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Assessing The Impact Of Digital Culture On Verbal And Non Verbal Communication Skills

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ABSTRACT

Humans are the social creatures who seek out and strengthen relationships with the members of their tribe. They communicate using multiple channels like outer appearance, voice tone, body language and use of words and sentences. But a new media called social media has affected their communication vastly; presently majority of the communication is happening through text messages, images, symbols and icons. But this form of communication is completely void of the richness of the vibrant signals, verbal and nonverbal cues and complex exchange of words that occurs in a face-to-face conversation which expressed the real emotions. Social media is completely void of personal touch, emotional expression, choice of words and a refined system of communication which has caused a biggest damaging effect on communication skills.

Another aspect of the popularity of the social media is that social attitude towards communications have undergone a total change. People in general are not much interested in real and in-person conversations because they wish to have instant social media recognition and that instant, colorful feedback from the platforms of social media keeps them stuck with and attached to their phones. This kind of attitude leads to a decrease in the quality and heartening flow of meaningful conversations.

This new way of surviving has greatly affected the way they express themselves and present their point of view to their teachers, job interviewers, parents and friends and to the other relationships. They have become poor in communication skills since they hardly talk and are mostly engrossed with social media. They are not trained in the face-to-face communication skills that they truly need to survive in the society.

This paper discusses about the impact of digital culture and gadgets which has left a detrimental effect on the communication skills when phone is used excessively or obsessively due to which individuals react poorly to emotions, social cues or nonverbal cues.

Keywords:- Digital culture, Communication skills, Superficial connections, Video game culture, Communication gap.

INTRODUCTION:-

Social media platforms like Facebook, X, Whatsapp, Instagram, and TikTok have completely influenced the societal patterns of communication, social interactions, and self-presentation, forming new social norms and behaviors. Every aspect of human communication has been impacted by information and communication technologies with social media apps leading in this regard. These technologies will keep developing, opening up new channels for communication and altering how people design their lives. But besides all this, human values are essential for the communication and need to be considered while developing new technology. Moderation, honesty, transparency and accountability demand a different approach to the creation of technology and the media platforms.

It is well known that our lives have been drastically altered by the mobile phones. Global statistics clearly demonstrate an authentic record regarding the deterioration in the capabilities of communication in the recent years, despite the fact that many linguists doubt the assertions against the detrimental effects of texting on young people's linguistic abilities. Although it has been suggested that this association may be caused by the impacts of texting but a clear causal relationship has not yet been established yet.

The impact of digital culture on communication skills of children, teenagers and the masses is examined here. The connection between texting and literacy growth and whether educational stakeholders need to be concerned about these potential negative consequences are also discussed.

Social networking sites are no longer a novel occurrence in our nation too; in fact, they have emerged as one of the most effective means of disseminating the most recent information from several organizations and even people, websites and other digital sources. The younger generation has undoubtedly been drawn to this emergence. Yet it is crucial to understand that the youth of today will have a major role in transforming the future of our country. They need develop the best communication skills and style to cater to the requirement of job market since employers and workplaces consider communication to be one of the most important abilities that an applicant needs to possess.

It is being widely observed that the younger generation/ youth have learnt to ignore the verbal communication as they happen to be always busy in messaging, playing games or watching videos. Their communication skills are greatly impacted by the social media. They are usually not connected to the people around in person, when they are addressed, they are unable to concentrate and remember what is said, they seems to be detached, staring at the floor, avoid eye contact and mumble a greeting with displeasure.

This paper is quite significant since it will help us establish the fact that the social, personal and interpersonal communications are negatively impacted by the excessive use of technology. This is because an individual's ability to lead, persuade, deliver accurate information, get the facts straight, and a variety of other talents are actually determined by their communication skills. It is an established fact that, despite having exceptional academic credentials, individuals with weak communication skills are unlikely to succeed in any endeavor requiring strong communication abilities, particularly after they enter employment. Therefore, the knowledge about whether it is established that social networking sites leave adverse effects, might be helpful.

More often we have been hearing, reading about the accountsof fresh degree holders who could not reciprocate properly during interviews or, even worse, who made a total spectacle of themselves when they couldn't produce a worthy presentation to make us brood over as to what made them so incompetent in making presentations or placing a poor out put of their social and communication skills. That is due to the fact that communication skills can really determine a person's capability in leading, persuading, conveying accurate information, getting the facts right and the list goes on. As we know, even though some people might be excellent in academics but if their communication skills are poor, it will be less likely for them to excel in anything that requires excellent communication skills especially when they embark on the working lives. Hence, the question remains that whether the social networking sites are proven to have negative influences on students' communication skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW:-

A study by **Greenhow and Robelia (2009)** titled **Old Communication, New Literacies: Social Network Sites as Social Learning Resources** indicates that students are involved in a complex range of creative communicative activities within the space of social networking sites. These activities suggest deep attention, tone, style, knowledge of subject matter and writing process to the viewers and could be noted positively because all of those elements are essential for enhancing communication abilities.

But **Henderson (2010)** stresses that face-to-face, person-to-person communications involve choice of words, vocal variety, body language, movements and positioning, facial expressions, listening skills and much more which together make up multiple components of messaging that are effective. Nonetheless, in virtual communications as in communicating through social networking sites, a lot of these aspects are missing as they are substituted with emoticons, cameras for visual cues, microphone for audio cues etc. Henderson (2010) further mentions that, the crucial components of effective communication that are lacking in virtual communication are prompt responses and feedback which are possible through in-person interactions only.

The following literature review indicate that- These issues have the adverse impact on the development of interpersonal social skills (**Pierce - 2009**), inappropriate and dangerous behaviors that texting may mediate such as sexting and cyber bullying (**Drouin and Landgraff-2012**; **Parris; Varjas, Meyers, and Cutts, 2012**), distraction to classroom instruction and the reduction of students' attention and comprehension. (**Kuznekoff, Munz, and Titsworth, 2015**; **Tindell & Bohlander, 2012**), and its negative effects on literacy and learning (**Drouin, 2011**; **Parris Drouin and Davis, 2009**; **Rosen, Lim, Carrier and Cheever, 2011**) and the development of linguistics Skill (**De Jonge and Kemp, 2012**; **Drouin and Driver, 2014**; **Rosen, Chang, Erwin, Carrier and Cheever, 2010**); among others.

The impacts of social media on society have been the focus of a great deal of research. Some significant findings and research areas on this subject state that, social media platforms have completely changed the way individuals connect and communicate. And that the constructive as well as the destructive social interactions such as cyber bullying can be facilitated by them.

Decreased Face-to-Face Communication: Excessive reliance on social media causes deterioration in one's ability to communicate face-to-face. This becomes harder for young people to perform in the real life situations, handle real-world, face-to-face interactions, feel more at ease expressing themselves through written text or emoticons, pushing them under the low confident lot.

The Incapability to Interpret Emotional Cues: The contemporary lot of young people find it difficult to appropriately interpret the emotional cues when there are not in the face-to-face interactions and would struggle to detect emotional cues correctly, causing misunderstandings.

Mental Health: Several research studies have looked into the connection between mental health and social media use. These studies have explicitly confirmed that Anxiety, Sadness, and Loneliness are found to be related to the excessive use, cyber bullying and social comparison.

Declined Empathy: According to the research, an essential human quality of empathy can decrease over time if a people spend a lot of time interacting with others online and are not aware of the immediate effects of what they say. In order to interact effectively and create enduring relationships, empathy is essential.

Distorted Self-Portrayal: Social media frequently promotes the display of well chosen, perfected versions of a person's life. These portrayals leave an adverse effect on authenticity and sincere communication skills by creating a gap between online personal and in-person interactions.

Fear of Missing Out (FMO): It is a social response to the idea that other people are in a better position than themselves and are leading comfortable lives which is being missed by them. They start believing that they are unfortunate and are missing out something special. Social networking sites can heighten people's fear of missing out on social gatherings and experiences which can make people prioritize online interactions beyond in-person connections and conversation.

Impact on Language Skills: The informal language and acronyms that characterize the social media communication leaves an unwelcome impact on the formal language skills. It is not a surprise that in the personal, professional and academic contexts the widespread usage of social media is in vogue for exchanging ideas, narratives, and experiences both personal and professional. It has had a significant impact on how people conduct their day to day interaction where in the style of communication in professional and academic contexts exhibits a decline in one on one communication. Although social media is practical, it can cause a loss of emotional intelligence and social skills making it difficult for people to build everlasting and meaningful relationships.

Compressed Writing: Messages have been getting shorter and more concise, beginning with the 2000s' character limit on text messaging and continuing today with the 140-character tweet. Summarized writing is also been adopted in other domains of communication including compressed work correspondence, abbreviated student-teacher correspondence and shortened promotional messaging leaving an emotional gap or mental connectedness.

Abbreviated Terms: Online chats have adopted the abbreviated communication style that gained popularity with the advent of text messaging in the 2000s. In addition, it has been incorporated into traditionally non-abbreviated communication channels like email, spoken language, and even academic writing.

Textism: In the research studies on texting, Drouin and Driver (2014) examined the relationships between texting behaviors (i.e. Texting frequency and text message transcription) the use of textisms and literacy abilities (i.e., reading, reading fluency, spelling and vocabulary) of college students. **Textism** density in text messages was shown to be strongly and negatively connected to reading and spelling even if texting frequency "was not significantly related to any measure of literacy" (p. 259). In other words, textese that employed texting more frequently scored lower on tests of evaluated literacy.

Further research revealed that certain textual categories like accent style had a good correlation with reading and spelling like leaving out apostrophes, had a negative correlation with all literacy skills and a substantial negative correlation with reading. Certain academicians expressed concern about this, citing research that links "textese" to adverse impacts on literacy abilities including writing and precision in reading. According to other research, employing "textese" has not much impact on one's ability to spell or use grammar correctly.

Echo Chambers and Polarization: Social media technologies generate "echo chambers" where users see the information that supports their pre-existing opinions only and through which they also strengthen pre-existing biases. This can eventually result in an unhealthy society by polarizing people and preventing them from having an open mind and freedom of expression.

News and Information Distribution: Research has examined that the digital media is an essential component in the dissemination of news and information. The effects of feedback networks, fake news and the quick spread of information during emergencies through technology affects the communication skills negatively.

Misinterpretation: Written communication such as email and text messages can be easily misinterpreted due to the absence of voice tone and body language and hence the exact message is not conveyed leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. The volume of information available through technology can be overwhelming but distorted and confusing information creates havocs and steals the peace of mind.

Advertising and Customer Behavior: Research indicates how well social media platforms are used for marketing and advertising work and influences the customer behavior. Most of the communication of an advertisement is misleading. The unnecessary advertizing messages and calls are not only irritating and disturbing but also invade the privacy and peace. They bombard the false claims to exploit our fears and insecurities, promote wrong kind of behavior and practices sometimes. It also involves spreading negative remarks about their competitors and reducing others' reputation affecting negatively.

CONCLUSION:

Thus, along with creating a positive atmosphere and social settings and opportunities for advancing human interaction, the goal of research in the new digital age should be to build the technologies that address human issues in understanding how the innovations are affecting human interaction and that the quick responses and unrestricted access to information has become its characteristics. The digital age is one of instantaneous communication where they have altered the ways in which individuals behave, write, act and ultimately communicate.

In order to gain a deeper understanding, further research should be the priority for empirical studies in the field of human communication. Individuals should act morally while making the most of the tremendous possibilities made feasible by the increasing number of innovations. The main argument and concern here is that relationships within families are impacted by interpersonal communication. The primary point of view is that interpersonal communication influences family behavior which in turn influences the behavior within the society. In order to prevent the likelihood of break down in the interpersonal communication and the society disintegration, it is necessary for the personal connections to occur more regularly. The nature of interactions with technologies will continuously change as technologies become more sophisticated and humans grow older. As technologies expand the range of human communication, the opportunity for face-to-face contact is decreasing steadily which is the cause of concern.

A key recommendation of this paper is that in the course of engagement, communication technology and communication ethics must complement each other. In all the matters of communication either directly or through mediated means, ethical judgments and decisions should be considered. While adopting the newest communication technologies, prevent the urge to become a slave to digital technology. It also implies that although we ought to possess digital communication tools, we ought to let them own us and that should not happen.

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