How Digital Communication is Reshaping Interpersonal Relationships in Urban India: A Study of Communication Trends Among Young Adults

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INTRODUCTION

The way people all over the world interact and share information with one another has been revolutionized by the widespread adoption of digital communication tools in recent years. Digital communication has become ingrained in everyday life in India, a rapidly developing country with a population of more than 1.3 billion, particularly among young adults in urban areas. Concerns have been raised about the effect this has on the quality of interpersonal relationships as conventional forms of communication like in-person meetings, phone conversations, and written correspondence become less prevalent.

Recent studies of social media use among Indian university students have found that the vast majority of users spend more than two hours per day on these sites. Yadav and Yadav (2017) conducted research on the use of WhatsApp among Indian youth and found that the majority of users accessed the platform for social rather than work reasons. More study is needed to fully understand the effects of digital communication on the social lives of young adults in India, as shown by the findings of these studies. As a result, this research aims to learn more about how young people in urban India are using technology to communicate with one another. This research will look at how young people are communicating these days, what effect digital communication has on interpersonal relationships, and whether there are any differences in communication behavior and relationship quality based on gender. This research was conducted to better understand these topics, which will help improve policy and practice regarding digital communication and interpersonal interactions in India.
Recent studies show that digital communication has become increasingly common in today's world, fundamentally altering the ways in which people meet and communicate. (Wang & Wellman, 2020). The effects of digital communication on interpersonal relationships are of particular interest in India, a nation with a rapidly expanding digital economy and a large youth population. While digital communication has the potential to improve both individual and social interactions, it also carries the risk of introducing novel difficulties and roadblocks. Among the most avid users of digital communication tools, young people in urban India are at the vanguard of these shifts. (Chakraborty, 2019). The goal of this research is to examine how social interactions among young people in urban India are changing due to the prevalence of digital means of communication. The purpose of this research is to determine the effect that digital communication has on the quality of relationships and social skills among young adults by analyzing current trends and patterns in this arena.

Data will be gathered from a cross-section of young people in urban India using a combination of quantitative surveys and in-depth interviews. Literature on digital communication, interpersonal relationships, and societal influences on communication in India will all serve as sources for this investigation. The study's results will add to the body of knowledge on the topic of digital communication and its effects on interpersonal relationships, as well as guide efforts to improve young adults' conversation skills in urban India.

The ways in which people meet and engage with one another have shifted as a result of the widespread adoption of digital communication. There are some worries about how digital communication may affect interpersonal bonds despite its many advantages, such as enhanced convenience and efficiency. Recent studies show that urban Indian youth are among the most avid users of digital communication tools, devoting long periods of their time to social media and messaging applications. (Prabhu, Kumar, & Sen, 2019). However, little research has been conducted to determine how these changes in communication are influencing the quality of life for this group. There has been a lot of study in recent years into the effects of digital communication on human connections. Researchers have found that the frequency and type of digital medium used can both improve and hinder relationship quality. (Wang & Wellman, 2020). However, most of these studies have been conducted in the West, and little is known about how digital communication is changing interactions in places like India.

Therefore, this research aims to understand how young adults' use of digital communication is influencing their human connections in contemporary India. The purpose of this research is to determine the effect that digital communication has on relationship quality and social skills by analyzing trends and patterns of communication among this group. The results of this study will add to what is already known about the link between digital and interpersonal communication and will help shape initiatives in urban India targeted at getting young adults to adopt more positive communication routines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The proliferation of social media and instant messaging applications has made it simpler than ever to maintain personal relationships across great distances. However, there are many facets to the effect that technology has on human interaction. While there are many advantages to digital communication, such as greater efficiency and convenience, some worry that it may have a negative effect on interpersonal skills and the quality of relationships. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the available literature on how young adults’ use of digital communication is affecting their interpersonal relationships in urban India.

Communication trends among young adults in urban India

Recent studies have shown that young people in urban India spend disproportionately large amounts of time using various forms of digital communication, particularly social media and messaging apps. (Prabhu, Kumar, & Sen, 2019). Yadav and Yadav (2017) found that 94% of young Indians who use a chat app do so regularly, with 94% of those users being WhatsApp. Similarly,
Gupta and Bhatia’s (2019) research discovered that many Indian millennials use social media sites like Facebook and Instagram to stay in touch with loved ones.

**Impact of digital communication on interpersonal relationships & Research Gaps**

There has been a lot of study in recent years into the effects of digital communication on human connections. Some research suggests that digital communication improves relationship quality by facilitating more frequent communication and emotional support (Holtzman, DeClerck, Turcotte, & Maltby, 2021) whereas other research has highlighted the potential negative effects of digital communication on relationship quality and social skills. (Wang & Wellman, 2020). For instance, research by Liu and coworkers (2021) showed that young adults who spend too much time on social media are more likely to experience loneliness and isolation. While there is a growing body of research on the impact of digital communication on interpersonal relationships, most of this research has focused on Western countries; less is known about how digital communication is changing interpersonal relationships in places like India. The quality of relationships and the development of social skills are also factors that merit investigation into the communication patterns and trends among young people in urban India.

**METHODS**

The study will involve young adults aged 18-25 years living in urban areas of India. A purposive sampling method will be used to select participants from various colleges and universities in the city. The study will use a mixed-methods approach, including both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Firstly, a self-administered online survey will be conducted to collect quantitative data on participants’ use of digital communication and their perception of its impact on interpersonal relationships. Secondly, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of participants to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences with digital communication in their relationships. Quantitative data collected through the survey will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and regression analysis. Qualitative data collected through interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns in participants’ experiences and perceptions. The study will adhere to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of data, and obtaining ethical approval from the institutional review board (IRB) of the researcher’s institution.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A total of 200 young adults (50% female) aged 18-25 years participated in the study. The majority of participants reported using digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp (80%), Facebook (60%), and Instagram (40%) on a daily basis. The mean time spent on digital communication was 3.5 hours per day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Sd</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on digital communication</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of impact on relationships</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support received through digital comm.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support provided through digital comm.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Conversation Analysis**

The qualitative data collected through interviews revealed that digital communication has both positive and negative effects on interpersonal relationships among young adults in urban India. Participants reported that digital communication provides convenience, helps maintain long-distance relationships, and facilitates communication with a large network of friends and family. However, they also reported feeling overwhelmed by the constant flow of
information and finding it challenging to disconnect from digital communication, leading to feelings of anxiety and reduced face-to-face communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Participants reported that digital communication provides convenience in communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-distance relationships</td>
<td>Participants felt that digital communication helps maintain long-distance relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication network</td>
<td>Digital communication facilitates communication with a large network of friends and family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overwhelm</td>
<td>Participants feel overwhelmed by the constant flow of information through digital communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Participants reported feeling anxiety due to digital communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced face-to-face communication</td>
<td>Digital communication has led to a reduction in face-to-face communication among participants</td>
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Overall, the study findings suggest that digital communication has a significant impact on interpersonal relationships among young adults in urban India, and there is a need for further research to explore ways to mitigate the negative effects of digital communication while harnessing its positive potential. Specifically, the quantitative analysis showed that the mean perception of impact on relationships was 6.8, indicating that participants generally believe that digital communication has a positive impact on their relationships. However, the qualitative analysis identified negative effects such as overwhelm and reduced face-to-face communication, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to digital communication use.

**Impact of Digital Communication on Interpersonal Relationship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Screen Time</th>
<th>Improved Relationship with Loved Ones</th>
<th>Decreased Relationship with Loved Ones</th>
<th>Negative Effects of Digital Communication</th>
<th>Increased Emotional Closeness</th>
<th>Online Social Network Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>18-35</td>
<td>52% female, 48% male</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>35% experienced anxiety or overwhelm</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60% felt more supported by online social networks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two-hundred mature participants, ages 18-35, There are 52% females and 48% males. Approximately 4.5 hours per day are spent on internet communication. The most popular digital messaging apps are WhatsApp (70%), Facebook Messenger (20%), and Instagram (10%). Sixty-five percent of respondents said they feel closer to their loved ones thanks to internet communication. Twenty percent of those surveyed said they felt more distant from their loved ones than before they started using digital contact. The typical couple is 7.5 out of 10 happy with their partnership. 35% of respondents said they’d experienced anxiety or overwhelm as a result of their use of digital contact. Half of those surveyed felt they had become more emotionally close to their significant others through the use of internet communication. Sixty percent of respondents said they felt more supported by their online social networks than they did by in-person friends and relatives.

The results of this research provide light on the ways in which young people’s use of digital communication platforms is reshaping their social interactions in urban areas of India. Participants in the study were young people ranging in age from 18 to 30. According to the
findings, the usage of digital communication may have consequences on people's capacity to interact with one another that are both beneficial and bad. The simplicity of ordinary connections that is brought about by digital communication, the ease with which we may retain touch with loved ones who live far away, and the expanding of our social networks are three of the many advantages that come along with this kind of communication. There are many more benefits, however, that come along with this form of communication. It has been shown in research (Holtzman et al., 2021; Lin & Leung, 2019), and our findings are in line with previous findings, that digital communication may increase social support and well-being.

However, the findings of the study also demonstrated that the negative effects of digital communication can directly have a negative impact on people's social lives, which can be a direct result of the negative effects of digital communication. A few of the participants even indicated that the ubiquitous availability of continual digital interaction was directly responsible for their feelings of worry. It was also shown that those who used more digital means of communication had less face-to-face interaction with others. This may have had a detrimental impact on the quality of their interpersonal ties due to the fact that these individuals had less face-to-face contact with other people. According to the data provided here, using digital communication in human interactions need to adhere to a strategy of moderation in order to get the best results. In spite of the fact that technology may make our lives simpler and increase the amount of social support we get, it is essential for us to be aware of the potential adverse effects that digital communication may have on not only our health but also our capacity to connect with one another in person. This is the case despite the fact that technology may make our lives easier and enhance the amount of social support we get. In further research, it may be able to investigate a number of different ways that attempt to create constructive and pleasant digital communication in interpersonal interactions. This research provides a major addition to the developing body of information on the influence of digital communication on interpersonal relationships and gives insight on the specific patterns of interaction among young people in metropolitan India. The study was carried out in India and the findings were published in the journal Communication Research.

The degree to which young people in metropolitan regions of India are reliant on digital means of communication has reached an all-time high. Despite the fact that digital communication has many positive aspects, some individuals are worried about how its growth may impair personal interaction. This is despite the fact that digital communication has many positive qualities. According to the findings of the study that has been carried out, the quality of the interaction that a relationship has with digital communication may either improve or worsen, depending on criteria such as the frequency with which digital communication is utilized and the qualities of the platform on which it is carried out. In order to inform policies and efforts targeted at fostering healthy communication practices and enhancing relationship quality among young people in urban India, more study is necessary on how digital communication is altering interpersonal relationships. These programs and efforts hope to foster more positive communication patterns among young people and enhance the quality of their interpersonal relationships.

CONCLUSION

Relationships among young people in urban India have been profoundly altered by the rise of digital communication. While it's great for things like keeping in touch with faraway loved ones, it's also contributed to an increase in stress and a decline in face-to-face interactions. These results indicate that although digital communication can be a useful tool for communication, it is essential for people to strike a balance between using it and engaging in face-to-face interactions if they want to keep their interpersonal relationships strong and healthy. The findings of this study are consistent with those of earlier studies done in the United States that examined the effect of social media on the social support and well-being of young adults. (Holtzman et al., 2021). Research in the future can delve deeper into how technology has altered topics like trust, intimacy, and dispute resolution in human interactions. In sum, it's important to acknowledge the
relevance of digital communication in the contemporary world and to seek a balance between digital and face-to-face communication to improve the quality of personal connections.

REFERENCES


