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The Social Media Interactivity in the Perspective of Media Ecology

Abstract: *This study looks at the media ecology theoretical framework to explore the impact of social media interactivity on users. This study argues that different age groups impact differently via social media interactions it's all depends on their demographics such as age, qualification, and socioeconomic status. The findings confirms that social media interactivity happened due to individual gratification but it creates an impact on the human environment as media ecology claimed. This study uses the qualitative technique of face-to-face in-depth interviews with a total of 16 participants to achieve its goals, and it presents its findings using inductive thematic analysis. The study came to the conclusion that both Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants' social behavior and self-concept are impacted by their frequent use of social media platforms*

Key Words: Media Ecology, Social Media, Interactivity, Social Behavior and Self-Concept

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Introduction

The new media in light of digital cultural subjectivity, interaction, information overload, diffusion and cybernetics that are arguably crucial to understanding current public discourse (Harsin, [2014](#)). A wide range of views or responses to what media ecology is and does are inevitable as it develops as a multidisciplinary research topic for understanding media, interaction, and culture. It does this by emphasizing one of the core ideas of media ecology on a more elevated level between media and other issues in

society (Lum, [2000](#)). Social and cultural development requires an understanding of how media work as environments (McLuhan, [1999](#)). Via a philosophical analysis, this paper explores technological determinism, different aspects of new media, and the strategies they employ to touch the production and dissemination of info. Johnson and Tully ([2022](#)) sated that in this recent time social media creates a messy environment between professionals and audiences regarding trust in the news and journalists. Jamil ([2022](#)) emphasized how media experts' lack of proficiency with digital tools affects their day-

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to-day tasks and the development of digital newsrooms in Pakistan. However, because all habitats are basically intangible and interrelated, analyzing the concept of media ecology is challenging and undertaking.

McLuhan's *Understanding media* was a surprising success, receiving praise from both critics and readers. From an ecological standpoint media should be viewed carefully. Technology transformed the symbolic and sensory world of meanings that constructed by society which impact human behavior and personal experiences (Griffin, 2006). The prevalence of social media has improved how people behave in social situations, such as when they hire people, pay taxes, utilize libraries, pursue higher education, and engage in other daily activities (Hauer, 2017). Investigating these underlying presumptions and their social, economic, political, intellectual, and cultural ramifications is the field of media ecology (Zimmer, 2005). In addition, Eisenstein (1983) adopts a more interactive perspective on acknowledging that a technology's impact is frequently determined by social change. The majority of users integrate numerous platforms for individual access and networking that can create a strong impact on them (Zhao et al., 2016). A thorough analysis of the media ecology approach reveals the broad acceptance of a moderate form of media determinism with the knowledge of how technologies have biases.

Research Questions

Does social media impact on social media users (Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants)?

Social media users classified into two major age groups Digital Natives (youth) and Digital Immigrants (Older adults). Social media users are considered those who utilized different social media apps and platforms on daily basis or actively online from two to three platforms. The researcher explored that Facebook is more favorite among current study participants.

Literature Review

The hybrid, dynamic ecologies of people, technology, and social behaviors, as well as their intricate, developing interactions and developments, are all understood, managed, and critiqued through the ecological lens (Tréré & Mattoni, 2016). Social networking sites were created as a result of Web 2.0 and social media, which blended new technologies with earlier computer-mediated communication techniques that were heavily influenced by tech sector values. A one-of-a-kind opportunity to get comprehensive behavioral data on what people are doing on social media is made possible by server-level data (Ellison & Boyd, 2013).

In this regard, Postman (2000) expressed concerns about the impending era of computer technology. The researcher questioned whether we were giving in to computation's authority, efficiency, and quantifiable attributes too rapidly. Being humane was becoming less important than scientific achievement. Postman (2005) questioned if knowledge could be substituted for wisdom for those who view falsifiability as a quality of a good theory, McLuhan challenged regarding his observations. On the other hand, history is full of theories that were revolutionary and could not be immediately tested (Islas, 2016). The potential cultural effects of new media technologies have come to light thanks to McLuhan's historical study. Some researchers have done a more detailed study and held more moderate opinions, but none has increased media awareness as much as McLuhan has with his famous quotes and dramatic comparisons (Rosen, 1990).

Information technologies have an impact on fundamental societal issues, such as freedom of expression and privacy, as well as the theoretical and practical standards for evaluating IT-society ties. The following connections are among them: (1) How humans are affected by technologies, (2) Fake information, (3) Updated technology, and (4) Functionality that are secure rather than focusing on users to increase security (Foust & Hoyt, 2018). The study of social media

interactivity, including their content, structure, and human impact, is referred to as ecology. After all, the environment is a complex system of messages that controls how people think, feel, and behave. It tries to understand that media planned what should audience need to see and explore, encourage us to play specific roles, and media impact the way we behave and think (Hauer, 2017). The study of the connections between media, technology, and the environment is known as the media approach. Literature confirmed that culture, technology, and communication. Biases exist in media technology. Marshall's fascinating theories provided motivation.

Neil Postman's 1976 speech on media as the environment is where the idea of media ecology first surfaced, according to McLuhan. Postman added that social engagement with media either aids or impedes our knowledge, feelings, and values, further demonstrating how communication mediums shape human perception (Zemmels, 2012). Therefore, media ecology is not media determinism in the strictest sense; it is a multifaceted approach to understanding how media technology affects society. It is more concerned with how media technologies interact with people than it is with the technologies themselves, and it work on the complex relationship between media and the latest technologies in society and culture (Zimmer, 2005). Researcher defined media ecology as the "active interconnection of systems and objects, people and things, patterns, and substance" as an alternative and dominant ideas, despite the fact that the word "media ecology" has been employed in a number of settings (Shah & Kesan, 2007). Jamil (2022) has identified a vast range of fields, including Language, stories, experiences, philosophy, interactivity, literature, and technology are required to study how technology has impacted society throughout history.

Theoretical Implications

Technical determinism has split into two separate schools since the turn of the 20th century: revolutionary and mitigated (hard, soft) technological determinism. Although

some views regarding technology as just a crucial component are vague in the understanding of social change, the extreme form views technology as a must for changing society (Postman & Weingartner, 1971). In the subject of media studies, the number of ecological viewpoints have expanded recently. They all stress how important it is to see media holistically in order to comprehend its complexity beyond specific media situations (Tréré & Mattoni, 2016). Society is exposed by technological and social change, and society brings about the alteration. Instead of simply adjusting to developments outside the economy, producers and consumers gradually introduce technological innovation (Hauer, 2017). In the domains of cultural studies, education, and geopolitics, the media ecology perspective on youth is categorically as important aspects of media on the one hand, technology impact on our sociocultural behaviors (Cristiano, 2020).

Technical determinism has split into two separate schools since the turn of the 20th century: revolutionary and mitigated (hard, soft) technological determinism. Although technology work as a crucial component that can transform our society (Hauer, 2017). In the subject of media studies, the number of ecological viewpoints have expanded recently. Although the user demographics cannot be unnoticed because everyone performs differently based on their age and atmosphere, the current study found that user intervention is more important than the theory's focus on its specific assumption. Technology is used by human beings with their own free will if they are more aware about good and bad consequences than the impact can be the cure.

Research Methodology

Researchers now have the chance to investigate novel phenomena in new guidelines because to the development of social media on the Internet. Qualitative researchers in Information systems, however, have not fully grasped this possibility for a variety of reasons (McKenna et al., 2017). Additionally, researchers explained how qualitative researchers who plan studies to be predominantly "off-line" may face new ethical

and methodological concerns as a result of online interactions and social networking sites (Reich, 2015). In this study, the qualitative intensive interview method was applied. The researchers meticulously recorded and transcribed the interviews. Analyzing qualitative data was done using the NVIVO 12-Plus.

The majority of qualitative research emphasizes on interlinked experiences and alternative viewpoints; in the current study, researchers investigate how two different age groups feel about using online mediums and why it's important to investigate the satisfactions of their social media interactions (Tsaliki, 2022). The users choose on basis of social media usage and knowledge. All participants had agency connections, received ideas and participated in social media interactions in Lahore. One of the interviewees admitted to started earnings as a blogger and being active on Instagram at the time of the interview. It was based on prior research. The coding sheet was developed to comprehend how platform usage (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc.) helped content creator topics and goals such as self-representation, working in community relations, and brand promotion without any knowledge regarding qualities, as well as interactivity and emotions (such as good, bad, rude, selfish, kindhearted, happy, sad, and so on (Duffy & Hund, 2015). The researcher assured participants that the project of the social media users requires significant time and energy because of the focus on social media interactivity, content sharing, and impact on social conduct in clearer focus and society.

Findings and Discussion

Technology has an effect on user psychology and may even bring about social change. Technological innovations, according to supporters of technological determinism, impact and shape society. It must adapt to new technological developments and conform to them. Technology's negative effects are a result of individuals using it incorrectly, not because it is inherently bad (Hauer, 2017).

Social Media Impacts: Thematic Analysis

The interviewees belong to different backgrounds; they include academicians to professionals. Participants were more interested to interact with recognized social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube) for free sharing opinions openly with their close relationships, some of them cited WhatsApp is more convenient for calls and texting. Facebook-owned both WhatsApp and Instagram Bucher and Helmond (2018) described the experience of creators regarding sensitive platform updates. They all have texting options for sharing status and stories. Instagram usage among youth is increasing day by day. Because it is so dynamic and user-friendly, "Instagram is undoubtedly one of my favorite, Instagram has added a memory feature, the bar has been raised even further because users may now appreciate once-in-a-lifetime moments" Another participant appreciates the advantages of Instagram

"I love networking on Instagram since it significantly eases my social life and piques my interest in a blogging career. It is a common practice now for people join social media for information as well as blogging and start earning online. Social media is a pastime for some people. Some merely do not want to miss any engaging discussions (Participant)."

The emergence of new social media platforms like Instagram, fashion designers are extensively known for their chase of ideals relating to obtaining instant-fame, a useful sort of planned self-presentation technique to attract followers (Arriagada & Ibáñez, 2020). As a means of communication, Facebook has become a routine aspect of many people's lives.

Even if people who don't personally know each other are introduced as Facebook friends, everyone online exudes positivity and makes nice gestures, but there are no interactions offline. Even our closest family members are interested more in posting on social media sites than any family gatherings (Participant).

In order to build an authentic knowledge of how social change actors interact with

digital technology and with what impact on cultures, it considers the necessity of including and combining various theoretical approaches (Mattoni, 2017). While youth are indulged in new practices in terms of their repertoires of

cultural practices and uses by new media technologies and marketing strategies, this unavoidably leads to a number of fears (Tsaliki, 2022).

Figure 1

Compared by Number of Coding References.

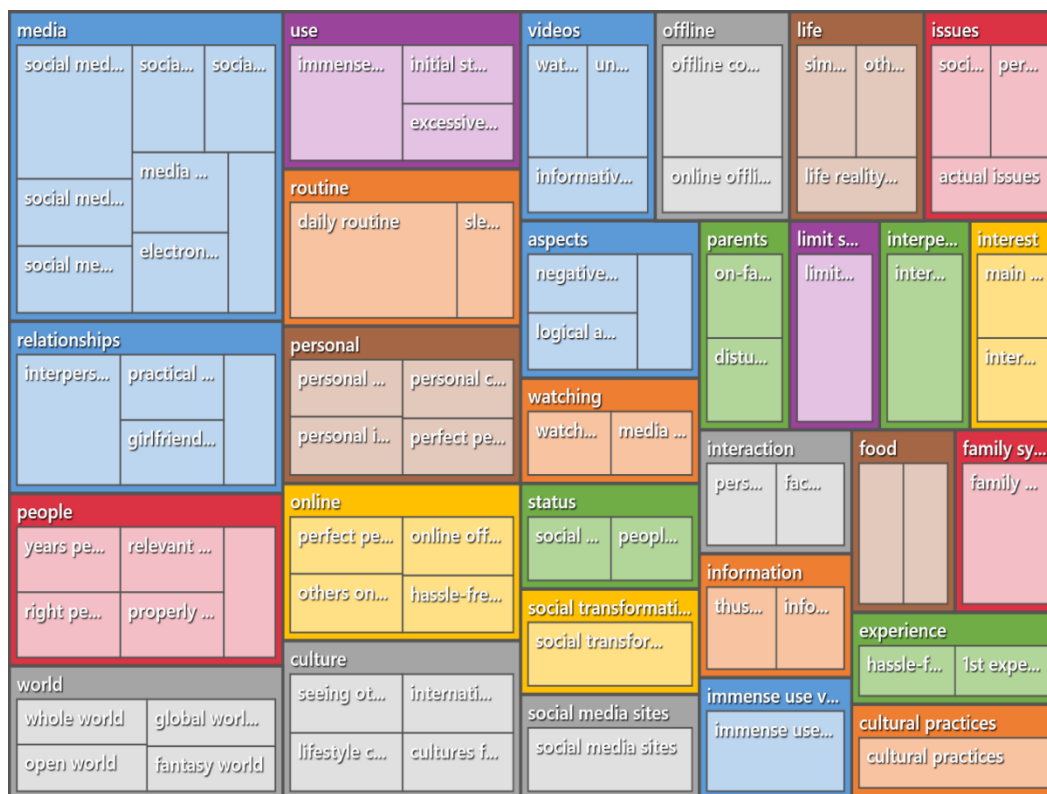


Figure 1 shows the proportion of coding references that are explained in data gathered from both digital immigrants and natives. Each code in the diagram has a meaning that helps identify themes in the collected data.

Paradoxically, while communication reasons are neutral, both theories contain both positive and negative aspects. Via their personal social accounts, the entire world. "I observe that there is something lacking" similarly another young participant "I stay in touch with people and stay informed about the outside world" It became clear during the interviews majority of the users, belong to digital natives used social media without any

aim and vision just pass time playing games and chatting with friends. Most of the Users accepted that they were making social media accounts because of the flexible environment; the new media is so diverse that users can interact easily and explore the world in accordance with their own choices and happiness. "I usually get thrilled and believe that this App or site must offer interesting and novel opportunities for me." People said and express anything in the name of freedom and the free will of individuality. By observing user practices, this researcher looked at how older adults and youth interacted on social media. This theoretical framework lays greater

attention on it's not how people use media and technologies than on the impact of those technologies on them is put into practice, then critiqued (Roy, 2009). Social media users' perspectives on ecology vary greatly as well. We can better understand the importance that individuals place on various media elements and the metaphors that they employ to explain them (Tréré & Mattoni, 2016). For this reason, research scholars explore information and communication technologies used within broad human practices were established rather than focusing on the advantages of particular platforms usage among youth (Christensen, 2017). A participant explained that "Social media is like Ocean" as social media interactivity have no time limits if one starts to interact it continues without noticing spending hours on chatting and sharing. Consider the importance that social media in worldviews, politics, education, and cultural perspectives when examining the members of the younger generation in various worldwide sociocultural contexts (Cristiano, 2020). In addition, a participant added that "I feel social media change our life we pretend more and celebrate less" Usually political communication is a type of social network where socially connected relationships happened and develop new identities via interactivity is supported by media ecology, which sees media as multifaceted, unified destinations (Foust & Hoyt, 2018).

A participant explained "Teens create internet accounts in both their individual and group capacities" Their representation of self is created through the information they receive and share, the information their peers share, and the reactions of others (Tsaliki, 2022). This conception aims to transcend the viewpoint of images that describe social media reviews as inferring a solitary user of technology (Arriagada & Ibáñez, 2020). Instead, the information ecologies method aims to restore human-friendly activity and reject the technical determinism of media theory by capturing a sense of location when scholars utilize the similes labelled on social media sites (Cristiano, 2020). The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided people to learn new things, languages, courses which includes

the new fields of linguistics and semantics, and of course the adverse effects of media on our society, the intellectual choices and preferences are important "I am connected, had much to do with these very same media and technologies". Social media and social interactions are the center of attraction to explore for the researcher in this current scenario. Finally, understanding the development of new media creates many options for learning new skills of media hybridization.

Ruotsalainen and Heinonen (2015) argued that how important online journalism as an aspect of society, it is astonishing how little attention has been paid to the impact of these new social media features that can affect our culture and the social systems. People are trying to be viral and sharing their personal information easily. The concept of spreading fake news about anyone become so common. In this study, researchers discussed the essential components of the internet's social media interactivity and drew comparisons between it and its impact on users and society. According to the participant, "Social media significantly influences our conduct." Like when we see the brands, we feel compelled to purchase them immediately whether we need them or not. Whether positive or negative occurrences occur, the impact of social media on user behavior has an effect on one's psyche. A person's relationships with others may suffer as a result of excessive use, which can cause dejection and worry. The modern information society is a result of new inventions, new technology, and the social and political effects that follow. Ecological representations in the field of communication is crucial to understand in perspective of social/cultural aspects. Technology play an important role to inform human beings about their own expertise and needs (Foust & Hoyt, 2018). Regardless of socio-cultural or political contexts, social media are creating unprecedented change worldwide. A lot of emerging nations are gradually standardizing media practices and sociocultural tendencies as they become more inhabited by new technology (Cristiano, 2020). There are many ways for society to pressure technology

innovators to advance their work. These entail using, among other things, institutional, political, institutional, institutional, social, economic, and regulatory elements. Several of these tactics, including self-motivation, public dealing, and the efforts to establish social relationships and the involvement of the government (Shah & Kesan, 2007). Due to a lack of interpersonal engagement, many people are isolating themselves more and more, which makes them less confident in their capacity for face-to-face interaction. According to interview data, people simultaneously think about "social media viewer" and "information sharing" when sharing, and these needs can sometimes conflict with one another.

Digital Natives and Immigrants also strongly desire to maintain platform boundaries while allowing content and audience to cross them. Finally, both users work to strengthen their own communication but must adapt to changes brought on making individual identities and choices of social conduct. This study take into account every member of the family, including unintentional background social media exposure as well as intentional exposure to interactive online content. Such studies show that youth learn from well-designed social media, especially when they interact with others while playing on a computer or other digital device. Social media has an impact on people in other ways outside just what they choose to do with it. The other theory that was utilized to support cultural practices and societal transformations brought about by exposure to social media was media ecology. According to Livingstone (2002), any attempt to evaluate social evolution

in two ways must take the concept of "environment" into consideration. Changes in the media environment first lead to the addition of new leisure options, which are then changed. Second, pre-existing leisure activities serve as a mediator for the integration of new media into daily life. According to Zimmer (2005), "ecology" is the study of settings that have an impact on individuals, regulate feelings and interaction patterns, and eventually bound us on to specific information and social behaviors.

Conclusion and Empirical Contributions

Aspects of how social media affects a user's perception, understanding, sentiment, and sense of self-worth have been investigated using the study of social media interactivity and the media ecology theoretical framework. According to the notion, excessive technology use has an impact on a person's social behavior and self-concept. Because there aren't enough social cues to influence cultural and behavioral features, the researchers examine social media platforms for the contact between the two generations and find that as people spend more time online, communication gaps in relationships are also growing. In addition to age differences, Lahore's digital immigrants and natives have particular social and personal integration requirements, which contributes to the basic imbalance in intergenerational relationships. Using the social cues that are available when users (digital natives and immigrants) have less opportunities for face-to-face interactions and contacts with one another results in social challenges that require in-depth investigation.

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