

Distorted Digital Mediated Communication: An Analysis of the Effect of Smartphone on Family Communication in Nigeria

Authors : Peter E. Egielewa

Abstract : Communication through the smartphone connects people globally. However, since the last 10 years, there has been an increasing shift from the social engagement in the family to the digital mediated communication aided by the smartphone. The traditional family communication had largely been oral and relational, which the smartphone is now digitally mediating. The study employs mixed research method of quantitative and qualitative research design and deploys questionnaire to elicit responses from both parents and children of 50 purposively selected families from five villages in Southern Nigeria that are very active with smartphone use. Based on the Theory of Family Systems, preliminary findings show that the smartphone is becoming an addiction among Nigerian family members and has shifted the dynamics of family communication from relational to digital culture. The research concludes that smartphone use affects family communication negatively and recommends the moderation of smartphone use in the family and the search for alternative platforms for family communication that minimises smartphone addiction.

Keywords : digital, distorted communication, family, Nigeria, smartphone

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