

INFORMATION OVERLOAD AS A MAJOR DETERMINANT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MALADJUSTMENT

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Abstract

The Researcher in his study title "Information Overload as a major determinant of Psychological Maladjustment" has in his first chapter analysed the meaning, definition and historical perspective of information Overload. In the second section of the study the researcher has explained the Major and Primary determinants of information overload. In the third section of the study the psychological impacts of information overload has been discussed. The Fourth section of the study gives the behavioural solutions to control the negative impact of information overload on humans.

Keywords

Information Overload, Information Explosion, Infoxication, Stress Disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Memory, Anxiety.

On the above mentioned title of the study, the researcher has decided to classify his study under below mentioned topics.

1. Meaning, definition and historical perspective of Information Explosion.
2. Major Determinants of Information Explosion.
3. Psychological Impact of Information Explosion
4. Behavioural solutions to control the negative impact of Information Explosion
5. References.

Meaning, definition and historical perspective of information Explosion-

The Online Oxford English Dictionary indicates that the phrase "Information Explosion" was first used in the

"New Statesman" article in March 1964. In another justification some scholars believes that the term was first used in "The New York Times" editorial content by Walter Sullivan in June 7, 1964, in which he described the term as "much discussed."

Information explosion is a term used to explain the continuously multiplying quantity of published information and the impact of this abundance of data. As the quantity of available information grows, managing the information becomes more difficult, which can lead to information overburden or information overload. Infor-

mation overload refers to the state of having too much information to make a decision or remain informed about a topic. The term was first used in 1970 by Alvin Toffler in his book "Future Shock".

In Future Shock published in 1970, a Sociologist and Futurologist Alvin Toffler describes the overwhelming flood of information and labeled it as an "information overload." This change will overwhelm people because the accelerated rate of technological and social change will leave them disconnected and cause "shattering stress and disorientation"—future shocked. Toffler states that the majority of social problems were symptoms of the future shock. In his discussion of the components of such shock, he also coined the term "information overload".

Information overload (also known as infobesity, 1.infoxication, 2.Information explosion 3. is a term used to describe the difficulty of understanding an issue and effectively making decisions when one has too much information about that issue.[5] Generally, the term is associated with the excessive quantity of daily information. Information overload most likely originated from information theory, which are studies in the storage, preservation, communication, compression, and extraction of information.

Information theory studies the quantification, storage, and communication of information. It was originally proposed by Claude E. Shannon in 1948 to find fundamental limits on signal processing and communication operations such as data compression, in a landmark paper entitled "A Mathematical Theory of Communication".

Hence, Information overload is associated with the over-exposure, excessive consumption, and input abundance of information and data.

Major Determinants of information Explosion-

- (A) A rapid increase in the production rate of new information
- (B) The ease of duplication and transmission of data across the Internet
- (C) An increase in the available channels of incoming information.
- (D) Large amounts of historical informations are there.
- (E) Contradictions and inaccuracies in available information
- (F) A low signal-to-noise ratio (informally, the ratio of useful information to false or irrelevant data)
- (G) A lack of a method for comparing and processing different kinds of information

Psychological impact of Information Explosion-

1. Overload of information due to Information Explosion can increase the stress level of the individual.

The following changes in personality are common to observe in people who are stressed:

- (A) Irritability
- (B) Hostility
- (C) Frustration
- (D) Anger
- (E) Aggressive feelings and behavior
- (F) Decreased interest in appearance
- (G) Decreased concern with punctuality
- (H) Obsessive/compulsive behavior (trying to cope with unwanted repeated thoughts or obsessions, by engaging in compulsive behavior rituals such as counting, checking, washing, etc.)
- (I) Reduced work efficiency or productivity
- (J) Lying or making excuses to cover up poor work
- (K) Excessively defensiveness or suspiciousness
- (L) Problems in communication
- (M) Social withdrawal and isolation
- (N) Impulsivity (expressed as impulse buying, gambling, sexual behavior, or similar)

Research suggests that chronic stress can lead to or exacerbate mood disorders such as depression and anxiety, bipolar disorder, cognitive (thinking) problems, personality changes, and problem behaviors.

2. Overload of information due to information explosion can break the Mental Focus of the individual.

ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) is a disorder that makes it difficult for people to control their behavior and/or pay attention.

Symptoms of ADHD

The primary symptoms of ADHD are focusing difficulties, hyperactivity (excessive activity), and impulsivity (acting before considering the consequences).

The three main categories are :

Inattentive: difficulty focusing or staying focused on a task or activity

Hyperactive-impulsive: excessive activity and impulsivity

Combined: focusing problems plus excessive activity and impulsivity

3. The Power of Attention can be disturbed due to overload of informations.
4. As per the studies of Dr. Hemp information overload is deteriorating the focus, attention and intelligence level of the individual.
5. As per the study of Dr. Loder information overload is making desensitized individuals. In addition to this people's begin to struggle with stress, self-esteem, self-worth, physical health issues, fatigue and exhaustion, memory issues and attention problems.
6. As per Dr.Wahnon "The digital age has monopolized our attentions,our emotions,our physical health,our spiritual health and our mental health."
7. Dr.M. Kumar has said that "Neuroscience had proven that multi-tasking is basically an illusion and rationalization that we tell ourselves to enforce how productive we are."
8. As noted in Levitins article regarding information explosion "We are losing our compassion,our humanity,our common courtesies, boundaries,respect and other things that keep us connected."
9. Dr.Schwarz has discussed the chemical changes that technology has on our brains.
10. Dr.Allen Rya has mentioned in his article that "We are underestimating the assault that information overload has on our senses.Continuous overload put us at risks for mental and physical disorders and diseases as stress, anxiety, negative self-talk and self-made escalates.
11. As per Dr. Sanjiv Kumar view point Information overload has a negative correlation with the ability to discriminate and select.
12. Information overload is minimising the ability to adjust with the environment.
13. Information overload has a negative impact on Span of Attention.
14. As per Dr.Ramakanti "Information overload can disturb the ability of Retention,Recall and Recognition".
15. According to Mohd.Waqar Raza "Information overload can disturb the of Sensory Memory Cycle of the individual."
16. According to "National Institute of Mental Health (U.S)" excess of online information can create Anxiety disorders which can leads to below mentioned

impact on mind-

1. Feeling tense, nervous or unable to relax.
2. Having a sense of dread, or fearing the worst
3. Feeling like the world is speeding up or slowing down
4. Feeling like other people can see you're anxious and are looking at you
5. Feeling like you can't stop worrying, or that bad things will happen if you stop worrying
6. Worrying about anxiety itself, for example worrying about when panic attacks might happen
7. Wanting lots of reassurance from other people or worrying that people are angry or upset with you
8. Worrying that you're losing touch with reality
9. Rumination – thinking a lot about bad experiences, or thinking over a situation again and again
10. Depersonalisation – feeling disconnected from your mind or body, or like you're watching someone else (this is a type of dissociation)
11. Derealisation – feeling disconnected from the world around you, or like the world isn't real (this is a type of dissociation)
12. Worrying a lot about things that might happen in the future.

Behavioural solutions to control the negative impact of information Explosion.

We are undoubtedly curious and hungry for information as it is easy to access anytime and anywhere. Whatever idea pops up into our mind, we want details about it and we check as many sources as we can.

But knowing the risks we expose ourselves to, we should opt for strategies & solutions that will ensure a normal function of our brain.

1. Use Information filtration theory

Read and listen only to the information you consider useful for today or if it enriches your knowledge. Otherwise, ignore irrelevant information like news, gossips, talk-shows, etc.

2. Select the the Reliable and Valid Resource

It is always great to hear different opinions, but more does not mean better or truer. Select only the reliable sources and stick to them.

3. Restrict yourself

Is it really necessary to read the news every morning or update your posts daily on Facebook? Set some time limit and do not spend more than 10 minutes a day checking your social media or the gossip you hear about your favorite celebrity.

4. *Set your priorities*

Some activities are more important than the others. Do not overload your schedule with plenty of activities that require your maximum attention. First, finish the most important one and if time allows, do the others.

5. *Choose your conversations*

Some people can leave you emotionally or mentally drained. Some may like to talk too much and give you as many details as possible while others will simply pass their problems to you. Your time and energy are limited, so spend them wisely.

6. *Learn to Refuse.*

If some tasks are out of your league or you feel like drowning in work, do not be afraid to refuse. An extra amount of work will reduce the efficiency and quality of your cognitive performance. This, in turn, will not bring the results you expect.

7. *Do the right thing!*

Year after year, the number of young people who suffer from stroke increases. According to scientists, one of the explanations of this worrying phenomenon is the overstimulation of young people's brains because they have too many responsibilities.

Thus, experts suggest that we should re-energize our neurons and increase their resistance to damage by doing 4 simple things: physical exercise, sleep, hydration and outdoor activities.

8. *Spend some time alone*

What else can refresh your brain better than spending some time alone? Give yourself a break and put your thoughts into order by simply doing nothing, away from the noises, Internet and people.

Are you experiencing the symptoms of information overload? If yes, what methods do you use to find a psychological equilibrium?

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