Online Learning Community: University English Teachers' Engagement in Using Facebook Page

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Article Info	Abstract

In addition to providing a wide range of information, Facebook has also been used as a significant learning platform in various educational contexts. This article examines the experiences of University English Teachers (UETs) in Nepal who engaged in a Facebook page as an Online Learning Community (OLC). A four-week intervention was conducted among 19 UETs, who shared professional development content and related activities on the page. Qualitative data were collected through online semi-structured interviews with 11 UETs and were analyzed thematically based on interpretative phenomenological analysis. The findings revealed that teachers initially had limited awareness of the concept of OLC; they gradually identified it as a valuable space for sharing experiences, solving professional challenges, and developing collaborative skills. Their engagement increased on the page through activities such as following shared content, commenting, and uploading their learning materials. UETs shared mixed experiences on the Facebook page's effectiveness for academic discussion and professional development. Moreover, they also expressed challenges related to technical devices and skills for active engagement in the OLC. The study suggests that professional online social communities can enhance English teachers' professional knowledge and collaborative skills.

Introduction

Facebook, one of the most popular social networking websites, was developed by Mark Elliot Zuckerberg in 2004 and initially targeted at college students, although it eventually became inclusive to allow all age groups (Hart & Steinbrecher, 2011). It rapidly became popular across the world for sharing personal information, events, and ideas, and has been a platform for different professional, business, and educational activities (Manca & Ranieri, 2013). Moreover, social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are extensively used to promote business (Hutchings, 2012) and socialize in diverse communities by university students (Madge et al., 2009). These social sites have been widely used by teachers to share content, experiences, and ideas relevant to their curriculum. Students also use these social sites to communicate with their friends and teachers to discuss their learning issues. However, there is limited literature about how university English teachers use Facebook pages in their professional activities. Facebook is a productive means of communication for university students to discuss their problems, share ideas, and collaborate with each other (Gray et al., 2010). The use of computer-mediated communication in teaching and learning helps both teachers and students build collaborative relationships and make their teaching and learning productive (Mazer et.al, 2007). Moreover, students can use Facebook and other similar social media to discuss their homework and project work, and teachers use it to contact their students and support them (Hew, 2011). Likewise, university students use Facebook to narrate their experience in their university with their friends, communicate about practical and academic information with colleagues, and create humor with colleagues (Selwyn, 2009). However, when students spend excessive time on Facebook chatting unnecessarily beyond academic purposes with their friends and read unnecessary content shared on Facebook, they cannot complete their academic tasks on time. (Janković et al., 2016). Therefore, students need to be aware of the consequences of excessive use of Facebook. (Busalim et al., 2019).

Facebook allows an individual to create a page and a group of many members who share the same interest and goal. Many teachers and students have developed their online groups of friends where they communicate personal ideas and professional activities by seeking and sharing ideas. In the past, the concept of community was relevant to a unit of several households residing in a place (Rovai, 2001). However, the development of internet facilities has provided a new virtual platform for people to develop their online groups of people, to share ideas with each other, and to conduct teaching and learning activities in an online learning community (Liu et al., 2010). McMillan (1996) views that the community has a spirit of belongingness to each other, a feeling of trust in an authoritative structure, and the advantage of mutual relationships. Members of Facebook use various user-friendly tools like wall, private message, group, page, event, news feed, and live streaming to communicate with each other (Pempek et al., 2009). Particularly, a Facebook group, a forum for interaction, allows members to communicate with each other and share ideas (Dalsgaard, 2016).

In Nepal, it is estimated that about 35% of the total population, which comprises 59.9% males and 40.1% females, uses Facebook (Khabarhub, 2019). Jha et al. (2016) reported that many students specifically use Facebook to communicate with their family and friends, although they have limited practice of the site for learning purposes. Some students often use Facebook to discuss personal issues, share information, and make plans, like a picnic program during the holiday (Sharma, 2012). Moreover, Ayu and Abrizah (2011) argue that Facebook is supportive

for non-profit groups to promote their career by gaining popularity. Facebook users create a Facebook page and post photos, videos, and other materials on its wall, invite comments, and escalate discussions among many Facebook page members (Sokoloff, 2009). In this context, this paper reports how the Facebook page, an online learning community, helps UETs in their academic activities.

Study Questions

- How is the university's English teachers' experience of using the Facebook page, an online learning community for sharing educational ideas?
- In what ways have they reflected the experiences they shared on the Facebook page, an online learning community?

Online Learning Community for Educational Practices

Many studies have reported that various Social Media apps, such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype, Viber, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and Instagram, are used for educational practices through creating groups. In this regard, a qualitative study in the USA by Trust et al. (2016) reported that social networking sites helped experts communicate and support teachers when needed. Likewise, an earlier survey by Carpenter & Krutka (2014) reported that Twitter became supportive to educators for professional development because of its affordance, accessibility, and flexible nature. Similarly, Al-Bahrani and Patel (2015) suggested that teachers incorporate social media like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter in teaching by making some rules to use them properly and argued that teachers might face privacy problems, whereas students might misuse ICT devices. Similarly, in a survey in Australia, Duncan-Howell (2010) reported that online communities facilitated teachers to solve their problems by participating in learning and debating in their scheduled time, but they experienced difficulties in managing time and making a clear understanding among participants. Forte et al. (2012) reported that a large number of teachers followed Twits of other than their colleagues and were followed by them more than their colleagues. In a survey in Turkey, Cetinkaya (2017) reported that WhatsApp was popular for sharing academic resources, works, and immediate solutions to problems.

Popular apps like Skype and ooVoo, which are useful for teaching and learning, allow users to share screens and files for collaborative learning from a distance (Hashemi & Azizinezhad, 2011). A study in Turkey, Erarslan (2019) reported that Instagram became a supportive tool to develop language skills. A qualitative study in the USA, Bloch (2002) reported that teachers used email for socialization and improving students' learning. Likewise, a qualitative study of Qi and Wang (2018) highlighted that Australian teachers used WeChat to exchange experiences, update students' progress, build rapport, and share audios. However, a survey in Hong Kong, Chik (2011) found that some teachers were suspicious of the potential and value of new social apps in teaching and learning practices because teachers lacked the technical skills to integrate them into educational practice. In a similar study, Allam and Elyas (2016) revealed that Saudi Arabian teachers did not adopt social media in teaching because of their fear of its misuse and distraction, and advised that not to incorporating social media in the curriculum. Similarly, in Malaysian setting, a qualitative study of Yunus et al. (2012) highlighted that social networking sites distracted teacher-trainees' attention, destroyed their writing, and made them passive. Likewise,

in a quantitative study of Soomro et al. (2014) in the USA, it was reported that some teachers rejected Facebook and social networking application in teaching and learning as they doubted if students would engage in non-academic activities.

Teachers' Strategies for Using Social Media

Many studies reported that teachers could integrate online communities in teaching and learning activities, professional development, rapport building with students, and constructive learning. For instance, Staudt et al. (2013) in a qualitative study in the USA reported that experts and trainers used Facebook to develop novice teachers' professionalism. Likewise, DeWitt et al. (2013) in Malaysia found that YouTube could be a beneficial ICT tool for teachers to motivate and improve students' performance and deliver information in acting arts. Ellefsen (2016), in a qualitative study in the UK, stated that university teachers used Facebook to have better educational interaction with students. However, Manca and Ranieri (2016) argued that the use of social media would complicate the issues of confidentiality and gradually add stress of secrecy in educational activities. In an ethnographic study, Bosch (2009) argued that some South African lecturers used Facebook to deal with students' problems, enhance students' collaborative learning, and disseminate teaching and learning materials prior to the beginning of real classes to develop confidence in teaching. In a case study in Israel, Blonder and Rap (2017) found that the majority of the teachers used Facebook groups proficiently to facilitate their students ' teaching and learning, although some of them in the beginning experienced technical problems. However, Asterhan et al. (2014) reported that Facebook disturbed teachers' private lives and freedom, and developed students' dependency on teachers to solve their problems.

Carpenter et al. (2020) in their survey in USA reported that the majority of educationists used Instagram to cooperate, share ideas, study, support fellows, and make their community. Similarly, Goktalay (2015) identified that trainers in Turkey used Facebook to share knowledge, send messages, and give feedback to the students. Similarly, Said et al. (2014) in cross-case analysis showed that Malaysian teachers could engage students by posting and sharing information on the Facebook wall, and shift existing teaching and learning activities into new, suitable ones and teach accordingly, although a few students reported some technical problems of using Facebook for learning. Similarly, Saini and Abraham (2019) in an empirical investigation in India reported that pre-service teachers used Facebook to improve their studies. However, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) in their earlier study in the Netherlands found that students who spent maximum time on Facebook obtained a lower Grade Point Average (GPA) than those who did not use it. In their study in Turkey, Çam and Işman (2013) revealed that Turkish junior teacher candidates used Facebook to communicate, cooperate, and share materials, while seniors used it to discuss subject matter with teachers and colleagues, share content of study, and form an academic group on the basis of academic commonality. However, Hew and Cheung (2012) reported that students in Singapore used Facebook for socialization, communication, and entertainment instead of educational activities.

Teachers' Experiences of Using Social Networking Websites

In the American setting, Davis's (2015) study revealed that Twitter became an effective learning community and an appropriate platform for teachers to access and share materials for professional development, and establish a

worldwide link. In a Turkish context, Çakır and Atmaca (2015) found that the application of Facebook in teaching and learning helped teachers enhance their linguistic skills, encouraged and supported students to develop their vocabulary power, and made students feel comfortable in learning. Similarly, Bicen and Uzunboylu (2013) reported that Facebook supported teachers to improve teaching strategies by creating a collaborative learning environment. However, Grosseck et al. (2011) reported that teachers experiences of difficulties in providing feedback on students' regular work in Romanian schools. A qualitative study of Lin et al. (2016) mentioned that in Taiwan, teachers used Facebook as an important tool to help students in learning. However, Sirivedin et al. (2018) argued that the use of Facebook in Thai schools mechanized communication and limited interaction between students and teachers, and complicated the task of assignments. In a mixed-method study in Spain, Sánchez et al. (2014) found that the use of Facebook enabled teachers to create collaborative teaching and learning. There is limited literature about the experience of using social network sites in teaching and learning activities in Nepal (Rana et al., 2020). A few studies have reported that social networking sites have helped students to cooperate and learning (Sharma, 2012). For example, in a survey, Jha et al. (2016) reported that in Nepal, a limited number of health students used Facebook to receive study-related information, whereas most students used Facebook to gain knowledge. Likewise, Sijali and Laksamba (2020) in an experimental study in Nepal reported that Facebook improved students' performance. The National Curriculum Framework 2007 has recommended incorporating ICT in teaching and learning and improving the quality of education (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2007). However, Rana et al. (2018) reported the limited access to ICT, particularly in rural areas, the lack of ICT infrastructure in schools, expensive mobile data, and people's lack of affordability of expensive technologies to implement ICT in schools in Nepal. In a case study in Nepal, Rana and Rana (2020) revealed that ICT tools helped teachers in their planning and delivery of lessons and provided immediate feedback on students' work. However, Rana et al. (2020) argued that although the government emphasizes the implementation of ICT in education to transform traditional pedagogies to modern learning, increase the access to quality education for all, produce skillful graduates and integrate Nepal into global society, the government without allocating budget for the project of ICT has involved NGOs to equip schools with ICT infrastructure and teachers with ICT knowledge and skills. Despite worldwide research on the educational use of social media, particularly Facebook, there is a lack of empirical research in the context of Nepal examining UETs' experiences using Facebook-based online learning communities for engaging and discussion within their specific Nepali socio-cultural context. Therefore, it is worthwhile to conduct the study to examine the UETs' experiences in this field.

Methods

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

This study explored UETs' experience of using a Facebook page for sharing and discussion in learning materials for professional enhancement. It is participatory action research employing observation of a Facebook page (Nørskov & Rask, 2011) and interviews to collect qualitative information. The intervention design consisted of creating a Facebook page as planning, disseminating content as action, and conducting follow-up activity as observation and reflection, as described in detail.

Planning: To begin the online learning community, we created a Facebook page named *University English*

Professionals' Community, Surkhet (UEPCS). We sent invitations to over 30 UETs from different districts and colleges of Nepal in their Messenger to like the page and be engaged by making comments about the uploaded materials. Among them, 19 accepted and joined the page. We included them as participants in the study.

Action: We systematically shared on the page a wide range of materials related to teaching and learning, motivation, English language learning, academic writing, poetry recitation, and current political issues to stimulate engagement and foster academic exchange. Our shared thought-provoking captions encouraged UETs for their interactive engagement on the page. To ensure active involvement of UETs, we directly sent the link of the uploaded materials to their messenger, reminding their engagement with the contents shared on the page.

Observation: We closely observed UETs' interactions, such as comments, responses, and sharing, by taking screenshots to maintain a verifiable record. Based on the nature of participants' feedback, motivation levels, and thematic interests, additional materials were posted. This iterative process of observation and content adaptation continued in cycles over more than three weeks.

Reflection: The Facebook page emerged as an effective platform for collaborative learning and professional exchange among UETs. They shared and explored a wide range of relevant information, enriching the collective knowledge base. The Facebook page facilitated the exchange of ideas, discussion of academic issues, and exploration of new perspectives. It appeared to be a practical and accessible medium for fostering professional learning communities in the context of higher education in Nepal. The PAR cycle used in the study is given in Figure 1:
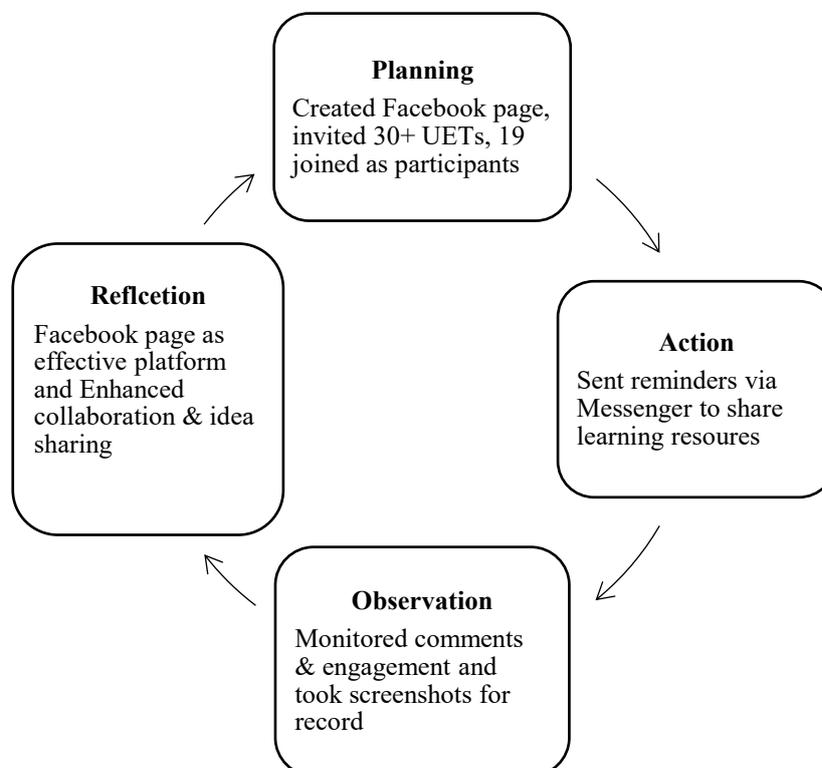

Figure 1. PAR Cycle

Data Collection Procedures

Continuous observation of UETs' activities on the UEPCS Facebook page was used as a key tool for data collection. UETs' interactions, comments, and engagement with the UETs' shared content were documented to identify their perceptions related to online learning. Additionally, we conducted online interviews with 11 UETs via Zoom, which were guided by the framework of Longhurst (2003) for addressing the core research questions. We purposively selected them based on the ideas of Patton (2007). The interview was conducted on Zoom, a freely available videoconferencing tool, which was recorded on a laptop. The UETs' participation was based on their willingness to engage in the online learning activities. For ethical considerations, the names of all participants and their affiliated colleges used in this study are pseudonyms.

Thematic Analysis

Data collected through observations and interviews were thematically analyzed following Gavin's (2008) framework. The interviews were transcribed, categorized into specific themes, and critically interpreted. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed to gain deeper insights into the qualitative data. Additionally, various sources such as books, articles, journals, theses, newspapers, and online materials, were reviewed in relation to the interview and observation findings.

Results

This section offers an analysis of the findings into three themes developed from the observation of nineteen UETs' engagement on the UEPCS Facebook page and the interviews with nine selected members of the community. These three themes elicited from the overall study are: Facebook page as a learning tool, teachers' participation on Facebook page, and perceived value of Facebook page in learning.

Facebook Page as a Learning Tool

The interviews with the participants and the observation of their involvement in UEPCS revealed that the majority of the participants did not participate in the discussion on the uploaded materials in the beginning. Although a few participants constantly remained inactive during the observation period, the majority of them developed their interest in the course of time. Their interest and participation increased in terms of watching the uploaded videos and commenting on the posts. However, none of them were involved in scholarly debates with other participants on new videos and pictures posted on the Facebook page. They initially took this page similar to other normal Facebook pages. However, they gradually increased their participation upon the request to comment on the posts and follow others' comments. When they found shared posts that were academic and relevant to their interest, they actively participated. In our interviews, participants shared their diverse experiences about how the content on the page encouraged them to engage with it. For example, Tilak, an English teacher at Karnali Model College, stated:

> *In the beginning, I was not much careful about the page because so many people post many useless things on the Facebook wall and Facebook pages. They upload their pictures, videos, and other materials which are not academic.*

Tilak's comment reflected the initial perception of the Facebook page that the majority of the participants had. They were more suspicious about whether or not it could be useful to share learning materials. Their expression reflected why teachers developed negativity against the use of Facebook. Teachers' responses indicated their limited knowledge of how social media like Facebook pages can be utilized as an OLC to develop their professionalism, share problems with members of the community, and help solve problems. Following the provocative questions shared on the page, the majority of the participants watched the videos and made comments on the page. They were probably aware of non-academic pages created for engaging people to disseminate political propaganda and fun, which they did not consider useful for them.

> *In the beginning, I was not much fascinated by the page because most of the pages are just created to deliver bogus things and they are really not important and not useful. So, that they only consume people's time and make people fool. (Reshami, an English teacher at Karnali Model College)*
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> *Especially, in the initial phase I was unknown about this kind of page because I was not familiar with this kind of page. I felt that this kind of page may not support the teachers and students. (Dharma, an English teacher at Khalanga Multiple Campus)*

These comments provided a picture of how teachers developed their awareness of the affordance of the Facebook page for their professional development. Continuous observation of the page identified that teachers proactively liked posts and explored other professional OLC to grow their knowledge and share skills and experiences with their teaching fellows, rather than wasting time on non-academic and fake information. It was observed that teachers following the UEPCS Facebook page increased the engagement on professional content and discussion. For instance, Chaitanya, an English teacher at Nepalgunj Management College, shared:

> *Later on, I noticed that it is very useful platform for us to professional development. It is a platform to share ideas and conduct scholarly discussions with each other. Not only sharing the ideas, but sometimes we can also invite people for an important discussion.*

However, a few teachers still had doubt whether or not they could utilize such online learning communities to communicate problems and get help from other professionals to solve them. On the other hand, the proactive participation of many other teachers suggests how teachers can benefit from professional community pages.

> *I involved more in discussion with the creator or admin of the page. I loved the way he put next question instantly after my replies. At first, those questions seemed irritating but later I really enjoyed them as they expanded my horizon of looking at things. (Suren, an English teacher at Kathmandu Multiple Campus)*

Suren's expression reflected how teachers can be motivated to engage in professional activities. Probably, schools and colleges can involve their teachers in such online communities to encourage them to engage in academic activities.

Teachers' Participation on the Facebook Page

The majority of the participants were engaged on the page by watching uploaded videos and making comments on the shared content. It was observed that a few members made just superficial comments like "good video", "good job", and "related to children," as well as sticker comments. Participants perceived that social networking sites like Facebook page, Twitter, and Instagram are powerful tools to create scholarly discussion on various content, including education. For example, Tilak, an English teacher from Karnali Model College, shared:

> *Before writing comments, generally, I watch their comments and videos and comment on them. I forward my view after observing the materials in detail.*

Continuous engagement on the UEPCS Facebook page developed teachers' awareness of how they could communicate on the social site, comment on uploaded materials, and share issues and ideas. Moreover, the page increased its responsibility and honesty to engage in professional activities. Participants' increasing engagement on the page indicated that they gradually developed their interest, curiosity, and awareness of the online community. Their academic interactions on the page provided a clear picture of how such online learning communities can be integrated in educational practices and promoted to help teachers solve learning problems. For instance, Dirgha, an English teacher at Narayan Multiple Campus, highlighted:

> *I was interested in this kind of activity. I repeatedly watch materials and analyse them. I read comments.*

His comment revealed that he was aware of using social networking sites for educational purposes.

> *I try to understand the materials profoundly, try to see the same thing from different perspectives and deliver my thoughts on the page. Regarding other members' comments, I have selected a few participants from the first day whose thoughts and standpoints really entice me. (Suren, an English teacher at Kathmandu Multiple Campus)*

The majority of the participants emphasized that they utilized Facebook for academic discussion. However, observation identified that a participant only watched videos but was never involved in the discussion. It was much clearer from interviews that they were very aware of how public debate on personal character would get them involved in social conflicts.

> *I watch most of the videos but do not make any comments on the materials and do not comment over other members' comments because they are their views. I do not comment concerning personal privacy. (Lal, an English teacher at Narayan Multiple Campus)*

> *I watch most videos but I comment on only some of them. I do not respond to all materials uploaded on social media. I do not have sufficient time. My device also does not work properly. (Reshami, an English teacher at Karnali Model College)*

The use of such professional online learning communities can be extended to various fields and promote the professionalism of people. It can reduce the misuse of social networking sites and help many professionals increase their entrepreneurship. Although many participants ignored the UEPCS Facebook page at the early stage, they significantly utilized it for getting ideas about crisis, online learning strategies, and the use of the internet for learning.

Perceived Value of the Facebook Page in Learning

Observations found that teachers' perception of Facebook significantly changed following the continuous use of it, and that they accepted Facebook page as an online learning tool. For example, Tilak shared his changed perception that: "Because of those pictures, I deeply thought about shifting of teaching and learning activities". It was observed that the Facebook page could be integrated in educational practices.

> *Materials are well selected for university professionals. Very few materials are not related to university level but match the secondary and lower secondary level. (Dirgha, an English teacher at Narayan Multiple Campus)*

The UEPCS Facebook page has received a high level of value in educational practices and professional development. Teachers probably were able to utilize the materials shared on the page in their teaching and learning activities.

> *Materials are interesting, relevant, and useful for teaching and learning activities as well as developing knowledge. They are really beneficial for personal as well as professional development for teachers. (Gobinda, an English teacher at Narayan Multiple Campus)*

Although it was difficult to encourage teachers to participate in discussions on the page at the early stage of using the UEPCS Facebook page, they proactively engaged on the page to comment and react to the materials and others' comments, and utilized the ideas generated from the discussions. A Facebook page can be a platform to acquire knowledge and share professional skills with colleagues, which helps members of the community to improve pedagogical skills and knowledge.

> *The materials on the page are very applicable for teaching and learning. They are very authentic and worth incorporating in teaching and learning. (Sabin, an English teacher at Lumbini Multiple Campus) The materials uploaded are not so detailed. I do not comment on those materials. Some of them are effective. (Lal, an English teacher at Narayan Multiple Campus)*

However, each member of the UEPCS Facebook page was not satisfied with the content shared on the page. Lal, for example, did not find the page very productive for his professional activities. His expression provided a lesson to improve intervention ideas ahead. Following his comments, several diverse materials were shared on the page to encourage all the members to participate in professional interactions.

Discussion

This study has identified UETs' experience of using a Facebook page for online teaching and learning. They initially doubted whether or not the UEPCS Facebook page would be productive for developing students' educational knowledge, sharing educational ideas, and engaging in academic discussions. They gradually increased their engagement on shared materials on the page, which motivated them to have a higher level of interaction with friends. Following their active engagement on the UEPCS page, they identified that it is a suitable platform for academic interactions, intellectual discourses, and professional development. Participants appreciated the uploaded materials because of their relevance in teaching and learning activities, and they increasingly watched and commented on the uploaded materials during the intervention. They developed their interest, curiosity, and awareness about the online learning community. They found it useful for sharing profession-related and other useful materials. Teachers used a Facebook page to share professional knowledge, skills, experiences, and educational materials among their colleagues. This finding corroborates the study of Dalsgaard (2016), Ellefsen (2016), and Qi & Wang (2018), who also suggested that online learning communities promote teachers' teaching abilities, enable their problem-solving skills, and develop their professionalism, often by sharing useful, authentic academic materials.

Some of the teachers were found to be less active in watching shared materials and commenting on them on the page because they were worried about their personal privacy and freedom. While many members watched most of the videos but were never involved in the academic discourses. They just engaged on the page with superficial

comments such as 'good matter', 'motivational video', 'suitable for children', and just sticker comments without writing anything, ignoring its educational use and value in the initial days. Studies (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015; Asterhan et al., 2014; Manca & Ranieri, 2016) have also demonstrated that teachers are aware of how social media goes to a wider community of all kinds of people beyond professional users. Moreover, the study revealed that some members faced technical problems, such as problems with the keyboards of laptops and mobile devices, and thus made comments on the limited uploaded materials. This finding resonates with the finding of Blonder & Rap (2017), who revealed that technological issues and limited ICT skills prevent teachers from utilizing available features on Facebook.

It was identified that after engaging on the UEPCS Facebook page, teachers proactively searched other professional online learning communities to enhance their professional knowledge and share skills and experiences with their colleagues, rather than wasting time on non-academic and fake information. This finding aligned the study of Jaffar (2014), who highlighted that the Facebook page helped increase their responsibility and honesty in their professional development. Similarly, participants' active engagement on the UEPCS Facebook page showed that social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are useful platforms to create scholarly discussion about educational content, issues, and other various content. They are affordable to utilize in education. The efficient use of such freely available mobile apps in educational activities save both time and money, and ease teachers' teaching activities (Charteris et.al, 2018). Schools, colleges, and universities can encourage their teachers to use such facilities to create online learning communities and enhance their professional development activities.

Observation found that participants developed awareness of OLC from their consistent engagement on the UEPCS Facebook page by commenting on shared materials. It was observed that the majority of members' limited participation in scholarly discussions by commenting on provoked questions indicated either their lack of previous experience in using OLC or lack of interest in participating in such open discussions (Cuesta et al., 2016). A few members of the UEPCS Facebook page remained inactive during the whole observation period. For their active participation, they were frequently requested to send a request message in Messenger. However, such messages did not work much to increase their participation in discussions. Their behavior indicated their limited knowledge of how social media, such as a Facebook page, can be utilized as an online community to enhance their professionalism and share their professional problems.

The UEPCS became a platform to share various teaching and learning materials covering multiple content and other materials relevant to social awareness. This finding suggest that teachers utilize OLC to acquire knowledge and share professional skills to improve their pedagogical skills. It supported university teachers to discuss various academic issues and solve their professional-related problems. Various teaching and learning materials and other materials were shared on the page to develop their professional skills necessary for their profession. However, international studies (Hew & Cheung, 2012; Janković et al., 2016; Soomro et al., 2014) reported that teachers' rejection of using Facebook as a teaching and learning tool because they found students wasting their study time by engaging in non-academic activities on Facebook. It suggests that school students who are too young to understand much about the potential of Facebook for educational activities might not be able to utilize it in the

same way as teachers use it for professional activities. This study suggests that university teachers appreciated the Facebook page as a platform to bring additional motivation and enthusiasm to the existing teaching and learning practices. Teachers were able to utilize the shared materials on UEPCS in their teaching and learning activities and develop their pedagogical skills. However, it was very difficult to meet all participants' needs and satisfy them fully.

Conclusion and Limitation

The Facebook page, an OLC, helped university teachers of Nepal have academic discussions, share teaching and learning materials, and improve their pedagogical skills. Despite initial suspicion about the potential of the page in terms of professional development, the university English teachers increased their participation in interactive activities such as watching and commenting on materials shared on the page during the intervention. Their increasing interest, growing participation, and comments on how they used shared materials in their teaching and learning practices indicated the benefits of the Facebook page for professional enhancement. However, technical problems, such as device-related problems and limited ICT skills of English teachers, have become barriers to the effective use of the page for professional discussions.

The findings of this study are based on the experiences of a limited number of UETs who participated in sharing, uploading, commenting, and reacting to the learning materials on a Facebook page. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all university English teachers in Nepal. Nevertheless, the evidence presented provides valuable insights and suggests new directions for future research. The study highlights that, although the government and educational institutions have promoted online learning communities as a replacement for traditional methods of sharing and discussing academic activities, further research is needed.

Acknowledgement

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