



**ASSIGNMENT
SEMESTER SEPTEMBER 2023**

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| SUBJECT CODE | : | FS1012 |
| SUBJECT TITLE | : | CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS |
| LEVEL | : | BACHELOR |

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QUESTION 1

A very famous Korean artist is promoting a health drink on his social media. The next day, he promotes a cream that he claims will whiten and smoothen the skin. By using these two products, he alleges that his health and skin has improved significantly.

As a student who is taking Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving subject, explain how would you verify the **credibility** of this artist's claims.

= Verification of any credibility of a product involves an extensive research and knowledge of the given product and the authenticity of the promoter. We can make use of our Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving skills to base and support our judgements. In fact, according to Beyer (1995), the proper use of existing or fulfilling criteria in order to judge the quality and element of something from directly jumping into conclusion is what he referred to as 'Critical Thinking'. As we critically analyse the facts, data with our extensive knowledge, we were prone to develop adequate problem-solving skills as well. In the case of the famous Korean artist, promoting a health drink on his social media, this subject is open to many biases. Starting from his claims of whitening and smoothening the skin to his allegation of the use of these products marking a significant improvement in his own skin.

Due to the influence of Capitalism, health drinks and beauty products have been all the rage and differentiating them from a marketing gimmick is a tough challenge. It is important to do our research from reality-based unbiased sources. A famous Korean artist's claims about health drink and beauty products can be problematic in a sense that says 'no shoe fits all'. Due to the variation in Genes of every human being in this world, there can be a natural advantage on some people with their beauty and health. If they are just promoting these products as 'Influencers' in the internet, it is high time that people check the claims of these products by seeking 'Knowledge-Lean' resources about the topic. The influencers in the internet are those famous individuals who use their fame and reach to market any product that their followers might be able to relate with. While people value all the emotion and claims that these influencers are selling upon us, there is another problematic issue which we can address using 'Affective Learning Styles'.

Skin-whitening products have their fair share of popularity in Africa, Aisa and the Middle-East. Forbes claims that this industry is valued at \$8.3 billion as of 2017. (McEvoy, 2020) Coming back to the affective learning styles, the Korean artist can be utilizing the same set of skills to advocate emotions into the general public's sensitivity to their existing nature of sense

and perceptions. If the artist can conform and contribute the public's satisfaction with these products, they'll internalize the need of these products into their belief system. In turn, they will develop a kind of characterization where such products shall be a necessity more than a luxury. However, we can counter this by separating manipulation from marketing, with the same affective learning styles but now from the general public's end as well. For instance, let's look at the case of a skin-lightening brand 'Fair & Lovely'. After many years of criticism, the Indian subsidiary of Unilever renamed their brand from 'Fair & Lovely' to 'Glow & Lovely'. The word 'Fair' had promoted colourism and had set unrealistic as well as unnatural beauty standards. Similarly, the commercials of these products are largely misleading and over-exaggerated but then again, it's just a marketing gimmick to advocate the need and emotion to buy these products. While the name switch from 'Fair' to 'Glow' hasn't ultimately changed the purpose of the product, it has definitely addressed the audience's regards in at least some ways. If the Korean artist's claims on whitening and smoothening the skin is against natural aging and natural skin types or colours, then we need to be mindful of such claims.

If we are to ignore and avoid these modern biases, and simply check the allegations and validity of the product, then we need to be carefully aware of the ingredient listings that make up these health and beauty products. Overpriced products are often referred to as the 'best products' but that is often not the case. We need to make sure if these products are dermatologically tested and approved. Dermatologists need to review these claims as they have expertise in this field.

In an ultimatum, the use of health drinks and beauty products doesn't hurt if it is clinically tested, verified, reviewed and is suitable for your diet and skin type. It is important to research and recognize your own needs. We can avoid the inevitable nature of genetics, and aging. The ultimate healthy way to gain the artist's claim is by keeping your skin hydrated, moisturized, protected from UV rays and with occasional use of Vitamin C, diet with rich-nutritious food backed by regular exercise. In this way, we can help ourselves attain healthy temple of body and critically analyse the famous Korean artist's claims on the said products.

QUESTION 2

Discuss what is **value assumption** and how this affects the delivery and understanding/acceptance of any message. Provide a real-world example in your discussion.

= Value assumption is an implicit preference for one value over another, given a particular context. Value priorities are synonymous with value assumptions. It plays a pivotal role in shaping our perspectives and influencing the decisions we make in various aspects of life. Understanding value assumptions is crucial as they significantly impact the delivery and reception of messages. This subtle influence, also referred to as value priorities, becomes evident in the dynamics of message delivery and reception, introducing complexities arising from value conflicts, diverse reasoning processes, and their consequential impact on drawing conclusions. Value assumptions also impact message dynamics, by delving into the complexities of value conflicts, reasoning, and their implications on drawing conclusions.

Consider the debate on legalizing cannabis. The conflicting values of public choice versus health risks and health benefits versus public choice create a complex landscape. Individuals advocating for legalization may prioritize personal freedom (public choice) over potential health risks, while opponents might emphasize the societal impact on health, highlighting conflicting value assumptions.

‘Legalize weed in Nepal.

So that, the economic prosperity and stability in public choices can be established.’

The premise here is that weed establishes economic prosperity and provides choices for public. With this premise, we have concluded our argument about weed having to be legalized in Nepal. Here, we have the following value assumption:

‘The benefits of weed being legalized outweigh its negative aspects. Every citizen must be aware of this effect.’ (Madai, 2022) The contextual nature of value assumptions introduces layers of complexity. Individuals may prioritize values differently based on the specific circumstances, challenging critical thinkers to navigate through nuanced perspectives. For instance, the debate surrounding the legalization of cannabis involves conflicting values such as public choice versus health risks. Those advocating for legalization may prioritize personal freedom (public choice), while opponents might underscore potential health risks, showcasing the contextual nature of value assumptions.

We need to be able to analyse this hidden or unstated agenda of ‘citizens being aware of hallucinating effects of Weed.’ The argument is taking this value for granted. With the help of value assumption pattern, people can have an effective communication and other parties can accept the validity of the message provided in context.

Consider another scenario of a nation grappling with the decision to grant asylum to a group of people which allows them to stay in the foreign country. Economic desperation may lead one group to prioritize financial gain over the dignity of their homeland, while another group, deeply rooted in patriotism, rejects seeking asylum to preserve their country's name. These contrasting value assumptions influence individual decisions and societal perspectives on the same issue. Critical thinking plays a crucial role in navigating these complexities, challenging individuals to consider the dynamics of differing value assumptions in a given instance. Taking the example of seeking asylum, economic desperation drives one group to prioritize financial gain over homeland dignity, viewing asylum as a means to secure visas and alleviate poverty. In contrast, another group, rooted in patriotism, rejects asylum to preserve their country's name, prioritizing national pride over potential financial benefits. The scenario illustrates the contextual and dynamic nature of value assumptions, emphasizing the need for attentive observation to understand the diverse values at play in real-life situations.

The values held by a message sender significantly affect how the message is delivered. The sender's values can imbue the message with attributes such as friendliness, invitation, encouragement, informativeness, threat, taunting, or even beratement. For instance, a sender valuing truth and honesty above all else might deliver a message that appears direct and transparent, though it may be perceived as cold or inconsiderate. Conversely, a sender valuing diplomacy and conformity may craft a message to appear considerate, avoiding bluntness to maintain a comfortable relationship with the receiver. Importantly, value assumptions also impact how the message is received. When the receiver shares similar values with the sender, the message is likely to be understood as intended. However, if participants have contrasting values, the message may be at risk of misunderstanding, potentially leading to conflict. In such instances, the receiver may struggle to accept the message, as it challenges their own values while establishing the sender's values. (ZOHRE GHAZIVAKILI, 2014)

In the complex web of human interaction, value assumptions serve as guiding principles that shape our decisions and perspectives. Recognizing the contextual complexity, diversity, and dynamic nature of value assumptions is essential for effective critical thinking. The real-world

example illuminates how these assumptions permeate decisions on a societal level. As individuals engage in critical thinking, they navigate through the intricacies of value assumptions, fostering a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives. In doing so, they enhance effective communication and problem-solving, contributing to a more nuanced and interconnected global discourse.

QUESTION 3

In your own words, define and discuss the implications of omitted information.

Write your answers in a **750-word-essay**. Provide real-world examples in your explanation.

Answers in bulleted points and/or a list would be **rejected**.

= In today's information-rich world, the significance of critical thinking is underscored by the prevalence of omitted information. Omitted information refers to the deliberate or unintentional exclusion of certain details in communication, often with the intent to persuade or influence decision-making. As critical thinkers, it is essential to delve into the implications of this practice, particularly in the context of advertisements and persuasive communication. Omitted information serves as a strategic tool in communication, allowing communicators to emphasize specific aspects while downplaying or concealing others. In advertisements, for example, this can manifest as the highlight of positive product attributes while omitting potential drawbacks. In persuasive communication, certain arguments may be presented with a deliberate exclusion of counterarguments to strengthen a particular viewpoint. the context of omitted information in today's digital age introduces additional complexities. The rapid dissemination of information through various platforms amplifies the potential impact of selective omissions on a global scale. Critical thinkers must be adept at navigating these digital landscapes, recognizing the influence of omitted information on public discourse, shaping opinions, and ultimately steering societal attitudes.

Omitted information serves as a tool in various forms of communication, particularly in advertising, where the goal is to persuade consumers. Advertisements frequently present a selective view of a product or service, emphasizing positive aspects while omitting potential drawbacks. The omission of relevant details can be deliberate, aimed at shaping perceptions and influencing decisions. Omitted information serves as a persuasive tool in various forms of communication, impacting public opinion and influencing decisions. During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, the dissemination of false information became a prominent example of omitted information's consequences. The deliberate exclusion of accurate details and the presentation of misleading narratives created confusion and influenced public perceptions.

Notably, the then-American President contributed to the spread of divisive language by referring to the virus as the 'China Virus.' This deliberate framing omitted crucial information about the global nature of the pandemic and its origins, contributing to a distorted understanding of the situation.

In this context, critical thinkers seek autonomy by persistently searching for hidden information that may impact their decisions. The critical question posed is, "What significant information is omitted?" By asking questions related to ambiguity, assumptions, and evidence, critical thinkers can uncover crucial missing details in reasoning. Critical thinkers, by questioning the presented information and seeking comprehensive understanding, can mitigate the impact of omitted details on decision-making. The deliberate framing of the pandemic as the 'China Virus' omitted crucial information about its global nature, fostering an incomplete understanding among the public.

Recognizing and detecting omitted information holds several benefits. When information is presented with a purpose, be it by advertisers, teachers, politicians, authors, speakers, or parents, critical thinkers have the responsibility to decide whether they wish to be influenced by the chosen purpose. Persuaders typically organize information to present their position in the strongest light, making it essential for critical thinkers to pause and consider what may not have been disclosed.

In the entertainment industry, the omission of crucial information is evident in movie marketing strategies. An illustrative example is the movie "Logan" (2017), initially rated R for violence and gore. However, upon viewing in cinemas, the audience discovered that certain violent and gory scenes had been edited by the censor board, despite the movie's explicit rating. This deliberate omission of the edited content left viewers feeling betrayed, as the marketing did not accurately represent the actual viewing experience. This practice serves to attract a wider audience based on the R-rating's appeal, yet it fails to disclose alterations made for censorship reasons. (Republica, 2017) Consequently, audience expectations are unmet, emphasizing the need for critical thinking when interpreting movie ratings and promotional material. Realizing the persuasive nature of communication, critical thinkers are encouraged to question the presented information and explore what might be intentionally or unintentionally omitted.

Ultimately, omitted information is a pervasive phenomenon in today's communication landscape. Understanding its definition and background is crucial for individuals engaged in critical thinking. The deliberate exclusion of certain details, especially in advertisements, can

significantly influence decision-making. Detecting omitted information offers critical thinkers autonomy by allowing them to make informed decisions based on a comprehensive understanding of the presented arguments. As we grapple with the implications of omitted information, the imperative for critical thinkers is clear: to be vigilant architects of their own understanding. By deciphering the motives behind the selective exclusion of information, individuals can forge a path toward autonomy in decision-making, contributing to a society that values transparency, integrity, and a nuanced appreciation of the complexities that define our information-rich world. The ability to question and uncover hidden details is essential for navigating the complexities of information in our information-driven society.

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