

Facebook in Pedagogy: Insights from Preservice Teachers

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Abstract

Many have used Facebook to stay connected with family, relatives, and friends. It is also used to share and exchange information. Nevertheless, the platform can be used for teaching as well. The study, therefore, investigates its use among preservice teachers in terms of assisting them in their teaching. Also, the study attempts to identify how the platform enhances teaching. Finally, it identifies the factors that impede them from using the teaching platform. In terms of methodology, the study employed qualitative research, namely exploratory research design employing 36 teachers as the samples. The study's findings produced three (3) major themes and ten (10) sub-themes following the research questions formulated. The study implied that Facebook is a potential platform teacher can use, although some were reluctant to use it. Teachers who are in the latter group believe that Facebook is a distraction. Therefore, they rejected its use to prevent their students from deviating when the platform is used in learning.

Keywords: Facebook, Education, Malaysian Teachers, Instructional Tool

INTRODUCTION

The use of social media has been on the rise, and there are expected to be 5.04 billion social media users worldwide in 2024, although the number is still evolving (Petrosyan, 2024). Social media platforms have become into centers for marketing and edutainment in today's world. While customers use these channels to buy products that are on the market, entrepreneurs use them to market and sell their commodities. As a result, social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter have become well-liked avenues for online purchasing for a wide range of users. When it comes to their educational uses, these platforms are an invaluable tool for teachers to share knowledge with their students.

In addition, technology is still relevant for learners of all ages, since it is an engaging medium used by both children and adults (Ali et al., 2020). Teachers utilize technology—more especially, Facebook—to help them meet their educational needs. A quick glance through the study field topic reveals that most of the research articles addressed the platform's application in learning, however opinions on how it affects instruction remain divided (Ariffin et al., 2020; Ganapathy et al., 2020; Mariappan et al., 2018; Mat Husin & Ali, 2022; Menon & Meghana, 2021; Rajesh & Rangaiah, 2020). In the Malaysian context, most studies on Facebook were carried out focusing on students' perceptions of using the platform (Abdul Rahman & Mohd Amin, 2014; Faryadi, 2017; Hassan, 2016; Syazliyati et al., 2018) than to its use among teachers as their teaching resource (Faizi, 2018; Mat Husin & Ali, 2022) .

Considering the lack of such studies, there is a need to fill up the gaps to understand the use of Facebook among teachers. Hence, this study aims to contribute significantly by exploring Malaysian preservice teachers' views on Facebook as their instructional tool for teaching. Following that, these research questions are constructed;

1)How do preservice teachers use Facebook to assist their teaching?

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- 2) How does Facebook enhance the preservice teaching process?
- 3) What are the factors that impede preservice teachers from using Facebook?

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to provide explanations on how Facebook is used by educators in the classroom and how they might use it to improve their teaching strategies. The report also highlights the need for stakeholders to consider Facebook integration when developing curricula, making it an invaluable teaching tool for educators.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Facebook Usage Among Teachers

Many factors made teachers use Facebook in their teaching. A study conducted by Kho and Chuah (2012) found that teachers used Facebook because it promoted interactive teaching experiences. Such teaching can be achieved when teachers use the platform to conduct both written and verbal communication skills activities. More specifically, the researchers found that with teachers as facilitators, Facebook encouraged students to interact when they commented on their friends' input while learning vocabulary. Teachers also use Facebook for professional networking and development (Ganapathy et al., 2020). Their study showed that Facebook enabled them to get in touch with the latest approaches and best practices in teaching. Also, its use could enhance teachers' learning and experiences in teaching. For planners and organizers, the researchers suggested that Facebook can be integrated to develop their profession better.

Woodford et al. (2023) found that using Facebook among teachers could enhance their teaching practice. One of the interviewed teachers claimed it built her understanding of teaching practice and roles when Facebook was used in her English class. More specifically, she learned to position herself globally while teaching students who are technology literate. Teachers in Wongsang and Son's (2022) study claimed that Facebook facilitated them as they could develop activities related to communication and collaboration. The use of Facebook, which integrated drama-based activities promoted pleasant experiences among the students since the learning was interesting and flexible. Such was because students could log into the designated Facebook and provide their input for the activities prepared by their teachers.

Teachers' control is the reason that made Facebook become their teaching resource. Shodiyev (2022), in his research, showed that teachers could control followers they wanted to get in touch with to discuss related matters to teaching. Having to control the content and discussion on Facebook was vital as they could share best teaching practices and new techniques in teaching. Meanwhile, using Facebook enables teachers to update information better than working in silos. Ito (2023) examined the use of Facebook among teachers during Covid-19 found that online communities were established in that period as they supported one another professionally and mentally. One of the respondents interviewed in his study stated that she used Facebook briefly, as she worked from home (while conducting classes) to obtain some updated information about her content materials.

Limitations of Using Facebook in Teaching

Despite the advantages of using Facebook in academia, there are still strong arguments on the drawback of its use for teaching. One of the most overwhelming issues limiting the use of Facebook among teachers is privacy. Abdulahi et al. (2014) inferred that such may occur since most Facebook users still lack awareness of the information-sharing policies when using the platform. However, such was not unusual due to the openness features of Facebook, as users can easily access other peoples' pages. Another limitation related to sharing pertains to the issue of screen sharing since Facebook does not have such a feature.

Ghimire (2022), on the other hand, reported in his study about an English teacher who used Facebook as one of the social media in her class. He found that its use was an issue among the students in the teacher's class. Such was due to students facing an electricity shortage that limited their internet access. Not having the device when attending online classes was the issue reported in his study. On the other hand, the low authenticity and unstructured educational materials were the limitations highlighted in Leung et al.'s (2022) study when using Facebook to learn Japanese. The Hongkongers who learned the language characterized by total amateur to

advanced learners reported that the platform could only be used by students in these two (2) categories, young, female or intermediate learners. The limitation of using Facebook is also evident when the platform is used by teachers for assessment (Urbano, 2022). The technical problem occurred because there were glitches in sending quizzes when students responded to test items that the teacher prepared. Although the problem obtained a low average, this issue somehow made the platform not convenient for assessments such as conducting quizzes. Perveen et al. (2022) in their study, showed that too much inappropriate content has led teachers not to find relevant materials that could be used for classes. Nevertheless, the shared link on Facebook was broken when they found the related materials. Although the problem was due to a temporary connectivity error, such wasted the teachers in finding relevant class materials.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A qualitative research design, namely an exploratory study, was employed in the study involving teachers teaching various subjects. In conducting exploratory research, one can relate it to social science exploration in qualitative research, as in the current study. Stebbins (2001) states that exploratory study research concerns a wide-ranging, purposive, and systematic research design researcher use to discover generalizations about a particular phenomenon. In observing the design, researchers take their standpoints of the phenomenon that they are trying to understand by evaluating descriptive facts, folk concepts, social processes and beliefs systems (Stebbins, 2001, p3. para. 3). In the study, the exploration concerns seeking the teachers' views about the use of Facebook as instructional material for their classes.

Respondents in the Study

The study employed 36 teachers as respondents to identify the use of Facebook as a resource for teaching. They were selected based on convenience sampling. Moreover, choosing the respondents is convenient since they were available when the data was collected. This sampling implies that they agreed to participate in the study voluntarily. Their demographic details are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 *Demographic information of respondents in the study*

Age	Below 30 years old	7	18.4%
	31 to 40 years old	17	44.7%
	41 years old and above	14	36.8%
Years of teaching	14 years and above	16	42.1%
	10 to 13 years	5	13.2%
	7 to 9 years	7	18.4%
	1 to 6 years	10	26.3%
Teaching institutions	Primary School	11	28.9%
	Secondary School	23	60.5%
	Tertiary Institution	4	10.5%
State Residing	Pahang	20	52.6%
	Selangor	5	13.2%
	Kedah	4	10.5%
	Negeri Sembilan	2	5.3%
	Melaka	2	5.3%
	Terengganu	1	2.6%
	Kelantan	1	2.6%
	Perak	1	2.6%
	Johor	1	2.6%
	Pulau Pinang	1	2.6%
Subject Teaching	Bahasa Melayu	5	13.2%
	English	22	57.9%

Mathematics	3	7.9%
Islamic Studies	3	7.9%
Science	2	5.3%
Information and Communication Technology	1	2.6%
Literature in Malay	1	2.6%
Visual Arts Educations	1	2.6%

Research Instrument

An open-ended questionnaire was used as the research instrument in the study. A Google form consisted of two (2) questions on the online form asking respondents to provide their views on the use and challenges of using Facebook as their teaching resource. They were required to provide short answers as their responses to these questions. The questionnaire's validity was validated by an expert from a Malaysian public university to ascertain that all academicians understand the selection of words. To ensure the data's trustworthiness (or reliability), Noble and Smith (2018) state that consistency and conformability procedures can be conducted upon analyzing responses from participants. Thus, in the study, for the former, a decision trail was conducted in that both authors-researchers made clear and transparent decisions about the data they obtained. This decision requires us to discuss and decide on relevant data for the study's findings and later use them to formulate themes. In terms of conformability, consistency and applicability were made to ensure the truth value of the obtained data.

Ethical Consideration

In conducting qualitative research, a researcher must consider ethical considerations since he/she needs to be responsible of the participants involved in her study. In the current study, some measures were taken to ensure privacy and anonymity among participants. These measures are:

1. Respondents were informed of the research's purpose before completing the online open-ended survey form.
2. Respondents were informed not to include their names, ages and contact numbers when answering the questionnaire.
3. Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary; therefore, only those who consented to the study were selected as resource persons.

Procedures for Collecting Data

The data collection started by informing the principal researcher's friends and acquaintances who are academicians whether or not they integrated Facebook as one of the instructional materials in the classes. The information about the research was relayed by texting them via WhatsApp. The text described the study's objectives and notified them that their participation was voluntary. The Google Form was open for two (2) weeks, and the survey administration software was closed after that.

Procedures for Analyzing Data

The analysis process was carried out manually using Microsoft Excel. At first, all participants' responses were downloaded and copied into a worksheet. Then, the researchers assigned codes according to the participant's responses to the stimulus. For example, answers from Participant 1 were set to P1. All coded answers were then grouped to formulate relevant categories. Later, the categories were combined and merged into relevant themes to answer the research questions formulated at the study's beginning. The data analysis process was conducted in a continuous cycle until the researchers reached a point of saturation. This process means that all the written comments made by the participants were understood and interpreted as the researchers identified the recurring themes that emerged from the analysis process. Moreover, a verbatim report describes the participants' responses in presenting the study's findings. As such, grammatical errors are not corrected in the report writing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study is to explore Malaysian preservice teachers' views on the use of Facebook as a resource for teaching. In particular, it attempts to find the preservice teachers' views on using Facebook to assist and enhance their teaching. Also, it attempts to gauge the challenges of using the platform as an instructional resource in the classes. The themes and sub-themes formulated based on the research questions are summarized in Figure 1.

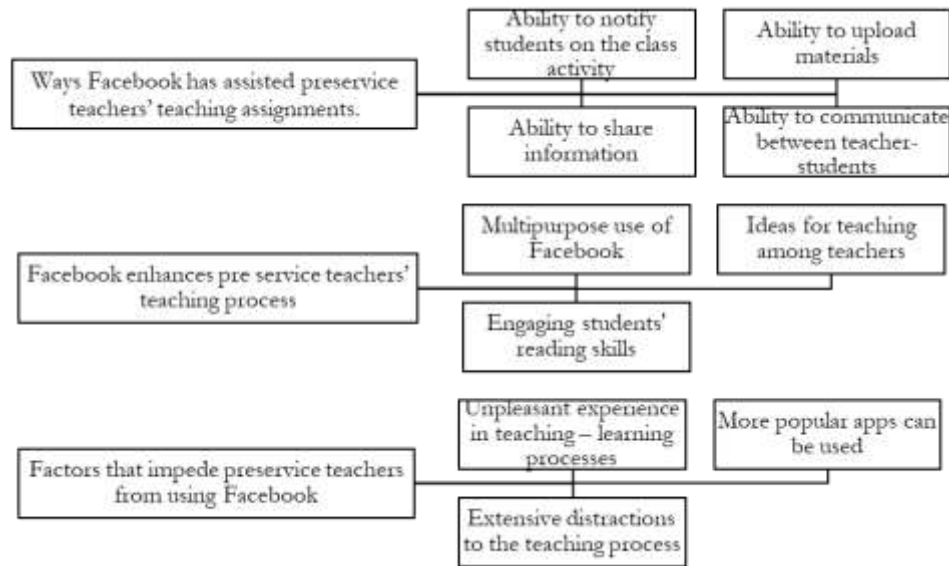


Figure 1 Main and sub-themes based on the formulated research questions

Major Theme: Ways Facebook Has Assisted Preservice Teachers' Teaching Assignments.

Research Question One concerns asking about the use of Facebook, which can assist preservice teachers in their teaching assignments. A major theme, "Ways Facebook has assisted preservice teachers' teaching assignments," with three (3) sub-themes, was developed to answer the research question.

Sub-Theme 1: Ability To Notify Students of The Class Activity

Findings showed that the preservice teachers perceived using Facebook positively assisting their teaching assignments. Participants commented that the platform helped them notify their students about exams and quizzes. P2 shared her thoughts on this matter:

"Through Facebook, teacher able to send notification to students on the upcoming class, exam or quiz that will be organize. So, students will be more alert and prepare the necessary. Additionally, teachers also able to share interesting web site related to learning topics to students easily as part of the references" (F38).

One of the teachers claimed that after-class notification could also be used using the platform, "Facebook can be used as one of the platform for the teachers and student where it is convenient for them to connect with each other after class session ended (F36). The notification on Facebook alerted students about recorded learning sessions and videos that the teacher uploaded, "Teachers also able to record their learning session and upload that video for those absent students." (M37).

Sub-Theme 2: Ability To Share Information

Facebook assisted the teachers in sharing information as a female student remarked, "... can be a good platform in sharing information to students which regard in sharing a positive info" (F9). The teachers also believed that Facebook assisted in the relaying of information among their students, "Besides, the students can also share their opinions and do discussion on the comment sections that can be used as references in the future especially when they are going to sit for examination" (F36). A male teacher compared the ease of using Facebook with Google Meet to share information. He said,

"Using Facebook, I can share information to students and they can take part during learning session as students know how to use Facebook better compared other platform such as Google Meet" (M37).

Sub-Theme 3: Ability To Upload Materials

A male teacher remarked that he used the platform to upload videos and required his students to watch them whenever they had free time. He said, "... *those students who unable to attend the class can watch the video later*" (M37). While another male teacher, M29, added that Facebook could be used as "...*multipurpose type of learning as [teachers able to upload] with video, live session and benefit posting*" (M29). Another teacher reiterated that she acknowledged that Facebook was useful for uploading materials related to learning. She said, "... *teacher can share interesting website relate to the topic of their lesson with their students as part of the reference*". (F38)

Sub-Theme 4: Ability To Communicate Between Teacher-Students

Facebook assisted preservice teachers' teaching assignments since the platform is suitable for interacting with their students. A female teacher said that Facebook enabled her to communicate with her students, "*Facebook can be beneficial as an educational tool to communicate between me and my students*" (F17). Likewise, another female teacher voiced out, "*Good tool to connect with my students*" (F18).

Findings from the study showed that teachers could notify, share and upload teaching materials on Facebook. Such accords with a study showing that connectivity can be used in online sharing materials (Perifanou et al., 2021). Teachers in their study were found to assign students to Facebook groups. The reason for doing that was to encourage students to upload photo-based materials for complex educational concepts. Students, therefore, could understand the concept better using the visual representation of the contents. Since the concept of learning using Facebook uses web-based learning, teaching materials as simple as enriching vocabulary with the representation of visuals can help learners understand the learning content (Ali et al., 2022). Findings also showed that Facebook enhanced the preservice teachers' teaching process by improving the interaction between teachers -students, as communicating using Facebook is easier and faster. This finding corroborated Purnamasari's (2019) argument that using Facebook supports better interpersonal communication, which is essential in the learning process. Due to the ease of communication, students' attitudes toward learning are more favorable (Kabilan et al., 2019).

Theme 2: Facebook Enhances Preservice Teachers' Teaching Process

Findings from the participants' showed that Facebook could enhance the preservice's teaching process. The major theme produces three (3) sub-themes related to the descriptions that the platform could enhance teaching among them.

Sub-theme 1: Multipurpose use of Facebook

Facebook can enhance the teaching process among teachers since it is a multipurpose platform. A female teacher wrote, "*Facebook can be beneficial as multipurpose educational tool*" (F26). A male teacher jotted that he likes the platform for various purposes: "It is one of the best educational tools that can be used *where it can be a multifunctional and multipurpose type of learning such as with video, live session and benefit post*" (M29). Meanwhile, a female teacher uses Facebook since it diversified her teaching methods, "*It helps in varying your methods of teaching*." (F24).

Sub-Theme 2: Assisted Teachers in Engaging Students in Reading Skills

Reading skills are one of the language skills that teachers can enhance when using Facebook in their teaching. A female teacher logged her comment, "*Facebook can attract students' attention, in order to make them always engage in study activities like reading*." (F20). Another female teacher noted that Facebook triggered the students' interest in reading "*Triggers students' interest in reading*." (F25).

Sub-Theme 3: Ideas For Teaching Among Teachers

As noted by a male teacher, Facebook is a platform for teaching ideas. He further commented by relating its use to the 21st-century learning experience "...*using Facebook is a very good way to improve the idea of teaching students*

in the 21st century style of learning. (M8). Likewise, a female teacher recorded that Facebook is used to get ideas, *"I use Facebook for ideas as I prepare materials/ notes shared by other teachers on their Facebook."* (F1)

The results on the multipurpose use of Facebook reflected Lee's (2019) study, which also found that its use was a flexible platform for education. She reported that a lecture encouraged students to post their questions or doubts on the Facebook group the former had created to ease understanding of a subject matter. Such was due to updates being given through the platform besides its other uses. Its function was also unlike the university Learning Management System (LMS), which was restricted to only a few functions. In addition, the current study found that Facebook helped teachers to enhance students' reading skills. The result corroborates the findings of Faryadi (2017) 's study. His study showed chatting on Facebook indirectly made the students gain new vocabulary at some points. The reading comprehension post-test administered in his research found that the new vocabulary assisted the students in improving the vocabulary section, thereby scoring better on the reading test. Over half of the students improved their reading comprehension scores through this incidental vocabulary learning.

Meanwhile, the findings that Facebook can be a platform for teachers to obtain ideas for teaching are supported by Woodford et al.'s (2023) study. Their study showed that it was routine for the teachers to check selected education pages or groups for relevant teaching ideas. In particular, they would check the lessons and approaches of particular skills they could use in their classes. Also, their study reported that Facebook is an ideal place for teaching ideas, especially for teachers interested in reading articles about pedagogy and news on teaching-learning.

Theme 3: Factors Impeding Preservice Teachers from Using Facebook

Sub-Theme 1: Unpleasant Experience in Teaching-Learning Processes

A female teacher asserted, *"There is a lot of consideration, and precautions need to be taken to implement the education in Facebook"* (F9). Similarly, another female teacher thought its use might promote unpleasant teaching and learning experiences. She said, *"... should be well developed and instructed to avoid any unpleasant experience during teaching and learning lesson"* (F26). Likewise, a female teacher viewed other platforms as more suitable for primary school students. She remarked, *"It is best to use other educational tools for Primary students compared to Facebook."* (F22). Another female teacher commented that using Facebook had more disadvantages than advantages. She wrote down: *"I disagree if Facebook will be used as an educational tool. There are more disadvantages than advantages."* (F27)

A female teacher associated the inappropriateness of using the platform due to the internet connection *"...it may be interrupted by some factors like weakness of internet, unsuitable gadgets, students focus and control."* (M35). While two (2) teachers did not recommend its use due to its inappropriateness. A female teacher noted down, *"Not really recommend"* (F17), and another male teacher put in, *"Not an appropriate educational tool."* (M33).

Sub-Theme 2: Extensive Distractions to The Teaching Process

The respondents argued that using Facebook in teaching could only distract their teaching processes. A male teacher commented that he did not use the platform since it had a harmful impact if not used in a controlled environment. He remarked, *"I am not a big fan to use Facebook as education tool as education should be in a more control environment. The amount of distraction is huge and will have a bad impact."* (M10). Likewise, a female teacher refused to use the platform because it interrupted the learning process among her students. She noted, *"I rarely used Facebook as an online learning medium. But for me, I think it's quite not suitable for my student's level as it has a lot of distractions that might interrupt the learning process."* (F34). Another female made the same remark when she wrote, *"Not suitable, too many distractions."* (M19). A female teacher associated the distractions due to there were too many ads. She reported, *"Not feasible as most students nowadays do not have a Facebook account and the amount of advertisements may disrupt the Teaching and Learning process."* (F2).

Sub-Theme 3: More Popular Apps Can Be Used

Some of the preservice teachers claimed that other more popular apps could be used as resources for teaching. A female teacher documented that Facebook is a dull app, and she preferred to use other apps, *"Facebook is quite*

lame for youngsters nowadays since they prefer Twitter and Instagram more." (F3). Likewise, a male teacher jotted, *"Should consider other platform such as Instagram or TikTok."* (M12). While another female teacher recorded, *"Not really appropriate as students do not use Facebook as much as they use Twitter and Instagram."* (F16).

Nevertheless, a male teacher preferred to use the classroom management tool Google Classroom instead of Facebook. He logged this comment, *"I didn't find Facebook as good as Google Classroom for educational purposes."* (M21). Meanwhile, a female teacher chose to use the messaging app, i.e. WhatsApp, due to its convenience in her teaching. She declared, *"I've never used Facebook for teaching because I feel like other platforms such as WhatsApp, is more convenient to use."* (F1). Another female teacher pinpointed that she did not use Facebook because not all students had the accounts. She wrote, *"Students not really interested in using Facebook as an education tools. They more likely to use other applications and some of them did not have Facebook account."* (F31). It seemed that a female teacher refused to use Facebook as she believed it was a platform to socialize. She wrote, *"Facebook is more of social communication tool than educational tool. (F5). "Could be a better option compared to others."* (F23)

The first sub-theme concerning "Unpleasant experience in teaching-learning processes" has highlighted several reasons teachers did not use Facebook in their teaching. Some of the opinions provided by the teachers were that Facebook provided unpleasant experiences (for teaching-learning), precautions need to be implemented using Facebook in classes, and the platform offered more disadvantages compared to its advantages and others. One crucial factor explaining this observation is that teachers do not want their students to have bad experiences using Facebook in the former learning sessions. The reasons given by the teachers supported previous research on having a bad experience online conducted by Christofides et al. (2012). Their study showed that one of the young participants reported that a bad experience that occurred to her friends had affected her directly. Her friend cried as she was hurt by the comments by one of her followers.

In discussing the second theme, "Extensive distractions to the teaching process", the majority of the teacher believed that Facebook distracted them if it were to be used in teaching. An alternative explanation for this result is that it may make students less focused on the class content. Since Facebook is a medium for socialization, it is afraid that students may do something else instead of concentrating on their lessons. Feng et al. (2019) argue that distraction in using Facebook is associated with academic achievement. Their study reported that students who spent more time on the platform had lower Grade Point Average (GPA) in their studies. Therefore, they recommended that teachers pay attention to the issues of academic attention control and academic performance when considering integrating Facebook into teaching.

In discussing the final theme, the current study's findings reported that teachers could use other online platforms, which impeded them from using Facebook in their classes. Nelimarkka et al. (2021) argue that Facebook is not a silver bullet. Instead, teachers must focus on how online platforms can motivate them in their pedagogy whilst integrating information communication technology (ICT) in class (Alam Khan, 2017). Moreover, the researchers argue that the increased demand for ICT in education needs teachers to consider the pedagogical opportunities and challenges they face when using the facility. Also, Ali et al. (2018) argue that online platforms like playing a digital board game can be an alternative to learning since it motivates student learning. Such is due to the nature of learning while playing using a medium that can promote player engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to gauge the preservice teachers using Facebook to assist and enhance their teaching and identify the challenges of using the platform in their classes. The investigation results show that Facebook has helped their teaching as they could notify their students of class activities, share information and upload materials. It also assists their teaching because Facebook is multifunctional, providing students with reading engagement and a platform for teaching ideas. Despite its advantages, a few factors impede teachers from using Facebook – unpleasant experiences, extensive distractions to the teaching process and more popular apps can be used.

Overall, the first two findings suggest that the social networking site can be used to facilitate teaching. Yet, the factors that impede teachers not using the platform are justifiable due to the harm they believe to be the result

of using it. Though there is a mixture of feelings about using Facebook as a resource for teaching, this study has provided a deeper insight into integrating social networking in class. Its use offers informal teaching and learning experiences for both teachers and students. In essence, imparting knowledge extends beyond using the textbook and does not confine to the four-walled of classrooms.

Moreover, there are still there are other alternatives for teaching resources. Using students' by-products can be the alternative, such as requiring them to produce videos that may be practical teaching resources (Ali, 2022). Another insight from the study is that the refusal to use Facebook among teachers is due to ensuring that students do not deviate from the learning content. Indeed, the platform is entertaining as they can chat with their friends while learning. Therefore, some teachers refuse to use the platform in total.

The current study is limited to a few participants and cannot be generalized to all teachers, although the data has reached a saturation point. Thus, future research needs to carefully plan the sampling technique and identify the total population to understand better the teachers' views on how Facebook can assist and enhance teaching while also researching the factors that impede the use of the platform. Furthermore, a more rigorous data analysis and research instruments using focus group discussion and interviews must be employed to gain in-depth views on the studied matter. As such, it is recommended that future studies can examine the relationship between designs and layout of Facebook platforms for teaching.

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