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RESEARCH PAPER

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Idea Pictures from Pinterest

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ABSTRACT

The core objective of the present research paper was to analyze the influence of social media posts on people and how they perceive it. Idea pictures were the posts that we encounter every moment while using social media applications. These posts might contain text, images, drawings, etc.; often, could have a mixture of all these. For the research purpose, five pictures were downloaded from a social media application named "Pinterest". In these selected pictures, different social issues were discussed, and the influence of these pictures was examined in depth under the light of Norman Fairclough's 3D model of critical discourse analysis (CDA). The term "idea picture" was used by the researchers because these posts had ideas or thoughts about many things and the results showed that these posts had such text and image depiction that could influence the thoughts of people who use social media. This research paper based on mainly three questions and along the pictures depiction, the language usage in posts was also analyzed in this study. This research will contribute to the domain of social media discourse and its analysis.

Introduction

A conversation may be thought of as a broadening of discourse to any kind of correspondence (Liu et al.). A statement or message, either spoken or written, conveyed by using language in a particular social context is known as "discourse." Any activity by which people give purpose to everyday life is referred to as discourse in sociology (Ruiz, 2009). An individual takes part in a conversation; he uses language as a source of interaction, and through the language he employs, we can find discourse. Discourse language is not simple, but twisted and complex to understand. In discourse, language has hidden agendas. Discourse analysis is the process of interpreting inherent meaning. Discourse is everywhere and done mainly through the use of language, but sometimes with gesture and posture as well. In every setting, discourse can be easily analyzed. It can be positive or negative. Let's take an example: when you go to a shop, the salesman will describe all the qualities of his product by using language and try to convince you that you must purchase it from his shop. If you try to think about it, what does the shopkeeper do? He uses language to sell his item, and when you go for analysis, it is up to you whether you will take this as negative or positive. Language is the most fundamental medium for conveying and constructing meaning, insights, information, etc. It is the language that is typically used for discourse.

Discourse, according to contemporary thinkers, fulfills a purpose (Strega, 2015). "Critical discourse analysis" is the act of responding to such language usage in which an individual employs language in a certain context and knows how to use it; it can be a speech, a sermon, a television show, a newspaper, a magazine, a digital media post, etc.

The liberal ideologies of privileges, free speech, equality, and accountability were also spawned by the modern era.

It is noteworthy that language techniques are used for communication and have a universal influence on a large number of people. We are living in the postmodern era, and this is the age of social media, where a teenage boy or girl can forget eating two meals but they cannot miss checking out their social media accounts. People are addicted to it, and it is up to us how we use all the networks of social media. We have knitted it, and we are victimized.

This social media has its good and bad effects on society. A substantial amount of how we interact and everyday interactions has been transformed by online channels and social networking sites (Thurlow, 2010). People post many videos and pictures, and these contain millions of thoughts. Its effect or understanding may vary from person to person. These may have motivational content, sadness, love feelings, a piece of advice, informative knowledge, and much more. These pictures or videos are known by many names, such as "post," "blog," etc. because they have some sort of idea behind them; therefore, I use the term "Idea Picture" or "Idea Video" for them. For this research paper, five pictures are selected and analyzed in depth.

An individual who is using social media is engaging in discourse unconsciously. People are sharing their lives with others, and the interesting fact is that the life they are sharing is not their real life. You may say "dual identity." It means that people are pretending to be someone they are not. Discourse is an endless phenomenon that cannot be stopped.

The main objectives of the study are why these particular pictures were chosen and the aims to select such a topic were; **i)** to analyze what kind of thoughts or information can (not) be transferred by using social media, **ii)** to know that social media usage can be positive or negative and can (not) manipulate the truth **iii)** to check whether these posts have influence over the thinking of the society or people.

Literature Review

Textual analysis, discourse practice, and social engagement are the three primary levels at which the text is analyzed using Fairclough's 3D model of CDA (1995). Grammar and vocabulary are among the linguistic elements that form the basis of the textual analysis. The goal of discursive analysis is to recognize discourse in the way that certain words are used. The monopolistic traits, power dynamics, and concealed ideologies are revealed by the social practice analysis.

Strauss et al. (1964) defined diverse discourse standpoint, which are sometimes referred to as discourse realms in existence which make up discursive devices. Through the medium of social media, such discourse dimensions are made visible through interactions between people using it. Individuals use dialogue and interpretive skills to achieve common understandings inside those communication activities. Online communication "seem to foster ongoing discussion between their authors and their readers making them more dialogic in nature than traditional Web sites" are the building blocks that put it into practice (Dickey & Lewis, 2010).

Richards and Schmidt (2014) described communication methods used by animals other than humans, such as the "language" of bees and dolphins. Language is a vital part of communication. It allows us to communicate our thoughts, ideas, feelings, and emotions

to others. The approach of human interaction that involves the organized arrangement of words (or their written representation) into bigger units, such as morphemes, words, phrases, and utterances.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2004) and Wodak and Meyer (2009) stated that scholars emphasized that when using a CDA strategy, multidisciplinary effort is crucial and the analysis of both obscure and explicit underlying connections of supremacy, prejudice, leadership, and governance as they appear in language is done using the CDA technique (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

It has been frequently discovered that media reports have a greater impact on other people than people think they have on themselves. Perceptions about the climate of opinion are least likely to influence the chance that someone will express their thoughts in public, though individuals who think that strategy is a highly important issue are more likely to believe that others have more media power than themselves.

Theoretical Framework

A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of language, which defines language usage as a form of social engagement, is the framework of CDA. All contexts have an association to different historical contexts and serve as a vehicle for the reproduction or contestation of preexisting social connections as well as the advancement of various interests. It is the inquiries about interests. How or where is the text positioned? Whose goals are being advanced by this positioning? Against whose interests does this? What effects does this posture have? Critical discourse analysis refers to the type of analysis that aims to comprehend the role that speech plays in power relations. The Fairclough (1992) & Fairclough (1989) model for CDA consists of three interconnected analytical processes connected to three interconnected discourse dimensions (Janks, 1997). They are the following:

1) The subject of examination (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts)

2) The techniques used among human individuals to develop and consume the word (writing, speaking, designing, and reading, listening, and seeing)

3) The social and historical circumstances that control these processes

Each of these aspects, in Fairclough's interpretation, requires a rare feature of assessment including:

1) Text Analysis (description)

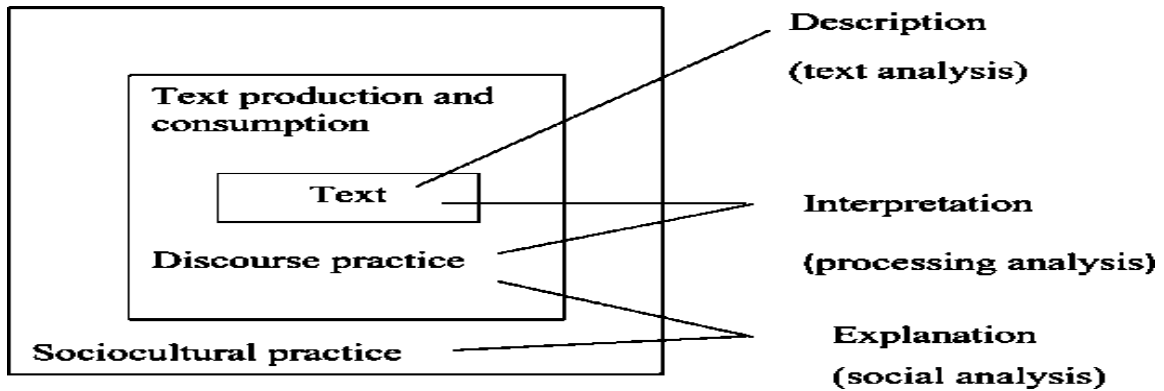2) Processing Analysis (interpretation) and

3) Social Analysis (explanation)

Figure 1. Fairclough (1992) 3D model

Material and Methods

In this paper, five pictures are taken from a social media application named "Pinterest". This application is found suitable for downloading pictures and these pictures are randomly chosen by the researchers. These pictures may contain multiple thoughts and stories as Van Dijk (2008) stated that critical discourse analysis examines how texts in both political and social contexts are used to enact, generate, and oppose democratic assault, inequality, and domination. Fairclough (1995) 3D model of critical discourse analysis was used as a tool to analyze these pictures in depth.

Results and Discussion

The five chosen idea pictures have been analyzed in the paragraphs that follow. They might show up one by one.
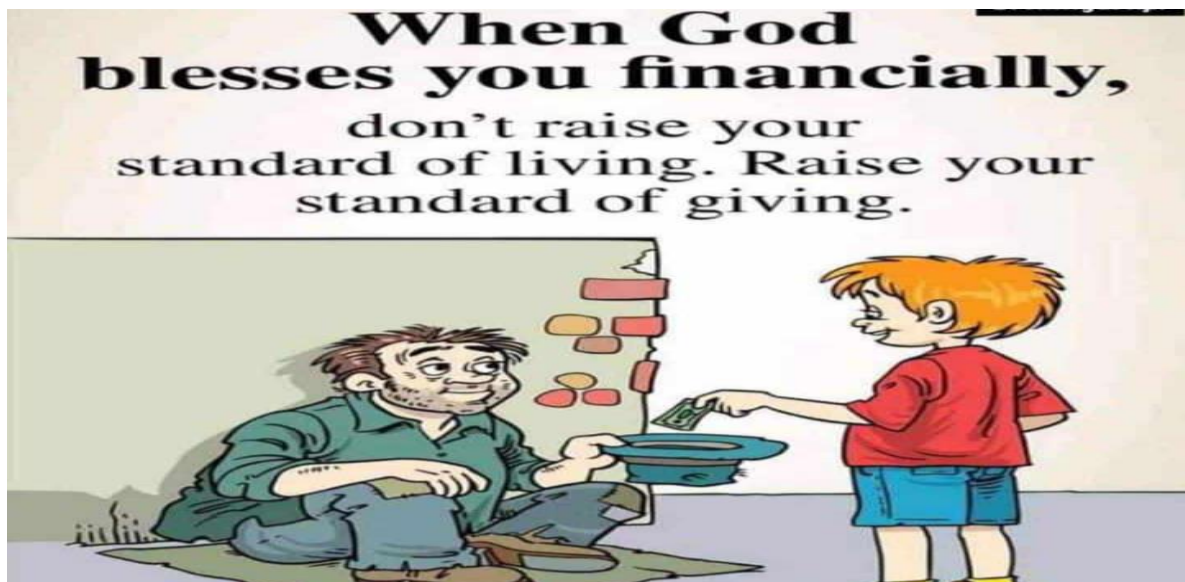

Figure 2. First Chosen Image

The selected picture in which it is stated;

"When God blesses you financially, don't raise your standard of living. Raise your standard of giving."

Description: A teenage boy is putting some money in the hat of a bagger man. Both have smiles on their faces.

A positive discourse analysis of the selected picture is discussed here. This picture supports the idea of Marxism. Marxism aims to develop a society or community without class bias. The picture carries the thought that if you make a lot of money, you should donate to charities in the same manner; if you do so, many social, financial, ethical, and other problems will be resolved gently. Then no one will ever think to adopt bribery, corruption, and the snatching of goods as merely a source of income to meet their basic needs; no one's daughters will get older at their parental home. If we will transparently circulate the money, then we might not see again hanging necks and drowned corpses of whole families in the lake. People commit suicide or take steps forward to end their lives because they may find it easier than living in a community or society where people are full of lust and sick for money and have zero feelings for others, either because they live or quit their lives miserably.

We notice that every faith, whether we are Muslims or followers of any other religion, employs charity for the well-being of the social strata. It has been said emphatically that people who prefer others over themselves are more humane. Such behavior will be rewarded.
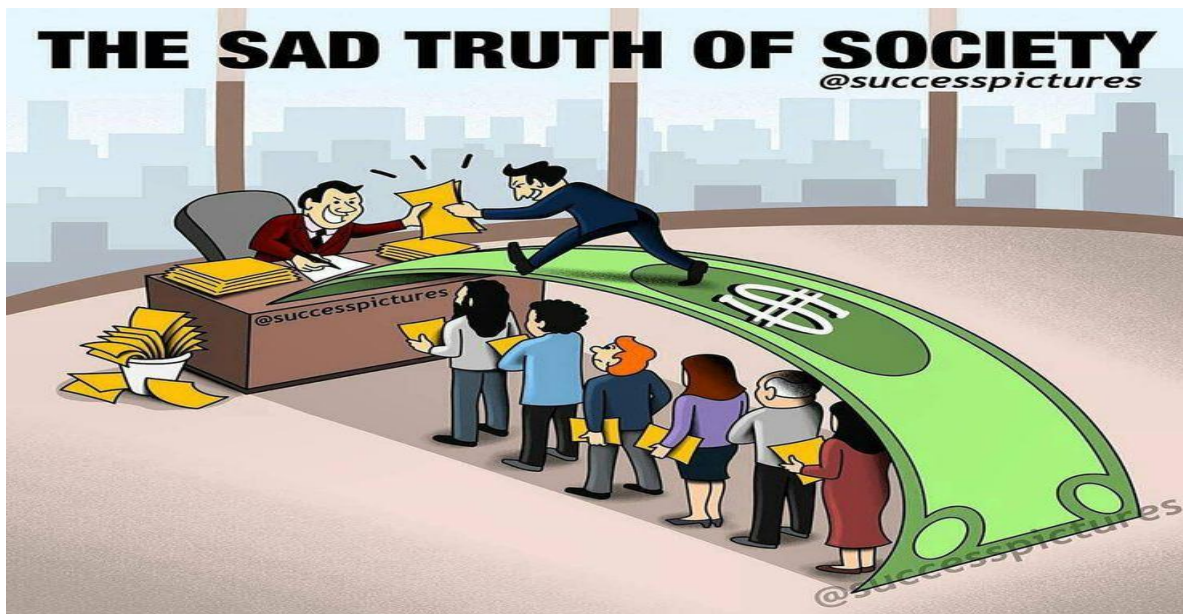

Figure 3. Second Chosen Image

The selected picture explains this;

"The Sad Truth of Society."

Description: A person is sitting on a chair and looking authoritative, and a desk lies before him. It seems that many documents are placed on the desk, and some are thrown in the trash. Many people are standing in a straight line and holding documents. A person has made a bridge of money and, riding over it, approaches the person sitting in front and hands over the papers. This may be an office setting where job interviews for hiring are held, or its interpretation may vary from person to person.

In our social society, merit is not measured; everyone prioritizes their own needs. A single person in a society is not responsible for this kind of injustice, but a whole society,

community, or state is. In developing countries, it has been witnessed more than in developed countries. All the developed countries commit such acts of injustice, but less than the developing countries.

In this picture, it is shown that if you have good money or belong to a high-reputed class, you will get whatever you want, but if you are just an ordinary human being, it will never be possible to achieve your goal until a rich person desire to do you a favor in what you are looking for.

Today's society is not equal. This society should be known as a "rich society" or "a society of rich-class people." A rich person is free to do what he wants, but poor people are not allowed to do jobs because they will not get those jobs until they have high-level political connections or good money to give as bribe to the selectees. Rich people use their money to manipulate the merits or laws of society or the state. If you cannot make people happy, then there is nothing for you, and no one would care even if you died of hunger, even though you have won gold medals in academics or for your abilities. In this picture, a line is made in front of a person who seems to have high authority, and all people are standing in line except one because he has money, and from last, by the use of money, he created a bridge and became the first one and got the desired paper or job easily. This act is not just entertained in one place or profession; it is everywhere, like in business places, hospitals, police stations, political settings, college or university admissions, departmental stores, etc. If you have good money or have high approaches (like in politics), then people will call you with such endearing terms that would please you, and if you do not have such qualities, then you are nobody to them *(Dahl, 1957)*.

We have to end this unethical or unbearable act of identity. We know people or form relationships with only those who will be fruitful for us in the future. We say that we live in an inherently discriminatory society, but facts prove us wrong. We had run campaigns and marched against racism, gender bias, class bias, and much more.

A question for you; are we achieving what we marched for? The answer would be "no," because we go on a march because we are paid for it. All these movements were run, but the people behind them all paid for all this kind of surveying. We are just talkative people; we do not have justice traits that what we say relies on, but the factors we rely on are our money, high-class relations, political power, and more.

There are millions of examples in the present world where you can see that they say to end gender bias, but in the same office or place, if he is a man, he will not let a woman grow, and vice versa *(Dunham, 2017)*. Today's society will only talk, listen, or even see for money. If you give them the money, they will do what you want them to see, speak, and listen for money. You pay them money, and they will do what you want them to see, hear, speak, and write.

If you do not possess any of these characteristics, then you have one more way to get what you want, and that is to suck the feet of someone in high authority. In this way, you may meet your desire if she or he takes pleasure in doing so.

Figure 4. Third Chosen Image

This third selected picture explains this;

"Don't Waste Food.

I Can't Eat Everything. I Will Eat Anything."

Description: On the top it is written "Don't waste food". On the left side a boy is wasting food in the trash and saying that he can't eat everything. On the right side of the picture a boy is weeping and finding food to eat and along this he is saying that he will eat anything.

Many countries in the world are dying because of a shortage of food. On this planet Earth, billions of human beings are living, but millions of people still do not have the sense of responsibility to save food and water for the coming centuries because these resources are getting much scarcer in quantity or whatever the quality might be.

In the above picture, you can see the miserable situation. One boy is wasting food and saying he cannot eat everything, while on the other side, another poor soul is trying to find something to eat and saying, "I will eat anything." We may not understand the situation and feelings of the poor boy. This picture depicts our current social scenario.

Our social strata are wasting food every minute. People have a lustful nature toward food. When they attend a ceremony, a wedding, a friend's party, etc. They fill their plates with the miserable thought that this could be the last meal of their lives. This typical act is more often seen when people find free food and there, they eat like monsters that have not eaten anything from decays.

Countries like Pakistan, India, etc. are among those where the majority of people have no ethic or sense of awareness that by saving food, they can save millions of lives. Even though thousands of NGOs are working and campaigning for this, people are showing that they are insane, and it will be better to call such people walking corpses because if they are alive then they must understand and should take care of others. Humans are the only beings who have cognitive insights. Therefore, it is believed that humans will

show acts of responsibility towards everything and will do things that will benefit mankind.

There are many poor countries in the world, like Madagascar, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, the Central African Republic, etc., where poverty rates are 70.70%, 63.30%, 69%, and 62%, respectively. In the above-mentioned countries, food shortages are so severe that every hour, hundreds of people are dying of hunger.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) published a charter of basic human rights that should be granted by the state in all circumstances. Food is one of those rights. But even though in many countries every year millions of people are dying from various causes, one of them is the shortage of food *(Bell, 1999).*

Here, a question may arise in your mind: Why are all nations mobilized on this internationally challenging problem? The simple answer is, "This is not our problem!" If everyone is getting their basic and desired needs at home, then why bother themselves? In the present social community, we are living in what is known as the "post-modern age," but it will be more accurate to call it the "Age of Hollow Humans."
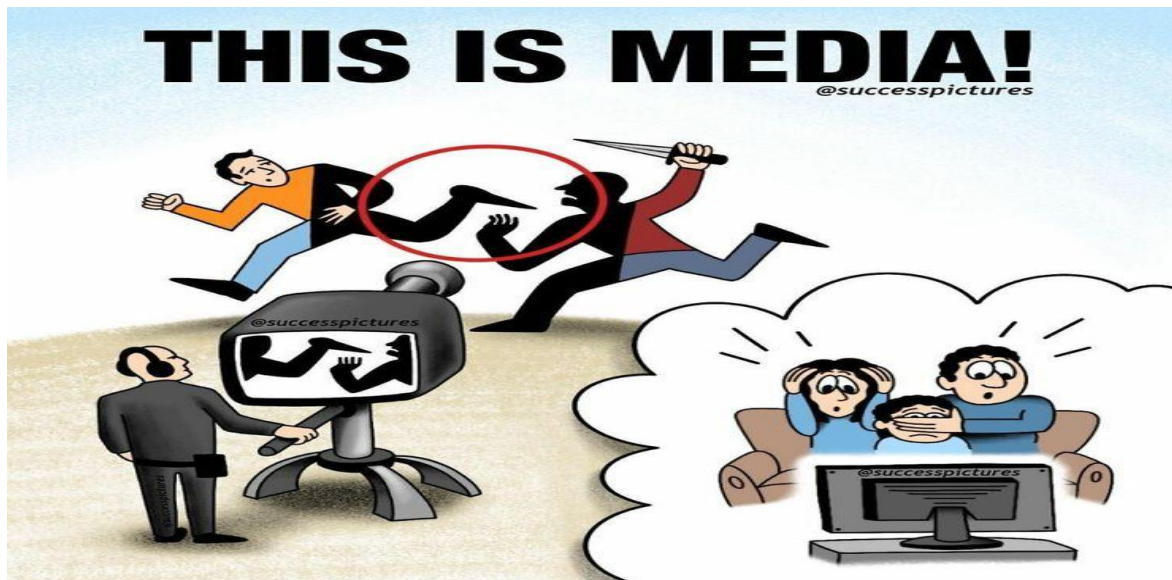

Figure 5. Fourth Chosen Image

In this selected picture it is stated;

"This Is Media!"

Description: First, "THIS IS MEDIA" is written in the upper centre of the image, and the text is bold. A cameraman in a corner is recording with his camera and manipulating the truth. Two men are running when one has a knife and the other has nothing; he is just running and looking back. In another corner, a family has a television screen in front of them are watching along with their son. They are watching something on it, but the father puts his hand over his son's eyes, and both the man and the woman are afraid of something playing on the TV screen.

Today's media is the worst because it uses language for negative purposes, for self-gains, or to get someone's affection. In the picture, the media reporter is showing the opposite attitude. In this way, the media will get more benefits if shows that the chaser is innocent and the person who is being chased by the killer is a killer and killing the chaser.

It's not only the media that publishes fake news; there are also people who perceive the wrong side or know only half the truth *(Mutz, 1989)*.

Media has the power to influence people, both positively and negatively. Our media transmission is not transparent but sold out. Everyone in the world is looking forward to one's benefits; no one is standing beside truth or reality, but some do so.

The media and its owners are not only those who manipulate the news and facts; except media, there are also political parties and other powerful people behind this misuse of media. Political representatives are also responsible for such misuse of power. All the facts are rearranged by these highly-placed officials according to their interests. A team will consider multiple factors to gain the desired results. They work on diction, audience, medium, style, narration, etc.

It is usually said that;

"If you tell a lie a hundred times, it will become the truth."

Our current media does the same. This proverb is perfect for telling the whole story about media and its functionality and power in our society. Our media shows only those sides of reality that raise TRP or get some order from high authority.
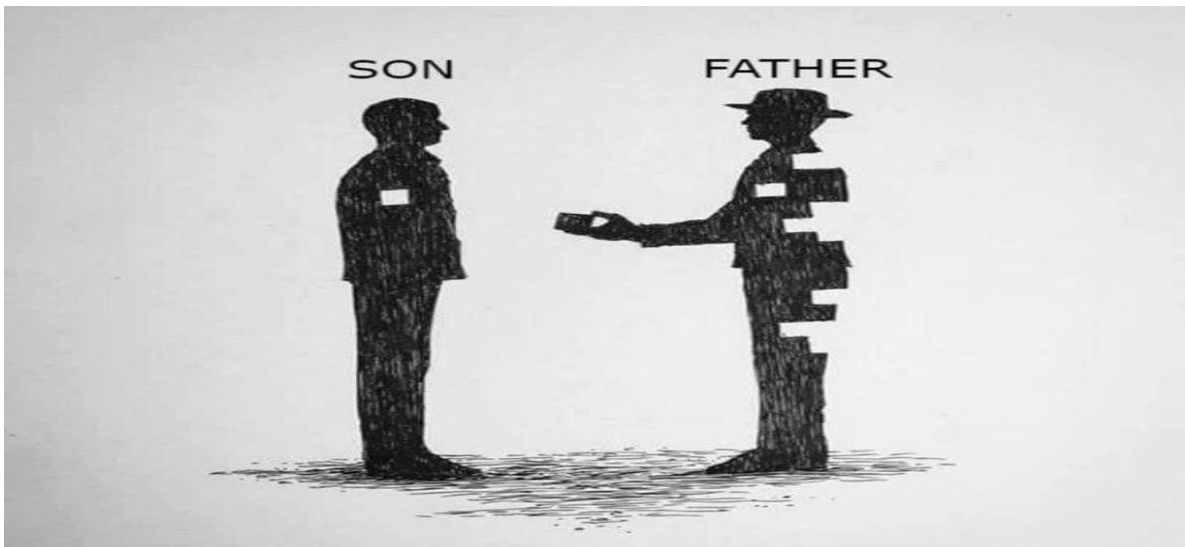

Figure 6. Fifth Chosen Image

This picture states that;

"SON" "FATHER"

Description: In this picture, it seems that two human-like buildings are standing, and bricks from one building are being shifted to the other. One building is named "Father" and the other "Son."

The relationship between a father and a son is magical. This is tough to describe in words, but every son and father can feel it in depth and realize how real it is. don't feel it in depth and realize what it is? For a son, his father is a savior, a lifeboat, a teacher, a helper, a fighter, and a friend, and even the son finds himself in his father and wants to become like his father in his life and follow the path of his father till the end of his own life.

Everyone has a dream in his life that he may become like his father, but these dreams are thrown out when the son grows up and later gets married. After marriage, what the son does is a shameful act, and for society, it is a curse. The son was raised by a man who is known as his father, who worked day and night harder to provide all the desired (or one thing set through his mouth) things and fulfill the wishes of his son.

A father is not a god, but as a human being, he does everything for the comfort of his child. A father sees himself in his son and assumes his son's dreams are his own. In the absence of his father, a son is a second-in-command until his father comes back. The responsibility of a good son is to return the same love, care, and affection to his father as when his father loved and cared for him when he was a child or in his growing years. When a son finds out his father is merely a human being who has flaws, he begins to reveal his own identity or create a new one, challenging the authority and knowledge of his father.

Just look at the picture; you will notice and question yourself that it looks like a house that is being constructed by shifting its bricks from one place to another. Yes! You are right; it is so. "Father" is like an old institution that was constructed by his father, and so on. Now he is building his son, and it is his responsibility to construct his son in such a way that he behaves well toward others, and in his old age, his son should take care of his father and give time to him.

The role of the father is patriarchal. Patriarchy is a concept in which a male person has the supreme or most power in terms of control over everything *(Frymer-Kensky, 1981)*. A father teaches everything to his son so that he becomes a good social member of society as a result of his teachings. A father makes sure that his son behaves well with everyone and always encourages his son to take part in social events and gain experience. He teaches his son how to overcome all the obstacles that will come up in his life. A father has a large role to play in his son's life, and no one else can play that role as well as a father can. A good father should never quit his job and give it to someone else.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, to support all that has been stated so far, this research paper has illustrated social media posts and their effects. What can these social media posts do to bring about change in our society? When this source of communication was introduced to us, millions of trends were set and followed by millions of people. According to Wodak (2005) the CDA employs an argumentation framework in which particular people or roles are defended using both positive and negative traits. As a result, both the favorable oneself and the antagonistic other-presentation are replicated (Reisigl & Wodak, 2005). The writer's choice of words in the chosen images makes this very evident. In this paper, five different pictures were selected to enrich the multiple thoughts that can be conveyed through them. People can use social media for their pure or evil desires to create or leave an everlasting influence on the people of a community, society, or state.

Recommendation

This study will also advance and recommend wide-ranging critical media literacy for social media users, advise transparency, broaden representation and respect for other's perspectives, and advocate for further analysis and research in the social media discourse. In addition to promoting ethical practices such as posting only verified content and never trying to trick or share sensitive information with readers or other social media users.

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