

PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS TOWARDS BLOGGING AS A METHOD OF WRITING

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Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study is to know the perception of students towards blogging as a method of writing. The respondents of this study were the two sections of Multimedia Business and Advertising in Lyceum of the Philippines–Laguna who were required to write an essay about a certain topic. The 16 respondents from the first section (Section A) do not use blogging as a method of writing while the 14 respondents from the other section (Section B) use blogging. The researchers used a nonequivalent groups design to know the difference between the perceptions on blogging of the two sections. In addition, the researchers also compared the average scores of their essay writing activity and used the correlation coefficient therein to know the relationship of perceptions on blogging and average scores. In the process, researchers used the copy of the respondents' grades and distributed a survey questionnaire following a Likert Scale to those who completed the essay writing activity. The findings showed that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of the respondents who do blogging and those who do not based on the communicative function, reflective function, technical function, entertainment function, and time element on blogging. In terms of the average scores of two the sections, there is a significant difference. This means that blogging is an effective method of writing since Section B got higher score than that of Section A. However, there is no significant relationship between the perceptions and the average scores. Although, the respondents found blogging as an easy and effective method of writing, it does not necessarily mean that through this tool of learning, they will get high scores in writing activity given the fact that there is a rubric used in grading their essays.

Keywords: *blogging, method of writing, perception*

INTRODUCTION

Learning is considered as a limitless process in which different teaching tools and methods are used. In today's modern world, there are technological tools which can provide an easier and faster access of learning and sharing knowledge and ideas. One of these is by using Internet sites wherein students can post their thoughts for academic purposes. It is through blogging where instructors allow the students to use the Internet for the fulfillment of the requirement.

According to Barber (2009), learning is about making and maintaining connections mentally among concepts, ideas and meaning, and experientially through the interaction between the mind and the environment.

In most schools, they use traditional learning strategy which people get used to during their primary and secondary education stages. Nowadays, there are schools that use traditional and technological strategy. On this kind of strategy, it seems that there are a lot of factors that can affect the strategy.

Traditional lecture method is not perceived as being a particularly good method for achieving such pedagogic aims, where the lecture is as effective as any other method in conveying factual knowledge but that on other criteria such as attitude change, development of thinking and problem solving. The lecture falls short of more student active methods. Traditional lecture can be transformed into an active and enjoyable learning experience for students and staff (Edwards, 2005).

Educators are encouraged to integrated technology into their classrooms because today's students are exposed to all sorts of digital devices in their daily life. The challenge many teachers face is how to incorporate new technology into their classrooms that will strengthen

classroom learning by capitalizing on students' media literacy (MacBride and Lachman, 2008).

Blogs which is a new and innovative technological tool can be used to support student learning by capitalizing on students' interests and familiarity with on-line communication (Francis & Taylor, 2009).

Blogging is incredibly a powerful tool in our time; basically blogging allows the average person to be put on the same stage to all famous people. In blogging, a student is able to write his articles and opinions and put it out into the world. If one has good ideas and opinions, more and more people will find him and he might get popular out of it. Blogging is simple—all one needs is an Internet connection and it is not very technologically sophisticated; he just have to put up his thoughts and articles to the Internet and many people can read them and might get interested on them.

By using blogs, students can freely express their thoughts in cyberspace but they might have different approaches and perceptions towards the new aspect of learning. This may affect or change the behavior of teachers and students in learning. On the other hand, even if these technological aspects are becoming part of students' learning, still, there are institutions and universities which use the traditional type of learning.

Being technologically based in schools may be good but there are some factors that may hinder the interaction between the students and may affect the level of understanding between them and also the subject.

Since technology-based learning such as weblogs is now emerging, researchers aim to know the perception of the students towards blogging as their method of writing essays and to see the difference between the perspective on blogging of students who use blogs and those who were paper-based only.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

This section presents the related literature and studies which are significant and related to the study. It also serves as a support for the data.

Demographic data remain important in any study; this will break the population into certain categories and lifestyle background (Vivian, 2001).

In the book “Mass Media in a Changing World” by Rodman (2006), demographics refer to the characteristics that are observable such as age, gender, occupation, program, and ethnicity. Meanwhile, according to “Communication Works” by Gamble (2002), demographics are the background, composition, and important factors that are being considered to determine their profile.

Women were significantly more likely than men to feel intimidated about participating in the blog and to have difficulty using the blogging website to post and to respond to entries. Women also were more likely to disagree that using the website to post and to respond was easy for them to do, albeit the difference was not statistically significant. None of the male respondents reported any concerns or problems with the blogging website in their open-ended comments (Davi et al., 2007).

In the study of Schler, et al. (2005), male bloggers of all ages write more about politics, technology, and money than their female cohorts do. Female bloggers discuss their personal lives, and use more personal writing style, much more than males do. Furthermore, for bloggers of each gender, a clear pattern of differences in content and style over age is apparent.

Learning is acquiring facts or procedures which are to be used by those who are studying. What is learned is seen to include skills, algorithms, formulas which students will need in order to do things at a later date, but

there is still no transformation of what is learned by the learner. Learning is making sense. The students make active attempts to abstract meaning in the process of learning. This may only involve academic tasks. Learning is about trying to understand things so the learner can see what is going on. He has got to be able to explain things and not just remember them. Learning is understanding reality. Learning enables the learner to perceive the world differently. This was also termed as personally meaningful learning (Brown et al., 2003).

There are many ways and methods from which learning can be acquired. One of these is by means of using technology such as the Internet wherein sharing of information occurs. People can post their own thoughts, ideas and knowledge through a weblog which is a useful tool.

As mentioned in an article by Johnson (2004), weblogs, or blogs for short, were created as a tool for people to create online journals without the need of any programming experience or knowledge. Blogs are a versatile tool with numerous applications.

Students who use blogs as an assignment posting platform is effective, based on the study of Cobanoglu and Bezerina (2010). Their findings showed that students use more words in their assignments when they post it on a blog and some of the students' postings demonstrate critical thinking and some of the comments posted to other students' blogs include a high level of intellectual discussions.

In an article of Racoma (2009), he mentioned that blogging involves more than writing. Blogging involves interaction, being part of the community, and having blog serves as an online identity and persona. When a person blogs, h/she does not just write a 500-word essay and publish it on a static page. People open up that essay to the world for critique right there and

then. Bloggers let people talk back to them on their comment threads and on other blogs. Furthermore, blogging is not solely about writing. It is about learning how to interact, how to establish a presence, how to make recommendations, and how to be reactive and proactive. Blogging is a social medium, after all. And as such, blogging goes far beyond writing.

Blogging can be integrated into the classroom in several different ways. Teachers can take time from class discussion or lecture to have students literally blog at that moment but only if there is an access to computers in the classroom. Teachers can also remind students that they can continue an in-class discussion on their blogs, thus, giving everyone a chance to “speak” (Meloni, 2009).

Teachers have been using blogs in instructional situations for years now, and the Internet abounds with postings and articles about blogging in the classroom. There are many blogs related to the educational experience such as those focused on what is going on in a given course, or those based on teacher’s experiences and observations (Walsh, 2009).

The idea is that students set up their own blogging according to the teacher’s instructions and guidelines. Every student posts in the blog his/her homework, written assignments, activities, and exercises. The teacher monitors the students’ progress and development. The teacher supports the students to overcome difficulties and problems encountered. In addition, students can share their blogs with peers in the class and receive commentaries through the comments section of their blog (Jimoyiannis, 2012).

As a tool for learning, blogging has its advantages and disadvantages. Based on the study of Kirk and Johnson (2009), they found out that blogs are useful and students are comfortable with using the Internet

because the format was easy for them to use. Students who were unwilling to speak up in class indicated that they felt more comfortable writing their thoughts and responding to the thoughts of others in a blog/comment format. Moreover, students tended to spend more time and effort in blogging than they do when required by their assignments. When given a choice of using a blog or a more traditional paper method of journaling, those with blogs appeared to be more creative as they were leveraging online resources, linking to other blogs, and finding meaningful graphics, while students who wrote in more traditional ways tended to stay strictly within the stated expectations of the assignment.

Blogging is an excellent way of motivating students to develop a life-long love for learning. Writing is a process, and when they learn this, they will be able to apply the skills to other aspects of their schooling. It also teaches children critical thinking skills which will help them as they progress through school (Fioriello, 2013).

On the other hand, according to Pietrzyk (2008), traditional writers are valued by readers precisely because they trust them to have thought long and hard about a subject, given it time to evolve in their head, and composed a piece of writing that is worth their time to read at length and to ponder. Bloggers do not do this and cannot do this—and that limits them far more than it does traditional long-form writing.

Likewise, blogging as a learning tool have its disadvantages. Anytime minors are posting information on the Internet either about themselves, their family, school, and others, it poses a threat to them. Therefore, there is a great need for the blog to gain security to all outside people. Not all students have access to computer and the Internet. Being on the computer all day takes students away from being outside and being active. Lastly, it is a big commitment for the teacher to be available to

students or parents after school hours (Barr, 2012).

Meanwhile, blogging has different purpose and learning outcome. When used in teaching and learning, the educational outcomes must be clear to the students. Most blogs are used to share information including facts, data, and statistics, link to other resources, opinions, and much more. In addition to text, the blog could contain audio, video, and visuals. Blogs are often used by teachers as a tool to document the information inquiry process.

Blogs can be used as a metacognitive tool to help people think about their life or learning. These reflections may be intended for themselves, their classmates, or the world. Some blogs focus on communication between the person posting the entry and the people making comments. The responses may include additional information, expanded ideas, or critiques. Sometimes, the most important aspect of the blog is questioning. With young children, the interaction is often between the child and the teacher. Bloggers may be asked to state facts, analyze an article, or express their understandings (Lamb and Johnson, 2004).

However, in an earlier study by Sharma and Xie (2005), many participants perceived that this course provided the first opportunity to use Weblog technology and unfamiliarity with its usage led some participants to feel stressed. Participants were also concerned about the instructor's lack of guidance on format and frequency of weblogging. Another negative perception about the use of Weblogs was the participants' concern about their lack of content knowledge. In addition, because the Weblogs were opened to public scrutiny, participants expressed concerns about safety of the environment.

According to an article published by McGraw-Hill companies last 2009, classroom blogs can serve as a portal to foster a community of

learners. As they are easy to create and update efficiently, they can be used to inform students on class requirements, to post handouts, notices, and homework assignments, or to act as a question-and-answer board. It opens the opportunity for students to discuss topics outside of the classroom. With a blog, every person has an equal opportunity to share his/her thoughts and opinions. Students have time to be reactive to one another and reflective. Teachers can also bring together a group of knowledgeable individuals for a given unit of study for students to network and conference with on a blog to integrate technology in the classroom.

The research results indicate that bloggers' trust, strength of social ties, and reciprocity all have a positive effect on their knowledge-sharing behavior. Further, the impact of each factor on such behavior varies with gender. Results provide evidences that offline expected social norms tend to persist in the online blogosphere and that gender differences need to be considered as a significant factor in understanding the IT usage behavior (Chai et al., 2011).

On the other hand, an earlier pilot study (Chan and Ridgway, 2006) on the use of blogs demonstrated that blogs could support the communication between tutor and students. Blogs were again adopted for a course, entitled: Computer Applications, part of the Bachelor of Education's program in the University of Macau. Blogs were introduced as a tool for students to develop their communicative, reflective and technological skills, and to serve as a channel for teachers to communicate with students in addition to face-to-face meetings.

Meanwhile, according to the study of Chan and Ridgway (2006), students were required to reflect on lessons weekly, and to write their reflections on their blogs as part of their assignment. Most students reported that they were not so familiar with the use of computer and many students

had little experience of using blogs. Even though students are new to the blog environment, majority of them or 80 percent found it easy to write and post entries using the blog environment.

Effective feedback is important for learning. This is true for both the teacher and the student. One-minute response blog posts are an easy way to get informal feedback from students about a lesson or activity and keep them posting in their blogs. Usually, the instructor gives the students a few prompts to get quick feedback on the effectiveness of the lesson. There are many more prompts teachers can use to get the feedback he/she wants from his/her students. He/she may want his/her students to reflect on how they feel about the class itself, or about a test, or ask other questions about how they perceive various aspects of the course (Cole and Foster, 2008).

On a study by Conroy (2011), the general finding is that blogging is an effective pedagogical tool. In this study, it was clear that blogging could be used as an information-dispensing device, a management tool for resources, and a means to develop and create educational links both at home and abroad. It is clear from the study that blogging can be used as a reflective tool with its archiving system for later retrieval of information.

Students' views on the use of blogs were overwhelmingly positive. Students spoke enthusiastically about various features of the blog in their learning process. They found the blog useful for storing and safekeeping their thoughts where many students considered the blog as a necessary adjunct or even an alternative to a paper-based notebook. The blog was particularly useful to students whose personal study routines lack order and procedure. The blog served to keep their lecture notes for safekeeping: a central storage bank of information which, unlike their notebook, was simple to locate, easy to manage and access, and impossible to lose (Armstrong and Berry, 2003).

However, according to the study of Song and Chan (2008), most of the students mentioned that blogging is convenient as they can access the blog 24/7 at their own pace. They also found out that the students were highly positive on the use of blogs as a learning tool, had increased interactivity and reflective activities, and appreciated the fact that they can do it anytime, anywhere.

Song and Chan (2008) summarized that the students are quite positive about using blogs as a learning tool. A percentage rate of 57.8 percent of the students said that they enjoyed using the group blogs as a mode of learning, 63.5 percent said they enjoyed reading and learning from it, while 62.5 percent of the students found it easy to use the group blog in the assignment.

Based on the 2012 study of the American Psychological Association, the researchers that the teens who blogged, as compared to those who did nothing or kept a private diary, displayed greater improvements in self-esteem, social ease, and emotional well-being. The bloggers who wrote specifically about their social difficulties and those whose posts were open to comments showed the most improvement.

Based on the data findings of Keeffe and Crehan in their study (2011), participants responded favorably to the blogging process. They perceived that the process was of assistance in developing a reflective approach to their practice, and that the blog was particularly beneficial in working towards the construction of the portfolio. Interestingly, participants were unsure as to whether they favored using a blog for such a reflective process, over other more traditional mechanisms, e.g., a paper-based journal. Set alongside the positive perceptions of blogging, this result appears anomalous.

Moreover, in a study by Jones (2006), one of the aspects that served the instructional goals for the class was that blogs allowed the students to focus on the content of writing and not on creating web pages. Blogging provided easy access for a student to write, edit, revise, and publish papers because blogs do not require an HTML editor or any webpage program. The students in this study could easily map their word processing skills to blog writing. Even the few students in the class who did not have well-developed word processing skills eventually developed better skills that were more beneficial to them in the long run than learning HTML codes.

As mentioned in the study of Shen et al. (2006), results also show that the overall performance of traditional mode is better than the online mode students although both groups of students have similar backgrounds. One of the possible reasons is that the online mode students have less regular contact hours with lecturers who can closely monitor their progress. They require a higher level of discipline to keep pace with their own schedules and, thus, there is a larger variation in their scores.

On the previous study of Fischer et al. (2011), their findings suggest that there is no significant difference in themes addressed or levels of reflection achieved when students complete a similar assignment via online blogging or traditional essay writing. Given this, the faculty staff should feel comfortable in utilizing the blog format for reflective exercises.

On the other hand, based on a write up by Penrod (2004), most Basic Writing teachers agree that building verbal fluency and voice are critical steps for emergent writers. Equally important is the student writer discovering how to learn the basic structures (sentences, paragraphs, genres) of written discourse. Meanwhile, the computer mediated aspect of blogging makes it more favorable for most students because of the immediacy as they can finish a journal for about 10 to 15 minutes.

In connection with the use of technology as a tool for learning, a theory called Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST) illustrates how technology affects the perception and the behavior of people. AST criticizes the techno-centric view of technology use and emphasizes the social aspects. Groups and organizations using information technology for their work dynamically create perceptions about the role and the utility of technology, and how it can be applied to their activities. These perceptions can vary widely across groups. These perceptions influence the way how technology is used and, hence, mediate its impact on group outcomes (Muthaiyan, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

The researchers used Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST) in this study in order to cover the two variables which are the blogs and students.

Adaptive Structuration Theory is based on Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory. This theory is formulated as—the production and reproduction of the social systems through members' use of rules and resources in interaction. De Sanctis and Poole adapted Giddens' theory to study the interaction of groups and organizations with information technology, and called it Adaptive Structuration Theory.

The researchers used the Adaptive Structuration Theory as basis for the study because the new generation learners are affected by the emergence of new technologies. This theory illustrates how new media or technologies affect the perception, interaction and behavior of students in class. Adaptive Structuration Theory explains the shift or change of social interaction between people. The intervention of technology on the students created a huge effect on how they will work for a certain requirement in class, like in blogging wherein the students have the freedom to use online references, and with that, they find the activity easier to finish. The

application of technology for the students' life can be an aid for them. Adaptive Structuration Theory also expound that utilization of technology can have an impact on the people's outcome. In the study, the technology of blogging mediated or controlled the students' average scores and perception towards a class requirement.

Conceptual Framework

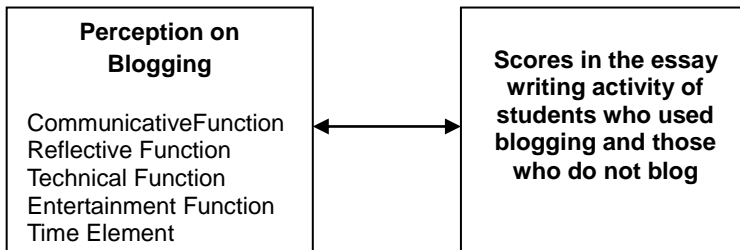


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

The framework shows the independent and dependent variables in the study. The independent variable is the perception on blogging which consists of five categories: communicative function (how blogging influences the communication aspects of the students), reflective function (how blogging affects the students' insights or thoughts), technical function (how blogging affects the technical skills of the students), entertainment function (how blogging keeps the students' interest) and time element (how students conceive blogging as an easier tool in writing). These five functions or categories are the independent or constant variables in the study. They will also be the bases in measuring the students' perception towards blogging. The dependent variable will be the scores of the respondents who use blogging and those who do not during essay writing activities.

Objectives of the Study

This research particularly sought to achieve the following:

1. to determine the perception of the respondents towards blogging in terms of:
 - a. communicative function
 - b. reflective function
 - c. technological function
 - d. entertainment function
 - e. time element
2. to determine the average score of the essay writing of the respondents who use blogging and those who do not use blogging
3. to determine if there is a significant difference in the perception on blogging between the respondents who use blogging and those who do not
4. to determine if there is a significant difference in the average scores of the respondents who use blogging and those who do not
6. to determine if there a significant relationship between the perception of the respondents on blogging and their average score in the essay writing

METHOD

Research Design

The researchers used a descriptive-quantitative approach to this research. To compare the average scores of the two sections, a

nonequivalent group design was used to gather the data wherein the respondents in each section were chosen. This design includes an existing group of participants who received a treatment and another existing group of participants who served as control or comparison group.

Research Locale

The researchers chose Lyceum of the Philippines–Laguna as the place to conduct their study because it is the most accessible location for them to do their research. This school has Multimedia Arts students who use blogging as part of their course requirement and students who do not use blogging in their writing activity.

Respondents

The respondents were the two sections of second year Multimedia Arts students of Lyceum of the Philippines–Laguna who were enrolled in Multimedia Business and Advertising PrincipleS during the first semester of Academic Year 2013 to 2014. The respondents were the ones who completed the writing and blogging activities. Section A consists of 16 respondents, out of which nine are females and seven are males; whereas Section B consists of 14 respondents, out of which, 11 are females and three are males. There were a total of 30 respondents.

Research Instruments

In the study, the researchers used the copy of the scores in the essay writing of each section which was given by the professor. Their essay scores were based on the rubrics which consist of content (50 percent), organization (logical flow, 25 percent; creativity, 15 percent), and grammar (10 percent). This measured the learning progress of the respondents in

terms of writing essay regarding the topics acquired through blogging and without blogging.

Moreover, the researchers also used a survey questionnaire following a Likert Scale. It was divided into five categories which consist of five statements each such as communicative function, reflective function, technical function, entertainment function, and time element. The questionnaire has undergone pre-testing of 30 respondents who validated it by testing the answered questionnaires through the Reliability Index. The questionnaire got 0.9515 percent (95 percent) reliability index. After the validation, the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents.

Procedure

The researchers informed the instructor of the respondents about the study. There is a course with two sections, the instructor assigned the students to write a reflection or essay regarding a certain topic. The two sections used different methods of writing, where Section A used the traditional approach (paper-based) of writing and Section B used blogging. At the end of the Prelim period, the researchers asked for a copy of the grades, the course syllabus, and the rubrics, which consist of content (50 percent), organization (logical flow, 25 percent; creativity, 15 percent), and grammar (10 percent). A survey-questionnaire was distributed to the respondents in order to know their perception towards blogging

Data Analysis

The researchers used the following statistical treatments in analyzing the data:

For the demographic profile data, frequency distribution table was used. To determine the perception of the respondents based on five

categories and the average scores of the respondents who used blogging and those who do not, the researchers used weighted means and standard deviation.

Interpretation of weighted means:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Verbal Interpretation</u>
1.0-1.49	Strongly Disagree (SD)
1.5-2.49	Disagree (D)
2.5-3.49	Agree (A)
3.5-4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)

T-test for independent samples was used in testing the difference of the perception towards blogging between the respondents who used blogging and those who do not.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Below are the results of the data gathered:

Perception of the respondents towards blogging in five categories

This part represents the perception of the respondents towards blogging in five categories: Communicative Function, Reflective Function, Technological Function, Entertainment Function, and Time Element.

A. *Communicative Function*

Table 1 shows the perception of the respondents on the communicative function of blogging. Section A (without blog) got the highest weighted mean of 3.63 on statement “I feel blogging can improve my writing skill” which means that they *strongly agreed* on how blogging can improve their writing skill. Section B (with blog) also has the highest weighted mean of

3.43 on statement “I feel blogging can improve my writing skill”, but the respondents only *agreed* to the statement. Statement “Blogging improved the communication between students and teacher” got the lowest mean for both sections, 3.13 for Section A and 3.14 for Section B, but they both *agreed* that blogging can improve communication between students and teacher.

Table 1. Perception of respondents on communicative function of blogging

	Section A (without blog)	Section B (with blog)
	Mean	
1. Blogging can help me communicate online.	3.38	3.21
2. Blogging can help me create new knowledge that I can share with others.	3.44	3.36
3. Blogging has increased my confidence and desire to express my thoughts in writing.	3.44	3.29
4. I feel blogging can improve my writing skill.	3.63	3.43
5. Blogging improved the communication between students and teacher.	3.13	3.14
Composite Mean	3.40	3.29

Legend: 1.0- 1.49 Strongly Disagree, 1.5-2.49 Disagree, 2.5- 3.49 Agree, 3.5-4.00 Strongly Agree

For over all composite mean on this category, Section A (without blog) got higher composite mean of 3.40 than Section B (with blog) which only got 3.29. This indicates that the respondents both agreed on the given five statements in communicative function of blogging.

Blogging as a tool for communication also have its advantage and disadvantages. Based on the study of Kirk and Johnson (2009), they found out that blogs are useful and students are comfortable with using the Internet

because the format was easy for them to use. Students who were unwilling to speak up in class indicated they felt more comfortable writing their thoughts and responding to the thoughts of others in a blog/comment format. Moreover, students tended to spend more time and effort than required by the assignments. When given a choice of using a blog or a more traditional paper method of journaling, those with blogs appeared to be more creative as they were leveraging online resources, linking to other blogs, and finding meaningful graphics. The students who wrote in more traditional ways tended to stay strictly within the stated expectations of the assignment.

B. Reflective Function

Table 2 shows the perception of the respondents on the reflective function of blogging. For Section A (without blog), the statements: "Blogging has given me more time to reflect on what I have written" and "Blogging can provide me opportunities to grow by looking back at my own thoughts, views and experiences" got the same mean of 3.50 each. It means that the respondents in this section *strongly agreed* that blogging can provide them opportunities in looking back at their thoughts and help them gain new awareness. The statements: "Blogging can provide me opportunities to grow by looking back at my own thoughts, views and experiences" and "In blogging, it makes me think critically" got the same mean of 4.43 for Section B (with blog). The respondents in this section *agreed* that blogging can make them think critically.

Table 2. Perception of respondents on reflective function of blogging

	Section A (without blog)	Section B (with blog)
	Mean	
1. In blogging, I can express my thoughts and ideas about a certain issue.	3.69	3.57
2. Blogging has given me more time to reflect on what I have written.	3.50	3.57
3. Blogging can provide me opportunities to grow by looking back at my own thoughts, views and experiences.	3.50	3.43
4. Blogging can help me gain new awareness.	3.44	3.36
5. In blogging, it makes me think critically.	3.31	3.43
Composite Mean	3.49	3.47

Legend: 1.0- 1.49 Strongly Disagree, 1.5-2.49 Disagree, 2.5- 3.49 Agree, 3.5-4.00 Strongly Agree

Both sections strongly *agreed* to the statement: “In blogging, I can express my thoughts and ideas about a certain issue” and also got the highest mean in all sections. Blogging can be a platform in expressing thoughts and ideas. Aside from having critical thinking, it can also make a person involved in a certain issue.

In general, the respondents all *agreed* that blogging is a tool for reflecting and voicing out what is in their minds.

In connection with this category, based on the data findings of Keeffe and Crehan in their study (March 2011), participants responded favorably to the blogging process. They perceived that the process was of assistance in developing a reflective approach to their practice, and that the blog was particularly beneficial in working towards the construction of the portfolio. Interestingly, participants were unsure as to whether they favored using a

blog for such a reflective process, over other more traditional mechanisms, like a paper-based journal. Set alongside the positive perceptions of blogging, this result appears anomalous.

C. Technological Function

Table 3 shows the perception of the respondents on the technological function of blogging. The statement: "In blogging, I am able to customize my blog posts" got the highest weighted mean of 3.44 on Section A (without blog), where the respondents on this section *agreed* that in blogging, they are able to customize their blog posts. In Section B (with blog), the statements: "Blogging makes me familiar with web designing," "Blogging makes me understand the information technology usage," and "Blogging develops my word processing skill" got the highest weighted mean of 3.29 which made the respondents *agreed* that blogging makes them familiar with web designing, and understand the utilization of information technology, as well as it can develop their word processing skills.

Table 3. Perception of respondents on technological function of blogging

	Section A (without blog)	Section B (with blog)
	Mean	
1. Blogging makes me familiar with web designing.	3.25	3.29
2. Blogging makes me understand the information technology usage.	3.31	3.29
3. In blogging, I am able to customize my blog posts.	3.44	3.21
4. Blogging develops my word processing skill.	3.38	3.29
5. Blogging allows me to explore digital arts and design.	3.56	3.21
Composite Mean	3.39	3.26

Legend: 1.0- 1.49 Strongly Disagree 1.5-2.49 Disagree 2.5- 3.49 Agree 3.5-4.00 Strongly Agree

For the category of technological function of blogging, Section A (without blog) got 3.39 that is higher than 3.26 of Section B (with blog). The results clearly show that the respondents are in favor of the usage of technology, as Section A who does not use blogging *agreed* that technology in blogging is an easier tool for writing.

However, in an earlier study by Sharma and Xie (2005), many participants perceived that this course provided the first opportunity to use Weblog technology and unfamiliarity with its usage led some participants to feel stressed. Participants were also concerned about the instructor's lack of guidance on format and frequency of Weblogging. Another negative perception about the use of Weblogs was the participants' concern about their lack of content knowledge. In addition, because the Weblogs were open to public scrutiny, participants expressed concerns about safety of the environment.

D. Entertainment Function

Table 4 shows the perception of the respondents on the entertainment function of blogging. The statement: "Blogging helps me discover new things and transforms my old views to new ones" got the highest weighted mean of 3.50 for Section A (without blog). The respondents in this section *agreed* that blogging can help them discover new things and can transform their old views into new ones. The highest weighted mean in Section B (with blog) is the statement: "I enjoyed reading and learning from the blog posts" that got 3.21, where the respondents found enjoyment in reading and learning from blog posts.

However, the statements: "I enjoyed reading and learning from the blog posts," "Blogging is a hassle-free type of writing," and "I enjoy blogging because my posts can be viewed and read by Internet users" have the same

weighted mean of 3.31 in Section A (without blog). The statements: “Blogging helps me discover new things and transforms my old views to new ones,” and “Blogging is a hassle-free type of writing” got 3.14 on Section B (with blog). The respondents *agreed* that blogging is a hassle-free type of writing.

Table 4. Perception of respondents on entertainment function of blogging

	Section A (without blog)	Section B (with blog)
	Mean	
1. I enjoyed reading and learning from the blog posts.	3.31	3.21
2. Blogging helps me discover new things and transforms my old views to new ones.	3.50	3.14
3. I am more satisfied to do my writing assignment through blogging compared to other methods of writing.	3.38	3.00
4. Blogging is a hassle-free type of writing.	3.31	3.14
5. I enjoy blogging because my posts can be viewed and read by Internet users.	3.31	3.07
Composite Mean	3.36	3.11

Legend: 1.0- 1.49 Strongly Disagree, 1.5-2.49 Disagree, 2.5- 3.49 Agree, 3.5-4.00 Strongly Agree

For the overall mean, Section A (without blog) got 3.36, while Section B (with blog) got 3.11. It means that the two sections both agreed to the five statements in this category. Blogging is one of the many things on the Internet an individual can enjoy. Nowadays, blogging is not only for mere writing but also for leisure and online sharing of thoughts.

Song and Chan (2008) summarized that the students are quite positive about using blogs as a learning tool. Out of the two sections, 57.8 percent of the students said that they enjoyed using the group blogs as a mode of learning while 63.5 percent said that they enjoyed reading and learning from it. More so, 62.5 percent of the students found it easy to use the group blog in the assignment.

E. Time Element

Table 5 shows the perception of the respondents on the time element of blogging. Section A (without blog) has the highest weighted mean of 3.44 on the statement: “Blogging gives me enough time to write, edit, revise, and publish my writing activity,” where the respondents in this section agreed that blogging can give them enough time to write, edit, revise, and publish their writing activity through blogs. The statements: “I can retrieve information faster since blogging makes use of Internet connection,” and “In blogging, I can easily update the content of my posts” got the highest weighted mean of 3.29 on Section B (with blog), where they *agreed* that blogging can retrieve information faster as it uses Internet connection and blogs are easy to update.

In general, both sections *agreed* that blogging can give them more time to write and post. Section A (without blog) got 3.30 and Section B (with blog) got 3.21.

Table 5. Perception of respondents on time element of blogging

	Section A (without blog)	Section B (with blog)
	Mean	
1. Blogging can make me keep pace in my own schedule.	3.19	3.07
2. Blogging gives me enough time to write, edit, revise, and publish my writing activity.	3.44	3.29
3. I can retrieve information faster since blogging makes use of Internet connection.	3.31	3.29
4. In blogging, I can easily update the content of my posts.	3.31	3.29
5. In blogging, I can immediately finish my writing activity.	3.25	3.14
Composite Mean	3.30	3.21

Legend: 1.0- 1.49 Strongly Disagree, 1.5-2.49 Disagree, 2.5- 3.49 Agree, 3.5-4.00 Strongly Agree

According to the study of Song and Chan (2008), most of the students mentioned that it is convenient to use blogging as they can access the blogs 24/7 at their own pace. They also found out that the students were highly positive of the use of blogs as a learning tool, and a means to increase interactivity and reflective activities. The students also appreciated the fact that they can do blogging anytime, anywhere.

On the other hand, in an earlier pilot study of Chan and Ridgway (2005) on the use of blogs, it demonstrated that blogs could support the communication between tutor and students. Blogs were again adopted for a course entitled Computer Applications, part of the Bachelor of Education program in the University of Macau. Blogs were introduced as a tool for students to develop their communicative, reflective and technological skills, and served as a channel for teachers to communicate with students in addition to face-to-face meetings.

Blogging is an excellent way of motivating students to develop a life-long love for learning. Writing is a process, and when they learn this, they will be able to apply the skills to other aspects of their schooling (Fioriello, 2013).

Average scores of the two sections

Table 6 shows the essay writing activity average scores of the respondents who used blogging and those who do not. Based on the data, it shows that the highest score in Section A (Student 5) is 95.40, which is lower than the highest score in Section B (Student 4) that is 99.20. In terms of the lowest score among the two sections, Section A (Student 2) got 84.8, while Section B (Student 12) got 86.6.

The idea of blogging is that students can set up their own blogs according to the teacher's instructions and guidelines. Every student posts in the blog their homework, written assignments, activities and exercises. The

teacher can also monitor the students' progress and development. The teacher supports the students to overcome difficulties and problems encountered. In addition, students can share their blogs with peers in the class and receive commentaries through the comments section of their blog (Jimoyiannis, 2012).

Table 6. Average scores of the respondents

Section A (without blogging)		Section B (with blogging)	
Student	Score	Student	Score
1	90.4	1	96.2
2	84.8	2	90.8
3	89.2	3	88.2
4	87.8	4	98.8
5	95.4	5	99.2
6	90.8	6	93.2
7	94.4	7	96.8
8	95	8	98.2
9	89.8	9	95.4
10	91.2	10	94.2
11	88.8	11	87.8
12	94.8	12	86.6
13	92.4	13	93.8
14	88.8	14	97.8
15	90.2		
16	92.4		

Maximum and minimum score, and mean and standard deviation of essay writing activity scores of the respondents

Table 7 shows the maximum and minimum score, as well as the mean and the standard deviation of the essay writing activity scores of the respondents from both sections. The respondents from Section A got an

average score 91.01, while the respondents from section B got 94.07. The respondents who used blogging as part of their course requirement scored higher than those respondents who did not use blogging. Based on the results, standard deviation of Section A (2.06) is lower than the standard deviation of Section B (4.46). It means that Section A is more concentrated than Section B.

Table 7. Maximum and minimum score, and mean and standard deviation of essay writing activity scores of the respondents

	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Section A (without blogging)	95.40	84.8	91.01	2.06
Section B (with blogging)	99.20	86.6	94.07	4.46

These results show a connection in a study of Shen et al. (2006) which stated that the overall standard deviation of online mode students (0.937) is generally higher than the traditional mode students (0.414).

Over-all average scores of the two sections

Figure 2 shows the average scores gained by the respondents who use blogging and those who do not. Respondents who do not use blogging gained 91.01 while those who used blogging got 94.07, which mean that there are 3.06 differences on the average scores of the two sections.

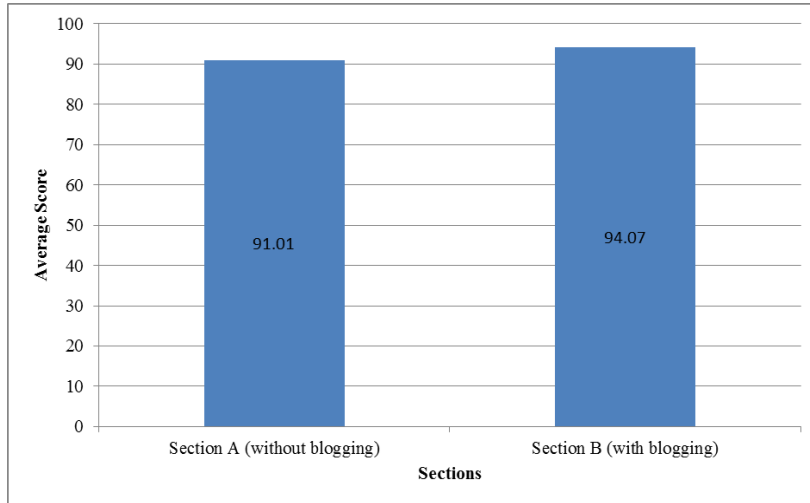


Figure 2. Over-all average score of the two sections

As mentioned in the study of Shen et al. (2006), results show that the overall performance of traditional mode is better than the online mode students although both groups of students have similar backgrounds. Their results contradict with the results of the study since the respondents who used blogging got higher score than those who do not use it.

However, Shen et al. (2006) mentioned that one of the possible reasons that traditional mode students got higher performance is that the online mode students have less regular contact hours with lecturers who can closely monitor their progress. They require a higher level of discipline to keep pace with their own schedules and, thus, there is a larger variation in their scores.

In contrast, Conroy (2011) found out that blogging is an effective pedagogical tool. In his study, it was clear that blogging could be used as an information-dispensing device, management tool for resources, and a means to develop and create educational links both at home and abroad. It is also

clear from the study that blogging can be used as a reflective tool with its archiving system for later retrieval of information.

Computed significant difference of average scores

Table 8 shows the computed p of the difference of the scores gained by the respondents who use blogging and those who do not, where 0.028 is lower than the set level of significance which is 0.05.

Table 8. Computed significant difference of average scores

	Average scores	Value of p	Level of significance (α)	Decision
Section A				
(without blogging)	91.01	0.028	0.05	Significantly Different
Section B				
(with blogging)	94.07			

Results showed that there is a significant difference between the average score of essay writing activity of the respondents who do blogging and those who do not. It means that blogging can be an effective writing method since the respondents who used blogging got higher scores in their essay activities.

In connection with the results, students who use blogs as an assignment posting platform are effective based on the study of Cobanoglu and Bezerina (2010). Some of the students' postings demonstrated critical thinking and some of the comments posted to other students' blogs included a high level of intellectual discussions.

On the other hand, the results showed in a previous study of Shen et al. (2006), stated that there is no significant difference in overall performance between students who study in blogging mode and those who do traditional mode. Although the traditional mode students usually achieve a slightly better performance in comparison with the online mode students, their essay activity results have only some minor differences that are reported in the research.

Computed significant difference between the perceptions of two sections

Table 9. Computed significant difference between the perceptions

	Mean		T Value	Level of Significance	Verbal Interpretation
	Without Blog	With Blog			
Communicative Function	3.40	3.29	0.715	0.480	Not significant
Reflective Function	3.49	3.47	0.095	0.925	Not significant
Technical Function	3.39	3.26	0.803	0.429	Not significant
Entertainment Function	3.36	3.11	1.626	0.115	Not significant
Time Element	3.30	3.21	0.554	0.584	Not significant

Table 9 shows that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of the respondents who do blogging and those who do not based on the communicative function, reflective function, technical function, entertainment function, and time element on blogging. It means that both sections have the same perspective towards blogging as a method of writing.

In relation with the results, Armstrong and Berry (2003) stated in their study that students' views on the use of blogs were overwhelmingly positive. Students spoke enthusiastically about various features of the blog in their

learning process. They found the blog useful for storing and safekeeping their thoughts where many students considered the blog as a necessary adjunct or even an alternative to a paper-based notebook. The blog was particularly useful to students whose personal study routines lack order and routine. The blog served to keep their lecture notes for safekeeping: a central storage bank of information, which unlike their notebooks was simple to locate, easy to manage and access, and impossible to lose.

In contrast, based on the study of Li et al. (2006), there is a marked difference in the perception between the students who have had a year of experience with educational blogging and those without. Through the nature of the blogging tasks given, students have become aware of the purposes related to the blogging tasks. In their study, the blogging students have become more aware of the personal logbook purpose of weblogs. Most of the students are actively online and are accustomed to social life in the virtual world. However, the popularity of blogging among these students comes way behind other communication tools.

Significant relationship of the average scores and perceptions of two sections

Table 10. Computed significant relationship of the average scores and perception

	Correlation Coefficient	Level of Significance	Verbal Interpretation
Communicative Function	-0.018	0.923	Not significant
Reflective Function	-0.057	0.767	Not significant
Technical Function	0.117	0.537	Not significant
Entertainment Function	-0.019	0.922	Not significant
Time Element	-0.043	0.823	Not significant

As the result shows, there is no significant relationship between the average scores and perceptions of the respondents who do blogging and those who do not. Communicative function, reflective function, entertainment function, and time element got a negative (-) value of correlation coefficient. It means that there is a weak negative linear relationship between average scores and perception towards blogging. It implies that as average score increases in its value, the perception on blogging decreases in its value. Meanwhile, technical function got a positive (+) value of correlation coefficient which means that there is a weak positive linear relationship between average scores and perceptions towards blogging. It implies that as average score increases in its value, the perception on blogging in terms of technical function increases in its value. Although the respondents are in favor of blogging as a method of writing, it does not predict that students will get good scores because of blogging.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

The study employed a descriptive-quantitative approach method using nonequivalent group design. The study was conducted during first semester of School Year 2013 to 2014. There were two sets of respondents, the students from Section A who did not use blogging and Section B who used blogging during a writing activity.

The data were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation, t-test, and correlation coefficient. The findings of this study were summarized under the specific questions which the study sought to answer.

Gathered from the demographics data, Section A which does not use blogging consists of 16 respondents, out of which, nine are females and seven are males. Section B which uses blogging consists of 14 respondents,

out of which, 11 are females and three are males. Majority of the respondents are female.

The average scores of the two sections were significantly different, Section A (without blog) got 91.01, while Section B (with blog) got 94.07 which appeared higher and it means that blogging can be an effective learning tool for higher education students. The results of the survey also reflect to the average scores as the respondents agreed to the statements from five categories such as: Communicative Function, Reflective Function, Technological Function, Entertainment Function, and Time Element. Among these five categories, perception of respondents on reflective function of blogging got the highest mean on both sections, 3.49 for those who did not use blogging and 3.47 for those who used blogging.

There is no significant relationship between the average scores and perceptions of the respondents who do blogging and those who do not. Communicative function, reflective function, entertainment function, and time element got a negative (-) value of correlation coefficient. It means that there is a weak negative linear relationship between average scores and perception towards blogging. It implies that as average score increases in its value, the perception on blogging decreases in its value. Meanwhile, technical function got a positive (+) value of correlation coefficient which means that there is a weak positive linear relationship between average scores and perceptions towards blogging. It implies that as average score increases in its value, the perception on blogging in terms of technical function increases in its value.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the researchers recommend the following:

To School Administration

The researchers suggest to the school administration that they integrate technology-based learning such as blogging as a tool or method since students prefer to use the Internet in doing their written assignments. Researchers also recommend creating weblogs for students given the fact that they can share their thoughts, view or opinions in cyberspace.

To Teachers and Instructors

The researchers suggest to teachers and instructors that they maintain the traditional method of writing but still use blogging as a supplementary support for learning. Researchers also suggest that the teachers orient their students to enrich the content of their essay or blogs to improve writing ability and to gain more knowledge. The researchers suggest to the instructors that they explore more on what blogging can do to students' way of writing, so they can further improve the writing activity of the students.

To Students and Future Researchers

The researchers suggest to students and future researchers that they conduct the same study with group of respondents from different schools since the study only focused on one locale. Future researchers are recommended to use other research materials in conducting the same topic. Researchers also suggest using different research method in order to improve and compare the findings of this research. The researchers also suggest improving the data collection and analysis, they can use other statistical treatment on this study to see how blogging affects the students. Future researchers are recommended to discover other theories and conceptual framework in order to get better results.

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