

Malaysian English Language Teachers' Engagement With Instrumental Support on Facebook

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Abstract—This study investigates how Malaysian English language teachers utilize networking sites for social support. It focuses on the social and discursive practices of Malaysian English language teachers as they co-construct social support on Facebook Timelines. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 Malaysian English language teachers to identify the value of social networking sites for teachers' development. The findings revealed that the majority of the teachers interviewed had a positive view of the engagement with instrumental support on Timelines even though some teachers questioned the efficacy of Timelines as a platform for the co-construction of instrumental support. The teachers mainly engaged with informational support on Timelines as they perceived the usefulness of Facebook in facilitating the exchange of informational resources. The teachers associate obtaining informational support on Timelines with the ability to communicate important information, communicate immediately, and participate as a lurker, which is useful when teachers want to obtain informational resources without having to engage in conversation with others. This paper argues that teachers' postings on Facebook serve as tools to obtain desirable support, facilitating the improvement of their practices and helping them navigate daily challenges in the workplace.

Index Terms—English teachers, Facebook, instrumental support, Malaysia

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is an inherently demanding profession, requiring educators worldwide to manage numerous routine and unforeseen tasks on a daily basis. Unfortunately, guidance and support for teachers are only sporadically provided adequately (Rashid et al., 2016). The insufficient institutional support, as highlighted by Rashid et al. (2016), prompts some teachers to contemplate leaving the profession. This underscores the importance of providing teachers with adequate support to effectively navigate the daily challenges they encounter, ensuring their retention in the profession. On the contrary, some teachers may seek external sources of support to sustain their careers. The retention and career commitment of teachers have been subjects of investigation by educational and psychological researchers for decades (Korte & Simonsen, 2018). In addition to wages and opportunities for professional development, feelings of support significantly impact job satisfaction, career commitment, and overall well-being among teachers (Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Korte & Simonsen, 2018; Minghui et al., 2018).

Social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter provide a potential source of support for individuals, including teachers (Utz & Breuer, 2017). These platforms enable teachers to communicate swiftly and cost-effectively with members of the online community, in training and professional development programs (Rashid et al., 2016; Bett & Makewa, 2020; Ellison et al., 2014). Teachers' engagement on Facebook showcases their self-determination to participate in training programs for autonomous, rather than controlled, reasons. Additionally, teachers' familiarity with Facebook minimizes the risk of attrition and technological frustration, thereby promoting effective involvement (Rosenberg et al., 2020).

The advantages of support extend beyond mere words of encouragement. Professionals in the educational and medical fields have extensively studied the physiological and psychological benefits of support (Ellison et al., 2014).

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Social support serves as a catalyst to promote productivity, creativity, and both mental and physical health (Ellison et al., 2014). Perceived support for teachers is fundamental in mitigating undesirable experiences, reinforcing career commitment, fostering a positive working atmosphere, and enhancing self-efficacy (Burke et al., 2015).

In Malaysia, administrators and school colleagues are characterized as unsupportive towards teachers (Rashid et al., 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to thoroughly scrutinize how English language teachers in Malaysia seek instrumental support. Consequently, this study aims to explore the engagement of Malaysian English language teachers with instrumental support on Facebook Timelines. The findings of this study aim to provide insights into the nature of teacher discourse on social networking sites and illuminate why and how teachers utilize SNS technology to seek instrumental support.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Teachers on Social Media

Social media platforms offer opportunities for teachers' professional development and serve as sources of digital social support among educators. These platforms facilitate connections between teachers, enabling them to acquire new skills and solve problems in non-traditional ways. Internet and related technologies have the power to bring together literature, research, information, and people from around the world (American Psychological Association, 2009). Social media platforms are valuable tools for enhancing synergy among teachers, facilitating the quick and cost-effective dissemination of resources and information (Nguyen et al., 2021). Particularly, Facebook provides an alternative setting for English learning and teaching due to its accessibility, ease of use, and features that enable teachers to share and post materials (Al Qunayeer, 2020). The literature acknowledges Facebook's significant role in improving collaboration, interaction, communication, and information sharing among teachers (Kwon et al., 2019; Lantz-Andersson, 2018). In the context of work, teachers consider how others can support them in achieving personal and professional goals. While knowledge is crucial for goal attainment, social capital reinforces individuals' ability to achieve goals by providing valuable information (Jolly et al., 2021). The frequency and quality of teachers' interactions on social media platforms help them navigate life stressors, engage in beneficial relationships, cope with psychological and work demands, and mitigate the negative impacts of stress (Andrews et al., 1978).

Widely used in Malaysia, Facebook is one of the prominent platforms. The engagement of English language teachers in social media, particularly on Facebook, diminishes professional isolation, facilitates mutual learning, and establishes a valuable foundation of social support (Jolly et al., 2021). Participation on Facebook represents a potential source of material or psychological social support (Jolly et al., 2021), as teachers utilize the platform to seek information, social connections, and instrumental support (Manca et al., 2022).

In traditional workplaces, information-seeking often occurs through face-to-face interactions among staff. Conversely, by using Facebook, teachers' information-seeking becomes immediate and unrestricted by physical limitations. Teachers can access a diverse array of information, such as tips for managing classes, teaching styles, and proper assessment methods, from a broader network of fellow educators (Rosenberg et al., 2020). Furthermore, information-seeking through Facebook can be either explicit or tacit. Teachers may use their real names to pose direct questions to Facebook users, or they can choose to maintain anonymity by being lurkers (Greenhow et al., 2021), granting them autonomy in fulfilling their informational needs.

B. Teachers' Social Support

Social support is the perception or feeling that an individual is admired, cared for, and part of a mutually supportive social network (Taylor, 2011). Adequate social support is necessary to help individuals feel integrated into a social network, representing the perception of being needed by others (Abidah, 2020). In the context of education, social support entails collaboration among administrators, teachers, and peers, fostering a sense of belonging within a specific community, such as a school.

Traditionally, teachers were evaluated based on their experience, certification, and subject knowledge. However, recent studies have confirmed the crucial role of teachers' support in advancing the educational process and achievement. There is no doubt that teacher support is conducive to the personal and professional lives of teachers (Ekstam et al., 2017). According to Münzer et al. (2017), social support reinforces teachers' productivity, life satisfaction, and shields them from negative effects. Tian et al. (2016) found that school-related social support is connected to positive teachers' professional development, short- and long-term work fulfillment, appreciation of school-related work, and academic initiative. Research has also revealed that both formal (e.g., from the school) and informal (e.g., from family) social support are deemed vital for teachers to enhance teaching quality, commitment, and willingness to learn new skills and experiences (Minghui et al., 2018).

According to Jolly et al. (2021), social support significantly impacts teachers' physical and mental well-being and enhances their coping mechanisms in stressful conditions. This support is particularly crucial for teachers who face a constant load of pressure, including challenges in classroom management, the absence or shortage of support in the workplace, and an overwhelming workload. These pressures can lead to feelings of pressure, exhaustion, depression, and workplace stress, sometimes resulting in negative coping responses such as alcohol consumption and smoking

(Jolly et al., 2021). The absence of social support for teachers, as noted by Demir and Leyendecker (2018), poses risks to teachers' mental, emotional, and physical health, influencing their behavioral and social attributes negatively.

Social support, as classified by House (1983), encompasses four types: informational, instrumental, appraisal, and emotional. Informational support is sought when an individual seeks suggestions or advice to overcome challenges. Instrumental support takes the form of tangible items such as resource donations, time, grants, rewards, etc. Appraisal support involves receiving constructive feedback and affirmation, while emotional support encompasses feelings of empathy, trust, love, and concern, demonstrated through caring and active listening.

Ekstam et al. (2017) view social support as most effective when the type received or perceived aligns with the specific need. Emotional support serves a wide range of needs, whereas informational and instrumental supports prove advantageous in relation to specific events or needs.

Social support, as perceived by Andrews et al. (1978), can be subjective or objective. Subjective support is achieved through an individual's social network, while objective support involves assisting a person in overcoming challenging conditions, thereby improving their positive physical and psychological well-being.

Teachers' instrumental support

Instrumental support encompasses the tangible aid or practical assistance that individuals receive while engaging in a specific task, emphasizing the provision of resources, guidance, or hands-on help to enhance their ability to accomplish the task effectively (Schultz et al., 2022). Within educational settings, instrumental support implies providing resources to help a teacher achieve a specific task or solve a problem (Drijvers et al., 2010). This type of support occurs when others offer material or services to accommodate a situation. Colleagues, supervisors, schools, counselors, local community friends, family, research institutions, and social media platforms are potential sources for teachers to obtain instrumental support (Schultz et al., 2022). For example, teachers can be said to engage in instrumental support when they collaborate with more capable peers who assist them in learning, such as how to effectively use a smart board in the classroom.

Empirical studies indicate that teachers' perceptions of instrumental support significantly impact their performance. According to Strati et al. (2017), teachers are more likely to engage with assigned tasks when they receive instrumental support from peers or their school. The correlation between various teaching achievements and instrumental support implies a potential link between academic accomplishments and instrumental support (Strati et al., 2017). As highlighted by Wang et al. (2011), an adequate amount of instrumental support provided to teachers nurtures institutional and occupational outcomes, such as improved education quality, innovation, work engagement, self and work satisfaction, effective problem-solving, enhanced teaching performance, and, ultimately, the minimization of negative experiences. Instrumental support aids teachers in coping with physical and emotional work demands, influencing teacher engagement and efficiency (Minghui et al., 2018). Beyond academic benefits, instrumental support is believed to contribute to teachers' state of mind and overall well-being (Asghar et al., 2021).

Social networking sites play significant roles in education, providing teachers with valuable instrumental support (Greenhow & Lewin, 2015). Platforms like Facebook enable teachers to connect with external sources of support, irrespective of geographical proximity, fostering the creation of new networks and access to resources, applications, and information (Schroeder et al., 2019). Teachers particularly value informally obtained instrumental support on platforms like Facebook, as it contributes to the enhancement of their professional skills and abilities (Davies, 2015).

Kadylak and Makki (2018) highlight the significant role of instrumental support on Facebook, emphasizing its distinct features that empower members to acquire material assistance spanning various aspects of life. For instance, the platform allows for the sending and receiving of money through Facebook Messenger. Furthermore, Facebook members can connect with regional and international colleagues, contacts, friends, and associates to discover resources, activities, and topics related to common interest. The characteristics of Facebook not only enable the direct exchange of material resources but also provide prompt and cost-free means to access valuable information and resources (Kadylak & Makki, 2018).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study scrutinizes the co-construction of social support on Facebook Timelines by Malaysian English language teachers, employing semi-structured interviews as the primary method. Thirty-four participants willingly engaged in these interviews, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of social support within this context.

Participants in this study were categorized into three groups: 20 active users, nine lurkers, and five non-users of Facebook. Initially employing purposive sampling, the researchers specifically selected teachers actively posting teaching-related content on their Timelines to garner rich insights. However, as the study progressed, the inclusion of teachers identified as lurkers became apparent. These individuals, although rarely posting, regularly engage with others' content. To capture nuanced insights into this group, the researchers extended their sample to include teachers who were lurkers, using a convenience sampling technique due to the unpredictability of identifying potential lurkers. Throughout this process, the researchers encountered teachers without Facebook accounts, further diversifying the sample.

Initially planning group interviews, the researchers adjusted to one-to-one semi-structured interviews based on the majority of teachers' preferences. However, some teachers who at the same schools opted for group interviews. The

researchers concluded the interviews after the 34th participant, reaching a saturation point where new data ceased to provide additional insights into the investigated issue.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A. Teachers' Views of Instrumental Support on Timelines

To prepare the data for analysis, the researchers transcribed the interview data, and the following codes were assigned to the data gathered. Examples of codes used are: (I15) refers to fifteenth interview, I15/Q2 refers to fifteenth interview and the second question, Hazreen/I3 refers to 'Hazreen' the third interviewee. Hazreen/I3/Q2 refers to 'Hazreen' the third interviewee answering question two. Based on the thematic analysis of data, there appear to be two broad views, one positive and the other negative, held by the teachers about the use of Timeline postings as a mechanism for co-constructing social support in their professional lives. Further analysis of these two opposing views leads to the emergence of three categories of views that the researchers refer to as the '3As' which are the 'Avid (+A)', the 'Analytic (+AC)', and the 'Anxious (+AS)'. The Avid (+A) category refers to the very positive perceptions held by teachers regarding the use of Facebook to seek social support in their professional lives. The teachers are enthusiastic about, impressed by or interested in Facebook and perceive it as useful. The avid view is mostly expressed by teachers who frequently post on Timelines (active users). The Analytic (+AC) category encompasses teachers who are enthusiastic but, at the same time, critical of the use of Facebook to seek social support, feeling that it needs to be used in particular ways. The analytic view is also mostly expressed by teachers who frequently post on Timelines (active users). The Anxious (+AS) category comprises teachers who are enthusiastic about the use of Facebook to seek social support but, at the same time, they worry and fear there may be unintended consequences. The anxious view is mostly expressed by teachers who often read Timeline postings but rarely post (the lurkers).

The majority of interviewed teachers (n=29) expressed a positive perception of their engagement with instrumental support on Timelines, even though some questioned the efficacy of Timelines as a platform for co-constructing instrumental support. Instrumental support encompasses various forms of resources, including equipment, information, and financial assistance, provided to individuals to solve problems or complete specific tasks (Beehr & Glazer, 2001).

Similar to Malaysian English language teachers in Khalid et al.'s (2013) study, the majority of teachers in this study reported that Facebook enabled them to access informational resources by facilitating communication and interaction. Facebook's software plays a crucial role in this facilitation, allowing teachers to exchange text documents, pictures, videos, and share links (Sue/I30/Q2), without incurring any subscription fees, as it is freely accessible (Linda/I15/Q2) and can be used on mobile phones, providing flexibility to log in anytime and anywhere (Eisya/I21/Q5). Furthermore, the absence of word-count restrictions when updating Statuses or posting Comments allows users to create longer posts compared to platforms like Twitter (Murni/I19/Q2).

The technical capabilities of Facebook, as highlighted in the previous paragraph, play a crucial role in facilitating communication and interaction, empowering teachers to acquire informational support. Further analysis reveals that teachers associate obtaining informational support on Timelines with the ability to: 1) communicate important information; 2) communicate immediately; and 3) participate as a lurker. Lurking proves useful when teachers aim to obtain informational resources without engaging in conversation with others.

(a). Communication of Important Information

The communication of important information facilitated by Facebook is illustrated in the following Excerpt.

EXCERPT 1
ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEW / EISYA

1	Researcher:	Do you think your life will be different if you quit Facebook now? In what ways?
2	Eisya:	Of course it does. Without Facebook, I will be an old boring teacher who does not know what is going on around the world.
3		You are left behind, not knowing the newest trend in teaching method,
4		getting to know lecturers that you can ask for advice
5		If I don't have FB, I will be by myself. I have to work alone.
6		I know we can ask around face-to-face, but it is limited not like FB.
7		We are living in a very fast pace life, even school is pretty hectic, I find myself not having time to read newspaper and watching news
8		so by using FB, when I have time for example when I am taking breakfast
9		I will just log on into FB using my handphone, get to know the latest issue and talk about it in the class.

Eisya's positive viewpoint is evident in her initial response, 'of course it does' (line 2), emphasizing her belief in the significance of Facebook. She expresses the idea that not participating in Facebook would make her feel like an outdated and uninformed teacher, contradicting Basak and Calisir's (2015) suggestion that information seeking is not a significant factor for continued Facebook use. While they propose that the intention to continue using Facebook is primarily influenced by the desire for recognition and entertainment, Eisya, using the modal auxiliary 'will' (line 2), conveys a high certainty that she would be negatively affected if she didn't use Facebook. This assertion indirectly communicates the importance of Facebook in her professional life, serving as a tool to stay updated on global issues,

prevent feeling left behind, stay informed about the latest teaching methods (line 3), and seek advice from expert friends, including lecturers (line 4). Eisyia not only perceives Facebook as a source for staying informed about current issues but also as a means to access valuable information, particularly expert advice from more experienced friends, such as lecturers.

Eisyia highlights Facebook's role in communication and interaction, particularly in sharing important information. She expresses the notion that without using Facebook, she would perceive herself as working alone (line 5), underscoring the platform's importance in connecting with others. Eisyia strongly believes that Facebook serves as a valuable tool for interaction, overcoming the limitations of face-to-face exchanges (line 6). The platform allows her to effortlessly obtain crucial information by reaching out to friends, transcending geographical boundaries.

Moreover, Eisyia views Facebook as a shortcut to information, sparing her from the time-consuming process of reading newspapers and watching the news (line 7). Its convenience is evident as she can log on at her own convenience, even during breakfast (line 8), using her mobile phone to stay abreast of the latest issues for classroom discussions (line 9). This type of information, exchanged on Facebook, is deemed important for teachers' professional lives, enabling them to present themselves as well-informed educators to their students and potentially integrate this knowledge into classroom activities.

(b). Immediate Communication of Information

Closely related to the ability to communicate important information is the immediate communication of information illustrated in Excerpt 2.

EXCERPT 2
GROUP INTERVIEW 1/ HAZREEN

1	Researcher:	Do you think Facebook allows teachers to make their professional lives better?
2	Hazreen:	Yes, because information spreads very fast on FB especially if you need to make announcement.
3		So teachers are not left behind.
4		Plus I have a lot of friends, from many fields, so I get rich instant feedback.
5		Status updates and Comments become like a chatting on Facebook because my friends are always online.
6		They give me very quick responses.

Hazreen underscores the swift communication capabilities of Facebook, emphasizing how information spreads rapidly on the platform (line 2). In the context of teachers' professional lives, the immediacy of communication becomes crucial to staying updated and not falling behind (line 3), particularly when following announcements made by friends. Observations from Timelines reveal that teachers often utilize Facebook for announcements, such as filling in transfer forms, available scholarships, and deadlines for tasks like entering student marks for SBA.

Apart from the ability to make announcements, Hazreen also values the platform for its capacity to receive rich and instant feedback (line 4). Facebook connects her with a diverse group of friends from various fields, allowing her to tap into a range of perspectives when addressing teaching-related issues. The immediacy of information exchange is further emphasized when Hazreen compares updating her Status and receiving Comments to synchronous chatting (line 5). The rapid responses from friends are facilitated by the Facebook software, which sends 'Push Notifications' to friends whenever a user updates their Status. Both Hazreen's and Eisyia's feedback illustrates how Facebook facilitates immediate communication of important information while enabling teachers to receive quick and insightful responses, thereby expanding their perspectives on specific teaching-related issues.

However, not all teachers share the enthusiastic view of immediate communication on Facebook. Christine, for instance, presents an 'Anxious' (+AS) perspective, expressing, 'when you sit in for a while, you respond better, after you think about it' (I16/Q2). This suggests that Christine values the quality of delayed responses over immediate ones, emphasizing the importance of thoughtful consideration before crafting Comments in response to any Status update. In essence, Christine appreciates the extended 'wait-time' (Walsh, 2006, p. 134).

It is reasonable to infer that Christine is concerned about the potential for teachers to respond hastily, providing inappropriate advice or using incorrect language, which could potentially tarnish their professional identity. Christine's 'Anxious' (+A) view on the immediacy of communication on Facebook aligns with studies highlighting users' regrets after posting inappropriate content on Timelines, which may adversely impact their image (Wang et al., 2011; Moore & McElroy, 2012).

(c). Obtaining Instrumental Support by Participating as a Lurker

The role of Facebook in facilitating instrumental support is intricately linked to the practice of lurking, as exemplified in Excerpt 3.

EXCERPT 3
ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEW/ JAMAL/I10

1	Researcher:	Do you think Facebook affords teachers to make their professional lives better? Why?
2	Jamal:	Yes, because Facebook enables engagement in interaction without having to expose yourself too much.
3		I often read, rarely post. I dig info rather than giving info.
4		I use their experiences as a way to overcome similar problems that I might face at school.
5		I observe what I want to observe
6		and if I don't agree, just let it be.

Jamal perceives lurking on Facebook as a strategic approach to interaction, emphasizing the opportunity for teachers to engage without overexposing themselves (line 2). He implies that excessive self-exposure on the platform can be detrimental, a concern supported by global cases where teachers faced termination due to their Facebook postings (Kimmons, 2012). To navigate this challenge, Jamal adopts the role of a lurker, actively seeking information without necessarily contributing (line 3). This allows him to make sense of others' experiences and potentially find solutions to similar issues in his school (line 4).

By choosing to be a lurker, Jamal gains the ability to selectively observe content and ignore perspectives with which he disagrees (lines 5-6). Active participation in conversations might inadvertently imply agreement with comments, but lurking affords him the freedom to remain unnoticed and uncommitted. Contrary to the notion that lurking may indicate a lack of psychological confidence in online spaces (Leask & Younie, 2001), Jamal's approach portrays lurking as a strategic form of participation, enabling him to engage in vicarious learning without the potential pitfalls of active involvement.

Teachers possess the autonomy to choose between active participation, contributing to either single or multiple dyadic conversations on Facebook, or adopting a more passive role as lurkers—a dynamic aligning with the flexible participations outlined in Gee's (2005) concept of affinity spaces. The researchers posit that lurking holds significance equal to active participation, as interviewees expressed that even without contributing posts, they actively read through Friends' conversations. Through this lurking practice, teachers gained valuable insights into various topics, subsequently applying the acquired knowledge in their professional lives. This study underscores the idea that Facebook serves as an informal source of Teacher Professional Development (TPD).

Teachers with a positive view of using Timeline postings as a means to seek instrumental support see Facebook as a platform that facilitates the swift communication of crucial information. They find it effective for immediate communication and consider lurking a valuable means to obtain informational support when needed. On the contrary, teachers with a negative view, particularly older teachers who are non-active Facebook users, express skepticism about the quality of information shared on Timelines. They believe that Facebook primarily connects teachers to their peers rather than more experienced educators.

(d). Instrumental Support and Informal Learning

The perspectives of teachers on instrumental support align with the argument that their efforts to seek informational resources, particularly regarding the implementation of educational policies (e.g., SBA) and 'content knowledge' (Shulman, 1987, p. 8) (e.g., grammar rules), reflect a commitment to engaging in informal learning. Teachers actively acquire a broad spectrum of informational resources on Timelines, ranging from straightforward details like exam result release dates to more intricate guidance, such as strategies for conducting SBA in secondary schools. These information-seeking behaviors encompass both 'practical knowledge' (Elbaz, 1983, p. 43) and 'content knowledge' (Shulman, 1987, p. 8), underscoring the teachers' intentional involvement in informal learning.

Excerpt 4 provides a glimpse into teachers' positive views (+A, +AC) regarding the informal learning opportunities presented by informational resources on Timelines. In the context of instrumental support, which encompasses equipment, informational, and financial resources (Beehr & Glazer, 2001), the sharing of experiences, knowledge, and advice on Timelines falls under the informational category. Unlike tangible resources such as equipment or financial support, informational resources are disseminated through narratives, stories, and interactions with more experienced Friends. Teachers, including Barnett, Lina, and Fiza, who expressed positive views, emphasized how the wealth of information shared in their Friends' stories and educational Facebook Pages, as well as insights gained from interacting with knowledgeable peers, facilitated their engagement in informal learning on Timelines.

EXCERPT 4

GROUP INTERVIEW 3/ BARNETT (I12), LINA (I13), FIZA (I14)

1	Researcher:	Do you think that teachers engage in any kind of informal learning on Facebook?
2	Barnett:	I think FB is a great way to learn without having to be there.
3		For instance, when you always teach in an urban area you don't know what it is like in in rural area,
4		so, you don't have to be there, check your friends Facebook... you just go online.
5		You can read from the other Friends' experience, how the students react etcetera
6	Lina:	Of course when you check Friends' Timelines, you will see lots of stories.
7		don't take negative things
8		you are mature enough to sort of like pick what is good for you.
9		so read, reflect and adapt to suit our needs.
10	Fiza:	When you follow an educational FB page, their posts will appear on your Timeline.
11		So I often learn new idioms, refresh my grammar knowledge by reading the posts.
12		Sometimes, I notice that my Friends ask about grammar, teaching strategy etcetera, so when other Friends respond, I learn from there too.

Barnett and Fiza express an 'Avid' (+A) perspective on instrumental support through Facebook Timelines, emphasizing the platform's ability to provide valuable support without unintended consequences, showcasing their enthusiasm for utilizing Facebook in seeking instrumental support. Barnett, for instance, views Facebook as an excellent means to learn from others' experiences (line 2), citing an example of how teachers can gain insights into schools in rural areas by reading Status Updates from Friends teaching there. Her use of the adjective 'great' underscores her high regard for Facebook's capacity to offer new and beneficial information to teachers.

In contrast, Lina adopts an 'Analytic' (+AC) stance, suggesting a specific approach to extracting new information from Facebook. Lina advises teachers to be discerning when reading information shared in Friends' stories, cautioning against dwelling on negative content (line 7). Instead, she advocates using maturity to selectively choose what is beneficial (line 8). Lina emphasizes that teachers should not merely read stories on Timelines but reflect and adapt the information to suit their specific needs (line 9). Her response reflects an 'Analytical' (+AC) perspective, acknowledging the potential for exaggeration or unreliable information on Facebook. While she is enthusiastic about leveraging Facebook for informal learning, Lina also underscores the importance of critical evaluation, urging teachers to be selective in choosing reliable information.

In contrast to Lina but aligning with Barnett, Fiza presents an 'Avid' (+A) viewpoint regarding the use of Facebook for instrumental support. Unlike Lina, Fiza does not critique how teachers should filter information or highlight potential unintended consequences. Fiza explores various avenues for obtaining instrumental support, discussing her engagement with educational Facebook Pages, where she gains insights into new idioms and refreshes her grammar knowledge (line 11). Subscribing to these Pages ensures she is promptly notified of any updates in her News Feed.

One noteworthy method highlighted by Fiza involves interacting with more expert Friends on Facebook, providing teachers with an opportunity to acquire new knowledge. Fiza points out that she learns from information shared when her Friends ask about grammar and teaching strategies, and other Friends respond to these inquiries (line 12). This interaction not only benefits the less experienced Friends who pose questions but also extends to Friends who read these conversations as lurkers. Fiza's statement, 'when other Friends respond, I learn from there too' (line 12), underscores the collective learning that occurs within the Facebook community.

Drawing from Fiza and Barnett's insights, it becomes evident that a Community of Practice (CoP), as defined by Lave and Wenger (1991), is present on Facebook. In this virtual community, teachers engage in learning from their peers who possess more expertise and experiences. This aligns with the borderless nature of Facebook, facilitating seamless sharing of new information and knowledge among teachers worldwide.

The peripheral learning observed, where teachers read the stories shared by their Friends before applying that knowledge in their real lives, mirrors the dynamics of a Community of Practice. Facebook's capacity to foster a CoP serves as compelling evidence of its potential as a platform for teachers' informal learning. This observation supports the perspectives put forth by Kadylak and Makki (2018), affirming that Facebook indeed serves as a valuable tool for informal Teacher Professional Development (TPD).

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the co-constructive nature of social support among Malaysian English language teachers on Facebook Timelines. The theoretical framework, grounded in the discursive practice of making and repairing meaning, provides a robust foundation for understanding the dynamics of social support in this context. The predominant form of instrumental support sought by teachers was informational, highlighting a crucial link between social support and teachers' engagement in informal learning.

Moreover, this study illuminates the significant role of Facebook in fostering immediate communication and interaction among Malaysian English language teachers, thereby facilitating the co-construction of social support. The platform's robust features enable educators to promptly share and access informational resources, contributing to a dynamic exchange of insights. The immediacy of communication on Facebook not only keeps teachers abreast of the latest developments but also transforms the platform into a real-time forum for collaborative learning. As teachers

navigate the complexities of their profession, Facebook emerges as more than a social networking tool; it becomes a dynamic hub for continuous learning. The findings underscore the significance of Facebook as a facilitator of instrumental support, providing teachers with a prompt and accessible avenue for engaging with valuable information, ultimately enhancing their professional development.

While these findings contribute valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge the study's limitations, such as the focus on a specific social media platform and the sample size. Future research endeavors could explore additional SNS platforms and consider expanding the participant pool for a more comprehensive understanding of social support dynamics among teachers.

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