

## POTENTIALS OF FACEBOOK AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL FOR COLLEGE LECTURERS

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### Abstrak

Dengan ditemukannya komputer dan *World Wide Web* (www) dalam dua dekade terakhir, cara baru dalam *online-communication* –yang dikenal sebagai teknologi Web 2.0, seperti *blogs, micro-blogging, podcasts, wikis*, situs jaringan sosial, dunia maya (*virtual world*), *video sharing*, dan *photo sharing*– telah muncul dengan potensi keunikannya masing-masing di dunia komunikasi dan pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat penggunaan situs jejaring sosial, Facebook.com, sebagai alat bantu pendidikan bagi dosen dan mahasiswa di Universitas Pelita Harapan (UPH). Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui proses wawancara terhadap 10 dosen, peneliti menanyakan beberapa pertanyaan seputar penggunaan Facebook dan apa alasan mereka menggunakan medium tersebut sebagai alat bantu dalam mendukung kegiatan belajar-mengajar. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa Facebook ketika digunakan secara rutin, mendorong relasi yang baik antara dosen dan mahasiswa, yang kemudian menghasilkan perilaku positif pada lingkungan belajar-mengajar yang merupakan hasil yang belum pernah diantisipasi.

**Kata kunci:** Facebook, situs jejaring sosial, interaksi di kelas, komunikasi dan pendidikan, perangkat pedagogi

### Abstract

With the invention of the computer and the World Wide Web in the last two decades, new means of online-communication –so called Web 2.0 technologies such as *blogs, micro-blogging, podcasts, wikis, social networking sites (SNSs), virtual worlds, video sharing, and photo sharing*- have emerged with their own unique potentials for communication and education purposes. This study examines uses of the social networking sites, Facebook.com, as a pedagogical tool for lecturers and students at the Pelita Harapan University (UPH) in Indonesia. Using qualitative approach through interviews on a total of 10 lecturers, respondents were asked on how and why they used Facebook to supplement/compliment face-to-face classroom interaction. Results show that apparently lecturers are primarily motivated to use Facebook in order to provide and receive information regarding classroom “activities” as well as other functions that support the teaching-learning process. Results also show that Facebook, when used frequently, encourages more cordial relationships between lecturers and students, which then resulted in a more positive manner on the teaching-learning environment: an outcome that was almost never anticipated.

**Keywords:** Facebook, social networking sites, classroom interactions, communication and education, pedagogical tool

### Introduction

Throughout the history of human communication, advances in technology have powered paradigmatic shifts in education (Frick,

1991); making technology a prime tool in teaching and learning. With the invention of the computer and the World Wide Web in the last two decades, new means of online-communication –so called Web 2.0 technologies

such as blogs, micro-blogging, podcasts, wikis, social networking sites (SNSs), virtual worlds, video sharing, and photo sharing - have emerged with their own unique potentials for communication and education. These new technologies are generally regarded to fall under the umbrella designation of computer-mediated-communication (CMC).

Several researchers have examined the unique communicative capabilities of CMC technologies. The unique characteristics of the technologies may also evoke different motives for using it than for those that prompt traditional media use, such as: *interactivity, demassification, hypertextuality, and asynchronicity* (Ruggiero, 2007). *Interactivity* is defined as "the degree to which participants in the communication process have control over, and can exchange roles in their mutual discourse". While *demassification* refers to the control of the individual over the medium, "which likens the new media to face-to-face interpersonal communication". And *asynchronicity* refers to the concept that messages may be staggered in time. Senders and receivers of electronic messages can read mail at different times and still interact at their convenience. It also means the ability of an individual to send, receive, save, or retrieve messages at her or his convenience.

It has been argued that these CMC characteristics have promoted a type of interaction that is absent in the traditional lecturer-based classroom. It allows learners the freedom to explore alternative pathways to find and develop their own style of learning (Shulman, 2001). For example, William, Strover, and Grant (1994) recognized that media systems such as personal computers create non-geographically based communities.

As technologies continue to develop, Terry Flew (2002) observes that tremendous opportunities for innovation in higher education as new forms of educational media are introduced. These are to free the learner or the user from the physical limitations imposed on social contacts by face-to-face communi-

cations; allowing communication dynamics not limited by space and creating endless array of communication possibilities (Postmes et al., 1998; Ray, 2007). Furthermore, Hamman and Wilson (2002), in their study "*The Development of Pedagogically Appropriate Use of the Internet*," found that students who participated in a web-enhanced class outperformed those students in a traditional lecture format. The authors suggest that such engagement with a new and enjoyable learning environment promotes a level of active processing, thereby creating a more effective learning environment.

Previous communication technologies (e.g. e-mail, chat rooms, and bulletin -boards) have been integrated into the teaching-learning environments (Chizmar & Williams, 1996; Griffin & Lewis, 1998, Hamman & Wilson, 2002; Franklin & Harmelen, 2007). As such, it is conceivable that social networking sites which are used by majority of college students in the United States (Social Media Optimization, 2008) may also have a place in the classroom.

## Literature Review

### SNSs: A New Communication Phenomenon

Over the past few years, a specific form of virtual community has proliferated online. In these "communities", users upload photos, have group discussions, add one another as "friends", play interactive games and applications, and connect with users who share similar interests, regardless of where they are in the world. This new form of CMC is referred as social networking sites (SNSs) with Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook as the most popular examples to date. These networking sites have a number of features that allow individuals to communicate with others, such as Instant Messaging, blog, classified listings, interest groups, music, public comment, image, video, ranking, and email.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) include three elements in their definition of SNSs, describing social networking sites as web-based services:

“that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.”

Since their introduction, SNSs have attracted millions of users and have become extremely popular among high school and college students (Krivak, 2008). Since then, it shaped the business, cultural, and research landscape of its users (Boyd, 2007).

It is apparent that members use these sites for a variety of purposes but the root motivation seems to be communication and the maintenance of social relationships. Popular activities on these sites include updating others on activities and whereabouts, sharing photos and archiving events, getting updates on activities by friends, displaying a large of social network, presenting an idealized persona, sending messages privately, and posting public testimonials (Dwyer et al., 2007).

#### An overview of Facebook

Facebook was developed by Mark Zuckerberg, a student of Harvard University in February 2004. The general concept was to digitize the legendary freshman-year “facebook”, and allow students not only to gawk at one another’s photos but also to flirt, network, interact (Hirschorn, 2007).

Facebook has a number of features that allow individuals to communicate with others. Facebook offer a combination of computer-mediated communication components and allows for a varying amount of flexibility in communication styles. Facebook features include:

- *News Feed*: Highlights information that includes profile changes, upcoming events and birthdays, conversations taking place between the walls of a user’s friends.
- *Mini-Feed*: News stream on the user’s profile page that shows updates about that user.

- *Wall*: Space on each user’s profile page that allows friends to post messages for the user to see while displaying the time and date the message was written.
- *Inbox*: Used for leaving more private messages, and are visible only to the sender and recipient(s) of the Message (much like e-mail).
- *Photos*: Users can upload album or photos, tag friends, and comment on photos.
- *Notes*: Blogging feature that allowed tags and embeddable images. It allows users to import blogs from other blogging services.
- *Gifts*: Allows users to send “virtual” gifts – small icons of novelty items – to each other by selecting one from Facebook’s virtual gift shop and adding a message.
- *Marketplace*: Users can post free classified ads within the following categories: For Sale, Housing, Jobs, and others.
- *Pokes*: Users can virtually poke another.
- *Status*: Allows users to inform their friends of their current whereabouts, actions, or thoughts.
- *Events*: Way for members to let friends know about upcoming events in their community and to organize social gatherings.
- *Networks and Groups*: Allows different networks and groups to which many users can join. Groups are used for discussions and events, and enabling a number of people to come together online to share information and discuss specific subjects.
- *Video*: Users can add and share their videos.
- *Chat*: Allows users to chat with their Facebook friends on a one-to-one basis.

- *Public Profiles:* Allows individuals or companies to “become a fan” of the individual, product, service, or concept. Public Profiles look and behave much like a user’s personal private profile. Public Profile owners can send updates to their fans, which show up on their home page.
- *User Names:* Allows users to choose usernames to make user location easier. The user is able to direct others to their page through a simple link such as [www.facebook.com/username](http://www.facebook.com/username) rather than an otherwise complex URL.

Originally developed as “an online directory that connects people through social networks at school,” Facebook grew and is currently supported by a tremendous traffic of users (Krivak, 2008).

Based on the data derived from Internet-ranking company comScore, Facebook is the sixth-most trafficked site in the U.S. in 2008. It has more than 64 million active users (roughly the same population as the U.K.), with a sign-up rate of over 250,000 new users registered a day (Krivak, 2008). In just one year, Facebook’s sign up rate grew in an astounding rate of about five million new users within a week. If Facebook were a country, it would have a population nearly as large as Brazil’s. It even edges out the U.S. television audience for Super Bowl XLIII, which drew a record-setting of 152 million viewers (Hempel, 2009).

When it was first launched, 85% of college students in the U.S. - an estimated about 3.85 million registered members – put up their profiles on Facebook. By 2007, Facebook has more than 21 million registered members (Needham & Company, 2007). Sixty percent log in daily, 85% log in at least once a week, and 93% log in at least once a month (Arrington, 2005).

At a rate of 645% in 2008, the growth of Facebook in Indonesia has been the fastest in Southeast Asia, outpacing growth in China,

India, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore (Inside Facebook, 2008). In Indonesia, Facebook tops the SNSs with Friendster and MySpace in the second and third place (Girlfriend Magazine, 2009). Hence, Facebook is estimated to have approximately 4.4 million users in which more than 65% are young productive age and 51% of active users log in daily with 25 minutes average daily usage as of May 2009 (Wijaya, 2009).

Facebook is widely suggested for educational pursuits because it is a global network that connects students with other students, indirectly creating a worldwide learning community, which is a vital component of student education (Baker, 1999). As Facebook is unique because it is equipped with bulletin boards, instant messaging, e-mail, and the ability to post videos and pictures, anyone can post information and collaborate within the system (Munoz & Towner, 2009). Arguably, these communication features may be employed to serve the teaching and learning experience, for lecturers and students. Mitrano (2008) even called it, “Facebook 2.0”:

“Facebook has built the site, and students use it; we in higher education should come to recognize that this universal commercial site is here to stay. We should use it for advertising and for communications—and certainly for emergency messaging. The race is on: may the first institution to forge this adventurous type of innovative collaboration win.”

To see the potentials of Facebook in education, this study will particularly focus on how the site has been used as an avenue for lecturer-student interaction.

## Method

The objective of this study is to examine the potential of online social networking sites - the website Facebook.com, in particular, as a pedagogical tool by college lecturers. This study takes on qualitative design in the form of interview. Six open-ended questions focusing on the lecturers’ rationale in utilizing Facebook for

pedagogical purposes were asked of the participants.

The persons involved in this study are individuals who use Facebook.com. They are lecturers of Communication majors at the Pelita Harapan University (UPH) in Tangerang, Indonesia. Ten lecturers from the Faculty of Social and Political Science (FISIP) of UPH participated in this study. The number of persons to be studied is chosen based on available time and resources. In selecting the persons for this study, the snowball sampling method were used, a non-

probability sampling method whereby each person interviewed maybe asked to suggest additional people for interviewing (Babbie, 2005).

The researcher found that almost all faculty members of FISIP, which consists of about 35 members with age between 26 – 70 years old, have Facebook accounts, but only ten of them who used the site as a communication tool between them and their students “actively”. These ten faculty members were then participated in this study (names of the respondents had been changed due to privacy matters).

**Table 1. Personal Background of Lecturer-Respondents**

Respondents	Age	Gender	Teaching course	Length of working as a lecturer
Ajeng	29	Female	Communication of social and development Public Relations	6 years
Merry	26	Female	Communication theory	1 year
Agus	32	Male	Communication research	4 years
Rizki	30	Male	Sociology	5 years
Lena	30	Female	English	5 years
Agatha	28	Female	Introduction to logic	2 years
Tari	26	Female	Print media production	3 years
Joe	38	Male	Principles of management	5 years
Kany	27	Female	English	3 years
Gabriella	28	Female	Communication bussiness	4 years

UPH is chosen as the object of the study because the university pioneered the “digital campus” concept in the region which offers a comprehensive teaching and learning through e-education ([www.uph.edu](http://www.uph.edu)). As a digital campus, UPH uses the latest and the most appropriate technology to foster excellence in education ([www.uph.edu](http://www.uph.edu)).

### Findings and Discussion

Each answer was transcribed and used as guides to examine users’ utilization of Facebook as a pedagogical tool. Needs and motives revealed themselves through respondent

response. The study asked the respondents what they felt as their needs and motivations in relation to the website. Each questionis designed to indicate respondents’ perception of the characteristics of Facebook as an Internet medium, namely: (a) *interactivity*, (b) *demmasification* and (c) *asynchronicity*.

Ten lecturers at the Pelita Harapan University were interviewed on why and how they use Facebook as a pedagogical tool. Lecturers’ age range from 26 to 38 years old (Table 4). From ten of the respondents, seven lecturers are female and three are male. All respondents said that they open their Facebook everyday with an average of one hour daily usage.

**Table 2. Facebook Usage of the Lecturer-**

Respondents	Age	Gender	Lengths of having FB	Duration	Frequency
Ajeng	29	Female	1 year	1 hour	Everyday
Merry	26	Female	2 years	30 minutes	Everyday
Agus	32	Male	2 years	Always login whenever online	Everyday
Rizki	30	Male	1 year and 2 months	Always login whenever online	Everyday
Lena	30	Female	6 months	Hours	Everyday
Agatha	28	Female	6 months	30 minutes - 1 hour	Everyday
Tari	26	Female	1,5 years	1 hour	Everyday
Joe	38	Male	2 years	30 - 45 minutes	Everyday
Kany	27	Female	6 months	1 hour	Everyday
Gabriella	28	Female	3 years and 8 months	30 minutes	Everyday

In presenting the lecturers respondents' results, and to illustrate the characteristics of the use of Facebook, this part will use relevant quotations to support insights for each characteristic.

**Interactivity**

CMC liberates people from physical limitations of face-to-face communication imposed by social contacts, allowing communication dynamics which was previously absent. One respondent shared how Facebook is believed to be an alternative way for college students to communicate without meeting face-to-face:

*"Facebook is the right alternative for the students to meet after school's hour. I several times make a group account on FB and ask my students to discuss certain topics there"* (Ajeng, 29).

Respondents also shared their opinions on why they use Facebook to modify the classroom atmosphere from the routines:

*"I still believe that learning and insightful discussion can also happen*

*in the virtual world of Facebook"* (Rizki, 30).

Meanwhile, other respondent said how the informal atmosphere Facebook creates and provides her a means for relaxation.

*"Sometimes it does. It allows me to relate with students in an informal way and allows me to relate with friends, former classmates, and so on in a non professional setting. This provides a means for relaxation"* (Gabriella, 28).

Facebook as any other mass media has been able to limit or decrease social boundaries. Supporting this, respondents said that one of the motives for having Facebook account is to make friends with his or her students:

*"As in any social network, all people are perceived as friends and that really helps me in having students who would perceive me as their friend. It creates less distance between us"* (Lena, 30).

*Just like peer-to-peer friendships that are characterized by mutual*

*support, lecturers who found out student concerns did not hesitate to provide support or affirmation. "If I have time and I see one of my students is having a big problem, I give them encouragement" (Tari, 26).*

Respondents said that Facebook offers a different atmosphere from the actual classroom. Rizki said he feels closer with his students when he is on Facebook:

*"I feel like I become closer to my students in a more personal way when I use Facebook, a venue not so associated with the classroom" (Rizki, 30).*

However, respondents argued that even though their perception might be influenced from what they read from their students' blog, but it doesn't mean it affects them in evaluating the students.

*"The information I get from my students' profiles have an influence on my perception of them. For instance, I was surprised to know that those who are quiet in class are actually sociable and like partying, and those who always look happy are actually facing family issues. It certainly affect my perceptions of them, however, it does not affect my way of evaluating them in class" (Kany, 27).*

As Facebook is believed to help the lecturers build relationships with their students, it goes beyond to contribute to the learning environment. Respondents shared that by becoming friends, Facebook is seen as a "safe house", even if it has not yet been proven to enhance learning. But at the very least, many believe Facebook helps make the learning less tense:

*"From what I have experienced, actually being too close with students can motivate them to study harder. I even find them more active in classroom. They don't hesitate to ask questions. It helps lesser the tense in the classroom. It also helps me in lesser the tense of being a lecturer. So, it's not only the students who feel tense..., we lecturers also feel tense in doing our job" (Merry, 26).*

Facebook has been the leading social networking site, an avenue where people share their personal identity. Other contacts or friends are able to view and browse each others' page. Respondents shared how they use Facebook as a medium to share knowledge and values that affect how they project themselves on their Facebook profiles.

*"FB is a public area and therefore we have to present ourself in public. Perhaps through informal environment (Facebook) we also can share our knowledge, experience as well as values that should be shared to our students" (Joe, 38).*

Agatha, a 28-year-old lecturer, shared how Facebook was not only a means of self-expression where she can disclose personal information but it is also where she got affirmation from students:

*"One of my colleagues is the one who introduced me to use FB. She told me that FB can make learning less tense. So far, I agree with her. I find some differences on how the students' attitude towards me, before I use FB and after I use FB. More students approach me, which I feel like I'm a truly lecturer. More students ask questions, which means it double my work, but so far it still manageable" (Agatha, 28).*

From respondents' answer, it is apparent that they use Facebook not merely to fulfill their needs as an individual, but to also fulfill their need as a lecturer. Respondents said that they use Facebook to find some information about their students from their students' posts and brought it to the actual class "to break the ice" so to speak (Tari, 26). Other respondent, Rizki, a 32-year-old lecturer who have been using Facebook for 2 years, said that he sometimes uses the information he got from Facebook as examples in class:

*"I sometimes use the information I gathered from their Facebook posts/statuses to "tease" them in class. I also pay attention to what is in on Facebook to mention as examples in class" (Agus, 32).*

As the Internet has been more available to more people, it is believed to be the most convenient communication tool. All respondents agree that at this moment, Facebook is the easiest way for them to communicate with their students, since most students have Facebook profiles.

*"Most of the students have Facebook and therefore it is a very effective way in sharing information as well as the tool for the students to be in contact with the lecturer" (Joe, 38).*

Answers from respondents implies several reasons that motivate them sending information through Facebook.

*"I send announcements to my students through FB. I use FB because more students open their FB regularly than e-mail" (Ajeng, 29).*

*"They react so quickly, and they gave me question early so they can understand the task and all" (Tari, 26).*

*"It is very convenient to use Facebook to get in touch with my students outside class and share information about academic stuff. Since most of my students use Facebook, the information spread quickly. I do not have to inform them one by one. For example, if I want to remind about a date of exams, deadline of assignment, or change in class schedule, I can post it in Facebook" (Kany, 27).*

The fast and quick response time from students has also become the main reason why lecturers use Facebook instead of other forms of communication. This has been articulated with the ease and the opportunity brought on by software use, Facebook has successfully broken down communication walls:

*"It allows me to keep in touch with students and other lecturers, it is open 24 hours a day, it is used by most students. Example: I mentioned a change in the schedule of a class through Facebook, and some students immediately respond. Of course I can use the (physical) bulletin board on campus, but students do not generally notice them. Information delivered through Facebook is much easier to access and share" (Agus, 32).*

But, not all respondents rely on Facebook to send information, Rizki, a thirty-year-old lecturer said that he still used other medium aside from Facebook.

*"I also use FB to send academic information like test/exam coverage, chapters to study, and other pointers for quizzes. Although I consider that not all students are FB users, I also give out the information in class or through SMS for them to check my Facebook profile" (Rizki, 30).*



It can be said that lifestyles have been changed by forming online social communities. One respondent explained how Facebook not only helps to maintain relationships between him and his students at his current university, but it also helps maintain his relationships at his previous institution.

*"I sometimes do this with my UI students; they are almost like friends. I sometimes discuss academic issues (they want to write a thesis and they ask me for my suggestions), but also non-academic relate issues" (Agis, 32).*

### Demassification

Applications that Facebook provides, such as the status message feature, tag, photos, make it possible for lecturers to send information to their students. Respondents expressed how they also use Facebook for giving affirmation or compliments to their students.

*"I sometimes take pictures of their marks (the hardcopy) then tag them in the picture, or copy their essay and put it in the notes, and tell others that it's a good one. Everybody needs compliment, right? =). And i use the notes also to give announcement" (Tari, 26).*

The ease factor has always been cited as a reason for the use of Facebook:

*"It is convenient because it is user friendly and it is used by most of our students while sometimes they do open their FB but not their emails. So if we would like to share academic information or discuss any issues, FB would be the most convenient tool for our students" (Joe, 38).*

A number of respondents said that working as a lecturer sometimes can be boring or monotonous. According to them, Facebook helps them to relax after dealing from a tense coursework. Many respondents mentioned of activities they do while logged on to Facebook: playing games, reading other people' posts, including the students' posts which may help them ease from the burden of a whole day's work.

*"Teaching is fun, but all the works entailing my job as a lecturer can sometimes be boring and exhausting, so Facebook is like a perfect way of relaxing, and by relaxing I mean by playing FB games and getting updates from my friends, students, and colleagues" (Lena, 30).*

This is supported by Rizki, a thirty-year-old lecturer who uses Facebook to play games to relieve stress:

*"It feels like I am in another world, a virtual world where exchange of information is fast. Applications (keeping pets, farming and games) also are stress-relieving for me" (Rizki, 30).*

In Facebook, a user can "tag" someone or be "tagged". This might mean that the content posted (article, photo or link to a site) may involve or is interesting to those "tagged". This Facebook feature, as a lecturer says, helps users to become at ease with each other:

*"I rarely purposely open my students' FB. I will open their FB if I see them "tag" me on their pictures. And sometimes I comment on their pictures" (Agatha, 26).*

A social network is made up of users and the relations between them. The social network is seen as an entity capable of mediating between the individual and society. Some

respondents said that as lecturers they use Facebook to get to know their students more.

*"It is quite hard to understand students' characteristics just through the teaching and learning experiences in class or through brief academic consultations. Through Facebook, I was able to see the side of the students that we don't see in class" (Gabriella, 28).*

Numerous respondents answer that they learn more about their students through the comments that they make and the content they post on their profile or on others.

*"Facebook helps me to get to know my students more, especially about non-academic things such as personality, the way of thinking, hobbies, relationships with families, friends, acquaintances, lovers" (Kany, 27).*

Supported by Lena, she admitted that out of curiosity she does open and read her students Facebook page, even of only certain students:

*"I get to know about their family, their love life, their interests and so on. For what purpose? Most of the time, because I am curious, I only open and read FB pages of students I am close enough with, my thesis supervisees, and some problematic and mysterious students. It really helps me in communicating with them. (Lena, 30).*

Other respondent even said that they understand their students more through Facebook:

*"Reading their posts on their FB help me to understand them more. Ex: there is one student who is very quiet in class. Even among her*

*friends, I find that she is a quiet person. But on FB, I don't find her so. She is so active in updating her FB status....like..."Eating durian after 3 years"; "I miss eating...."; "Having dinner with mama, papa, koko (brother), cece (sister)....complete!".....things like that. From her statuses I find that she's a family oriented. She often mentions about their family members on her statuses. Even from her pictures, most of them show either she's with her parents or siblings or relatives" (Agatha, 26).*

*"I could discover that one of my thesis advisee is under a lot of pressure and nearly gave up on finishing his thesis through reading his status on facebook. He had always come across as having a mature and strong personality. It turns out that through facebook, I found his "weak" side and the factors that stressed him out. The facebook exposure encouraged me to get in touch with him personally and subsequently changed my approach in advising him" (Gabriella, 28).*

Meanwhile, Merry, a 26-year-old lecturer who has been using Facebook for two years said that by knowing her students more, she learnt to see from their perspectives:

*"The information they post on their page do influence my perception of them, but it doesn't merely so. It more helps me to understand them better. For example: there are some students who are quiet in the classroom, but on Facebook I find them different. Some students are more active on Facebook. This is maybe because they are shy to express themselves in front of the class, but*

*on Facebook they only face the screens, so maybe it gives them more confident. And by doing that also, it helps them to articulate their ideas better” (Merry, 26).*

Online social networking websites offer a combination of CMC factors like IM, blog, public comment, and email. These factors helped these online networking websites to allow relationships that begin online to move offline, into real life. Respondents shared how they build their relationships through Facebook, *“I do sometimes comment on their posts that are non-academic related. It helps building our relationships which I find positive for learning atmosphere” (Merry, 26).*

*She explained further:*

*“I’ve been teaching for several years and I feel like it’s better for me to know about their personality. And I realize if meeting them only at school is not enough for me. Therefore, Facebook does help me a lot in doing my job as a lecturer. Through their pictures, the comments on their Facebook, I can know different side of them, understand them, especially when they are having problems or difficulties. By knowing about their difficulties, I can put more attention to them. And it happens several times I ask them their problems and they are very happy to share it. But, I never post it on their wall posts. We’ll talk either meeting face-to-face or we’ll exchange messages inbox” (Merry, 26).*

Being too close with students is not always seen as appropriate. Thus, some lecturers deem it necessary to keep a healthy distance between them and their students

*“I post on their wall with non-academic related only for those I’m*

*close with (such as the head of the class, or whom I know the name without looking at their paper, but it’s only for birthday greetings and all cause I don’t want them to feel that they’re my ‘kiddos’). I won’t post non-academic related to random students, because I need to maintain my self image as their lecturer. I need some distance, so I can judge them and give them marks objectively” (Tari, 26).*

*“If they post a comment on my wall or photos, I would respond. But I do not leave any comments on their posts about both academic and non-academic matters because I would like to treat my students equally. If I keep leaving comments on certain students’ posts, the others might get jealous or might think that I favor certain students” (Kany, 27).*

*“I usually do not discuss the information posted by my students to avoid getting close to certain students. I do not want treat them unequally even in the online space” (Gabiella, 28).*

Some respondents are aware of privacy issues that are always part of any social networking sites such as Facebook:

*“I do limit myself in expressing my personality, but it’s not merely because I’m a lecturer. Even though I need to gain respect from my students, also because I’m very conscious of my privacy. I do upload pictures on my Facebook, but only the “appropriate” ones, or sometimes I limit the people who can access to my pictures. I don’t want people to judge me by looking at my pictures from my FB” (Merry, 26).*

*"I have always tried to control myself from publishing very personal information. I do not present my "back stage" on Facebook except through personal communication with selected friends" (Agus, 32).*

Online image is an aspect of personal identity need that involves not only the user creating the profile, but also those who view the profile. One respondent shares how she felt about her online image, as a means to gain respect from her students:

*"I use it to express not only my personality but also my life. Being a lecturer or a lecturer it means I have to limit the info, the wall, the shout out, the pic about me. I will censor some of my pictures such as: partying part, sexy pose, etc. I have to earn their respect" (Tari, 26).*

Moreover, for Tari as a young lecturer who is about her students' age, says how she needed to maintain a lecturers' image on her Facebook:

*"It's hard to put my TOO personal photos even everybody have their own "child at heart or sexy minded" but sometimes I can't share it too wide for them. Cause it may cause some bad effect such as disrespect and all. After all, I'm almost the same age, same taste, same style, same environment, but they still have to respect me enough to accept knowledge from me" (Tari, 26).*

Meanwhile, some respondents shared how being a lecturer made them more aware of how they may be more of a role model to students. They have thus tried their best to control what they posts online:

*"As most lecturers are perceived as role models, I am aware that what-*

*ever I post online, not only on Facebook – can influence how my students relate with me. As much as I can, I post non-violent, positive and non-sexual content, and comments on my Facebook wall or on others" (Rizki, 30).*

*"Yes, I express my thoughts through posts in status and comments but I am careful about what I post because I believe that lecturers should be role models for students" (Kany, 27).*

Unlike Tari, Rizki, and Kany, Lena, a thirty-year old lecturer said that she has expressed herself freely on Facebook:

*"I do express my personality on FB despite my profession as a lecturer. It is good for them to know me as I am. Being a lecturer does not affect how I present myself on my FB page, at least not much. Even though, I am sometimes being careful on my FB page, it's not because I am a lecturer, but it's because there are many people without much level of tolerance" (Lena, 30).*

Similar with Lena, Gabriella, a 28-year old lecturer said that being a lecturer doesn't affect on how she presents herself on her Facebook.

*"Facebook does in some ways express my personality but I don't purposely use facebook to express my personality.... I would present myself in that manner anyway even if I were not lecturer" (Gabriella, 28).*

Some respondents admitted that they sometimes view or browse their students Facebook to gain information about their students' activities outside classroom, mostly for students who have problems with their

academic performance or socially (Gabriella, 28). Others responded:

*"Yes, out of curiosity, I browse through my students' Facebook page, just to check on what activities my students are involved in through the pictures and comments they post. I gather mostly information on their personal and non-academic lives: what they do in their free time, their moods, the movies and music they are into" (Rizki, 30).*

*"I do not intend to gather information about my students but I am curious about what kind of people they interact with and what they do outside class because those things could affect their attitude toward studies" (Gabriella, 28).*

Meanwhile, other said they browse their students' Facebook to make them "stay in the loop".

*"I even sometimes update my knowledge on what's happening among the youngsters through Facebook, such as to know what songs are popular at this moment, scandal/rumors about celebrities, what is "fun" to do, even sometimes I find nice places to hang out from my students' Facebook (Merry, 26).*

The information available via surveillance is also used by the respondents for self-evaluation:

*"I like to read my students' posts about their lecturers. Just like what happened last month for example, one lecturer was panic to safe the laptop or himself during the earthquake. Some posts also show how the students complained because of a very strict lecturer, who is always on time. So, I feel like by*

*knowing about what students think of us, may help us, especially me to evaluate myself as a lecturer" (Ajeng, 29).*

Getting this information can have practical applications as well:

*"I can know whether their lying about their lateness or not, i can tell their late or dont do their job as a student because family problem or just late at night partying, etc. With their age, they usually use pics and shoutout just to tell the world what are they doing at that moment. So it's a good thing for me." (Tiara, 26).*

Activities such as sending information for changes of class venue, exchange of interesting links, and giving encouragement to the students were the activities that all respondents do when logged into Facebook.

*"I have definitely made use of FB as means of sending academic info and meeting announcements for students even though not that often." (Lena, 30).*

*"I use Facebook to manage group assignments and send announcements/links to read. I also sometimes post links to interesting websites that might help students (see the group "I Survived Social Research Methods' for example)" (Agus, 32).*

*"I have sent out academic information such as invitations to conferences and forums that they might be interested, and announcements like what to bring to class and what to do for assignment".*

Most respondents said that aside from the features that Facebook provides, they also

mainly use Facebook because it is very cost efficient:

*"It's been two semesters I've been using Facebook for educational purposes. As a lecturer, Facebook does help me a lot to get connected with my students in a "cheaper" and immediate way. It also helps me in sharing information to my students" (Merry, 26).*

Many respondents spoke of the functionality of finding old students and keeping in touch with them. This supports the ease of use element and allows communication opportunities among users who haven't kept in touch for a long time.

*"First time I had Facebook, I didn't realize how Facebook can be used as a medium for communication to my students. I only used it to maintain my relationships with my friends, especially my friends abroad. Just this past one year, I realize its advantage" (Merry, 26).*

"Through Facebook, I can meet my students from the previous semesters. They find me through my recent students' Facebook. They visit my Facebook and say hi, ask me how the students now, what class I am teaching now. Some of them also tell stories about their activities now, tell me how they miss me...miss the class, and they even ask me to meet. I do sometimes meet them for lunch and we share our stories. They share how they are having difficulties, especially the thesis. If they ask suggestion from me, I share them what I think" (Agatha, 28).

*"I widely use Facebook to maintain my relationships with my students*

*from the previous semesters and also with the alumni. Some alumni students sometimes message me and ask how I am doing, they also sometimes send me some links to interesting articles or video regarding to my subjects. And other students who are doing their thesis sometimes still discuss about their thesis and ask me for some suggestions (Merry, 26).*

Another respondent commented on how media convergence has made the use of this social networking site easier. *Blackberry*, a popular brand of hand-held personal data assistant (PDA) and Facebook, helps her more easily in maintaining her relationships with her students:

*"Yes. After the class, I often say hi at their wall or just give them spirit to work more on their essay. Sometimes they tell me about their difficulties also. We discuss all things, from the new lecturer until their relationship with boyfriend/ girlfriend, anything they want to share with me or pass on our eyes to speak about so I found fb and also blackberry really a greattttt ship to give away information. And believe it or not, it links everyone" (Tari, 26).*

### **Asynchronicity**

Because Facebook is an online networking site, content and information sent can be viewed immediately or for a later time. Many lecturer respondents appreciate this feature. Some respondents said that they don't open his/ their Facebook anytime. He/she will open only if there is (he gets any notification) from the (his) students: *"I spend one hour everyday for me to answer my students' inquiries" (Agatha, 28). "I do not open my students' FB page. Unless I have been informed by them that there are issues or comments or pictures or funny videos that are*

*shared. I do comment on their status and pictures, as necessary* (Joe, 38).

## Conclusion

This paper addressed the potentials of Facebook as a pedagogical tool among lecturers and students in the Pelita Harapan University (UPH). First finding the researcher found from the study was that most of all faculty members of FISIP at UPH, which were 35 people with the age between 26 – 70 years old, had Facebook accounts. But, only ten of them who were “active” on Facebook, which then participated in the study. The finding also found that these ten Facebook users were relatively young, with the age between 26 – 38 years old. This finding supported previous research on daily usage of Facebook that mentioned that from 4.4 million users of the medium, more than 65% were young productive age (Wijaya, 2009).

Respondents shared that there were particular characteristics Facebook as an Internet medium that could account for their gratifications, which included the interactivity, demassification, and asynchronicity properties of the medium. These factors thus provided the drive to participate in this online networking site. This research supports the finding of Barry Wellman who stated that as users become more aware of their needs and the needs of others, they attempt to gratify their needs through more frequent communication (Wellman et al., 2001).

After reviewing, this study also found that Facebook has become a welcomed recourse for lecturers to fulfill their gratifications as individuals and to enrich their interaction in education. This is inline with the assumptions of the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory that suggests people use media to gratify their needs or wants (West & Turner, 2007). The study found six gratifications that motivated the respondents to use Facebook as pedagogical tool, such as: (1) *diversion*; (2) *personal relationships*; (3) *personal identity*; (4) *surveillance*; (5) *convenience*; (6) *social capital*.

The first gratification is *Diversion*. This can be defined as escape from routine problems, emotional release, or seeking of alternatives (McQuail, 1972). Second, *Personal relationships*, which refer to friendships and relationships being formed, and social utility of information in conversations (McQuail, 1972). Third, *Personal identity*, which pertains to the reality exploration, reassurance, self-understanding, and identity formation (McQuail, 1972). Fourth, *Surveillance*, which refers to information about things which might affect one or will help one to do or accomplish something (McQuail, 1972). Two more types of gratifications based on recent U&G findings on internet-related use are included. These are *Convenience, or the easy and cheap access to information of others* (Papacharisi & Rubin, 2000), and finally, *Social Capital*, which pertains to the extent to which members use SNS to maintain existing ties or to form new ones (Ellison et al., 2007). These encourage them to use Facebook on a regular basis and have, for some, become part of their lifestyle.

For *diversion*, many respondents shared wanting to divert from their daily routine. They feel applications, such as online games; help them relax after dealing from a tense coursework. Other applications, the *News Feeds* and *Mini-Feed* (comments feature), also are important applications for respondents. For example, lecturer respondents reported using these applications for posting online discussions. Students shared that online discussion provide a different atmosphere in learning: there is learning but in an alternative setting. Furthermore, respondents agreed that Facebook makes the learning less tense. The nature of the online site where one can choose when to respond, gives them time and thus articulate their ideas better. These findings point to the work of Canagarajah who found that online communication provides a virtual “safe house” to the students as they can explore academic and other issues (Canagarajah, 1997).

On *personal relationships*, users reported that they commented each other on their page. This interaction may then affect the relationships between them. This study then suggests that Facebook when used frequently encourages more cordial relationships between lecturers and students, which then gave positive impact on the teaching-learning environment. The finding showed that students who felt close to their lecturers would more likely to be more active in class and not hesitate to ask questions: an outcome that was almost never anticipated in an unconventional, non face-to-face venue. Similarly, Terenzini and Pascarella (1980) noted a positive influence of both the frequency and quality of students' informal relationships with faculty (cited in Halawah, 2006).

Lecturer respondents placed high importance on the impression their profile can convey to other users, particularly to their students. Some respondents said that they always tried to do what is called as identity management" (Hewitt & Forte, 2006), to control what they put on their page, particularly in uploading their pictures. According to respondents, Facebook through its features - especially the *Photos* feature - may fulfill their *personal identity* gratifications which inherent in this behavior in an aspect of the lecturer as a role model. The study found that most lecturer respondents, who were about in their middle 20s, stated that their aim in doing identity management was mainly to gain respect from their students. This online identity management also relates to the work of Barry Wellman who spoke of control a user is given over what they will present online and who has access to what is presented (Wellman, 1996).

The study also suggested that Facebook was used by the lecturers because it fulfilled their *surveillance* gratifications. It was the drive to learn from the information available that leads to behavior prompts the users to explore the site. This is in support of Ray's study of needs and motives of CMC, which posits that curiosity drives users to gather information through the software's available tool to meet their needs (Ray, 2007).

Convenience is one of the major gratifications respondents seek in using Facebook. Similar to Raacke & Raacke (2008) findings, the study found that all lecturers respondent responded that they widely used the status message feature to send announcements or other important notifications to their students through this feature. According to them, this way is the most effective way to do that because majority of the students have Facebook account and they log in to it regularly.

Facebook also fulfills individual needs for social capital. Normally the relationships between students and lecturers only happen within a semester, but with the presence of Facebook, the relationships continue beyond this time. Numerous respondents shared that Facebook helped them maintaining their relationships with their students, both former and current students. They said usually, their former students would leave message on their Facebook and asked for advice about their thesis or even only say hi to them. This strengthens Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe (2007) finding that social networking sites allow establishing or maintaining connections with others (Ellison et. al., 2007).

While Karpinski's study said that Facebook's users have significantly lower grade-point averages (GPAs) than those who do not (Hamilton, 2009), this study seems to disagree with the notion. Even though the study doesn't suggest that the students who use Facebook may improve their grades, like many other computer applications, with the gratifications and its use, Facebook carries a great potential to be used as a pedagogical tool.

Specifically, research discussed earlier by Hoffman in this article suggests that social networking sites, such as Facebook, can be used as a tool for usage in teaching and learning (Hoffman, 2009) may have been proven. Consistent with this, the respondents shared that Facebook is used to mediate lecturers and students outside classroom. The study findings then suggest that Facebook fulfill both lecturers and students needs in teaching – learning process at UPH.



Moreover, the study maintains that networking technologies not just offer a better learning environment for students, but also providing opportunities for reducing the cost of the learning process (Chizmar& Williams, 1996). These include electronic submission, electronic handouts, notices, and schedules.

Overall, the findings suggest a great potential for using Facebook as an effective teaching and learning tool for both lecturers and students at at UPH, but at the same time, the findings also suggests some potential dangers if both lecturers and students do not follow the “rules of the game”. The study found that, some lecturer-respondents felt that as the impact of their informal relationships with their students, they had to put more effort in order not to loose respects from their students. This case happened to some of the respondents, especially for the young lecturer-respondents. In this case, the lecturers have more work to do, to do image management.

Findings also suggest that having too close with students may affect their objectivity as a lecturer. Therefore, maintaining relationships between students and lecturers are really necessary to do, in order to avoid misjudgment. Some lecturer-respondents argued that in order to do this, they tried to make some “distance” to their students, by limiting comments on their students’ blog or only giving comments which is related to school matters.

As the final point, the study found that all ten lecturer respondents, who come from a young group of age which were around 26 – 38 years old, also the student respondents had been effectively, used Facebook as a pedagogical tool. It is also found that using Facebook as a pedagogical tool is applicable for social science field.

In conclusion, the study suggests there is a large potential for existing online networks such Facebook to be an effective teaching and learning tool. Furthermore, this study pointed out that the use of Facebook is a rational and cost-effective interaction and learning resource

for lecturers at UPH. The move to integrate social networking sites into teaching and learning environments seems rational because students are already using the network on a daily basis. Moreover, it is undoubtedly a more cost-effective educational tool because the virtual infrastructure is already functioning successfully and is just for the students and lecturers to use at liberty.

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