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Digital Intelligence: An essential skill for Organisation Growth and Employees Well-Being. A Conceptual study

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ABSTRACT

Purpose *– The post pandemic world has urged people to be skilled in using technological devises for smooth functioning. Despite better working conditions of people, the chronic stress of the professionals are increasing day by day. Digital intelligence (DI), the ability to understand and apply digital technologies effectively, is a crucial factor in today's competitive business environment. This study provides a conceptual framework for understanding the concept of DI and explores its potential impact on organizational efficiency and growth.*

Design/methodology/approach *– The study describes a framework of Digital Intelligence which gives the notion to understand how various areas of Digital lifestyle needs to be alerted and practiced upon such that people are able to have a balanced life of work and entertainment.*

The framework outlines the key components of DI, including digital literacy, digital problem-solving, digital learning, digital communication, and digital collaboration. It presents a comprehensive model illustrating the relationship between DI and organizational outcomes, such as productivity, innovation, decision-making, and customer service.

The paper uses secondary data to highlight the challenges faced in adapting to the lifestyle of digital environment.

Findings *– The data will help us to discover whether Digital Intelligence is an essential skill to be developed among working professionals whose works are glued to the screen for most of the time. The effect on mental and physical health*

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has taken a toll due to a shift in the paradigm of work life either from home or from office. It has been estimated that Digital skills enhance the economic growth of the country.

Originality/value *– Digital intelligence is crucial skill what every smart manager should know in an age of information where access to the information through powerful enabled technologies are available at the tip of the fingers. This study will explore how Digital intelligence can be an essential skill for the growth of an individual in terms of performance as well as management in health*

KEYWORDS: *Digital Intelligence, Well-Being, Health, Performance, Digital.*

INTRODUCTION

"No product is made today, no person moves today, nothing is collected, analysed or communicated without some digital technology being an integral part of it. That in itself speaks to the overwhelming value of digital technology." Louis Rossetto

Digital skill may not be the oil of the twenty first century, but it certainly is the fuel that powers Artificial Intelligence. And yet, organisations have failed to devote the necessary attention and resources to build digital skill competence as a strategic asset. And if there is a single reason why AI has not delivered the promised value, it is the myopic view of digital intelligence. If there is one to take from the tech firms it is that to nurture and develop digital skills generate economic value for the firm to be treated as front and centre of the business and operating model. In the digital age, companies will need more leaders, not managers. This will require managers to unlearn and relearn. It is a big challenge for successful managers who are well set in their ways.

In the digital age, either organisations win in big size or lose unrecoverable ground such as winners like apple, amazon.com, Tesla and zoom have applied new rules of business that accelerates digital transformation while organisation like Blackberry, Nokia, Sears, Compaq, general motors, Kmart, have lost significantly in the digital age.

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Traditionally, companies have focused on the core functional capabilities of their industry and have seen technology as a support function. However in an era of constant technology distruption technology has to be a core competence irrespective of the industry in which one is operating. It has to move from being an enabler to a core source of ideation, strategy and and competitive advantage for Business. Business and technology have to connect deeply but often there is a gap in understanding on both sides.

70% of the organisations fail to deliver the target impact in the digital age which are

- Failure of vision
  - Too Incremental
  - Just taking offline offering and processes online
  - Lack of understanding the New customers
  - Risk averse especially to self-cannibalise
- Failure of Execution
- Not able to scale up tech stack
- Lack of required talent
- Too slow
- Inability to break organisation silos
- Trying to go “Big Bang”

COVID-19 has accelerated digital transformation. Clearly, traditional organisations are struggling to adapt to the pace of change in the digital age. Clayton Christensen articulated brilliantly in his seminal book, ‘The Innovators Dilemma, New Disruptive Technologies cause great firms to fail. The same practices that had led the business to success in the first place can also result in their eventual demise.

In this VUCA world new age companies face hurdles in their path to sustained success which are as follows:-

- **Being in constant war mode**:- They are quick to market but not able to build long term capabilities.
- **Lack of experienced Talent**:- Their leardership does not always have the resilience to battle through the ups and downs of a business cycle.

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- **Weak Foundational capabilities and practices**: - Their enabling functions such as HR and Finance have not kept pace with business.
- **Fragile Values and Culture**: These are the key factors contributing to a lack of organisation resilience and longevity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of Socio Technical Systems Theory:-

To develop organisation, it is mandatory to understand the system of the organisation. Organisations are complex social systems interacting with the environment. Shafritz and Ott describe the systems perspective as follows: "The systems school views an organisation as a complex set of dynamically interwined and interconnected elements, including its inputs, processes, outputs, feedback loops, and the environment in which it operates. A change in any element of the systems inevitably causes changes in its outer elements. The system of the organisation consists of Inputs, Throughout and Output. This article explains the relevance of digital intelligence as a skill of employees that goes as input into the organisation's system and produces out in the form of well being and performance upon which the organisations attains it's goal of survival, sustenance, profit and growth and service to the society.

As emotions of the individual are inseparable so is the technology inseparable from professional, personal life and organisation's system. Thus, it explains the concept of socio technical systems theory. STS theory is the principal conceptual foundation for efforts in work redesign and organisational restructuring the two active segments of OD. A socio technical system is the interaction of technical and human needs in effective design , combining the needs of the people, with the organisations need for technical deficiency (daft, 2016). Henceforth, the study articulates the relevance of Digital Intelligence for effective organisation growth and development. For an organization to grow and develop, it is essential that the skills of its employees are continuously grown and developed.

Digital Skills of Young People:-

India will need Nine Times as many Digital Skilled Workers by 2025 (AWS).The research reveals that digitally skilled workers currently represent 12% of India's workforce. The research estimates that the number of workers in India requiring digital skills will need to increase nine times by 2025, and the average worker in India will need to develop seven new

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digital skills by 2025 to keep pace with technology advancements and demand 2. This amounts to a total of 3.9 billion digital skill trainings3 from 2020 to 2025.

According to a survey carried out by the British Computer Society, only 52 % of the employers think that their employees have the appropriate digital skills. Research made in Germany and Austria shows that while many people consider themselves digitally literate, the tests revealed that many of them were unable to perform even the most basic operations. It should be made clear that being able to use a Smartphone or to chat with friends on a social networking site is by no means the same as being digitally literate. It is a further problem that the concept of "digital literacy" is not defined; practically it can mean anything. A survey conducted by the Italian University, 42 % of university students are not aware of the dangers of free Wi-Fi, 40 %of them do not protect their phones by a pin-code, and 50 % of them download anything to their computers without checking the source. The International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) conducted a survey among 60,000 young people, which showed that 17 % of those participating in the survey failed to meet even the most basic requirements, and only 2 % had a high level of knowledge necessary for conscious facility sharing.

1. Digital Scams:

Scammers are well aware of the need and urgency of the people. For instance, the scam of Identiy theft where most of the common people fall prey to. The scammers ask for an application to be filled out which contains sensitive information such as bank account numbers, other personal information. Scammers usually do this by creating false listings on various web portals. Once the con artist has this data, they use it to steal identities. (Times property, 30th June 2023).

2. Digital Workspace and Technostress:

In 2020, the onset of a global pandemic made digital working an essential way of working for large swathes of knowledge workers in what has been referred to as 'the world's largest work-from-home experiment' (Banjo et al. 2020). A gradual shift to remote working for organisations that has already spanned decades was suddenly accelerated as digital technologies became the primary way for large numbers of workers to remain productive and connected (Ozimek, 2020). For many, it is a change that will not be reversed - not least because early data suggests improved productivity within certain industries and roles - with higher

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levels of remote working expected in the future (Bartik et al., 2020). The shift in work style appears to have been accompanied by a shift in attitudes, with entrenched resistance to remote working broken down for both managers and employees (Colley & Williamson, 2020). To a greater or lesser degree, remote working or, more likely, a hybrid model of remote and office working is here to stay. While digital working brings great benefits it is also acknowledged that it comes with an array of unintended negative consequences such as technology-related stress and anxiety which need to be understood in order for a model of digital work that is optimal to both organisations and employees to be achieved. Improved productivity, communication and collaboration, engagement and innovation as well as reduced waste have all been found to flow from the adoption of these technologies by a range of organisations (Attaran et al., 2019).

Gaining such benefits, however, is not simply a matter of 'switching on' the technology. Practitioners and researchers alike point to a range of practices that are key to their success, such as clear strategy and business case, user experience design, change management, conducive organisational culture, leadership support and end-user training (e.g. Attaran et al., 2020; Hamburg, 2019). Success for the organisation also implies success for individual workers, immersed as they are in technology as they move through the workday: catching up on news, booking and running meetings, fulfilling tasks and creating knowledge artefacts. For example, a greater sense of autonomy, competency and connection can result for employees (Meske & Junglas, 2020), with greater flexibility positively impacting work-life balance (Lee and Sirgy 2019).

Yet the reality for many users is one of difficulty and overwhelm, with devices and applications leading to anxiety or even phobia, overload, addiction, distraction and, ultimately sometimes, to stress, exhaustion and burnout (Stich et al., 2018; Powell, 2013; Puranik et al., 2019; Sarabandi et al., 2018). Collectively these unintended, negative consequences of workplace technology have been referred to as its 'dark side', an area that is garnering an increasing amount of investigation and which Tarafdar et al. (2015, p.161) define as 'a broad collection of 'negative' phenomena that are associated with the use of IT, and that have the potential to infringe the well-being of individuals, organisations and societies.' While acknowledgement for this broad collection of negative impacts is growing, the ways in which they are associated and play out collectively is so far less clear.

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3. Digital Intelligence:

Digital intelligence refers to the combination of social, emotional, and cognitive abilities that enable individuals to adapt to the demands of life in the digital age. It is the use of generated data by digital technologies to improve the user experience. This is the kind of intelligence everybody ought to have in the twenty-first century. Digital life shaping the world around us. They have a firm grasp on practically every aspect of human life. We interact with digital technologies when we work, play, learn, communicate, and do business. To survive in the digital era, digital skills are more important than ever before. Digital technologies give us superhuman abilities and we need to know how to use these abilities wisely.

Digital skills need to be updated constantly to enable individuals to participate meaningfully in modern life. Lack of Digital Quotient causes reduced digital empathy, increased anxiety, and social pressures among their peers, excessive screen time, digital addiction, cyber-bullying, online grooming, digital identity, theft, online privacy mis-management, and exposure to digital information operations. Digitalisation primarily means new business models and this is where most people have difficulties with." In a study analysed by Hofman aimed to analyse the crucial digital competencies required for the organisation's growth as the intelligent use and evaluation of data also enables new business models. Especially private sector organisations see the need for higher-skilled employees and look for analytical competences and expertise in databased work, which goes hand in hand with the above-mentioned search for new business opportunities. (Hofmann & Ogonek, 2018).

While everyone recognizes the critical need for digital skills, it's even more critical that we define what we mean when we say digital and map those skills. After all, digital is less of an outcome and more of a "way of being."

4. Framework and Structural Elements of Digital Intelligence:

Many assume that Digital Quotient is something to do with the skills needed to use technology more effectively, such as how to debug a computer that won't start or use all the features of a smartphone which is not defined as Digital intelligence. Digital Quotient in precise way can be considered as limiting screen time, or being aware of developmental hazards for kids who overuse screens, or knowing when to disconnect from device, and anything related to addiction and digital intoxication.

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According to the DQ institute, which coined the acronym in 2016, digital intelligence is the sum of social, emotional and cognitive abilities that enable individuals to face the challenges and adapt to the demands of life. But unlike IQ which is genetically determined intelligence, Digital Intelligence/quotient needs to be built. It is a fundamental precursor to 21st century skill development for the future workforce because like language, it is absorbed at young age.

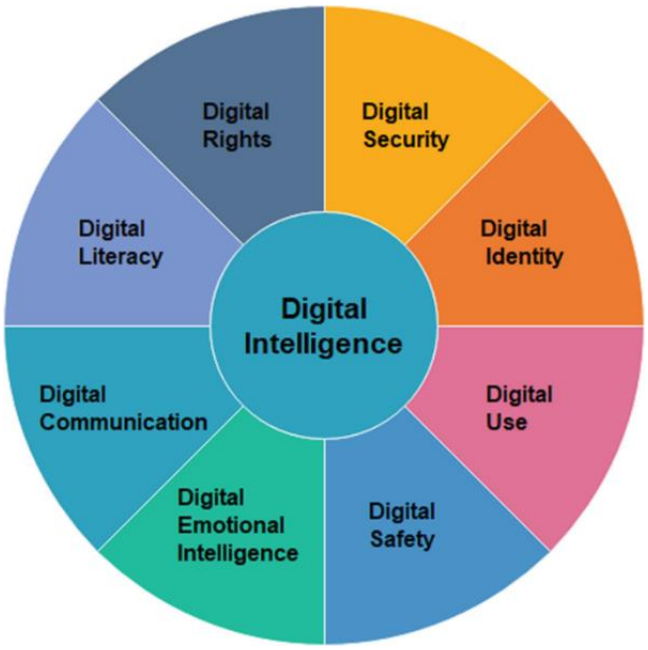


Figure: 1

The above figure represents the framework or the structural elements of Digital Intelligence;

a) ***Digital Identity***: It defines the awareness and horizons of a good digital citizen, digital creator, digital entrepreneur. The ability to build and manage a healthy identity as a digital citizen with integrity. Individuals understand the basic vocabulary needed for discussing the media landscapes in which they are embedded, the social and multicultural nature of digital media and technologies, the construction of their self-image in the digital environment, and how personal use of digital media may have professional implications.

b) ***Digital Rights***: It explains the right to freedom of speech, defines the protection in Intellectual Property and privacy.

c) ***Digital Literacy***: Digital Intelligence defines the computational thinking, content creation and critical thinking.

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d) ***Digital Communication***: It expresses online communication, collaboration and digital footprints. Digital communication can be a job demand if it requires extra effort, creates pressure, and disturbs workflow. In addition, the constant flow of email can increase employees' workloads and lead employees to lose control over their work (Barley et al., 2011). The context of digital communication, technostress symptoms may appear, for example, when employees are forced to use digital communication channels although they prefer other channels, there are expectations of constant availability, communication technology is difficult to use, and technologies are constantly changing (c.f. Tarafdar et al., 2011).

e) ***Digital Emotional Intelligence***: Emotions are energy in motion. It is not detachable. It describes about social and emotional awareness, emotional awareness/regulation and empathy. Emotional Intelligence and Digital intelligence needs to be collaborated in order to have an effective performance and well-being of people. Studies have found that higher emotional intelligence has created better job satisfaction, improved job performance, lower stress and happy life. However, with the transformation of work in the industries since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, digital stress of employees has increased due to which it has affected mental and physical health of people. The widespread adoption of remote work has become emblematic of the post-pandemic era. Organizations worldwide have embraced digital collaboration tools to facilitate seamless communication and collaboration among dispersed teams.(Nadkarni, 2020).

f) ***Digital Security***- It explains about the know-how of password protection, internet security, and mobile security.

g) ***Digital safety***: It cautions about behavioural risks, content risks and contact risks.

h) ***Digital use***: lastly, it brings the understanding and awareness about usage of screen time, maintaining balanced digital health and social- community participation. As studies consistently find that more frequent digital-media use is associated with lower well-being among adolescents. Although some of this relationship may be due to lower well-being causing digital-media use, longitudinal and experimental studies suggest that at least some of the link is due to digital-media use leading to lower well-being. Possible mechanisms

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include sleep disruption, displacement or disruption of face-to-face social interaction or physical activity, social comparison, and cyberbullying(Twenge, 2019)

5. Individual Development

a) **Digital Literacy and Beyond:** While digital literacy is a fundamental component, it is insufficient on its own. Scholars emphasize the need for a holistic approach to digital intelligence that includes digital emotional intelligence, safety, and security (Ng, 2012). This comprehensive skill set is essential for individuals to effectively manage their digital presence and interactions.

b) **Mental Health and Well-being**: The digital environment significantly impacts mental health and well-being. Research indicates that digital emotional intelligence can mitigate the negative effects of digital interactions, such as cyberbullying and social media-induced anxiety (Goleman, 2006). Thus, integrating digital intelligence into education and personal development is vital for fostering a healthy digital life.

c) **Increased Stress and Anxiety:** A study by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that constant connectivity and the pressure to respond quickly to digital communications contribute to increased stress and anxiety levels among employees (APA, 2017). This phenomenon, often referred to as "technostress," arises from the inability to manage digital demands effectively.

d) **Digital Overload:** Research by the Pew Research Center (2018) indicates that excessive use of digital devices without the necessary skills to manage digital interactions leads to digital overload. This condition manifests as mental fatigue, irritability, and difficulty concentrating, which can adversely affect productivity and overall well-being.

6. Physical Health

a) **Ergonomic Issues:**Lack of digital intelligence often results in poor ergonomic practices, such as improper posture and prolonged screen time. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that these practices can lead to musculoskeletal disorders, eye strain, and headaches (NIOSH, 2018).

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b) **Sedentary Lifestyle:** A study published in the Journal of Physical Activity and Health highlights that inadequate digital literacy and time management skills contribute to a sedentary lifestyle. The authors found a correlation between high screen time and increased risk of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and other health issues (Owen et al., 2010).

7. Work Performance

a) **Decreased Productivity:** According to a report by McKinsey & Company (2019), employees who lack digital skills spend significantly more time on routine tasks that could otherwise be automated or streamlined using digital tools. This inefficiency reduces overall productivity and hampers the organization's ability to compete in the digital economy.

b) **Poor Decision-Making:** A study by the Harvard Business Review (2019) found that employees without adequate digital intelligence struggle with data analysis and interpretation. This deficiency impairs their ability to make informed decisions, leading to suboptimal outcomes and missed opportunities for innovation.

c) **Social and Emotional Well-Being**

Social Isolation: Research by Turkle (2015) in her book "Reclaiming Conversation" indicates that a lack of digital communication skills can lead to social isolation. Individuals who cannot effectively engage in digital interactions may withdraw from social activities, leading to feelings of loneliness and reduced social support.

d) **Impaired Emotional Regulation:**

A study by the University of California, Irvine (2016) found that individuals with low digital emotional intelligence have difficulty managing their emotions in online environments. This inability can result in heightened emotional responses, such as anger or frustration, during digital interactions, negatively impacting personal and professional relationships.

8. Educational Impact

a) **Learning Inefficiencies:**

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) (2018) reports that students with low digital literacy skills struggle to leverage educational technologies effectively.

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This struggle can lead to disengagement from learning activities, lower academic performance, and reduced motivation to pursue further education.

b) **Digital Divide:**

A report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2019) highlights that the digital divide exacerbates educational inequalities. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds who lack access to digital resources and skills are at a disadvantage compared to their peers, leading to long-term disparities in educational and career opportunities.

Henceforth based on the above literature review, it needs to undergo the following research questions.

METHODOLOGY

This paper uses a qualitative approach to explore the concept of Digital Intelligence and its impact on organizational outcomes. Data was collected from secondary sources such as academic journals, industry reports, and expert opinions. The data was analyzed to develop a conceptual framework for understanding DI and its relevance to organizational efficiency and growth. This paper has addressed the following questions.

Research Questions

a) What are the key components of Digital Intelligence?
b) How does Digital Intelligence impact organizational efficiency and growth?
c) What are the challenges and opportunities in developing Digital Intelligence among employees?

DISCUSSIONS

1. Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is foundational to DI, encompassing the ability to use digital tools effectively. It involves understanding and using information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources presented via computers. It also includes the ability to navigate, evaluate, and create

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information using digital technologies. Digital literacy skills are critical for effective participation in the digital economy and society.

2. Digital Problem-Solving

Digital problem-solving involves the ability to identify and solve problems using digital tools and resources. This skill is essential for innovation and creativity in the workplace. It includes the ability to troubleshoot technical issues, develop digital solutions, and apply digital tools to complex problems.

3. Digital Learning

Digital learning refers to the ability to use digital technologies for learning and personal development. It includes accessing and using online resources, participating in online courses, and using digital tools to enhance learning experiences. Digital learning is essential for continuous professional development and staying relevant in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

4. Digital Communication

Digital communication involves the ability to communicate effectively using digital tools. It includes using email, social media, instant messaging, and other digital platforms for communication. Digital communication skills are critical for collaboration, networking, and building professional relationships in the digital age.

5. Digital Collaboration

Digital collaboration refers to the ability to work effectively with others using digital tools. It includes using collaborative software, online project management tools, and virtual meeting platforms. Digital collaboration skills are essential for teamwork, project management, and achieving organizational goals.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations must invest in developing DI among their employees to stay competitive in the digital age. This includes providing training and development opportunities, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and supporting employees in using digital tools effectively.

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Organizations that invest in DI are likely to see improvements in productivity, innovation, decision-making, and customer service.

Recommendations:

1. **Invest in Digital Training Programs**: Organizations should provide regular training programs to enhance employees' digital skills. This includes offering online courses, workshops, and hands-on training sessions.
2. **Promote a Culture of Continuous Learning**: Encourage employees to pursue continuous learning and stay updated with the latest digital trends and technologies. This can be achieved through knowledge-sharing sessions, webinars, and access to digital learning resources.
3. **Support Digital Collaboration**: Provide employees with the necessary tools and platforms to collaborate effectively in a digital environment. This includes investing in collaborative software, project management tools, and virtual meeting platforms.
4. **Enhance Digital Communication**: Encourage employees to develop their digital communication skills. Provide training on using various digital communication tools effectively and ethically.
5. **Address Technostress through Slow Computing**: Recognize and address the issue of technostress among employees. Implement strategies to reduce digital overload and promote a healthy work-life balance. Slow computing should be known to employees which means that sometimes becoming slow towards the gear of life can also reduce stress and improve productivity at a faster rate.

CONCLUSION

Digital Intelligence is a crucial skill for organizational growth and employee well-being in the digital age. It encompasses a range of skills, including digital literacy, digital problem-solving, digital learning, digital communication, and digital collaboration. Organizations must invest in developing these skills among their employees to stay competitive and achieve sustainable growth. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, supporting digital collaboration, and addressing technostress, organizations can enhance their efficiency, innovation, and overall performance.

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