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USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY CREATIVE ARTS STUDENTS FOR LEARNING AND CREATIVE ARTWORK DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Social media is nowadays broadly used by young people. Majority of the young people are with social media sites as it enable them to stay connected with people around the globe anywhere and anytime. The features of social media sites where it allows different forms of content to be shared attract young people's attention and transform ways of communication and interaction between their users. Consequently, majority of higher learning institution are starting to use social media for teaching and learning. This paper explores how the creative arts students are engage in the social media for learning and creative artwork development. Using a mixed methodology, this study used a sample of 300 students from public and private universities and colleges through a questionnaire focusing on the use of social media for learning and creative artwork development specifically in communication and collaboration, information management, learning and problem solving as well as meaningful participation. Discussion sessions are also conducted with 10 students to get better insights. The findings of the study reveal that social media plays a role in getting local and international inputs and feedback for developing creative artwork. Social media is also a source for creative learning and information however there are some of them who face difficulties in judging the credibility of excess information on the social media. In additional to that, social media is also turn out to be an alternative platform in the widening of creative students' network with the outside world, it provides opportunities to promote and exhibit their work to a larger group of audience. Students with different connection on the social media have different views and arguments on the pros and cons of using social media for learning and problem solving. The findings of this study also show experiences and exposures that students come across on social media.

Keywords: Creative Artwork, Creative Arts Students, Social Media, Learning

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become increasingly common in everyday life. The growth of social media has transformed the ways in which the internet is experienced by most end users. Now the internet is no longer a one-way broadcast delivery system where the individual user downloads data, information and other resources produced by a relatively small number of content providers. (Selwyn, 2011) Applications of social media enable user to communicate with other users as well as to create, edit and mix different forms of content such as images, podcasts, visual, audio and text for sharing purpose. These tools provide opportunities for individual expression and also interactions with other users. (Arnold & Paulus, 2010) Kaplan & Haenlein(2008) stated that social media can be defined as 'interactive platforms through which individuals and user group create, share and exchange user-generated content'. MTM London report on digital audience (2010) show that interaction with arts and cultural content in digital environment can be classified into five main categories: access, learn, experience, share and

create. As the features on social media sites keep on increasing and attract interest and attention of young people; the use of social media has also increase significantly among the students especially in higher learning institutions. Nowadays, information and knowledge are also delivered through digital forms such as eBook and online sharing. Pearce & Learmonth (2013) argue that 'Learning through digital social media can take place anywhere, inside or outside the classroom, with fellow students, their family and friends, or even the wider public'. We live in an era where 'students can potentially download and stream media whatever, wherever and whenever they like, affording great flexibility in learning experiences, and potentially de-tethering learning from the bricks and mortar university classroom'. (Thomson, Bridgstock, & Willems, 2014) Furthermore, the majority of creative art students are specifically engaged with social media sites like Facebook, Youtube, Behance, Pinterest and DeviantArt, which provide them with new platforms in sharing artworks, finding references, as well as building up connections. (Lupton, 2014; Stoeckel & Sinkinson 2013; Dabbagh & Kitsantas 2012; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2011) Social media without boundaries provides exposure to local and international artworks for learning and reference. Creative arts students are able to get feedback and discuss with the audiences about their work through social media. Those audiences who have any comments and feedback can send their views to the owner of that creative artwork at their own convenience; the technologies on social network also enable discussion in groups. The accessibility of creative artwork has become a two-way activity. (Poole, D. & Ho, S. L., 2011; MTM London, 2010; Budge, 2013; Hargittai, E. & Walejko, G, 2008) As a result, social media is not only helping them in learning, students can also get ideas and feedback to develop and further improve their own artwork. The link between students' learning and creative artwork development with social media technology is one that concerns digital competency. Digital media used in an educational context has begun to be explored and it is clear that they have some potential in this area (Rodriguez, 2011). Social media sites such as YouTube are already being effectively used in the classroom (Seo, 2012, Snelson, 2011). Haeryun Choi & Joseph M. Piro (2010) argue that using websites, search engines, digital libraries, online references, and databases to access, manage, and integrate strands of diverse data will ensure students to attain and master these resources and are able to apply these solutions to real-world problem solving. There is much research that explore the use of social media in learning settings, but there is no adequate research on creative arts learning and artworks development using social network sites. This paper offers selected preliminary findings that reveal how creative arts students engage in social media in their learning environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Several studies have explored social media practices in the learning environment of students in institutions of higher learning. Beqiri (2014) argued that social media has impact on students' study related activities and has given positive influence in communication and interactivity among them. Respondents from the study agreed that social media is an effective tool for getting course-based information. They agreed that higher learning institution should use social media actively to interact and provide information for their students. The Economist Intelligence Unit Report (2008) argued that the new technology has had a significant impact on higher education learning. Technology innovation, from time to time, will change according to the way of teaching and learning in universities. These days, online learning has become a key consideration for scholars and educators around the world. The findings in the report show that a majority of the academic staffs claim that technology has brought a largely positive impact to their students. Moyle (2010) in Australian Education Review stated that technologies are largely used by students outside of school for a variety of purposes. Young people were found to create social networks based on common interests and aims. The development of technology enables students to gain and give feedbacks from parents, teachers, peers, generous experts and interested strangers. Students can also learn and practice a range of skills through online as well as gaming. Moyle argued that social networking technologies are providing new opportunities for education as it can

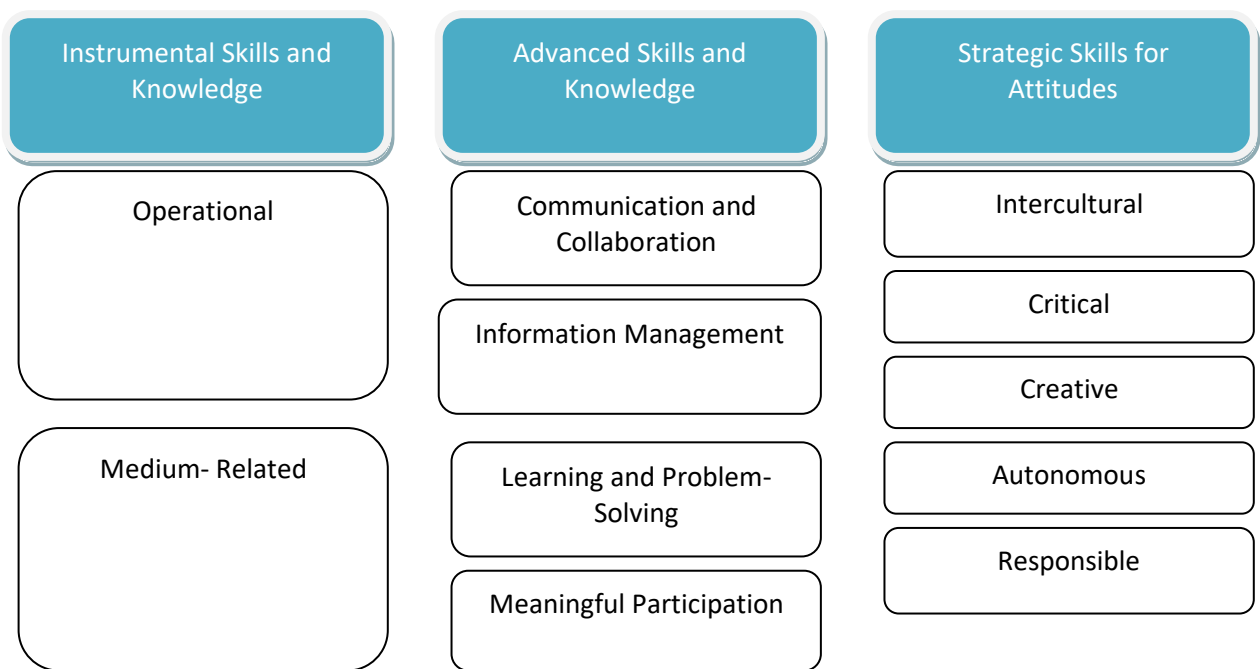
enhance students' learning by facilitating collaboration and innovation. Nevertheless, all of these will also depend on teaching and learning approaches used by social media users. Kabilan, M. K., Ahmad, N. and Abidin, M.J.Z. (2010) argued that the number of students in higher learning institution who are using Facebook is increasing. Respondents from the study agreed that Facebook can be an online learning environment that can facilitate English language learning and enhance their confidence in English writing. Respondents also agreed that Facebook has given them motivation to communicate in English. Kabilan et al. (2010) asserted that using Facebook for learning English is feasible with the condition of having an appropriate planning as part of the educational project. Corso & Robinson (2013) in their findings highlighted social media can facilitate and enhance educational experiences. Social media was able to facilitate in students' understanding and encourage creative thinking. Social media allowed the students to choose their personal learning style based on their preferences. They also stressed that informal learning happened through peer based sharing and feedback on social media. Social media is an ideal platform for creative people as they could share their artworks there to gain recognition and to build reputation. Ralph & Ralph (2013) argued social media is a tool that will bring improvement in students' learning with different learning styles. They added that social media will increase participation and promotes greater collaboration in learning. Benefits of using social media in classrooms also included creating greater interest and increasing students' sense of responsibility towards their own study. However, to chose the correct media was one of the challenges to incorporate social media for explicating difficult or complicated concepts. Ralph & Ralph emphasised that instructors will consume more time in class preparation and also interaction if social media is incorporated in teaching and learning. Zanamwee, Rupere & Kufandirimbwa (2013) looked at the use of social networking technologies in higher education through the perspectives of learners in Zimbabwe University. They argued that students are highly connected to social networking sites for social activities and education purposes. The findings also indicated that students feel comfortable and convenience to have group discussion through social media for their assignments. Improvement in learners' technology proficiency, enhanced learners' social skills and helping learners to communicate in new ways with new people are identified as the three top listed benefits for using social media in higher learning institutions. The research also argued that the use of social media has improved learner's technology proficiency and research skills. A summary review of literature above on social media in learning settings reveals several themes that are of significance like interactive communication and collaborative learning, information management, and learning in higher learning institution. Much of this research centers on digital competency but does not address the digital competency related to creative arts students that explores the use of social media for creative arts learning and creative artwork development. This paper draws largely from the works of Ala-Mutka to give insights to students' practices on social media in institutions of higher learning in Penang. Selected findings of a bigger study that aims to look at social media practices of creative arts students is presented in this paper. It is important to explore how the creative art students engage with the social media for learning and how the social media can assist them in artworks development. *In this paper, findings on perspective of creative arts students on their own advanced skills and knowledge is presented.* There are several models that can examine digital competencies in social media practices. Researchers have different views and definition on the concept of digital literacy, however majority of their studies relate to knowledge, skills and attitude. Gilsterin 1997 insisted that the ability in interpreting the information involve basic thinking skills and core competences, without which, a person could not perform tasks effectively in an interactive environment. The term of digital literacy now includes many sets of specific skills and competencies needed for searching, finding, evaluating and handling of information in computerized form (Shopova, 2014). European Commission (2007) defined digital competency as the involvement of confident and critical use of technology for work, leisure and communication. This includes the basic skills in using computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate

in collaborative networks via the internet. The model offered by Ala-Mutka (2011) is important and instructive to the present study as it centers on the aspects and elements of digital competence. Ala-Mutka proposed a conceptual model of digital competence which covers three main areas:

1. Instrumental knowledge and skills for operational and medium related media usage
2. Advanced skills and knowledge for communication and collaboration, information management, learning and problem solving and meaningful participation.
3. Strategic skills for attitudes that foster intercultural, critical, creative, responsible and autonomous involvement.

The different indicators encompassed in this model are as follows:

Table 1: Digital Competence Conceptual Framework (Ala-Mutka, 2011)



Project Design

This study is based on a sample of 300 students consisting of Arts students (design, graphic, new media, product), Communication students (journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising, corporate communication) and Music Studies in public and private universities and colleges. Using a mixed methodology, the study explores the use of social media for learning and creative artwork development through social media from the perspectives of creative arts students specifically in communication and collaboration, information management, learning and problem-solving as well as meaningful participation. A total number of 10 students were interviewed to generate rich insights about the use of social media in learning environment. The fieldwork for data collection for this study was carried out between October 2013 to July 2014.

Advanced Skills and Knowledge on Using Social Media

As seen in Table 2, generally, majority of the creative arts students (68.3%) stated that they get helpful comments for their creative projects from their contact on social media. 52% of them agreed that they look for comments from creative professionals or designers from all over the world through social media. Nearly 50.7% of them agreed that for creative artworks improvement, they have joined creative groups on social media.

	Communication and Collaboration	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1.	I get helpful comments for my creative projects from my contacts on social media.	2.0	17.3	68.3	12.3
2.	I look for comments from creative professionals/designers from all over the world.	1.0	30.0	52.0	17.0
3.	I have joined creative groups on social media to improve my creative work.	4.0	31.7	50.7	13.7

Table 2: Skills and knowledge on communication and collaboration

Data attained shows 76.3% students agreed and 12.3% students strongly agreed that they are able to locate creative artwork information on social media that are relevant to their own projects (see Table 3). With regard to the number of students who are able to organise creative artwork information on social media that are relevant to their own projects, only 7.7% of students disagreed with this statement while 70.7% of them agreed with it. To look for creative artwork information, about 66.7% of students in this study stated that they are able to choose suitable websites or search systems.

	Information Management	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
4.	I am able to locate creative artwork info on social media that are relevant to my projects.	1.0	10.3	76.3	12.3
5.	I am able to organise creative artwork info on social media that are relevant to my projects.	0.7	18.7	70.7	10.0
6.	I am able to choose suitable websites/search systems to seek for creative artwork information.	0	7.7	66.7	25.7

Table 3: Skills and knowledge on information management

About 73.3% of students agreed that they gather relevant feedback to improve their creative projects; 14.3% of students strongly agreed with that statement. Many of the students (76%) in this study agreed that they are able to determine learning goals, plan and use social media to carry out their creative projects. When the students come across difficulties in their creative projects, 66.3% of them agreed that they use social media to find solutions. (see Table 4)

	Learning and Problem-Solving	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
7.	I gather relevant feedback to improve my creative project.	0.3	12.0	73.3	14.3
8.	I am able to determine learning goals, plan & use social media to carry out my creative projects.	0.3	10.3	76.0	13.3
9.	I use social media to find solutions whenever I face difficulties in my creative projects.	0.7	10.7	66.3	22.3

Table 4: Skills and knowledge on learning and problem-solving

Findings reveal that 63% students agreed that they are able to collaborate with others on social media to complete their creative project. To look for opportunities for project exhibition, 12.3% of students strongly agreed that they are able to locate national and international opportunities through social media. Apart from that, 66.7% students agreed that they are able to use social media to promote their creative artwork in order to create an impact on the society. Meanwhile, 13.3% students disagreed on this.

	Meaningful Participation	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
10.	I am able to collaborate with others on social media to complete my creative project.	0.3	20.3	63.0	16.3
11.	I am able to locate national & international opportunities that allow me to exhibit my project through social media.	0.3	30.3	57.0	12.3
12.	I am able to use social media to promote my creative artwork in order to create impact on society.	0.7	13.3	66.7	19.3

Table 5: Skills and knowledge on meaningful participation

DISCUSSIONS FINDINGS

Interaction on social media for creative project

Majority of the students have posted their work and created groups for their projects on social media, however they have very different experiences and view on how helpful is the interaction on social media for creative projects. Some of the students think that the interaction is helpful while some think that the interaction does not help much. One of the respondents stated:

I think that is not really helpful because usually they will only give you comments after you develop the whole project... at that moment, you will not be able to make much changes. The only thing is you can keep it for the next project... However, it will not be the main factor for improvement too.

Meanwhile, another respondent stated:

I have a group of photographers or I should say few groups that I actually involve in working with them, we go out and shooting together, we work together and there are a lot of things they are discussing in Facebook and social media. I think this is a

good way of interaction. A lot of meetings and photo shoots we actually arrange through Facebook.

There are also students who believe that social media is a good platform for them to have more interaction and getting feedback. One of the male respondent commented as follow:

The thing is that people don't actually have the time to... aaa... attend to me especially the lecturers who are always busy with their work. I found out that sharing these on the social media will make them able to look at it on their own leisure time. Whenever they have the time and...aaa... because... aaa... I was in several universities before, I was in UiTM before and also I have some contact in The One Academy, and... even some lecturers from other universities and they are very helpful in my design career.

Students who are using social media for creative project development also tend to get meaningful feedbacks. However, they feel that not all of the feedbacks and interaction are helpful for their project. One of the respondents noted:

For me, I like discussion but it also depends on what kind of feedback they have given to me. If they just wrote a 'good' there, then I seriously don't know what I can do from that. If they give me a very detail of comment, then seriously I feel very thankful.

Meanwhile, there are also students who feel that there are restrictions and difficulties when it comes to interaction on social media for getting feedback and comments. It depends on who they are connected to and the relationship between them and their contact on the social media. Part of the students commented as below:

Maybe... they just share some partial of what they have. But could be because I look for them for too sudden also. I don't really... not based on the friend relationship, then maybe like I approach to you as a stranger, then maybe you feel like...oh... this is stranger. So what should I share everything I know.

Sometimes the way we speak and write is different and sometimes I can't get what they meant. They don't express well and I do not know what they are trying to tell also.

However not everyone on the social media will be willing to help also. But still as I said, the chances of getting to them is at least higher. But if you say about future plan, I don't see anyone who are being helpful in this.

Students have very different views for the feedback from different groups of people. Some of them think that professionals' view are more helpful in developing their creative artwork; some of them think that people from the same industry will know their work better and therefore able to provide better guidance for changes and improvement. While there are also some students who think that views and feedback from those who have a different background are equally important for improvement and development purposes. One of the students stated below:

I think the professional groups always give the helpful comments where else those which are from friends might not be so helpful because some of them are not able to understand the real situation of difficulties face by the artist. But the master students... they know because they have experienced all these.

Another student who claimed that feedbacks from people of different background are also important stated below:

I prefer feedback of students from different background because some other designers might know what you are doing because same mind...some concept... they know. But student from other courses they never learn about this. When you put something in ...for example, when you design and you put in the concept, some might not understand and some will understand. Sometimes things which are simple will make people understand it easily. So I wanted to see how the... audience reacts.

While a lot of us think that social media is a place where we can get connected to a lot of people, some of the students view it differently when they were asked if the social media allows them to get connected and benefits them in developing their artwork. Majority of the students are only connected and getting feedback for creative artwork from their own friends, course mates, friends who are taking the same course in other institutions, friends of whom they know in person from the creative industry, and lecturers. They also have some connections that never interact with them on social media. Based on their experiences, professionals and designers especially international experts are slightly hard to be connected through social media. According to one of the students:

The problem is those who are really great in the creative field, usually they are not that attach to social media. The other way is... after you work as an intern in the company and then only you get connected with them. There is no way for you to just search and get connected with them through the social media. Meaning you have to know them in person first.

Another student commented:

I try to approach designers from Hong Kong and Taiwan but they didn't reply to me so I just give up.

One of the respondents who is disappointed for not getting any interaction and feedback from his contact stated:

We are connected to so many people but none of them response to us so what can we do. We are connected but no interaction.

However, there are also students who manage to get feedback and knowledge sharing with international contacts. According to that student, participation in international level events provided a chance to get international contacts and interact with them.

...because I do get a lot of international feedback as well. And also for an example, when I take photo for Georgetown festival last year, I posted up the pictures and

then I add some caption and description for the photo and I can see people are happy and they get to know some information through my photo as well. So I can see that people are also using the social media as a platform to search and get information, even a photo can give some info.

Apart from all of the above, it is also important for the students to decide on which social network site should they post their artwork or questions for communication and interaction. One of the students stated, different social network site will provide a different impact on this.

For Facebook, then it is more on your own circle of friends only. For Behance... I can interact with other artists. You won't have that kind of limitation like only those whom you know and also those who are also students, at the same level with you. Behance can help to get comments and interaction with more people around the world. It can be anyone.

Information Management

Majority of the students share and receive information through social media. When students found information that they think is useful for themselves and will be helpful and will be an inspiration for their friends, they will share the information on social media. However, there are also students who prefer to share creative related information only in groups created for creative learning and sharing. One of the male respondents stated:

I share a lot of impressive artwork and also a lot of tutorial with my art and design friends. Skills, with my fellow arts industry people especially those who are from the same institution and I think this benefits everyone. For those which I think will benefit everyone then I will share it out publicly. Usually I will share a lot of things but for those which are specifically for graphic designers, I would just share in the circle of the group.

In terms of creative related information on social media, majority of the students share tutorial videos that they feel will be helpful for their friends to learn some new skills. One of the students stated he hardly see in-depth information on tools, products, and software.

I don't receive much information but I do share some information. If it is something related to creative artwork I will only share twice or slightly more than that in a week. I think people don't really share much on these information like tools, product and creative related info on the social media. Usually they just show their artwork.

They felt that information which they found on social media for creative artwork development purpose were not highly reliable. A few of the students claimed that they need to test out the technical information shared on social media; compare or even filter the information found before they can apply them to their own work. Some of the students stated that they will always crosscheck on different websites and also with experts in the industry for information found. Meanwhile one of the respondents felt that it is irresponsible to share the information without checking its authenticity:

I think only 60% of the information on the social media is reliable... A lot of people just share it due to the rest are also sharing it, and then everybody is circulating the same thing without knowing whether it is right or not. I think this is not right.

Another student noted the following:

I think if you want to use that information, then you have to search more and make a comparison and see which is more reliable.

The qualitative data reveals that students do not rely much on the information or resources found on social media for specific creative artwork development. Social media is where they are getting information from what their friends shared. The information could be something related to what their contacts are doing and might not be relevant to what the respondents are doing. However, it could be an extra knowledge or information for their future creative artwork references. One of the students stated that there is no information to be found on social media, social media is just a place to get connected unless you post your questions there and let your contacts share or find the information for you. His comment is as follows:

How can you search for information there? It is more on you get connected and then you post up the questions and then you wait for an answer.

Another student felt that information found from different sources or connection on social media can be different and this creates confusion. She commented:

Sometimes... too many artist and of course most of them will have their own philosophy. Aaa... Because... for example, this person says yes and I thought that what I am doing is correct but when I come across another artist, I will get the opposite view. Then...haiks...

Nevertheless, there are also students who strongly think that the information found can be very helpful to make their work a better one. One of the students stated information or resources found on social media can be a guideline for his creative artwork.

I saw some quotes before... 'Creativity is to take an idea from someone else and evolve it to something better'. Meaning I look at somebody work and then look for tutorial as well, and then I will improve it in a way, combine and improve, improve from what they have, or even from the knowledge I have gathered

Learning and problem solving

Students have different views on how helpful social media can be in solving their creative artwork problem. One of the students think that social media will be somehow helpful in this matter; however using the messenger to reach their contacts for the solution will be much more efficient. Some students feel that social media is helpful in problem solving especially for group work. Through the discussions and sharing of findings of group members, they will come across different views and references to get a better solution. Another student experience a situation where he seek for help to solve the problem he faced by posting a question on his social media however none of his contact has given any feedback to him. Some of the respondents think that it is more efficient to get their problem solved if they can see the correct person face to face; demonstrate and show them what are the proper steps will be much easier compared to asking for help on social media.

Part of the students commented as below:

Last time I am doing Web and I have to do some coding and I have problem with that. I created something and something else comes out and... I shot my questions to the group but then nobody reply me.

You have to post up the questions and then wait for the right person to response. The other option is you have to private message those whom you think will be able to help you such as students, lecturers, experts of the field. It takes some time for you to get to the person and discuss face to face. However, social media is anywhere and anytime.

One of the girls feel that social media is only somehow helpful in solving minor problems. She commented:

If you are talking about posting the problems you have and posting it on social media, usually those are minor problems, not the major one.

One of the respondents also reported that he has difficulties in getting his problems solved through social media due to the difficulties in explaining his problem using text.

If you need to discuss in details then of course face to face is better. Usually when we do the discussion on social media, we have to express through text and I think for me there is a limitation, I have to type everything and the other problem is I am struggling in expressing myself.

As for learning, respondents feel that post or sharing from other social media users had given them knowledge, skills and ideas.

For learning.... the people, designers those who share the information, I often follow their updates and they are being so helpful in putting up information, links and also other sources that are helpful in my learning stuff.

Majority of the students claimed that they compared the content or information found on social media. Findings reveal that most of the students lack skill in verifying authoritative and non-authoritative content. They are only concern if the information is reliable or not. For most of the students, they think that comparing the content they found from different sites is one of the ways to judge the reliability. There are also students who think information that were found on certain 'reliable websites' such as Youtube are considered as reliable and trustworthy. Most of the time, the students judge the reliability of the content based on their very personal judgment. One of students recorded that:

I think it is important for us to look at the source of the information. For example, those who shared it is like aaaa... primary school kids like my cousins, then you have to think twice. But if it is from those like.... lecturers, then of course I feel that the reliability is higher then.

Another student stated:

Since Youtube has the policy, the law to protect it now, so since I can get them on Youtube, then it could be something right already.

Meaningful participation

Apart from sharing and receiving information on social media, students feel that social media is also a space that assists them for projects' collaboration. However, the collaboration is limited to their own coursemates most of the time. Most of the respondents use social media as a tool for having discussion when it comes to collaboration. Students claimed that they play a role as an observer rather than taking initiative to take part in other activities on social media. One of the students noted:

Collaboration....Yes, among the course mate. We do something for promotional, publicity...that's all. I don't work so much with others on social media apart from the course work.

Students have different views on how their participation or creative projects on social media benefit the society and themselves. Some students are quite uncertain about this, some students feel that their work will more or less carry some weight. There are also some of them who lack the confidence in their own work. They feel that their work will not be able to bring any impact to the society. Some of the respondents commented:

I think if I post it up, more or less of course it will benefit certain people or the society. Is just the matter of more or less.

I think it is more on promoting or sending certain messages. I try to make most of the projects I do to be something that can benefit the society but sometimes... the problem is how many of them who have seen the projects can receive the message clearly?

I don't know yet. Maybe yes maybe no because they might just view my work on the social media without leaving me any comment.

Most of the students feel that their participation on social media brings improvement in terms of knowledge and skills. As mentioned earlier, most of them spend a lot of time in observing and looking through what their contact had shared on social media. Therefore, they gain some extra knowledge other than their own discipline through sharing of these. One of the girls comment as below:

It brush up my skills. More on skills and techniques. Also... I think yes because most of the time I learnt something and at the same time I get to know some people as well. It is like... cross discipline and I actually learnt something which are out of my own field too.

Students also feel that their participation and interaction with others on social media help to increase their level of confidence and getting mental support. One of the students mentioned that the work of other creative designers motivate him to work harder and make his own artwork better.

When I look at other users' project, the passion of doing a better work will increase..from there, I try to improve and develop and this happens from time to time. It actually created that kind of motivation which makes me more competitive.

Findings also reveal that some of the students use social media as one of the tool to promote themselves.

Yes. If I upload my artwork, there are some directors, art director who like your work, then they can hire you. But as I mention just now also, Facebook and social media is not the only one platform you can have. The other good thing is Facebook can make things work very fast. For example, your artwork can go to those directors who are looking for talented people very fast and also they can contact you fast to get you to work with them or interview. Compare to you have to knock on the door, sending resume and asking for the job, this is really fast.

DISCUSSION

The collected data revealed that students are digitally competent in various kinds of interactions and online activities on social media. Students look forward to get helpful feedbacks and comments from their contacts, however the quality of interaction is highly dependent on whom the students are connected to on social media. Besides, students' interactions with international contacts are lower compared to their interaction with local contacts. Experience of students who manage to achieve and get comments from international contacts as well as from the professional shows that participation in events and activities are important factors to achieve this. Data revealed that social media is a medium that give convenience to students in making time arrangement with their contacts on events and meetings. The students also claimed that social media provides them a platform to exhibit their work to gather views for further improvement. However, various kinds of skills and knowledge are needed for getting the 'correct connection'. Besides, advanced skill on approaching, questioning, and managing is also highly needed in getting helpful connection, helpful feedback, and helpful comments. Through social media, students are sharing and receiving information on creative arts in their own way. Even though the students are able to locate creative artwork information which is relevant to their project, findings also showed that they are not able to differentiate between authoritative and non-authoritative content. Apart from this, students are also not fully assessing the reliability of information. Moreover, students' lack of skills in understanding information gathered from the social media and not able to relate the information found with their own projects. This basically means it is a bit risky for them to use the information found on social media. They are not able to judge when they come across information which shows different views and perspectives. Given that there are potential dangers for applying information found on social media to their studies or projects, it is important for students to be critical while they share, evaluate, manage and use information found on the social media. The findings reveal that students' skills and knowledge is essential in this digital age as information can be created and shared on the social media by anybody. When students face difficulties in their creative projects, they still prefer face to face discussion compared to looking for solutions on social media. Even though the students are exposed to different views and references on social media, they still feel that the social media is not able to help in solving major problems in creative projects especially problems that are technically related. Using text to explain and understand is also one of the restrictions for problem solving by using social media. In view of that, social media is not the first choice for students as a problem solving tool. On the other hand, data shows that students gained new knowledge, idea and skill through the sharing by their friends. However, due to the lack of ability in differentiating between authoritative and non-authoritative information this will also put them at risk. As mentioned earlier, lack of skills will restrict the use of social media as a platform for learning and creative project development.

The data reveals some of the students have very low confidence on their own skills and knowledge and this restricts their participation on the social media to a certain extent. They feel that their work has not achieved the standard for uploading on the social media for sharing and discussion. Students have different views on their own patterns and impact of participation. Through the sharing and interaction with their contact especially those who are of the same background, students gain support, inspiration and motivation. As for those who interact with contacts from different background and culture, students claimed that the social media provides a space for learning something new which are not directly related to their work but it could be a reference and guidance for their future projects. The study shows that students use social media as a platform showcasing their artwork in the hope of getting opportunities for job and chances of collaboration. As a whole, social media is helpful to a certain extent for creative arts learning and creative artwork development. The study has stressed the importance of digital competency among creative art students in this digital era. There is a need for discussions on how creative arts students' digital competencies can be improved in order to benefit them in learning and artwork development.

CONCLUSION

The strength of social media applications is that they offer an assortment of tools that learners can mix and match to best suit their individual learning styles and increase their academic success (Grover & Stewart, 2009) Callaghan and Bower's (2012) research demonstrated the critical role of the teacher in creating engaging and effective online learning in social networking environments. They argued that social networking environments promote greater levels of student motivation and engagement, and enable students to use higher order thinking. This study provides a picture of how interactions and activities are done on social media by creative arts students. Many of creative arts students are engaged in social media from time to time and social media has become an additional platform for learning. Active involvement of creative art students is partly due to social media applications in sharing of artworks in different forms. Students are comfortable with Facebook and creativity is conducive in spaces where learners are emotionally comfortable. While there are many opportunities that are available on social media, students also confront anxiety particularly in relation to their ability and standard of artwork. This makes them more restricted when it comes to their participation in terms of contribution to the society and other users. As a conclusion, this study shows that social media is a potential tool for creative learning as well as increasing the exposure of creative arts students to references and resources for artwork development. The module offered by Ala-Mutka is a useful way of tracing the pattern of social media engagement in terms of learning among creative arts students.

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