

Studying the impact of Social Media, Mediatisation and Cyber-Psychology of Youngsters

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ABSTRACT

Background: The questions arises whether the emergence of social-cyberspace had eased the relationships between one another or the virtual space had literally distanced the youth from his/her environment resulting in reduction of empathy towards others while seeking one's own identity through the images of the self. Currently the national suicide rate is 11.2 per lakh, whereas all the southern states have more than 16. It was also observed that the maximum number of suicides occurred between 15 and 29years of age. The extensive use of cell phones and peer pressures obtained through the messages play an important role in the above. **Objective:** This paper seeks to understand through various psychological and communication theories and methods the role of social and cyber media in the day today lives of youngsters and the affects thereby. **Methods:** As per uses and gratification theory (Blumer and Katz, 1974), an individual seeks out a specific media to satisfy his/her specific needs. As it is an audience-centered approach, this paper focuses on the teenage users of the digital media and their behavioral progress from need to addiction. The assumptions that the audience members are not passive consumers of media creates concerns about the mental health. This paper attempts to look in to the three pronged psychological approaches which are, towards the source (competence and warmth), normative influence (reciprocity), and affective influence (mood).

Keywords: Mediatisation, Social Media, Cyber-psychology, Social-cyberspace

Recently, the television news was showing a shanty house laid with thatched roof in which an eighteen year old college going girl has been reportedly committed suicide. The reason for her suicide was simply because of her mother had denied access to her cell phone. She took her daughters cell phone and left for her daily wages as she thought her daughter has been browsing through the net all the while that made her to distract from her studied. One is astounded about the fact that a second year English undergraduate student would go to the extent of committing suicide finding it impossible to part with her mobile. In another incident couple of high school boys murdered their classmate aspiring to abduct his mobile phone.

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The changes in the behavioral patterns and the compulsive psychological intrusions of the cyber-media had triggered the author's interest in writing this article.

The article in its first section deals with the formation of the individual's knowledge with regard to his surroundings and his understanding of the self. Comparing Pierre Bourdieu's idea of Habitat, field and power and with that of Foucault's omnipresent power helps us to understand the dynamics between knowledge formation and power structures.

The second section of this article deals with user and gratification theory which makes the subject to seek the cyber world. A short survey on students dependence on internet is being analyzed with the help of Anthony Giddon's Structuration Theory.

The third segment of this article talks about the impact of mediatisation and media market that leverages upon the data pooling through the surveillance of individuals.

UNDERSTANDING THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE AGE OF CYBER MEDIA

Bourdieu – The habitus, field and Power

Foucault sees power as omnipresent and beyond agency or structure, Bourdieu sees power as culturally and symbolically created, and constantly re-legitimized through an interplay of agency and structure. Bourdieu argues that the idea of 'habitus' is formed through the socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking (Lechte 2017: 69). According to him 'habitus' is 'the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them' (Wacquant 2005: 316, cited in Navarro 2006: 16). Habitus is rather constructed by the society. The difference between one class to another in the society can be understood as the habitus, where in it depends upon the variables that are exists in the society due to the faculty developed by ones occupation, economic relevance, living circumstances that reflects in ones taste for music, food making him elite and non-elite. He says according to ones own experience this patterns are capable of changing over the time. Habitus 'is not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period' (Navarro 2006: 16)

The contemporary world is talking about the convergence of media. McLuhan's concept of "global village" had reached another level where in the world of communication is increasingly being converged so that it can be accessed through a single medium of over the top nature, be it a smart watch, or a mobile (McLuhan 2018). The individual feels much more powerful when this whole lot of information can be accessed by him/her.

What attracts people towards the cyber media is the notion of empowerment they attain while accessing through the websites. The personal information of a Television Star, the rating information and menu card of the restaurant in the vicinity can easily be accessed through the cyber media. A family member or a tutor of an educational institution have their own boundaries and areas of knowledge which can be shared with an adolescent. The windows of the cyber world swings according to your one's streaks. The touch of the finger on the LED screen is guided by the mind in a determined individual whereas it is guided by the heart for a perplexed adolescent boy or girl. The paradox of an authority over the viewership of the virtual world makes them obsessed with the cyber media.

The virtual world is available for the habitus of all sorts. There is a social exchange that happens between these habitus which is mostly an event of knowledge exchange. On the other hand the cyber world it is not always sought for the sake of knowledge exchange. When

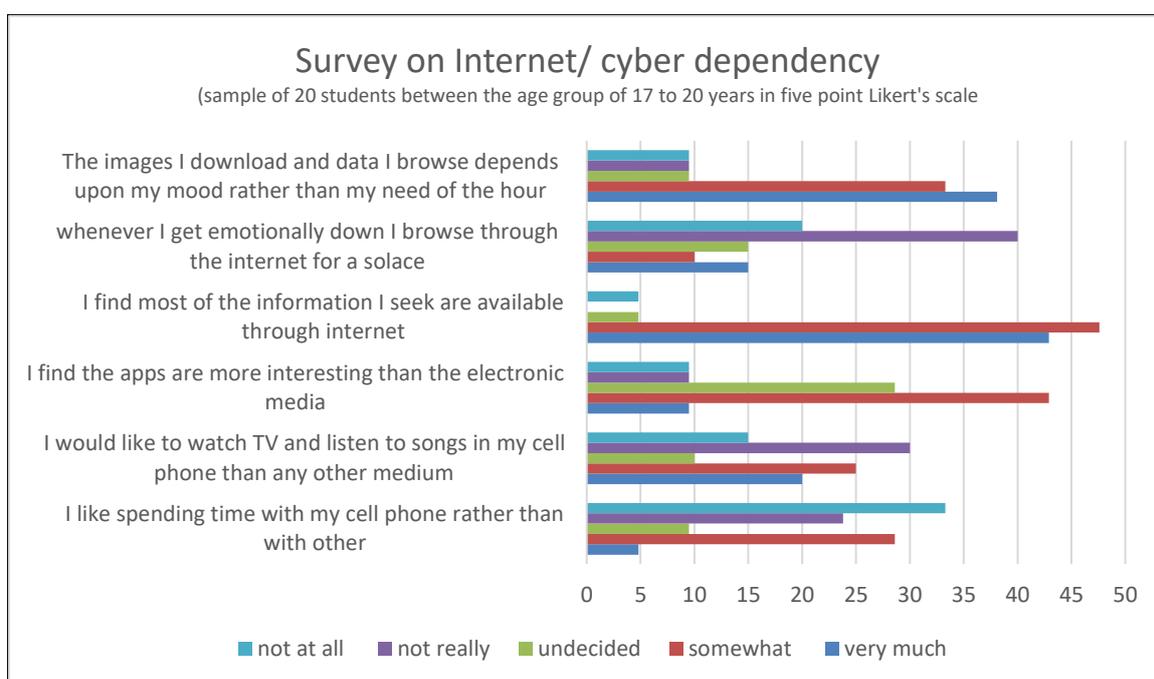
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there is a conscious search there is also layers of unconscious wandering over the cyber scape by the viewer or the client. Games like blue whale and PubG are based on these sub-conscious notions.

Then there comes a question, what are the limits of this attraction? Does every move on the net happen with rationality or a logic? Emmanuel Levinas talks about the non-intentional consciousness as against Husserl's intentional consciousness. To Husserl, when thought is getting absorbed in what one thinks with consciousness of being, there the horizons of being gets blurred. In otherwords the revival of the being of the entity is being forgotten in the reflection of a conscious thought. In the process of knowing the thought focuses on the thinkable which can also be called as the *being*. But then the thinking about the *being* in itself is not capable of retrieving the knowledge about self. There is an exteriority of the self which can be called as an otherness. While the intriquer might learn about the interiors of the self the other otherness of the self is recollected in immanence. According to Levinas knowledge is intentionally act and will(Levinas 1998:139). The otherness which lie in the exterior cannot be mapped in to the process of logical thinking that seeks for pure knowledge. Instead it makes the habitus to loiter the cyber world in its unconscious.

Understanding behavioral patterns of the cyber space user through the uses and gratification theory

Uses and gratification theory analyses the needs of the audience and their respective choice of media. As we are familiar with McLuhan's theory "medium is the message". He argued that at the advent of the electronic media it was an extension of our central nervous system. Now the cyber media has become an extension of man's body without which he or she wouldn't be able to survive. From taking notes in the class room to finding a place near your residence for everything cyber intelligence is sought. A sample of 20 students between the age group of 17 years to 20 years was taken to analyze their dependency on cyber space as well the nature of their dependency the following results were obtained using the five point Likert's scale:



Seven questions were asked to the students on the basis of their need for using the internet. Wherein a large number of students had accepted that the images they download and data I

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browse depends upon their mood rather than the need of the hour. This proves that the shift in the focus of the students and their responses to the virtual image is basically related to their mood swings where in the mood swings are the psychological factors controlled by their environment and relationships with others. The behavioral changes in the students can be understood using Thomas Giddens structuration theory. Giddens over comes the debate between those who hold the human action is caused by outside forces and those who advocate the intentionality of the human action (Little John, Foss 2010: 294). He states that through human action various social systems are produced. The rules laid by systems these play an important role in turn in creating structures “like relational expectations, group roles and norms, communication networks and the societal institutions both affect and are affected by the social action”. The students do not believe that most of the information they need can be availed through the internet. But at the same time they are dependent on the net as an emotional support bringing images to their door steps as per their mood swings. As per the recent research apart from the cognitive development and hormonal changes the young adult’s experience of day-to-day emotional lives, their experience of negative emotions, their emotional competencies, as well as the relation of emotion to identity in adolescence¹ (Rosenblum, Gianine D. Lewis, Michael 2019:269–289) are capable of influencing his/her growth. While the emergence of social-cyberspace had eased the relationships between one another, the virtual space had literally distanced the youth from his/her environment resulting in reduction of empathy towards others while seeking one’s own identity through the images of the self. Currently the national suicide rate is 11.2 per lakh, whereas all the southern states have more than 16. It was also observed that the maximum number of suicides occurred between 15 and 29 years of age. The extensive use of cell phones and peer pressures obtained through the messages play an important role in the above.

CONCLUSION

The mediatisation plays an important role in the lives of youngsters. Data pooling and cyber intelligence play a crucial role in the surveillance of individuals through the net. The growing thread in cyber security and internet scams create an eternal threat to privacy. On the other hand the addiction to the virtual cyber space by the GenZ results in distraction and proves counterproductive especially when their latent desires of the labyrinth are indirectly touched by the virtual space. There is a need for understanding the cyber technology and the relative changes in the psychological behavior of our future citizens.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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