

The Use of Facebook as an Alternative Learning Platform: Perspectives from Transactional Distance Theory

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Abstract

Learning must take place anytime and anywhere, whether through online or offline mode. Hence, this paper explores the perception of the students in the use of Facebook as a learning platform in a Practical Research class in the light of transactional distance theory. A qualitative research design following netnographic procedures and a self-administered questionnaire of open-ended questions was conducted. Insights on the narrative of the students revealed that the use of Facebook as a learning platform promotes learning, instruction, and students' interaction which is evident in the exchanges of conversation in the comment section of Facebook posts. Facebook as a learning platform, provides an avenue for teachers for instruction and feedback purposes. Nevertheless, the findings also revealed that there were students who found the use of Facebook as being problematic. Hence, caution of its use must be exercised. Academic integrity must be upheld to its highest standards regardless of the learning modalities. The researcher suggests that turning and maximizing the use of social media to academic use in distance or remote education is a good learning practice making sure that pedagogic interventions are in place along the way.

Keywords: alternative online learning platform, Davao City, Department of Education, Facebook, practical research, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Technology-aided instruction has been successfully proven to enhance, improve, and aid students' learning (Elson et al., 2012). However, in this time of pandemic where face-to-face instruction is challenged, technology does not only aid in instruction but also becomes the mainstream instructional tool to deliver class lessons and activities. The problem in the Philippine context does not solely lie in the competence of the teachers to use technology to aid instruction. The problem behooves on the slow internet connection coupled with high-cost internet connectivity.

In Indonesia, offline and online learning modes have been adapted as alternatives to face-to-face schooling. This means that printed materials were likewise afforded to learners who could not afford to access the online learning management system. Home visits were also afforded to students who lived in far-flung areas. On the other hand, Timor-Leste showcased an interactive learning material that is intended to engage learners with disabilities. Also, reading materials were developed and written in local languages to cater a wider range of learners. Additionally, Lao PDR promoted the use of radio, online, and campaign methods to deliver lessons using 14 languages. These learning materials include tips on parenting, mental health, and psychosocial support (United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021).

As of July 2020, the Philippines ranks 113th on mobile internet speed in the OoklaSpeedtest Global Index Report with a rough estimate of 16.95mbps. On a fixed broadband speed, the Philippines ranks 109th with 25.07 Mbps. On an average basis, this can accommodate online classes; however, not all areas in the Philippines are covered with internet connection. In datareportal.com, the internet penetration in the Philippines is estimated to be around 67% as of January 2020.

This is even worsened by the high cost of internet connection that only a privileged few could afford. On the average, the Philippines ranks 23rd on the highest cost of internet connectivity. The country's internet cost is way higher than its neighboring countries in Southeast Asia such as: Indonesia (56th), Malaysia (55th), Singapore (52nd), Thailand (73rd), and Vietnam (99th). The ranking was released by numbeo.com.

Given the scenario, educators have become proactive in looking for solutions to deliver learning lessons and activities within a remote learning framework with the end in mind that all students could afford. The use of Learning Management systems such as Google Classroom and Moodle is not feasible and practical because these require a lot of online data for the access of content. Hence, the use of Facebook was thought of as an alternative online platform because of its accessibility.

Specifically, Davao City is an urbanized city in the Philippines with a total population of 1,632,991 as of 2015 Census of Population by Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). As of July 2020, the Davao region has recorded over a million learners enrolled in a public school system (Philippine News Agency). Thus, teachers are preparing for multi-modal delivery of lessons ranging from printed modules and online modules and then converting these modular lessons to television and radio-based instruction. The challenge for teachers is more than ever.

Statistically, according to datareportal.com, there is a significant increase of the internet users in the Philippines from 2020 to 2021. To date, there are already 73.91 million users in the Philippines. It has also been reported that there are 17 social media platforms

with over 300 million monthly active users, with Facebook topping the list (2.895 billion monthly users), followed by YouTube (2.291 billion active monthly users) and WhatsApp (2 billion active monthly users). These data are insightful, showing that people are using Facebook more often than other social media platforms. Hence, the researcher decided to choose Facebook as an alternative mode of learning delivery.

This study presents a pedagogical practice of using Facebook as a Learning Platform which the researcher observes in several years in teaching since his employment to the Department of Education in Davao City, Philippines. With the principle in mind that learning should take place everywhere and anytime, the thought of using an online platform accessible for many came to being. Many were considered in the conceptualization of the study like the use of Edmodo, Google Classroom, and Moodle. However, given the context where only less than half of the students in a class can afford the internet connection whether pocket data or wired data, the use of these were excluded in the list. Thus, Facebook which can be accessed anytime and anywhere (Kimmons et al., 2021) with very minimal data usage was used as a platform to engage learning in a practical research class. This is divergent from how Facebook was created; that is one of the most widely used social media. Now, it is used for academic purposes.

This area of study has also been explored by several researchers across the country (Esteves, 2012; Maglunog & Dy, 2019; Boholano & Cajés, 2021) and abroad (Gutschmidt, 2012; Meishar-Tal et al., 2012; Rodrigues et al., 2014; Jones & Bogle, 2017) but not among senior high school students in public schools in the region during the pandemic time. Thus, this study aims to look for the perspectives of the students in the use of Facebook as an alternative learning platform.

Review of Literature

Learning Management System. The whole education system has drifted from face-to-face teaching to online learning due to community lockdowns. In India for example, 100% of the teachers resorted to online teaching modes using a University Learning Management system, 32% used google classroom, 45% used Zoom/Cisco WebEx/Google Meet, 25% used webinar, 50% used YouTube videos, 6% Youtube/Facebook Streaming, 100% WhatsApp/Telegram, 87% Telephonic Conversation, 100% email and 11% used Zonet Cable TV (Mishra et al., 2020). The study showed how the teachers looked for different online platforms to continue learning despite community lockdowns.

Learning management systems (LMSs) are defined as online learning platforms for designing, managing, and distributing training materials (Sabharwal et al. 2018; Turnbull et al., 2019). Learning management system varies accordingly to its feature and design. Some LMSs allow the teachers to organize and structure their lessons according to the

design of the course syllabi. Other LMSs are more rigid and have already preformatted structures which you will have to utilize. Some LMSs include effective assessment features; some do not have. Examples of LMSs popularly used in the Davao region are Edmodo, DepEd LMS using Moodle, Google Classroom, and Schoology.

Regardless of their major differences, Kattoua et al., (2016) argued that LMSs play a significant role in the improvement and facilitation of teaching and learning in today's pervasive multimedia world. LMSs do not only facilitate instruction delivery in a shared environment to strengthen and enhance student learning but also encourage teachers to design and ensure effective learning activities.

In the Philippines, Google classroom is the most widely used Learning Management System. In the study of Zuñiga-Tonio (2021), most of his respondents concurred that the use of Google classroom could afford accessibility, utility, and students' satisfaction. The findings of the study also showed that students prefer Google classroom as an LMS due to its user-friendly features- tasks, assignments, projects, and announcements can easily be monitored and has an organized storage of learning materials. Overall, the use of Google classroom supports learning in flexible education.

Generally, the review of the literature showed that there are many factors that affect the decision of adopting and using a certain learning platform. Among those identified in the literature are lack of technological skills, poor internet connection or limited internet access, and lack of incentives and attitude (Ansong et al., 2017; NuriAbdalla, 2019; Shurygin et al., 2021). These findings were commonly identified among developing countries.

Transactional Distance Learning. In the disruption of education due to the COVID-19 pandemic, education has heavily relied on technology where lessons are delivered remotely through various technological means. Hence, the technology to mediate the distance between the teacher and student must be fully considered (Weidlich & Bastiaens, 2018).

Transactional distance is a theory and philosophy of education that describes the basic principles of distance learning. It introduces a concept of distance education which implies that teachers and learners are separated. The principle of transactional distance is characterized by the idea that distance is used not only as geographical isolation but also as a pedagogical term. Consequently, the principle encourages the incorporation of all forms of curriculum, i.e., a method in which technology is the primary or principal mode of communication (Moore, 2007).

Moore (1993) proposed that transactional distance is not specified in terms of geographical distance, but rather is a pedagogical definition that incorporates the

division of time and space between learners and teachers. It is about a psychological and communication space that resides between learners and teachers and is formed by the atmosphere and patterns of behavior of people in an environment. This further assumes that learning must take place anytime and anywhere and negotiation of learning should still occur despite distance and space.

For example, Thoms and Eryilmaz (2014) contended that a certain learning management system can affect students' level of satisfaction and interaction implying an effect on transactional distance learning. In the study, there were two groups. One group utilized the customized online social networking software while the other group utilized the traditional learning management system. The result showed a higher interaction occurred in the group with OSN which indicates that the traditional LMS may lack the features to simulate or support actual classroom environments where social interaction and collaboration play a significant role in learning even in online instruction.

Similarly, the study of Sun (2016) revealed that LMS or course technology has a weak link to supporting online instruction. The findings suggest that the teacher still must do a lot of alignment of LMS to course outcome. Support, accessibility, and usability of LMS must be revisited and strengthened to align them to online instruction such as group projects and activities, virtual discussion, and web conferencing. Hence, course technology must afford options to teachers to design their virtual space that can simulate face-to-face learning instruction (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Hamid et al., 2015).

Facebook and New Normal Education. The use of Facebook is an alternative learning platform because it only meets two of the three requirements of the Learning Management System (Coates et al., 2005; Meishar-Tal et al., 2012). First is the pedagogical potential of conducting both asynchronous and synchronous classes; second is the flexibility of the platform to upload and download learning materials; and third is the presence of feature that allows formative and summative assessment of students. The first and second requirements for the platform to be considered a Learning Management System are present in Facebook but the third can hardly be monitored. Only a formative assessment can be used on Facebook, not a summative one. Hence, the use of Facebook in the current study is treated as an alternative only for mainstream online learning platforms during the emergency remote teaching and learning brought by the COVID-19 pandemic (Kimmons et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Facebook as a learning platform has pedagogical, social, and technological affordances (Wang et al., 2012). Technological affordance means that the use of Facebook allows the teacher to share learning resources, conduct a synchronous and asynchronous discussion with the students, and can organize activities around a certain topic. The use of Facebook has a social affordance as well where the students can freely share their thoughts and ideas on a topic anytime at their own pacing. They can interact,

meet new friends, and virtually socialize with peers. Furthermore, the use of Facebook as a learning space has a technological affordance in that the platform is user-friendly. Both the students and teachers can easily navigate the interface and feature to connect, interact, download, upload, and discuss a topic.

On the other hand, the findings of the study suggested that an archival system should be updated on Facebook if it is to be used as a learning space for ease of access to previously uploaded information and materials. In addition, Facebook as a learning space should not include options or features of advertisements and games. It should also give an advanced search engine to look for files (Kalelioğlu, 2017).

Nevertheless, despite the lack of its feature to promote the assessment of learning among the students, the use of Facebook to continue education in a distance learning setup has been popular internationally. In the study of Kimmons et al. (2021), it was found that the use of Facebook groups has become popular in the United States of America and worldwide. In the study of Hocoy (2013), the use of Facebook as a learning platform garnered highly positive feedback from both the students and teachers. Students commented that the use of Facebook is so much better and more interactive than Moodle. There were 86% of enrollees who said that they would recommend the use of Facebook as a learning platform to others. On the other hand, the four faculty who taught a course using Facebook as the platform all enjoyed teaching and would prefer to teach all the courses on Facebook instead of Moodle.

On the same note, the study of Akbari et al. (2015) that used two group pretest-posttest (non-equivalent comparison group) showed that those students who use Facebook as a learning environment scored higher both in English and in three variables (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) than those face-to-face group. Similar quasi-experimental studies showed a significant effect on the experimental group than the control group (Alias et al., 2012; Barrot, 2016; Bowman & Akcaoglu, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design following Füller et al.'s (2007) netnographic approaches and self-administered open-ended questionnaire via Google form. Füller et al.'s (2007) netnographic approaches are: (1) identifying the characteristics of online users, (2) identifying and selecting the online community, (3) observing and gathering data, and (4) analyzing data and interpreting findings.

The first step includes setting the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study. These are senior high school students currently taking a quantitative research class

whose teacher used Facebook as an alternative mode of learning delivery. The second step is about identifying an online community that houses individuals possessing the characteristics identified in the inclusion criteria. Step three includes the actual observation and interaction of the research participants. The observation was only limited to monitoring how the participants commented, reacted, and interacted in the comment section of the post. Step 4 involves the use of Qualitative Data Analysis Software, Quirkos software version 2.4.1., to analyze and thematize the answers of the participants from the Google form.

Additionally, the self-administered open-ended questionnaire via Google form was used to elicit the student's perceptions of the use of Facebook in discussing scholarly questions. The use of a digital tool is the most appropriate method to elicit the participant's experiences given that no face-to-face gathering is allowed due to the widespread of COVID-19 (Keating et al., 2021). A self-administered questionnaire via Google form was utilized and not online interviews to allow a high rate of responses or participation. The use of an audio-video application for interviews is not practical due to internet connection problems in the area.

Participants

The researcher has been teaching research classes to Grade 11 and 12 students in a public school in Davao City, Philippines. Thus, members of the group page were only the bona fide grade 11 and 12 students. Those who finished the subject had the option to withdraw membership in the group page; however, none of them left the group. Currently, the group page has a total of 595 members. In understanding their perceptions of the use of Facebook in online communication and discussion, a purposive sampling technique was used (Campbell et al., 2020). Only those students enrolled in the School Year 2020-2021 were included. Their participation was purely voluntary considering internet connection and data allowance from parents. There was a total of 115 students who participated in the online class discussion via the Facebook group.

Procedure

The researcher created a closed group Facebook page. Students were invited to join the aforesaid online group. One from each section being handled by the author was assigned as a moderator to help admit requests from other students. The researcher did not turn on the admit-all setting to ensure that only those who were enrolled in the class were on the group page. Group rules were also set to remind the students on how they were expected to behave in the group.

The researcher video recorded his lesson, uploaded it to the Facebook group, and included a discussion or a trigger question. The discussion question was answered and

discussed by the students through the comment section of the post. The researcher made comments on the answers and usually provided a concluding remark after all had given their views to the question. No one was forced to answer the question. Only those who have the data could access the video. The activity was only intended to sustain learning even despite the lockdowns. This was the most feasible initiative to continue education in the context of the Department of Education in the locality. Needless to say, the activity cannot be used to replace formal assessment for student promotion or ranking.

After six months of online engagements through Facebook comments in Practical Research 2 class, the researcher formulated questions to explore the perceptions of the students in the use of the platform. These were open-ended questions that were encoded in the Google form. Everyone was encouraged to accomplish the form. The researcher generated 101 responses. These were analyzed, coded, and thematized using Quirkos software version 2.4.1.

To guarantee a certain level of academic discourse on the use of the Facebook group, part of the instruction was to only use the English language to communicate. The use of attribution or citation was encouraged to make arguments more valid and scholarly. Accordingly, the answers, comments, and replies of the participants manifested formal and scholarly engagements as evident in the use of the English language and proper attribution of ideas as arguments to the questions and responses.

Data Analysis

To make meaning of the textual data, the researcher utilized Quirkos software version 2.4.1. to aid the data analysis from coding to categorizing the text to formulating themes of common categories. Saldana's (2009) suggestion of coding and categorizing was used as the model to arrive at the themes. First, the responses of the participants were downloaded from the Google form, took the overall impression of the responses by going over the response one by one, and code each accordingly. Following the coding is the formulation of themes by grouping similar codes. The whole process of coding and thematizing was aided by Quirkos software version 2.4.1.

Ethical Considerations

Since the discussion was done through the Facebook group comment section, only those members in the group can see and post comments. Before the conduct of this activity, the students were already debriefed (Spall, 1998) that the activity is scholarly and only the English language should be used in all communications on the page. Everyone was reminded to refrain from posting derogatory or irrelevant comments. Students who have tendencies to violate the online rules were dealt with accordingly following school policies and regulations on conducting online classes. Furthermore, the researcher closely monitored the traffic of comments to ensure that everyone followed the online discussion

protocol. In asking for their answers to open-ended questions on their perception of the use of Facebook as a learning platform, the Google form had no field to ask for the email or similar data that may be used to identify the participant.

RESULTS

This learning practice was set on the idea of transactional distance learning. Transactional distance learning posits that learning must occur anytime and anywhere. This means that learning becomes borderless different from the traditional concept of the walled learning environment in the classroom. This learning practice can be facilitated through technology. Technology then serves as a complementary tool for actual instruction.

Facebook was used as a learning platform where the researcher posted the group learning materials and instructions. Reminders were set from time to time to keep the students guided. Additionally, PowerPoint slides and additional reference materials intended for the class were uploaded on the Facebook group to allow them to browse over the materials anytime and anywhere. Those who were absent during the lecture could still avail the materials; thus, they could still cope with the lesson. The researcher deems this practice is essential in a public-school setting because of no available textbooks for the students.

The use of Facebook as a learning platform also provides a good avenue for students' feedback on their achievements. The researcher usually posted on the Facebook group output of the class with a congratulatory message. It is a way of showing to them that the teacher is proud of their work and is also a way of motivating other students to do good in their output.

Finally, being on this Facebook group is a good support system for those who are needing attention and technical support. Students could post a question to the group and anyone who has a confident answer can interact. This could be a good start for a learning community that will later be translated into a professional learning community. On the average, Facebook Analytics of the group indicated that more than half of the students engaged through Facebook reactions and 48% of the students answered, commented, and replied through the comment section of the post.

The narrative of students of their perceptions in the use of Facebook as a learning platform reaches over 105 codes, 72 were inclined to positive perceptions while the remaining 33 were more likely to express negative perceptions. This shows that although the intention of using Facebook as a learning platform is good, students' perceptions may not render such.

Positive Perceptions of Students in the Use of Facebook as a Learning Platform

Beneficial. The findings revealed that most of the students saw the use of Facebook as beneficial. Facebook as a platform affords a notification feature that informs them whenever the teacher posted announcements or materials in the group. ST 66 has it:

The use of Facebook is very helpful and useful for me to continue my learning as it become[s] my source of information regarding my subjects whenever my teachers are announcing some schoolwork. (ST 66)

Additionally, ST 80 shared a similar perception as ST 66 in the use of Facebook as a learning tool. However, ST 80 added that the use of Facebook is more beneficial than the mainstream learning platforms such as Google classroom because of the low consumption data rate of Facebook. Hence, announcements and information are easily accessible.

Facebook is a good and effective learning tool not just for me but also to [for] other students in the following reason[s]: The announcements and other concerns can just be seen easily in [on] Facebook unlike in Google classroom, it requires a good internet connection in order for you to get information about the class. This tool that is used by our teacher provide[s] me with the ability to get more useful information, to connect with learning groups. (ST 80)

ST 09 mentioned that Facebook is beneficial because class discussions and announcements are easily accessible at any time of their pacing and convenience.

I can do my tasks at [on] time since there will be no meeting. I can also go back to the previous discussion anytime if I have to clarify something as it is posted in [on]the group page. I highly recommend it because I am always updated through posting on your group page sir and it also serves us as a reminder that I have a task to do whenever I got distracted by social media particularly Facebook. (ST 09)

Convenient. Many considered the use of Facebook as a learning tool as convenient to use. Students expressed that Facebook is a convenient learning tool because access to learning materials is easy and cellular data is not so much of an issue. Learning becomes flexible for them. Below are excerpts of their statements.

In my experience, Facebook is a good learning tool in Practical Research 2. The videos of the lessons are easy to access, and I don't need to spend a lot of loads for [on] my data since it was just in [on] Facebook. And it is also easy to participate since I am familiar with the settings of Facebook. (ST 5)

“Because of the way that Mr. Lim discusses, which is through uploading video discussions in our group, my schedule became more flexible because we were not really required to report during our specified schedule for the said subject. Moreover, we can still ask questions by commenting in the discussion video.” (ST 57)

Furthermore, the students got notifications when uploads were done or when announcement posts were made. Uploaded lecture videos can also be played unlimited times at their convenience. This helps them in understanding their lessons at their own time and pacing. See the sample transcripts below:

For me using Facebook as a learning tool is better. We get notified every time our teacher would post something, and it is easy for us to access even though we’re using free data. (ST 100)

Personally, it’s convenient since it is easy to access. Also, uploading discussion videos really helps a lot. Having such helps us, learners, to grasp the entire lesson easily as we can replay it over and over again until we fully understand it. (ST 9)

Using Facebook as a learning tool is very convenient to me. I always used Facebook and if there are instructions posted, I can read it [them] right away. Also, Facebook is easy to access and there are no technical problems unlike the other apps. Even if there is no load, it is still accessible because we can use free Facebook and read the instructions posted. (ST 59)

Negative Perceptions of Students in the Use of Facebook as a Learning Platform

Troublesome. While several students perceived the use of Facebook as a learning tool that is beneficial and convenient, part of the findings revealed that there were those who found Facebook troublesome. ST 45 wrote that:

Sometimes if you post something about the subject like discussions or announcements sir, I cannot notice it right away. However, there are also times that it will appear in my notifications. (ST 45)

This kind of scenario where the student in the group was not notified is not an isolated case as many shared similar sentiments. Additionally, ST 11 mentioned that Facebook is trouble at times due to the difficulty of managing the time spent on browsing over a lot of irrelevant posts which they considered a distraction.

But there are times that I am having trouble in managing my time on Facebook since there are [is] a lot of distractions on the platform, internet, and inside the home. (ST 11)

Further, ST 53 also mentioned that the materials posted on Facebook are quite disorganized because previously posted information had been mixed over with recent posts.

The video lectures that were given are good and efficient. However, sometimes it's difficult to find the activities that are needed to be answered because the posts in the group gets [get] covered by new ones. (ST 53)

Inappropriate Platform for Educational Purposes. Some students argued that Facebook is not an appropriate application for educational purposes. They clamored on the distractions as they use Facebook. Few to mention are streamers, entertaining videos, and hot or controversial topics. An excerpt of the transcript is states that:

I don't like FB as a learning tool... my experience in Facebook as a learning tool in Practical Research was not good. Facebook compose not only in education but also in other ideas or what I call "distractions" (streamers, entertaining videos, controversial topics, etc.). Last year I deleted my face apps to focus on my studies since I could only avoid distraction and self-control by deleting the application. The time has come, Facebook had become a learning tool and now suffering from distraction. It makes me challenge myself. (ST 1)

Although a millennial, this student is not fond of using Facebook and considers it a distraction, containing irrelevant information for education use. One student recommended the use of google classroom instead of Facebook. See the transcript below:

I more prefer using Google Classroom since this platform was really made for school purposes. Moreover, using google classroom helps me avoid some social media distractions, unlike Facebook. Google classroom has greater features also compared to Facebook; it can remind us about the due date, and it also has a to-do list in its menu. Although Facebook is a great online platform, and it is very familiar to everyone, I still think that Google Classroom is more efficient. (ST 22)

This kind of idea is legitimate; however, not viable for many. Many do not have wired internet connections and the use of google classroom may become a challenge due to data consumption. Hence, the use of google classroom was only for homework submission or written assessment requirements, or group assignments. With group assignments, the leader who has a stable internet connection sends the file to the google classroom.

Below is the table showing the summary of the themes and the representative significant statements from the transcript.

Table 1
 Summary of Themes

Theme	Significant Statement
Beneficial	<p><i>“The use of Facebook is very helpful and useful for me to continue my learning...”</i></p> <p><i>“Facebook is a good and effective learning tool not just for me but also to other students...”</i></p> <p><i>“... I can also go back to the previous discussion anytime if I have to clarify something as it is posted in the group page...”</i></p>
Convenient	<p><i>“In my experience, Facebook is a good learning tool...”</i></p> <p><i>“My schedule became more flexible...”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s convenient since it is easy to access...”</i></p> <p><i>“Facebook as a learning tool is better...”</i></p> <p><i>“Using Facebook as a learning tool is very convenient to me...”</i></p>
Troublesome	<p><i>“Sometimes if you post something about the subject like discussions or announcements sir, I cannot notice it right away...”</i></p> <p><i>“... there are a lot of distractions on the platform, internet and inside the home.”</i></p> <p><i>“... it’s difficult to find the activities that needed to be answered because the posts in the group gets covered by new ones.”</i></p>
Inappropriate Platform for Educational Purposes	<p><i>“...Facebook compose not only in education but also in other ideas or I call “distractions” (streamers, entertaining videos, controversial topics, etc....”</i></p> <p><i>“I more prefer using Google Classroom since this platform was really made for school purposes...”</i></p> <p><i>“... I’ve never used Facebook as a tool for Practical Research 2, Instead I used Facebook for me to keep me updated for the latest Activities, Quizzes, And Module submission.”</i></p>

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study support the findings of the study conducted by Kalelio lu (2017) and Wang et al. (2012) about the use of Facebook as a learning tool. As there were many of the students who found the use of Facebook beneficial and convenient to the teaching and learning process, there were those who found the use of Facebook in learning to be problematic. Findings reported in the literature were very similar to what transpired in the current study like issues in accessing pre-uploaded materials, the format of files for upload is very limited, discussion among the students on a certain topic was not organized and students did not feel safe and comfortable in sharing their ideas and information in the Facebook group (Gutschmidt, 2012; Maglunog & Dy, 2019; Boholano & Cajés, 2021).

However, reports on the effective use of Facebook as an alternative delivery platform for learning and communication in distance education are still prevalent in the literature (Brady et al., 2010; Kalelio lu, 2017; Wang et al., 2012; Menon, 2012; Meishar-Tal et al., 2012; Esteves, 2012; Rodrigues et al., 2014; Jones & Bogle, 2017).

Drawing from the findings, the theory of Transactional Distance Learning of Moore (2007) is still operational in this study. The findings suggest that regardless of time and space, learning can take place with the aid of technology. Technology, this time of new normal, democratizes learning spaces making them available for everyone anytime and anywhere.

CONCLUSION

In this time of pandemic where no face-to-face conduct of classes is allowed, the use of various online learning platforms is a must. Nevertheless, instructional planners and implementers should not forget both the economic and social context where learning may take place. Utilizing the functionality of pervasive social media into academic use is a good learning practice. In this manner, the perception that these applications are only good for socialization and glamour now turns into a higher plane of academic socialization and interaction.

The ubiquity of Facebook as a social media leads to a promising idea that it can be used as an alternative learning platform for students. It is a low stake, high-impact communication platform to engage with the students and parents, and the school community quickly. The challenge here is for the teacher to be creative and innovative to make the Facebook environment a conducive virtual learning space for the students.

The use of Facebook as a learning platform is only highly supplemental during these emergency remote learning classes. Facebook was used as an alternative learning platform because students could not afford to use Zoom and google meet due to the lack of internet connection and data allowance. Hence, by using Facebook, at least the students could still interact and continue to learn from each other and from their teacher within their affordance.

The learning experiences of the students in the use of Facebook as a learning platform must be examined as well. While many perceived the use of Facebook as beneficial and convenient, there is still a fraction who found the use of Facebook being troublesome and distracting. This is an obvious fact because Facebook is a social media and is primarily intended for information sharing and buzzing. Thus, the use of other social media platforms can be explored to be used as an alternative learning platform. The ubiquity of the application, user-friendliness that includes features for student interaction and data consumption must be considered in the overall selection of application.

Although this sounds promising, educators must be reminded that pedagogical principles must be enforced on the use of social media as a learning platform. Academic integrity must be given premium above and across learning modalities. While the use of Facebook is timely, caution must be observed on giving assessments. High stake assessment must be forgone on the value of formative assessment on social media use. This could mean high stake assessment on formal face-to-face instruction and a richly creative formative assessment on the online platform. This implies the use of constant feedbacking to students' performance in any forms like comments in posts, replies to messages, or immediate constructive criticisms of outputs during synchronous classes.

The use of various online tools to engage students as well as to assess their understanding of daily lessons must be put into high consideration. The use of voice communication can be done to provide feedback continuously and sustainably to students and monitor their performance even without an internet connection. However, project-based and performance-based assessments (through multimedia) are also ideal to be submitted and graded on an online platform.

RECOMMENDATION

The pedagogical practice presented in this paper has been conducted even before community lockdowns and quarantines. For other educators, they may experiment with the use of other social media as an instructional tool maximizing the comments feature of the application to promote interaction.

As a learning platform, one can do live streaming on the Facebook page discussing lessons or topics. The output video file may automatically be recorded and posted on the page. Thus, students could just playback the video to review the lesson. Relevant video materials can also be posted on the Facebook page.

Moreover, it would also be good to conduct a quantitative study on the effectiveness of using Facebook as a learning platform to the development of a target or desired learning competency. In a way, a more reliable pedagogic decision may be made based on the findings.

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