

Chapter 4

Social Media Usage and Writing Skills Competence Among College Students

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ABSTRACT

The study was driven by the need to investigate the use of social media and its influence on how college students engage with each other; and their writing activities and projects. Writing is a key component of communication competence whether in interpersonal, workplace or audience engagement in media productions. Communication engagements are shaped by the medium and this is evident in a society centered around digital mediums that are continually changing and advancing in their features. The exponential growth of social media and the high rate of mobile phone penetration has led to platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and WhatsApp being a key part in youths' daily communication; yet these social media platforms require users to express themselves using limited words complemented by memes and acronyms. This paper adopted a

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qualitative. Findings indicate that social media shapes the way students write as illustrated by the inconsistencies in their formal writing which is influenced by the informal writing, slang, emojis and acronyms used on social media.

INTRODUCTION

Communication, as a social process, is constituted in an interwoven and ever-evolving spatial and temporal framework. The arrival of new media and the continuously emerging technologies have drastically affected the nature of discussions on audience participation and media. The framework of audience engagement has then shifted towards audience participation as opposed to audience reception. The introduction of the internet and digital media technologies and human interactions have changed significantly in the last couple of decades. Digital media connects people in ways never before possible, enabling users to maintain friendships across time and distance. It enables those who are socially isolated or somehow set apart from their immediate physical community to connect with like-minded or like-situated people. It also facilitates interaction across social, economic, cultural, political, religious and ideological boundaries, allowing for enhanced understanding.

The development of the Internet and web 2.0 has created a whole new world of communication and today, social media has become a great social phenomenon especially among young people. For instance, Web 2.0 facilitated the feedback loop in online communication amongst members of a society by providing interactive communication platforms for different users to post comments, share posts or like posts. Companies use blogs as an informal, unstructured communication tool that can engage current and future customers and members of their wider community. Blogs are often used to start and maintain relationships, to update an audience, discuss new functionalities, and to inform about company decisions.

Social media is an interactive platform where users are able to generate contents based on mobile and web technologies for multiple sharing activities. Valerie and Campbell (2020) aver that technology is an integral part of daily life for many young people as much of their communication

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