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Use of social media as an educational tool: Perspectives of Mongolian university educators

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ABSTRACT

Social media could serve as a potential tool to enhance the delivery and quality of education in the country, such as Mongolia, which is characterized by vast territory, sparsely distributed population and relatively poor fixed technology infrastructure. This exploratory study aimed to assess the usage of social media in Mongolian higher education, as perceived by the university educators. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 25 university educators in individual and group settings.

The findings from this study demonstrate the pros and cons of using social media as a potential tool in academic environment. The majority of respondents consider social media as useful tool to employ in their teaching practices because it is reshaping their current teaching methods with new technological options. They value social media as a useful tool because it creates fast communication with students and colleagues and offers easy content delivery. However, they also express cautions that social media could distract students or raise ethical and trust issues among students.

This study provides an insight on use of social media as an educational tool in Mongolia contributing to social media research from a developing country's perspective.

KEYWORDS

Social media, Mongolia, higher education, faculty members, educational tool, Facebook

1 INTRODUCTION

The Internet has penetrated our lives with high-speed during the last two decades. Only 0.05 percent of the world population used Internet in 1990, whereas in 2016, it reached 45.79 percent [1]. At the global level, the Internet provides the opportunity to improve people's education. Many countries, including Mongolia, are working towards improving the quality and effectiveness of education using information technology benefits. Nevertheless, students and educators around the globe do not have equal access to the Internet and differ immensely with their computer literacy, education level, and learning conditions [2]. This aspect of the digital divide could slow down economic and social development of certain counties and prevent their people from achieving their full potential. In particular, the digital divide can have a detrimental effect on the educational systems in countries that do not have an adequate or widespread digital infrastructure. It is vital to address the potential inequity by creating equal opportunities for disadvantaged countries. One way of addressing this problem is by using social media and e-learning, both of which have become widely used over the past two decades [3-7].

Today, billions of people use social media for various social interactions including self-development, business, communication, education, entertainment and so forth. For many people, social media is embedded in their daily routine and used in various locations, such as home, work, school, public transportation on different devices, including mobile phones, tablets, TVs, desktops, and so on, at any time. Social media users are growing exponentially. According to Perrin [8], social media usage grew from 7% to 65% among Americans from 2005 to 2015. In 2018, this number has grown up to 69% [9]. Now, Facebook has 2.27 billion registered users as the end of September 2018 [10]. More than a year ago from this date, Facebook proudly announced that the platform connects 2 billion monthly active users [11]. Moreover, YouTube has 1.8 billion monthly active users by May 2018 [12] and WeChat has 1 billion registered users in the beginning of March 2018 [13]. In addition, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WeChat, YouTube and all other social media have slightly different purposes and diverse platforms, but all have a goal to communicate people in one place [6].

Consequently, ubiquity of social media tools and digital technologies could change the way of learning. Tess [14] suggests that educators should provide an opportunity for students to be involved in the social media classroom. This study suggested that educators should use the social media platform beyond posting "teacher-generated contents" and

create an interactive learning environment. Despite only a few studies, there is a lack of research on the actual usage of social media tools in for higher education, especially in developing countries. This research attempts to fill in this gap.

The overall goal of this research is to explore the usage of social media in Mongolian higher education, as perceived by the university educators.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT MONGOLIA

Mongolia has a vast territory with sparse population. Land area of the country is 1.56 million square kilometer and it is landlocked between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. Population is 3.1 million with density of 1.9 per kilometer square. Though, one third of the population lives in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city. Mongolia has three major cities including the capital city, which has nine districts, 21 aimags (an administrative district equivalent to a province) and 339 soums (an administrative district equivalent to a district) [15].

Mobile telecommunications industry is growing rapidly. Even though whole population of Mongolia is 3.1 million, mobile subscribers reached up to 5.56 million and active mobile users reached up to 4.08 million in June 2018. This number is higher than the actual population because many users have access to a few different mobile providers' services. According to the Communication Regulatory Commission of Mongolia's statistics of 2017, 2.5 million users used mobile data network on their smartphones, 71 percent of the whole mobile phone users [16]. Since then, number of mobile data users has grown to 2.8 million [17]. Furthermore, the total number of Internet users was 2.4 million in 2016 out of which 84 percent are from Ulaanbaatar and 2.9 million in 2018, according to ICT report of Mongolia [18]. In distant provinces, the Internet penetration is very low because of infrastructure and sparse population. The most populated aimags have just above 100 thousand people and the least populated aimag has 10 thousand people. Surprisingly, not only households in distant provinces do not have access to fixed Internet access but also 70 percent of the capital city's households do not have fixed Internet connection [18]. Because of low fixed Internet penetration, most users access the Internet using their mobile devices.

As for the higher education sector of Mongolia, in 2018, a total of 96 higher educational institutions, out of which 18 public, 75 private and three international colleges, are serving 155,248 students with the inclusion of 1520 international students. 89 out of 96 colleges are located in Ulaanbaatar and seven colleges are dispersed in aimags. 84.78 percent of students are undergraduate and 15.22 percent – postgraduate. In terms of gender, 58.2 percent of the students are female, and 41.8 percent are male. Tuition and fees were around 2.5 million tugriks (approximately equals to $1000) per academic year in 2017/2018. Number of academic and administrative staff of the higher education organizations is 12,705. By gender, 62.1 percent of the staff are female, and 37.9 percent are male staff. Half of the total employees are academic staff [19].

In Mongolia, social media penetrated rapidly during the last decade. The most popular social media is Facebook with 1.2 million registered users [20]. Market share of social media is as follows: Facebook users share 77.93% of the total social media users, YouTube users share 8.21%, Pinterest users share 6.48%, Twitter users share 5.14% and rest of social media shares others [21]. Moreover, The Communication Regulatory Commission of Mongolia introduced statistics of Mongolian social media usage in 2018 as follows: 1.7 million people use at least one social media platform, 84 percent of the capital city's population and 77 percent of the 21 aimags' population use Facebook as their main social media platform [17]. Therefore, Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Mongolia.

3 SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION

For last decade, social media technology has been penetrated intensively into daily life of individuals globally. However, it is not completely clear, "what tools, platforms and social phenomena" is considered as social media [22]. Based on an analysis of academic literature on social media, McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase identified three main themes: activities social media enables, how it enables these activities, and the content it contains. They proposed the following definition: Social media are web-based services that allow individuals, communities, and organizations, to collaborate, connect, interact, and build community by enabling them to create, co-create, modify, share, and engage with user-generated content that is easily accessible [22].

With the rise of social media and social networking platform's introduction, scholars have started to study social media usage in various fields, including education. Yaros [23] discovered that use of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter can facilitate learning process positively. According to this study, students engage more in the learning process, appreciate to be identified individually and have more interest in the subject regardless of the content. Joosten [24] found that students preferred social networking platforms, such as Facebook for the whole classroom discussion over email communication and learning management systems. This type of communication provided tight connection between students and with the instructor.

Falahah and Rosmala argued that social media tools could be used for the following tasks in academic environment: task assignment, making announcement, class rescheduling, task/schedule negotiation, examination, resource material searching/sharing, and other (entertain, communication, information update) [25]. Social media also reported as the way of interaction between students and educators [25-27]. Social media enabled students to interact with lecturers more frequently and easily. Hamid et al. state that social media encourages collaborative learning and increases interactions. However, they cautioned that certain scientific disciplines are not suitable to use social media for teaching including chemistry, biology and others [27]. A few other studies [26, 28-30] examined the faculty perspectives on social media usage in higher education.

Number of studies confirm that social media not only offer benefits in higher education but also cause obstacles, such as poor time management, distraction, privacy issues, information overload and others [14, 25-27, 29-31]. Manca and Ranieri [26] determined pros and cons of social media usage in higher education. On the positive side, social media provides instant interaction between social media users. Therefore, teachers can easily reach their students by using different social media and deliver the content both asynchronously and synchronously. On the negative side, social media could have unintended consequences, such as addiction to social media, excessive information and easy distraction. Sobaih et al. [30] reported that social media could serve as effective tool for teaching and learning in academic environment if certain obstacles, such as privacy and security issues, time commitment, loss of control and monitoring, digital divide, ethical issues and so on could be controlled.

Miller, et al. [7] carried out the series of in-depth research on social media usage and consequences on key topics, such as education, work, politics, and gender on global level. They concluded that social media could have both positive and negative impact on education. According to their study, social media improves social relations between people engaged in the learning process and provides additional tools to enhance traditional learning. However, social media could also distract from learning.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research aimed to explore the usage of social media in Mongolian higher education, as perceived by the university educators. The following research questions guided our study: What are the perspectives of university educators on social media use in teaching and learning? Which social media tools are used in Mongolian universities? How effective these tools can be? What are the benefits and drawbacks of using social media in higher education? How to deal when conflicts arise on social media platforms?
Due to lack of research on this topic, we decided to use McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase's definition of social media [22]. This broad definition allowed us to gain deep insights on usage of social media by Mongolian educators.

We conducted semi-structured interviews with university educators in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The interviews provided flexibility to the researchers and freedom to respondents to express their viewpoints on the subject. In addition, Gray [32] highlights the benefits of interview: getting in-depth information, best way of exploring stories and perspectives of respondents, and easy improvisation and adaption of questions.

4.1 Data Collection and data analysis

The first author conducted individual interviews with 10 educators and group interviews with 15 educators in three different settings from higher educational institutions in Mongolia. Interviews were conducted between July 15 and August 10, 2017. The main criterion for selection of the respondents was the affiliation with the major universities in Mongolia. The representatives from both public and private institutions were chosen. Additional criteria included age and scientific disciplines pursued by respondents. Group interviewees' main criterion was age range of respondents to get their perspectives on social media usage from the different age groups. Three groups were selected as following: age group between 25 and 34 (*Group 1*); age group between 35 and 43 (*Group 2*); age group between 44 and up (*Group 3*). Each group consisted of five respondents. The individual interview sessions lasted 25-35 minutes each. Group interviews were conducted at universities' faculty's rooms and lasted 20 to 30 minutes. Group interviews were conducted as highly productive discussions between the researcher and the participants. A topic sheet to guide the interviews was prepared and sent before the actual interviews. It presented the structure of the interview, background information of the research, different sections related to the research question and potential questions (*Appendix A*). All interviews were recorded on a voice recorder and transcribed immediately after each interview.

The authors used data analysis model, developed by Miles and Huberman [33]. This model suggests the following steps: Data collection, Data reduction, Data display and Conclusions: Drawing and Verifying. Data collection was performed as mentioned above. Then, the data reduction included reading transcriptions several times, focusing and searching for keywords, tagging important data for later analysis, counting the frequencies of keywords and similar ideas, grouping similar insights and creating the segments for main ideas which were guided by the interview

questions. Furthermore, summaries were written, notes were made, important points were pulled out and relevant segments were connected with each other. Then, data display wasperformed by organising data into visual displays. Finally, as Miles and Huberman suggested, conclusion drawing and verifying step was performed [33]. In addition, we employed grounded theory approach in qualitative data analysis [34].

4.2 Demographics of the Respondents

All 25 respondents for interview sessions were selected from various public and private universities based in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia. Respondents' age range was between 26 and 55 years old, with an average of 38 years old. Majority or 52% of the respondents aged between 31 and 40.

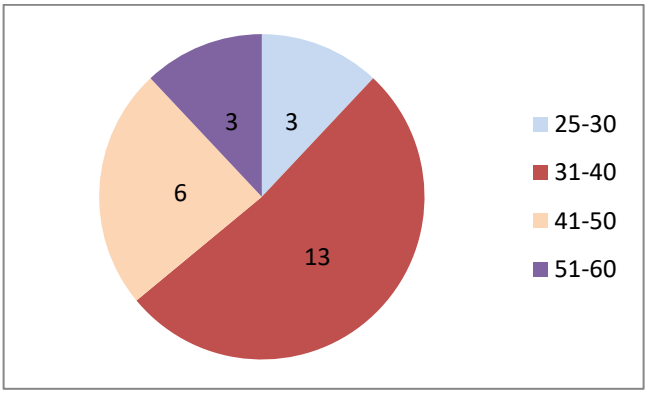

Figure 1: Age group of the respondents

Gender division of the respondents was almost equal. Out of 25 respondents, 12 (48%) were male and 13 (52%) were female.

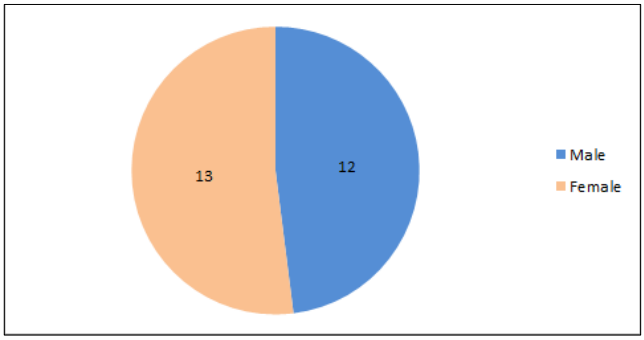

Figure 2: Gender of the respondents

80 percent of respondents reported working at public universities, whereas 20 percent worked at private institutes in Ulaanbaatar. All respondents were full time faculty members. Their positions held at their respective universities were: one professor, six associate professors, six senior lecturers, and 12 lecturers (*Appendix B*).

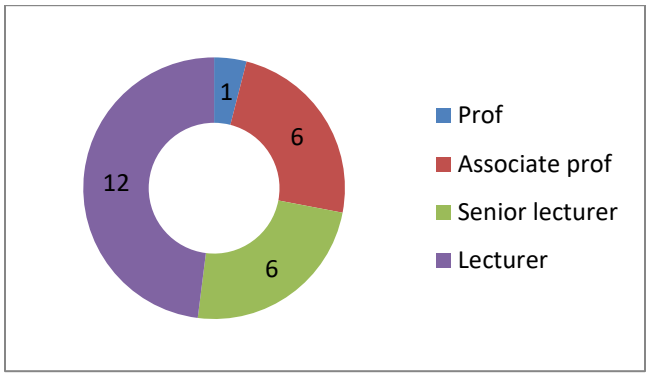

Figure 3: Positions held at university

In terms of degree qualifications, 52 percent have doctoral degree and 48 percent have master's degree.

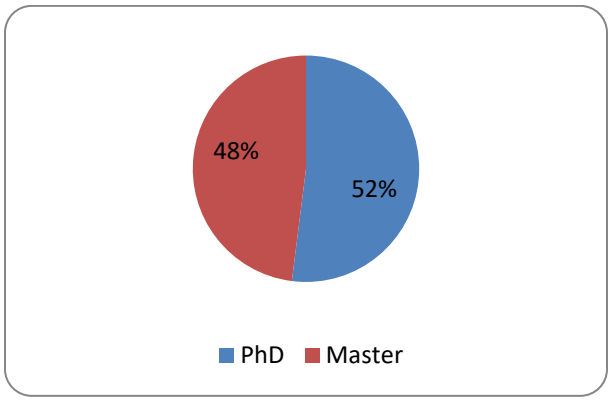

Figure 4: Degree qualification of the respondents

There were two faculty members who had a ranking of a major and a first lieutenant. The average number of teaching years was 14, with the longest of 28 years and shortest of 3 years. Respondents represented the different scientific disciplines: mathematics, economics, finance, marketing and trading, computer science, information systems, medical science, law and justice, social sciences and education.

5 FINDINGS

The findings from individual and group interviews are presented separately. In order to get better perspectives on social media's popularity in Mongolia, the interviewer asked a few questions on social media usage from the respondents.

The most popular social media used by the respondents was Facebook (80%) in individual interview sessions (*Table 1*). They used Facebook mostly for general use. The next most used social media was YouTube (48%). The usage of the following social media was almost evenly distributed with Google Drive (24%), Instagram (20%), Google Class (20%) and WeChat (20%). The majority of the respondents reported that they use more than three social media at the

same time, including Wikipedia, Yahoo, Blog, Khan Academy, LinkedIn, SlideShare and Google calendar. In average, respondents reported that they have used these social media at least in the last five years. With reference to each social media tool, respondents reported that they use Facebook to communicate with families, friends and colleagues, YouTube - for watching video clips, movies and video tutorials, Blog to write stories, share opinions and so on.

Table 1: General social media usage

Name of social media	Freq.	%
Facebook	20	80%
YouTube	13	48%
Twitter	3	12%
Wikipedia	7	28%
Google Class	5	20%
Google Drive	6	24%
Instagram	5	20%
Yahoo	3	12%
WeChat	5	20%
Blog	2	8%
Own website	4	16%
Khan Academy	3	12%
LinkedIn	3	12%
SlideShare	3	12%
Google Calendar	3	12%

5.1 Trends of Social Media

The majority of respondents stated that social media is developing too fast that it is hard to follow the current trend of every social media. *Facebook Live* was mentioned several times. Some of the educators stated that *Facebook Live* can be useful in teaching when educator wants to give extra content for students. However, they all agreed that the content needed to be prepared well in advance before using *Facebook live* to transfer information. One respondent (R20) from didactics revealed that she is working towards possibility of using *Facebook Live* when junior students implement teaching practice at primary schools. Another respondent (R12) said that "*Facebook Live* can be useful tool in e-learning". Though, four respondents said that their respective university's infrastructure is not sufficient to test this new feature of Facebook.

5.2 Use of Social Media in Teaching

More than half of the respondents (56%) reported that they used Facebook in their teaching by creating Facebook groups with students enrolled in their classes. Mongolian universities assign instructors as class advisors to a group of students. Therefore, respondents who were class advisors all had created a class group on Facebook and used them. The primary uses of Facebook groups were to make announcements quickly, reach students faster, provide additional information, share useful documents, deliver assignments and conduct group discussion. One respondent (R18) said, he monitors students' participation on social media easier than any other methods. Downsides of Facebook use in higher education were mentioned by respondents are presented in Drawback of using social media in education part (See Section 5.10).

YouTube was second most used social media among the respondents (44%). Primary uses of YouTube were to let students watch video tutorials, case studies, offer extra-curricular activities, upload and share own video lectures and tutorials and attach in PowerPoint slides. The respondents mentioned that short YouTube videos could help students to understand difficult terms easily.

The next most mentioned social media was Google for education. Five respondents used Google classroom and Google forum to give reading materials in advance, give and receive assignments, provide feedback, assign individual or group task and to test and evaluate students. Google docs and Google drive were also used for group tasks and for sharing study materials.

Five respondents pointed out they use own university's Learning Management Systems (LMSs). However, they noted that the LMSs do not have all useful functions and tools to expand teaching beyond classroom time. Therefore, sometimes this situation forces the use some social media tools in order to improve teaching.

Many of the respondents (72%) revealed that their universities' Internet access was not sufficient to use social media in teaching, so it creates extra work to prepare in advance from home. Some of the universities block certain social media access such as Facebook and YouTube. Two respondents (R1, R21) argued that social media is not useful in education at all, therefore they don't use any of them in their teaching. Adoption of the social media in teaching seemed to vary based on the educator's field of study. Interestingly, educators from social sciences have adopted social media better than their fellows in natural sciences.

5.3 Video Tutorials

All respondents admitted that they have used certain video tutorials at some point in their teaching. 72 percent of the educators used videos from YouTube, Khan Academy, Wolfram Demonstrations Project or other similar sources. Four respondents have created video tutorials using special programs, such as Camtasia. Three respondents reported that they videotaped while giving lectures.

Useful video contents in Mongolian are rare, so it creates language barrier to students. In addition, one respondent pointed out that the teaching load per lecturer is too much and salary is too little so creating video tutorials adds extra work to lecturers.

5.4 Collaboration on documents

11 respondents stated that they used document collaboration platforms, such as Google docs to assign group tasks. Five respondents used these tools for their project collaboration. Eight respondents admitted that they never used document collaboration. One respondent (R5) shared his experience in using Google drive and Google classroom as follows:

> *"I post courseworks and assignments on Google classroom. Then, students can create recording and write recommendations on a schema to their task, and post their solutions to the task before a deadline. Meantime, students can revise as many times as they want from anywhere, so it created advantage to them. After the deadline, I received final submission on Google drive and Google classroom and gave feedback to my students. This was convenient for both for me and for my students." (R5)*

Several (7) respondents used Google drive to share reading materials and supplementary materials and Google docs to create polls from students. Two respondents were concerned about security issues in Google docs.

5.5 Communication with Students through Private Social Media

Surprisingly, 72 percent of the respondents reported that they responded to their students' questions through their private accounts on social media, such as Viber, Facebook messenger, Facebook comment, Skype, WeChat and so on. This number is similar with the findings of Sturgeon and Walker [35] study. In their study, 75 percent of the faculty member respondents had students as their Facebook friends on their profiles.

The response time to students' questions varied among respondents. Some of them said that they responded to students' questions happily anytime, while others preferred to respond only during office hours. However, some respondents mentioned that they are annoyed by the repetitive nature of questions. Also, some said they answer questions through social media but they don't consider it as a suitable communication. Seven respondents (24%) said they do not accept friend request from students, and they do not communicate with students through their private social media accounts. These respondents preferred email communication, office hours meetings and university LMS. Some respondents admitted that they communicate with former students through social media to announce job offers or other important matters. Age, gender or scientific discipline did not matter on this issue. A 55-years-old, female educator noted that she happily responds to students' questions through social media, whereas 26-years-old male teacher did not communicate with students through social media.

5.6 Blog

From all respondents, 18 answered they don't have a blog or they don't intend to have one. On the other side, six respondents reported that they have a private blog but don't use it for educational purpose. Only one respondent (R17) had a blog for teaching purpose. He posts reading materials, writes announcements, writes stories and essays, defines tasks and coordinates students' answers. Most of the respondents stated they don't have time to post materials on a blog and coordinate discussions on specific topics, instead they prefer Facebook over blogs. One respondent (R16) mentioned that he is not comfortable with blog because materials on blogs are available to anyone without any restrictions.

In general, Mongolian educators don't want to use blogs for teaching purposes contrary to their peers in other countries. Blog was widely used to provide reading materials or supplementary materials, to make announcements and to support active learning [25, 28-30]. The reasons of not using the blogs by the respondents are related to heavy work load and low salary. Many respondents expressed that they don't want to spend extra time on blogging. They don't have teaching assistants or technical assistants, so they need to do everything starting from the scratch to create blogs by themselves.

5.7 Facebook Groups

All respondents mentioned that they use Facebook groups mainly to communicate with colleagues and professionals. Some of them reported that they use Facebook groups to communicate with students, post the study materials, share notes, assign tasks, make announcements, create lively discussions, negotiate timings, and create various polls. For the work purposes, respondents noted that they belong to departmental group, school group and university groups on Facebook. Many respondents agreed announcements reach faster than any other media when its transmitted via Facebook groups. Teams and working groups also create Facebook groups to collaborate, check work progress and share work related materials with each other. A few respondents admitted that sometimes they face stormy discussion and debates among group members. Even though some respondents do not accept friend requests from students, they are forced to use Facebook because of its groups. One respondent pointed out that Mongolians are very curious about everything, so this curiosity causes very high penetration of Facebook. He also highlighted the following:

> *"Mongolian culture supports social media usage in everyday life. Almost everyone I know is on social media. For instance, in London 2012 Olympics, Mongolia ranked in the top positions with the most number of tweets for this Olympic Games. Social media permeated this quick and massive because of Mongolian nomadic nature, curiosity and naivety"*

5.8 Conflicts on Social Media

Most of the respondents (90%) did not have any experience of conflicts with students or colleagues on social media. However, they admitted that they would delete negative or insulting comments. They also want to create a friendly and ethical environment. For the worst case they would block the users. One respondent (R11) pointed out that deep respect towards teachers is reflected even on social media. Three respondents stated that they noticed have conflict among students themselves and plagiarism with assignments in social media groups. When cheating occurred, one respondent (R25) nullified the student's task. Several respondents (4) mentioned the importance of policy development to handle conflicts on social media. A few respondents (2) expressed their dislike when students write private messages anytime of a day, mention educator's name on unimportant or unrelated posts, write unprofessional comments and invade into educator's privacy. One respondent (R1) said that he discovered students' secret Facebook group which monetise answers to previous exams and reported to get it closed. Therefore, ethical and trust issues on social media is hard to follow and monitor.

5.9 Benefits of Using Social Media for Educational Purposes

Respondents agreed on several benefits of using social media for educational purposes in Mongolian higher education. Fast delivery of information regardless of time and place was the most mentioned advantage by the respondents (92%). Then, easy and fast communication with students and colleagues was mentioned by 80 percent of the respondents. Other advantages included cost effectiveness such as using less papers, reducing travel cost and improvement in teaching quality and enhancement of traditional classes by using social media tools, such as YouTube videos, Google docs and others. Several respondents agreed that social media gives opportunity to enrich their teaching materials with content from around the globe. Interestingly, one respondent said social media decreases educators' working load, whereas others noted that social media adds extra work. Two respondents from the Mongolian University of Science and Technology pointed out the importance of effective and productive use of classroom time because sharing teaching materials on social media before the actual class can trigger the use of creative teaching methods such Flipped Method, Teamwork, Class discussion and so on. A few respondents were happy that social media gives chance to motivate students using technological advances and opportunity to teach these digital born students using their digital technologies and interact with them in their language. One respondent was confident so that social media can create transparent environment so that both teacher and students can control each other and become responsible in learning process. The majority of the respondents agreed that the 21st century is an information and technological era. They agreed that, they need to carefully examine social media potentials in higher education and implement its positive tools in order to improve teaching quality and resources, while considering digital born students' needs.

5.10 Drawbacks of Using Social Media in Education

Respondents had different opinions on disadvantages of social media usage in higher education. However, they agreed on the several drawbacks of social media, such as students wasting their time on social media and being easily diverted from the learning materials. Most of the respondents pointed out, both students and educators can be distracted easily on social media by all means. Another important concern raised by the respondents was the privacy issues. They said that students could invade into educators' privacy, create unofficial relationship crossing certain boundaries. Inappropriate relationship between educators and students on social media could have consequences diverting from official to private. A few respondents mentioned cultural difference and digital divide could cause conflicts among students on social media platforms. A respondent from the Mongolian State University of Education worried about the negative effects of social media usage on reading habits of students. According to him, loads of study materials' availability on social media makes students lazy. The reading habits of students are getting worse deteriorating their abilities in reading, writing and presenting. Couple of respondents mentioned that social media weakens live relationship among people. Many educators were not happy that posting study related materials on social media requires more time and efforts from the educators and there is no fixed time on social media usage in education. Moreover, quality of information is doubtful on social media and there is no proof that social media can be beneficial in teaching. One respondent worried that social media usage on education could reveal the financial inequality within students as well as within educators because not everyone can afford digital devices such as laptops and smart phones or access to the Internet. Several respondents were concerned about the intellectual property problems, such as students copying others' materials without any acknowledgments. Some respondents mentioned that abuse on social media can happen and it can hurt students. Therefore, they pointed out the importance of having social media policy in education. Finally, one respondent thought using social media for teaching purpose can lower academic quality of teaching and learning process.

5.11 Highlights from Group Discussions

The findings from group interviews supported the insights from individual interviews.

Group 1 (GR1) highlighted the importance of building the sufficient infrastructure for social media use in higher education. Educators and students both need to be connected

to the Internet and have good access to digital technologies. In Mongolian case, both educators and students have unequal access to technology resources. Not everybody has desktop computers, laptops and other devices. The higher educational institutions have limited number of computer labs and libraries, which open until the midnight. Even though most educators and students have mobile phones, it is almost impossible to submit assignments by mobile phones. Therefore, it is useless to ask people to use social media for learning and teaching when infrastructure is not sufficient.

Group 2 (GR2) emphasized that higher education system needs to develop specific policy and guidelines regarding social media usage. Every respondent from this group agreed that universities should be required to incorporate social media time for their policies.

Group 3 (GR3) respondents underlined the importance of the teachers' development. In order to manage the teaching process successfully, schools need to accelerate the growth of teachers' education, awareness on ICT and pedagogical ability using technological advances. Respondents also highlighted the importance of raising awareness of social media use in higher education among faculty members.

In general, the majority of the respondents agreed that this study is useful for investigating the faculty's point of view on social media usage in higher education, specifically for teaching. The respondents accepted social media as useful tool to employ in their teaching practices because it is reshaping their current teaching methods with new technological options. They also consider social media as a useful tool in higher education because it creates fast communication with students and colleagues and content delivery becomes easier. Conversely, two of the respondents expressed their disbelief that use of social media can be beneficial in higher education. They feel that social media is inappropriate tool to deliver education in academic environment because it distracts students and ethics of students are questionable. Moreover, these respondents argued that social media usage requires time and effort from the lecturers.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the faculty's perception on using social media as an educational tool in Mongolian higher education. In order to investigate university educators' views on the subject, semi-structured interviews were conducted with university educators and social media experts. The findings of this study reveal that the Mongolian educators have divided opinion on the potential usage of social media in higher education. Some respondents perceive social media as useful tool whereas others consider it as distracting. Number of factors, including institutional constraints, such as blocked internet access to social media, and pedagogical views affect the exploitation of social media in higher educational sector of Mongolia. However, in this research, seniority was not an impacting factor on the usage of social media in Mongolian universities.

Adoption of the social media in higher education varied in the educator's field of study. Interestingly, educators from social sciences have adopted social media more than their fellows in natural sciences.

The findings of this study demonstrate that respondents' social media usage was mostly limited by the following options: using Facebook groups, showing YouTube videos and uploading contents onto Google drive. Educators reported that they share resource materials, make announcements, conduct classroom discussion and reschedule class. All respondents agreed that using social media could spread the news instantly because students check their social media accounts more frequently than any other media.

The findings of this study confirm the benefits and obstacles that were mentioned in the existing literature [14, 25-27, 29-31]. The benefits of social media usage in education highlighted by the respondents include the fast delivery of information, improvement in teaching quality and easy communication whereas obstacles include privacy and security issues, wasting time and contributing to digital divide.

Interestingly, penetration of Facebook is higher than any other social media in Mongolia, which takes up 78 percent of total social media market. 80 percent of the respondents of this study use Facebook as their main social media tool and they associate this with the curiosity character of Mongolians. Findings from this study demonstrate that Facebook could be effective tool to teach and learn in academic environment. Facebook's exponential growth and potentials should be considered by higher education institutes as it's becoming an universal platform. Therefore, university educators need to be more open to utilizing social media to enhance their traditional teaching methods.

Moreover, the respondents mentioned the importance of improving ethics and creating policy and guidelines on social media usage. Majority of the respondents highlighted the significance of teacher development on ICT literacy, social media awareness and pedagogical ability. Main motivation to use social media was fast communication with students and co-workers.

For university educators, conflicts on social media in academic settings occur seldom. This is because Mongolian culture respects educators dearly. Main conflicts mentioned

by the respondents were plagiarism and students asking questions anytime of the day.

Few respondents opposed the idea of using social media in higher education because it has many disadvantages. They pointed out that there is no proof that social media is beneficial to deliver quality education. Most importantly, social media distracts students' attention. Another important point was that social media adds extra time and effort in faculty's working loads.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The findings of this study are limited because of its exploratory nature and sampling of the respondents. Due to big holiday season in Mongolia, recruitment of the interview respondents was limited to capital city's universities. The response from educators from distant areas of Mongolia would have enriched our findings. Further limitations of this study include the absence of insights from other key stakeholders, such as students and administrative workers. Future studies should incorporate insights from these stakeholders to understand social media acceptance as a potential educational tool in higher education system in developing countries. One specific focus of future research could be the potentials of using Facebook as teaching and learning tool in Mongolia because of its popularity in the country. Association between scientific disciplines, age, gender, or work title and utilization rate of social media among faculty members should be investigated in further studies. Moreover, ethical and cultural issues of social media usage in higher education could be studied further.

Appendix A

Interview questions that were asked from university educators

Background questions

1. How old are you?
2. Where do you work?
3. What is your degree? (PhD or Master's)
4. What is your position in your school?
5. What is your title?
6. How long have you been teaching?
7. What is your research interest? What subjects do you teach?

General social media usage

1. What social media do you use? How long have you been using these?
2. Why do you prefer these social media?
3. How do you stay updated with latest social media trends?

Use of social media in education

1. What social media do you use in your teaching? Why do you use these?
2. What social media is more appropriate for educational use? Why do you think that?
3. Have you ever tried creating a group using any social media, such as Facebook group or WhatsApp group to enhance your teaching methods? How do you use these group functions in your teaching?
4. Do you recommend any videos or video tutorials to your students? Which social media do you use in this case? Why?
5. Have you ever tried creating video tutorials by yourself? What tools do you use?
6. To what extent do you use Skype to communicate with your students?
7. To what extent do you use Wiki technologies in your teaching?
8. Do you have your own blog? If yes, in what extend do you use this blog in your personal life and teaching?
9. Many students contact and ask questions using social media such as Viber and Facebook when it is not office hours. How do you handle this issue?
10. Which social media would you recommend to your fellow colleagues and students? Why do you prefer these social media?
11. How would you deal with conflicts among students or with negative comments?
12. What are the benefits of using social media as an educational tool?
13. What are the limitations of social media as an educational tool?
14. What is your own opinion in using social media as an educational tool?
15. I leave the last comment to you. Please say something useful to my study.

Appendix B

Description of the respondents

Code	Age	Gender	Position	Degree	Years worked	Field
R1	40	M	Sr. Lecturer	PhD	18	Accounting
R2	35	F	Lecturer	MA	10	Law
R3	40	M	Sr. Lecturer	PhD	12	Sociology
R4	51	F	Sr. Lecturer	MA/ Major	28	Linguistics
R5	42	M	Professor	PhD	18	Mechanical engineering
R6	44	M	Sr. Lecturer	PhD	20	Machine dynamics
R7	35	F	Lecturer	PhD	4	Pharmacology
R8	26	M	Lecturer	MSc	5	Econometrics
R9	51	F	Lecturer	MA	28	Didactics
R10	44	M	Associate prof	PhD	20	Computer science
R11	47	M	Sr. Lecturer	MA / Lieutenant	24	Linguistics
R12	41	F	Associate prof	PhD	20	Sociology
R13	35	F	Sr. Lecturer	PhD	3	Cultural studies
R14	33	F	Lecturer	PhD	8	Business statistics
R15	39	M	Lecturer	MSc	8	Applied mechanics
R16	35	M	Lecturer	MSc	13	Computer graphics
R17	34	M	Lecturer	MSc	9	Internet programming
R18	32	M	Lecturer	MBA	8	International trading
R19	30	F	Lecturer	MBA	5	Marketing
R20	42	F	Associate prof	PhD	21	ICT in education
R21	28	F	Lecturer	MBA	7	Project management
R22	38	F	Lecturer	MSc	13	Network programming
R23	38	F	Associate prof	PhD	16	Creativity management
R24	55	F	Associate prof	PhD	26	Information systems
R25	37	M	Associate prof	PhD	6	Programming language

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