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ENHANCING LEARNING PARTICIPATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM USING SOCIAL MEDIA: THE CASE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK UNIVERSITY

Subkhi Abdul Aziz[*]
National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia
*Corresponding author's E-mail address: subkhi.aziz@gmail.com / subk001@brin.go.id

A B S T R A C T

The utilisation of social media for education such as Kahoot! and Padlet to improve the classroom learning experience has become popular in recent years. This study investigates the implementation of Kahoot! and Padlet in the international students' learning environment at the UK university. The purpose of this study was to explore international students' perspective towards the implementation of Kahoot! and Padlet in the classroom learning process. In doing so, this study used a qualitative research design. Data were collected from ten international students from six different countries origin via semi-structured interviews. The results suggest that the implementation of Kahoot! and Padlet can improve the classroom learning process and create better study experience than the conventional way. Several benefits have been identified from the implementation of Kahoot! and Padlet in the international students learning environment, such as managing classroom discussion, building up an active classroom discussion, and encouraging critical thinking. However, some challenges regarding the implementation should be considered, notably those related to technical matters and the production of interesting contents. From this study, it can be concluded that using social media applications, such as Kahoot! and Padlet, can enhance students' collaboration learning as well as support an inclusive classroom learning environment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a digital online platform that builds on the foundation of web 2.0, which enables the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Ebrahim, 2020). Social media can facilitate the social and interpersonal relationship among individuals, allow their users to connect with other people, to publish content, and to engage in conversation (Jarrahi & Sawyer, 2015). Nowadays, social media becomes a popular tool for online communication. Social media also improves communication in many activities, including in the higher education area. One of the most discussed topics regarding social media in the context of higher education focuses on the usage of social media as tools to enhance participation learning of students.

As explained by van Dijck et al. in the book entitled Social media platforms and education in 2018 assert that there is an increasing tendency to use social media as tools and platforms in the educational context. The utilisation of social media in the education process, can, however, either be enhancing or disrupting the learning experiences. On the one hand, social media offers opportunities for collaboration by allowing students to engage in communication and content creation (Ansari & Khan, 2020; Gikas & Grant, 2013). On the other hand, the challenges arise when social media triggers disruptions in the classroom learning process, causing teachers' disappointment (Junco, 2012).

In the educational context, social media can be used either both inside and outside the classroom. as explained by Moran et al. in the book entitled Teaching, learning, and sharing: How today's higher education faculty use social media in 2011 argue that the implementation of social media for teaching inside and outside the classroom can create collaborative learning and sharing knowledge among members. This can occur because social media enables students to post content and video and to give comments to each other related to study materials. Another study from Hrastinski and Aghaee (2012) states that social media has a role in supporting students for a particular task, such as information retrieval of the study material. The information retrieval becomes easier because it is uploaded in social media like Facebook or YouTube, therefore preventing the students to lose their study materials. Research from Pallas, Eidenfalk, and Engel (2019) reports that the implementation of social media for education in the classroom could encourage students who are normally quiet in the class to become more active in the discussion. Furthermore, more discussions will be produced by the quieter students when conducted the learning process in online forums rather than in the physical classroom (Pallas, et al., 2019). Another research from Henninger and Neal in the book chapter entitled Incorporating web-based engagement and participatory interaction into your courses in 2012 implements social media to convert live classroom presentation to presentation in digital format and then upload this in Facebook. The result shows that presentation in digital format through social media (that allows the students to comment) has substantially increased students participation in the discussion.

Another social media study in higher education, discusses the utilisation of Kahoot! and Padlet to support learning process in the classroom (Babar & Panah, 2020). Research conducted by Rashid, Yunus, and Wahi (2019) regarding the implementation of Padlet application in the classroom reports that it has improved students' participation in-class activities and has encouraged interaction between students and teacher. Rathakrishnan, Ahmad, and Choi (2018) argue that learning with Padlet in the classroom can enhance the critical thinking of students. Furthermore, Padlet can be used in the classroom for several class activities such as class resource for material learning, class diary, information for frequently asked questions, brainstorming and online dialogue (Sari, 2020).

Another study regarding the utilisation of Kahoot! Application concluded that it can be used as a collaborative learning tool. Benhadj et al. (2019) and Licorish et al. (2018), argue that using Kahoot! in the classroom has influenced the enhancement of classroom dynamics, fostered student engagement and motivation, as well as improved the learning experience. Kahoot! can also foster and reinforce learning material (Tan, et al., 2018). Furthermore, Kahoot! can be used to evaluate teaching and learning activities based on students answer to quizzes (Licorish, et al., 2018).

In the context of international education environment, social media is also used as a tool to build interaction and communication between local and international students (Yu, Foroudi, & Gupta, 2019). However, in this environment, international students tend to choose to stay in the same cultural group and to build communication with other students that have a familiar language (Arkoudis, et al., 2013; Senyshyn, 2019). Rienties, Héliot, and Jindal-Snape (2013) argue that the English language ability of international students and the limited opportunity to make interaction with local students are the main obstacles to build communication between them. In the university, teachers play a crucial role in designing collaborative learning and improving the social interaction between international students and local students in the classroom through social media application (Hrastinski & Aghaee, 2012). Moreover, Ngai (2019) studying Japanese international students in US university that use Facebook to support activities inside and outside the classroom reports that there is an improvement in terms of global competence, such as communicative ability and collaboration involving people from diverse backgrounds.

Considering the advantages of social media as one of the tools in the learning process, it is reasonable to assume that using social media application for education inside and outside the classroom could help improve learning experience between teacher and student. However, previous studies regarding the utilisation of social media in the education sector for international students has largely focused on mainstream applications, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, that is strongly related to personal and private usage. Meanwhile, studies focusing on social media to improve learning in the classroom such as Kahoot! and Padlet only involve students from the same background. Therefore, little is known on the implementation of those social media applications within the context of international students who have different languages and cultures.

Against this background, this study aims to better understand the international students' perspective in the UK university towards the implementation of social media in the classroom learning process, as well as the extent to which Kahoot! and Padlet have supported the learning process in the classroom. Such knowledge is important to improve the implementation of social media in the classroom by a teacher, that in return may enhance international students' participation and create a better study experience for them.

2. METHOD

This research used a qualitative method. While the previous literature provides little information about the phenomenon, the researcher needs to explore this phenomenon from participants overview (as explained by creswell. in the book entitled Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.) in 2012). In this sense, exploratory research is useful to clarify the researcher's understanding of a particular issue, problem, and phenomenon (as explained by Saunders et al. in the book entitled Research methods for business students. Financial Times/Prentice Hall, Harlow (7th ed.) in 2015). The implementation of social media in the classroom for international students learning is the central phenomenon of the research that was explored through participants view, opinion and perception. As this research is exploratory in nature, semi-structured interviews provide an opportunity to probe the participants' answer, where the researcher wants their interviewees to explain and give a response to a particular topic (as explained by Saunders et al. in the book entitled Research methods for business students. Financial Times/Prentice Hall, Harlow (7th ed.) in 2015).

A total of 10 participants from international students in the UK university were selected purposefully for this research. The participants come from postgraduate international students and studied master degree in one of the UK universities. Participants consist of six countries of origin that have different languages and cultures: three students from Indonesia, three students from China, one student from Japan, one student from India, one student from the United Arab Emirates, and one student from Taiwan. The purposeful sampling was selected where the researcher intentionally select individuals to understand the central phenomenon and ensure they can meet the objectives of the research (as explained by creswell. in the book entitled Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.) in 2012)
. In this research, the researcher tried to select participants that have "information-rich". Because of that particular reason, participants are those having experience in using Padlet and Kahoot! as social media applications in the learning process in the classroom.

Before collecting the interview data, all participants were given the participant consent sheet to ensure they are aware of the interview process and accept all the terms. All participants were also informed that they could withdraw their participation for this research in anytime during the interview session. The researcher committed for the ethical consideration such as ensuring that participants response would be anonymous, saving the recorded interviews and then transcribing these in a secure device with codifying folder name that has been protected by a password, as well as ensuring the data collection will be used only for this research purpose. For that reason, 10 participants of this research are given a pseudo name: participant A to participant J. The details of the participant background can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Background

Participant	Country of Origin	Degree
A	Indonesia	Master
B	Indonesia	Master
C	Japan	Master
D	China	Master
E	China	Master
F	China	Master
G	India	Master
H	United Arab Emirates	Master
I	Indonesia	Master
J	Taiwan	Master

All data collected from semi-structured interviews have been analysed using thematic analysis. The thematic analysis process followed six steps (as explained by Terry et al. in the book entitled Thematic analysis in 2017). The thematic analysis started by familiarising the data during the collection period. After transcribing the interview conversation, the researcher reread the transcripts and then highlighted the words or sentences to create notes. In the second step, the researcher immersed more deeply in the data collected to find meanings and then grouped similar notes for generating codes. In the third step, the researcher continued to find similarities and patterns across datasets and then grouped similar codes to constructing themes. In the fourth step, the draft themes created in the previous step are possible to change during data analysis to find the new appropriate potential themes. In the fifth step, the researcher defined the name of each theme after ensuring clarity and cohesion between codes and themes. Finally, in the sixth step, the researcher produced a report from the result of the thematic analysis.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The two main themes that followed by five sub-themes have been defined after processing the collected data using thematic analysis. All of the themes used to answer the international student's perspective towards the

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implementation of social media such as Kahoot! and Padlet for classroom learning. Table 2 shows the detail of the themes and their sub-themes from the result of data analysis using a thematic analysis approach.

Table 2. The Results from Thematic Analysis

Themes	Sub-Themes
Advantages	Managing classroom discussion
	Building up an active classroom discussion
	Encouraging critical thinking
Challenges	Technical matters
	Create interesting content

3.1 Advantages

Social media has a chance to improve the learning process in the classroom. International students as participants of this research have a certain degree of experience in using social media for collaborative learning in the classroom, such as Padlet and Kahoot! during their study in the UK university. The participants argued that social media implementation in the classroom had created better experiences in the learning process. One participant expressed the experience using Kahoot! in classroom learning,

> Excerpt 1
> "It is interesting because one professor uses the platform that we can see other students answer. It is like competition, so we can just feel more interesting than just having the lecture." (Participant E)

The expression above shows that social media implementation in the classroom has given a chance for the teacher to offer another learning method than the conventional way. This can enhance students engagement in the classroom learning process. Aligned with the participant expression, previous research from Licorish et al. (2018) & Putri (2019) argue that the implementation of Kahoot! in the classroom can improve the quality of teaching and learning beyond the conventional classroom method. Kahoot! (https://kahoot.com/) is one of education social media applications that can modify the learning method through online gaming quiz. A teacher can create online gaming quiz related to study material using Kahoot! and encourage all students to join the quiz that has a chance to answer within a limited time. Kahoot! offers an online quiz followed by some music that can create an attractive environment and impose students to win the competition by choosing the right answer as quick as possible. Kahoot! is able to show a sense of pride for the winning student because the quiz winner indicates the understanding of study material (Zarzycka-Piskorz, 2016).

In addition to Kahoot!, Padlet has been also used to support the learning process in the classroom. One participant shared an opinion about the implementation of Padlet in the classroom learning,

> Excerpt 2
> "It is interesting, you can share your idea, share link website, share photos and they are will appear in front of the screen." (Participant B)

Based on this opinion, the ability of Padlet application has encouraged students to become more active in classroom learning. Aligned with the participant opinion, previous research from Rashid et al. (2019) report that Padlet utilisation for learning in the classroom can motivate students to participate in class activities and encourage interaction between students and teacher. Padlet (https://padlet.com/) is one of education social media applications in the classroom learning that can accommodate the collaborative learning among class members through the online digital canvas (Taufikurohman, 2018). On this online digital canvas, students and teacher can share their questions, opinions, and ideas. Because of that, Padlet has enabled students to collaborate and support each other in the learning process by providing the study materials (Zainuddin et al., 2020). Shortly, Padlet has an ability to build discussion and enhance class activities by creating two-way interaction between teacher and students, as well as produce more interesting learning process through online collaboration than the conventional way (Anwar, et al., 2019).

From this study, there are three sub-themes of advantages of using social media in classroom learning, i.e. managing classroom discussion, building- up an active classroom discussion, and encouraging critical thinking.

3.2 Managing Classroom Discussion

The teaching method in the (traditional) classroom usually involves students in some activities: asking questions, participating in discussion and class activities, and offering opinions. Many people argue that successful teaching in the classroom can be measured by the quality and quantity of student participation. However, there are some barriers that discourage students from involving in classroom activities. Fuchs (2014) argues that some barriers can come from the variety of conflicting feelings and beliefs of students, such as (1) afraid of making a mistake; (2) afraid that their words will not be understood; (3) afraid of how class members might respond to an opinion that is not widely discussed; (4) feeling shy and fear to speak in public; (5) and having a feeling that their opinions and thoughts are not yet well-formed and thus unworthy to be shared in-class discussion. Those barriers are preventing students from participating in-class activities, especially in the discussion session. All the barriers should be removed to support inclusive classroom learning that can accommodate and encourage participation from all

students. On the other hand, some challenges can arise when starting the discussion in a big classroom, such as the limited time of discussion session, needly to wait the turn to speak and to compete with other friends to make a contribution.

The implementation of Padlet for classroom learning can help the teacher to manage the classroom discussion, particularly when the teacher is running the question-and-answer session in classroom learning. One of the participants shared an opinion about Padlet implementation in a big classroom.

> Excerpt 3
> "It is more convenient, it is helpful for us, for the students when they are in a very big classroom. I think it is good. It helps the students to share their opinion. Maybe some students they do not want to ask the teacher directly so they can use this to raise their question." (Participant F)

The opinion above indicates that the utilisation of Padlet for classroom learning can help students to share their opinions, especially when students learn in a big classroom. In this situation, Padlet can accommodate all students' questions and opinions about study materials.

Padlet can replace an ordinary whiteboard in the classroom to an online digital canvas that can facilitate online classroom discussion. When using Padlet, every student does not need to wait their turn to speak, thus enabling the teacher to collect many ideas and suggestions within a short space of time. Moreover, Fisher (2017) argues that students from the non-English speaking background may feel more comfortable in participating in class discussion through the written post rather than directly speaking in the class. It is reasonable because some students who are non-native English speakers have a difficulty to fully express their thoughts due to limited capability in the English language. As one participant said,

> Excerpt 4
> "When the discussion started, sometimes I want to express all ideas in my thoughts. However, I couldn't do that because it was difficult to say in English. But when the professor using Padlet in our class, I can use a translator to express my ideas before I post online to the Padlet." (Participant D)

Based on this participant statement, we can conclude that Padlet can help students to become more active in classroom discussions, even though they have a problem with limited English language capability. Padlet enables students to rethink and recheck their ideas before posting these so as to ensure that their statements have been written correctly. Padlet has made interactive learning between teachers and students easier.

3.3 Building Up an Active Classroom Discussion
Having the function to enhance collaborative learning in the classroom, Padlet is beneficial, not only for teachers (in terms of managing classroom discussion) but also for students as they become more active in the classroom discussion. One participant said that,

> Excerpt 5
> "It is definitely a very important and very helpful, because I'm in a hall, well maybe 200 or 500 students sitting, and someone wants to speak specific views and some people got shy. So, using this tool, you can use to type your question and be anonymous at the same time. Because some students feel that if they ask a particular question, then some students will laugh and make fun of them because the question is not that important or not that relevant other." (Participant G)

Based on that participant comment, Padlet utilisation for classroom learning can help students with a shy personality to remain active in the discussion. Padlet enables the student to become anonymous when giving a comment on the platform, and this can help this type of student to protect his/her identity while asking the question in the big classroom. Students with a shy personality may hesitate to raise question given the feeling that their questions may be inappropriate for the study material discussion. This is because this type of student has high social anxiety and greater fear of negative interpersonal evaluation. Ulbig and Notman (2012) argue that the use of in-class technology can improve the classroom learning experience of shy students who are typically isolated by traditional classrooms teaching methods. Aligned with the participant comment above, another research carried out by Mahmud (2019) and Zainuddin, et al. (2020) note that Padlet utilisation for learning in the classroom has encouraged not only an active student but also student with a shy personality to become active in classroom discussion.

In the international students learning environment, another challenge arises when creating discussion in the classroom, such as the ability to use the English language for communication. One participant said that,

> Excerpt 6
> "Padlet is convenient. It is a supporting tool to transfer your idea. Because some students are not fluent in English, so using this tool, you can raise your idea or question without anxiety to speak in front of other friends. Because some student feels if they can not speak clearly, other students will criticise and mocking them because of their inability to speak English in the international learning environment." (Participant A)

According to previous research, international students who have limited English language capability has lack of confidence in speaking and talking a proactive role in classroom discussion (Sawir, 2005). Aligned with this

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finding, research from Park et al. (2017) & Park et al. (2020) report that international student was facing communication difficulties due to their accented English. The accented English of international students was a factor that has affected their communication success, and the false of accented English could be a major cause of miscommunication. In addition to this, when students feel their language abilities are insufficient in terms of expressing themselves clearly in the presence of other international students, they tend to remain silent as a face-saving strategy (Khatun, 2019; Tatar, 2005). The silence students could be a sign that student wants to avoid a direct face-to-face communication due to their insufficient English language abilities. To overcome that problem, Padlet utilisation for learning in the classroom can help international students with limited English language capability to keep active in the classroom discussion. Padlet offers an opportunity for students to review a message before posting their idea or question online which will be appear in the classroom screen. Padlet is seen to be convenience for international students with limited English language capability as it allows them to edit their message before posting it, thus ensuring that it conveys the intended meaning.

3.4 Encouraging Critical Thinking

In addition to improving the learning process in the classroom, social media can also encourage the student to become critical during the class session. One participant who experience using Kahoot! and Padlet for learning in the classroom said:

> Excerpt 7
> "I think it is good for students who use those apps, because when I was answering the question, sometimes I will discuss with my partners, so it can help us to have the brainstorming and also critical thinking." (Participant J)

Murawski (2014) and Veliz and Veliz-Campos (2019) argues that critical thinking becomes one of the important skills that want to be developed by the teacher in higher education. However, it is challenging to create a learning environment that can promote critical thinking for students. Social media utilisation for learning in the classroom can encourage such a thinking from students. Kahoot! and Padlet enable students to share ideas, comments, and questions that appear on the big screen. It can be a starting point to involve students in the classroom discussion, as well as to encourage the critical thinking of students through their comments on the learning material. Aligned with the participant comment, another research carried out by Rathakrishnan et al. (2018) reports that students who used Padlet for online discussion in the classroom have greater macro and micro critical thinking than students who do not use it for online classroom discussion.

3.5 Challenges

Besides the advantages offered by Kahoot! and Padlet in the classroom, the utilisation of these social media applications for classroom learning can have some obstacles in its practice. The technical matters and the creation of interesting contents are identified as the main obstacles for effectively implementing these applications in classroom learning.

3.6 Technical Matters

Technical matters can become an obstacle when implementing social media in classroom learning. One of the participants shared the technical problem experienced when using social media for learning in the classroom:

> Excerpt 8
> "Before beginning the lecture, the professor asked us to open an online link and then submit a survey of what we think the course was about. Then for some phones, it worked, but for some others, it didn't work." (Participant H)

According to the finding on social media for the classroom learning process, it can be concluded that social media implementation used as collaboration tools create a positive experience when the application can run smoothly. However, it would become an obstacle, thus creating a bad experience, when some devices cannot connect with the social media application due to broken connection of the provided link, unsupported apps for several phones, and unstable internet connection. Those problems are known as a technological challenge when applying social media for education using mobile technology. Benali and Ally (2020) and Khaddage et al. (2015) argue that several technological challenges should be considered when applying mobile technology for education, such as supporting infrastructure, supporting device, design and delivery of the content, and technical support. The problems that encounter Participant H when using social media for education in the classroom relates to the issue of the content delivery and the unsupported device for some apps. Technical support knowledge is needed to overcome those problems.

3.7 Create Interesting Content

Another challenge of social media implementation in classroom learning is the production of creative content from the platform. The social media utilisation in the classroom may not change the student interest. Instead, it can increase boredom while studying in the classroom. The participant who experiences boredom said that,

Excerpt 9

"When in my class, Kahoot only for a survey, so I'm lazy to answer any questions. I never do like competition using Kahoot!." (Participant C)

The argument above indicates that teacher should produce more interesting content by utilising some features embedded in the social media applications. The appropriate content generation can improve satisfaction and learning experience. For example, as explained by Beltrán-Martín in the proceeding entitled Using Padlet for collaborative learning in 2019 reports that students have increased their satisfaction when utilising Padlet for several activities in the classroom learning, such as online dialogue, class dairy, and class resources. Because of that, producing interesting content in social media to support classroom learning would become a challenging task to do for the teacher. Aligned with previous research carried out by Khaddage et al. (2015) design content is important and becomes the challenge for the teacher when implementing mobile technology for supporting student learning in the classroom. So, creating an engaging content would be a determinant factor affecting student satisfaction and learning experience.

4.   CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have provided some insights that may have some benefits for academic staffs, especially for teachers and lecturers teaching students in an international education environment. This study reveals that the benefit of implementation Kahoot! and Padlet as social media for education in the classroom is to improve the learning process of international students. The research also exhibits that the utilisation of Kahoot! and Padlet can enhance the participation of international students in the classroom discussion. It happens because Kahoot! and Padlet have erased barriers that discourage international students from involving in classroom activities caused by different languages and a variety of conflicting feelings and beliefs. Kahoot! and Padlet have also helped the teacher in managing the classroom discussion, as well as have enabled inclusive learning that can accommodate and encourage participation from all students. Kahoot! and Padlet have stimulated the critical thinking of international students through collaborative working and discussion. Despite a number of benefits they provide, some challenges should be considered when implementing those social media applications in classroom learning. Creating interesting content from Kahoot! and Padlet have to a certain extent become challenging for some teachers. Technical matters when operating Kahoot! and Padlet in classroom learning also become a challenge that should be taken into consideration.

Based on those findings and given their practical currency, it is recommended for academic staffs to utilise Kahoot! and Padlet for supporting international students learning in the classroom. Kahoot! and Padlet have the value to improve communication performance and create better learning experiences. This study thus extends the knowledge of Kahoot! and Padlet utilisation, that is by testing these applications in a different context: international students learning environment. Potential future research can cover different types of social media for education purpose as well as involve broader international student participants outside the Asian continent.

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