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Promoting teacherpreneurship in creative education through Instagram.

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Teacherpreneurs use their high risk-taking entrepreneurial leadership skills to create an innovative classroom using modern technologies. Given the changing learning patterns of modern-day students, and the influence of social media in highlighting their creative achievements, Being a popular social media platform, Instagram has the potential to play a valuable role in teaching and learning, particularly in the field of creative education. The objective of this paper is to explore the role of Instagram in promoting teacherpreneurship in tertiary level creative education. Using a digital ethnography approach, Sri Lankan teacherpreneurs' practices were explored. Higher education plays a critical role in Sri Lankan economic development and has demonstrated it's potential to develop creative industries. A purposive sample of twelve participants were observed and interviewed over a period of two months. Qualitative content analysis was used to understand this rich visual and textual data. It was revealed that Instagram promotes teacherpreneurship by facilitating edutainment (education + entertainment) via a flipped classroom pedagogy, breaking away from hierarchical structures and snail pace policy changes, fostering innovation, diversifying professional pathways and careers and seamless connections in and out of cyberspace.

Keywords: Teacherpreneurs, Instagram, Creativity, Edutainment

Teacherpreneur

The concept of Teacherpreneurship has become a popular topic in the field of education. Teacherpreneurs are educators who have time, space, and reward to incubate and execute their ideas (Berry et al., 2015). These teachers bring their entrepreneurial spirit to the classroom teaching and extend it beyond the classroom in order to help students to achieve their professional goals. They deliver education by creating their own methods and tools". (Levy, 2015). They are capable of managing their own finance enjoying the sense of freelance or independent teachers' experience by creating their own teaching environments through creating and sharing (Guinan, 2015).

Teacherpreneurship is the new role of a teacher where the teacher bridges the gap between a traditional classroom teacher and an educational policymaker. In the traditional education system, the hierarchy always separates the group who do the actual delivery (teachers) and the group that creates educational policies (administrators). In contrast, teacherpreneurs are not only professional teachers who are capable of classroom teaching but also capable of developing education through entrepreneurship. Hence, teacherpreneurship is considered a sign of a high-quality education system (Berry, 2015). These teacherpreneurs are often full of ideas, take leadership and function as facilitators, motivators, and innovators with the positive mindset of an entrepreneur. Just as an entrepreneur has excellent competence in their field in developing, packaging, delivering, and marketing products, these teachers are competent in delivering education beyond the traditional classroom setting. Resource constraints and resistance from traditional systems are common challenges for teacherpreneurs. However, modern teacherpreneurs are using social media to expand their teaching and learning process beyond the classroom and also to influence or challenge policymakers. The ability of social media to reach a wider audience, instant resource sharing, and the ability to create multimedia content has revolutionized some of the teacherpreneur practices.

Social media and changing learning practices

In the contemporary world, social media has become a prominent lifestyle feature attracting over three billion users across glob (Statista, 2022) with an unprecedented impact on youth learning habits. The transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 transformed user habits from retrieving information uploaded by a small group of content creators to a massively engaging space where all users have access to contribute, share and, remix information. Eventually, social media have proved its potential for learning and teaching (Manca & Ranieri, 2017). Youth have been using social media for their learning in various ways including both formal and informal spaces.

However, it is doubtful how far the contemporary education system has been successful in catering those students with changing learning habits.

Changing learning practices of university students

University students have been diverting their attention between studies and social media, mostly viewing nonacademic content (Aldahdouh, 2020). On the other hand, the massive popularity of social media has encouraged tertiary teachers and students to adopt social media in their teaching and learning process as well (Bai et al., 2021). Many higher educational institutes use social media as a pro media in their enrolments, live streaming of lectures, promotions, and also to take care of the well-being of students. Legaree (2015) claims that empirical studies have shown that there are multiple benefits associated with the use of social media including better communication between teachers and tertiary-level students; better opportunities for networking and collaboration; the ability to share resources instantly; access to course materials after the classroom hours; and gaining additional skills and techniques that may improve their career success. Also, there are high risks such as miscommunications that would widely spread, sharing learning materials generated from unreliable resources, fake academic consultation, etc., that come along with benefits too. However, due to the high influence of social media there should be visible structural changes and policy changes in tertiary education system.

Role of Instagram as a social media platform

Instagram was originally launched in the year of 2010 as a free i-phone application for sharing pictures among friends (Instagram, 2015b). Instagram enables users to share self-generated multimedia content such as photos and videos (Ellison et al., 2007). Its popularity is evidenced through its rapid growth as it attracted one million registered users in two months and 10 million within a year (Instagram, 2016). Instagram offers other facilities such as improving the appearance of mobile photos using filters, instant sharing of photographs across multiple social media at the same time, developing the speed and ease of photo uploading process, and allowing users to share short videos (Instagram reels) and photo collections called "Instagram stories" (Instagram, 2015a). Instagram is particularly popular among teenagers and young adults (Duggan, 2015), and as of June 2016, Instagram had over 500 million active users where 95 million posts and 4.2 billion likes were made each day (Instagram, 2016). Despite the immense popularity of Instagram, it is relatively limited compared to other social media platforms such as Twitter. Though Instagram is not naturally suited for mainstream Big Data approaches (Highfield & Leaver, 2014; Kaufer, 2015), it has rich data that necessitates new approaches to blending images with captions, hashtags, and comments (Highfield & Leaver, 2014).

Figure 1:Modes of Instagram

Using Instagram for creative education

Instagram co-users are different from users of other social media platforms (Duggan, 2015). As 90% of

Instagram are under the age of 35 (Smith, 2013), many are also engaged in some form of learning who may represent a good number of tertiary students. Purnama (2017) states that Instagram increases students' motivation and participation in classroom activities which can be potentially used by skillful teacherpreneurs. A study carried out among students in ESL classrooms at University Malaysia Terengganu using Instagram shows how the platform allowed students to interact with their peers in teacher-led video related activities (Mansor & Rahim, 2017). However, education is a process of facilitating learning or acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits which can happen in either formal or informal settings (Dewey, 1916). Therefore, this research based on Malaysian ESL students evidenced that Instagram is capable of facilitating the process of education by creating platform to share knowledge and skills.

Design education is a broad academic field with cross-disciplinary connections, and it involves application of theory in the creation of products. It calls for a divergent thinking process for generating creative ideas by exploring possible solutions while nurturing curiosity and taking risks. According to Gunasekara (2018), creative education, influenced by culture and social attitudes, is focused on divergent thinking. Further, it is a nonlinear, free-flowing process unique to each individual. Generally, students majoring in design studies are required to have a wide range of cross-disciplinary knowledge and high levels of creativity to enable an environment for communication and exchanges, and social media technology is a platform to support a constructivist learning model for design education (Meyar and Norman, 2020). Recent research on social media and design education has mainly focused on design studio-based education research, and argues that students who use social media for education are better motivated to learn and make creative achievements than those restrained by traditional classroom teaching (Lim, 2015; Abel, 2015). Amabile et al. (1994) have proven through research that people's motivation could affect creative achievements. Guler (2015), based on his research carried out among students at the University of Guangdong in China majoring in Visual Communication, states that social media use had positive effects on student success in terms of communication, unlimited exposure to peer progress, and archiving and backtracking capabilities. It is also revealed that faculties that teach arts and humanities have the highest usage rates of social media, while natural science streams ranked the lowest (Moran et al., 2012). Social media creates an environment for self-expression and challenging; in other words, students compare themselves with peers and gain a mindset to challenge peers who share their works (Chai & Fan, 2017). Based on these literature findings, it can be argued that the design students can be easily motivated through a multimedia social platform such as Instagram. The educational facilitators or the teachers should have an optimistic view and skills in using social media in teaching and learning processes. And that's where the teacherpreneurs risk taking entrepreneurial spirit matters in creating a better learning experience for students using various content creation and sharing features of Instagram. Therefore, it is important to identify the role of Instagram teacherpreneurs and promote their best practices.

Considering the powerful role of Instagram in the contemporary society, and the high level of utilization by the teacherpreneurs, this research aims to discover the role of Instagram in promoting teacherpreneurship among tertiary level creative design academics. The research asked:

1. What characteristics of Instagram support teacherpreneurs?
2. What practices do Instagram teacherpreneurs engage?
3. What influences teacherpreneurs experience?

The shift to Web 2.0 and the increasing popularity of social media have created a new site for ethnographic fieldwork. Internet ethnography first appeared during the 1990s, which was a time where the online social environment was completely disconnected from the real world (Paccagnella, 1997). Digital ethnographers paid more attention to the so-called "digital-dualism" (Jurgenson, 2012, p. 6) when they attempted to conceptualize digital fieldwork as a blend of online and offline observations. Therefore, digital ethnography was identified as the most appropriate research method for this research.

Aligning with the digital ethnography principles, the research design was done with two phases.

Phase 01- Online observations, and visual data collection and analyses
Phase 02- Semi-structured interviews

In this era of Big Data values, qualitative research, and small sample sizes, these small sample sizes can provide more valuable insights than big data approaches (Boyd and Crawford, 2012). Therefore, the purposive sample consisted of 12 participants including design students and young apprentices (5), designers (3), teachers (2),

freelancers, and professionals (2) in a determined proportion. In determining these proportions, the researcher used her own experience as an Instagram follower and observer and as a tertiary-level teacher in Sri Lankan creative education field.

Data collection phase 01: Online observations

As the first step of data collection, the author become a passive Instagram consumer to observe participants. The first step was to set up an Instagram account for research purposes which was named "Instaresearcher". The observational data had to be recorded daily basis using field note techniques, screenshots, and screen recordings. Below observational data grid shows the types of data that was collected over the months.
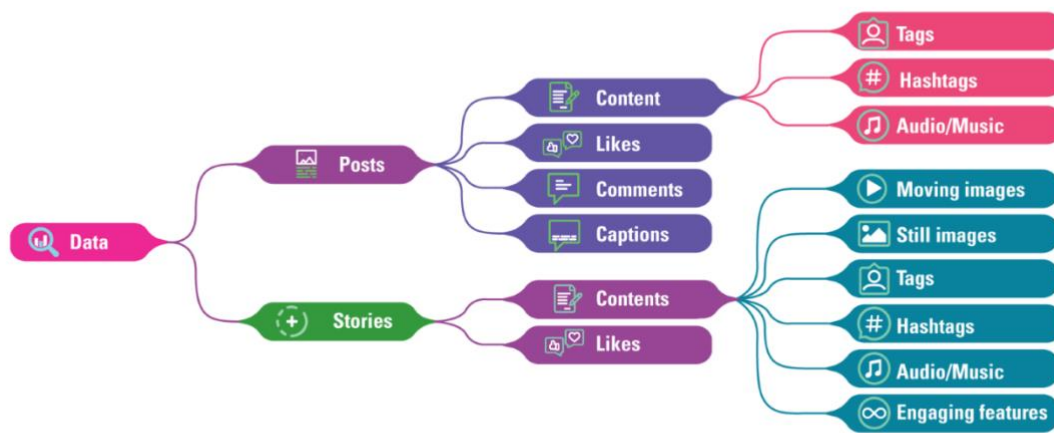

Figure 2: Observational data grid

Data collection phase 02: Structured interviews

Another ethical concern in social media research is developing a connection between the researcher, data, and the participant rather than the researcher and data. Dubois and Ford (2015) suggest the technique of "Trace interviews" where the Instagram user is invited to comment on visualisations of their traced data. Trace interviews help to strengthen the validity of the data by triangulation, providing additional context on the posts and building up a dialogue among the researcher, participant, and data. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were carried out in phase two of the present research ensuring data validity. In this big data context seven (07) participants were selected for the semi- structured interviews at the end of the online observation period.

Data analysis

For ethnographic researchers, there is no single accepted formula for analysing data (Gibbs, 2007). In fact, some scholars highlight that analysing ethnographic data can be completely "custom built" depending on the project objectives (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative content analysis can be used to answer "what" questions as well as to understand perceptions (Julien, 2008, p. 121), and it is generally used in analysing texts but it can also be used for visual analysis as well. Content analysis comes in various modes such as recorded observations, interviews, focus groups, photographs, policy manuals, multimedia, and public domain resources (Throne, 2000). Also, textual data can consist of field notes from observations, reflexive journals, stories, and narratives (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). When the data is collected in an interactive form, the researcher might come to the final data analysis with some prior knowledge and judgments. Therefore, the qualitative content analysis method was preferred in analyzing the visual and textual data collected through a purposive sample.

Findings

A set of themes was developed specific to the theme of this paper. All the visual and textual data were coded line by line. However, here are two stories from Dilani and Charith quoted herewith as they made strong statements regards to teacherpreneurship which is the focus of this paper. Dilani and Charith are young tertiary design teachers representing public and private university systems.

Theme #1: Edutainment (education + entertainment) via a flipped classroom

In a flipped classroom, instructional content will be mostly delivered online and outside the classroom. Through this pedagogical approach, conventional classroom-based learning is inverted where students would take the lead to deepen their understanding and start a discussion with peers on problem-solving. Teacherpreneurs play a vital role in shaping up creative education by bringing it out of the box, and proving that creative education is possible on online platforms as well

"I take captures from other Instagram pages and showcase them as they are very interesting posts. Especially with textile developments, I directly take brand captures and mention the name and ask them to visit the Instagram page and check it out. Especially Alexander McQueen's Instagram page. Then they get to know the standard level. If I find a similar standard with our students, I can directly share them as well" (Charith, Personal communication, 24th August 2021).

Thus, teacherpreneurs such as Charith informally bring innovation and excitement. Instagram provides an array of features (posts, reels, stories, polls, IGTV, hashtags..etc) to access information, self-expression, and connect with experts. The multi-user virtual environment on Instagram facilitates teachers to work with students in a virtual context and try more interactive and fun ways of learning.

Theme #2: Seamless connections in and out of cyberspace

These teacher leaders always expand student learning opportunities across geographic limits and facilitate students to explore knowledge beyond locally available pedagogical experts. Instagram is such a unique metaverse where teacherprenuers can help students to navigate a tailor-made educational experience.

> So, my presentations are not only PPT presentations because they don't like PPTs. So, I combine these together. When we are talking about the designer aspect, I show them some examples from my Insta. See these things happening in the world. So, they are keen on that. So, they start to follow those pages. They are really updated. As fashion designers, updating oneself is very important. Students are not using Google anymore. If they hear about anything they search it on Instagram (Dilani, Personal communication, 30th August 2021).

Design studies always connect to trends, and continuous changes are the norm of the industry. Therefore, it is easy for teachers to share the most recent examples from global brands via Instagram rather than updating their PowerPoint presentations. Therefore, Instagram references can be used as a tool to create seamless connections in and out of cyberspace.

Theme #3: Diverse professional pathways and careers

Instagram help design teachers to diversify their professional pathways and come out of the traditional teacher role without a major effort. It helps them to build up a flexible hybrid teacher role where teaching is productively delivered online and offline formally or informally. These teacherpreneurs also utilise classroom skills to run a business and gain richer, more diverse, and more fulfilling professional experiences, and in turn, they become better classroom instructors because of the multifaceted nature of their work. They do not restrict themselves to textbooks; instead, they create opportunities to connect with external professionals to gain more up-to-date knowledge.

> People recommended to me that Instagram is one of the professional platforms to present our work. I have two accounts. One for my personal use and the other one is for my artwork. Insta provides us with business profiles and professional profiles. That means you can keep separate accounts under the same name. That's an advantage. We can keep our personal account private and professional account public. On Instagram we can reach people all over the world. There are so many professionals out there. So, we can reach those people. (Dilani, Personal communication,

30th August 2021).

Some of these creative educators use Instagram as their art gallery or digital teaching portfolio. They share posts or reels on their classroom teaching and make them available out of the formal classroom setup and also expose them to a wider audience becoming money-making nano influencers..

Theme #4: Breaking away hierarchical structures and snail pace policy changes

The concept of teacherprenurship is not only about money but also about urgently responding to changing needs of students. A visual-based platform such as Instagram facilitates creative teachers to go the extra mile by breaking away hierarchical structures and snail pace policy changes in a formal classroom setup which helps innovation. The teachers can creatively use their pedagogical talent to spread and sell their expertise.

> Some old school lecturers are not very familiar with Instagram. There're two different crowds. Some reject it. But some seniors like to be involved in these platforms. They ask how to do it and they also create new accounts. Sometimes they follow me as well. 75% is positive. Also, there are some negative comments. They think technological advancements are not very good for creative education. I don't know whether it's good or bad but I'm trying to utilise these platforms in a more productive way. (Charith, Personal communication, 24th August 2021).

It was revealed that apart from technical barriers and the inability to think outside of the box, the public university culture largely influences these perceptions. These techerprenuers believe that the teacher-student gap should be less in creative education to bring out student creativity, and they find Instagram is a great platform to bridge that gap. They have their students as Instagram followers and believe it is a positive addition to their teacher-student relationship.

> When it comes to university work, they are doing it for marks but when they are posting on Instagram or Facebook, they don't want any marks. They need attention. Sometimes they are doing their best artwork on Instagram because they don't have any tension. (Dilani, Personal communication, 30th August 2021).

The above personal communication during the interviews reveals that design students tend to perform better under less stress levels caused by strict marking criteria and tough deadlines. During the further discussion, it was emphasized that the prevailing assessment system has to be changed according to design students' and rapidly changing industrial needs. It is very unlikely that the existing higher educational policies have been designed to address unique needs of individual streams. However, the teachpreneurs in the field of design education have managed to overcome the snail pace policy changes by engaging Instagram in their day-to-day teaching process.

Theme #5: Fostering innovation

Many suspects that teacherpreneurs are often disturbed by outside distractions but instead, they bring their enriching and effective experiences to the classroom. Describing his teaching experience during the pandemic, Charith states that he could introduce innovative assessment methods while the other faculty members found it impossible to teach design subjects online.

> One thing is the pandemic. It supported changing some assignment types. I think Instagram is a more interesting platform than others. Students can showcase their initial ideas to others. They can express what they have, basically their skills like dyeing, printing, and even textile weaving. There are so many experiments. Through Instagram they can get a nice photograph of their experiments or textile stuff and promote their design ideas to the audience. I think they were very interested in that. Because of the current situation, they can't go outside to find materials and we don't allow students to bring hard copies because of the pandemic. Sometimes people think all their artworks are in digital forms, and think this can disturb their hand skills and the psychomotor skills. So, that's why I asked them to do it all manually and then take a photograph and upload it to Instagram. (Charith, Personal communication, 24th August 2021).

Thus, Instagram had been a useful platform for Charith for carrying out his class assignments during the

pandemic. Simultaneously, it has been beneficial for students in exposing their work to a wider audience. However, it was also accepted that some students could over-curate their work thereby using various filters and photo editing techniques.

Discussion and conclusion

Instagram is a comfort zone to promote teacherpreneurship in connecting formal and informal learning spaces as essential in modern-day creative education. Today, a teacher is not merely delivering content for students during a limited timeframe but also someone who maintains a constant connection with their students and helps them grow while also benefiting themselves. In referring to the literature, Design education is a broad academic field with cross-disciplinary connections, and it involves the application of theory in the creation of products. It is always influenced by culture and social attitudes (Gunasekara ,2018) which means a digital social platform like Instagram can benefit both design students and teacherpreneurs.

What characteristics of Instagram support teacherpreneurs?
Instagram create *seamless connections in and out of cyberspace* where teacherpreneurs can always connect with their students via fewer barriers. Instagram offers other facilities such as improving the appearance of mobile photos using filters, instant sharing of photographs across multiple social media at the same time," (Instagram, 2015a). Instagram posts, reels, comments, messaging threads, explore features, AI features such as filters, and search optimization are massively helpful for teacherpreneurs to be successful in their online and offline teaching. Those features allow them to create multimedia content and share instantly which extends learning beyond the classroom.

What practices do Instagram teacherpreneurs engage in?
As teacherpreneurs are often recognized for delivering education using their own methods (Levy, 2015), e*dutainment (education + entertainment) via a flipped classroom pedagogy* is a common practice among Instagram teacherpreneur. They create a joyful learning experience while fostering innovation beyond traditional teaching and assessment methods. They foster innovation despite the socio-economic barriers or challenges due to natural disasters. Their innovative assessment designs, learning materials, and assessment criteria help to progress a flowless teaching and learning process.

What influences teacherpreneurs experience?
As discussed in the literature resource constrain and resistance from traditional systems are common challenges for teacherpreneurs. Therefore, many teacherpreneurs are attracted by the freedom they gain by *breaking away from hierarchical structures and snail pace policy changes*. Also, they are capable of managing their own finance enjoying the sense of freelance or independent teachers' experience by creating their own teaching environments through creating and sharing (Guiaan, 2015). Instagram provides ample opportunities for teacherpreneurs to reach new academic institutes, diversify their career into teaching and other creative careers (online galleries, content creators, online consultants, etc) which potentially generate additional income for them. Importantly, this ability to *diversify their professional pathways and careers* is a positive factor that be used to promote the teaching profession to attract young, talented individuals as a promising career.

Instagram support teacherpreneurs to facilitate creativity among diverse learners and they also make deeper partnerships with students and other stakeholders by contributing digital pedagogy while debunking the myths about using virtual platforms and online environments for education. Web 3.0 is already upon us and with teacherprenurship, the future of creative education will be shifted beyond what we've imagined.

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