

Educational Habitus and Student Pragmatism in Blog Use

Rahma Sugihartati^a, ^aDepartment of Library Information Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Universitas Airlangga, Email: rsugihartati@yahoo.com

This study discusses the experience and habitus of students at higher educational institutions, in their use of blogs for academic purposes since their senior high school period. This study also examines how the blog use habitus at senior high school affected the practice and shift of blog use when they were studying at institutes of higher education. This study was conducted in the cities of Surabaya and Malang, through a survey of 400 students at institutes of higher education and in-depth interviews with selected students and 10 teachers. The results of this study indicate that the usefulness of blogs shifted to a mere source of information for students at higher educational institutions, and this was influenced by their experiences at senior high school, that formed a counterproductive blog use habitus.

Key words: *Blog, habitus, information, senior high school students.*

Introduction

Blogs as a Web-2.0-based educational practice open an opportunity for students to publish and share tasks, promote critical thinking, communicate ideas, and build social networks in a learning environment (Ada, Stansfield, & Baxter: 2017; Adel & Ramezanzadeh: 2017; Hsu, Ching, & Grabowski: 2014). Blogs enable students to participate digitally, engage in collaborative learning, and have greater access to collectively built knowledge sources. Within the last 15 years, many experts have come to believe that blogs have the potential to be a transformational technology for the improvement of learning and teaching process, and for laying a foundation for lifelong learning (Blaschke, 2018; Brett, 2017; Chu et al, 2018; Marvell, 2018; Pilkington, 2018; Reinhardt, 2018).

Despite the various advantages of blogs for the educational field, some hindrances and problems persist in their application. The results of the study by Bennett, Bishop, Dalgarno, Waycott, & Kennedy (2012) show that at junior and senior high schools, most students had

insufficient experience in using blogs as an educational technology. There were many students who struggled to realise the value of blogs in the learning and teaching process.

If blogs are to be incorporated as a kind of educational technology, it is worth noting that learning should be regarded as a process instead of something instant. Blogs should be conceived of as an educational tool that accommodates the development of participation skills, discussion, collaboration, reflection, and critical thinking among students, and, finally, bring about self-regulated learning (Angelaina et al, 2012; Jimoyiannis et al, 2018). If blogs are deemed potential to the enhancement of argumentative skills, activities which make use of them should be designed not only to improve student engagement, communication, and collaboration, but also to yield knowledge construction and collective intelligence (Jimoyiannis et al, 2017).

When blogs increase in quantity, types, and content, the information and knowledge virtually available for access abounds. Under a condition of information overload, there is a possibility that blogs are used by information seekers as an information source for educational purposes (Ali et al, 2017). Because of this condition, the potential of blog use as a reliable source of academic information for overcoming learning obstacles presented by ‘intellectually inaccessible’ information arises (Morris, 2018). A study of the use of social networking sites including blogs, by Aillerie & McNicol (2018), found that such sites are usually used by senior high school students for seeking daily-life, academic, and school-related information.

Blogs’ tendency to be a reliable source of information is a result of today’s information overload (Arrieta et al, 2018; Nawaz et al, 2018). In the event of information overload, finding credible and reliable content would give a user efficiency (Haas et al, 2017; Schweiger et al, 2019). Users take interest in blogs, as blogs are laden with information, opinions and perspectives from various sources, especially those that support them in completing their homework (Owusu et al, 2019).

The present article analyses how blogs become a source of academic information for students at institutions of higher education, and how blog use as a source of academic information has shifted as a result of student experiences, in and habits of using blogs during their pursuit of secondary education. It has been indicated that blog use and learning environments in secondary education impact the use of blogs in higher education.

Literature Review

Educational practices are not only the concern of educational theorists, but also an important research object for social scientists, especially those engaged in educational sociology. Bourdieu is one of the sociologists whose ideas are often used for understanding how social



environments, especially in educational institutions, influence behaviours. The concepts proposed by Bourdieu (i.e., practice, field, capital, and habitus) have contributed to the theory on inequality and cultural stratification of education. A wide range of studies have drawn on Bourdieu's ideas to understand the social impacts of digital technologies, notably those relating to the digital divide (Robinson, 2009; Savage, 2013; Schradie, 2011) occurring in the educational domain.

Bourdieu's theory of practice is a theory about human practices that sees action as taking place within a social world, and sees social worlds as what is internalised within an individual's self (Bourdieu, 1990). More specifically, Bourdieu's theory of practice considers practice to be an individual's action that is also associated with social and cultural aspects, as well as system, and structure. According to him, the practices undertaken by an individual are structured in their habitus, become capital in various domains of their lives, and form the practices of their future life.

In addition, habitus is the internalisation of one's self from history, encompassing all experiences that form ways of being, how you act, and understand the social world (Bourdieu et al, 1992). Habitus forms an individual's dispositions through ways to be, act, and understand. Habitus is formed by an individual's experiences and ever-changing conditions, which is constantly developing and therefore continuously built from experiences that are reproductive or changing (Bourdieu et al, 1992). As stated by Wacquant (2016), "Habitus is not a self-sufficient mechanism for the generation of action: like a spring, it needs an external trigger and so it cannot be considered in isolation from the definite social worlds (and eventually fields) within which it operates".

In Bourdieu's thoughts on habitus, a school is a field that significantly forms, reproduces, or changes the habitus of its members (Dalal, 2016). Bourdieu states that a school is a field in which students are taught, socialised, and prepared to successfully enter the community setting (Swartz, 1997). In Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the practices undertaken by students are formed by their habitus at school, not only in terms of their involvement in academic activities, but also the socialisation processes. Therefore, education is in fact a habitus transformation, which can be explained by "the difference between the condition under which a habitus is formed and one under which habitus is activated". If a student enters a school that has its learning strategies, learning methods, learning processes, and environment set by the structure; new dispositions in perception, thought, and action, in fact, arise in the student (von Rosenberg: 2016).

The application of Bourdieu's theory of practice also offers a framework for understanding how educational technology is made use of as a learning strategy at schools and universities. In the digital era, technology functions as a basis for human life in all areas, including

education—in the learning process at school, Web 2.0 application have been applied—such as blogs. This is because blogs are believed to have an impact on the learning process, to support collaborative knowledge construction, to motivate autonomous learning, support reflective learning, and encourage thought expression and knowledge sharing among students (Ifinedo, 2017; Kramer et al, 2017; Wang et al., 2017).

Many studies believe that blogs have a positive effect on the achievement of educational objectives. Hence, schools and teachers strive for blogs' success as an educational technology in a number of ways, including encouraging involvement, interactivity, and discussions on blogs, making guidelines for content, building students' positive attitude and self-efficacy in blogging, and designing a blog-integrated writing instruction (Ayao-ao, 2014; Chen, 2016; Hung et al, 2016; Wankel et al, 2013). However, by using Bourdieu's perspective, the analysis of the field of education may reach a different conclusion, and criticism may be drawn towards its technological practices.

Methods

This study generated both quantitative and qualitative data, at collective and individual levels. Habitus presents the principles of sociation and individuation (Wacquant: 2016). Sociation, concerned with behaviours that stem from the community, are shared by all those who are subjected to similar social conditions and conditionings. Meanwhile, individuation occurs in each person and is related to a unique trajectory. In the light of this, this study used a survey and in-depth interviews to reveal the blog use practices, from the habitus they encountered previously. The general disposition of the blog use behaviour of students was identified from the quantitative data and the survey study. Meanwhile, a deeper understanding of individuals' attitudes and perceptions in forming a habitus was gained through in-depth interviews.

In the first stage, a survey of 400 students at institutions of higher education was conducted. All of the interviewees were selected purposively from a number of private and state institutions of higher education in Surabaya and Malang, Indonesia. The respondent criteria is as follows: (1) the respondents were active students of the institutions of higher education selected and (2) the respondents had blogs when they were pursuing studies at senior high schools and institutions of higher education. Habitus is examined from the disposition in social practices, and this disposition is confirmed and strengthened by students' peers at school, who make up their social capital. On that account, how habitus was constructed during the senior high years hopefully could provide a picture of the disposition of students at higher education in blog use practice at the present time.

Secondly, in-depth interviews with 48 students at institutions of higher education and 10 teachers were conducted. The students at institutions of higher education who were enrolled

in the in-depth interviews were those who had blog use experiences, either when they were still studying at the senior high level or when they were studying at the institutions of higher education. Meanwhile, the teachers selected were those who had tasked students with creating blogs. The teachers interviewed taught at four senior high schools from which the students enrolled in this research graduated, two secondary senior schools for each city.

All quantitative data obtained in the survey study was processed by the program SPSS, while the qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interviews was classified and analysed to unveil individual experiences and objective structure. The data obtained in this research was analysed from the perspective of Bourdieu's ideas on habitus in relation to the learning system.

Results

Blog Use at Senior Secondary Schools: Blog's Function Shifting to Merely a Source of Information

At schools where this study was conducted, it was found that the teachers' role in encouraging students to make blogs was generally underdeveloped. Of the 400 respondents, 43.5% admitted they were never instructed by their teachers to make blogs. As many as 22.5% of the respondents stated they were once instructed by their teachers to make blogs but were not motivated to manage the blogs. Not many teachers assigned their students to make blogs and monitored the development. Only 5.5% said they were instructed by their teachers to make blogs and upload their school assignments and got monitored for their uploading activities. Meanwhile, 12.8% of the respondents stated their teachers instructed them to make blogs and upload their school assignment, monitored their activity, and assessed their blog content.

“.....My senior secondary school teacher asked me to make a blog, but there was no follow-up afterwards. Back then, we (students) just did what was assigned to us by our teachers. I, personally, was not really interested in blogs because there were already too many homework assignments we had to do. We spent all of our time studying. We did not have the time to manage blogs”, said Redy (21 years old).

This study found that not many teachers used students' blogs or were effective as media for discussions among students. Most of the respondents (79.5%) stated they were never assigned by their teachers to use blogs as media for discussions. Instead of encouraging students to get into the habit of using blogs as media for productive discussions, teachers generally concentrated more on the day-to-day learning and teaching processes, which bore no relationship with blog use. As many as 15.8% of the respondents said they were assigned by their teachers, at a relatively low frequency, to use blogs as media for discussions with other

students only for particular tasks. Out of the 400 respondents, only 1.8% revealed they were constantly assigned by their teachers to use blogs as media for discussions. The study also found that only 44% of the respondents had been motivated by their teachers to think critically and discuss the uploaded school assignments. Meanwhile, the remaining respondents were never taught to be critical.

Being obliged to finish the learning materials and to ensure that the students pass the National Examination, the teachers were unable to make sure that students could manage their blogs. One of the teachers said the following.

“We, teachers, are in dilemma. I am aware that blog is important, but we have been mandated to make sure that all students pass the National Examination successfully. So I priorities their preparation for the National Examination over instructing them to make blogs. I am sure later, as university students, they will be able to make blogs on their own”, said Ridwan (37 years old), a teacher at a senior secondary school in Surabaya.

In the learning process, teachers are expected to be the ones who actively encourage students to manage blogs well. However, for reasons like extra-curricular activities and the urgency of National Examination success over blog creation, few teachers motivate the students to create blogs. More than a half of all respondents (53.8%) stated that during their studies at senior secondary school, their teachers never motivated them to make blogs. Of the 400 respondents, 25.5% stated they were encouraged to keep uploading content and updating their blogs. Meanwhile, only 3.3% stated their teachers motivated them by giving them information on blogging contests. Only 5.3% were even told blogging can be beneficial economically if the blog is well-managed, while 9.3% stated they were encouraged to actively manage their blogs to practice their writing skills.

Among students, accessing blogs is in fact a common thing. Almost all respondents stated they had accessed others' blogs when they were senior secondary school students. They accessed others' blogs to obtain the information they needed. As many as 28.3% of the respondents said they often accessed others' blogs to gain non-academic information, such as tips, recipes and tutorials which could inspire their blog content. Meanwhile, 21.5% stated they often accessed others' blogs from which they drew inspiration for the content they would create for fulfilling their assignment.

According to some respondents, the blogs of others they had been accessing were highly inspirational. However, only a few students were interested in learning to manage blogs properly. From the students' perspective, blogs were no more than sources of information and were not used as media for discussions. Some respondents said they accessed others' blogs to find content they could extract or copy. Around 4.5% of students stated they rarely read the

posts on others' blogs, and even if they did, it was for the purpose of finding content they could copy for their school tasks. Blogs that can enable students to develop collaborations and discussions, in actuality, are only used as a reference to fulfill school assignments.

The respondents would not just extract any writing from others because the content they would post was to be assessed by their teachers. Several respondents admitted that this had motivated them to fill their blogs with interesting content. Learning from others' blogs was one of the easiest short cuts to understand how to manage their blogs. They would take all of the content of others they read and found good for completing their school assignments (24.8%). As many as 24.5% said that even though they found the content they read was good, they would only extract part of the content for fulfilling their school assignment. Around 15.5% of the respondents stated that they would only choose articles or writing if references were included.

Blog Use among University Students

The blogs which university students have owned since they were in senior secondary schools should make them understand how to use blogs as media for constructing knowledge. This study found that for university students, blogs have yet to be used as a collaborative platform for discussing academic content. Although they have been introduced to blogging since they were at the senior secondary school, the blog's role has stimulated a pragmatist attitude in them, that is, to use blogs as sources of information for fulfilling assignments, which they are not supposed to do.

Table 1: Intensity of using others' blogs for completing assignments

Description	F	%
Always read blogs as preliminary reading before searching for academic information at the library	39	9.8
Always read blogs to gain a preliminary understanding of an unfamiliar concept to find meaning/definition	133	33.3
Always read blogs and select blog content suitable for the academic assignment, then copy it	18	4.5
Always read blogs and select blog content suitable for the academic assignment, then paraphrase it	64	16.0
Rarely read blogs for fulfilling academic assignment, and read blogs only when readings related to the academic assignment are not found	90	22.5

Rarely read blogs, and read blogs only when it is near the assignment deadline	17	4.3
Never read blogs for fulfilling academic assignment nor copy the content of other blogs	39	9.8
Total	400	100.0

University students usually accessed others' blogs to gain a preliminary understanding of an unfamiliar concept (33.3%). As many as 22.5% of the respondents said they rarely read others' blogs, and they only did so involuntarily because they found difficulty finding references for their assignments. Sixteen percent of the respondents said they always read others' blogs to complete their tasks. Not just reading for gaining inspiration, some students said they intentionally read others' blogs to paraphrase the content to make it faster to complete their assignment.

"At my senior secondary school, it was common that students find academic content via blogs, and our teachers were not against it. There was no other way. We could never find any books that we needed to complete our school assignment"....."We could find much of what we needed on blogs, so we often extract blog content", revealed Ridwan (19 years old), presently studying in Malang.

"I know that it is not allowed to take references from blogs. But I could hardly find books I needed to do my tasks. It is easier to search on blogs. On the internet, I can find many blogs of others and experts containing theories and concepts, even with some explanation and examples". "If we can quote properly, it will not take long to finish the assignment", stated Rudi (21 years old).

Table 2: Students' opinions on blog's feasibility to be used as sources of information for fulfilling Assignments

Description	F	%
Not feasible, because it is not a credible source of scientific information	107	26.8
Feasible, as long as the source (blog) is included in the references	117	29.3
Feasible, as long as the sentences used on the blog are paraphrased first	44	11.0
Feasible, as long as it is used only to extract data	19	4.8
Feasible, because I was not told against it when I was a senior secondary school student	1	0.3
Feasible, because the lecturer did nothing about it	1	0.3
Feasible, because there has been no punishment/sanction enforced against it	5	1.3
Feasible, because there has been no policy from the faculty (university) against it	8	2.0
Feasible, as long as the blog is credible	2	0.5

Feasible, as long as the references are reliable	56	14.0
Feasible, as long as the content is filtered	3	0.7
Feasible, as long as the blog is official and reliable	8	2.0
Feasible, as long as the content is accountable	3	0.7
Feasible, as long as the content meets the needs	3	0.7
Feasible, as long as the content is credible	6	1.5
Feasible, as long as the blogger is reliable	12	3.0
Feasible, as long as it cannot be found in journals	1	0.3
Feasible, if it is used to gain a preliminary understanding	3	0.7
Feasible, if the reader believes it	1	0.3
Total	400	100.0

As many as 29.3% of the respondents did not know that blogs should not be used as scientific sources for assignment completions. More than a half of all respondents stated that blogs can be used as academic reference on various conditions. As many as 26.8% of the respondents said that blogs can be used as academic references as long as they are included in the references. Meanwhile, 11% of the respondents stated that blogs can be used as scientific sources as long as the sentences are paraphrased. Some other respondents believed that blogs can be used as scientific references as long as they are credible, include reliable references, are owned by prominent authors, and so forth.

Discussion

False Learning Habitus

The data presented in this study shows a relationship between learning habitus at senior high school and the blog use behaviour of students at higher education institutions. False experiences and habitus developed during senior high school years, as found in this study, have been proven to have an influence on students' ways of thinking in higher education. The lack of opportunity to participate in teacher-guided digital practices during senior high school made them unknowingly develop a false digital learning habitus. During their university study, it was observed that their dispositions had been affected by their blog use practice experiences from senior high school. As stated by Bourdieu (1990a), the dispositions that form a habitus are the products of the opportunities and obstacles framing an individual's past life experiences. On that account, a habitus refers to something historical that is related to an individual's history (Bourdieu, 1990b). In higher education, we have observed an increasing intensity of students accessing blogs. But students' increasing pragmatic attitudes could pose a threat to the academic integrity of higher education.

The habitus developed in these students over their senior high school years did not encourage them to understand the positive role of blogs. As stated by Bourdieu (in Bourdieu et al,

1992), a habitus is responsive to what happens around students. The habitus developed when they were studying at senior high schools in relation to blog use set the foundation for the behaviours developed when they were studying at higher education institutions. As a product of the experiences gained during the senior high school years—the product of educational socialisation—habitus would later be restructured by students when they entered different environments, namely higher education institutions (see: DiMaggio, 1979). This study's data shows that when students left their senior high school environment, blogs were no longer used as merely an information source, but also believed to contain credible information for campus assignments.

Because during the senior high school period teachers tasked students to create personal blogs but never monitored the development of the blogs, no correct perception on the functions of blogs arose in students. The teachers could actually decide on whether to develop personal blogs or communal (class) blogs based on their teaching goal (Biberman-Shalev, 2018). According to Biberman-Shalev (2018). If the teaching goal is to promote social learning, blogs should be used as an open class room that encourages students to express their opinions, share their ideas, and engage in discussions. However, if the teaching goal is to develop self-inquiry, personal blogs function as a class room in which a close relationship can be built between a student and a teacher.

From the research data, it was found that teachers instructed students to create personal blogs but in practice, they neither monitored the continuity of the blogs nor interacted there. The learning habitus transformation process, that was supposed to give students understanding on blog functions from the start, was scarcely put into realisation by the teachers. Instead of making use of blogs as a medium for critical discussion, this study found that students regarded blogs as a minor, trivial part of learning activities. Blogs along with their potential for storing an immense body of information, were not used as a means of discussion, but only understood as no more than side tasks from the teacher. A mistaken way of transforming an educational habitus, eventually made these secondary students unaccustomed to using blogs correctly. As a result of the habitus developed during the senior high school period, students in higher education considered blogs to be merely a source for copying and pasting a reference when completing academic assignments.

When studying in higher education institutions, writing skills are in fact extremely important for constructing shared knowledge (Kathpalia et al, 2016; Limbu et al, 2015). For this reason, it is necessary that students receive instructional intervention in argumentative writing via blogs (Stasaitis, 2018). It is impossible to ignore academic writing at the higher education level when it is related to academic's professional capital. French (2019) states that through higher educational academic writing practices, academics distribute, transmit, and evaluate their academic knowledge. Through academic writing, academics build professional

identities essential for scientific legitimacy. Hence, an academic writing habitus should be built before students enter the higher education level.

This study found that over the senior high school period, students did not experience blog use habitus that could encourage productive blog use during their studies in higher education. This finding is different from those of previous studies, which revealed that blog use had a positive impact on students' learning processes, to provide a tool to learn academic writing (Hindley et al, 2018b; Strobl et al., 2019), causing students' literacy to improve (Hindley et al, 2019). Another study found that blogs could improve the learning process through reflective and collaborative responses (Worthington et al, 2019), and in the end, students' critical literacies were improved through engagement in virtual collaborative discussions in a blogosphere (Chamberlain, 2015).

Conclusion

While benefits offered by the use of blogs in education now have been felt more widely, the presence of blogs has also caused counterproductive dispositions in students in higher education institutions. Unlike earlier studies showing that blogs are used by students as an academic source of information (Aillerie et al, 2018; Morris, 2018), this study found that the habitus built during senior high school years, teacher attitudes, and overly-burdensome learning models, have discouraged students from using blogs as a medium for collaborative learning. It was also explained that blog use habitus developed during senior high school years inclined students who were pursuing higher education toward a pragmatic attitude. Instead of being a medium for discussion and encouraging critical thinking, students in higher education saw blog use as only for a source of academic information. This means that the learning habitus transformation process from secondary education to higher education did not produce students who are ready to learn at higher education institutions. The educational habitus transformation process developing and developed at senior high school was actually dysfunctional, and was not designed to support productive blog use perception and behavior development.

While a recent study by Garcia, Moizer, Wilkins, & Haddoud (2019) found that the blog use experiences and benefits gained by students in higher education influenced the way they used blogs. This study asserts that experience was not restricted to having an influence only in higher education. This study found that blog use experiences gained during senior high school years also influenced the ways in which blogs were used for completing academic assignments. In the past four years, there have emerged studies of blog use in higher education for improving learning performance (Eid et al, 2016) and enhancing academic writing (Hindley et al, 2018b, 2018a; Hindley et al., 2019). This study adds that how blogs



are used as a learning tool in higher education institutions, depends on the habitus built at senior high schools in relation to blog use as an educational technology.



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