THE INTEGRATION OF AUTHENTIC LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND FACEBOOK IN SERVICE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT
To date, lots of research was carried out solely on the effectiveness of Authentic Learning principles in service learning. The results showed positive relationships between theories and practices because students had become relatively analytical thinkers, problem-solvers and collaborators. The uses of Authentic Learning and Facebook in service learning, however, are under research. Hence, this paper tends to investigate the effectiveness of Authentic Learning Principles and Facebook in promoting active learning among students in their service learning curriculum. These students are from Albukhary International University (AiU) whereby service-learning curriculum also known as Community Engagement Project (CEP) has been introduced to all undergraduate students across their 3-year curriculum. Purposive samplings were employed to find out the students' preferences in using Authentic Learning Principles together with Facebook as a social media tool in their service learning projects. Surveys which consisted of Likert-scale questions were administered to ninety-six (99) students from 20 different countries. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the students were males and the other forty-nine (49%) were females. The results have shown that Authentic Learning Principles and Facebook as a tool of communication have effectively enhanced students' learning experience in service learning.
Keywords: Authentic Learning Principles, Facebook, Service Learning / Community Engagement Project

INTRODUCTION
Albukhary International University (AiU) is established under the concept of "Waqf" – a charitable university which offers full-fledged scholarships to the underprivileged students during the duration of their studies. The ultimate goal of the concept aims at providing equal education opportunities to academically qualified students from disadvantaged, underprivileged and marginalized backgrounds. In line with the ultimate goal, the students are expected to possess good characters in terms of valuing discipline, being caring and generating contributions to the society upon their graduations. It is also a model university to the world characterized by high quality and relevant education and universal humanitarian values. In order to produce students who have good characters and experience in social activities, they are requested to participate in planned service learning projects during their course of studies. The service learning projects provide an authentic learning phenomenon in which they have to employ real-world and discovery-based problem solving skills to resolve the problems. They are expected to learn the passion to serve and the meaning of contribution for the betterment of the society. Previous research on the integration of authentic learning in service learning projects showed positive outcomes because they had become relatively analytical thinkers, problem-solvers and collaborators (Brown, 2002; Lombardi, 2007; Tan, Teo & Chy, 2009). Technological-based authentic learning also presents its significant role in creating and applying new knowledge by using higher thinking cognitive processes (Churchill, 2005). Hence, this paper tends to investigate the effectiveness of authentic learning and the use of Facebook as a social media tool in the process of students' active involvements in the service learning projects.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Authentic Learning in Service Learning Environment
Authentic learning (Herrington & Kervin, 2007), also known as experiential learning, has created a new paradigm shift for students because it dismisses rote learning. The principles of authentic learning promote learning knowledge and skills useful in real life (Collins, 1988), link the classroom theories with real world practices (Bennett, Agostinho & Lockyer, 2002; Borthwick, Bennett, Lefoe & Huber, 2007), develop problem solving skills and construct knowledge (Hui & Koplin, 2011) during the authentic activity learning process. Research has also shown the fact that students who have engaged in authentic learning activities tend to have the flexible competency such as "the judgment to distinguish reliable from unreliable information, the patience to follow longer arguments, the synthetic ability to recognize relevant patterns in unfamiliar contexts and the flexibility to work across discipline and cultural boundaries to generate innovative solutions" (Chang, Lee,

Wang & Chen, 2010, p.1572). Lombardi (2007) further commented that authentic learning activities can go beyond the content of curriculum where students are exposed to different disciplines and cultures. Consequently, students can face and manage their problems easier because the higher order of thinking skills they possess give them strength to make the right decision in their future working atmosphere (Herrington & Kervin, 2007; Lombardi, 2007).

Service learning has become the curriculum in higher education institutions which aims to improve the quality of live especially to underprivileged and maginalised people on a voluntary basis. It gives authentic contexts to students to apply their knowledge and skills. Therefore, students are encouraged to be involved in service learning which provides authentic activities. Students can learn new experience by real experience and they can remember the content for a long time (Ammon, Furco, Chi, & Middaugh, 2002). Apart from this, the students learn about social responsibilities such as being empathic, ethical and helpful to needy people in their surroundings (Berham, 2006; Ikeda, 2005; Wigginton, 1985). Such learning experience also certainly enriches the life of learners in schools. Erlich (1996) and Furco (1996) had clearly stated that students best learned not by the printed materials but experiences. Jacoby (1999) further explained that service learning is the authentic activity which accommodates "human and community needs" besides being a popular activity and contextual relevant to culture and experiential learning (Settle & Smith, 2008). In addition, service learning requires participants to give up their time, comfort and finance (Perold & Omar, 1997) for the benefits of others. In this process, students have to be self-sacrificed to handle and solve the complicated problems externally and internally. Learners are given opportunities to strengthen their skills of thinking process as they freely explore, discuss, reflect, construct concepts from the project they are involved (Mims, 2003). Positive characters such as team-spirit, leadership, conflict resolution, communication, organization, and time management (Tucker, McCarthy, Hoxmeier, & Lenk, 1998) are inculcated when they are committed to service learning. A previous research (Campus Compact 2005) showed that 95 percent of interviewees recognized and accept the outcomes of positive character building through service learning. With the positive outcomes, the students are able to make use of their existing good characters, knowledge and skills in their real-life. They are the practicalities of authentic learning activities in service learning.

Authentic Learning in Facebook (Social Networking)
Because of the popularity and usefulness of social networking, teaching and learning from the traditional setting has now moved to the virtual world setting. Previous research in Malaysia mainly focused on interface design and interactive multimedia elements (Sivapalan & Wan Fatimah, 2010) which did not offer authentic learning contexts and activities for students to interact. The focus on authentic learning in social networking particularly in the use of Facebook is under research.

The invention of Facebook, a popular communication tool, has offered the virtual communities for students to communicate. Facebook has broken its records of active users from 350 million in 2010 (Facebook, 2010) to 526 million in 2012 (Facebook, 2012). The drastic increase of users has signified its existence not only as a communication tool but also an avenue for the people to share their leisure and lives. It is also a tool to befriend and simultaneously joins the connections and interactions from a physical setting into a virtual world (Wang, Chun, Yu & Wu, 2013). Shih (2013) has proven that the virtual world in Facebook is enticing because users are given the opportunities to "exchange, interact, collaborate and socialize" (p.52) with other people. Before its invention, multimedia technologies which lacked of interactive components were regarded as inhumane and the community felt bored to use them (Zaidieh, 2012). However, the introduction of Facebook with interactive advertisements, chatting tools, colourful pages, pictures and games has gained its fame among students and teachers. It encourages students to communicate with their teachers after school hours for their projects and most importantly, Facebook promotes learning through authentic contexts and activities. Students are given leverage to express their thoughts, opinions and suggestions on Facebook. Simultaneously, they will receive comments, feedback and support from their teachers and peers. In this case, strong relationships in the culture of learning for both teachers and students are strengthened (Zaidieh, 2012).

Teachers and students gain the advantages of using Facebook as a tool to allow students to come together to discuss, co-ordinate, collaborate and resolve subject-related problems in the virtual platform (Salaway, Caruso, Nelson & Ellison, 2008). Besides, students using Facebook as an educational tool are encouraged to spend more efforts to work in teams for their academic activities (Kennedy, 2000). With the convenient features in Facebook, students and teachers can experience authentic learning environment when they share the resources, make the announcements, discuss the details of the projects and exchange ideas in groups. As a result, merging Facebook with teaching and learning breaks the four walls of classrooms and provides students more room to interact with the aim at enhancing effective learning. Students are now more able to improvise their thinking and

communication skills which are beneficial to their work in the future. The skills go hand in hand with "engaging students in disciplinary practices of professional practitioners" (Land, Hannafin & Oliver, 2012, p. 11).

METHODOLOGY

AiU has tailored the Community Engagement Projects (CEP) as compulsory curriculum to all the undergraduate students during their 3-year studies. They are from 50 different countries and are expected to be the agents of change to their respective communities after their studies. CEP focuses on empowering underprivileged and disadvantaged students by transferring social entrepreneurship qualities, moving towards a non-conventional paradigm - social business mind set and ability to plan, implement, monitor, identify, scale up and evaluate a "holistic" development programme by taking into consideration social, economic and environmental dimensions.

Indeed, CEP promotes "learning from each other and taking action together" (Chamberlain, 1993, p. 31) in which learning has moved into real social contexts. He further observed that "it is not only what's being done that is impressive, but how – against the odds; and why – the motivation and the spirit that produces such a determination to succeed' in community development (Chamberlain, 1993, p. 32). Ideally, it is linked together with a common goal of combining activities and working together so as to build good relationships and sharing available resources in the communities or villages. It also goes further to encourage the AiU students with community members and other interest groups to be involved in learning by identifying the potential development, making the proposals and action plans based from the demographic findings and monitoring the progress of the development programme at the specified community areas.

A total of 232 undergraduate students had registered themselves in CEP. They were divided into 21 groups. Each group comprised 9 to 13 students. The names of the groups consisted of Enactus 1, Enactus 2, Heptanations, Global SLA and 7-Heaven. Students were able to choose their own group of 3 from different countries. Besides, each student had a Facebook account. AiU had made use of Facebook to make announcements on community service activities and academic matters. Students liked the flexibility of Facebook because it could update the communication in the community fast and also the ability to share multimedia contents. Hence, Dwyer, Hiltz and Passerini (2007) has advocated in the research that Facebook is an easier mean of communication with staff leaders and group members since most undergraduate students are online with Facebook daily.

As part of the preparation process in CEP, Facebook is used as the social media tool for communication. Facebook has become their source of interaction among the project leaders, student group leaders as well as among the group members. They needed to develop their own digital identities in order to become the community of professionals utilizing educational technology to the community. The Year 1 group leader would create a Facebook group at the beginning of the first semester. All group members were required to join the Facebook group. It was not public viewing Facebook groups. Only group members could access and view the groups' announcements, shared documents and online discussions. Figure 1 is an example of a Facebook group created by one of the groups. There were 13 members who came from various countries namely Somaliland, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Uzbekistan and Bhutan.

Figure 1: An Example of a Facebook Group

Facebook functioned as a social media tool does support the authentic learning via service-learning. It has also provided information and resources that help students in CEP. By engaging students in Facebook, they were able to flexibly communicate with each other and it was a cost-effective way of communication. Most importantly, Facebook also gave the opportunities to many university students to explore and manage their daily communication in a safe and ethical mode (Ahmedani, 2011).

Purposive samplings also known as random or probability samplings were used in this study. Purposive samplings are a "strategy in which precise settings, persons or events are selected purposely in order to gather important information that can't be obtained from other choices" (Pickard, Child and McLeod, 2007, p. 64). We chose selected CEP groups and they were required to complete 30 items in the Likert-scale survey form. In the survey form, the students were asked about the average time spent on Facebook and whether or not they liked the idea of using Facebook in their CEP.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS ANALYSIS
Out of 232 students, there were only 99 students involved in the survey. They consisted of 51 males and 48 females. Out of 99 students, 83 students used Facebook Group as a communication tool in the CEP. Using Facebook Group triggered the critical discussions and shared field trips experience among the group members. They could also upload and update the common group report to meet the objectives of respective tasks. It goes in line with the objective of this paper which tends to investigate the effectiveness of Authentic Learning Principles and Facebook in promoting active learning among students in their service learning curriculum.
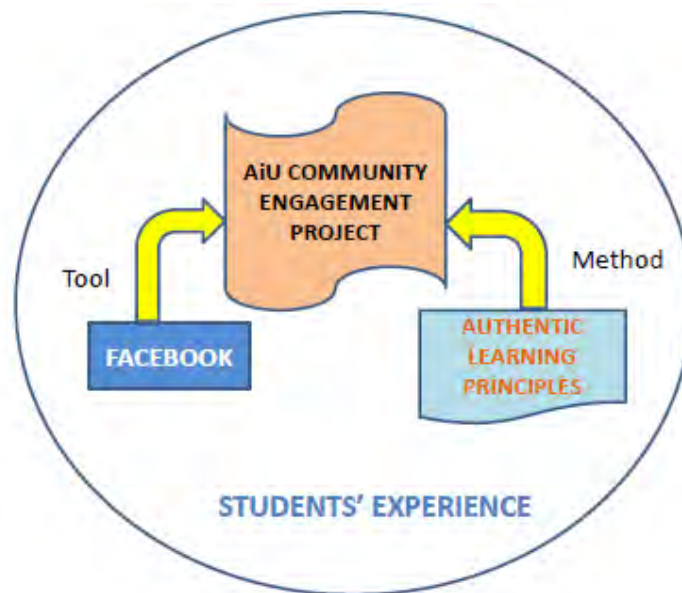

Figure 2: Conceptual framework of CEP in AiU

In this study, we integrated the ten authentic learning principles into the community engagement project activities as indicated in Figure 2. The students went on field trips to study the socio-economic environment of the rural local community. The activities included addressing means of living, strengthening the ability to cope and recovering from stress and shocks, incorporating relevant aspects of people's lives and livelihoods into development planning, implementation and evaluation, and the ability to be responsive to changes and people's needs and ensuring sustainable resources for today and tomorrow's generation.

The outcome of the finding is reflected in the Table 1. Students felt that using Facebook had helped them in achieving a successful outcome in their CEP. The students also agreed that the Facebook group provided a useful medium for them to share and display information and resources. Facebook was as if a noticeboard for any updates of their CEP activities. From this survey, 83% of the respondents had accessed to Facebook all the time and frequently visited the site every day. Only 12% of the respondents were not frequent Facebook users.

Besides, about 90% respondents agreed that Facebook had allowed them to communicate effectively and conveniently between group members and staff group leaders. They could communicate freely in texts for any discussions related to CEP. Facebook had also provided them an easy, cost-effective, safe and friendly environment to voice out their views and opinions.

Almost all the students (93%) agreed that Facebook had promoted authentic learning contexts and activities in CEP by learning the roles, delegating tasks among group members. This was done through Facebook groups and events. Facebook had allowed the students to articulate their views and opinions, discuss issues and process activities via status updates and comments. By uploading the related Youtube, videos and visual elements to Facebook, the experts of performance were able to identify how service learning was conducted as well as to explore more topics through external links.

Two thirds of respondents (66%) agreed that coaching and scaffolding were done through Facebook discussions and it had given the opportunity to instructors to observe the activities and comments made by the students. When students had made a comment or asked for a question, feedback could be given by the project leader or the group leader. Somehow, only 70% of the students agreed that the feedback had helped the students to reflect on what they had learnt during the CEP activities. The overall result of this study had implied that Facebook was a social media tool that could be used as platform to implement authentic learning principles in AiU CEP activities.

DISCUSSIONS
There were some limitations in this study. Firstly, Four groups had not adopted Facebook as a social network media tool in the CEP. The students felt that Facebook was merely for their social lives and it was not for academic activities. Some students found that the staff leaders did not extend their co-operation in assisting them to complete their activities and tasks related to CEP. It had affected the results for the principle in coaching and scaffolding. Secondly, Facebook had a constraint of only accepting a certain type or format of document to be uploaded. Thus, it restricted the students and project leaders to share the resources among the group members. Finally, students appreciated very much the flexibility of Facebook in terms of communication and sharing information and resources. Facebook has already been an integral part of undergraduate students' daily lives. Students could improve better through their CEP with the integration of Facebook as a social media tool and ten authentic learning principles. Hence, the study has shown that students favourably responded well to this framework.

Table 1: The Students' Perceptions on Facebook and Authentic Learning Principles

Authentic Learning Principles	N	Mean	Std Dev
Principle 1: Authentic Context a. Facebook allows you to bring the real life learning experience into community engagement activities.	99	2.4693	0.7587
b. Facebook provides you a place to display pictures, YouTube or visual elements about community engagement activities.		3.0202	0.7518
c. Facebook is a tool to motivate you to learn more about the community engagement activities during the process.		2.4141	0.8042
Principle 2: Authentic Activities a. Facebook provides you a place to determine the roles of each team members in the community engagement activities.	99	2.616	0.7876
b. Facebook provides you a place to delegate the tasks of community engagement activities among the team members.		2.889	0.7899
c. Facebook provides you a place to connect with team members regardless of their locations about the community engagement activities easily.		3.071	0.7726
Principle 3: Expert Performance a. Facebook provides a place to project leaders to demonstrate the steps to begin and manage community engagement activities systematically.	99	2.745	0.7601
b. Facebook provides you a place to observe the communication skills of the project leaders to other students.		2.633	0.8130
c. Facebook allows easy and cost-effective communications among team members and project leaders.		3.072	0.7766
Principle 4: Multiple Roles and Perspectives a. Facebook provides you a place for different comments and opinions about	99	2.990	0.7491

community engagement activities.			
b. Facebook provides you a place to investigate the reliability of information about community engagement activities.		2.663	0.8800
c. Facebook provides you a place to update your group members about any news and discussions on community engagement activities.		3.265	0.6784
Principle 5: Reflection	99		
a. Facebook provides you a place to write reflections about your strengths and weaknesses in community engagement activities.		2.459	0.8227
b. Facebook provides you a place to record the incidents take place throughout the community engagement activities.		2.633	0.8498
c. Facebook is a place to express your feelings freely without being judged.		2.691	0.9235
Principle 6: Collaboration	99		
a. Facebook provides you to collaborate among members of the community engagement group.		2.857	0.6999
b. Facebook provides you as a medium to collaborate their work and ideas about community engagement activities.		2.888	0.6528
c. Facebook allows you to share the group reports about community engagement activities.		3.010	0.6308
Principle 7: Articulation	99		
a. Facebook provides you to discuss issues or processes of community engagement activities.		2.816	0.7333
b. Facebook provides you the opportunity to debate about the views on community engagement activities.		2.724	0.8053
c. Facebook is a tool to adopt a new learning method in community engagement activities.		2.546	0.8618
Principle 8: Coaching and Scaffolding	99		
a. Facebook provides project leaders to observe students, offering resources and providing feedback about community engagement activities.		2.691	0.7231
b. Facebook provides the opportunity to you on the skills and knowledge transfer from project leaders about community engagement activities.		2.670	0.7828
c. Facebook provides you an effective channel for the project leader's feedback and areas of improvements about community engagement activities.		2.753	0.6740
Principle 9: Integrated Authentic Assessment	99		
a. Facebook can capture rich information about student performance in community engagement activities.		2.408	0.8186
b. Facebook allows you to upload reports about community engagement activities for project leader's assessment.		2.867	0.7645
c. Facebook has the mechanism for you to continuously revise your reports based on project leaders' feedback about community engagement activities.		2.732	0.7253
Principle 10: Professional Learning	99		
a. Facebook allows students to keep informed about new technology developments in teaching and learning techniques related to community engagement activities.		2.816	0.6903
b. Facebook allows student to update information relevant to their future professional development.		2.847	0.7050
c. Facebook is a social media tool to learn about community engagement project in innovative, challenging and creative ways.		2.714	0.8081

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