

The Usage of Social Media to Enhance Effective Communication Among Secondary School Teachers and Principals in Ampang

Shah Rafi Ihsham Shah*, Zuraidah Abdullah

Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy
University of Malaya,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

*shahrafi@um.edu.my, zuraidah@um.edu.my

Abstract—Social media has become a medium of communication in today's educational organisations. It is seen to be relevant in encouraging effective communication. This study aims to identify the level of frequency in utilising social media among teachers, level of communication between principals and teachers, plus the relationship between social media and effective communication practices between teachers and principals in schools. Quantitative method was used through administration of a survey questionnaire and findings were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0. A total of 312 respondents answered the questionnaire. The findings of the study found the level of frequency in utilising social media amongst teachers is high (mean=4.15, SD=.49), whereas the level of frequency of communication between principals and teachers is moderate (mean=3.56, SD=.54). Furthermore, the relationship between the utilisation of social media and effective communication between teachers and principal is weak ($r = .503$, $N 312$, $p < .001$). Hence, it can be concluded that although teachers have a high level of social media usage, it is only moderately used for educational communications, and consequently does not necessarily impact or encourage effective communication between teachers and principals in the schools.

Keywords—social media in schools; effective communication

I. INTRODUCTION

Malaysian education aims to be a progressive system that fulfil the needs of the nation. This is evident through the conception of The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 in 2015. One of the most prevalent aspect is the focus on using Information Communication and Technology (ICT) in education. In fact, over RM6 billion has been spent over the past decade for information and communication technology (ICT) in educational initiatives [1]. This amount is among the most comprehensive capital investment for the improvement of the country's education system.

Malaysia believes that ICT would help improve the quality of learning in Malaysia. Besides infrastructure to support ICT use such as personal computers, laptops, netbook, computer laboratories; internet connection and virtual learning platform is also provided extensively. The provision of technology-

based platforms such as Frog VLE provides a new dimension in interactive learning and sharing and encourages virtual communications.

The progress of virtual communications includes the use of social media. Social media refers to applications that uses the Internet and is developed using Web 2.0 technology and ideology, and is used for the creation and exchange of content through user-generated (User Generated Content-UGC) services [2]. Social media has become a new form of communication technology that allows users to share their views and knowledge [3], content to a desired target [4], as well as, allows users to participate and contribute to information, thus allowing dialogue and thorough communication with other users [5]. The method of communication involving more than one individual in various ways such as daily conversation, formal discussion, informal discussion, small group interview, in the organization or socially [6] can all be done through social media.

One of the major innovations in social media compared to traditional media, is that users can find information and share their own content within their own network [7]. This encourages user-creativity and expressiveness in communication [8]. Work-wise, social media has evolved to become the main communication medium for workers to manage their daily affairs [9], achieve goals set by the organization [10] and enhance access of information to own and outside organizations [10]. Furthermore, communication through social media can be a reliable source, and build a good relationship between the members of the same organization [11].

So how does social media work in education institutions? The use of social media in educational institutions is in line with the wishes of the Malaysian Ministry of Education to empower the use of ICT. It is seen as a way to encourage teacher and principal communication. Since organizational communication takes place in many forms, the best platform at present is through electronic media [12] specifically social media [13]. As consistent communication can be made easily through social media, it may build a rapport between principal and teachers. Thus, teachers may feel more comfortable in

voicing their concerns, and in instances where principal gives direct feedback, the feelings of appreciation will exist among teachers and will give their best in their work [14]. Therefore, the use of social media to communicate in schools can be considered for the purpose of achieving the goals and targets that have been set.

Studies on the use of social media are still limited [10] particularly concerning social media use in education. From the studies that was found however, most studies focused on the impact of social media on family-work conflicts and job satisfaction. Studies showed that the overuse of smartphones for access to social media can bring a negative impact on family life [15]. Meanwhile, communication using social media in the management of a project in the organization can give impact to the effectiveness of communication [11], however uncontrolled social media use by organizational managers, will impact negatively on employees and organizations [9].

At present, specific studies on social media use as a medium of communication for teachers and school principals in Malaysia is still scarce. However, there are studies on the impact of social media use on organizations other than schools have been implemented [10,11,13,16-22]. There are also few studies on teacher communication and principals that focuses on the effect of communication styles practiced by the principals and their impact on teachers' satisfaction [14,16,23]. This means that there is still room for research on the impact of social media use in Malaysian education.

As social media has the capability to change the communication scenario of teachers and principals in schools, its' relevance and impact should be studied. Therefore, in light of this, this study will contribute to the knowledge on social media utilisation in Malaysian schools among principals and teachers by focussing on three areas which are, level of frequency in utilising social media among teachers, level of communication between principals and teachers, and, the relationship between social media and effective communication practices between teachers and principals in Malaysian schools.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study was conducted using quantitative method. Data was obtained through a survey questionnaire. For research on perceptions and views, the use of questionnaires is more appropriate to be used in research [24]. In addition, the questionnaire is also a commonly used measuring instrument in education studies because the use of large sample sizes can minimize sampling error [25].

The researcher uses this research design as a guide to obtain, analyse, and process the data obtained. To answer the research question, the data obtained will be analysed using descriptive analysis method. Descriptive study is often used as a method of describing a situation [25]. There are two variables in this study, the application of social media is the independent variables and effective communication as the dependent variable.

B. Research Sampling

Sampling refers to the individuals selected to represent the population of a study [25]. It involves a process for researchers to select specific individual groups to be respondents for the study [26] in order to obtain the required information only from some of the selected research population. There is no special rule regarding the sampling method because the sampling method which is applied in a study depends on the researcher himself [26]. This research will use a simple random sampling method. Simple random sampling is the most fundamental sampling method to determining samples in a study [25]. Each respondent has the opportunity to be selected as the sample of the study by simple random sampling method [27].

C. Research Instrumentation

The instrument is a tool for measuring, observing and documenting data in quantitative research [28]. The research instrument used in this study is a survey questionnaire. Questionnaires are often used in educational research to obtain information, beliefs, feelings, wishes and so on [25]. A specially designed questionnaire for a study is aimed at collecting the data required in the study and has various uses [29]. Questionnaire items should be easy to understand, concise, clear, meet the needs of further research and can be answered by respondents without any doubt [29]. This research questionnaire is used to answer the three objectives of the study. Thus, it is divided into sections consisting of questions about the use of social media in the school amongst principals and teachers. Items are then divided into three subtopics such as Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived of Usefulness and View of Media Social Usage. This questionnaire has been modified from other researches [30-32] to fulfil the objective requirements of this study. The questionnaires were distributed to seven secondary school in Ampang, Selangor, Malaysia.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study is meant to look at three objectives which are: (1) to identify the level of practice of social media use in communication between teachers and principals in schools: (2) to identify the level of effective communication between teachers and principals in school: (3) to identify the relationship between the use of social media and the communication of teachers and principals in schools. The respondents of this study are 312 respondents made up of random teachers, teaching in secondary schools in Ampang, Selangor, Malaysia. The researcher used descriptive analysis to analyze the data collected. The mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage of the data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 25.0.

A. Social Media Usage

There are two factors that impact the social media application among teachers and principals in Ampang secondary school. Perceived Ease of Use (mean= 4.29, SD= 0.51) and Perceived of Usefulness (mean= 4.19, SD= 0.52) factors get a high overall mean. Based on the findings of data analysis, it shows that secondary school teachers and principals in Ampang district uses social media for communication because it easy to use and accessible regardless of time, place

and age. Additionally, teachers also demonstrate that the use of social media is flexible, and applications provided by social media platforms are easy to understand and use. Teachers in the Ampang district also agreed that the use of social media can facilitate daily tasks as a teacher. This proved that the Perceived Ease of Use became one of the factors of Ampang district secondary school teachers using social media to communicate with principals.

The findings of Perceived of Usefulness show the reason social media is the preferred choice for teachers as a medium of communication. The high-level mean score (mean = 4.19, SD = .52) shows that social media is considered to be useful. Based on a modified questionnaire from Cardon and Marshall [31], the views of teachers on social media in organizational communication were also taken. The findings show that teachers' views on the use of social media are high (mean = 3.95, SD = .67). It is also found that the level of utilizing social media amongst secondary teacher and principals in communication as a whole is at high level with a mean score of 4.15 with a standard deviation of .49.

Teachers and principals agreed that social media is essential for the purpose of communicating in the organization in the future. Teachers are able to share needed materials quickly, improve the performance of duties at school and serves as a tool for communicating with colleagues, discussing teaching material and planning their lesson plan. They also agree that the use of social media will enhance the capabilities of teamwork, capable of creating an effective work role in turn allowing teachers to produce high quality work.

The findings of this study are almost identical to the findings of the study by Cardon and Marshall [31] that social media is a potential communication tool for future organizational managers. Based on the findings of this study, social media is easy to use, useful for daily tasks, able to be the main medium of communication in the school in the future and have an impact on communication as well as the quality of teachers' work.

However, the study also shows that the use of social media for discussion and problem solving with principals is at a moderate level. This means that although teachers use social media actively with each other, its' use is not as extensive with principals of the schools. The findings of this study are similar to a previous study [30], where these two factors, Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived of Usefulness get a high overall mean. This may be due to the ease of use of social media, that becomes the factor it is chosen as a communication tool [21] but it does not necessarily facilitate communication between teachers and principals.

B. Teachers and Principals Communication

The second research objective is to determine the frequency of communication between teachers and principals in Ampang district secondary school. The data analyzed are as table 1.

TABLE I. TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS COMMUNICATION

No	Item	Mean	Std Deviation	Mean Interpretation
1	Downward Communication	3.33	.65	Moderate
2	Upward Communication	3.33	.69	Moderate
3	Horizontal Communication	3.79	.64	High
4	Open Communication	3.78	.68	High
	Overall	3.56	.54	Moderate

The table 1, shows the level of communication amongst teachers and principals. The analysis findings show that horizontal communication records the highest with a mean score of 3.79 with a standard deviation of .64. This is followed by, open communication with a mean score of 3.78 and the standard deviation of .68. Both of these items recorded a high-level mean. Meanwhile upward and downward communication recorded the same mean score of 3.33 with the standard deviation of .65 and .69 at a moderate level.

The findings illustrate that the communication of secondary school teachers and principals in the Ampang district is a horizontal and open type of communication. This is because both types of communications data shown a high-level mean. This result shows that teachers agree principals encouraged them to use social media for communication, sharing ideas, getting information and conversations. Horizontal communication involves the exchange of information or messages that occur among members of the organization with the same authority [33]. This study proves that the exchange of information between members of an organization with the same authority is inherent because the teachers agreed that the principal encourages the discussion to be conducted through social media.

Open communication within an organization is a bond of trust among all members of an organization involved regardless of whether the superior or subordinate group [34]. These beliefs can be seen when teachers agree that communication through social media is open to the exchange of views, tolerance, freedom of planning, sharing of ideas, and problems can be resolved immediately. Teachers also agreed that they can contact the principal at any time using social media.

The findings of a previous study pointed out that lower communication shows the level of formal and bureaucratic management practices that are appropriate to the management of a school [7]. However, the findings of this study show secondary school teachers in Ampang agreed that the level of communication downwards using social media was at moderate level. However, it does not necessarily mean that the organizational management of the secondary schools in Ampang is not formal and structured. As such, a further study on the use of social media and its impact on school management can be implemented in the future.

In this study, downward communication receives less attention from teachers and principals. This is proven as teachers agreed that principals do not criticize teachers through social media. This may be because of the type of social media

used is open-ended. For example, the existence of WhatsApp Group in a school is an open-ended communication channel. This type of channel allows participation of several individuals simultaneously and all the communication appeared can be seen by all members in that particular WhatsApp Group. Thus, in a school WhatsApp Group, all teachers would be participants. Therefore, this could be a factor why the principals do not use that medium to criticize teachers openly as criticizing a teacher in an open forum can cause embarrassment, dissatisfaction and lead to a tense relationship. The principals' communication style would determine the morality of their organizational members; thus, the selection of appropriate communication medium plays a very important role to the organization [35].

It can be concluded that since the level of teacher communication with principals in Ampang secondary schools are at moderate level, communication using that medium is yet to be fully utilised. Teachers and principals should be more proactive in their communication when using social media to properly discuss school-related decisions, promote good rapport and eventually collaborate to help school improvement and achieve the targets. Effective usage of social media as a communication tool can leverage school collaboration and become a supporting element, which in turn help teachers to give their best to ensure the student will get the proper education needed.

C. Relationship Between Social Media Use and Communication with Principals and Teachers

The results of the data analysis found that the relationship between the use of social media and the communication of teachers and the principals of the secondary schools in Ampang was ($r = .503$, $N = 312$, $p < 0.01$). The finding of $r = .503$ shows a weak relationship [36]. This finding is almost the same as the study by Cardon and Marshall [31] that found the use of social media with organizational communication is not practiced by certain organizational managers because of traditional communication such as face-to-face meetings is still the top choice.

Yet, another study found that communication using social media among school principals is a necessity rather than an option [37] that helps in the communication process [38]. Social media can be used internationally which encourages networking and fast information access. Nonetheless, usage of social media for communication amongst teacher and principals in school is still weak. This might occur due to the lack of official guidelines on social media use in an educational setting. So, it causes social media application in communication not viewed seriously and principals prefer to practice traditional communication in a face-to-face manner.

The findings of this study differ from a previous study that found social media has had a major impact on the business organization [10] such as job satisfaction and work motivation. Previous studies also suggest that there are differences of views between X and Y generation organization managers as well as Baby Boomers on the social media use [31]. Only generation Y supports the view that the use of social media will impact on high quality work [31].

More studies on the social media application in education are required to determine whether the same findings occur elsewhere. The use of social media can be a very positive medium for educational improvement. Communication through social media is broader and can involve many parties at any one time. Hence teachers and principals in schools should take advantage of this technology eruption and be prepared to use social media as one of the formal communication channels at school. In view of the increasingly unpredictable technological advances, it is disadvantageous if social media is not fully utilized.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study has successfully achieved all three objectives. The study was able to identify the level of frequency in utilizing social media among teachers, level of communication between principals and teachers, plus the relationship between social media and effective communication practices between teachers and principals in schools.

The finding shows that social media is used at a high level by teachers and principals due to its' ease of use and usefulness. Despite this, the level of communication between principals and teachers is moderate and the relationship between social media and effective communication practices between teachers and principals in schools is weak. This clearly shows that social media has yet to be fully utilized as an effective communication tool for professional communication in schools. There are still boundaries that may be invisible between teachers and principals that prevent from social media being used as a medium for active open discussions for decision makings regarding the schools vision and missions.

Principals in particular should be aware of the benefit of social media for communication with teachers. The flexibility and ease of use of social media could be used to supervise, facilitate and mentor teachers in their daily routine. At present, teachers are actively using social media as a medium of sharing knowledge, improve process of teaching learning and build collaborative partnership. Through these findings, secondary teachers in the Ampang area have shown willingness to utilize social media as a channel of communication within the school organization.

There are still a few aspects of social media as a communication tool that needs to be examined. As such, further studies can be implemented to identify the root cause of the weak relationship between social media and effective communication practices between teachers and principals in schools, as well as the perceptions of teachers in other districts in Selangor, or other states in Malaysia, or even in another country to compare to the current findings. As social media is rapidly being hailed as a communication tool for organizational management at schools, its' impact on school organizational communication has yet to be determined. Thus, further studies should continue to contribute to the knowledge and improve on school communication as a whole.

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