



## A Correlational Study of Social Media Literacy and Intercultural Competence among University Students

**El Guermat Abdel Moula**

*Applied Communication in Context Laboratory, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, English Studies Department, University of Mohammed I, Oujda, Morocco.*

[abdelmoula.elguermat.d24@ump.ac.ma](mailto:abdelmoula.elguermat.d24@ump.ac.ma)

**Abdellah El Boubekri**

*Applied Communication in Context Laboratory, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, English Studies Department, University of Mohammed I, Oujda, Morocco.*

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<b>Received:</b> 03/06/2025	<b>Abstract</b>
<b>Accepted:</b> 08/07/2025	<i>With the recent trends towards internationalizing higher education institutions, the need to develop students' intercultural awareness has become more crucial than ever. Globalization and the rapid advancement of technology have amplified the standards needed of individuals, especially undergraduate students, to acquire a series of intercultural competencies that can allow them to blend into academia abroad or a multicultural work environment. Because of this, universities worldwide are trying to meet these standards. For instance, Morocco recently passed new reforms of higher education whereby it aims to enhance students' intercultural as well as digital skills. Production of intercultural mediators, therefore, has to be reoriented to accommodate the current generation whose lives actually revolve around technology, with most of their intercultural acquisition on social media. To serve this purpose, the current research investigates the relationship between undergraduate students at Mohammed I University in Oujda and their use of social media in relation to their level of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Specifically, the research is conceptualized through Lara Schreurs and Laura Vandenbosch's Social Media Literacy (SMILE) Model to assess students' social media literacy (SML) across cognitive, technical, and socio-emotional dimensions, and, concurrently, Byram's ICC model to assess their skills, knowledge, and beliefs. In doing this, the research aims to investigate whether there is any correlation between students' use of social media and their levels of ICC. The findings reveal significant positive correlations between specific components of SML and dimensions of ICC, providing insight into the promise of using social media as a pedagogical tool to improve students' intercultural communication skills in HEIs.</i>
<b>Keywords:</b> Intercultural Communicative Competence, Social Media, Media Literacy, Higher Education .	

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Moroccan higher education recently started new reforms that have a clearly defined focus on internationalization. The latter has been imbued with pace during the past three decades and is a product of multiple rationales, including economic, political, and academic (Lamdaghri et al., 2024). Essentially, internationalization is the process of incorporating international, intercultural, and global perspectives into what universities actually do: teaching,

research, and engagement with communities (Knight, 2003). There was no model that captured the shaping of internationalization. Yet, viewed from a broader perspective, the enactment of such policy aims is more likely to target integrating international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the purpose, function, and supply of higher education. It could embrace various initiatives such as student mobility, faculty mobility, global research collaboration, and infusing global perspectives into courses. The major objectives include improving the quality of education, motivating international competencies among the students, and improving the status of Morocco in the international world of academia (Allame & Kaaouachi, 2023; Adoui, 2023; Lamdaghri et al., 2024). Nevertheless, beyond institutional objectives and organizational transformation, internationalization in practice ultimately depends on students' capacity to communicate and collaborate across cultures. In this regard, this paper argues that improving students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) at the first place is a must for a successful internationalization.

If one will go in depth, s/he would likely realize that the very core of internationalization both lies in and depends on the gift of intercultural communication competences to the students. Being in terms of professional competencies or academic knowledge is not of primary concern. However, the contemporary global market has begun valuing people who have a specialty in effective communication with no reservations to embrace diversity and are versatile and accommodating of various settings (Zolfaghari et al., 2009). The yardstick to gauge the success or failure of such policies to internationalize Moroccan universities, in my opinion, should be the students' ability to successfully communicate with people from multicultural environments, to act as mediators between cultural contexts, and to represent their own culture in a positive way. In a word, among the myriad set objectives of internationalization, the development of students' intercultural communication competence should always remain at the forefront.

The aim of this research is neither to provide an assessment of the status of internationalization integration of Moroccan higher education nor to quantify its success. Instead, it pursues a different path. It attempts to investigate students' ICC and the determinants that are linked to them, and through which such competence can be explored and verified. In doing this, the research provides stakeholders with knowledge of actions through which such integration can be realized. Meanwhile, current research has shown that social media has become the main place where individuals interact and learn about other cultures (Monika et al., 2019; Fornara, 2020; Gibson & Capdeville, 2019). Today, social media like social networking sites (SNSs) are indispensable to individuals for communicating and knowing about others' traditions, habits, and religion. Social media play a crucial role in the formation of ICC. The

present generation may find themselves fortunate to have such media in the manner in which intercultural communication has never been easier, at least if compared to non-Internet-based media. However, despite their advantages, social media sites are also the ones most frequently blamed for their role in spreading misinformation and propaganda. Tandoc, Lim, and Ling (2017) cited: “Social media sites are not only marked by having a mass audience, but they also facilitate speedy exchange and spread of information. Unfortunately, they have also facilitated the spread of wrong information, such as fake news” (p. 3). Consequently, this can lead its users to fall into the fallacy of generalization, miscommunication, and polarization. This actually raises serious questions about the role played by social media in actually shaping people’s ability to navigate such complex cultural and information environments.

That is being said, developing students’ ICC can be realized only if learners are equipped with certain cognitive skills to deal with such platforms, a literacy commonly referred to as social media literacy (SML). The latter involves the ability not just to use social media for mere communication or entertainment purposes but to use it reflectively, to assess the credibility of information, to recognize cultural nuance, and to counteract embedded biases. This places ICC and SML at the heart of letting students learn how to communicate in cultures all over the globe in the age of technology.

In this regard, the present study presumes that everyday use of social media affects the ICC of students. It presumes that there is a positive correlation between students’ use of social media and their ICC in university education. Specifically, it proposes that intentional and active use of social media affects students’ ability to engage across cultures. First and foremost, this research aimed to research this correlation by finding three primary objectives: 1) to analyze social media activity of students who enrolled in the Excellence Track of the English department at Mohammed I University with the Social Media Literacy (SMILE) Model, 2) to evaluate their intercultural communicative competence based on Byram’s ICC model, and 3) to explore the potential correlation between students’ social media consumption and their ICC within the higher education context.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. Global Engagement**

The world has become more connected than ever been, from the people we interact with to how we conduct our business and whom we have the opportunity to serve. As a result, college graduates today will join an increasingly global workforce, and their ability to engage in service through global connections cannot be left to chance (Darko, 2024). In the same vein, the American Council on Education (2011) observed:

Higher education exists in, and is very much affected by, a world that increasingly operates across sovereign borders. Just as countries have become more interconnected worldwide, so, too, have colleges and universities. This new reality is much more than just a phenomenon; rather, it embodies a wholly new way of thinking and working. In the 21st century, higher education is explicitly and fundamentally a global enterprise.

In this context, the term “global engagement” is often employed to capture the interconnected activities that characterize this new approach to thinking and working. These activities vary in scope and occur at multiple levels within higher education systems. Understanding this concept involves recognizing the various levels at which it takes place. As outlined by the American Council on Education (ACE, 2014), global engagement can be conceptualized at two primary levels. At the individual level, it refers to activities such as student mobility programs, student and faculty exchanges, collaborative faculty research partnerships, faculty-led research networks, jointly taught courses, and other cross-border academic collaborations. At the institutional level, global engagement includes formalized agreements, such as memoranda of understanding, joint or dual degree programs, the establishment of branch campuses abroad, cooperative research projects, and similar initiatives. In some cases, these efforts originate with faculty and are subsequently embraced by institutions as key strategic partnerships.

### **2.2. Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence**

In his definition of Communicative Competence (CC), Hymes (1972) laid stress on the exclusion of “appropriateness” or the socio-cultural appropriateness of an utterance in a given situation. Canale and Swain (1980) introduced the components of communicative competence as linguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and sociolinguistic competence. Van Ek (1986) added two more things to the above list: socio-cultural competence, or one's ability to function in a variety of cultures, and social competence, i.e., familiarity with variations in social ways, confidence, sensitivity, and willingness to communicate with others. In response, the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has been built. Most of the language education specialists have considered that ICC is an extension of communicative competence. In Beneke's (2000) words “intercultural communication in the wider sense of the word involves the use of significantly different linguistic codes and contact between people holding significantly different sets of values and models of the world [...] Intercultural competence is to a large extent the ability to cope with one's own cultural background in interaction with others” (pp. 108-109).

Byram and Fleming (1998) claim that someone who has intercultural competence “has knowledge of one, or, preferably, more cultures and social identities and can discover and relate

to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared directly” (p. 9). According to Byram’s well-developed model (1997), intercultural communicative competence requires certain attitudes, knowledge, and skills in addition to linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence (see table 1). The model views language learning as a communicative, interactive, and meaningful process. It outlines the factors that contribute to successful intercultural communication, including a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and a willingness to act.: *Savoir*: knowledge of self and other; of interaction; individual and societal. *Savoir être*: attitudes; relativising self, valuing other. *Savoir comprendre*: skills of interpreting and relating. *Savoir apprendre/faire*: skills of discovering and/or interacting. *Savoir s’engager*: political education, critical cultural awareness (adapted from Byram 1997, 34). Accordingly, successful communication involves not only understanding how different cultural contexts influence the interpretation and perception of spoken or written words but also a genuine concern for establishing and maintaining relationships across cultural boundaries (Byram 1997, 3).

**Table 1:** *Components of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997)*

Knowledge	Skills/behaviour	Attitudes/traits
Culture-specific and culture-general knowledge	Ability to interpret and relate <i>Savoir-comprendre</i>	Attitudes to relativize self and value others
Knowledge of interaction: individual and societal	Ability to acquire new knowledge and to apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction	Positive disposition towards learning intercultural competence <i>Savoir être</i>
Insight regarding the ways in which culture affects language and communication <i>Savoirs</i>	Meta cognitive strategies to direct own learning <i>savoir-apprendre/ savoirs faire</i>	General disposition characterized by a critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one’s own <i>Savoir-s’engager</i>

### 2.3.Social Media Literacy (SMILE) Model

As for the case that social media are now part and parcel of our daily lives, there have been worries regarding their utilization. By way of explanation, social media websites have become unavoidable in the sense that they are providing opportunities that were not previously available. Nonetheless, such tools also come with challenges that have an effect on people’s health. One of these issues, for example, is the “positivity bias” under which users essentially

post only positive things, which may lead to skewed perceptions and social comparisons. Or, when they are victims of stereotypes and judgments that often function against the development of their ICC.

Thus, the remedy for these issues necessitates hence a nuanced understanding of social media literacy. So, in answer to the need for a comprehensive framework, Lara Schreurs and Laura Vandenbosch introduced the Social Media Literacy (SMILE) model in their 2020 publication. For them, social media literacy is defined as “the extent to which cognitive and affective structures are present among users to ensure the risks of interactions with social media content are mitigated and the opportunities are maximized” (p.5). In accordance with this definition, they believe that such literacy is a continuous variable with essentially two subcomponents (i.e., cognitive and affective structures) that are present in varying levels.

Their model attempts to 1) conceptualize social media literacy (offering a systematic definition of social media skills and know-how needed to perform in social media), 2) examine user-platform dynamics (diagnosing how heightened literacy influences the people-social media site relationship), and 3) emphasize participatory mediation processes (highlighting active involvement in building social media literacy). Basically, the model is divided into five major assumptions:

- 1) Social Media Literacy as a Moderator: An individual’s level of social media literacy influences how they interpret and respond to online content. For instance, someone with strong literacy skills is more likely to critically evaluate the authenticity of a post, reducing the risk of negative impacts.**
- 2) Social Media Literacy as a Predictor: Proficiency in social media literacy can predict specific behaviours or outcomes. Those with higher literacy are better equipped to identify misinformation and are less likely to propagate it.**
- 3) Reciprocal Process of Social Media Literacy: Social media literacy evolves through use. As individuals engage with social media, their skills improve, and these enhanced skills shape their future interactions.**
- 4) Conditional Process of Social Media Literacy Development: The development of social media literacy is shaped by factors such as age, education, and cultural background. These variables influence how and to what extent literacy is developed.**



- 5) **Differential Learning Process in Social Media Literacy:** Social media literacy is not acquired uniformly. It varies depending on personal experiences, the learning environment, and the methods used to promote these skills.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

Given the study's aim, this paper employs a quantitative methodology, which is deemed most suitable. This is due to the fact that it attempts to measure the extent and direction of relationships among quantitative variables. As defined by Given (2008), quantitative research refers to the empirical study of measurable phenomena by systematic statistical, mathematical, or computational means (p. 86). It uses standardized instruments to increase the precision of results and provide results that can be generalized (Given, 2008, p. 86).

#### **3.2. Sample**

The sample for this study consisted of students enrolled in the Excellence Track program, which operates under the framework of the ESRI 2030 Pact, within the English department at Mohammed I University. This particular group was chosen due to their active engagement in academic innovation and their potential to represent emerging trends in higher education reform. The study employed a convenience sampling technique, which involves selecting participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate (Koerber & McMichael, 2008, as cited in Golzar et al., 2022). This method was deemed appropriate given the practical constraints of time and resources, as well as the researcher's proximity to the student population. Although convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings, it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and perceptions within the specific context of a nationally supported academic excellence initiative.

#### **3.3. Instruments**

This study uses a questionnaire as the main instrument to explore how participants engage with social media and whether this engagement influences their level of ICC. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section, inspired by the Social Media Literacy (SMILE) Model developed by Lara Schreurs and Laura Vandebosch (2021), examines four key aspects of social media use: critical evaluation, bias awareness, engagement practices, and impact awareness. The second section draws on Byram's model to assess five dimensions of ICC: knowledge of self, knowledge of others, skills to interpret and relate, skills to discover and interact, and attitudes.

To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha test was applied to all sections. This approach was chosen because the questionnaire includes a Likert scale with multiple items designed to measure the same construct (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Cronbach's Alpha Values for Measured Aspects*

Aspect	Cronbach's Alpha
Critical Evaluation	.732
Bias Awareness	.718
Engagement Practices	.601
Impact Awareness	.683
Knowledge of Others	.859
Knowledge of Self	.758
Skills to Interpret and Relate	.748
Skills to Discover and Interact	.859
Valuing Others' Values, Beliefs, and Behaviours	.711

The table above shows that most aspects exhibit acceptable to strong consistency. Specifically, Knowledge of Others (0.859) and Skills to Discover and Interact (0.859) show excellent consistency. However, Engagement Practices (0.601) and Impact Awareness (0.683) have lower reliability. This is possibly due to ambiguous items or the varied nature of these two constructs; these limitations will be addressed in subsequent analyses.

### 3.4.Data Collection & Analysis

Having used a questionnaire as the main instrument of data collection, 45 students out of 65 had responded. The analysis involved two stages: first, descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean scores for key aspects of each questionnaire section; second, inferential analysis, mainly correlation analysis, was conducted to examine the relationships between variables in line with the research objectives. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

### 3.5.Ethical Consideration

Before any data were collected, the participants were informed that their involvement in the study was completely voluntary and that informed consent had been sought from each participant. The purpose of the study, the assurance of anonymity, and participants' freedom to withdraw at any time were outlined clearly at the commencement of the questionnaire. To maintain confidentiality and privacy, no personally identifiable information was gathered during the study.



## **4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

The results are presented alongside their discussion to provide a clear interpretation and demonstrate their relevance to the study's objectives. The analysis begins with descriptive statistics and progresses to inferential analysis.

### **4.1.Descriptive Statistics**

This section presents findings derived from a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to gather data regarding students' online social media practices and their ICC. Participants responded to items using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"), to evaluate both their social media usage and their levels of ICC.

**Table 2:** *Summary of Key Measures: Mean and Median*

<b>Measures Aspects</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
<i>Critical Evaluation</i>	3.948	4.0000
<i>Bias Awareness</i>	4.0519	4.0000
<i>Engagement Practices</i>	3.4370	3.6667
<i>Impact Awareness</i>	3.6815	4.0000
<i>Knowledge of Others</i>	3.5481	3.6667
<i>Knowledge of Self</i>	4.1037	4.0000
<i>Skills to Interpret and Relate</i>	3.5037	3.6667
<i>Valuing Others' Culture</i>	3.8148	4.000

The data in the above table demonstrates trends in participant ratings on a number of important constructs. The constant median of 4.0, observed in numerous domains, indicates an overall trend towards agreement. Indeed, this generates concern as to whether or not participants actually agreed or if they were affected by social desirability bias. That this is a likelihood is one that must be considered thoroughly. The highest mean score of 4.10 was on "Knowledge of Self." This may indicate high self-awareness, but the validity of self-report needs to be confirmed by other measures. Perhaps self-perceptions are inflated. "Bias Awareness", "Critical Evaluation", and "Valuing Others' Culture" scores were relatively high, indicating favourable perceptions.

However, a check needs to be done to ensure whether action necessarily follows these expressed opinions, since behaviour is not always consistent with expressed belief. Engagement Practices had the lowest mean score, at 3.44. This is a cause for concern. It suggests that participants may struggle to apply engagement skills, and is an area for further work and training. "Impact Awareness," "Knowledge of Others," and "Skills to Interpret and

Relate” scores were in a moderate range. This is an indicator of areas to be developed. Generally. The results show a generally positive attitude to students’ SM practice and their overall ICC level, though there are important nuances, and the differences may require further investigation. Inferential Analysis

#### 4.1.1. Correlation Analysis

Correlational analysis required an initial assessment of data normality to ensure the selection of suitable statistical techniques. Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used. These tests are recognized and dependable ways to determine whether data conforms to a normal distribution (Razali & Yap, 2011).

**Table 3:** Normality Test

Constructs	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
<i>Critical Evaluation</i>	.148	45	.015	.915	45	.003
<i>Bias Awareness</i>	.185	45	.001	.895	45	.001
<i>Engagement Practices</i>	.167	45	.003	.950	45	.051
<i>Impact Awareness</i>	.205	45	.000	.951	45	.055
<i>Knowledge of Others</i>	.181	45	.001	.923	45	.005
<i>Knowledge of Self</i>	.257	45	.000	.867	45	.000
<i>Skills to Interpret and Relate</i>	.212	45	.000	.872	45	.000
<i>Skills to Discover and Interact</i>	.215	45	.000	.882	45	.000
<i>Valuing Others’ Culture</i>	.128	45	.061	.959	45	.111

Normality tests in table 3 showed that most of the constructs measured failed to follow a normal trend. Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test showed the same results, which were consistent with each other. Constructs such as “Bias Awareness,” “Knowledge of Self,” and “Skills to Interpret and Relate” had very low p-values (below 0.05). This is an indication that their distributions significantly deviated from normality. However, “Engagement Practices,” “Impact Awareness,” and “Valuing Other Values, Beliefs, and Behaviors” had higher p-values in the Shapiro-Wilk test. This suggests that these constructs are more closely distributed normally, if not perfectly normal. The “Critical Evaluation” construct also did not follow a normal trend, with p-values of 0.015 (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) and 0.003 (Shapiro-Wilk). Because most of the constructs that were measured did not meet the assumption of normality, non-parametric statistical tests will be utilized for the remaining

analyses. Spearman's rank correlation will be utilized instead of Pearson's correlation to examine relationships between the constructs under investigation.

#### **4.2.Spearman's Correlational Analysis**

**Table 4:** *Spearman's Rank Correlation between Social Media Practices and ICC*

<b>Social Media Practices (SMILE Model)</b>	<b>ICC Components (Byram's Framework)</b>	<b>Spearman's rho</b>	<b>Sig. (2- tailed)</b>
Critical Evaluation	Knowledge of Others	.577**	<.001
Critical Evaluation	Knowledge of Self	.369*	.013
Bias Awareness	Knowledge of Others	.456**	.006
Bias Awareness	Valuing Other Cultures	.415*	.005
Engagement Practices	Skills to Relate and Reflect	.493**	<.001
Engagement Practices	Skills to Discover and Interact	.400*	.007
Impact Awareness	Knowledge of Others	.549**	<.001
Impact Awareness	Valuing Other Cultures	.513**	<.001
Knowledge of Social Media	Skills to Relate and Reflect	.431**	<.001
Knowledge of Social Media	Skills to Discover and Interact	.480**	<.001

Table 4 shows the correlation outcomes. These outcomes analyzed correlations between social media usage and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) facets. The results showed that positive significant correlations existed between social media activity types and ICC skills. Specifically, "Engagement Practices" was found to be positively correlated with "Knowledge of Others" ( $\rho = .549$ ,  $p < .001$ ), "Skills to Interpret and Relate" ( $\rho = .493$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and "Valuing Other Cultures" ( $\rho = .513$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results show that active use of social media is linked with increased cultural awareness and improved critical digital skills. "Bias Awareness" also showed a positive correlation with "Knowledge of Self" ( $\rho = .600$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This implies that awareness of misinformation goes hand in hand with higher self-awareness and cultural adaptation. "Impact Awareness," which measures how people view the effect of social media, was positively related to "Knowledge of Others" ( $\rho = .423$ ,  $p = .004$ ). This supports the notion that use of social media in an informed way can enable people to comprehend other cultures freely.

The research findings support the hypothesis stated. The students' social media usage and their ICC in higher education have a positive relationship. "Engagement Practices" had strong positive correlations with all dimensions of ICC. More actively engaged students who made greater use of social media tended to exhibit greater cultural awareness. They also tended to have greater ability for interpretation and appreciation of other cultures. A high positive correlation between "Bias Awareness" and "Knowledge of Self" was established. It implies that critical digital literacy competences facilitate self-awareness and intercultural adaptability. Both the Social Media Literacy Model and Byram's ICC model are supported by these findings. Such validation upholds the contention that focused social media use can facilitate students' capability for good intercultural communication. Overall, results from the research suggest that social media is a key factor in determining student ICC. It exposes students to diverse perceptions and promotes critical engagement with what is out there. The study also proved a positive correlation between "Impact Awareness" and "Knowledge of Others." This shows that knowing the impact of social media assists in understanding other cultures. Therefore, incorporating social media literacy into education policies is important to enhance ICC.

The results of the current study concur with prior academic scholarship. Specifically, recent research reaffirms the hypothesis that social media use has a positive impact on intercultural competence. For example, Monika, Nasution, and Nasution (2019) found that engaging actively on Facebook and Twitter enhanced cultural awareness and digital competencies. Their finding is in line with our observation that "Engagement Practices" has a direct association with ICC, particularly "Knowledge of Others" and "Skills to Interpret and Relate." Further, Wu and Marek (2018) depicted that social media training interventions facilitated ICC by promoting critical thinking and sensitivity to bias in order to reassert digital literacy's role towards cultural adaptation. Similarly, Xiang's (2023) research on Chinese Malaysian students concluded that social media expands cultural knowledge and improves intercultural communication competency. This is in line with conclusions of comparable studies, such as those that had already proved social media usage facilitated both interaction and reflection among American and Chinese students. These findings together support our conclusion that educated usage of social media improves ICC.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The present study contends that social media literacy not only serves as a medium for online communication, but also as a significant catalyst in the process of ICC development among students in higher education settings. The statistically significant positive correlations between some social media activities and some aspects of ICC suggest that frequent,

purposeful, and critical engagement with social media outlets can serve to facilitate cultural awareness and self-reflection. Thus, the study has implications not only for the higher education sector but also for the broader discipline of intercultural communication. The documented positive relationship between social media use and ICC identifies the potential of these media as useful instruments in the cultural awareness and digital competences required in students. Furthermore, the salience of “Impact Awareness” here highlights the importance of critical thinking on the part of students regarding social media narratives, evaluating their impact both on one’s own understandings and on one’s understanding of other cultures. However, some limitations must be acknowledged, including possible bias due to reliance on a self-report questionnaire, the impossibility of drawing causal conclusions from the cross-sectional design, and limited generalizability due to the unique nature of the participant sample of the study.

With such limitations duly noted, it is recommended that universities should strategically incorporate social media as teaching tools in courses to optimize ICC development; conduct regular, organized activities with significant cross-cultural interaction; improve critical digital literacy, and nurture reflective practice regarding personal bias. Following research should then examine the precise characteristics of social media use which best enable ICC development.

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