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An Investigation on the Perspectives of Teachers Using Facebook: A Case of Malaysian Academics

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Abstract

Education fields have rapidly transformed since the year 2020 from the traditional method to adapting more Web-based tools. Facebook has been regarded as one of the most popular social platforms teachers and learners use in education. It is perceived by teachers and learners as a tool that improves the teaching and learning processes significantly through its several features. This study aims to explore the Malaysian teachers' views on Facebook in their teaching. Eighty teachers from different levels of Malaysia's institutions participated in this study. This study adopted the quantitative method to gather teachers' views on the advantages and disadvantages of Facebook and their reflections on Facebook usage in teaching and learning. Findings showed that teachers had a positive perception of the use of Facebook. This study also found no significant difference between male and female teachers in their perception of Facebook use. This study suggests that teachers optimise this tool in their teaching based on the advantages of using Facebook.

Keywords: Facebook; ESL; education tools; learning tools

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Introduction

Since 2020, the world has experienced an unprecedented event that has transformed the old norm of how humans live. The Covid-19 virus, referred to as the 2019 novel coronavirus or '2019-nCoV' (Bender, 2020), has severely infected the world. This new virus can be transmitted from one infected person to another person in just a short time, and no one is immune to this virus once it enters the human system. Due to this pandemic, many sectors such as public transport, tourism and even education are badly affected and closed down. Bender (2020) mentioned in the UNESCO report that out of 91.3% of the total number of students registered in 188 countries at all levels of learning, 1, 576, 021, 818 students were affected by this pandemic. Most governments had to close down schools and other educational institutions to stop the spreading of the virus.

Consequently, the education sector has shifted from the traditional method to online learning. Teachers and instructors have to transform their teaching by using the available web-based tools. Most teachers and instructors choose to take advantage of asynchronous learning by using the available Web-based tools that provide them with the flexibility in formulating learning materials and allow students to balance out the demand of being at home and studying (Daniel, 2020). One of the popular Web-based tools used by teachers in their teaching and learning is Facebook. At first, Facebook was developed and created as one of the media for socialisation. Over time, Facebook has evolved to become one of the tools in education where it provides a communication platform between students and teachers (Shefketi & Hamiti, 2019). As the world of education rapidly integrates Facebook into the education system during this post-pandemic period, people have different views on the advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook as one of the educational tools. Researchers and educators held a positive view that Facebook encourages university students' active learning (Lee, 2019). In contrast, respondents in one of the private universities in Malaysia perceived that Facebook was only for social communication and did not intend to use it for learning (Moorthy et al., 2019). Within the secondary school context, English as Second Language (ESL) literature teachers express their views on using Facebook in their literature teaching classroom (Mariappan et al., 2018).

In addition, Lin et al. (2013) claimed that gender difference plays a significant role in individual perception of the use of technology. Based on the Social Role Theory (SRT), as males and females carry different social roles, their perceptions towards using technology are also different (Lin et al., 2013). Lin et al. (2013) also found out that the perceived usefulness of Facebook had a significant impact on female respondents' intention to continue to use Facebook compared to male respondents. Furthermore, it was found out that female respondents were more worried that Facebook would harm their reputation and social status. In another study, Shen and Khalifa (2010) found significant differences in Facebook usage and perceptions among UAE respondents. The study showed that in assessing Facebook as an essential tool for extending their social network and collecting information, female respondents rated it higher than male respondents did (Shen & Khalifa, 2010). As such, gender differences should be considered an essential variable in investigating user perception of Facebook usage.

Considering all the views, Facebook can be regarded as one of the resources for teaching as it can enhance the learning process. Several advantages of using Facebook in teaching and learning have been studied and agreed by experts. One of those advantages is enhancing communication among students and teachers (Waldman, 2016). Facebook is likely to be used because of its several features, especially messenger, wherein students can interact with teachers privately. In addition, the discussion board allows teachers to post or share information with a large group of students or utilise the comment and reply features in Facebook posting (Toland, 2013). Another notable advantage of Facebook is that it helps promote collaborative learning among students. Students use Facebook to collaborate with their peers in the classroom activities that teachers have instructed. This approach further develops students' motivation to learn and increases their engagement (Lampe et al., 2011).

Although many studies have explored Facebook as a teaching resource, teachers often see obstacles when using the platform in imparting the learning content. Several studies were carried out to explore students' views on the usage of Facebook in education at primary, secondary or tertiary level. Although some studies were conducted in examining the teachers' perceptions of Facebook usage in education (Faizi, 2018; Hassan, 2016; Mariappan et al., 2018), there are still some areas that need further investigations, especially those that are related to their perceptions concerning the advantages and disadvantages of Facebook. Therefore, it is essential to find out how teachers view Facebook as a resource for teaching. This current study will add to the literature on Facebook usage in the educational context.

The current study aims to investigate perceptions of using Facebook as a resource for teaching among teachers from different levels of institutions in Malaysia. Based on this objective, the following research questions are formulated:

- 1) What are the teachers' views on the advantages of Facebook as a resource for teaching?
- 2) What are the teachers' views on the disadvantages of Facebook as a resource for teaching?
- 3) How is Facebook used among teachers to optimise it as a teaching tool?
- 4) What are the gender differences in teachers' perception of Facebook as a teaching resource?
- 5) Are there any significant differences in male and female teachers' use of Facebook?

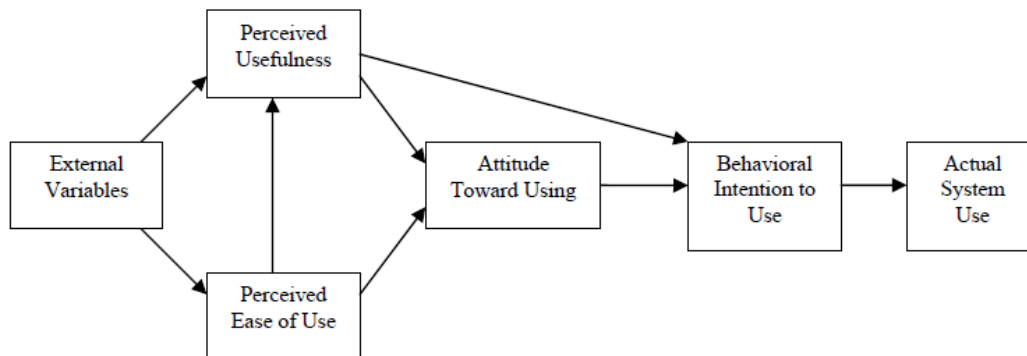
Literature Review

Technology Acceptance Model (Tam)

One of the most well-known and widely accepted theories relating to the use of social media is Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which was proposed by Davis in the year 1989 (Destiana & Salman, 2015). Davis (1989) explained that under TAM, two main factors influence how people accept the computer: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Davis (1989) further suggests that these two factors positively affect individuals' attitudes and acceptance of technology. This theory proposes that perceived usefulness positively affects individuals' perceived intention to use a particular technology. On the other hand, perceived ease of use has both direct and indirect positive effects on individuals' motives for using a specific technology (Miller & Khera, 2010). A representation of the Technology Acceptance Model theory is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Technology Acceptance Model



In the current study, perceived ease of use refers to the degree of students or teachers believing that using Facebook would be free of effort, while perceived usefulness refers to how teachers believe that Facebook features are helpful in their teaching. Based on TAM, students' or teachers' motives in using Facebook will govern their behaviour and attitude towards Facebook. Teachers may develop a positive or negative perception towards Facebook as an education tool depending on their belief that students may have a positive or negative motive in using Facebook.

What is Facebook?

Facebook is a social-based platform that allows people to interact and share information by assigning each user a unique profile. As one of the leading social media platforms, Facebook has an estimated 2.7 billion active users worldwide as of 2020 (Marengo et al., 2021). Facebook is unique compared to other social media platforms. Facebook users can easily combine many media sources such as web pages, webmail, digital images, guest books, digital videos and search engines (Tupamahu, 2017). Facebook allows users to access it using many technology platforms and telecommunication devices available such as mobile phones, laptops and tablets. Some of the main reasons people use Facebook are to make contact, keep in touch and communicate (Doshi, 2020).

The advantages of Facebook are mainly attributed to its features and purpose in helping users. Several of its most used features are newsfeed, messenger, events, groups, pages and moments (Saddhono et al., 2019). These features enable users to communicate with other people and friends once the user has set up the profile. In addition, videos, images and documents can also be shared by a user or a group of users using the features on Facebook. One of the popular features of Facebook is group page, where users can create and invite other people based on similar interests (Horzum & Demirhan, 2017). Furthermore, using this feature, Facebook users can post various media such as videos, images, song clips and documents related to the group's purpose. Facebook users can also create multiple group pages and control the group's privacy setting, either private, for invited users only, or public, for anyone who enters a similar interest. Numerous studies found that Facebook users showed a positive attitude towards Facebook as a social tool, information sharing medium and entertainment platform (Aung & Myint, 2019; Ellison et al., 2007; Kim & Harwood, 2020; Mazman & Usluel, 2010). In terms of the use of Facebook in education, researchers found that Facebook can be considered to be one of the best platforms to foster collaborative learning among students (Donlan, 2014; Tsitsekidou & Siakas, 2017; Voivonta & Avraamidou, 2018). Students can work together with their friends under the teacher's guidance when using Facebook as an educational tool. Facebook features allow students to share new information, thoughts and experiences, thus creating an effective learning environment. In addition, Facebook was found to promote collaboration through sharing intelligence, strengthening peer connections and fostering personal responsibility when commenting or posting a status (Ataie et al., 2015).

Perception of Facebook Among Teachers

With Facebook as a valuable tool in creating a meaningful learning environment, Kabilan et al. (2010) found that undergraduate students in Malaysian public universities believed that Facebook could help the English learning process. The study also showed that most students perceived that Facebook could increase their self-confidence in English writing (Kabilan et al., 2010). In a study by Sirivedin et al. (2018), Facebook could significantly assist teachers in improving their writing skills, especially in the English language. That study aimed to explore the use of Facebook in enhancing the effectiveness of English writing and learning among English language teachers in Thailand. The findings showed that Facebook also "enhanced teachers' English learning attributes such as fluency, confidence, satisfaction, value and self-efficacy belief" (Sirivedin et al., 2018). Besides, Purnamasari (2019) conducted a study to explore Indonesian pre-service EFL teachers' perception of the use of Facebook group in learning. The findings suggested that pre-service EFL teachers showed a positive attitude towards the use of Facebook group. Participants of the study mostly agreed on the statement that Facebook group was highly suitable to check class notes and homework assignments posted (Purnamasari, 2019). Rdouan Faizi (2017) also conducted a study exploring teachers' perceptions towards Web-based tools such as Facebook usage in language learning and teaching in Moroccan tertiary institutions. The findings found that the majority of the

teachers believed in the positive impact that Web-based tools brought in teaching and learning (Faizi, 2018). However, it was found that only a tiny percentage of respondents used Web-based tools to communicate with their students and create educational content (Faizi, 2018).

Perceptions of Facebook Among Learners

A study conducted by Malik and Rahim (2019) revealed that Facebook could help increase students' confidence by expressing their views and thoughts, which later improved their academic performance. According to a study carried out by Lee (2018), it was found that students preferred the use of Facebook since the platform enabled communication between them and their teachers. Furthermore, the platform promoted online discussions and interactivity. Nevertheless, there were a few disadvantages of using Facebook that were highlighted by the study. It was reported that students and lecturers found that information overload distraction and lack of active participation were some of the drawbacks of using the platform in learning. Facebook may also promote intercultural communication among learners. Özdemir (2017) found that samples in their study improved their communication skills, especially in English, among other skills, when they were involved in discussions via Facebook. The students admitted that Facebook gave them a chance to practise English.

Shahril et al. (2018) also carried out a study exploring Facebook as a learning tool and found that Facebook increases students' enthusiasm and motivation in learning. The study also strongly recommended that educators at tertiary institutions entirely use social media as an educational tool to enhance and improve students' learning experiences (Shahril et al., 2018).

Methods

The current study used the quantitative method research design, namely descriptive and inferential analyses, to collect the data required to provide answers for research questions formulated in this study (Creswell, 2014). The benefits of adopting the quantitative method in this study are that it is repeatable and that it is fast. This current study can be replicated and repeated with a different scope or larger samples in the future as its instrument yields a good reliability score. Due to time constraints, the use of the quantitative method helps provide fast results in answering the research questions. (Cohen et al., 2018)

Samples

The participants of this study were selected based on convenience sampling. The use of convenience sampling in this current study was due to the easy accessibility of reaching out to participants and their willingness to participate in the survey. This type of sampling is reasonable, and the participants selected are readily available to take part in the study (Etikan et al., 2016). The participants were 80 ($N=80$) teachers teaching in primary and secondary schools and in Malaysia's tertiary institutions. Table 1 shows the details of the demographic information of the samples involved in the study.

Table 1

Demographic of Respondents

Profile	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	33	41.3
	Female	47	58.8
	Total	80	100
Age	below 20 years old	1	1.3
	21 to 30 years old	10	12.5
	31 to 40 years old	30	37.5
	41 to 50 years old	19	23.8
	above 51 years old	20	25
	Total	80	100
Years of Teaching	1 to 3 years	9	11.3
	4 to 6 years	11	13.8
	7 to 9 years	12	15
	10 to 13 years	8	10
	14 years and above	40	50
	Total	80	100
Institution	Primary School	15	18.8
	Secondary School	59	73.8
	Tertiary Institution	6	7.5
	Total	80	100
State	Pahang	54	67.5
	Terengganu	1	1.3
	Kelantan	4	5
	Selangor	6	7.5
	Perak	2	2.5
	WP Kuala Lumpur	1	1.3
	Negeri Sembilan	2	2.5
	Melaka	3	3.8
	Johor	1	1.3
	Pulau Pinang	1	1.3
	Kedah	4	5
	Sabah	1	1.3
	Total	80	100
Subject	Bahasa Melayu	6	7.5

English	31	38.8
History	1	1.3
Mathematics	6	7.5
Islamic Studies	28	35
Science	2	2.5
Information and Communication Technology	2	2.5
Arabic/Foreign Language	1	1.3
Literature in Melayu	1	1.3
Economics	1	1.3
Visual Arts Education	1	1.3
Total	80	100

Research Instrument

An online questionnaire using Google Form was employed to collect data for this study. This questionnaire consists of four (4) sections covering 20 items. The first section of the questionnaire relates to respondents' demographic background such as gender, age, years of teaching, the state and institution in which they were teaching and the subjects they were teaching. The second section requires participants to indicate their views on the advantages of Facebook as a resource for teaching through the Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The third section requires them to indicate their views on the disadvantages of Facebook as a resource for teaching. The last section involves participants' reflections on the use of Facebook in teaching-learning.

Content validity of the questionnaire was verified through an expert checking all the items in the questionnaire. This type of validity measurement involves assessing the new survey instrument to ensure that all items are required to provide an answer for research questions, and it also involves removing unwanted items related to a specific concept area (Taherdoost, 2018). The expert, a tertiary institution senior academic staff member, reviewed all the items in the instrument and provided feedback on the language structure, the vocabulary used and the arrangement of items on the list. Specifically, she suggested using nouns for the first word in all the items. Therefore, the words *Enhancing*, *Assisting*, *Promoting*, *Enriching* and *Improving* are used accordingly in the questionnaire items. Besides, she commented on the division of sections in the survey that it should be divided based on the construct, such as questions one (1) until six (6) under 'Section A Demographic Information', questions seven (7) until eleven (11) under 'Section B Advantages of using Facebook', questions twelve (12) until fifteen (15) under 'Section C Disadvantages of using Facebook' and questions sixteen (16) until nineteen (19) under 'Section D Reflections on Facebook usage in Teaching-Learning'.

Based on the comments given, an improved version of the questionnaire was prepared, and three reiterations were conducted on the items to ensure the validity of the questionnaire. The 13 items in the questionnaire were tested using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, and the score for the instrument was 0.82, which is considered acceptable (Taber, 2018). In measuring those 13 items, the researcher used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 to conduct the reliability analysis test.

Data Collection Procedures

The participants in this study answered the questionnaire distributed using Google Form link via WhatsApp message and Facebook Messenger. The data were gathered within four days, starting from 19 until 22 April 2021. A brief statement mentioning the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents was written in the first part of the questionnaire. In addition, the study purpose and a brief explanation on voluntary participation in the survey were also included for the respondents to read before beginning to answer the questionnaire.

Table 2

The Schedule for the Data Collection Procedure

Day	Task	Dates
1	Share the questionnaire using Google Form link through WhatsApp Message and Facebook Messenger to friends, acquaintances	19 April 2021
2	Share the questionnaire link to teachers in Pekan, Pahang	20 April 2021
3	Distribute the questionnaire link to teachers in Kota Bharu, Kelantan	21 April 2021
4	Collecting the responses and compiling using Microsoft Excel before being converted into SPSS Version 26	23 April 2021

Data Analysis Procedures

The data gathered from the questionnaire were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 software. Two analysis methods were employed in the current study: descriptive analysis and inferential statistics, namely the independent samples *t*-test. Descriptive statistics that were employed in this study presented data to provide the answer for the formulated research questions. This study reported the data by measuring frequency, mean, per cent and standard deviation. The findings of this study were presented by comparing the mean score of each variable responded to answer the research questions. In addition, *t*-test, namely the independent sample *t*-test, was carried out to identify whether there was a significant difference between genders in terms of their perceptions towards Facebook as an educational tool.

Findings

Table 3

Perceptions towards the Advantages of Facebook as a Resource for Teaching

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Enhancing the communication between teachers and students	80	1	5	3.89	1.006
Assisting towards promoting collaborative learning between students and their peers	80	1	5	3.93	.938

Enriching meaningful learning in an informal setting	80	1	5	4.12	.919
Promoting teachers/instructors to be multitasking in terms of using Facebook features such as discussion board, messenger, linking documents, posting materials for students	80	2	5	4.17	.823
Improving active learning progress	80	1	5	4.11	.886
TOTAL	80				

Table 3 displays the five (5) statements in the questionnaire related to the teachers' perception of the advantages of Facebook as a resource for teaching. The lowest mean score of 'one' indicates 'Strongly Disagree', while 'five' indicates 'Strongly Agree'. The highest mean score was 'Promoting teachers multitasking using Facebook features such as discussion board, messenger, linking document, posting materials for students' ($M=4.17$). The lowest mean score was 'Enhancing the communication between teachers and students' ($M=3.89$).

Table 4

Perceptions towards the Disadvantages of Facebook as a Resource for Teaching

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overuse of Facebook for personal purpose during teaching-learning session	80	1	5	3.86	1.028
Cyberbullying may occur when students use Facebook in learning	80	1	5	3.87	.973
Contents posted on Facebook might be exposed to outsiders (privacy issues)	80	2	5	3.95	.810
Students can post inappropriate content on Facebook, which can disturb and bring danger to others	80	1	5	4.01	.864
TOTAL	80				

Table 4 shows four statements in the questionnaire related to teachers' perception, particularly of the disadvantages of using Facebook as a resource for teaching. The table shows that the highest mean score was 'Students can post inappropriate content on Facebook, disturbing and bringing danger to others' ($M=4.01$). The lowest mean score was 'Overuse of Facebook for personal purpose during teaching-learning session' ($M=3.86$).

Table 5

Teachers' Reflections on Optimising Facebook as a Teaching Resource

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Facebook is a better platform than Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms that can be used for teaching-learning.	80	1	5	3.65	1.192
Facebook should be optimized more in classroom teaching	80	1	5	3.74	1.111
Facebook helps towards delivering better teaching in online learning	80	1	5	3.77	.993
Facebook helps to provide better engagement between students and teachers	80	1	5	3.79	1.002
TOTAL	80				

Table 5 presents the teachers' reflections on optimising the use of Facebook as a resource for teaching. Teachers mostly agreed on the statement 'Facebook helps provide better engagement between students and teachers' ($M=3.79$). There was no significant difference in terms of the mean score of the three (3) statements. These were 'Facebook is a better platform compared to Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms that can use for teaching' ($M=3.65$), 'Facebook should be optimized more in classroom teaching' ($M=3.74$) and 'Facebook helps towards delivering better teaching in online learning' ($M=3.77$).

Table 6

Results of Independent Samples t-test for Mean Scores of Perception towards the Advantages of Facebook

		Levene Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Advantages of Facebook	Equal variances assumed	.677	.413	.201	78	.841
	Equal variances not assumed			.198	65.517	.844

An independent-sample *t*-test was run on a sample of 80 respondents to determine the learning advantages of Facebook as a resource for teaching among male and female respondents. Based on Table 6, the results show no significant difference between genders in their perceptions of using Facebook in terms of its advantages as a resource for teaching, $t(78) = 0.20, p = 0.41$.

Table 7

Results of Independent Samples t-test for Mean Scores of Perceptions towards the Disadvantages of Facebook

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Disadvantages of FACEBOOK	Equal variances assumed	1.826	.180	.067	78	.947
	Equal variances not assumed			.069	76.352	.945

On the other hand, Table 7 displays independent-samples *t*-test ($n=80$) to compare the perception of the disadvantages of Facebook between genders. The results show that there was no significant difference between genders in their perceptions towards the disadvantages of Facebook as a resource for teaching, $t(78) = 0.07, p = 0.18$.

Discussion

In discussing teachers' views on the advantages of Facebook as a resource for teaching, it was found that respondents mostly agreed that the platform enabled them to be multitasking. They could use discussion board, messenger, linking documents and posting materials for students as advantages of using Facebook. This finding is consistent with Judd (2014) who states that with the use of Facebook through its features, a person may develop multitasking behaviour. Teachers who used Facebook in teaching and learning found that several features of Facebook such as discussion board, linking documents and video and messenger enabled them to do several things simultaneously. They could foster active learning by providing related learning material in the discussion board and capturing students' attention by providing learning materials in linking documents or videos for students. This finding further proves the link between Facebook use and multitasking, similar to the finding of previous studies (Karpinski et al., 2013; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010).

Concerning the disadvantages of Facebook as a resource for teaching, most respondents agreed that they disliked the inappropriate content that students could post on Facebook. Abdulahi et al. (2014) claimed that people remain unaware of the policies related to information sharing even though those policies are mentioned on Facebook. These privacy and security issues will disrupt the process of learning as students will have an unpleasant experience. The finding from the current study is also in line with that in the study by Johnson et al. (2012), which found that their participants raised fear of certain groups being

able to view inappropriate content posted on Facebook. However, the finding in this study contrasts with that in Hassan's (2016) study, in which respondents mostly agreed that 'Facebook is too open to the public as the main disadvantage'. For the purpose of mitigating this disadvantage concerning inappropriate content being posted, Facebook has a controlled setting in which users can customise access on a per-post basis through the menu when their respective posts are created. Another feature that can be used to deal with this problem is deleting posts containing inappropriate materials. These two features can help teachers or instructors control the learning process better when they use Facebook as a resource for teaching.

In response to the third research question concerning teachers' opinions on the optimisation of Facebook as a resource for teaching, the findings showed that most respondents agreed that Facebook helped provide a better engagement between students and teachers. This finding is consistent with the work of Duncan and Barczyk (2016) and Mariappan et al. (2018). The research by Sirivedin et al. (2018) also showed that teachers in Thailand perceived Facebook as a handy tool in terms of interaction that would assist the teacher in improving their engagement with students during and after class. Teachers also believe that Facebook may optimise communication in class. Buga et al. (2014) stated that since Facebook is a platform to promote daily communication, it can therefore be used in the school environment. Facebook serves as an effective communication platform for students and teachers. With Facebook, students are more comfortable interacting and engaging with their teachers, and thus, teachers believe that they can successfully improve their students' communication competence.

Concerning gender role in influencing teachers' perceptions towards using Facebook as a resource for teaching, it was reported that both male and female respondents had positive views on the advantages and disadvantages of Facebook as well as the reflections on Facebook. The result is in contrast to the findings by Idemudia et al. (2017), which showed a highly significant difference between females and males in terms of their preference for the use of social media. This finding is essential for the future use of Facebook as both genders had positive views on using the platform in learning (Idemudia et al., 2017).

Conclusion

This study shows that teachers demonstrated positive attitudes towards using Facebook in their teaching. Although it was found that teachers also agreed on the disadvantages of using Facebook in their teaching, most of them perceived that the platform could still be optimised as an educational tool. In addition, gender did not play a significant role in teachers' perceptions of using Facebook. The current data highlight the importance of using Facebook among teachers across primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Malaysia for their pedagogical needs. Nevertheless, this study is limited in terms of the absence of employing qualitative research design such as conducting interviews, as findings from this instrument may shed a better understanding of teachers' views when investigating the advantages and disadvantages of Facebook. It is recommended that studies be carried out using a mixed-method research approach to explore teachers' perceptions of the use of Facebook. The findings from this study strongly suggest that Facebook needs to be employed by teachers as a resource for teaching as its advantages outweigh its disadvantages. However, schools and institutions need to ensure good internet connection speed to have meaningful class sessions when the platform is used (Mariappan et al., 2018).

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