

Using Social Media to Improve a Parent-School Relationship

Aunchalee Chairatchatakul, Prapaporn Jantaburom, and Wanida Kanarkard

Abstract—Family and school are two important institutions in children's lives, playing a crucial role in their overall development. Effective integration of these two institutions can benefit not only students but also schools, teachers and parents. This paper has purposed the use of social networking tools, such as Facebook, to improve a parent-school relationship. In this paper, a data analysis of digital behaviours and habits of parent involved in school Facebook is presented. School demonstrate responsiveness to a parent by communicating openness to new information, suggestions, and other forms of feedback about the school activities, and maintain a welcoming, supportive stance toward parents. The paper highlights how an evolving, technology-mediated society via social media create a better relationship of home-school partnership and increase the parental involvement. These definitely have an impact on improvement of the school management in terms of idea generation, parent service, public relations, reputation management and parent-school communications.

Index Terms—Parental Involvement, Social Media, Facebook, Facebook usage habits.

I. INTRODUCTION

Participation in school activities provides parents with information about children's learning and development plus insight into their child's abilities that leads to improvements in how parents promote the development of their child's school-related abilities[4]. In addition to facilitating parental familiarity with and support of school goals and functions, some parental involvement activities have the potential to increase teacher understanding of parents' goals for and views of their child such as parent-school conferences and school personnel's awareness of parent perspectives on school. The results of a kindergarten study indicated that the quality of the parent-school relationship was more strongly associated with child outcomes than the amount of parent-school contact[1]. For a busy teacher, with papers to grade and lessons to plan, finding ways to involve parents in classroom may seem like an insurmountable task. However, staying connected with parents will make it easier for them to ask for volunteers in the classroom or deal with a misbehaving student.

Parental involvement is not only an issue of social capital. There also exists differential power between parents and schools which school need to be aware of in their interaction with parents. While many families require both parents to work, many schools use parent volunteer opportunities to

enhance parent involvement. To accommodate parents who may work during the day, school offer opportunities to help out during after-school activities or during weekend via Facebook[3]. The more opportunities the school provides, the more likely parents will choose to get involved. If a school does not offer many opportunities, parents who are more restricted on availability are less likely to sign up to help. The reviewed of research projects[1,4] found that a child with attentive parents is more likely to have higher grades, better attendance, positive attitudes and behavior and, ultimately, a school diploma. A reported in studies [5,7] reveals that people believe that parental involvement is a key factor in improving their schools, and yet the lack of parental involvement continues to be one of the biggest problems school encounters today. In addition, parents are more likely to become involved if they know they are wanted and feel like they are making important contributions. Therefore, the use of social media is designed to encourage parent involvement is purposed in this research and examined at Kindergarten Demonstration School, Khon Kaen University, Thailand. The purpose of this study is to examine how school use Facebook to engage parents, foster relationship growth in parent-school and also to learn which school information the parents preferred.

II. PARENTAL SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT USING SOCIAL MEDIA

A. Instrument

Social networking is changing the way the world is doing everything, from the way people get information to the way people communicate, and, most importantly, the way people interact[8]. The importance and relevance of social media outlets are growing stronger with the rapid developments of technology; however, is there a strong importance for social networking profiles like Facebook to improve the parent-school partnership? In this study, the Facebook is defined as a social media utility that helps parents and school share information and communicate more efficiently.

III. RESULTS

Parental involvement is an integral part of a child's development and education. In most cases, the more involved a parent, the better a child's attitude and achievement. But this abstract quality is typically hard to measure. The traditional measure parental involvement by creating a set of questions and answers to assess it, based on a variety of criteria. However, in this research, the digital behaviours and habits of parent was analysed and conducted using Facebook Insights[2]. The results in this section illustrate analysed data during March 1-April 30,

Manuscript received May 9, 2012; revised June 15, 2012.

A. Chairatchatakul and Prapaporn Jantaburom are with Kindergarten Demonstration School, Khon Kaen University, Thailand.

W. Kanarkard is with Department of Computer Engineering, Khon Kaen University, Thailand (e-mail: wanida@kku.ac.th).

2012. Fig. 1 details the usage and application of the school Facebook Page in several features namely, presence of school information, questions, interesting links, events, places and photo and video albums. The school updated the information via status weekly was having 187 parents who “Like” the school page, 52,519 friends of parents, and received 61 “Comment” within March and April of 2012.

Fig.1(c) illustrates the display student work to garner parents' attention can be done by photo albums. In addition to displaying student work, the school can present the students works to all parents. Parents may not come to school, but many are happy to come to see their students' work displayed in the school Facebook. They can also provide their feedbacks on school policy in Fig.1 (d).



Fig. 1. Kindergarten Demonstration School, Khon Kaen University Facebook.

Fig.2(a) displays the four metrics, allow school to quickly understand the size and involvement of parents. This information assess the success of home-school partnership. Total Likes is the number of unique parents who like school Page. Friends of Fans is the number of unique people who are friends with school parents, including current parents. People Talking About This is the number of unique parent who have created a story about school Page in the last seven days. Total Reach is the number of unique parents who have seen any content associated with school Page in the last seven days. Getting more parents to talk about school allows school to reach more parents. Fig.2(b) summarises the demographic profile of parents including their age, gender, and language and place of use. This information helps school to understand who school parents is and how to reach them. It is a key to optimise the relationship of parent-school. School has adapted to publish content to fit with the interests of parents will want to see, engage with and talk about to their friends. The majority of parents who like school Page are women 25 to 34, (29%). In a future plan, school also considers posting content that resonates better with a male parent to get these men to start engaging with school as there are only 35% of male parents compared to 64% of female parents. Most parents who visit the school page are from Thailand, this could be found in Countries profile. Countries shows the number of parents, based on the user’s IP address, who liked school Page, broken down by country. In the next two years, school plans to promote the international program, this information will enforce the school to try harder to promote the program to the parents outside Thailand. Surprisingly, school is located in Khon Kaen, but the number of parents from Bangkok (988) is 3 times more than the number of parents from Khon Kaen (381). This result highlights the more opportunity provided

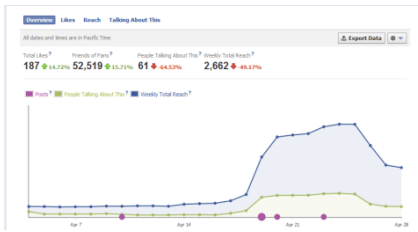
by school to the parents who are not in the local area. This addresses the success of extending the network of parent-school via social media. Also, the language of Facebook that parents used is Thai. In the year 2015, Thailand will become part of ASEAN Community. The asian language has found only japanese and vietnamese. This information addresses the defective of readiness preparation of school for ASEAN Community.

The majority of parents involvement reported in Fig. 2(c) accessing school Facebook from school home page (n=55, 42.31%), whilst some predominantly accessed it directly from school Facebook (n=53, 40.77%). Further, the majority of parents accessed Facebook using mobile (n=11, 8.46%) as opposed to third-party apps (n=4, 3.08%). In addition, the minority of parents assessed Facebook using search results, and admin invite (n= 3, 2.31%; n=2, 1.54%; n=2, 1.54%). As seen in Fig.2(d), the number of photo viewed by parents (590 times) more than video (5 times). In addition, results showed that most of contents were viewed by school timelines (3,420). Google site is the major external referer compared to other sites especially school website. Therefore, school shall enhance the opportunity for parents to join the online social community via the school Facebook on their own website.

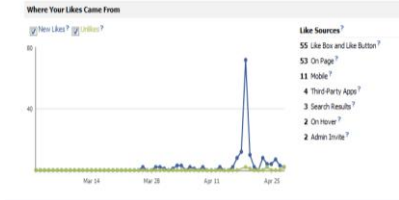
Fig.3 depicts the two metrics of parents usage of school page. The left-hand graph displays the Reach number whereas Frequency of Facebook usage by parents is illustrated in right-hand graph. Reach is the number of parents who saw the status update, or the number of times that update was displayed. The Organic is the number of unique parents, fans or nonfans of school page, who saw this post in their news feed, ticker or on school Page. Paid is the number of unique parents who saw this post from a sponsored product, such as a Page Post Ad or Sponsored

Stories. Viral is the number of unique parents who saw this post from a story published by a friend. These stories can

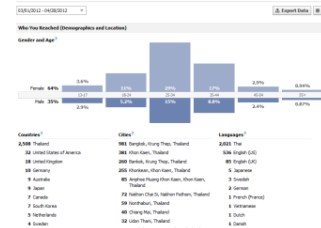
include liking, commenting or sharing school post, answering a Question or Reserving to an event.



(a) The overall performance of school Page



(c) Sources of accessing information



(b) Facebook used place and languages



(d) Number of Visits inside Facebook and external referers

Fig. 2. Digital behaviours of parents involved in school Facebook.

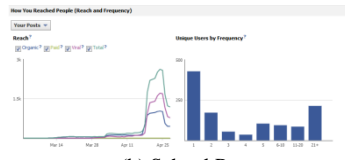
Fig. 4 illustrates the parents feedback to stream stories provided by school. These include Daily Unique Logged-in (DAU) and various types of parent involvement such as commenting, likes, daily shares, feedback per share, reshare rates. Fig. 4(a) shows Daily Content Shared via Application, including Publish Story, Update Status, Post and Photo Share. The next graphs illustrate, Daily Content Feedback in Fig.4(b), Post and Photo Share by parents Fig.4 (c), Story Likes in Fig. 4(d) and Story Comments in Fig.4 (e). As indicated in Fig.4(b), the majority of school page usage is only one time and could be more than 20 times if the content is fit their interests. When other parents posted any information on school page, there is only one time access by other parents as shown in Fig.4(c). This result reveals that the links among school parents are still weak. This experiment was only done in two months, school envisages that the community of parents will be stronger when they are open minded.

The left-hand graphs in Fig. 4(a)-(e) display the previous 7-day period information of “How People are Talking About Your Page”. Moreover, these graphs depicted the same effect occurs in the graph of the number of parents

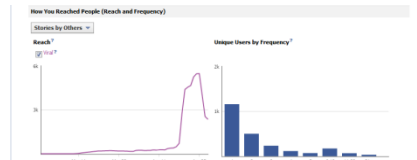
participated in school information and the viral reach number. This is the number of parents that involve with school Page over the past 7 days and includes parents liking school Page, liked, commenting on or sharing a post from school Page, answered a Question asked on school Page, or tagged school Page in a photo or in a status update. This also includes parents who’ve responded to an event on school Page. If school information are not reaching parents multiple times with school posts, school has to adjust the publishing strategy of connecting with parents. Experiment with posting more often, focusing on getting more parent involvement so that school post comes up more in parents fans’ news feed. The improvement could be done by do something more involved like running a contest or Facebook advertising to reconnect and strengthen the relationship of school-parent. Interestingly in Fig.4 (a) 187 parents who likes the school page could help school expanding the school online community network via their own friendlist approximately closes to the number of six thousand people. Fig.4(e) addresses the lack of contribution from parents comments on photo. This information shows that most of the photo posted in school page were not updated.



(a) All page content reach parents and friends of parents

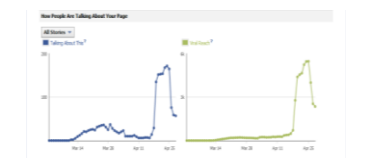


(b) School Post



(c) Parent Post

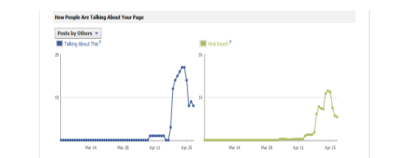
Fig. 3. School information Reach and Frequency of usage results.



(a) Parents feedback to school stream stories



(b) Parents feedback about school information



(c) Parents feedback about information post by others



(d) Page was likes by parents



(e) Parents mentions and photo tags

Fig. 4. 7-day information of parent involved in school Facebook.

Fig.5 illustrates the stream feedback analysis of all school post type such as parents post, photo, link, video, school post and questions. Reach is the number of parents who have seen content, content associated with school Page. Engaged Users is the number of parents who have clicked anywhere on school Post. Talking About This shows the number of parents who have created a story from school Post and Virality is how school message is spreading to the friends

of school parents and calculated from Talking about this divided by Reach. This data depicted the chances, that if parents friends like school page, they will like school, and even better they will trust school, too. School pays more attentions to the Reach and Engaged Users metrics because these information address the success of school publishing strategy, the more number depicted, the more number of parents are involved in the school information.

All Post Types	Reach	Engaged Users	Talking About This	Virality
Post	656	227	21	3.41%
Photo	1,119	466	37	3.31%
Link	897	65	9	0.72%
Video	1,494	466	41	2.74%
Platform Post	1,335	229	24	2.05%
Question	1,221	123	1	0.08%

Date	Post	Reach	Engaged Users	Talking About This	Virality
9/18/12	Informational-Child-Resource-1-Br...	1,494	466	41	2.74%
9/18/12	Welcome to Google Docs	1,221	123	1	0.08%
9/18/12	Informational-Child-Resource-1-Br...	77	9	1	1.3%
9/18/12	https://docs.google.com/open?id=...	25	1	--	--
9/18/12	Parental-Child-Resource-1-Br...	9	--	--	--
9/18/12	Informational-Child-Resource-1-Br...	8	--	--	--

Fig. 5. School stream stories feedback.

IV. CONCLUSION

One of the biggest aspects of a successful parent involvement in this research project is communication between the school and parents. The world of education is more open. Parents no longer need to wonder what school administrators are thinking, because it can share continuously in an open way. Knowing people beforehand will help to break down barriers that may have existed before. Facebook is a new phenomenon for school and parents, few handbooks exist to guide parents on how to use the sites. Instead, they are learning through active participation on the site. School must begin to educate the parents how to use social networking site as parent membership numbers continue to expand. This is not about technology. This is about connecting and sharing with others and yes, technology of utilising social media can be a fantastic medium for this. The findings of this research help school to learn which content resonates with parents and optimise the school publishing strategy for parents so that they could have more satisfaction and they can tell friends about school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of our respective parents who have been our constant source of

inspiration, school lecturers and staffs and the faculty of education, khon kaen university to the development of this research paper.

REFERENCES

- [1] S. L. Christenson, "The family-school partnership: An opportunity to promote the learning competence of all students," *School Psychology Review*. vol. 33, pp. 83-105, 2000.
- [2] Facebook Insights. [Online]. <http://www.Facebook.com/FacebookInsights>, 2012.
- [3] L. Grossman. Person of the year 2010. [Online]. http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/028804,2036683_2037183_203718500.html, 2010.
- [4] N. E. Hill and L.C. Taylor, "Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. vol. 13, pp. 161-164, 2004.
- [5] G. O. Kohl, L. J. Lengua, and R. J. McMahon, "Parent involvement in school: Conceptualizing dimensions and their relations with family and demographic risk factors," *Journal of School Psychology*. vol. 38, pp. 501-523, 2000.
- [6] L. Lockyer and J. Patterson, "Integrating social networking technologies in education: a case study of a formal learning environment. In. Proceedings of 8th IEEE international conference on advanced learning technologies (pp. 529-533)," Spain: Santander, 2008.
- [7] R. A. Marcon, "Positive relationships between parent school involvement and public school inner-city preschoolers' development and academic performance," *School Psychology Review*. vol. 28, pp. 395-412, 1999.
- [8] C. Ross, E. S. Orr, M. Sisic, J. M. Arseneault, M. G. Simmering, and R. R. Orr, "Personality and motivations associated with Facebook use," *Computers in Human Behavior*. vol. 25, pp. 578-586, 2009.