

Influence of Social Media on the Soft skills for Learners and Practitioners: A Study

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Abstract: *The emergence of internet and use of web based mobile has not only increased the constant engagements with social media but has substantially reduced the real and active participation which influences the soft skills of learners and practitioners. “Soft skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a job.” (Wikipedia, 2007). Soft Skills are important because they mould the personality of a human being to sustain the competitive edge and to achieve survival of fittest. The purpose of this research paper is to reveal the influence of social media on the following soft skills that is Communication, Interpersonal skills and Emotional Skills of learners and practitioners of an Indian private university. Responses were gathered from 120 respondents which include undergraduate students of business administration and management faculties, of an Indian private university of Uttar Pradesh, India. Analysis of the responses have been done using the Chi-Square test. Results revealed that Soft Skills like Communication and Social Skills are majorly influenced by the increased use of social media.*

Key words: Social Media, Soft Skills, Communication Skills, Social Skills, Emotional Skills, Survival of Fittest

Introduction:

Social Media is a platform that facilitates the creation and sharing of information, ideas, various areas of interest. There are various forms of social network that most people use. They are WhatsApp, Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Learners today are able to acquire a vast amount of information by a mere click of button at lightning speeds. But excessive use of social media has its negatives too. Most of the times we find learners using a ready to use template information directly from Social Media instead of putting any effort of their own. People are constantly on the virtual world and are exposed to wrong things which also at times leads to addiction. This addiction to Social Media, is negatively influencing various soft skills in an individual. Since the need of the hour, and to execute any kind of task, it has its importance.

What are Soft Skills?

Soft skills are attributes that belongs to an individual and enables him/her to interact effectively and harmoniously with other individuals. Soft skills in today's times are of utmost importance.

We are hired for our technical skills, but fired for the lack of soft skills; so said Shiv Khera, founder of Qualified Learning Systems Inc. USA and a motivational management Guru. Technology and technicians can always be purchased with money; but the wealthiest person in the world must build and create relationships which can only be possible through soft skills. In today's scenario only those organizations and persons are likely to succeed who have excellent soft skills.

Soft skills are very much needed in this present economy where complexity and uncertainty have become the hallmarks of business. They are required by all employees from bottom to the top level to ensure professional success and enhance employee's productivity and performance. We are at the threshold of a phase of life where in we need to prove ourselves and carve for ourselves a place both in personal and professional facets of life. This involves making right choices at the right time. In order to steer this crucial phase in our life successfully we need to add soft skills with hard skills. "Soft skills" are needed for everyday life as much as they are needed for work like – in communicating, listening, engaging in dialogue, giving feedback, cooperating as a team member, solving problems, contributing in meetings and resolving conflicts.

By using people skills as Interpersonal Communication & empathy, technology can augment the speed and quality of work as well as help to better manage people working from different geographical areas. The organizational architecture of IT companies will evolve around autonomous work teams and strategic alliances. These firms will be virtual organizations, temporary networks of independent companies, suppliers, customers and even rivals linked by information technology to share skills, costs and access to one another's markets.

The global workforce is becoming ever more diverse and mobile because the world's increasing globalization requires more interaction among people from diverse cultures beliefs and backgrounds than ever before.

It reflects that to manage diversity, skills are more important than technical knowledge in the employee. Gandhi ji believed that wealth without social responsibility, pleasure without conscience, religion without sacrifice, politics without principle, knowledge without character, science without humanity and business without ethics and people without people's skills that is soft skills will destroy society.

Review of Literature:

John. J (2009) The study reveals the importance of soft skills in the professional life and soft skills can be enhanced if the management college consistently imparts the adequately framed and standardized soft skills training sessions to the students when they are gaining management education.

Goswami. R (2013) The paper emphasizes more on the grooming of soft skills of Information technology students. It has been observed that during their course of studies emphasis is given on developing the hard skills as their curriculum is specifically designed to make them technically very sound but they lack in soft skills. This gap is clearly visible during the occasions of interviews, presentations and public speaking.

They find it difficult to coordinate when they are more likely to work on series of projects with the diverse teams in which they have to use variety of soft skills to convince the team members and implement the task. Here it reflects the importance of soft skills and training in soft skills to gain employability.

Mathur. A (2017) In this conceptual paper an effort is made to highlight the importance of soft skills requirements initiated due to employers' complaint about the lack of soft skills among technical graduates.

Chaturvedi, Yadav and Vajpayee (2011) attempted to find out the impact which the soft skills training could give in enhancing the output of hard skills. As language coaches or communication consultants, teachers will have to face both teaching and learners differently. They will have to help learners use the language suitably in their working contexts. This will include the insertion of the soft skills in their teaching in a very explicit way. By being aware of the fact that we live in an ever-changing world, they must deepen their

knowledge of human resources in order to continue providing teaching solutions to their learner's specific needs. As soft skills are basically skills related to people the trainers must be people-friendly and must possess excellent inter-personal and intra-personal skills, like communication, motivation, body language, leadership qualities etc. Subramanian.K.R. (2017) In his research explores the impact of social media on various facets of modern life and which has profound influence in interpersonal communication. With the busy lifestyle of individuals people are finding less time in their fast paced lifestyle. Social media has become a preferred medium of communication and is able to fulfil the social needs of the people .

Bhat, S. & Bashir, H. (2016) highlighted the effect of social media on mental health. The present generation excessively uses social media which in turn lays substantial influence on the digital life and has an effect on their mental health. As the younger generation feel restless when they are unable to access messages and updates on social sites.

Aforesaid studies reveals that researches has been conducted on importance of soft skills and impact of social media on specific skills such as interpersonal communication and social skill. The present study, emphasizes more on the influence of social media on the broader aspects of soft skills which helps learner and practitioners in the "survival of fittest" to have the competitive edge.

Objectives of the Study

To study the influence of Social Media on the following Soft Skills of learners and Practitioners:

- **Communication skills**
- **Interpersonal skills**
- **Emotional skills**

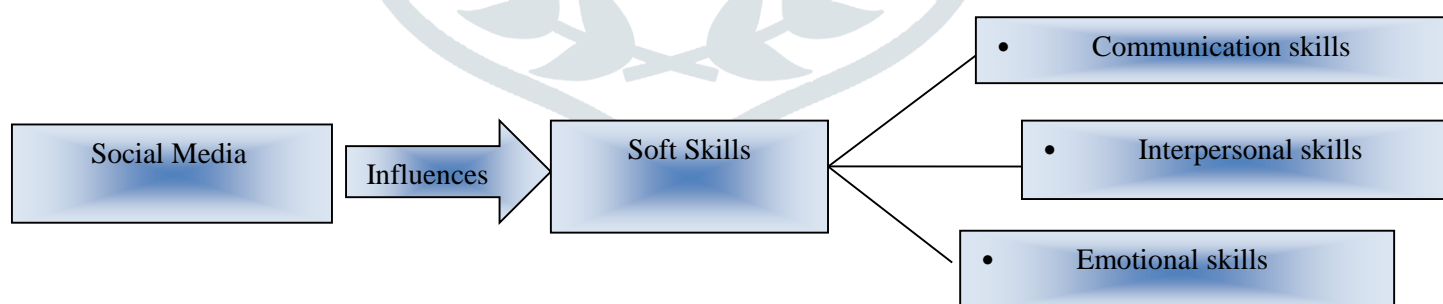


Fig.-1 Influence of Social Media on the Soft Skills.

H1: There exists a significant influence of Social Media on the following Soft Skills of learners and Practitioners ; Communication, Social and Emotional.

H0: There exists no significant influence of Social Media on the Soft Skills of learners and Practitioners Communication, Social and Emotional.

Methodology: Information was gathered from 120 respondents which include (learners) business administration students and Academicians (Practitioners) of an Indian Private university. The survey method was used and responses were randomly collected through whats app, email and face to face interaction and subsequently analyzed using Chi-Square Test. The analysis was presented in the following tables and subsequently interpreted.

Analysis: Table No. 1

Influence of Social Media on the Soft Skills of Learners and Practitioners									
S.No.	Name of Soft Skills	Statements		To a great extent	To a considerable extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Significant level 0.05
1	Communication skills	To what extent do you communicate through voice calls	Chi Square	18.37	8.16	6	7	8	9.488
		To what extent do you communicate through social media platforms	Chi Square	20.16	8.16	3.37	8.16	7	9.488
		To what extent do you use Acronyms	Chi Square	28.16	2.7	2.66	7	7	9.488
		To what extent do you think that communication through social media impact English language	Chi Square	24	1.5	4.16	1.5	8.2	9.488

Table No. 2

Influence of Social Media on the Soft Skills of Learners and Practitioners									
S.No.	Name of Soft Skills	Statements		To a great extent	To a considerable extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Significant level 0.05
2	Interpersonal skills	To what extent do you think that social media affects interpersonal skills	Chi Square	26	8	4.16	3.37	2.7	9.488
		To what extent do you use polite expressions through social media	Chi Square	54	8	3.37	1.5	2	9.488

Table No. 3

Influence of Social Media on the Soft Skills of Learners and Practitioners									
S.No.	Name of Soft Skills	Statements		To a great extent	To a considerable extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Significant level 0.05
3	Emotional skills	To what extent do you think that social media distracts your attention	Chi Square	88	8	8	8	0.7	9.488
		To what extent do you think that posting anything on social media will boost your confidence	Chi Square	26	8.16	8	6	7	9.488

Results: As mentioned in table no. 1,S2, & 3

- Higher significant chi square values (18.375, 20.16, 28.16, 24) reveals that social media has significant influence on communication skills. As Communication through voice call, Use of Acronyms and impact on English language is to a great extent hence it proves that use of social media influences the various forms of communication skills such as verbal, written of learners and practitioners while they are performing different academic work which increase their efficiency such as speed, quality, knowledge and ability to perform the work . As communication skill is vital in everybody's life .

As mentioned in table no. 2

- Higher significant chi square values (26, 54) reveal that using social media has significant influence on interpersonal skills. As interpersonal skills can be enhanced by being polite and using polite expressions in day to day life which many of learners and practitioners do use by greeting, apologizing, appreciating others on different occasions through social media platforms which in turn removes misunderstanding and strengthens the relationship among them.
- Higher significant chi square values (88, 26) reveal that using social media has significant influence on Emotional skills.

As affordability and accessibility to web enabled phone distracts attention of learners and practitioners while doing any academic assignments such as lose focus from listening to lectures, scoring less in internal assessment and cheating that is deviating from the path of values and ethics. Overall it reduces quality and hampers growth.

Therefore the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion:

Due to change in lifestyle, long distances to commute, lack of time and increase in multitasking use of social media has greater influence on emotional, interpersonal and communication skills. As per table no.3 high influence of social media is seen on emotional skill where attention of learners and practitioners is

distracted to a great extent while doing any academic assignment. It impacts the concentration and impacts the quality of the academic work and by posting on social media boosts confidence which is of great help to learners and practitioners. It influences the emotional skill as posting anything creative which has been developed by self such as a poem, painting, article or any family snap when liked by people on different social media platforms it boosts their confidence to a great extent it improves mental and emotional health of learners and practitioners. But it can be emotionally draining and may lead to anxiety or even a fear of missing out if they are not liked or appreciated by the people on social media. When getting ignored online, or disconnect from those they have been constantly connected to, may lead to frustration, hurt feelings, and even depression. As per table no. 2 next high influence of social media can be seen on interpersonal skills where use of polite expressions on social media by learners and practitioners like 'thank you', 'sorry', 'get well soon', 'take care' etc. help them to maintain their best, most ethical selves and increase the bonding in the relationship with people who are virtually connected which is an important part of interpersonal skill.

As per table no. 1 influence of social media can be seen on communication skills as learners and practitioners of an Indian private university use acronyms such as shorthand and shortened versions of words in order to type and deliver their messages as quickly as possible & English language to communicate through different social media platforms for different purpose which help them to enhance vocabulary, grammar and fluency which is a very important part of their life.

Research should be conducted to understand the influence of other soft skills in the personal and professional life of the Indian and of other Nationalities.

Conclusion: In this research paper, influence of Social media on the soft skills of learners and practitioners of an Indian private university has been analyzed and the results are interpreted and concluded that the influence of Social media on emotional and interpersonal skills as it helps the learners and practitioners to sustain in the competitive edge. As the use of Social media is increasing day by day in various aspects so new fronts in management education may also open where the influence of Social media will appear in the near future. The influence of Social media on the soft skills may be studied on the personnel working in different sectors such as information technology, medical education taking new aspects for different hierarchies.

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