

DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF NING SOCIAL NETWORK FOR TEACHING TRAINING ONLINE SURVEILLANCE

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ABSTRACT

Supervision of teaching practice is an important aspect of training teachers in improving their teaching skills. Barriers such as distance and time factor are the constraints faced by the lecturers at the National University of Malaysia to communicate with the teacher trainees under their supervision. Therefore, this study aims to develop and evaluate a social-networking site Ning's platform for the supervision of lecturers to teach on-line training. This study used the case design where a total of nine teacher trainees involved in this study. It found that overall, acceptance of the use of the social-networking site Ning mean score at the highest level of 3.91. In addition, all student teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of the social-networking site Ning social-networking site and agree a suitable approach to the supervision of one of the online teaching practices. While the "blog" is the most active facility used by student teachers in which they do self-reflection. In conclusion, the social-networking site Ning has the potential to assist lecturers to carry out supervision on-line teaching practice.

Keywords: Ning, Social networking, supervision, teacher trainee, Islamic education

INTRODUCTION

Supervision of teaching practice is an important aspect that needs to be paid attention on in order to improve the performance as a student teacher. Through supervision, the trainees will be guided and given guidance from the lecturers to improve their teaching. During the supervision session, trainees will be assessed and given grades or scores to determine the performance of their teaching practice. Grade given is essential to evaluate the performance of their teaching on students. Normally, a lecturer guide is made up of university lecturers. Results from previous studies showing lecturers face time constraints when supervising and evaluating the teacher trainees placed under their supervision (Esah et al., 2003; Margaret & Dusel, 1999). While the student teachers need guidance and supervision while hoping they can be evaluated in order to see the extent of achievement of teaching practice which they run. Therefore, supervision should be improved through a medium that trainees keep in touch and communicate with the lecturer.

This study will use the on-line social network service Ning (www.ning.com) to help the lecturer to make the supervision of trainee teachers in certain schools involving distance boundaries, communication, time, and others. Ning on-line social network used and was chosen because it provides a platform for controlled and based on "niche" areas. In addition, the social-networking site Ning is also easy to handle on-line.

Characteristics that are "user friendly" as it makes the software and social-networking site that many users preferred (Eckman, 2010). Ning Platform also shown covering the important features to support the safety of the students as close control network membership, the need for users to enter site information, and reports from around the network activity (Couros, 2008). Therefore, the use of online social network service Ning will only involve the trainee and the supervisor and can only be invited by email only, while the third party cannot enter the space provided for the on-line supervision is. This also means this site is controlled and privacy without the open access that can affect users' personal information. Among the advantages of the social site Ning is that it has a variety of interactive applications such as chat rooms, discussion forums, email, information sharing and can upload pictures and video (Rosenfeld, 2008). This function can be used as a conduit for members at the site to communicate with each other. Registered in the site are given a personal page and can be adjusted according to their creativity (Towell, 2009; Levy & Hadar, 2010). Ease of interaction described above is very attractive for university students and teenagers, who have the ability to communicate through social sites like Facebook and MySpace (William & Chin, 2009).

The changes which happen in the world today prompt everyone to be more concerned about education. The practice of using ICT and social network in Islamic Education cannot be underestimated by the Muslim society in Malaysia because this modern approach serves the purpose of a quick and easy form of delivering messages in line with globalization. Although many changes have been carried out to achieve the objectives of the National Education Philosophy (FPK) and the Islamic Education Philosophy (FPI) in Malaysia, there are still many aspects which need to be looked into such as changes in curriculum, method and style of teaching and the optimum use of current technology. This is in accordance with Islamic teaching which has never prevented its ummah from using whatever methods or materials so long as they do not contradict Islamic Shariah. Therefore, the capacity of Islam as a leading discipline must be upheld because the calibre of a Muslim depends on the quality of education he or she has acquired. The application of Islamic values within the Muslim person needs to be practised from school-going age. Through this early step, sustained guidance and education will holistically give birth to the kind of Muslim who lives up to Islamic requirements (Nawi et al., 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study by Seppala & Alamaki (2003) is an innovation in the supervision of student teachers teaching the technique car. The technique, known as Uniwap II will enable trainee teachers and lecturers, mentors exchange information through mobile devices using short message system (SMS) and digital messaging system (MMS). Photos and short video clips can be transferred from a teacher to the mobile web-browser through the infra-red during the last lesson. Further data will be uploaded into UniMAP II databases, and it can be achieved by lecturer's coach before class ended. This includes class photos, the atmosphere in the classroom, student diversity, and activities in the classroom and teaching techniques practiced by teachers in the classroom. The findings indicate the use of cars in teacher training is the potential to be developed. It is beneficial to the trainee teachers, lecturers and mentors and students. In addition, there are innovations that are made for the supervision of teaching practice as the study by Alger and Theodore (2009) and Esah et al. (2003) they found that the use of e-Supervision in teacher training can overcome the problem of communication between teacher and lecturer.

In fact, the use of e-Supervision is actually a positive impact and good potential to enhance the experience of teaching practice. They see that the concept of this e-Supervision a new alternative in the process of teaching practice supervision with the latest technology in line with the 21st century. However, they also suggested that the study of e-Supervision is continued throughout the existence of the necessary improvements to enhance the online teaching practice supervision. The use of social-networking services on the Internet such as Ning, Facebook, MySpace and Twitter is one medium that can be used as a platform to connect teachers with specific training. It is proven that the internet service has been successful in fostering social ties between communities around the world, but it is also successfully used in the current political campaign by President Barack Obama's politics. One of his Facebook social network has managed to garner support and has gathered 200,000 members in three weeks time (Westling, 2007). Ning social-networking site is more prone to building an online community network. With the construction of the network, users can build an own community by interests, hobbies, hobbies or activities. Users can communicate with members of the site through the facilities available on the site such as email, blogs, discussion forums, chat rooms, rooms, photos, video and file sharing (Roland, 2010). In addition, the social-networking site Ning has also made a significant contribution, especially in improving individual skills and social relationships among members at the site (Rosenfeld, 2008). Research has shown that social-networking site Ning has been applied within the field of education such as distance learning (Towel, 2009), MBA (Levy & Hadar, 2010), teaching and learning in science and psychology of psychology (Towell, 2009), English and technology (DeCosta et al., 2010; Davis, 2010) and the subject of sports (Barbour & Plough, 2009). In fact, the social-networking site Ning also used by teachers to make lesson planning (Davis, 2010). This indicates that Ning's site is suitable for a new platform to help improves the relationship and interaction between the students and lecturers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses the basic spiral model of action research as recommended by the Waters-Adams (2006) with some modifications.

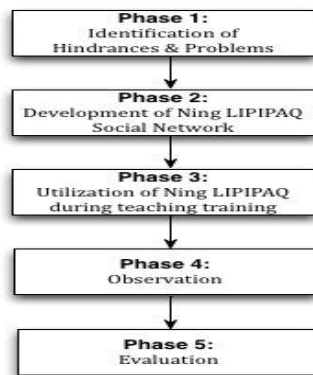


Figure: 1
Phases of Ning LIPIPAQ Development

This model organizes the flexibility of action research where it can start from various angles and dimensions of the study.

It can start from the planning problem, corrective action, the observation of actions have been taken and finally an assessment of the actions taken. In this study, they start planning the construction of the social networking site Ning, use the page as a tool to improve teaching practice supervision, observation of the use of the site and assessment of the user.

This Ning LIPIPAQ Site Development

The first phase of this study is the development of social sites Ning LIPIPAQ to be used by the mentor teacher and lecturer. Development of this site involves the registration process, the selection of the appropriate menus and facilities as well as the direction of translation from English to Malay to facilitate users. Ning LIPIPAQ main page contains information for the benefit of the entire student teachers during this visit. At the top of the page shows the options menus have been specifically selected by researchers such as invite, my site, members, pictures, forums, blogs and video chat.



Figure: 2
Ning LIPIPAQ Homepage

On the left page are Muslim animation is as are minder that is updated every day sourced from the Quran, hadith and the words of Islamic scholars. Column shows the status of current activities and recent activities of members on this site. Figure 2 below shows the main page of the site Ning LIPIPAQ. This page can be accessed at the following address: <http://lipipaq.ning.com>

On the main page, users have access to upload photos, videos and music. The site also contains the discussion forum for members to discuss issues related to teaching and learning or supervision. Links to related sites are also available and include chat rooms for members who are online at the site. Users will also discover other users are online at the same time while in this site. Ning LIPIPAQ site is also included background music to attract users. Selection of menu options is based on the usability of trainees while undergoing training activities to teach in schools. The selection of the menu items in the social pages Ning LIPIPAQ is composed of member activities, forum, and part of the upload of materials such as photos, videos and songs, chat rooms with other members and so on. The facilities provided Ning site is modified to complement the needs of teaching practice supervision process online.

Figure: 2 above shows the control of the facilities given to the creator of the page to facilitate manipulate this site. Ning also provides treatment facility from the use of English language to use the language of choice. Ning LIPIPAQ social networking site has also changed the language from English to Malay.

Language editing process can only be done by the administrators and moderators only. Among the languages of choice are included in the Ning are Czech, Deutsch, Netherlands, China and others. Ning site also provides a language other than the editing options for users wanting to use their own preferred language operating on the site.

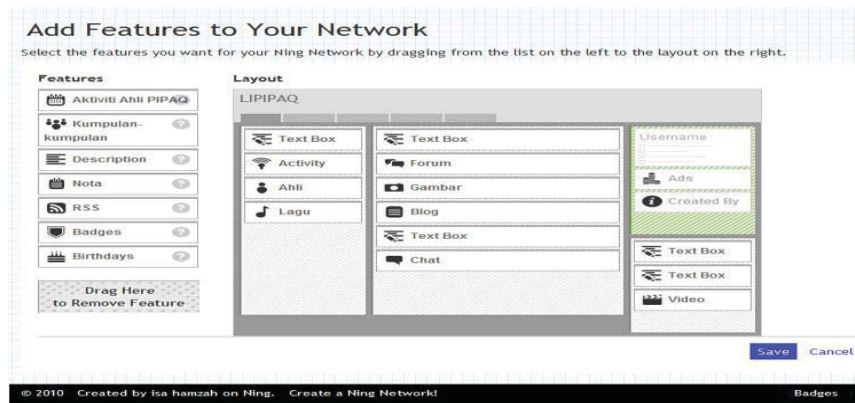
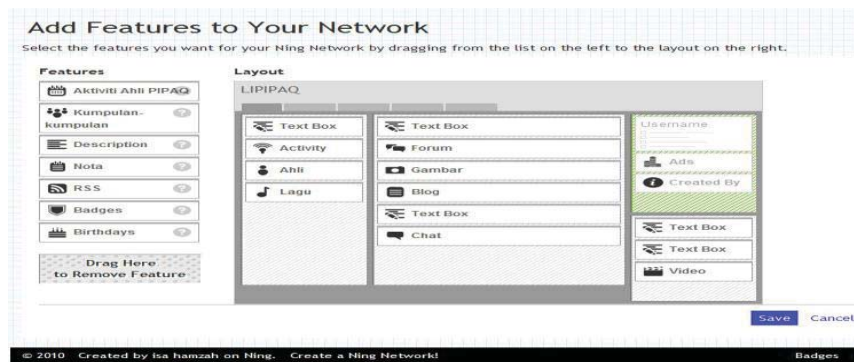


Figure: 4
Writing Teacher Trainees on Ning LIPIPAQ Blog

This study uses mixed methods approach that combines the design of quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research design involved a questionnaire.



This questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS 17.0 software. Observations are also made to the frequency of use Ning site by student teachers at school. Each student teacher activities in the social networking site Ning will be recorded from time to time.

Ning LIPIPAQ Site Assessment

A total of nine respondents involved in this study is among the student teachers Postgraduate Diploma and Bachelor of Education teacher specializing in Islamic Studies and Quran Education Faculty of Education at National University of Malaysia.

The number of respondents is confined to nine persons only as they were identically supervised under the same lecturer during semester 2 2009/2010. They underwent training activities for eight weeks of teaching in schools throughout Malaysia.

Questionnaires that consist of Likert scale value of 1, 2 and 3, respectively categorized as 'Strongly Agree', 'Disagree' and 'Not Sure'. The value of 4 and 5, respectively categorized as 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' is to analyze the percentage and frequency of each item. Mean scores will be obtained by analyzing the Likert scale value for each item as selected by the respondents. The average value of the overall scores for each aspect will be analyzed.

The design of the qualitative study involving interviews of study participants based on individual interview protocol provided by the researchers. Interviews with study participants recorded audio. All subjects responded verbally transcribed and then analyzed using NVivo 7 software. Qualitative methods in this study are as follow up to detail the findings from the questionnaire that was conducted. According to Creswell & Clark (2007), effective use of qualitative methods to obtain detailed information to provide in-depth understanding of a research problem. The combination of quantitative and qualitative findings are able to clarify and add depth understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2005: Creswell & Clark, 2007).

FINDINGS

Survey Findings

The study showed that consumers are very satisfied and show positive attitudes towards the use LIPIPAQ site.

Table: 1
Percent Effectiveness of Social Networking Service for Supervision of Teaching Online

No	Item	Percentage (%)					Min
		SR	R	S	T	ST	
B1	I feel like using the site LIPIPAQ	-	-	12.5 (1)	62.5 (6)	25.0 (2)	4.11
B2	I am always updating the site daily activities LIPIPAQ	12.5 (1)	37.5 (3)	25.0 (2)	25.0 (3)	-	2.78
B3	I am always updating personal pages on the site LIPIPAQ	-	37.5 (3)	12.5 (1)	50.0 (5)	-	3.22
B4	I can share experiences with other trainees	-	12.5 (1)	12.5 (1)	62.5 (5)	12.5 (2)	3.89
B5	LIPIPAQ page useful for my reporting of training activities to teach	-	-	12.5 (1)	50.0 (4)	37.5 (4)	4.33
B6	Comments from the supervisors B22 LIPIPAQ page is useful to me	12.5 (1)	12.5 (1)	-	12.5 (2)	62.5 (5)	4.00
B7	LIPIPAQ site is suitable for monitoring on-line teacher training	12.5 (1)	-	-	62.5 (5)	25.0 (3)	4.00
B8	LIPIPAQ I agree that the site continued to monitor on-line teaching	-	-	-	37.5 (3)	62.5 (6)	4.67
B9	I can share ideas in forums LIPIPAQ for planning teaching and learning activities	-	-	12.5 (2)	50.0 (4)	37.5 (3)	4.11
B10	I am satisfied with the use of LIPIPAQ site	-	12.5 (1)	12.5 (1)	37.5 (4)	37.5 (3)	4.00
Total							3.91

Table: 1 above shows the percentage of the value of high scores on the effectiveness of social network services for the supervision of on-line teaching of aspects of the use.

Respondents indicated that they prefer using Ning LIPIPAQ site (88%), is satisfied with this site (75%) because they can share experiences with friends who use this site (75%). Respondents also stated that this site useful for their reporting activities at the school either in class or outside class (88%) and it is also useful to them when the lecturer supervisor comments and feedback to them (75%). 88% of respondents stating this site is a suitable platform for the monitoring of teaching and 100% of the respondents agree it is continued for the same purpose. However, in terms of the use of this site is not as frequent as expected from the user. Although they have a positive attitude but there are constraints in the use of this site. Only 25% of respondents who say they always update their daily activities and only 50% who regularly update their personal websites.

The Findings of the Interviews

Findings from the interview data showed that all trainee teachers agree that the use of social networking site Ning can help improve their communication with the lecturer guides. According to one student teacher (GP3), this site is "helping" the supervisor to "know" his involvement in any "events and activities" during the training to teach in schools. GP4 trainee teachers also stated this Ning site "is appropriate" is used for "student to be practical" for lecturer coaches sometimes does not "know" the teacher school is located.

This is because of his position training lecturers to teach in the state and is located in the state coaches made it difficult for him to complain of "problems" during the training to teach. Study participants GP1, GP4 and GP6 also reported that social networking site Ning also help lecturers mentor supervision activities on-line teaching. Lecturers can provide "comments" to writing and check on the work of trainee teachers at school (GP1).

It helps trainees learn "mistakes" they are from the beginning (GP4). Feedback from lecturers guide also allows them to do "improvements" prior to their arrival to make the process of supervision in schools (GP1). The GP6 study participants were of the opinion that the use of this site "lecturer" to know "problem students" under their supervision. According to student teachers, they have to upload some pictures or video to show involvement in school activities for lecturers' supervisor.

Most of the trainees indicated that they have difficulty to upload multimedia material. Teacher trainees (GP5) state that the "upload files" to "problem" for him because Internet access in schools that "less speed".

He also noted that "the pictures" he managed to be uploaded, but take "a long time." Trainee teachers (GP3) is also acknowledged that while access to "Internet" in school "slow" and "not so fast," but he was able to upload picture "of 40 pieces" during the training to teach in the school.

However there is one teacher in the school stating that he had no problem in uploading pictures of school activities. He also noted that the use of the application "Java" will slow down the process of uploading photos. Thus he chose to upload the use of alternative "browsers."

The Findings of the Observation

Results from the analysis of the use of social networking site Ning for teaching training facilities have a blog section to the main use of the option trainee teachers in which they use to write personal reflection and to report any activity that they are indulging in school. The use of popular blog is a medium to study participants to report daily and weekly activities during the school practicum. Writing blog by the teacher to give them the opportunity to share experiences with other practice partner. This is acknowledged by the study participants GP1, GP2, GP4 and GP8. For respondents GP1, sharing in the "blog" is an option for the column space that he could "share" activities during the training to teach in schools. GP8 also admitted that he told the blog easier "daily activities" while in school and make the "personal reflection" after the teaching in the classroom. The figure below shows the teacher writing activities in their blog.



Figure: 4
Writing Teacher Trainees on Ning LIPIPAQ Blog



Figure: 5
Writing Teacher Trainees on Ning LIPIPAQ Blog

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overall, this study found that social networking site Ning is appropriate to use for the purpose of monitoring teaching practice. This page allows trainee teachers to make personal reflection on teaching and learning in schools as well as to report their daily activities at school. This page is also able to stimulate trainee teachers to communicate with each other and interact with the lecturers.

Trainee teachers say that this site “helps” lecturer early information of supervisors in their activities in school. Interactive features of interest in this site have been encouraging its use among students. Students can upload multimedia material such as videos and images that can accurately reflect the situation in school generally and in particular classes. Special space for the facility to upload multimedia material such as pictures and video to be shared with other users on the homepage is very friendly.

Characteristics that are “user friendly” as it makes the software and social networking site that many users preferred (Eckman 2010). Are However, in this study found that the main obstacle factor is the difficulty to access to the Internet. Although many schools provide high-speed access the Internet but is very minimal which affects the process of uploading multimedia materials? Multimedia materials such as video are large storage space and this requires fast Internet connection capabilities to facilitate the process of uploading multimedia materials. In conclusion, the social networking site Ning able to be used for monitoring of teaching at the Institute of Higher Education. It also has the potential to be used and tried the other courses that require a virtual communication and interaction. It is clear from this study; it can increase the interaction among the lecturers’ supervisors and trainees during the training to teach. It is helpful lecturer knows all the activities they undertake the training of teachers in school before and after the actual supervision at school.

Acknowledgement: This study is financed by the Research Group of Arabic Culture and Islamic Civilization (KUKAPI, OUP-2012-038), the Research Group of West Asian Region (AKRAB, OUP-2012-004) and the Strategic/Action Research project (UKM-PTS-092-2009 and PTS-2012-061).

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