Utilization of Facebook Group for Students Engagement in Learning Activities of ICT Courses

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Abstract
Online platform utilizing Facebook group can be beneficial to pursue education this time of pandemic. This study was conducted to determine the students' engagement in learning activities utilizing Facebook group. This study involved 82 students, 52 from Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEE) 3A and 30 from Bachelor of Industrial Education major in Food Technology (BIT-FoodTech) 1A of Iloilo Science and Technology University Miagao Campus, Philippines. Students' engagement was based on their participation by reacting, commenting, responding to online quiz, and seeing posts created by the instructor on each Facebook group which contained five different types of learning activities for selected topics of their respective courses such as assignments, announcement, uploaded course materials, online quiz, and shared photos. Pre-experimental, specifically, one-shot case study design was utilized to determine students' engagement to learning activities. To determine the significant difference in the level of engagement to learning activities in the utilization of Facebook group, t-test was employed. Both groups had low engagement in the learning activities utilizing the Facebook group. Taking into consideration the specific activities, assignment was the learning activity that the students were engaged most while online quiz was the least.

Keywords: Information and Communications Technology, online teaching, online learning, Facebook group, students' engagement, learning activities, Philippines

1. Introduction

Utilizing online platform in teaching and learning is the trend today to most schools, both private and public in order to pursue education in this time of pandemic. Within the past decade, online learning is the newest and most popular form of distance education and it has had a major impact on postsecondary education today and the trend is only increasing (Stern). The online classroom is considered as a potentially powerful teaching and learning platform in which new practices and relationships can make significant contribution to learning. Making this change can develop potential for learners to take charge of their own learning process and facilitate the development of a sense of community among them (Smith & Brame, n.d.). Moreover, online learning also means remote or distance learning, which became a substitute to face-to-face.

In online learning, instructors must be trained not only to use technology but also to change the ways which they organize and deliver course materials. The following are some of the best practices for remote learning: accessibility, choice, collaboration, communication, feedback, flexibility, social and emotional learning, and time (Benner, 2020). With the aforementioned best practices, some instructors opted to utilize online platform to ensure engagement of students to learning activities. It is said that social network sites like Facebook should not be used for the learning process because it can interfere and hamper student's academic performance. Although Facebook is sometimes used for learning purposes but it should be used for social reasons and not for formal teaching. Meanwhile, studies that agree on the use of Facebook argued that it can increase student's motivation for learning, engagement, and collaboration among students (Soebandhi, 2016). The intensive use of Facebook among students can be used as an online learning platform in higher education. As of January 2020, 96% of the local population accessed Facebook in the Philippines. Locally, all internet users accessed or visited a social network, where 93% have been actively engaged within the same period (Sanchez, 2020).

A Facebook Groupis a place for group communication and for people to share their common interests and express their opinion. They let people come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organize, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos, and share related content. Anybody canset up and managetheir own Facebook Group, and you can even join up to 6,000 other Groups (Moreau, 2019). Facebook group has useful features which can be used in education. It can be a platform for online learning. One of its features is the

Learning Units which is seldom used by most groups, but it is used now at Iloilo Science and Technology

University as a learning management system or online teaching and learning platform. Learning Units feature is available in Social Learning group type, and it allows you to create course-like content structured in different units. All of this can be hosted through a Facebook group and to utilize this feature, there is a need to set up a group setting as a Social Learning group (Gotter, 2019).

To find out the engagement of students to learning activities in the utilization of Facebook group as an online teaching and learning platform, this study was conducted. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The independent variable is the section, while the dependent variables are utilization of Facebook group and engagement to learning activities.
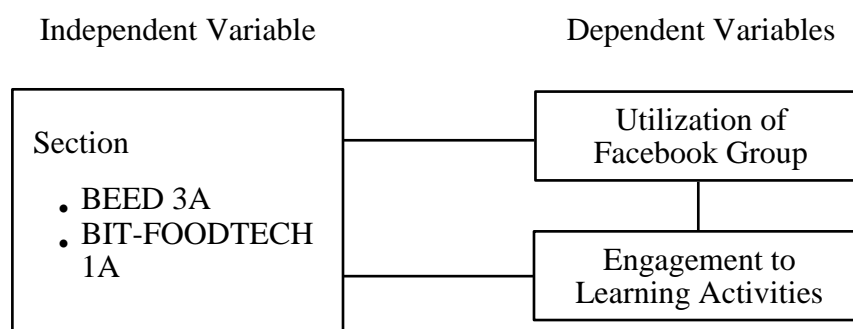
Independent Variable   Dependent Variables

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

2. Statement of the Problem

This study focused on determining the utilization of Facebook group for students' engagement in learning activities. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

2.1. What is the level of students' engagement to learning activities using Facebook group as a whole and when classified according to course?

2.2. Is there a significant difference in the level of student's engagement to learning activities when classified according to course?

3. Hypothesis

In line with the aforementioned problems, the following null hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significant difference in the level of student's engagement to learning activities when classified according to course.

4. Method

Pre-experimental, specifically, one-shot case study design was utilized to determine students' engagement to learning activities. A single group is studied at a single point in time after some treatment that is presumed to have caused change.

The carefully studied single instance is compared to general expectations of what the case would have looked like had the treatment not occurred and to other events casually observed.

No control or comparison group is employed.

5. Participants

This study involved two sections of Iloilo Science and Technology University (ISAT U)

Miagao Campus students who were officially enrolled during the First Semester, Academic Year

2018-2019. These sections were Bachelor of Elementary Education 3A and Bachelor of Industrial Technology major in Food Technology (BIT-FoodTech) 1A. There were 82 students who participated in the Facebook group learning activities from which the data necessary were taken in the analysis. Data from the Facebook group of 52 BEED 3A students enrolled in Ed6 (Educational Technology 2) and the Facebook group of 30 BIT-FoodTech 1A students were included.

6. Materials

Two groups were created in Facebook, one for the BEED 3A and another for the BITFoodTech 1A. Each class was provided with five (5) different learning activities in their respective courses, these includes two (2) announcements, three (3) assignments, two (2) uploaded course materials, one (1) online quiz, and two (2) shared photos. Students' engagement was based on their participation in the assigned activities by reacting, commenting,responding to online quiz and seeing posts created by the instructor on each Facebook group which contained five (5) different types of learning activities for the selected topics of their respective courses. The activities were performed asynchronously by the students on their own pace.

Mean was used to determine the students' engagement and described based on the following scale arbitrarily assigned by the researchers: "low" for a mean range of 0.00-10.00, "average" for a mean range of 10.01-20.00, and "high" for a mean range of 20.01-30.00.

To determine the significant difference in the level of engagement to learning activities in the utilization of Facebook group, t-test was employed.

7. Results and Discussion

Table 1

Level of Engagement to Learning Activities Utilizing Facebook Group

Category	Mean	Description	SD
Entire Group	9.26	Low	7.90
Section			
BEE 3A	7.97	Low	7.20
BIT 1A	10.00	Low	8.26

Note. n = 82. 0.00 -10.00 – Low; 10.01 -20.00 – Average; 20.01 - 30.00 – High.

Table 1 shows the students' engagement in the learning activities utilizing the Facebook group. Students' engagement when taken as an entire group was "low". When grouped according to section, BEE 3C students' engagement was "low", likewise, the BIT-FoodTech 1A students' engagement was "low". This means that both sections showed less interest working with their learning activities in Facebook group. This also shows that the students did not take seriously the learning activities.

It implies that learning activities conducted in an online platform, particularly in Facebook group, though it is most popular, does not guarantee engagement of students in terms of online learning. Maybe, it is because of its technological requirements such as internet connection, the device to be used, and the financial demand of the mobile data or internet fee.

Moreover, the manner of how the learning activities was posted in Facebook group may also affect the engagement of students. Since the posting of learning activities was not done by learning units, as it was not yet adopted by the instructor, the students may have some difficulty in organizing their tasks and monitoring their performance. Lastly, the students may

not be guided about the learning outcomes of each activity and how important it is in the course.

Taking into consideration the specific activities, Figure 2 below shows the percentage of students' engagement per learning activity as a whole.
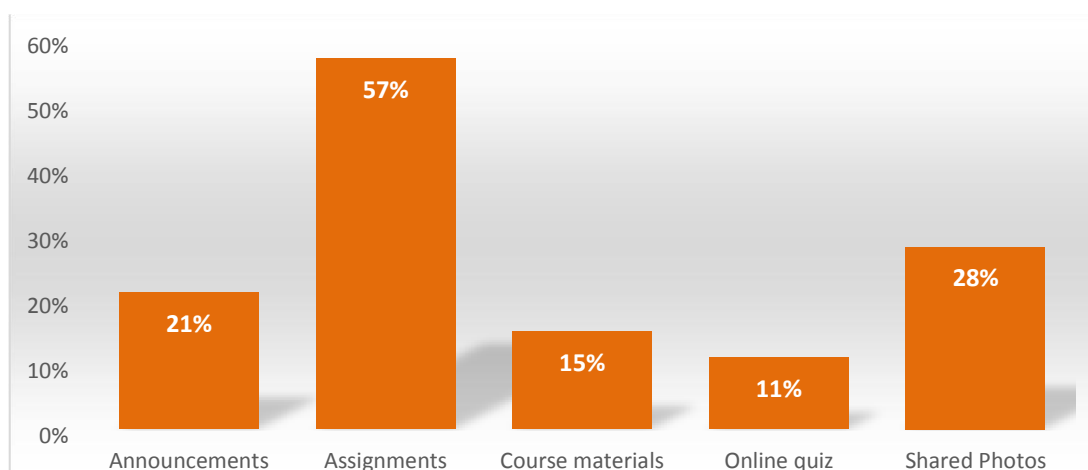

Figure 2. Percentage of Students' Engagement per Learning Activity as a Whole

Figure 2 shows the percentage of students' engagement as a whole per learning activity utilizing the Facebook group platform. As what can be seen in Figure 2, assignment ranked 1st, it was followed by shared photos which ranked 2nd, announcement ranked 3rd, learning materials ranked 4th, and online quiz ranked last. This means that students were most engaged with the assignments and least engaged with the online quiz as learning activities.

This implies that students need more motivation in working with their learning activities in performing their tasks in two subjects utilizing Facebook group platform. Moreover, assignment seemed to provide motivation to students to engage in a learning activity. Maybe, it is because the instructor specified in the posts the equivalent points to be given to them when they respond to it.

Students are motivated with the reward they can get from the learning activity. However, online quiz seemed to be not interesting to students. The students may not be comfortable with the conduct of online quiz, it is maybe due to their readiness in this kind platform. It is also because of the low engagement to topics posted in the group the reason why they hesitated to participate in the quiz since they doubt about their learning.

Table 2

t-test Results for the Difference in the Level of Engagement

Section	M	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
BEE 3A	7.97	-1.124	80	0.264
BIT 1A	10.00			

p>0.05, not significant

Table 2 shows the difference in the level of engagement to learning activities of the two sections. The table reveals that there was no significant difference in the level of engagement of BEE 3A students and BIT-FoodTech 1A students to learning activities utilizing Facebook group.

Regardless of the section, student's engagement was low. This implies that online learning in this platform may not keep students engaged in learning activities if its content is not carefully designed and organized by the instructor regardless of the course and program. It may also imply that students are looking for more interactive learning activities or varied applications in their online learning.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Both BEE3A and BIT-FoodTech1A students have similar level of engagement to learning activities which are low. This may be due to some limitations on the part of the students to respond to the learning activities given by the instructor. These limitations could be due to the accessibility issue of the said platform such as poor internet connection, incapacity to pay for the internet fee and unavailability of the device to be used on the said online learning. Poor internet connection was the mostly identified difficulty encountered in students' engagement to learning activities(Flejoles&Perlas, 2018). To respond to this problem, the institution must provide assistance to the students under this mode of learning such as internet fee subsidy and the device needed which could be computer, tablet or cellphone. Students must be made aware of their responsibility in order to comply to their course requirements and not to rely on school assistance. For instructors, they must provide clear expectations to students about each topic in the learning activities so students will take it seriously and respond accordingly.

Moreover, organizing the course content using the learning units feature of the Facebook Social Learning group type must be considered. In each learning unit, it will be much better to describe the objectives of the topics so students will be guided on how they'll

perform the activity and the expected outcomes they should demonstrate. In this way, it would be easy for the students to go along with the learning activities. The study conducted by Coates argues that quality assurance determinations need to take account of how and to what extent students engage with activities that are likely to lead to productive learning (Coates, 2006). The instructor must first have a carefully designed and organized course content to be included in the platform before launching it.

Additionally, the students seemed more engaged to assignments as compared to other learning activities. It may be attributed to the specified points in the assignment which served as a reward to students when they respond to it. This reward serves as motivation to them to get engaged with the learning activities. Students must be encouraged to give extra effort to their course requirements and be more responsible of their own learning. On the other hand, most students hesitated to participate in an online assessment. It is due to their poor engagement to learning activities which resulted to refusal to participate. The instructor must make sure that students are aware of the importance of the quiz and ensure the needed knowledge and skills of the students to interact with online quiz platform. To support the result of this study, similar study is recommended containing more learning activities and increasing the number of sections.

Significant difference did not exist between the levels of engagement to learning activities in the Facebook group by both sections. This may be attributed to the aforementioned limitations which they experienced in the use of the Facebook group as online learning platform. A research study point to a need for the better utilization of Facebook in classrooms and the need for school boards who choose to "embrace" the increasing popularity of social media to implement programs that better ensure teachers also feel comfortable enough to embrace this informal teaching tool (Fewkes & McCabe, 2014).For instructors, they must consider the interactivity of the learning activities posted and consider the use of other online applications as online learning platforms.

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