



Eroding Cognitive Presence: The Impact of the Digital Mirage On Human Attention

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Abstract

To maintain good mental health and develop a balanced mind, people need an appropriate atmosphere of healthy thinking, just as they require a well-balanced diet to keep their bodies healthy, which will lead them to certain goals. But today, social media is taking away people's time to think about their health. In return, they provide short video clips. Today, most people are allowing their minds to think for 30 seconds or less. 90% of people (ages 12 to 60) spend an average of two (2) to six (6) hours a day watching such non-nutritious entertainment videos. Because of this way of transmitting pleasant, nutritious, entertaining things to the brain everyday the mind is always getting used to getting more pleasant feelings in less time. As a result, people have trouble accepting or thinking about content that is not pleasant, and people's attention span decreases.

Most of the school and college students are not able to study any text content for a long time, losing patience to think deeply about the content. Students do not feel comfortable in the classroom. Students are distracted during class.

Keywords: Digital Mirage, Digital media addiction, Attention Span, Entertainment, Instant gratification, Dopamine.

1. Introduction:

People could concentrate on reading in a much more patient way even when the writings on the pages of the book could not be seen properly in the flickering light of the lamp. At that time, there was no electricity, mobile phones, modern technology and means of communication. The only face-to-face relationship was the exchange of knowledge, and the human mind was limited to a certain number of areas; people had the opportunity to think about a subject in a certain way, and with a strong willpower, they could go deep into the subject and understand it.

In the era of modern information and communication technology, the field of human thought has expanded as well as the kingdom of knowledge has opened. Today there is self-reliance in knowing the content of any knowledge that is capable of satisfying our individual psychological needs. People have been able to know their mental needs and abilities and have also got the opportunity to develop accordingly. Again, it cannot be said that this technology is not being misused due to lack of proper training and awareness. Today, people's minds are moving in different directions, such as social media making it possible to connect with new people. Various habits are forming in the minds of people, which are hindering the

stability of attention, among which some reels and videos of Facebook and YouTube are pushing people from the light of knowledge to darkness. An unusual mental habit is developing in the human mind to consume more pleasant content in less time, behind which the happy hormone called "dopamine" is influencing. With cognitive and information-based content that requires thinking for a long time, people are unable to think and fail to think deeply about the subject, which is also acting as a curse in the education of students in the modern era. There is no arrangement to train the students in the proper use of this information technology. Due to this practice among the students and the people for a long time. They are not able to focus on education or knowledge, leading to a superficial understanding of complex topics. As a result, critical thinking skills are diminished, and the ability to engage in meaningful discussions is lost, further perpetuating a cycle of shallow learning.

2. Background of the Study:

The Transformation of Entertainment Over Time –

There was a time when entertainment meant engaging in creative activities, long-term literary pursuits, participation in intellectual debates, and various sports competitions. However, today's social media platforms have stripped away the time required for such healthy thinking. Modern Facebook and YouTube Reels, or short videos, have confined the human mind within a span of 5 to 30 seconds. As a result, the human brain is losing the opportunity to think deeply about any subject. Statistics show that a large portion of people aged between 12 and 60 spend two (2) to six (6) hours every day scrolling through mobile screens, indulging in unhealthy entertainment by watching meaningless videos like Reels. To steer the general public and students away from the influence of this futile entertainment and harmful habit, the researcher has chosen this subject as a part of the study.

3. Statement of the Problem:

The present problem is stated that- **“Eroding cognitive presence: The impact of the digital mirage on human attention”**

Objectives of the Study:

1. Knowledge of the use of digital media.
2. How digital media affects the mind.
3. Understanding the impact of digital media addiction on attention span
4. How digital media is affecting education.

4. Methodology of the Study:

This research was actually a descriptive study, conducted with a view to measure the impact of digital media on human attention and to determine whether there was any relationship between the use of digital mirage such as Facebook and YouTube Reels/Shorts videos and human attention.

Variables:

Researcher took three variables in the present research. Those are-

1. digital media
2. digital mirage
3. Attention span
4. Educational achievement
5. Age

Population & Sample:

In this study, the researchers took all the people of Contai Subdivision, Dist.- East Midnapore, Westb Bengal, India in the age group of 12 to 70 years as a population and collected data from 200 people as a sample through Google Form. The distribution of the sample according to age is shown in Table-1

Table-1 DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE (AGE WISE)

12 – 18 Year	19 -30 Year	31 – 50 Year	51 -70 Year	Total
50	50	50	50	200

Tools Used:

The researcher used Questionnaire, with 20 items for data collection from 200 people. Researcher used 5-Point Likert scale for data collection.

Analysis of the Study:

According to the data, 68 % of people between the ages of 12 and 18 spend screen time on mobile phone by watching some reels and short videos for four hours and more every day.

70% of people between the ages of 19 and 30 watch more than five (5) hours of this meaningless video every day.

56% of people between the ages of 31 and 50 spend more than four (4) hours a day scrolling through screens.

28% of people over the age of 50 watch a maximum of three (3) hours of this meaningless video.

Interpretation of the study: -

Addiction and the Dopamine Cycle:

The human brain is always looking for happiness and joy. Whenever people are exposed to pleasurable stimuli, a hormone called "dopamine" is released, which gives people a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction and helps reduce stress. And it has some limitations. For example, when a person watches overly non-nutritious and pleasurable reels, short videos, etc., it can lead to intoxication or various addictions. People want more and more of this instant gratification, and digital addiction is on the rise. As a result, there are many changes in people's minds and thinking. such as

The instant gratification:

In this case, the person wants to get more pleasure in less time and gets instant gratification. They can't wait to watch any content for a long time.

Lack of patience:

People are losing patience to accept any content if it is long or not possible to understand it in a short time. If this content does not give immediate pleasure, the brain is reluctant to accept it.

Lack of ability to think:

The ability to think deeply and analyze content that is not immediately enjoyable is decreasing day by day. Reasoning power is not developing in human beings.

Attention span:

This digital addiction has a special effect on people's attention. Attention is moving from one subject to another in a very short time. This fickleness of attention prevents one from understanding any subject in depth.

Impact on Education:

Today modern digital addiction is having a terrible effect on students. According to analysis of the data, people between the ages of 12 and 30 are more addicted to watching overly non-nutritious and pleasurable Reels and short videos. Most of them are involved in school and higher education. It cannot be denied that there is a special influence in the minds of the students. Students are not feeling happy when they are going to the classroom or going to the reading room. The teacher's speech seems to them to be merely boring and annoying. They do not have the attention to read a subject for a long time and cannot think deeply about the subject. They are reluctant to solve a difficult problem. Different subject-based knowledge is located on different islands in the brain. Students today are largely failing to bring different subject-based knowledge into one place and not doing integrated learning. As a result, students are becoming more interested in theory-based learning and rote learning. Students are neither gaining practical knowledge nor are they able to transfer learning in real-life situations.

5. Conclusion:

Today the crisis of attention, or this mental instability, is no longer a personal problem; it is a social problem and an intellectual disaster. If people are not able to come out of this malnourished media addiction, if they are not able to change the habit of entertainment, and if they are not able to bring stability of attention, then the future generation will gradually sink into the darkness of inattention and impatience. In the future, society will be filled with the darkness of ignorance.

To get rid of this curse, appropriate guidelines and government initiatives need to be taken. Students need to be trained to use digital media properly so that they can use these media in education. It is necessary to organize in-depth discussions and arguments based on specific topics for students. Meditation and yoga can bring stability to the attention span.

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