

Iranian Teachers' Attitude towards Using Social Media and Technology to Increase Interaction amongst Students inside or outside the Classroom

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Abstract—Internet and Social media is a ubiquitous phenomenon affecting many areas of life, including education. From various disciplines have used some forms of social media in their personal as well as professional lives, the English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers are no exception. Many studies on the area have been conducted such as those reviewed by Inayati (2013), and Tess (2013). However, despite the fact that Iran is among the high users of a number of social media, such study in Iran is still scarcely found in International journals. Therefore, this paper addresses the issue by studying how Iranian ELT teachers perceive social media in relation to their teaching as well as their general attitudes towards this type of media. A number of ELT teachers in recent popular social media (telegram, whatsapp) were surveyed with regards to their attitude and perception of social media use in teaching English. Analysis of the survey results showed that generally, the participants indicated positive attitude towards the employment of social media in ELT. In addition, most participants also showed high awareness of the educative potentials offered by social media in ELT practices, and several factors which could potentially hinder the actual use of social media were also identified. Some implications were drawn based on the findings of the study, some of which are related to the aspect of education management.

Index Terms—English language teaching, social media, Technology-Based Interaction (TBI)

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media is one of the current phenomena in the technology advancement that touches many aspects of life, including education. It has served educators globally in various manners; some use it to attract more students by social media campaign, some use it to create and maintain professional networking, and others also use it to aid the teaching and learning process. The use of social media in teaching has gained increasing attention over the past decade, which is evidenced by the growing number of research in the area found in the International peer reviewed journals. Social media has been found employed in the instruction process of various disciplines, one of which is the English Language Teaching (ELT).

ELT educators has always been actively incorporating technology into their teaching and learning, starting from the simple recording commonly used during the era of audio-lingual method in the 60's to the 80's, up until the booming of the Internet and its subsequent by-products, such as social media. Social media is a ubiquitous phenomenon that affects a huge number of teachers and students, including those students and teachers of ELT. Social media has been largely used by ELT educators, which is reflected in the review studies conducted by Inayati (2013), Tess (2013) and Sim and Hew (2010). According to Inayati (2013, p. 197) social media has been employed in various ways, some use it for teaching skill courses such as writing and speaking skills, while others use it for teaching content courses such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and for teaching cultural aspect in English language learning.

Iranian Internet users have been renowned as one of the biggest users of social media globally, with over 80% penetration rate. In other words, almost all internet users in Iran use social media in some ways. A search on Google searching engine about social media use in Iran shows a considerable number of entries about the employment of social media (whatsApp, telegram, viber, ...). However, empirical research on the use of social media in ELT is still very limited, especially in the International journal. This becomes the underlying basis of the current study, which covers the Iranian language teachers' attitude towards the use of social media in their classes or outside.

The necessity of interaction among teacher and students and among students themselves needs not evident clarification in this communication era. The communicative language teaching theory claims that the purpose of language learning is to communicate and interact (Richards & Rodgers, 1986), and previous studies on communicative language teaching (Hymes, 1972; Nunan, 1991) reveal that interaction is a good facilitation for learning of both language functions and of language forms. As there is not sufficient and various forms of interaction in most language classrooms in Iran, social media can serve as a wide spread medium tool to connect classmates and their teacher to

experience various types of interactions including group discussion, peer interaction, teacher to students interaction, synchronic and asynchronic communication, video chat, voice or written chat and etc. Many researches conducted by scholars around the world investigating the effect of using ITC, social media, and CMC on language teaching and learning. In the future, based on Skill and Young (2002) learning will not be solely online nor solely instructor-led classroom.

This study aims at gaining Iranian teachers' perspective to the use of any available type of technology to persuade language learners participate in interactional communications inside or outside classroom. Considering this fact that social media has widely spread out amongst Iranian society and the continuing phenomena is including a large number of students, the emergence of research studies in this area can be felt by educational scholars. Internet, in addition to fun and finance, can serve as a learning and teaching medium. As this is a new topic in the context of Iranian educational system, the research is taking advantage of the most available tool to researcher meaning questionnaire. The questionnaire in a Likert Scale format investigates different aspects of using social media from the teachers' view point.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Importance of Interaction inside and outside Classroom

Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996) claims that interaction concentrates on the 'negotiation for meaning'. The frequency of occurrence of the target form leads to salience, negative feedback, and input modifications to enhance comprehensibility and content predictability. These processes induce 'noticing' of new forms, new form-meaning connections, gaps in interlanguage, and mismatch between input and output. Long (1996) mentioned that interaction paves the way for comprehension and acquisition of semantically contingent speech and negotiation for meaning. Long emphasizes the significance of the interactional modifications that occur in negotiating meaning. In other words, interactive input is more important than non-interactive input (Ellis, 1994). Classroom interactional tasks that provoke negotiation for meaning might turn out to be those among several beneficial language-learning activities, for they might be the most convenient ways to facilitate a learner's focus on form. Classroom interactional tasks often consist of learner classroom participation, group work, teacher talk, role plays, etc. The communicative language teaching theory shows that communication and interaction are the aim of language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 1986), and previous works on communicative language teaching (Hymes, 1972; Nunan, 1991) indicate that it is interaction that facilitates the learning of language functions as well as of target language forms.

A large number of studies have scrutinized the effect of the quantity and quality of learner classroom participation on their L2 achievement, but the expected results have not been conclusive. For example, Seliger (1977) and Strong (1984) found positive effects, while Allwright's study (1980) brought forth opposite results. Considering to the quality of learner participation in class, tasks and group work are involved, Long (1980) and Newton (1991) revealed in their studies that the mutual interactional tasks lead to promotion of negotiation of meaning. In addition, the study by Long, Adams, McLean, and Castanos (1976) found that small groups of students working together experience better language production compared to individual language learners. This confirms superiority of group work over individual activities for learners to produce language. Wong-Fillmore (1982) showed that teacher-student interaction, as well as pair work and group work gave a clear effect on L2 learning. The study revealed that second language learning can be influenced by interaction in the classroom, although it does not clarify how specific linguistic features are learned.

Since there is no real situation available for EFL students to interact and communicate meaning outside classroom, the teachers can provide them with a new and possible and manageable procedure out of class. Multimedia technology has newly improved considerably, so computer-aided language learning (CALL) turn out to become an appropriate alternative to traditional models of classroom interaction between student and teacher (Ehsani & Knodt, 1998, p. 45). Therefore, a continuous research attempt is needed as well as a good support of instructional materials to help this improving field of CMC.

Recent studies on the arrival of Internet-based communication recognize a technological innovation with the potential to create a paradigmatic shift in teaching and learning second languages (e.g., Berge & Collins, 1995; Dede, 1993). However, it is claimed by Salaberry (2000, p. 28) that this shift can only happen if specific pedagogical objectives are obtained through the design and implementation of instructional activities in computer mediated communication (CMC) environments.

The *Foreign Language Standards* (1996, p. 28) support this idea that students be given sufficient opportunities to explore, develop, and use communication strategies, learning strategies, critical thinking skills, and skills in technology. The *Standards* also state that "Students must participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world by using the language, both within and beyond the school setting" (p. 9). Salaberry (2000, p. 23) affirms "the pedagogical goal of computer-aided language learning (CALL) activities is for learners to improve their ability in the target language through participating in linguistic interactions."

The results of a research project on the classroom FTF and online CMC discourse analysis were noticeable in the context of a Hong Kong higher education institute. It debates that both classroom FTF and online CMC in combination paves the way for creation of a dynamic atmosphere for learning and teaching. In the future, based on Skill and Young (2002) learning will not be solely online nor solely instructor-led classroom. They suggest that hybrid or blended learning models are the most effective learning strategy for many of teachers who have been working with various

learning models. This tendency suggests that the creation of new learning environments should include both virtual and real learning contexts.

B. Learners' Attitudes about CACDs

In general just a few studies investigated students' attitudes toward Computer Assisted Communication Discussion (CACD) or Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). These studies suggest that learners tend to have positive attitudes towards CACD's activities. Attitudes of students were examined by Warschauer (1996) and Dwyer (2005) after a short period of studies, while the same attitudes were investigated after a long period of studies by Beauvois (1997) and Blake (2000). Amongst pioneering researchers in CACD, Beauvois (1998) explored the attitudes of intermediate French learners in a comparative study for a five-week period on reading. Both FTF and CACD discussion were explored. Interviews and questionnaires were conducted to investigate learners' attitudes to CACD. The report from her learners was that they had enjoyed the CACD experience. They had also found it less stressful and felt that they had more language production in CACD than in FTF discussions. Beauvois and Eledge (1996) used Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator to examine students' attitudes towards CACD and discovered that the two types of personality (introvert & extrovert) perceived CACD as a linguistically affective and personally beneficial experience. All others came to the same results including, Dwyer's (2005), Blake's (2000) and Warschauer's (2005).

Another long research CACD study, which continued for two terms, was performed by Blake (2000) on Spanish intermediate learners who were supposed to do three types of activity (decision-making, information-gap and jigsaw). A survey was used to collect Students' attitudes; these revealed the fact that learners found it motivating, conducive to L2 learning, and fun to learn with. Warschauer (1996, p.6), as a major researcher in the field of CMC at that time, carried out a similar short-term course, comparative study but his sampling frame was made-up of advanced English learners whose attitudes were sought through questionnaires only. His learners showed that CACD was less stressful, more comfortable, and more creative. A second short-term study which examined student's attitudes was conducted by Dwyer (2005) who performed a small scale study on three CACD sessions; he explored the role of negative feedback in CACD. In the semi-structured interviews employed to explore students' attitudes towards CACD they indicated that CACD sessions were easy to follow, more communicative than traditional FTF discussion and considered it as a good learning environment where they could notice others' mistakes and learn from them.

C. Social Media in English Language Teaching (ELT)

The use of Social Media for teaching and learning has been connected to several popular theories in education. Selwyn (2011, p.3) proposed the theory of connectivism as the basis of its implementation, suggesting that the ability to access information when needed has become the main feature of learning in this information era. He further explains that the emphasis of learning has shifted from the accumulation of knowledge to the capacity to know more through an individual's connection to a particular source of knowledge. In addition, Shih (2011) pinpoints that the theory of constructivism could also serve as the basis for social media use in education, as its application allows pedagogy designs with meaningful social interaction and community sharing. In ELT contexts, sociocultural theory has also been related to the use of social media in the instruction process, for example by Hsu (2013). In his explanation, Hsu maintains that this theory prescribes learners to be well exposed to the speakers of English and their community of practice, and that meaningful interaction with them is an essential factor in language learning. With regard to this theory, Hsu believes that social media could provide such exposure and facilitate the intended interaction in the classroom. Various forms of popular social media have been integrated into ELT, for example, blogs, wikis, Facebook and Skype. These are employed in various ELT contexts such as teaching courses in English skills and English content. An example of the study was reported by Hung (2011) who studied the use of blogs for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in a Taiwanese university. In this study, the students in a Business Oral Communication course were required to practice their professional speaking skills in English by video recording themselves and posting the video in the designated blogs for other students to view and offer constructive criticism. By using surveys, interviews and content analysis, the study found that students were generally in favor of using blogs because in addition to its archival feature, blogs enabled them to reflect on their weaknesses in speaking and helped to improve these weaknesses. In addition, Sun and Chang (2012) conducted a study on blog employment to improve the writing skills of English as a foreign language (EFL) students in which they conclude generally positive findings. Using a qualitative approach inquiry design, their study shows that blogs could be employed naturally and independently by advanced-level students to improve their academic English writing skills. In this study, the blog posts of four graduate programme students with advanced English skills were analyzed for improvement in their academic writing skills and their authorship identity building. In this study, blogs were found to be an effective platform for actively generating and sharing knowledge and reflection on experiences, and at the same time enhancing the students' sense of authorship.

Another study on social media use in ELT contexts was conducted by Chik and Breidbach (2011) who used the combination of wikis, Facebook and Skype in their study of the Language Learning History of two student cohorts from Hong Kong and Germany. Students involved in this study were required to write a reflection of their language-learning experiences on a wiki page. The students were then asked to discuss their experience through a shared Facebook page to follow up specific questions based on their wiki entries. A Skype conference was also conducted to allow synchronous live discussion among the two cohorts.

Based on the analysis of content and interview data, the findings of the study suggest that the social media employed in this study effectively served as a platform to allow both cohorts to compose multimodal texts. In addition, the findings were believed to provide evidence that all young people are equally capable of using social media and that social media may serve as an effective platform for intercultural sharing.

However, although the penetration of rate of social media in Iran is considerably high, research on social media use in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Iran is still relatively low. Therefore, this study aims to fill in the gap by conducting a study focusing on the Iranian ELT teachers' attitudes of the use of social media in their classroom.

D. Teachers' Attitudes towards Social Media

This study focuses on teachers' attitudes as several theories have shown the manner in which attitude is closely related to practice, in this case, the practice of English Language Teaching (ELT). Despite originating from the discipline of psychology, the following theories have been employed by many researchers to explain teachers' use of the Internet and Computer Technology (ICT). First, the Theory of Planned Behavior stipulates that an individual's behavior is determined by an intention which, in turn, is influenced by three governing aspects: attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen 1991).

When this theory is applied to teachers' use of ICT or social media, the attitude aspect may include how teachers view the value of the technology, and the manner in which it affects their role in the classroom, students' learning and motivation, teachers' influence in the school, and other teachers (Cox 2003).

Another theory entitled the Technology Acceptance Model proposed by Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989) suggests that an individual's attitude in using ICT is governed by two aspects: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of the technology. Both aspects are believed to be influenced by external variables such as local education policies in ICT, teacher ICT training received, pressure from parents and students, and opinions of colleagues (Cox 2003).

Empirical studies have provided evidence on the manner in which teachers' attitudes play a significant role in influencing their tendency to be in favor of or against using any form of technology in class, with a positive attitude correlating positively to integration (Cavas et al. 2002; Kreijn et al. 2012). Using the Theory of Planned Behavior as the basis of their study, Kreijn et al. (2012) conducted a survey on 1,209 Dutch teachers to observe their usage of digital learning materials (DLM). They found that attitude was the one variable with the strongest predicting factor for the teachers' intention to use DLM. Further, regression analysis showed that attitude positively correlated with teachers' self-efficacy, previous usage of ICT, and to some extent, colleagues' usage of ICT. They also argued that teacher observation of colleagues with successful experiences in technology integration positively influenced their attitude and ultimately their real usage of the technology.

A closer look at teachers' attitudes towards social media was presented in a study by Ajjan and Hartshorne (2008). Again, using the Theory of Planned Behavior as the framework of the study, they surveyed 136 university faculty members in a large south-eastern university in the United States to determine their awareness of social media benefits and their intention of use. They found that the perceived benefits are that social media improves student learning, increases student-faculty interaction and improves student writing. A path analysis of the data showed that attitude was the only factor with a strong significance in affecting the faculty's behavioral intention for use of social media in teaching. The other two factors believed to affect the intention of use, perceived behavioral control and subjective norm, respectively showed a significant but weak effect and no significant effect towards the faculty's intention to use social media. The attitude variable was measured against the faculty's perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and the compatibility of web-based social media. As such, the study suggested that training in integrating social media could be offered to influence faculty's decision to use social media in class.

Within the context of Iranian education, studies about teachers' attitudes towards ICT in general, and social media in particular, are still scarcely found in international journals. To the author's knowledge, the availability of empirical studies on this area of research is still relatively low. As such, this study aims to fill in the literature gap by exploring the Iranian ELT teachers' attitude towards the use of social media in teaching.

The present study focuses on teachers, whose influence over student learning is evident. Teachers are active, thinking decision makers who play a critical role in shaping classroom events. As such, an understanding of their mental state is of central importance to gain insight into the nature of their instructional practices and professional development, as well as to assist policy makers to be more sensitive to the key roles that teachers play in educational innovation (Borg 2006).

The present study focuses on teachers' attitudes to perceived usefulness of social media, and discusses different aspects of using social communication technologies in the process of language teaching and learning. In addition, the correlations between the attitude towards social media and some demographic details of the respondents such as gender, experience, education level, age, were also probed in order to observe the potential relationships.

III. METHOD

Survey is a procedure in quantitative research that involves the use of a questionnaire to explore a population's characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, and opinions (Creswell 2012). This instrument was considered appropriate with the

objective of the study, which is observing the attitude of ELT teachers towards the use of social media in their teaching contexts. The survey items were developed through a rigorous process which includes extensive literature study on the area of research to create good and relevant items in the questionnaire. Then it was offered to five language teachers to exclude inefficient and ambiguous items.

The survey consists of three sections: the first section is 15 questions about problematic aspects of using social media (a negative attitude towards using social media). The second section consists of 15 items, which probes into the respondents' attitudes towards social media use from general to professional effects on language learning and teaching (a positive and persuasive attitude towards media use). The third section is about the respondents' profile such as the gender, age, educational background, city of settlement, and years of teaching experience.

The data collection was conducted from 10 Azar to 10 Bahman 1394. The questionnaire was distributed in some social media groups in Telegram and WhatsApp which included large number of English teachers. 46 teachers responded the survey which is considered sufficient and representative. After the data was obtained, they were analyzed using the descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS 20 software. To analyze the respondents' profile, familiarity and use of social media, simple description of numbers and percentage is used. In addition, weighted mean is used to analyze the attitude items as it is considered appropriate to understand the overall trend of the respondents' attitudes.

IV. FINDINGS

The profile of the respondents was dominated by female, younger than 30 years old and with a bachelor degree qualification. The percentage of the female respondents was 68% while the male respondents were 32%. Next, 81% of them were younger than 30 years of age, and held the bachelor degree qualification. As for the length of teaching experience, all the participants had more than 6 years' experience.

Following the profile were the questions about the respondents' application of social media to communicate in English. For this question, all respondents reported familiarity with and use of social media in foreign language communication.

There are 30 items in this section of the survey; each measured using the five-point Likert scale of agreement: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (0) undecided, (3) disagree and (4) strongly disagree. Analysis of the results showed that generally, the teachers have a positive attitude towards social media for teaching English and other educational purposes. Detailed account of the respondents' attitude towards social media use in ELT and education in general is presented in the Table.

Items	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided
1. Technology-based interactions need facilities that not all students may have access to.	100%	0 %	0%
2. Technology-based interactions may impose much time and energy demands on the teachers.	54%	32%	14%
3. Students often prefer to get feedback and be corrected by their teachers directly.	59%	32%	9%
4. Students often prefer to interact directly inside classroom.	59%	32%	9%
5. There is not a formal and legalized procedure to use technology in our education system.	77%	14%	9%
6. Technology-based interactions may distract students' attention from language learning.	32%	59%	9%
7. It may be harmful for students to use internet from a moral and cultural point of view.	32%	59%	9%
8. There is not a specific pre-determined computer application for students and teachers.	36%	32%	32%
9. Students cannot afford it to provide facilities of TBI.	91%	5%	4%
10. Students do not have the skills needed for using TBI.	77%	23%	0%
11. The language used in internet is not formal language.	45%	32%	23%
12. Using similes and characters in social media prevents using the language itself..	50%	32%	18%
13. The students do not have a real personality in social media.	41%	41%	18%
14. The students will not receive sufficient and well-timed feedback in TBI.	41%	45%	14%
15. TBI may fossilize grammatical and lexical errors in the students' mind.	50%	41%	9%
16. TBI may increase students' motivation to language learning.	64%	14%	23%
17. TBI may motivate students' to interact in the target language.	73%	17%	9%
18. TBI may decrease grammatical and lexical errors of students in long term use.	50%	23%	27%
19. TBI may fortify four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).	59%	27%	14%
20. TBI is a meaningful way of interaction to students.	55%	18%	27%
21. TBI may increase students' vocabulary knowledge.	77%	14%	9%
22. TBI may compensate paucity of face to face interactions in classroom.	54%	36%	10%
23. TBI may increase students' self-confidence.	59%	23%	18%
24. In TBI, it is easier to assess students more accurately and reliably.	32%	45%	23%
25. In TBI, the teachers can experience a convenient way of supervision on students' progression and interaction.	64%	23%	13%
26. Different kinds of interaction (group work, peer interaction, teacher and students interaction, synchronous and asynchronous interaction, ...) can be performed in TBI.	82%	18%	0%
27. In TBI, both synchronous and asynchronous interaction can be implemented.	64%	23%	13%
28. In TBI, the students have the opportunity to correct and revise language errors.	82%	9%	9%
29. Using TBI may increase production of language.	77%	9%	14%
30. Using TBI may be more inexpensive than language courses outside schools.	68%	18%	14%

V. DISCUSSION

Overall, it was found that the respondents in the present study were in favor of social media use in education. The Likert scale analysis indicates a generally positive attitude towards social media use in education. A more detailed discussion of the analysis results of the attitude variable is presented below.

As mentioned above, the survey includes 3 parts. the first section is 15 questions about problematic aspects of using social media (a negative attitude towards using social media). The second section consists of 15 items, which probes into the respondents' attitudes towards social media use from general to professional effects on language learning and teaching (a positive and persuasive attitude towards media use). The third section is about the respondents' profile such as the gender, age, educational background, city of settlement, and years of teaching experience.

The researcher prefers to put the items into discussion separately in order to clarify the extent to which the participants agree with social media use and technology-based interaction in language teaching. It should be explained that the survey items are a combination of likely barriers on the way of TBI, weaknesses and disadvantages, and the advantages. It was intended to include maximum related issues of TBI and social media in previous literatures and also various aspects of TBI be discussed.

The items 1 (lack of technology equipment for students), 2 (imposing more demands of energy and time on teachers), 5 (lack of a pre-planned procedure in education system), 8 (lack of a specific computer application designed for education system), 9 (students' financial problems to provide the personal equipment), 10(students' weakness in using technology) are the major barriers on the way of using TBI for teachers and students. According to the percentages obtained for the first 15 items, it can be identified that majority of the teachers are agreed with such obstacles.

Equipment is a crucial cornerstone of an extensive change. Due to high costs of technology for most families, it seems having a homogeneous class is far from real. Net users, in Iran, are growing in number, but we are not quite sure about the students' access to technology. Yet, majority of the students, especially in rural areas, are not capable of providing a computer system and internet connection. Therefore, we can at least count on privileged areas in large cities to experiment or execute TBI.

The items 3(the preference of traditional assessment and interaction over technology-based ones by students), 4(the preference of face to face interaction in class over TBI), 6(the disturbance in students' attention and concentration caused by TBI), 7(the behavioral and moral consequences of internet on students), 11(informal language in internet), 12(using similes instead of language production), 13(lack of a real personality in virtual world of internet), 14(lack of sufficient and well-timed feedback), 15(fossilization of grammatical and lexical errors), should be categorized as disadvantages of using technology-based interaction. Noticing the percentages obtained for the items 3, 4, 12, 15, it is clear that agreement percentage overcomes disagreement responses, meaning that the participants confirmed these disadvantages in TBI use. Although, the confirmation does not report much higher percentages than 50. The figures in items 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, tend to explain teachers' agreement which reveal that majority of teachers agree with the drawbacks included in the items.

In the second section of the survey, items 16 to 30, the concentration is on specific issues related to TBI. The survey aims at collecting teachers' viewpoints none of which are not experimented in Iran yet. The items in this part were chosen considering the issues in experimental studies conducted around the world. The previous literature suggests that most of the issues in the second section of the survey had good effects on language learning and teaching, some of recent studies were mentioned in the review of literature. The percentages of this section of survey elaborate that there is a positive attitude towards using TBI. Except for item 24 which a 45% disagreement is showing a negative attitude, but if the 23% agreement and 23% undecided responses are considered accurately, this idea can be inferred that the item had not been much palpable to some of the participants.

VI. CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to explore the Iranian language teachers' attitude towards social media and technology-based interaction. The results of the study suggest that regardless of gender, employment status, age, education level, and tenure, all faculty members were familiar with social media and have used at least one type of social media. It was found that the respondents generally held a positive attitude towards the use of social media in education, especially in ELT. Based on these findings, some implication could be dawned. First, the ELT educators' positive attitude towards social media could be best employed by the education institution to promote blended learning, or learning using both face-to-face and on-line platforms, thus also promoting the better integration of technology in education. Second, the respondents indicated positive attitude towards the use of social media for continuous professional development, and a considerably high interest in obtaining further trainings in using social media in teaching. This particular attitude should be best employed by the education institution management by including more aspects of social media use in teaching and learning in their professional development programs. In addition to trainings, to ensure the sustainability of the initiative, the management could also introduce a new policy that promote experimental atmosphere among the faculty members to integrate social media in their teaching.

Finally, future research could be conducted to complement the limitation of this study. For example, as the present study used only a survey to obtain the data, future research could consider doing a triangulation study such as via

interview and/ or observation to generate more in-depth data about the issue. Furthermore, the present study merely focus on the ELT educators' attitude towards social media, thus future research could probe further about the issue, for example by studying the actual use of social media in education, or by widening the scope of the study to cover more relevant educational institutions. In addition, to support the smooth integration of social media into ELT, future studies could consider some effective practices in making the best use of social media in the different contexts of ELT. Finally, as the current study focused only on the teachers' perspectives, future research could consider shifting the focus to the students' perception of social media use for educational purposes. Studies in the area of Iranian educational contexts are currently still very limited in the literature and thus, many areas remain open for research.

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