Is Social Media Sabotaging Real Communication?

With the world awash with the internet, social media has covertly affected what used to be the day to day communication. A decade ago, the entire world was enveloped in writing letters and receiving them, to the everyday face-to-face communication. The invention of social media has created a whole new dynamic in relaying information. From texting to instant messaging and online chatting, the internet has revamped the art of communication. This is the same case for the workplace, where, in as much as social media is not that eminent, organizations have resorted to using communication databases to relay their information. Following the connotation that face-to-face communication is archaic, considering the effects that social media is having on the human society is certainly critical.

Whereas, the social media platform can be credited with the elimination of traditional barriers to communication, verbal communication is attested to account for only 7%, with non-verbal communication catering for the rest 93% of our communication (Phoon 3, as cited by Tardanico). Such statistics allude to the potency that social media plays in disrupting real communication. In as much as, the real intent behind word conveyed is dependent upon a speaker's non-verbal cues, social media conveniently hides the non-verbal message relayed. Apparently, this distorts the message that the expected, since the platform hides the real intentions portrayed by the message; especially by individuals holding a different ideology. Considering that such deliberations for non-verbal communication remain hidden, the true intent behind what is said via these platforms is obviously what is meant.

According to Phoon (3), a considerable number of people, 92%, agreed that social media had an adverse effect on relaying information. This was a pretext to the 73% of the students who agreed to using their cellphones for communication, while in their dining hall (as cited by Drago). The use of emojis', funny videos and other media platforms, such as snapchat, was a means to stimulate conversation. Further research alluded to addictive tendencies when social media platforms were frequently used, as opposed to actual communication. These platforms would be responsible for a negative effect on interpersonal communication, resulting into an addictive phase (Phoon 3).

In as much as social media can sabotage communication, different researchers hold a varied opinion. Students are actually engaged in social media platforms to improve their grades and sharpen their communication skill. Okeffe and Kathleen (800) alludes to a spike in social media usage among the teens who used social media platform to connect with friends, or with peers having shared interests. Whereas the channels were being used for interpersonal growth, a large majority of pre-adolescents and teens sought social media platforms for their emotional and social development, an opportunity availed through ownership of cellphones.

Considering the risks that such platforms present to such young minds, the effect that social media will continue to have on the society remains miles away from being tamed. Young

developing minds are prone to exploitation and experimentation, which is easily provided by such media platforms. Deranged perverted adults are always on the look-out for naïve teenagers to trap the youngsters into some delinquent or perverse behavior. (Okeffe and Kathleen 800)

Following the imminent risk that social media platforms creates for real communication, it is evident that governments should impose legislations aimed at taming the vice. Tapping and viewing messages anonymously will not deal with cyber bullying and sexting. Real action should certainly be meted on the culprits. Parents should also be on the lookout for their children, especially on the sites and social media platforms that their kids are akin to; and monitor who their children are talking to. The society at large also needs to be sensitized with how these platforms affect their lives. Awareness campaigns be instigated to ensure that people remain steer clear of social media sabotage.

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