The Effectiveness of Using Synchronous Learning on Social Media to Enhance Classroom Participation in Higher Learning Institutions

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ABSTRACT: This paper discusses the acceptance of synchronous technology used to enhance class participation by college students. A total of 47 students enrolled in two Diploma progammes at Kolej Polytech MARA Ipoh participated in this study. The main objectives are to investigate the issues associated with classroom participation in teaching and learning process, and to propose the implementation of Facebook Live as a streaming video technology for instructional delivery and to evaluate the effectiveness of using Facebook Live on student participation. The data were collected using a mixed-method approach and analysed using thematic and descriptive statistical analysis. The finding established that the social synchronous experience garnered positive feedback by both teachers and students. Guidelines on how the interaction can be made better in the future is also proposed.
Keywords: *Online synchronous learning; e-learning; Facebook Live*

INTRODUCTION

Synchronous streaming session is part of a new feature on social media platforms. It has the ability to broadcast live video instantly with limited technical know-how on how the technology works. This has allowed many teachers and learning practitioners to make use of this technology in their teaching and learning in order the increase participation and engagement of their students.

It is highly practical to implement Facebook Live since previous studies have reported statistically on student's high ownership of mobile phones with individual Facebook accounts. Facebook Live, in a form of synchronous learning, is another learning approach that happens in real time. It allows the students and teachers to interact in a virtual space at a specific and agreed time. Using live broadcast video technology via internet connection has been improved after the emergence of Web 2.0 system coupled with improved broadband speed which prompted learning institutions to embrace live synchronous learning [1]. This idea is not new as [2] said video conferencing or streaming is a real-time face-to-face education through the Internet and usually used to connect people from different locations for quite some time.

METHODOLOGY

As the study aims to examine the effectiveness of using Facebook Live on the class participation in a synchronous classroom setting, previous studies have reported that the combination of research approaches and a convergent of several data collection techniques would help researchers to understand the study better [2]. Recently, researchers that understand the study on technology for collaborative learning has highlighted the importance of the mixed methods to support understanding other than solely relying on a single method [3]. This study adopts a mixed method approach (Figure 1) to study the effectiveness of using Facebook Live in enhancing class participation.
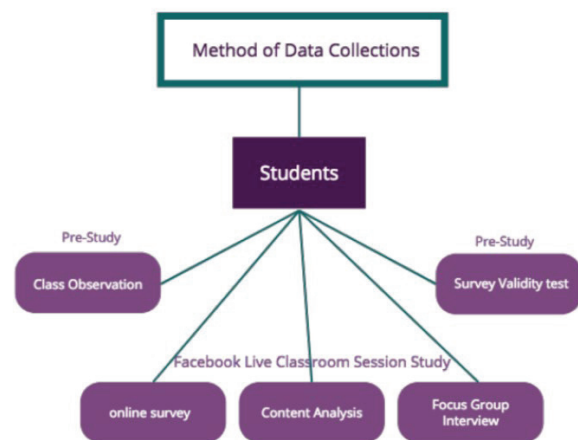

Figure 1 Research Design

In this study, a total of 32 students from Diploma in Multimedia course participated, consisting of 59.4% male and 40.6% female students and was labeled as Group A (control group) A total of 15 Diploma in Management with Multimedia students, comprising of 33.3% male and 66.7% female students and was labeled as Group B (treatment). These two groups participated in both in the observation as well as the survey. Some of them were further invited to be part of the focus group.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result are analysed and compared according to two groups which look into three domains:
• Behavioral – reflects on education achievement such as

being present, cooperation, and completing exercises.
• Emotional – feelings such as attractiveness, disappointment, disinterest, and social relation.
• Cognitive – the attempt or have the intention to learn and "self-regulation" or discipline.
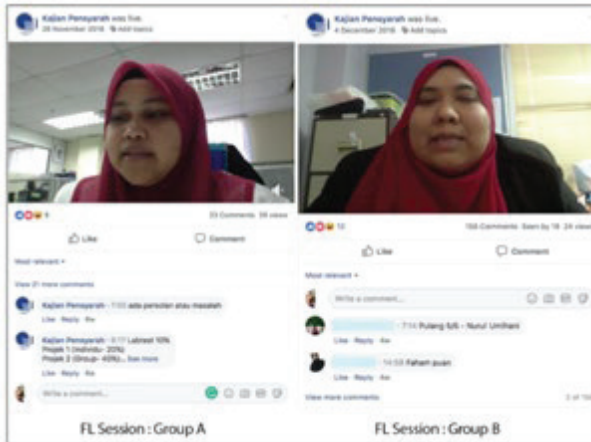

Figure 2 The sessions for Group A and Group B were conducted separately.

Figure 3 The observation done on students

The analysis is separated based on four instruments to explain how synchronous learning on Facebook Live enhances class participation.

The results showcased positive feedback which includes understanding the content, answering and asking questions, and the number of likes. Social interaction such as greetings and emoji posted were also captured including comments such as student's inability to understand the topic. From the analytical results, Group B demonstrated more interaction through comments and likes due to the implementation of the guideline presented (Table 1 and Table 2) which was constructed based on the literature and preliminary studies.

Table 1 Online Synchronous Guideline for students

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS
•   Students should use their own smartphone and data plan since the purpose is to see actual synchronous learning happen.
•   Students should also be asked to mute their mic and only one individual can enable video sound which is connected to the Bluetooth speaker to cater audio distraction.
•   Students are encouraged to use all the interaction features inside FB Live if it can help them to understand the topic and they should prompt the host if there are any parts that they find it difficult to understand.
•   Students should treat others with respect, refrain from making comments that can undermine the moral or motivation of friends or other participants.

Table 2 Online Synchronous Guideline for Hosts/lecturer

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOSTS
•   The host should be provided with simple and clear instruction as a guide to moderate the interaction, among the contents are listed below.
•   The host should be informed about the number of students attending the session.
•   The host needs to wait for the students to fully participate before starting the learning session
•   Check engagement at regular intervals by asking them i.e. "Do you understand or need any help? Ask the students to post "clear" if yes and "no" if not. If there is a part that needs to be repeated, please comment "repeat <topic>" and "Next, we move to the next point"
•   The students have to be notified that their interaction i.e. answering the question or giving opinion will get extra marks which contribute to their total coursework.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has concurred the advantages and disadvantages when synchronous learning is applied using social media platform. Clearly, when designing this learning environment towards class participation, educators need to have sufficient preparation, strategies and clear learning objectives to overcome potential issues.

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