ROLE OF DIGITALIZATION IN THE STRENGTHENING OF CAPACITIES OF STUDENTS IN TOURISM INSTITUTIONS: CASE OF ENCG AGADIR (UNIVERSITY OF IBN ZOHR) AND OFPPT OF TATA, MOROCCO

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Abstract:

Nowadays, higher education institutions are making considerable efforts to adapt the content of didactic programs to a new method of teaching using digital and technological devices.

Digitalization is transforming the world of education. In fact, to get close to these "born-online" students, teachers are moving from classical methods of teaching to hi-tech ones using information and communication technologies. This enables them to both enhance the level of learning in classes and also involve students in the teaching process.

The brand new "Professional Degree" in Management of Tourism that just started in the academic year 2017/2018 in both ENCG Agadir - Morocco (National School for Business and management) - University of Ibn Zohr and OFPPT (office for professional training) of Tata campus, has developed a new method of teaching based on both digital devices and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

We will seek through this work to show how the use of technologies can develop capacities of students of this Professional Licence in the two institutions: Agadir and Tata. A brief comparison can be also done between the two campuses in terms of: courses, methods of teaching; ability of students to work in this area of digitalization can be also shown in this work.

Keywords: Digitalization, Capacities, Students, ICT, Tourism, Education

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is spreading in classrooms. "Although there is no consensus to date on the real benefits of technology for quality education, ICT is increasingly seen as an integral part of modern education systems" (UNESCO 2013). This undeniable reality of the contemporary world of education is not necessarily stable from one situation to another, from one school to another, from one university to another.

In this context, a research was conducted for the benefit of the students of the professional degree "Management of tourism" at the campus of ENCG Agadir (Business School) which belongs to the University of Ibn Zohr, and the OFPPT (Office of Professional training) of Tata, in southern Morocco. This research was realized from June to July 2018 using a questionnaire that was sent to all the students of both institutions (total number if the students are 40). The answers obtained make it possible to describe and better understand the use of ICT by students but also to observe the role of ICT in the educational development of these students.

An empirical overview about what have been told, to date, about digitalization, innovation and ICT will be also shown throughout this work

1. DIGITALIZATION AND EDUCATION

1.1. Short overview about digitalization

Digitalization is the integration of multiple technologies into all aspects of daily life that can be digitized. A few examples of digitalization include smart homes: security systems, electrical devices, electronic gadgets; but also in others aspects: e-commerce, e-administration, smart cities etc. The widespread impact of digitalization affects everything from personal relationships augmented by social media and their services, to other relationships such as how citizens interact with support services in e-government (Gray, J. Et al 2015).

1.2. Digitalization in education

Giving importance to the educational system passes through helping young people to get access easily to social media and make it as the best way of education (Bourdieu 1986).

A considerable number of researchers insist on the fact that teachers and pedagogical staff have a major role in this context. Their responsibility can be seen in teaching young people how to

work and study with innovative technologies such as: internet and social media. But how the training about social media can be integrated in the educational system and how the success of this integration can be calculated. The theory of education about (social) media has been communicated in several researches about media. First it was invented and dedicated for mass media: newspaper and broadcast media. With the arrival of new media technologies, the research about education about media in general, and particularly social media has taken new perspectives and a lot of researchers have advanced considerable works about this concept, but also other ones that refer to it, e.g. ICT and innovation.

1.3. Innovation in education

The concept of innovation has become in recent years the total issue of the sector of education and training. According Cros & Adamczewski (1996), innovation is a form of human intervention, audacious or cautious in self-organized movements but also self-destructive of individuals, groups and institutions. Innovation is a multidimensional process which connects authors and actors, in an adventure, in a collective uncertainty; what comes and happens to this uncertainty is its object, its concern and promise.

Cros (2000) proposes another definition of innovation in the field of education: innovation in training is based on a new relative and contextualized; it changes according to a finalized action that is part of a process. It can be seen that it is built around five components: the new, the object, the change, the finalized action and the process. But are all innovations in education and training pedagogical?

According to Béchard and Pelletier (2001), Innovation is a deliberate activity that tends to introduce novelty into a given context. Innovation is also pedagogical because it seeks to substantially improve the learning of students in interaction situations and interactivity. For the university context, these authors mention that pedagogical innovations are often described as anything that is not a matter of formal teaching, a method still used by a very large majority of teachers.

1.4. ICT and Tourism education

As we all know, Information and Communication Technologies are having an incredible impact on the education system, transforming educational syllabus, learning materials and instructional practice.

ICTs are enabling students and teachers to exchange educational materials and also to interact between each other via improved and innovative platforms. This new digital tools make the transfer of knowledge much easy than before between teachers, students and collaborators. In tourism education, the most effective technologies which have good results on students learning, there is "e-learning" which, according to Poehlein (1996), has many advantages such are: life-long learning opportunities, alleviating spatial and time constraints, catalyst for institutional transformation.

In our geographic zone, educators in the field of tourism are adopting ICT and enhancing its use in tourism institutions, but only a minority who are fully exploiting Internet and digital technologies capacities to develop their pedagogical materials.

It is also known that educators and tourism institutions are deploying considerable efforts to augment the use of ICT in classrooms although that we are still in the preliminary stage of use those innovative tools in the education fields.

2. USE OF ICT IN TOURISM EDUCATION: ENCG AGADIR & OFPPT TATA, SOUTH OF MOROCCO:

2.1. Introduction

The brand new "Professional Degree" in Management of Tourism that just started in the academic year 2017/2018 in both ENCG Agadir - Morocco (National School for Business and management) - University of Ibn Zohr and OFPPT (office for professional training) of Tata campus, has developed a new method of teaching based on both digital devices and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). We will seek through this work to show how the use of technologies can develop capacities of students of this Professional Licence in the two institutions: Agadir and Tata.

2.2. Objective of the research

The main goal of this survey is to examine the perceptions of Professional Degree students concerning the use of ICT in tourism courses.

2.3. Research question

• Perception about digitalization/technology?

- Use of ICT?
- User satisfaction?
- Benefits?

2.4. Method of the research

In order to gather data for this case study, we utilized "questionnaire" as a quantitative data collection tool, so as we can evaluate the role of ICT in the strengthening of capacities of tourism students.

2.5. Case of the study:

The case of this study was students from professional Degree of Management of Tourism, Agadir Business School & Tata Technical School, University of Ibn Zohr – Morocco, summer 2018.

20 students had participated in this research out of 40 enrolled in both campuses: National School of Business and Management Agadir (20) and Technical school of Tata (20), south of Morocco.

2.6. Results of the research:

In order to determine the role of digitalization and particularly ICT in developing capacities of tourism students, we have examined data and analyse it as follow:

2.6.1. Age and Gender

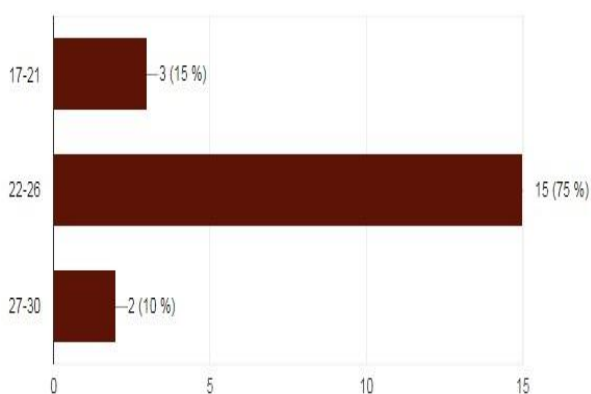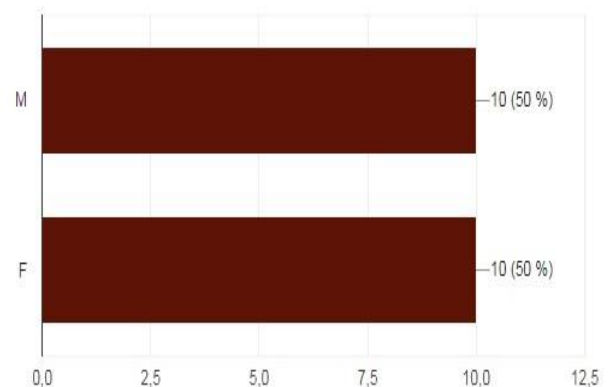**Figure 1**. Age of the participants   **Figure 2**. Gender

Figure 1 illustrates the age of the participants. 75% of the students who took part in this study have an age from 22 and 26 years old.15% are from 17 to 21 years old while only 2 (10%) are from 27 to 30 years old.

Figure 2 shows that there were equality between males and females (10 -10) from two institutions.

2.6.2. The use ICT services in classes

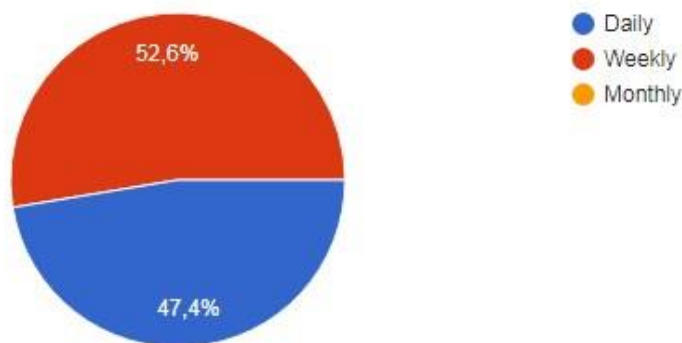**Figure 3** How often do students use ICT services in classes?

Figure 3 demonstrates that 53 % of the students use weekly ICT services in tourism classes, while 47% use them daily.

2.6.3. ICT software application students use in classes

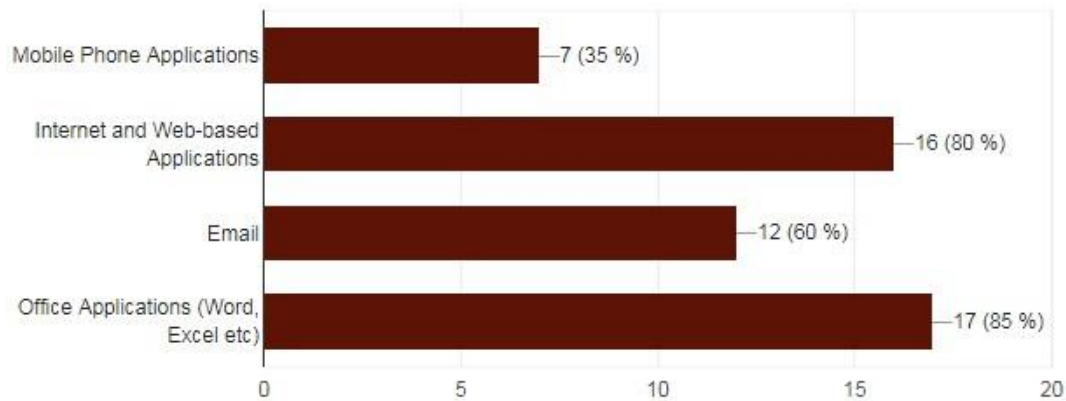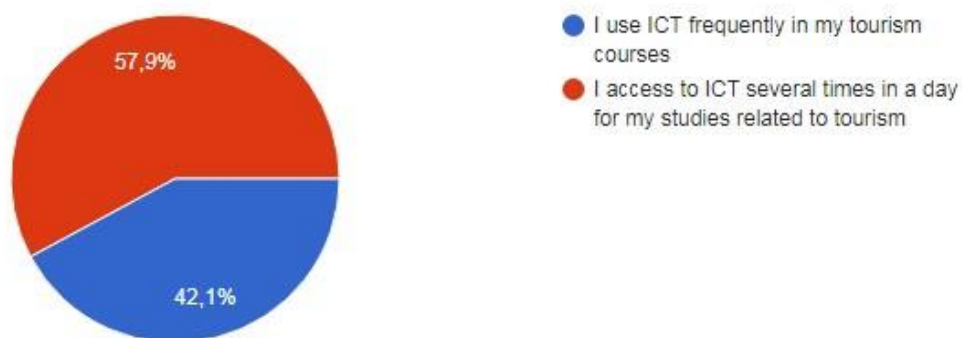**Figure 4** What ICT software application do students use in classes?

Figure 4 displays that office applications are the most used by the students (85%), followed by the Internet and web based application (80%). 60% of the target students use email as a way of communication, and 35% use mobile phone applications.

2.6.4. Use of ICT

Figure 5 Use of ICT

58 % of the students interviewed have access to ICT several times in a day for their studies related to tourism. 42% of them use them frequently which it means they are all time connected for studies purposes especially in tourism education.

2.6.5. Feeling about digitalization/technology

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Disagree totally, 2. Disagree, 3. Not strong, 4. Agree, 5. Agree strongly					

Table 1: Feeling about digitalization/technology

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I enjoy using technology.	1	1	3	**7**	**7**
2. I avoid using technology when I can.	3	**10**	2	4	1
3. I think using technology in class takes up too much time.	6	**8**	3	1	1
4. I know that technology can help me to learn many new things	0	2	3	5	**9**
5. Technology intimidates and threatens me.	**5**	4	**5**	4	0
6. Students should know how to use technology in class.	1	3	2	4	9
7. I would be a better learner if I knew how to use technology properly.	1	0	5	**7**	5
8. I'm very confident when it comes to working with technology at home/at work/at university.	0	2	5	**10**	1
9. I want to learn more about using technology at home/at work/at university.	1	2	0	5	**8**
10. I believe that I can improve my language skills using the benefits of the Internet.	1	1	2	5	**8**
11. Using technology in learning languages is not necessary.	4	**10**	1	2	0
12. Technology breaks down too often to be of very much use.	2	5	**8**	2	0

The majority of the target students (14) enjoy using technology and 50% disagree about avoiding using technology when they can. 8 of our participants confirm that using technology in class takes up too much time. 9 of the participants admit that technology can help them to learn many new things. Our participants share different judgements about the fact that Technology intimidates and threatens them. 9 of them agree about this point while 4 of them agree, 5 of them are neutral.

The majority of the Students (9+4) agree about the fact that they should know how to use technology in class. The majority also (7+5) would be better learners if they knew how to use technology properly. More than half (11) of the participants are strongly confident when it comes to working with technology at home, at work or at university.

8+5 agree about their willing to learn more about using technology at home/at work/at university. The same number of students believes that they can improve their language skills using the benefits of the Internet.

Half of the participants are on disagree about the fact that using technology in learning languages is not necessary. While 8/20 see the argument that "technology breaks down too often to be of very much use" is not too strong.

2.6.6. Experience of using Internet

Table 2: Experience of using Internet

1. I use the Internet	Regularly	Infrequently	Never
• At school	9	11	0
• At home	19	0	0
• At work / training / internship	15	4	1
2. I use the Internet in English for the following:			
• To write emails	12	8	2
• To communicate with people : social networks	15	4	1
• To find information/ to collect data	17	2	1
• To read the news	12	7	1
• To watch movies	19	1	0
• To prepare home works	13	5	2
• To buy/sell products	9	5	6
• To learn : online courses, online dictionaries etc.	14	3	1
• To have fun : games, puzzles etc.	8	7	5
• To download software	8	2	10

Almost all the students (19/20) regularly use internet at home while only 11 out of 20 use it infrequently at school. 75% of them on other hand use internet regularly at work, training or in an internship.

Our target use the internet in English to regularly write emails (12/20), to communicate with people via social media (15/20), to find information or to collect data (17/20), to read news ((12/20), to watch movies (19/20), to prepare home works (13/20) and to learn e.g. online courses, online dictionaries (14/20).

As far as "buying and selling products" via internet is concerned, 9 out of 20 do it regularly, 5 infrequently while 6 of them never did it before.

Concerning "having fun like playing games, puzzles etc.", only 8/20 do it regularly, 7 infrequently and 5 never played a videogame before on internet.

50% of the students have never downloaded software on the internet, 8/20 do it regularly while 2 do it infrequently.

2.6.7. Updating your knowledge with technology 2.0

Table 3: Updating knowledge with technology 2.0

Tool/trend	I know what this is	I'd like to explore this more
• E-learning	13	7
• M-learning	6	14
• Use of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	7	13
• Blogs	15	5
• Wikis	10	10
• Use a mobile phone texting activity in class	13	7
• Podcasts	13	7
• Join an online discussion group	20	0
• Creating groups of discussion in Facebook, WhatsApp etc.	19	1

13/20 of students know what E-learning is, while 7 of them would like to explore more about this concept.

14 out 20 students would like to know more about M-Learning, on the other hand only 6 know what it is.

Concerning the use of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), only 7/20 of students know about it, while 13 would like to explore more about it.

75% know what does mean a blog, but 25% still need to know much more about it.

As far as wikis are concerned, we have equality, 50% know it and 50% would like to explore more about it.

13 out 20 students use mobile phones texting activity in class, while 7 still need to know much more about this technique.

13/20 of students know about podcasts, 7 of them would like to know more about this tool.

100% of target students know how to join an online discussion group

Almost the majority of them know how to create groups of discussion in: Facebook, whatsApp etc.

2.6.8. User satisfaction

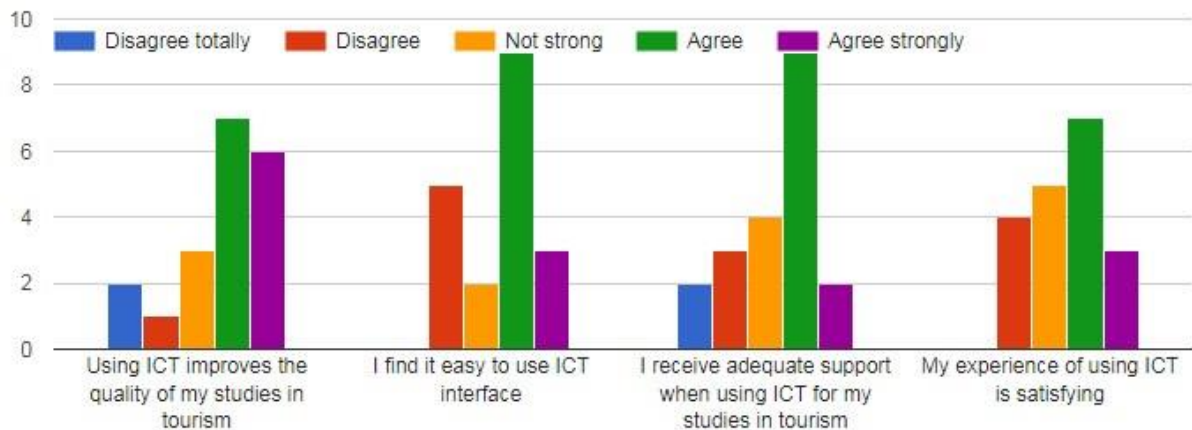**Figure 6** User satisfaction

Figure 6 demonstrates that the majority of the participants agree about the fact that using ICT improves the quality of their studies in tourism (7+6) while (1+2) disagree about this idea.

12 (9+3) students confirm that ICT interface are easy to use, while 5 of them think is not that easy.

50 % of the students (10) receive adequate support when using ICT for their studies in tourism, while 5 of them disagree with this point.

50% of our target (10) is satisfied of the experience of using ICT, but 4 students are not.
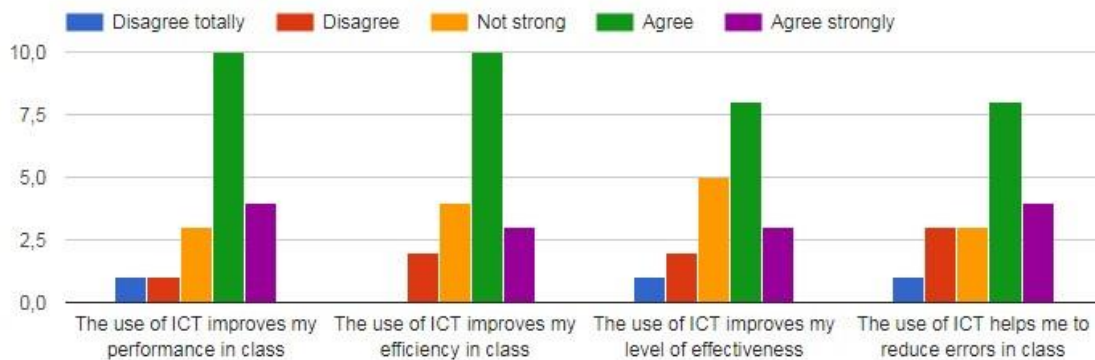
2.6.9. Benefits of ICT

Figure 7 Benefits of ICT

Figure 7 illustrates that almost 75% (10+4) of the students confirm that the use of ICT improves their performance in class, 2 only see the opposite.

(10+3) adopt the idea the use of ICT improves the efficiency of students in class, while only 2 disagree with this point.

More than a half (8+3) agrees about the fact that the use of ICT improves the student's level of effectiveness, 3 of them don't share this opinion.

12 (8+4) of students confirm that the use of ICT helps them reduce errors in class, while 4 see the contrary.

3. ANALYSIS

The majority of the students use at least once a week ICT services in their courses related to tourism and among the tools which are the most used in their classes, we have Office applications (85%), Internet and web based application (80%), emails (60%) and mobile phone applications (35%). And this can be explained by the nature of courses they received throughout a week, there are some educators who uses technologies to facilitate the information and there are some others who do not call for ICT in class.

On the other hand, the majority of students (58 %) have access to ICT several times in a day for their studies related to tourism outside classes: home, café, street, library etc. 42% of them

use them frequently which it means they are all time connected for studies purposes especially in tourism education.

All along with this research we notice that the majority of the students (14) enjoy using technology and almost half of the participants (9) admit that technology can help them to learn many new things.

We notice also that students do not trust technology. 9 out of 20 admit that ICT intimidates and threatens them.

Among the things that catch our attention is that 75% of the Students confirm that they still need to know how to use technology in class. 60 % admit that to use properly ICT, they should be trained on that.

We notice also that (55%) of the students are strongly confident when it comes to working with technology either at home, at work or at university, and 65% express their willing to learn more about using technology.

As far as internet is concerned, 65 % of students believe that they can improve their language skills using the benefits of the Internet, and it is necessary for learning foreign idioms. What makes this point too strong is that almost all the students (19/20) regularly use internet at home and 75% of them use it regularly at work, training or in an internship. Internet is an important thing for students in tourism, they use it in English to regularly write emails (12/20), to communicate with people via social media (15/20), to find information or to collect data (17/20), to read news ((12/20), to watch movies (19/20), to prepare home works (13/20) and to learn e.g. online courses, online dictionaries (14/20).

Concerning technologies, the majority knows much more about social media, online discussion group (100%), podcast (65%), mobile phone texting activity (65%), blogs (75%), but they still need to know about more technologies used usually in education such as M-learning, wikis, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) etc.

When it comes to talk about satisfaction, the majority of the students (65%) confirm that using ICT improves the quality of their studies in tourism, and 60 % find ICT interface are easy to use

Overall, 50% of the students is satisfied of the experience of using ICT, and receive adequate support when using ICT for their studies in tourism.

As far as benefits of ICT is concerned, 75% of the students confirm that the use of ICT improves their performance in class, 65 % see that the use of ICT improves the efficiency of

students in class and also their level of effectiveness (55%), 60% confirm that the use of ICT helps them reduce errors in class.

4. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this research is to to examine the perceptions of Professional Degree students concerning the use of ICT in tourism courses. But using technologies in classes still need more effort and education among students and also educators. According to this research, students are familiar with technology devices and they full open to use and work with ICT in tourism courses during the professional degree "Management of Tourism". The data collected confirms that the students in both campuses (Agadir and Tata) know that ICT improve the quality of their studies in tourism and they are also satisfied of the experience of using ICT. Thus, the analysis results shows that the use of ICT improves their performance of students in class, and that the use of ICT improves their efficiency and their level of effectiveness as well.

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