Disruptions in Direct Communication Post-COV-19 through the Usage of Virtual Communication and Social Networking Sites among Working Employees

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Abstract:- A considerable change has been noticed in the communication pattern among people using social networking sites. Using virtual media forms for expressing their hardest emotions rather than talking directly to the concerned individual. This shows the individual lacking their face-to-face communication ability, especially in a conflicting situation. The current study focused on employees with more than 2 years of experience in service and non-service sectors. The study used surveys with tele-interviews as a research methodology making the study qualitative by having one-one conversations. 31 working employees participated in the survey, where 11 members were interviewed through tele setup. The survey stated no substantial difference exists in the employees' direct communication patterns due to the use of social networking sites for socialization. In contrast, a significant relationship exists between Entertainment and face-to-face communication. In the interviews, through participants' disclosure, the use of social media is only for entertainment and stress relief, and direct conversations were made on the trends in social media.

Keywords:- Virtual Media, Tele-Interviews, Social Networking Sites, Socialization, Face-To-Face Communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this modern world, people use technology to communicate. Technology has made communication easy to maintain relationships and get information from anywhere and everywhere in this world. An application of scientific knowledge is called technology. Humans live in an environment transformed by technology that draws on scientific principles (Ford A, 2021). "Communication can be defined as the exchange, interchange, or transmission of messages. Communication can occur for many purposes. Most communication occurs because the content of the communication – the message – is intended either to inform or to entertain, or sometimes both. The message is the content of the communication. That message is carried over some conduit – the medium – of communication" (Noll. MA, 2007). Our interpersonal skills (IPS) enable us to interact with people both individually and in groups on a daily basis. A few terms used to describe IPS include social skills, social competence, people skills, soft skills, social self-efficacy, and social intelligence (Rajesh. VR & Chandrasekeran. V, 2014).

Through the use of technology, communication technology enables the exchange of information among people. It assists people in making decisions, solving problems, and controlling other machines. In addition, communication technology enables two people from different places to build and maintain relationships even though they are far apart (BASchools Org, 2020).

A global contagion of Novel Corona Virus disease-2019 caused by severe respiratory syndrome. As there is an increase in the number of infections, global-wide borders were closed and shut down in Schools and workplaces for cutting down the spread (Patel & Patel, 2022). It is significant that this abrupt shift to remote work occurred in the midst of the economic and social upheaval brought by COVID-19, especially at a time when organizational coordination, decision-making processes, and productivity were more crucial than ever(DeFilippis et al., 2022). After the pandemic hit the world, virtual or online communication increased in the way of adjusting to the new normal among employees. However, even before the pandemic, the habit of maintaining relations and identifying oneself through technology in any form of a social networking site and other online communication applications on mobile, desktops, or laptops. With a wide range and usage of social applications like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and so forth, people identify themselves as sociable by making virtual, or online communication.

The smartphone is the most effortless and handy for everyone to communicate with the world. However, smartphones have significantly changed how people access information, allocate time, and interact with each other. These changes impact behavior and social changes in Society (Rotondi et al., 2017). In comparison with virtual communication, face-to-face conversation enhances the quality of life. Though the internet and technology released humans into a new realm of connecting with people globally, the traditional face-to-face conversation inherent factors that reduce the satisfaction of the conversation or the discussion happening online or virtual (Plumridge. N, 2020).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study was conducted on Social Networking Usage in the Indian High Education context; the results showed higher usage of social networking Sites. The study was recommended to use it on students to determine the relationship between academic performance and usage of

social networking sites. Studying teachers' attitudes and opinions about social network use for academic purposes at university would accomplish the requirement (Bashir L & Gupta S, 2018). There is a transformation that brought in social life through Mobile communication which is virtual in nature. This had brought adverse effects on the quality of face-to-face communication. There is greater satisfaction experienced in spending time with friends than in spending time on smartphones (Rotondi et al., 2017)

Technology does not provide room to share emotions. At times, technology through virtual communication permits people to keep up their relations who stay in distant places. Thus, allowing people to communicate more, whereas, on the other end, technology and virtual communication also misapprehend a message that the sender communicates. Since there is no emotion expressed or a lack of clarity or focus on emotions, there are chances to misinterpret the message and person (Nelson. M, 2012). Virtual communication helped employees to be quick and reactive to their daily work. Managers and employees stated in a survey that they were able to handle workplace conflict virtually more than face-to-face. The employees become more reactive to feedback and get into conflict (Morgan N, 2020). It is not possible to predict the quality of life through Internet communication, but it is possible to predict it through face-to-face communication with friends and family members (Lee et al., 2010).

Social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Twitter show that Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat were found to be very prominently used by youngsters. These Social Networking platforms attract the younger population whereas, LinkedIn is a professional Site, where there can be a difference in usage according to age. Students benefit psychologically from online social capital as well as in-person social connections. As a result, professional identity, well-being, and confidence may be enhanced (Hoda Najmul et al., 2022). Additionally, because there is relatively little variation between reported levels of shyness and comfort, it was impossible to test whether shyer individuals would have a higher level of positive feelings toward those they communicate with online or if they would feel more comfortable in online interactions than they would in face-to-face interactions. (Snow, 2007).

Researchers found that heavy Internet usage reduces the likelihood of visiting family or friends on a random day in the future. A majority of people believe that computer-mediated communication is less valuable than face-to-face communication and that replacing face-to-face communication with online communication will harm relationships and wellbeing. Participants with stronger social relationships also used online communication more frequently, which predicted more cohesive friendships and a better connection to school for them (Goodman-Deane et al., 2016).

Online relationships become more intimate and meaningful as self-disclosure occurs earlier than in face-to-

face relationships. The ease of manipulating self-disclosure online makes virtual relationships feel more intimate. A more positive self-presentation is possible through selective self-presentation in online conversations; Walther refers to this as 'selector self-presentation'. (Walther, 2011). A virtual environment supports explanations for virtual relationships by facilitating the establishment and maintenance of romantic relationships (Rosenfeld et al., 2012). The appearance, mannerisms, age, and ethnicity of other people greatly influence our attraction to them, limiting our choice of potential partners. However, virtual interactions eliminate these obstacles this opens up romantic relationships for shy and less attractive people.

(Young, 2011) has conducted research on internet addiction and applied CBT-IA (Cognitive Behavior Therapy- Internet Addiction) on 128 clients who were evaluated on the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) to assess the efficacy of CBT- IA, a uniquely designed model to treat Internet addiction administered twelve weekly sessions of CBT-IA. More than 95% of clients were able to manage symptoms at the end of the twelve-week period and 78% continued to improve six months after treatment. (Young, 2011).

III. METHODOLOGY

A wide range of changes took place in communication between two or more individuals. In contrast to face-to-face communication, other forms of communication such as text messages, e-mails, or social media messages are on the rise. People's communication methods also affect their interactions with one another in person. The study gathered data through a sample survey of working employees of age 25- 30 years Young Adults from different sectors and 11 of them had attended tele-interviews. The target population consists of working employees in various sectors like the non-service sector and service sector from different parts of India. The hypothesis here is that virtual communication through social networking sites negatively affects the quality of face-to-face interactions, due to its high degree of intrusiveness, which often results in a state of absent presence.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 31 working employees participated in the survey, and 11 participants from the sample attended a tele-interview. The study was conducted on working employees younger than 30 years of age. The responses from 31 participants were collected quantitatively, and eleven were interviewed on calls for qualitative information to know about their comfortable form of communication (virtual or face-to-face conversation). The total scores range between (15-42) on social networking site usage. The scores show that the employees who participated in the survey show there is moderate usage of social networking sites and virtual communication platforms among working employees. Differences in using social media or virtual communication platforms exist between different age

groups. Employees could also maintain face-to-face conversations better, after living real-life experiences.

Table 1: Regression Weights of Face-to-Face Communication, Socialization, and Entertainment on Social networking sites

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Face-to-Face Communication <--- Socialization	0.027	0.105	0.254	0.799
Face-to-Face Communication <--- Entertainment	0.358	0.143	2.508	0.012

p-value < 0.05, significant; "; "p-value < 0.01, highly significant

Table 2: Standardized Regression Weights of Face-to-Face Communication, Socialization, and Entertainment on Social networking sites

	Estimate
Face-to-Face Communication <--- Socialization	0.049
Face-to-Face Communication <--- Entertainment	0.485

Table 3: Squared Multiple Correlations of Face-to-Face Communication

	Estimate
Face-to-Face Communication (R^2)	0.263

Table 1 shows the Regression Weights result, which describes the variables' significance. The sample Path Analysis compares the strength of relationships between Socialization and Entertainment with Face-to-face communication. The regression weights from **Table 1** show that Socialization is not significantly affecting face-to-face communication among the Working Employees, which declares that virtual communication has no effect or less effect on face-to-face communication. The P (0.799) says that the level of significance is less than 95% (P>0.05).

However, the tele-interviews presented a different perspective of the score. In the one-one tele-interviews, the participants were questioned on their comfortable form of communication, and the obstacles they face when they have to talk directly. Participants stated that at the workplace it used to be difficult or rarely or never communicated about the stressors they experience due to another person especially if it is their superiors. It was also discerned in the tele-interviews that participants were at ease while initiating conversation even with strangers or new joiners in their team at the workplace. Studies show that in new product development teams, a variety of electronic communication media facilitates task complexity coping mechanisms, including coordination activities. This impact on team efficiency and effectiveness is much less pronounced (Kock & Lynn, 2012). In contrast, it is found the participants felt difficulty in maintaining an open conversation about their difficulties and stressors experienced at the workplace.

After the pandemic employees felt better with the form of virtual communication in receiving and providing feedback. Participants stated that through virtual communication they found an easier way in giving their views and feedback through social networking sites like WhatsApp, and MS Teams. The social exchange theory states that trust is an essential antecedent to knowledge sharing in virtual teams. High levels of team trust encourage ideas, information, and resources to be shared more openly. (Wu et al., 2006) (Garro-Abarca et al., 2021).

It is also spotted that there is a reduction in conflict situations and embarrassment followed by the situation as most of the discussion was happening virtually. Managing internal conflict effectively is a key factor in virtual team success, and temporal coordination can have some significant moderating effects (Montoya-Weiss et al., 2001). Participants use social media for entertainment or as a stress buster rather than as a platform to build new relations. Studies show that social disengagement is associated with poor physical and psychological health. In terms of both physical and mental health, people who participate in more social activities are happier and healthier (Lee et al., 2010).

Table 1 also shows that Entertainment is significantly affecting Face-to-face communication. Since the P (0.0412), where the level of significance is greater than 95% (p<0.05), shows that there is a significant effect on Face-to-face communication and Entertainment. From Table 3, the Correlation score of 0.263 says that a 26.3% change in Face-to-face communication can be accounted for by predicting variables (Socialization and Entertainment) that are less significant. Table 2 shows a substantial relationship between the variables of Entertainment and face-to-face communication. An observation was made during the tele-interviews that the trending content on social networking sites was shared and discussed among colleagues and friends. Communication via virtual means cannot be successful if workers are silent or not very responsive. Therefore, regular and consistent communication is crucial, and workers must be held accountable for their communication efforts (Kock & Lynn, 2012). Virtual communication cannot succeed if workers remain silent or are not responsive. Therefore, in order to ensure effective communication, workers must be held accountable for their efforts (Layng, 2016). As humans are prone to treating others the way they are treated, escalator spirals result and conflict worsen the virtual platforms made employees avoid such situations (Shonk. K, 2022) (Shonk.K, 2021). Thus, itemizing the piece of evidence that the employees in virtual communication are avoiding being assertive in stating their

views or opinions until they were addressed or inquired or initiated by others to avoid the risk of conflict.
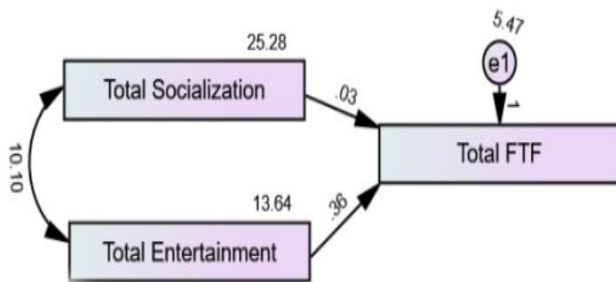

Fig 1 Confirmatory Path Analysis (*FTF- Face-to-Face communication)

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following paper focused on Direct and Virtual Communication; the usage of Social Networking Sites. Studies also state that social media overuse among adolescents is caused by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors. Traditionally considered the brain's "pleasure chemical," dopamine is now understood to be a chemical that stimulates desires. The use of social media among young people is associated with a surge in dopamine stimulated by unpredictability, small bits of information, and reward cues. There is a possibility that the prefrontal cortex might contribute to the tendency toward compulsive use of social media (Ramasubbu Suren, 2017). The study lays a path for comparing the internet and social networking sites used for communication among different age groups. Impact of face-to-face communication while expressing emotions in adolescents.

The study also recommends training in Assertiveness, which assists the employees with healthy emotional stability and expressing their views or feedback face-to-face/direct communication with the concerned colleague or superior or peer in a distressing setting.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there is no difference between face-to-face or direct communication due to the usage of social networking sites and socialization. Employees use social networking sites for entertainment by sharing and discussing the trending content on social networking sites. This study also finds that after the pandemic, working employees use virtual media or social networking sites only to communicate their distress at work and give feedback to their colleagues. Also, employees avoid being assertive or standing up for themselves to prevent the risk of conflict.

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APPENDIX

1) **Questionnaire for the Survey: Quantitative Analysis**
- Social Networking Usage Questionnaire: Development and Validation in an Indian Higher Education Context (Bashir L & Gupta S, 2018).
- The Effects of Technology on Interpersonal Relationships Among Rowan University Students Ages 18 – 25 (Nelson. M, 2012)

Statements		Always	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never
Socialization	I use social networking sites to become more sociable.					
	I use social networking sites to create my social identity.					
	I prefer using social networking sites to attending social gatherings.					
	I use social networking sites for strengthening interpersonal relationships.					
	I use social networking sites to keep in touch with my relatives.					
	I use social networking sites to get information regarding current social events.					
Entertainment	I use social networking sites for sharing pictures.					
	I use social networking sites to look at funny sharing.					
	I use social networking sites for watching movies.					
	I use social networking sites to get relief from academic stress.					
Virtual Vs face-to-face communication	I feel comfortable communicating through Social Networking sites					

I have difficulty communicating face-to-face than through Social Networking sites					
I have difficulty expressing my views without the usage of Social Networking sites					
I prefer initiating conversation primarily from Social Networking sites					

2) **Questionnaire for tele-interview: Qualitative analysis.**

Questions
1. What is your comfortable form of communication? Face-to-face or virtual?
2. Since you scored (High or Low) how do you manage to face to face conversation
3. Do you face any obstacles while having face-to-face conversations?
4. Which is your comfortable form of communicating Emotions? virtual communication or face-to-face conversation?