

Social Media-A Default Anarchist?

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Abstract

Communication has always been integral to civilization- originating with sign language moving towards both oral and written to its amazing propagation in the digital era. Social Media communications have added dynamism to communication breaking all the barriers of distance and culture. The generation of users did not have a blueprint to follow, with no knowledge of the depth of Social Media, all delved into it. The purpose of the conceptual paper is to decode the structure of Social Media as it is and create awareness. The extensive study of the phenomenon through published books, research papers, and articles is undertaken to arrive at meaningful nodes or discussion points and suggestions thereof. Social Media is beyond geographical boundaries and across cultures, and hence there is no easy way to define rules, but its the need of the hour. The findings of the detailed study entail that Social Media addiction is real and not just a hoax. The gadgets were created with the intent to make the user overuse them. The whole process applies science (the likes of dopamine, melatonin) (Bono, 2018) and psychology (e.g., random feedback, likes, (Atler, 2017) loss aversion (Ariely, 2008) (Kahneman, 2011), norm theory (Lanier, 2018), Choice and Free, (Ariely, 2008)). The business model of Social Media companies, which aims to earn through behavioral modification (Lanier, 2018), has a crucial role to play in their making the medium addictive. The repercussions of the user's mental and physical health are immense. The lack of empathy is creating a threat to democracy, as individual users are getting different feeds. This lack of uniform information is negating the Theory of Mind (Lanier, 2018). The paper is positioned as a conceptual paper. It is aimed for use by the policymakers and academicians to create awareness around the subject and thereby look at the solutions for the same. Creating awareness would ensure that Social Media companies take corrective measures. The ethics around the usage of Social Media need the research community to work in sync with Social Media companies and developing protocols for a better society.

Keywords

Social Media, Facebook, Instagram, Addiction, CAGE, Dopamine, Likes, and Happiness.

1. Introduction

Social Media has changed the way people - live, socialize, and share. It is a socially networked life. The niche it has acquired in the life of people is evident from the fact that each visiting card has a person's social networking handles on it. The gamut of Social Media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp has so many advantages associated with it, that there is no escape. Thereby, not being on a social networking site is considered queer. Social Media seems to have disrupted life, and many instances support this. Therefore, the article proposes to study the phenomena in-depth and develop ethics and protocol around it.

As discussed above, the paper believes that Social Media usage is not a choice but a compulsion now. Various Social Media platforms are going stable influencing life in both a positive and negative way.

The paper discusses various aspects of Social Media and the attention deficit economy (Odell, 2019). Social networking is a way of life, which needs more understanding than it has at present. The truth about the connectedness, the science behind it, the usage pattern, and the effects it has on mental and physical well-being are all studied in-depth in this paper.

The paper establishes that Social Media usage is addictive. This part where the paper sets the connection between mobile addiction and Social Media dependency so that the two are used interchangeably.

In the next section, the paper discusses Social Media addiction as a behavioral addiction, wherein the "Cue" (Duhigg, 2012) i.e., the smartphone, cannot be ignored or abandoned entirely. The person addicted to alcohol is advised to stay away from the 'Pubs'/Breweries or to avoid going to late-night parties. Now, in case of behavioral addiction to Social Media is established, it is impossible to keep the vehicle carrying Social Media, i.e., the smartphone, at bay.

"Nomophobia," i.e., the fear of missing or no mobile, is a real phenomenon, and it affects most of the users, not necessarily the addicted

ones. So, the carrier of the addictive substance (Smartphone and Social Media apps) used to access personal or work-related messages, e-mails, calls, etc., cannot be shunned.

To live in the real world and practice somehow makes it imperative to use the smartphone, so how do we de-addict?

Another aspect that requires focus is the “suppression” does not work. Various social scientists have proved it with many pieces of research in the field. The results were always the same. Whenever the respondents were instructed not to think about a “polar bear” (Jeff, 2014), the respondents could not stop thinking about it and ended up thinking more about it. (discussed in detail, later in the paper)

Another critical factor in understanding Social Media addiction is that whether the “addiction” is the side-effect the Social Media companies were not aware of? Sadly the answer is “No.” Not only is the addictive pattern known to Social Media, but these apps were created and tested to make the medium or apps addictive. The prototypes that are not addictive enough are worked upon to make them addictive.

The miracle website (Bono, 2018) Facebook that was supposed to keep us connected and happy, has turned out to be the opposite. In 2008, a sample of the students was studied and the research revealed that they felt worse off after using the website. The most ironic finding was the “feeling of unconnectedness” reported by the students, from the website which was thriving on the premise of making the world a smaller and a connected place. Besides, it implied that Facebook usage was associated with lower self-esteem, less optimism, less sleep, more homesickness, and less motivation. The claim and the result in itself contradictory. The dimensions of Social Media are extensive and need a separate line of study.

2. Need for the Study

Adam Atler (2017) in his book, *Irresistible*, claims that school child (8-18 years) spends a third of her sleeping, one third at school and one third engrossed in new media (smartphones, tablets, TV). Is it bad? In 2012, an experiment proved that they were taking a toll on humans (quality of life). Since the phenomenon is new, its impact on the avid users might be evident when it is too late.

Along with the symptoms and criteria prominent in smartphone addiction, there are additional reasons why studying the phenomenon is essential. Though Internet Gaming Disorder has been considered a disorder now included in DSM-5, neither Internet Addiction nor Smartphone addiction (APA, 2013). The inclusion of internet gaming shows that technological addictions are of interest to the mental health practitioners' community. Smartphones are relatively new technologies and clubbed with Internet addiction; it is debated whether to perceive the two as disorders. It should be prudent to include smartphone addiction as a mental disorder that requires further study since there has been an explosion of smartphone usage in recent years. (Fox & Rainie [2014]).

3. Objectives of the Study

The paper proposes to elaborate on the basic structure of Social Media. Starting with Why (Sinek, 2011) is the inspiration to understand and create awareness about the phenomenon i.e., to figure

- a. Why, i.e., the reason for the creation of Social Media and its addiction?
- b. How is Social Media impacting its users and society?

4. Research Methodology

The paper is positioned as a conceptual paper with no numeric data attached to it. Conceptual papers are not required to provide empirical data (Glison and Goldberg, 2015), but the aim is to provide an integration of literature, to aid in creating integrated frameworks, add value to the existing body, identifying gaps and guide further queries in the field. In this paper, the concepts from psychology, business management, marketing practices, and academics have been integrated. MacInnis, 2011 supports the role of understanding patterns connections and accepts the subjective interpretation of thinking. The model emphasizes on conceptual papers on identifying, revising, delineating, summarizing, differentiating, and integrating.

In this paper, *summarization, is the focus. The paper takes stock of the concept of Social Media addiction, right from where it started, to where it is evolving to. Focussing on digesting, recapping, and reducing the manageable takeaways.*

The paper is presented in the form of the following outflow of information from the books and research papers, studied and analyzed. The various outcomes of the excessive usage of Social Media are enumerated by in-depth study and analyzing the same. The framework is intended to serve the understanding of Social Media addiction, the reasons, and implications, thereof, by studying the conceptual papers from the field of psychology and marketing.

5. Discussion

The paper is discussed mainly in three parts to elaborate on the two defined objectives. The first part establishes that the smartphone and Social Media addiction can be addressed as interchangeable terms. The two are inter-twinned, addicted to one medium in most cases means, addicted to the other. The next part emphasizes on decoding Social Media Addiction as a real phenomenon with the aid of science (CAGE, Dopamine, Melatonin, Sleep) and psychology (Feedback, Suppression, Loss Aversion (FOMO), Likes).

The last part of the study discusses the effect of Social Media overuse on the user and the society with a specific focus on Physical manifestations and Emotional and Psychological ones. Physical manifestations include lack of sleep and its impact and Sitting repercussions. Emotional and Psychological ones include Lack of Empathy, Comparison, Likes, Unhappiness, Broken Attention Syndrome (Sharma, 2019), and Anxiety.

5.1 Smartphone Addiction and Social Media Addiction

Smartphones are the tech-devices that have become the extension of our body. It has become an amalgamation of all that we do or want to do in our life. The users start their day by waking up by the alarm beeping, weather, calendar, emails implying the ways to make the day productive. Also, Social Media apps/chat apps give us the dose of gossip that would otherwise require you to go out with friends, clicking and posting pictures, practically for everything.

Without access to the phone, the fear of missing out (FOMO) grips people. Another concern of not being able to find the phone (Nomophobia, i.e., no mobile phone phobia) is a reality. “Nomophobia” is apparent by a familiar sight of people searching their pockets for their smartphone while they are talking on it. In 2008, a study by the UK Post office used the term Nomophobia for

the first time, investigating anxieties mobile phone users suffer (Its SecurEnvoy? 2012).

A study by Dmitri in 2015-16, was done to shorten the Estonian Smartphone Addiction Proneness Scale. The analysis was done by studying approximately 800 people and applying factor analysis, correlation, t-tests established that all of the related addictions viz., smartphone, Social Media use, and Internet share similar processes and effects.

Various researchers have studied the usage pattern of smartphones depicting as to what are the main activities undertaken on the smartphone? This information is of interest to the marketers and the researchers who aim to analyze the results of the overuse of smartphones.

In a study by Flurry Analytics (2015), time spent on Messaging and Social Media usage which was very high, rose exponentially (394%) in 2015-16, and the underlying reason of the growth of mobile phone usage (69%). Commutainment (communication and entertainment combined) are the reasons for this hike; it also includes the voice and video calling applications. The growth in news and magazine sections and the Music, Media, and Entertainment, was depicted as negative and slow respectively, implying that Messaging and Social category has absorbed the media and news industry, as well.

According to Nielsen data, the study of U.S. smartphone users revealed that the usage of news apps has been tipped by Social Media apps by more than 14 times more minutes. Facebook mobile users spend more than 15 hours a month on mobile usage.

Nearly 40 percent of the users claim that they use Social Media apps most often on their smartphones, followed by Gaming and Communication apps.

There tend to be substantial differences between ‘self-reported’ estimates of behavior and actual measures of behavior,” said Dr. Sheana Ahlqvist (Panko, 2018), lead UX researcher at PhD Insights, a user research agency. The users underestimate their app usage because they find it challenging to analyze the number of times they use an app, so they try and give an answer that should be the case, rather than the reality.

The underestimate is further evidenced by a report by Apple, that an average smartphone user compulsively check in the phone around 80 times per day. Kleiner Perkins report estimated the number at 150 times per day. So the average is much higher than being reported by people.

Amongst the Social Media apps used, Facebook leads the way, followed by YouTube, FB messenger, WhatsApp, and Instagram.

The above discussion creates a link and a valid one which relates to smartphone usage as a deterrent, and within smartphones, Social Media apps are the most used. Hence the addictive devices are aiding in increasing the usage of another addictive phenomenon called Social Media.

The subsequent chapters would decipher what makes the medium additive, how does it affect the people? What is the problem with the effect? How can the behavior be checked?

5.2 Is Social Media Addiction Real?

If Yes, how is it any different from regular addiction?

In the previous section, we established the fact that Smartphone and Social Media addiction can be categorized as one. So the two terms may be used interchangeably in the report, with mainly SM Addiction as the dominant one. There is now a plethora of studies trying to define where the addiction is a reality or not.

5.2.1 Concept of Cage

In the words of Dr. Vipul Rastogi, Senior Neuro Psychiatrist at Medanta Medicity Gurugram, the Social Media Addiction is a reality in scientific terms as it fits in the criteria of “CAGE. “C” in CAGE is that people around you or you have felt the need to cut down on the usage of it. “A” is for annoying people with the overuse of it. “G” implying the feeling of guilt of overusing Social Media and “E” if it is being used as an “eye-opener”, doing it, or the urge to use it first thing in the morning. The same “CAGE” principle applies to alcohol, cigarettes, etc.

So in this paper, we shall study and refer to excess usage of Social Media as a behavioral addiction.

The problem is that electronic media or the smartphone is not something without which life today is sustainable. Now with behavioral addiction to Social Media, the scenario is different. As a student, the assignments are shared online, as an employee or an employer, the business is conducted through the smart device, people get information about the momentous events like interviews or auditions through the sharing on Social Media. Therefore, we cannot expect a dependent user, to go cold turkey on Social Media. Some alternatives have to be suggested.

So how it should be viewed has been set up nicely by ReStart (Atler, 2017). ReStart (world's first gaming and internet addiction treatment center) recognizes that it differs from substance addiction because you cannot return to the real world without ever going online. It does not even call itself a de-addiction center but instead “Centre for Digital Technology Sustainability.” It is called “Retreat” and not a treatment center. It teaches patients to use the internet “sustainably,” rather than encouraging them to avoid it altogether.

A complete understanding of the Social Media Addiction is required to suggest ways to overcome this Behavioural Addiction (BA). It is done in detail around the following pointers, which helps establish what causes this BA.

5.2.2 Social Media a thought-out Side-effect?

Is SM addiction a side effect that Smartphone and Social Media companies were not aware of?

Sadly, the answer is ‘No’.

5.2.2 (a) The Science behind it

Not only is the addictive pattern known to the Smartphone and Social Media companies, but the same was created and tested to be made addictive before launching them. The work on making them addictive continues.

As is said in the case of drug lords, “Never get high on your own supply”. It is a known fact that Steve Jobs and other curators of technology, never allowed their kids to use the gadgets that helped them earn millions. The relation between “blue light” and sleep deprivation, sleep deprivation and health, and the masterstroke of “random feedback” all need specific focus.

Technology is not bad; it is good, it keeps us connected, and we can all connect for a cause or fun. But if the same was created to addict you to the usage, it cannot be right.

The biological drivers of Social Media addiction are Dopamine release and Suppression of Melatonin release.

- **Dopamine:** Dopamine is an organic chemical that functions both as a hormone and a feel-good neurotransmitter. Dopamine is sometimes referred to as a chemical messenger as it transmits messages between nerve cells. The body releases it when we eat the food we like or indulge in activities we enjoy. In laboratory experiments, rats pressed the lever again and again for food, due to dopamine. And the urge to seek more dopamine increases in people who produce lower levels. Hitting the refresh button or accessing the smartphone, again and again, is for dopamine. Not using the phone decreases the release of dopamine, and the moment there is a notification, the release of dopamine increases. We are thereby creating a pattern of excess use.

- **Melatonin:** Our brain waves need to slow down for us to sleep. It is a common practice to use a smartphone before sleeping (Shivani, 2015) and the University of Bergen (Tim, 2019) in Norway found that more than 75 percent of the users use mobiles to play games, surf the web, or text after getting into bed to sleep. The more they use mobile in bed, the more pronounced are insomnia and daytime sleepiness. Is the user to be blamed for the same? Not really, it is the fact that the blue light emitting from the devices hits the back of our eyes, and the pineal gland in the brain stops producing “Melatonin.” Melatonin, a hormone the brain secretes to make us feel tired, sleepy. Lesser melatonin secretion does not let allow the brain to slow down, and we would keep tapping on various apps and not sleep. (The repercussions of sleep deprivation is discussed later in the study). One of the pioneer studies by Professor Hyung Suk Seo (Adam, 2019) presented at the 103rd Scientific Assembly, there has been a correlation developed between smartphone addiction and neurochemical imbalances in the brain. (Professor Seo is a professor at Korea University in Seoul). Researchers used a particular type of MRI to measure the brain’s chemical composition while the subject used the smartphone. The results showed significantly higher levels of Depression, Anxiety, Impulsivity, and Insomnia.

5.2.2 (b) Psychology behind Social Media Overuse

i. Random Feedback

The initial version of Facebook did not have the “like” button, the masterstroke of Random feedback. Michael Zeiler (Atler, 2017), in 1971 experimented on pigeons and concluded that their brains released more dopamine when there was an unexpected reward as opposed to when it was predictable. Facebook in 2008, unleashed an experiment on millions of humans

and created a deceptively simple feature called “Likes”. Earlier, you wondered what people thought about your posts; now, you get real-time feedback. And also sometimes you get likes and sometimes you do not. Human beings always look to decipher patterns and hence keep coming back (in this case, keep posting). This pattern-seeking behavior is the driver of gaming addiction. The massive success of Instagram also owes its success to Random feedbacks.

ii. Explaining “Likes”

Users were gambling with feedback every time they shared a photo, a web-link, or a status update. When we get “No likes”-it is privately painful and also public condemnation. Feedback isn't guaranteed, so like pigeons in the Zeiler experiment, we will keep pecking. Something about Zeiler's experiment, The pigeon brains were releasing far more dopamine when the reward was unexpected than when it was predictable. Zeiler had documented an essential fact about positive feedback: that less is often more. His pigeons were drawn to the mystery of mixed feedback just as humans are attracted to the uncertainty of gambling, and for our study, the variable number of “likes” we may or may not get.

iii. Repression

Another issue with the de-addiction is that “Repression” would not work. It never does. To further emphasize this, unprotected sex is more frequent in conservative states of the United States of America. So, instructing the user not to use Social Media would not work. Therefore it is good to try and create a Nudge. The way out is to replace bad routines (excess SM usage) with good ones.

Requesting people not to use Social Media would make them want to use it more. Xianchi Dai and Ayelet Fishback at the University of Chicago asked students in HongKong to abstain from using FB for three days. With each passing day, they issued it more and so inferred that they liked it more, and wanted to use it more often. But the students who used some other Social Media sites as substitutes were immune to this effect-because they had something else to replace it. (Adam, 2017)

iv. Cashing in on FOMO

“Fear of Missing Out” is not new. As explained in the paper by Dr. Nick Hobson, (Nock, 2018) it was there when the office colleagues went out for dinner, and you had to stay back home, but the same has increased in magnitude because on Social Media the event cannot be ignored, even if one tried.

The explanation of the phenomena by Daniel Kahneman in his book, “Thinking Fast and Slow”, while explaining the human need of “Loss Aversion.” The concept of Loss Aversion is that people are more averse to lose than they are excited about the profit. There have been arguments talking about NASMO i.e., the Necessity of sometimes Missing Out (Odell, 2019). Alternatively, the fear of missing out is so intense that people fear to exit a small WhatsApp group, because they feel that there would be something that they will miss out; to focus on what they would gain, is against the typical human nature.

Being in the present, interacting face-to-face with friends and family, which would give them a better understanding of each other. When they are connected with less number of people, it would narrow their circle of comparison.(explained in detail in the next part, “Comparison is the thief of joy”) All this leads to an

increase in the happiness index. Implying that we gain a lot but the “loss aversion” makes people stay put, though anxious and upset, would relent to “FOMO.”

5.3. How does SM Addiction affect People and Society?

The fabric of the world around us has changed. The fake news is a problem, but the bigger problem is that the users believe it. The happiness that would have resulted in us staying connected all the time and the flow of information would have made us knowledgeable but the reverse is true.

The section is discussed in two parts, the Physical Manifestation of overuse and the Psychological Manifestation of overuse.

5.3.1. Physical Manifestations of SM Overuse

5.3.1. (a) Sleep

Sleep is a contentious issue. How many hours of sleep are required or are recommended, all have become debatable. The choose 2 experiment (Ariely, 2008), wherein the students are asked to choose any two out of the three options given viz., good grades, enough sleep, and social life. Invariably, the students left out “enough sleep,” calling it the most obvious choice. Some even called “sleep a waste of time.”

The science of sleep is different, the phrase, “Sleep on it,” and you might get clarity is based on our physiology. The seahorse-shaped structure in the brain called the hippocampus (Ariely, 2008) plays a critical role in the creation and storage of memories. And hippocampus works best when we are sleeping. Research strongly suggests that sleep, which constitutes about a third of our lives, is crucial for learning and forming long-term memories.

So not getting enough sleep gets counterproductive.

Washington University (Tim, 2018) researchers conducted study with a Group 1 and Group 2, group 1 arrived in the lab at 9 am for the first session to go through a list of syllables that appeared individually,

and then returned at 9 pm to recall as many syllables as they could. Group 2, did the reverse, they were shown a list at 9 pm and had to retrieve it from their memory at 9 am the next day. Group 2's 12 hours were separated by sleep, whereas group 1's with routine activities. Group 2 retrieved 46% more than group 1.

The second aspect is that the smartphone, the iPad, or most other gadgets are built to deprive the user of sleep. Too strong a statement? But the science says otherwise, To sleep, we need to help our brain waves slow down.

- Using Mobile before sleeping is a universal norm: the University of Bergen in Norway found that more than 75% of the users use mobiles to play games, surf the web, or text after getting into bed to sleep.
- The more they use mobile in bed, the more pronounced are insomnia and daytime sleepiness.

Why is sleep deprivation a problem?

Most of the modern age ailments are a result of chronic sleep deprivation, Dr Vipul Rastogi, Neuropsychiatrist, Medanta, Gurugram. Sleep deprivation may lead to weight gain, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, stroke, and many more modern-day disease.

Over time, lack of sleep and sleep disorders can contribute to the symptoms of depression. In 2005, Sleep in America poll, the pre-existing condition of depression or anxiety was likely to get less sleep (less than 6 hours). The most common sleep disorder, insomnia, has the most definite link to depression. (Camille, 2014)

5.3.1. (b) Sitting

“Sitting is the new smoking” is a statement we hear more often now than we ever did before. The working hours, studying hours, watching television, commuting to the workplace, and back, and now another reason to sit in smartphone usage. The hours spent on SM usage are increasing every day, and we do most of it while sitting. In 2012, Dr. Martha Grogan (Bill, 2015), a cardiologist at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, stated that “For people who sit most of the day, their risk of heart attack is about the same as smoking.”

- “We are sitting ourselves to death.”

“Today, our bodies are breaking down from obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, depression, and the cascade of health ills and everyday malaise that come from what scientists have named sitting disease.”

~ *James Levine, MD, PhD*

5.3.1. Physical Manifestations of SM Overuse

5.3.2. (a) Comparison

“Comparison is the thief of joy” said Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt, the 26th president of the United States. On Social Media, that is the most frequented emotion that the user experiences. The race on SM is about the best of everything; best marriage, best vacation, best friends, best parties, best weddings, i.e., nothing but the best and the perfect. The effect on the others is what it may or may not be intended to be- making them feel low and belittle.

Happiness

$$\text{Happiness} = \frac{\text{What we Have}}{\text{What we Want}}$$

This equation is certainly not a new thought; there is no ‘rocket science,’ but the most obvious things sometimes need special attention. The logic says, if the numerator is more than the denominator, the result is the desired increase, in this case, “Happiness”. “What we have” is dependent on a lot of external factors like money,

health, etc. What seems feasible is decreasing the denominator, which in this case is “what we want”. Arguably, it should be more within our control. “Comparison” is the trouble creator here. Comparison with

- the fitness level or skin color of a movie star (her/his posts may be photoshopped, but that is what we see, (News18lifestyle, 2020),
- holidays pictures of your close friends or colleagues (the reality might be different, but then the photos are perfect, so our denominator increases).
- a new luxurious car your friend/relative just bought and posted (even without Social Media this information would flow to us, but our circle of comparison has increased manifold, from 10 real-life friends and say 40 family members to compare our lives to, we have increased it to thousands).

When the factors increase our denominator, “Happiness” comes down

- The principle of Social Comparison, as discussed by Sam Polk (Atler, 2017) describes how social comparison affects our happiness. If we are making \$40k, we can be happy or sad. \$40 K remains the same, but it will make you happy or sad based on what others make.
 - The feeling of Relative Deprivation (for a school girl with 200 followers, her senior with 2000 is where happiness is.)

Since our world of deprivation has expanded, there is a provision to stay in the “comparison rut” forever.

The comparison is with ourselves as well. “Beamon-esque” can explain the concept better. Robert Beamon set an excellent record in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games in the long jump after faltering in the qualifiers, jumped so well that there was no suitable measuring tape in the stadium. “Beamon-esque” term coined to signify an otherworldly achievement that dwarfs its predecessors and even what you can achieve shortly.

Jeniffer Aniston, on her debut on Instagram, in one hour, Aniston's page had attracted more than 116,000 followers (Guardian, 2019), now for her to keep up to it is not an easy thing to achieve. So every time a post gathers good or substantial likes, the next post has to beat the earlier one; otherwise, it is no fun.

The truth is that the decisions taken privately are the real ones, where the fear of being judged is not there. Social interactions are online or offline. The experiment conducted and shared in the book *Predictably Irrational* (Ariely, 2008) the subjects were observed placing orders for the drink to have when with peers and when asked privately. The realization dawned that they did not realize they were not true to themselves when announcing aloud what they wanted to drink. The direct implications for Social Media postings. We start leading a life which might well be appreciated by others, without even realizing how we want it to be.

5.3.2. (b) Likes: What do "Likes" mean?

"Likes" do not necessarily mean that we are appreciated. It might mean a lot of online social constructs, the predominant one being "you liked my post, I am returning the favor." The race to "likes" is a fake appreciation a standard user is counting on. (In the case of celebrities, "likes" do mean appreciation and in common parlance also, it might mean appreciation sometimes.)

Creative "Fake" vs. "Real" Fake

"Fake" is a word we hear commonly now; the discussion around the "perfect" life circumvents the "fake". The attempt to portray what is not true is "fake." Buying a car, when you cannot afford it but because your friends (online/fake) have bought one and got "likes" for it, is artificial life. We can learn to manage the creative fake i.e., the fake we are creating around us with the "perfect "baggage," but the "real fake" is the online friends or followers who are not

real people but created identities to make you seem popular. Fake people have no reason. Also, the real fake like Alexa, Siri, Cortana, is that it!

Unfortunately, these are the two categories; we are aware, but reviews posted may be from artificial people, “likes” and followers and retweets from artificial people. In 2018, the rate of the first 25000 fake followers was \$225. These counterfeit people have an industry dedicated to them. (Lanier, 2018)

How can we fight an army of people who do not exist? Have they just been created to up the likes and followers to an unattainable level?

Competition with fake people would increase the denominator (of happiness) beyond repair and unhappiness rise.

5.3.2.(c) Unhappiness

Studies found a correlation between Social Media use and unhappiness, but was the reverse also correct?

The University of Michigan and the University of Leuven in Belgium (University of Michigan, 2013), developed a study with 82 young adults for two weeks. All of them had smartphones, and Facebook accounts. They were sent text messages at intervals and asked about their happiness at that moment. How much had they been using FB? They used experience-sampling to measure how people think, feel, and behave every moment in their daily lives. This information was taken at random times five times a day for weeks.

The study concluded that as the usage increased, the worse the user felt. The authors also asked people to rate their level of life satisfaction at the start and end of the study. Similar results, conveying that the participants felt less satisfied with their lives, the more they used Facebook.

When they were using FB more, they felt unhappy and not the other way round. (Lanier, 2018). In the meta-analysis study (Cheng, 2014) the study across 31 nations revealed that the prevalence rate of Internet Addiction across world regions. The study concluded that the Internet Addiction (IA) prevalence is inversely associated with the quality of life, as reflected by both subjective (life satisfaction) and objective (quality of environmental conditions) indicators.

It is said that CIA/NASA files can be leaked, but FB and Google's algorithm "no way!!". It is kept protected. People have not been able to access it, though they have tried hard. So, a stranger, Mark Zuckerberg is controlling us with FB, Insta, and Whatsapp. So much power vested with one person has never been the case and monopolies have never been good.

4.3.2. (d) Lack of Empathy

SM addiction is real and is not a by-product but an intentional move by smartphone and Social Media companies. It is imperative to discuss that it isn't an evil intention that has given rise to the addictive media or devices. The Business Model of behavioral modification is to be blamed for the present chaos.

To explain it further, we are not paying the Social Media companies any money to be on the platform to connect and share our lives with our online friends and family. Facebook is a giant with the ownership of WhatsApp, Instagram, FB messenger, and Facebook itself and is one of the most substantial monopolies probably in history. Mark Zuckerberg is a powerful man, not because users are paying him; the users are not even considered its customers. So, who are the customers?

Its business model is revenue earning through advertising. Advertising is one-on-one in the Facebook regime and is done to perfection. With the data of the world (a little exaggeration) at its disposal, Facebook not only targets the customers with the products or services, referred to as advertising, but has upgraded itself into manipulating the behavior of the users. Facebook came out and boasted that they could manipulate the users into feeling sad or happy by changing or managing their feeds. Also, the Donald Trump victory in 2016 elections had a lot to do with the speed of fake news against Hilary Clinton, and even the movement “Black lives matter,” indirectly kept the black voters away from voting and contributed heavily to Trump’s victory. Had Hilary hired FB to manage its campaign, who can say what the result would have been!

The Illusion of Truth (Emily, 2019) is created by the heavily dependent strategy of Behavioural Modification Addiction, i.e., “A reliable way to make people believe is frequent repetition because familiarity is not easily distinguished from truth”. The Social Media page or WhatsApp shows the user the same message so many times that without even realizing it, the user starts believing it to be true.

Norm Theory is another tool being used to manipulate behavior. Norm theory states that “Strange things when they happen frequently are accepted as Normal”. We meet a close friend at an airport of a foreign land, we are surprised, next month we see the same friend at another unrelated place, the unbelievable nature of the situation decreases, and it is considered normal.

Marketers and politicians have always exploited the illusion of Truth and the Norm theory. The exposure of the user to the media is 24/7, and their task has become more accessible. This new Business model is striking Democracies in an unfamiliar and undesirable

way. In countries besides the United States, like Turkey, India, the challenges are arising as now behavior modification has become the forte of the SM giant/s.

Effect of Secretly using the Behaviour Modification Tools

The problem with the business model of behavioral modification is that the user is not aware of it. It is similar to not seeking permission before trying to hypnotize the user. It is unlike a psychological experiment, where you agree to be tested.

This Behavioural Modification has been made possible by the “Customization” virtue of the world wide web. In ideal circumstances, the user signs up for certain features, like customization of news app, and is happy to receive the feeds based on his/her preferences. The user is now shown the feeds/advertisements/product suggestions even without asking for it.

“Artificial intelligence” and “data mining and analysis” have made it possible. If the user watches a particular video on YouTube, he would be shown suggestions similar to that one. (watching a video that supports the Government, would stream related videos and *vice versa*)

The problem is the propagation of “lack of empathy”.

Each user feed is different, so when debating on a particular topic, the two have no commonality. Compare it to the era of radio, television, the whole city or nation would watch one piece of news or a particular series on Television. The difference of opinion would exist, but people would know where the other person is coming. Now that line has been blurred beyond recognition.

“Lack of empathy” is giving way to “cyberbullying,” which again is a reality. Bullying has existed since time immemorial; the difference is that in the case of “cyberbullying,” the opportunity to bully is 24/7.

Cyberbullying is abuse and mistreatment (verbal and non-action) of someone vulnerable (anyone and everyone online, connected) by someone more robust, more powerful, etc. (this is anonymity and the crowd). Unless you keep away the device, the chances of being bullied at 4 am are as high as noon.

India had the highest rate of cyberbullying (Intel Security, 2015). Social Media is the medium where cyberbullying is prevalent. The interactions on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter; or SMS (Short Message Service); Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps, and Social Media messaging features) and Email.

It is not only rude that constitutes cyberbullying. Zero likes aren't just privately painful but publicly humiliating as well. So, silence is a potent tool of cyberbullying (Atler, 2017).

5.3.2. (e) Anxiety or Work Burnout/Low productivity

Fasted modes of communication have increased the pace and productivity of the business, mainly supported by the Emails, which are proof of contract between the two parties communicating. It is an asset that is becoming a tool of anxiety for the user.

The concept of multitasking (Kahneman, 2011) is not a real concept. Multitasking doesn't exist; it's like an animator's flip-book. When we are performing one task, we temporarily stop the other. So, whether it is responding to e-mails while studying or to text messages while driving, the act of leaving one task midstream to pick up another is costly in terms of both time and accuracy. Switch Costs are high: The additional time it takes to reorient ourselves to the passage after each quick diversion. The email notifications, which should increase productivity, actually disrupt the flow of work.

It is far better to recognize separate tasks and to complete them one at a time. It takes up to 25 minutes to become re-immersed in an uninterrupted job (Atler, 2017). So that makes us live in an unproductive zone throughout the day or life!! When we come back to the task on hand, we will have to pay the switch cost, which is more than a few minutes away from work, the time to figure out where you left, also referred to as “Broken Attention Syndrome” (Sharma, 2019).

“Law of Least effort” (Kahneman, 2011) can best explain this behavior. The scenario of doing something meaningful and then immediately switching to Social Media or news app or chat window seems unproductive to the rational mind. But whoever said, we are rational (Ariely, 2008). The law of least effort applies to cognitive as well as physical exertion, implying that Laziness is in-built in the human system. So, while doing something that required deep thinking, the more comfortable option like Social Media account views, chatting, watching videos would be more attractive and hence give way to unproductive behaviors.

Here it would be apt to discuss the much known and accepted System 1 and System 2 approach of the Human mind working. The system which works automatically and quickly without much thought is categorized as system 1 and the effortful, analyzing section is system 2. (Kahneman, 2011) Social Media usage as a pattern seems to be the function of System 1, which cannot be turned off. So, looking at a picture of someone you know, you cannot but recognize the person. System 1 is responsible for it. If the analytical mind function, system two was operating, the excessive use of a smartphone or Social Media should be registered as addictive, and system 2 shall not allow the same. Still, as we see, system 2 is rarely in-charge.

Also, repetitive tasks, reduce the system 2 effort and shift to system 1 mode. According to an Apple report, the average iPhone user tends to unlock his or her device 80 times a day. So, a repetitive task like using a smartphone would encourage the use of System 1.

Again, when feeling overwhelmed or tired, again, System 1 takes over. (Morning person may use Social Media at night and vice versa). Evidence suggests that people are more likely to be influenced by empty persuasive messages, such as commercials when they are tired or depleted. Online shopping at night is more than during the day, is requiring the companies to set up night shifts in London.

System 1 has more influence on behavior when System 2 is busy (and it is said, it has a sweet tooth), so when doing something critical (like studying), the app notifications act like chocolate cake i.e. an irresistible temptation. So we go for broken focus syndrome and live in the low productivity zone.

The syndrome called “Inbox Zero” (Atler, 2017) is not a reality.

“Inbox Zero” “Inbox Zero”-Checking emails as soon as they come.

- 70 percent of the office emails are read within 6 secs of arriving
- people disrupt whatever they are doing to look and answer the email
- it takes 25 minutes to become re-immersed in an interrupted task.

(so if we open just 25 emails a day, we shall be able to spend no time in the zone of maximum productivity).

5.3.2. (f) Pictures

Clicking Pictures are no longer for treasuring the memories but only to post for “likes” and “comments”. Clicking pictures have become the experience. The scriptures of any religion or the spiritual preachings encourage everyone to be “mindful”, which entails living in the present moment. “Mindfulness” goes against the lifestyle of Social

Media and smartphone usage, where even food is clicked (and also posted online) before eating it, also if it implies that the ice cream will melt or the sizzler would be cold when the time to eat comes. Enjoying the sunset has taken a backseat to click the perfect shot of sunset (till the sun finally sets).

What is the harm of clicking pictures?

Deaths by selfies (also referred to as killfies by some researchers, 3.7) are a reality, a report in 2019 found that 259 people died between 2011 and 2017 while clicking selfies at dangerous locations. According to some reports, in 2015, more people died from taking selfies than shark attacks. Some enlisted selfie deaths of Social Media celebrities like, Gigi Wu, an experienced hiker from Taiwan, travel bloggers Meenakshi Moorthy and Vishnu Viswanath, and many more.

Disneyland, a dream destination of most of the kids, banned selfie sticks at its theme parks (3.8), citing safety as a concern. The Russian government (3.9) started the “safe selfies” movement by releasing a guide educating people on how not to die taking one, even banning it at various places.

Clicking pictures and excess checking of the phone has given rise to a phenomenon called Phubbing. An acronym for Phone+Snubbing=Phubbing (Mishra, 2014). Phubbing has proven to be harmful to the emotional well-being of people being phubbed. The research also reveals that people phub the people they love (like their partner or children) more than their colleagues or bosses during the meetings. It is an alarming finding since the relationships are heading southward because of missing “mindfulness”. Phubbing (Matsua, 2005) leads to lower quality of interpersonal interactions, and people are losing the art of face-to-face interaction, lower levels of empathic concern compared to those in the absence of a smartphone on the table.

6. Conclusion

The paper reviews the process of how some beneficial inventions (smartphone and Social Media) are creating chaos in the minds of people and hence impacting society at large. The reasons attributed to overuse are the misuse of the technology, but the study delves further into the science behind it. Dopamine release as a result of random feedback and suppression of Melatonin release by the blue light emitted by most of the digital devices. To counter this problem, an online learning company ByJu's has tied up with Lenovo to create the tab for learning with a less blue light so that the kids do not get addicted and stay awake at night. This would give their "hippocampus" enough rest to process the learning. ByJu's is an apt example of what the companies should act. The equivalent example is the situation that arose when made public that lead in paints is not good (Lanier, 2018). No one decided that they would never get their houses painted but waited for better options, in this case, lead-free paint. The situation with smartphones and Social Media apps is similar. No one is expected to shun the use altogether. By creating awareness, usage can decrease. These efforts would make the technology giants take note to promote users' physical and mental health. The simple act of showing only "likes" sans numbers is useful since the numbers lead to comparisons and a decrease in the happiness index.

From the users end, being "mindful" helps, replacing bad habits with good ones and so does the conscious effort of cutting down "multitasking"(which as discussed is not humanly possible) and many more.

The field is worthy of constant research, and the starting point is "Creating Awareness," and the paper can lead the way into that.

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