

A new possibility to write about the community for the community: the presence of social science faculty members in social networks

Hamed. Taheri Kia^{1*} 

¹ Assistant Professor, Institute for Social and Cultural Studies, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: kia.erhut@iscs.ac.ir

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ABSTRACT

The issue of writing should be considered as a historical situation that has made it possible to produce and record knowledge and information. The position of writing is dependent on the tools that enable ideas to transform into the materiality of the writing. Therefore, with the change of writing tools, the possibilities of creating ideas and producing knowledge, along with publishing tools, have also changed. Therefore, the main goal of the article is to clarify the function of and the sharing of writing in the digital situation by the social science faculty members. For the social science professor, the position of writing is the most important and main position of knowledge production for a social scientist. The position of writing about the community for the community, in social networks, what new positions has it activated? To answer this question, an in-depth interview was conducted with 6 social scientists who are faculty members, and the data were coded in MAXQDA software. Based on the obtained results, the position of writing in social networks has led to rapid writing in the face of the rhythm of the movement of forces shaping the space-time of the current situation and creating an imagination of it. The rapid writing is to generate information and create propositional knowledge about the issues of the present time. The rapid writing is related to the contemporary living characteristic of the social scientist, where knowledge and information flows affect each other.

Keywords: Writing, social sciences, social networks, virtual space, university.



Introduction

Academic writing is the most important criterion to estimate an academician's knowledge. There are different scientific methods to make ordinary writing into a legitimate academic writing. Therefore, like other scientific disciplines, social scientists need legitimate academic writing in variety formats of article, book, and thesis. These are dominant formats of writing about social life in social science. These types of writing have their specific audience and they circulate in academic environments. But how can we imagine a position of writing which is about community for the community? What possibility remains for the production of writing in the field of social sciences that can be used outside the university apparatus? What are its characteristics and how does it relate to the general audience?

These questions are generated from the digital worlds in which the position of writing has an important function to produce and distribute information. By entering the digital age data regimes, information systems, and "digital computing tools" (Mitcham, 2004: 328) are key concepts to introduce the new positions of sender and receiver of information. "Algorithmic culture" (Kushner, 2013: 1242) is a cultural turn in communicative values (Uricchio, 2011). Thus the position of writing through social networks is about algorithmic culture and information society. The digital position of writing for a social science professor is a new position to produce information about community for the community outside the dominated official and legitimized form of academic writing. So, our main question is, for the social science professor, writing about social life for the community, in social networks, has enabled what positions?

Related to this subject there are some research literature which focuses on the tweeter. The role of tweeting for highlighting the issue of social justice (Greenson, An, Xue, Thompson, & Guo, 2018), using twitter as a source of research information (Kharman Shah & Cox, 2017), making connection with the scientific network, and the presence in tweeter as a position to consistency of research position (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2016) are some of research literatures about social networks in conjunction with scientific networks.

The dual combination of scientific and social networks for Iranian research literature has not been a field of interest. Then we found two similar research literature. First, Mahmoudi (2021) focuses on the identity performance of Iranian university performance on Instagram. Mahmoudi concludes that the presence of professors on Instagram results in the normalization of university professors' identity. Second, Kazemi's (2021) research subject is about academic influencers. He suggests three types of professor influencers: 1. Traditional celebrities who have low presences on Instagram; 2. Professors who are more famous on Instagram than outside of social networks; 3. Professor who has gained fame on and outside of Instagram. In comparison to these research literatures, our article focuses on the position of writing in social networks by social science professors.

Methodology

The current research has a post-qualitative approach and is placed in the paradigm of post-humanism (Braidotti, 2006). In the paradigm of posthumanism, the nature of the phenomenon is formed by the combination of human and non-human forces, and, in other words, non-human forces have the power of agency. Therefore, in the paradigm of posthumanism, the issue of the writing position in the digital era and the impact of non-human forces such as software, hardware, applications, and algorithm language on the writing position become important. The digital age has brought the situation of writing into a new historical period.

In the qualitative method, similar codes are grouped under larger thematic categories, and then they create a categorical analysis report. The analysis report is categorized by thematic categories. But in the paradigm of post-humanism, the qualitative method is criticized by introducing the post-qualitative method (Pierre, 2016). In the qualitative method, the primary codes are compressed in order to obtain a shared category, while this compression destroys the possibility of fluidity and movement of open codes to create conceptual links with each other. Open codes in the post-qualitative method lead to the generation of analysis paragraphs. In the post-qualitative method, the researcher deals with open codes, while in the qualitative method, by compressing the open codes, the categories become important. So in post-qualitative method open codes are used is in paragraph generation. The researcher based on the open code develops the paragraph, and the paragraph is used to call the next open code, and in this way, a chain of paragraphs is developed based on the open codes that are interwoven.

We conduct in-depth interviews with six sociology professors who are active in social networks such as Instagram and Telegram. All these sociology professors are university faculty members. This feature helped to put the position of writing in social networks in relation to academic writing, which is one of the administrative requirements of producing scientific texts. In general, the experience of obtaining the both positions of an academician and an influencer was important in the selection of samples.

Findings

Based on the coding and post-qualitative method, we did not classify codes into thematic categories. Instead we developed open codes through paragraphs and, in the meantime, entangled other open codes with each other to create concepts. In other words we created a conceptual analysis text. These concepts functioned as analytical positions.

Table 1

Conceptual analytical positions

Rapid writing	Contemporaneity	Propositional knowledge	Expression	Rhythm
Flows of forces of everyday life	Post print era	Will to write	Imaginative writing	Sociological imagination
Legitimated responsibility	Expressive agency	Flows of information	Trilogy of writing-distribution-receiving	

Conclusion

The digital situation has introduced to the field of social science a new position of writing that we called rapid and visual writing. Rapid and visual writing comes from the nature of contemporary living and contemporaneity in the information society and digital situation. The digital situation is a network of human and non-human forces that are intertwined. The digital situation is in an acceleration of information production, circulation and consumption. In the digital situation, rapid writing is a form of information production that produces propositional knowledge.

The rapid writing allows for a sociological visualization of the current situation. The social science professor has now found the possibility of the rapid writing in the synchronized rhythm of the currents of the forces that shape space and time. For social science professors, the rapid writing is an emergence of being affected by everyday life forces in the digital situation. The responsibility of writing rapidly for a social science professor shows the validity of his contemporaneity. The rapid writing enables social science knowledge to produce information for a large and plural population.

In the digital situation, the rapid writing is a responsibility and mission to the flow of the rhythm of the forces shaping the current space-time and its events. A social science professor in any space and time can use a machine like a mobile phone to convert what he receives in the present into propositional knowledge. Written information is transmitted and disseminated, and recipients who follow the social science professor receive it automatically. In the tension of sending and receiving information, it is possible to produce collective knowledge and influence the level of collective awareness and feelings.

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