Original Article

Students' Lived Experiences of Media in Maintaining Ethics

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Abstract

Introduction: Ethics is an effective means for living better; therefore, learning it is essential to human life. With the emergence of new technologies, this matter has acquired new dimensions. Accordingly, the present study aimed to explain students' lived experiences of media in maintaining ethics.
Material and Methods: The research employed a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The study population consisted of high school students in Lahore city. Using purposive sampling and following theoretical saturation, 40 students were selected as participants. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis (open coding).
Results: From the set of conducted interviews, after transcription, data analysis, and the removal of redundant codes, eighty conceptual codes were obtained and categorized into six main themes.
Conclusion: The results indicate that students have gained numerous positive and negative experiences through their interaction with media, which have left lasting effects on their ethics, behavior, and personality.
Keywords: *New Technologies, Values, Ethics, Lived Experiences*

INTRODUCTION

Technologies have influenced human life since the dawn of civilization. While in the past, new innovations were exceptional and occasional, over the past two centuries they have developed at an accelerating pace. The dimensions of technological transformations in the present era have become so vast and complex that many people can no longer comprehend their intricacies and diversities [1]. During the past two decades, developments in information and communication technologies have so transformed the face of societies that, according to some, the Earth is no longer flat or spherical, but rather a vast network. McLuhan states that we now live in a "global village," which coincided with the rapid expansion of communication technologies and the emergence of hypermedia [2].

According to Giddens (1999), today all of us live in one world, and as Robertson (1992) asserts, the world is tending toward a single unified space [3]. Statistics provided by various organizations and institutions also indicate a rapid and ever-increasing growth in modern information and communication services throughout the world.

Koch states that information and communication technologies have created the potential and a new form of social relations that are not transient or ephemeral, and whose consequences differ from those of conventional social patterns [4].

The message of every technology represents a process or scale that manifests within human affairs. Castells argues that new communication networks encompass diverse cultures, values, and frameworks arising from multiple ideas and different participants [5]. Communication technologies, by manipulating time and space, have produced a world that is extremely small and condensed -a digital world encapsulated in devices only a few centimeters in size, such as mobile phones, monitors, or digital televisions. The astonishing and breathtaking advances in communications define other features of the contemporary world -namely, its information-centric nature. What flows through the vast communication networks is an enormous and ever-growing volume of information? This very production, distribution, and consumption of information has transformed the modern world into an information-oriented one [6].

The communications industry -through television, radio, cinema, telex, and ultimately the internet- has created a new world parallel to the real one: a placeless, borderless, and virtual world that has brought about significant changes in the individual and social lives of human beings. Today, computer technology in communication is regarded as one of the major indicators of development, culture, and ethics [7]. Modern educational technologies have accelerated scientific production; such that new discoveries are added to human knowledge every moment. E-learning, which includes computer-based, internet-based, and web-based education, directs new human paradigms toward a massive educational revolution. The transition from an industrial society to an information society is not necessarily an evolutionary process but rather a

structural leap -one that, for the first time, provides the opportunity for nations to move from a state of backwardness to advancement. Among these, the development of information and communication technologies in education is considered the most important indicator of progress, and e-learning or virtual education is viewed as the key factor in scientific and cultural advancement.

However, it must be acknowledged that the revolution in communication and information technologies not only leads to the progress and development of societies but also — and more profoundly — transforms their values and social norms. According to Menschiz (2003), values are culturally defined standards of desirability, goodness, and beauty that serve as broad guidelines for social life.

With the presence of these technologies, moral values are sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously influenced and altered. The impact of technologies on cultural norms may affect elements such as language, identity, social relations, interactions between boys and girls, customs, rules, lifestyles, and individual ethics. Zokaei states that the vast amount of knowledge and information available to today's youth through mass media forms the main foundation for their decisions and behaviors. Inglehart, based on cross-cultural studies, believes that value change occurs from one generation to another, not continuously from year to year; therefore, in his view, individual and societal values do not change overnight, but rather gradually and imperceptibly over time [8].

Accordingly, the present study aimed to explain students' lived experiences of media in maintaining ethics.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is qualitative research of the lived experience type, also known as phenomenological research.

The research population consisted of high school students in the city of Lahore. Using purposive sampling and following theoretical saturation, 40 students were selected as the sample. Their demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of research participants

	Gender	Age(year)	Grade	Father Edu.	Economic status	Favorite media	Favorite sport
1	Female	15	1	Diploma	Average	Internet	Swimming
2	Female	17	3	Middle school	Average	Message	Aerobic
3	Female	16	3	Primary school	Average	TV	Volleyball
4	Female	17	3	Diploma	Average	TV	Volleyball
5	Female	16	3	Secondary school	Average	TV	Volleyball
6	Female	17	2	B.A.	Good	TV	Swimming
7	Female	16	2	B.A.	Average	TV	Volleyball
8	Female	17	2	Primary school	Average	TV	Volleyball
9	Female	16	3	Secondary school	Average	TV	Climbing
10	Female	18	3	Diploma	Good	TV	Handball
11	Female	17	3	Primary school	Average	TV	Volleyball
12	Female	16	2	Diploma	Average	TV	Football
13	Female	16	2	Illiterate	Good	TV	Tennis
14	Female	17	3	Primary	Good	TV	Volleyball
15	Female	17	3	Diploma	Average	Internet	Taekwondo
16	Female	18	3	Primary school	Average	Message	Basketball
17	Female	17	3	Secondary school	Average	TV	Volleyball
18	Female	17	3	Primary school	Average	Message	Volleyball
19	Female	16	1	Secondary school	good	Message	Basketball
20	Female	16	1	Diploma	Good	Message	Basketball
21	Female	16	1	Secondary school	Good	Message	Badminton
22	Female	16	1	Diploma	Average	Newspaper	Football
23	Female	16	1	Diploma	Average	Newspaper	Taekwondo
24	Female	17	3	B.A.	Average	TV	Volleyball
25	Female	17	3	B.A.	Good	Internet	Football
26	Female	15	1	B.A.	Average	TV	Shooting
27	Female	14	1	Diploma	Average	Message	Handball
28	Female	17	3	Primary school	Average	TV	Volleyball
29	Male	15	1	Diploma	Average	TV	Taekwondo
30	Male	16	1	Primary school	Average	Message	Football
31	Male	16	2	Diploma	Average	Message	Football
32	Male	18	3	Primary school	Weak	TV	Volleyball
33	Male	14	1	Associate	Good	Radio	Football
34	Male	18	4	Secondary school	Average	TV	Billiard
35	Male	18	4	Diploma	Average	Internet	Chess
36	Male	18	3	M.A.	Good	Internet	Swimming
37	Male	18	4	Associate	Average	Internet	Ping Pong
38	Male	16	2	Diploma	Good	Internet	Football
39	Male	16	2	Diploma	Good	Internet	Football
40	Male	16	2	Middle school	Good	Internet	Football

To collect data, in-depth semi-structured interviews were employed.

The implementation procedure in the present study was as follows: using an interview guide, efforts were made to conduct interviews within the framework of the intended topic and research objectives, without directing or influencing the participants. Considering that the subject of this study was the understanding and lived experiences of students regarding moral teachings, and since schools were chosen as the research setting, the researcher, after referring to the schools, relied on student introductions for participation. At the beginning of each interview, after participants expressed their willingness to take part, their permission was obtained for audio recording. They were also assured that all information would remain confidential. The interviews were conducted in a quiet environment during the students' free time. Since the interviews were semi-structured, the researcher, using the interview guide, ensured that the conversation remained within the research objectives. The ability to conduct interviews is a crucial factor for ensuring the validity and reliability of the data. For this purpose, the researcher began by conducting three pilot interviews to gain proficiency and experience in the interviewing process. After each interview, the researcher transcribed the recorded material and compared it with the audio to ensure accuracy and consistency before proceeding to the next participant. This continued until, in accordance with the sampling method, coding reached completion and no new information was obtained from the final participants. During transcription, meaningful nonverbal cues observed during the interviews were also taken into account by recalling the interview atmosphere while listening to the recordings, in order to prevent any misinterpretation. After reviewing the transcribed texts, meaningful sentences were extracted, and from within them, significant statements-derived with consideration of the aforementioned elements-were identified and analyzed. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 60 minutes, depending on the participants' willingness. In qualitative research, data validity refers to the extent to which the findings represent reality. To ensure the accuracy of the data, the researcher employed the method of "reconstruction of reality," sending the transcribed interviews to the participants and subsequently receiving confirmation of their accuracy. Flick (2006) also refers to this technique as "communicative validation."

Finally, the data were analyzed using a coding method.

RESULTS

After interviewing the students, concepts were extracted from the interview transcripts, which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Concepts extracted from the experiences of the research participants

Sentences extracted from the interview.	Summary sentences	Extracted concepts	Sub-theme
My friend says that whenever I chat, I get angry because I use fake profiles to hire people.	Using chat and fake profiles and enjoying it	Using fake profiles and enjoying putting others to work	False identity
Many of my friends who have satellite TV imitate it by watching bad Persian TV	Watching satellite and its bad series and its effect on choosing and how to have a	The effect of satellite films and getting to know and	Incorrect relationships with the opposite sex

series and choosing and accompanying the opposite sex.	relationship with the opposite sex	communicating with the opposite sex	
Some of my friends' dress and style their hair like the satellite TV movies, which I thought was cute.	The cuteness of hairstyles and clothes with the effect of satellite	-The unusualness of clothing styles -Influence from satellite	Fashionism
In addition to increasing my knowledge, the Internet is a form of entertainment for me.	Getting to know more science and entertainment through the Internet	-Learning about new sciences -Entertainment via the Internet	-Awareness of the principles of values -Learning science
I learned about the dangers of lying from books and the radio, and I am now afraid to lie.	Using the media to get to know lying	-Using the media -Getting to know the harms of lying	Research and investigation
I use text messages to comfort my friends when they are upset (sometimes I try to change the atmosphere with funny messages).	Using text messages to calm down	-Using the media -Sympathy with friends to make problems less obvious	Understanding and solidarity
I learned how to make peace between people from the hosts of TV shows who, with logical words and Quranic reasons, established a bond of friendship between two people who had melted sugar.	Bonding friendship by citing reasons and verses from the Quran	-The role model of the prophets and the Quran -Creating peace and friendship -Logical words	-Empathy and sympathy -Creating logical understanding
I learned some inappropriate words (really, don't be sensitive, peach) from TV and from my friends' repetitions, which I am afraid to say in front of my family and school staff and get reprimanded.	Taking as a role model the insistence on incorrect words from the radio and television	Inappropriate words	-Relying on inappropriate words -Borrowing inappropriate symbols
From the series, I became familiar with and aware of moral issues (such as how to communicate with the opposite sex, how to choose friends, etc.).	Education through the radio and television in how to communicate and make friends	-The effect of the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation -How to communicate correctly	Appropriate relationships with the opposite sex
From the movies, I learned that hiding important matters from the family is ultimately a disgrace and misfortune.	Working secretly and stealthily will lead to misfortune	-Education via the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation -Working secretly -The scandal of doing wrong things	Secret work
From movies and series, I learned that clothing and makeup are a sign of power and respect.	I learned from the movie that expensive makeup and clothes are a sign of respect	-False education through films -Not pretending and staying away from luxury	-Fashionism -Attracting attention

From movies and series, I learned that one should not deceive anyone because it will end in harm.	I learned from the movie not to cheat on people	-Not cheating and not cheating -The bad consequences of doing wrong things	Consequence thinking
Films, their adventures, and their teachings have a very good effect on me.	The good moral effect of watching the movie	The effect of the media	Awareness of values and moral principles
Television satisfies my feelings of loneliness, and I take its programs as a model.	I don't feel lonely by watching TV	Filling free time	Reducing loneliness
From the stories on the radio, I learned not to trust anyone without reason.	Education through the radio and not trusting unnecessarily	-Education through radio -Not trusting without knowing	Consequence thinking
From films, I learned how to live a right and healthy life (life with understanding and friendship is sustainable).	Learning to live with understanding and lasting friendship from the movie	Having understanding and solidarity in life	Understanding and solidarity
Text messages with moral messages have had a very positive impact on my honesty and my relationship with God.	Good text messages introduced me to good things	-Being familiar with new technology and sciences	-Honestness -Communication with God
The children's program introduced me to being compassionate and proactive.	The children's program taught him to be compassionate and active	-Being compassionate -Being active in affairs	Empathy and friendship
My friend's betrayal of her husband caused their divorce, and I hate this ugly act. I learned this from watching satellite movies.	My friend's wife's betrayal and my hatred for her	Creating hatred for bad people	-Consequence thinking -Divorce
I like satellite because its programs keep me away from my inner problems for hours and make me happy	Keeping problems away from myself by watching satellite	-Paying attention to free time -Staying away from problems	Forgetting problems
Radio Jawan introduced me to important life issues such as making friends, living a healthy life, being clean (free from tricks and deceit), and having a healthy personality.	Getting to know moral issues through the radio (making friends - being pure)	-Learning about moral issues through radio -Living a clean life -Being without tricks and deceit	Making friends
I received a text message about honesty and it had an impact on me, and I tried not to lie anymore.	I was influenced by text messages and I don't lie	-Education through text messages -Not lying	Honesty
Text messages have had the effect on me to be careful with my words and not to say anything unnecessarily.	I should be careful not to speak unnecessarily and carelessly	-Not talking unnecessarily -Speaking carefully	Thinking about the future
I learned from television that the consequences of cruelty and evil towards parents are	The bad consequences of oppression and cruelty	Not being cruel	Thinking about the future

inevitable, and I am not like that at all.			
I learned from the media and movies that fair competition leads to progress if we are not jealous people.	Healthy competition and not being jealous	-Not being jealous -Healthy competition	Healthy competition
I like text messages because it makes it easier for me to communicate with friends and is effective in maintaining friendships.	Easy communication and friendship with text messages	Friendship and empathy	Making friends
I learned about keeping a promise from stories	Learning to be faithful to one's promises from stories	Learning to keep your word from stories	Keeping promises
Bad TV series cause divorce to increase in society	Bad TV series education has caused separation	-Learning to be honest about movies -Divorce and separation	Divorce
I like satellite TV because not all of them are religious programs and they bring happiness.	False happiness due to unauthorized programs	-Being happy with unauthorized programs -Not repeating things	Having fun
I learned to be fanatical about protecting my homeland from movies where there is a war between two countries and soldiers swear to defend their country.	Bias in protecting the homeland through movies	-Keeping your word -Defending the border and homeland	Keeping promises to the homeland
Most text messages have introduced me to moral issues.	Getting to know morality through SMS	Text messages and getting to know ethics	Familiarity with moral values
Some programs introduced me to moral teachings.	Getting to know morality through TV shows	Getting to know ethics through the program	Familiarity with moral values
Most of the messages sent to me have positive moral points.	Getting to know morality through SMS	Text messages and getting to know ethics	Familiarity with moral values
I learned about selflessness and sacrifice from the series	Learning self-sacrifice by watching movies	Sacrifice and forgiveness	Thinking about the future
I became interested in moral points such as connection with God and patience from reading books, especially the biographies of the prophets and imams.	Learning moral points through reading books	Emphasis on familiarizing oneself with moral points through reading	-Communication with God - Patience
I became interested in the novel hell and heaven, which introduced me to patience and perseverance, which are two good qualities, but I am not a patient person myself.	From the book, I learned about the two qualities of patience and perseverance, but I am not a patient person	- Getting acquainted with patience through books - I am not a patient person	Patience
From the books, I was introduced to a new concept of love, which is sacrifice, in	From the book, I learned about the concept of love and sacrifice	- Getting acquainted with sacrifice through books	Thinking about the future

my work, I often make sacrifices and God loves those who sacrifice.		- Having forgiveness and sacrifice in life	
In addition to entertaining me with its films, watching satellite TV also introduced me to a variety of fashions, and according to the new fashion, I think my friends accept me more and I feel great.	Seeing a satellite	-Having fun with satellite TV -Getting acquainted with Western fashions -Imitating fashions -Feeling great with inappropriate work	Fashionism
Bad friends, satellite TV programs and films, and ugly text messages have had an impact on my immoral behavior.	Bad friends, text messages, and satellites have had a great impact on me	-The negative impact of a friend -Movies, satellite, SMS	Familiarity with immoral matters
Newspapers and the events in them have introduced me to many moral issues, both good and bad, and have made me always act with a clear mind in life.	The impact of newspapers on getting to know issues and staying focused on doing work	- Collecting one's senses - Acting intelligently	Thinking about the future
Bad education from satellite TV series and programs causes an increase in divorce in society.	The bad training of the series has caused separation	-Bad education from movies -Divorce and separation	-Divorce - Familiarity with immoral matters

The findings of this study, after removing common codes, are 80 conceptual codes that indicate students' lived experiences of ethical teachings in interacting with the media in six main categories and twenty-five subcategories, as shown in Figure 1.
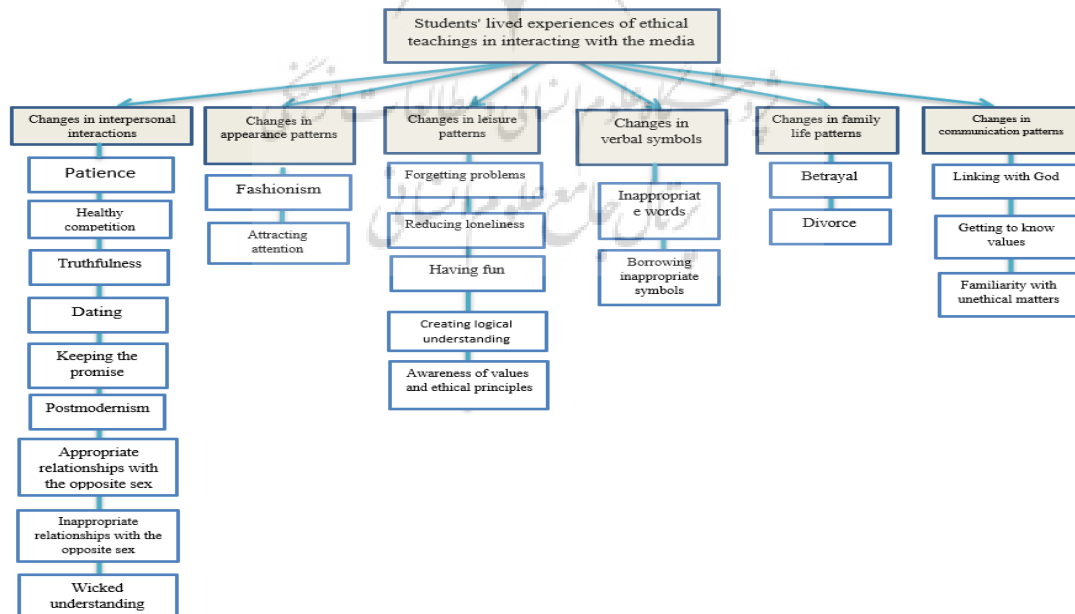

Figure1: Students' lived experiences of ethical teachings in interacting with media

DISCUSSION

After removing overlapping codes, the findings of this study yielded eighty conceptual codes that reflected the students' lived experiences of moral teachings in their interaction with media. These were classified into six main categories -changes in communication patterns, changes in family life patterns, changes in leisure patterns, changes in appearance patterns, and changes in interpersonal relationships-and twenty-four subcategories, as shown in Figure 1.

1. *Changes in Communication Patterns*

The subcategory of changes in communication patterns included both positive and negative experiences of students. Some students reported feelings of enjoyment from using modern technologies (such as text messaging, television, the internet, and satellite media) and becoming familiar with moral values through them.

Some researchers [9] have used the term technopoly in this regard. Technopoly refers to a system in which technology-particularly communication technologies-replaces all forms of belief, authority, and moral value, leading society toward the sacrifice of spirituality. Overall, the digital culture of new media has influenced taste, preference, communication patterns, needs, and norms.

2. *Changes in Family Life Patterns*

The violation of norms, values, and ethics occurs across a wide spectrum. At the macro level, it manifests as waste, negligence, disorder, carelessness, insecurity, lack of expertise, and ignorance; while at the micro level, it results in illness, delinquency, crime, and sin. This finding is consistent with several other studies in this field [2].

3. *Changes in Verbal Symbols*

Another key finding of this study indicated changes in verbal symbols within the Persian language, encompassing two subthemes: changes in the verbal symbols or words used in everyday communication, and the replacement of these with foreign-particularly English-terms. Although such change may strengthen foreign language proficiency, it also contributes to the gradual disappearance of certain Persian words. The important point is that, in general, communication technologies have become symbol-making tools. Some linguistic studies support this claim [10].

4. *Changes in Leisure Patterns*

Technologies are not only communication media but also serve as platforms for entertainment, leisure, games, and recreation. This has transformed social interactions, norms, and values. Users of modern technologies are not passive recipients; rather, they actively seek information and entertainment according to their interests. The internet, in particular, functions as both an informative and entertaining medium, yet it is also seductive and deceptive. Moreover, the internet provides an outlet for individuals suffering from psychological difficulties [11].

5. *Changes in Appearance Patterns*

Some studies [11] have shown that certain unique entertainment applications—such as following new fashions, showing off, monitoring others, and experiencing a sense of maturity by possessing specific and private tools-are regarded as the main motivations behind the use of modern technologies, especially mobile phones.

6. *Changes in Interpersonal Interactions*

Modern communication technologies and media, through sophisticated and long-term planning, can significantly influence the relationships, beliefs, values, and ethics of society. Mobile phones, the internet, and similar tools have increased communication overall. In general, such tools are necessary to meet individuals' needs and enhance social interactions, which in turn help satisfy many social, emotional, spiritual, physical, and essential human needs. Typically,

those norms and values that benefit society are endorsed, whereas those that disrupt it are discouraged [2].

CONCLUSION

The vast advancement of modern technologies-particularly information technology-has brought to attention the realization of the "flat world" theory, which has undoubtedly influenced the maintenance of ethics as well. A positive and trusting attitude toward communication technologies is a common cultural characteristic observed in all developed countries. However, neglecting the potential risks of a communication technology can lead to a crisis of public trust.

Since the path of every technological development passes through a series of dualities in decision-making, it is necessary for ethical discussions about technology to be extended to broader segments of society, enabling greater public participation and influence in this field.

The results indicate that students, through their interactions with modern technologies and media, have gained numerous positive and negative experiences that have left lasting effects on their ethics, behavior, and personality.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy and etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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