Extent Of Use Of Social Media And Writing Skills In Filipino: A Correlational Study Among Freshmen College Students

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Abstract
Social Media has removed barriers inhibiting communication to take place across time and geography. In fact, they have transformed the world into a ‘global village’ (Aljehani, 2019, p.216), with the youth as the most numbered subscribers. Against this backdrop, it is important to determine the extent of Social Media (SM) use of learners, and determine whether or not they (SM) influence learners writing skill, specifically in the Filipino language noting that the main language of SM is English. The empirical study performed data gathering to 136 tertiary students via the employment of a research tool (with reliability score = Cronbach’s alpha = 0.812). Interesting findings were disclosed in the study.

Keywords: Social Media, Writing Skills, Filipino language, Mass Communications,

Introduction

Background of the Study
Social media (SM) have undoubtedly altered how people interact and communicate with each other in this modern time (Sriwilai & Charoensukmongkol, 2015; Wylie, 2014), and they have transitioned into becoming an integral part of people’s social life (Lai & To, 2015, as cited in Eijansantos, 2018). It has made possible the type of communication that is not constrained neither by space nor time. Consequently, people nowadays across geographical spaces and time zones could communicate with each other through the use of Social media which led to the transformation of the world into a ‘global village’ (Aljehani, 2019, p.216). Thus, it is beyond doubt that people have been enticed to subscribe and use social media applications for their apparent benefits in terms of communication. Notably, approximately more than half
(54%) of the world population are active SM users which, in figure, exceeds more than four billion in the year 2021 (Kemp, 2021). This overwhelming number is a testimony not only to the existing wide acceptance for SM, but also for people’s positive attitude towards them, translated in terms of use and subscriptions.

Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that social media is presently regarded as an important, if not the most important, online communication tool, connecting people world-wide (Boyd, 2006). One reason explaining the wide acceptance and use of social media is because they are affordable tools of communication (Aljehani, 2019; Jue et al., 2010) facilitating the publication and access of information among people; hence, it could be claimed that SM have revolutionized the communication process (Andrade-Vargas et al., 2021).

Significantly, studies have consistently found the steady increase of social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube) use among students (Smith and Caruso, 2010). In fact, it could be said that SM have attracted a large segment of the population across the world, mainly of which are youths (Aljehani, 2019). Notably, this popularity and trend have attracted the attention of learning institution to utilize SM teaching-and-learning support (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). In fact, it could be noted that SM play an important role in the performance of students’ academic tasks in the present set-up, especially during this time of the pandemic. Social media have served as avenue for the creation of contents required in different courses.

Against this backdrop, studies have been conducted to investigate the influence of SM on many regards – such as their influence on the learners’ value system (Aljehani, 2019), SM usage to promote learning of English as foreign language (Sharma, 2019), the use of SM to support blended learning in higher learning institutions (Chan & Leung, 2016). However, limited studies have been conducted to determine the association between the extent of SM use and Filipino writing skills as most of the investigations relating to this variables have been, most of the time, if not always, with English writing skill as the English language appears to be the most investigated language across different conducted research (Rillo & Alieto, 2019), and this is most likely on the account of its use which spans globally (Eijansantos & Baguio, 2021).

Thus, this study probed the extent of social media use and extent of writing skill in Filipino of students enrolled in Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication and Bachelor of Arts in Developmental Communication. Furthermore, this study investigated the relationship between the identified tertiary learners’ extent of SM use and their extent of writing skill in Filipino.

Research Questions
This empirical investigation on the extent of social media use and Filipino writing skill of the respondents intended to determine the relationship between the identified variables, and aimed to determine whether or not statistical differences could be drawn across genders. The following specific questions guided the development and direction of the study:

1. What is the extent of the use of social media of the Bachelor of Mass Communication and Developmental Communication students?

2. What is the extent of the writing skill in Filipino of the Bachelor of Mass Communication and Developmental Communication students?

3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents’ extent social of media use and the extent of Filipino writing skill?

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

The research design of the study has been identified to be descriptive-quantitative-correlational. Quantitative studies are those that aim to measure variables (Kothari, 2004 in Alieto et al., 2020), and intend ‘to generalize results from a sample to a population of interest’ (Alieto & Rillo, 2018, p. 96) as in the case of this study which aimed to quantify the extent of SM use and extent of Filipino writing skill among the chosen respondents of the study. Moreover, the research is noted to be quantitative as it statistically inferred differences and relationships utilizing statistical tools in treating data numerical in nature (Mat Roni et al., 2020 in Eijansantos et al., 2020).

On another hand, descriptive studies are conducted to characterize or describe a variable or variables through the use of simple statistics (Abdon et al., 2019 in Lim-Ramos et al., 2020 ; Pattern & Newhart, 2017 in Tanpoco et al, 2019), such as, but not limited to, mean (M), standard and deviation (SD) (Berowa, 2012; Berowa & Mendoza, 2017; Johnson, 2000 in Perez & Alieto, 2018; Singh, 2006 in De La Rama et al., 2020; Torres & Alieto, 2019a) as in the case of this study which aimed to describe the respondents’ extent of SM use and the extent of Filipino writing skill through the use of descriptive statistics.

Additionally, the study is acknowledged to be correlational as it intended to determine the relationship between and among variables (Kendra, 2020 in Jacinto & Alieto, 2020) as in the case of this study which explored the association between the variables extent of SM use and extent of Filipino writing skill of the respondents.

Moreover, the study is population-based (Buslon & Alieto, 2019) as it is specifically directed towards identified respondents types, the first year Mass
Communication and Developmental Communication students. Finally, in terms of the time allotted for data gathering, the study is noted to be cross-sectional in design as one-time data collection method was employed (Go Silk et al., 2020).

**Respondents of the study**
The study enlisted a total of 136 respondents drawn from two state-managed universities offering the Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication and Developmental Communication courses. Seventy six (54% of the sample size) are Mass Communication students.

**Research Instruments of the study**
The study employed the use of a research questionnaire which is determined to be a classic technique in data collection (Ubalde & Rosales, 2018 in Buslon et al., 2020). Additionally, the choice of using a questionnaire is anchored on the claim of Dillman et al. (2009 in Alieto, 2018) that the employment of a survey tool in a study with large sample size is both cost and time efficient.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. Part I solicited the personal data of the respondents, such as, name (optional), school presently enrolled, active social media account and gender. Part II is on the extent of the use of social media. Items in this section are answerable with options described as follows: (4) always, (3) frequently, (2) sometimes and (1) rarely. Part III is on the writing skills in Filipino, and answerable with four options described as follows: 4 for very high, 3 for high, 2 for low and 1 for very low.

On another hand, the research tool was pilot tested which is realized to address semantic issues, validity of the inventory, and internal consistency of the items in the instruments (Johnson, 2010 in Alieto, 2019). It was administered to a total of 60 respondents who did not form part of the final sampling frame. The statistical analysis disclosed that the internal consistency of the items are reliable (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.812).

**Results**

**Respondents’ Extent of Social Media use**
To determine the extent of SM use of the respondents, the responses drawn from the research tool were coded first in a spreadsheet and transferred to SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics (Mean [M] and Standard Deviation [SD]) were employed. Table 1 presents the analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.708</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messenger</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.624</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 1, it could be noted that, among the identified most popular social media, the respondents reported to use that the top used SM, in general, is the Messenger (M-3.13, SD-0.708), while the least utilized is the Twitter (M-1.56, SD-0.922). Additionally, the overall extent of social media used is described as ‘frequently’ (M-2.63, SD-0.6333).

**Respondents’ extent of writing skill in Filipino of the respondents**

To identify the extent of writing skill in Filipino of the respondents, the responses in the questionnaire were coded. Analysis for the mean score and standard deviation was performed. Table 2 shows the result of the treatment.

**Table 2** Extent of writing skill in Filipino of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of writing skill in Filipino</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.065</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 gives the descriptive analysis of the respondents’ extent of writing skill in Filipino. The data provide that the respondents’ reported, in general, that their writing skill is ‘low’ (M-2.48, SD-1.065).

**Correlation: Respondents’ extent of SM use and extent of writing skill in Filipino**

To draw whether or not a significant association exists between the respondents’ extent of SM use and extent of writing skill in Filipino, the data was treated with an inferential statistics of relationship, the parametric tool known as Pearson Product Moment Coefficient. Table 3 presents the analysis.

**Table 3** Relationship between respondents’ extent of SM use and extent of writing skill in Filipino

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>r-value</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of Social Media Use</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.285</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of Writing skill in Filipino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, it could be identified that there is a significant relationship between the respondents’ extent of SM use and extent of writing skill in Filipino (p-value = 0.000 < Cronbach’s α = 0.005). Moreover, the relationship is identified to be inversely as provided by the negative r-value. This means that respondents with high extents of SM use are with low extents of writing skill in Filipino.
Filipino. Conversely, respondents with low extents of SM use are the ones with high extents of writing skill in Filipino. Furthermore, the strength of the relationship between the variables is noted to be weak ($r$-value = -0.285).

**Discussion**
The study revealed that the respondents’ extent of use of social media (e.g. Twitter, in general, is high. This confirms early findings (e.g. Aljehani, 2019; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Kemp, 2021) that there is a wide acceptance and a trend on the use of SM among, especially among the young. Additionally, it was found out that among the top four most popular SM the most frequently used is the Messenger, the only application reported by the respondents to be used always. Noticeably, the second highly utilized is Facebook. Along this line, it is inferred that because the applications, Facebook and Messenger, are linked with one another their use is most likely simultaneous. Meaning, the respondents who use Facebook would likely be using Messenger. It is supposed that the reason for the ‘very high’ utilization of Messenger is that it offers a broad range of communication opportunities as opposed to using cellular phones. Through messenger, it becomes possible to communicate to people even in distant places inexpensively. Moreover, it could serve as an alternative for sending messages via mobile phones.

As regards the respondents’ extent of writing skill in Filipino, it is clear that there is a need for the respondents to continuously develop their writing in the identified language. It is regrettable to note that the respondents’ extent of writing skill in Filipino is ‘low’, suggesting they have not well developed their competence in the use of the Filipino language in expressing ideas via written discourse. There are reasons conceived to explain this. One is that the tertiary students have limited subjects which could have enhanced their writing skill in Filipino. It is surmised that the removal of the Filipino subjects in the tertiary level has negatively impacted the ability of learners in writing in their National language which is something worthy to take note. Another is that in the use of SM the language of preference among learners is English, apart from the fact that the main language of the internet is also English. Thus, the utilization of SM appears to expose and train learners in the use of English. Hence, the language choice in using SM as educational support should be greatly considered by Higher Academic Institutions.

On the account of the significant relationship between the respondents’ extent of SM and extent of writing skill in Filipino, the study disclosed that there is a significant relationship, but the relationship was identified to be negative. Therefore, the high extent of SM exposure and use appears to be detrimental in the development of writing proficiency in the Filipino language. It is supposed that because the main language of SM is English students’ ability to express and communicate in another language like Filipino appears to be less favored and even to an extent challenged. It is believed that the communication performed in SM serves as language practice, and
because these languages are different, for instance in structure (Eijansantos, 2017). Therefore, ideally, these communication activities in SM would act as an opportunity for language use which is understood to be a means for language development. However, the study’s finding suggests that, although to an extent this contention is true, it is limited to the language preferred and nominated by learners, which in the case of SM use is mainly English.

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**References**


