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Digital Transformation and Interpersonal Communication among College Students in the Contemporary Media Environment

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ABSTRACT

The high rate of development of digital technologies has greatly changed the manner in which interpersonal communication is done between college students affecting how they interact, collaborate, and sustain relationships. The main objective of the study was to explore the influence of digital transformation on interpersonal communication in the modern media landscape. Convenience sampling was performed using a structured questionnaire with 599 undergraduate and postgraduate students after a driven cross-sectional survey with the help of Google Forms. In SPSS Version 26, the study analysed the data with descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that the students were highly digital and satisfied with communication via smartphones and social media platforms, showing that they use them extensively in their daily communication. Nonetheless, enhanced digital interaction was linked to decreased offline communication, which showed a change towards blended communication practices. The use of social media proved to be an important predictor of interpersonal communication behaviour. The research findings then conclude that although digital media improves the effectiveness and accessibility of communication, educational institutions need to promote a balanced communication behavior by means of digital literacy programs, communication skills and responsibility in the use of technology in order to reinforce meaningful interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication, Digital Transformation, College Students, Social Media, Digital Communication, Communication Satisfaction, Contemporary Media Environment

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The process of interpersonal communication has been established as the core of human interaction as it allows people to share their thoughts, emotions, experiences and social support both verbally and non-verbally (Datu et al., 2025). Historically, the main communication between college students is between individuals and is done through face-to-face meetings, discussions in the classroom, calls, and letters. Nevertheless, the fast development of information and communication technologies has essentially changed the manner in which people communicate and connect. The prevalence of smart phones, high-speed internet, and digital communication tools transformed how people venture with one another and the interaction process has been quicker, more convenient, and without geographical limitations.

One of the most significant sources of this change has been the increase of smartphones proliferation. Smart phones are now essential in the lives of college students due to their provision of instant messaging, video calling features and social networking features (Ningtias & Ariyanti, 2025). At the same time, digital media revolution has widened the possibilities of virtual communication, and the number of WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Telegram, and X (previously Twitter) are used (and also all). The development of digital connectivity has also been accelerated by the "rising internet penetration, especially in the developing world such as India as students have the ability to be perpetually involved in online communication. As recent statistics suggest, the young adult population is one of the most numerous and the busiest internet users who depend on digital platforms greatly in terms of academic cooperation, social networking, spending free time and maintaining interpersonal relationships (Purnama & Asdlori, 2023).

The representatives of generation Z as people born after the second part of 1990s and the first part of 2010s have been brought up in the world where digital technologies prevail. The Internet as a form of social communication is not a novelty to them as it is to the other generations. Speed, multimedia content and constant connectivity are all part of their communication preferences, and this has led to changes in

interpersonal communication trends (Madkour, 2022). More so, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital communication forms greatly as schools were forced to transition to online learning and students were forced to use virtual communications to uphold academic and social connections at the time when physical distancing arrangements were needed. Such digitally mediated patterns of communication have continued even after campuses have reopened and blended communication pattern has developed, which incorporates both face-to-face communication and use of the internet.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although digital communication technologies have many beneficial effects, some concerns have arisen about its effects on the quality of interpersonal relations between college students. The increased reliance on smartphones and social networking sites has minimized the chances of direct face-to-face communication, which may influence the level of competence in communication, expression, empathy, and satisfaction in the relationship. Over digitalization can promote shallow social interactions, social loneliness, and diminish meaningful human-to-human relationships. Even though digital platforms enhance real-time communication, they can also change behavioural patterns concerning communication and interpersonal trust, as well as emotional bonding. Although a number of research studies have been conducted globally on the use of social media and internet-based communication, not many empirical researches have been done on the issue of how digital transformation has changed interpersonal communication among Indian college students. This brings in the need to conduct context-sensitive studies to know the modern communication behaviour in the context of higher education institutions.

1.3 Research Gap

Previous studies have explored the subject of adoption and utilization of social media and internet, as well as the use of digital communication among young adults in ample detail. Nonetheless, the majority of past studies were concentrated on such detached factors like screen time, phenomenon of social networking addiction, or academic results instead of exploring the overall restructuring of interpersonal communication. In addition, the studies have shown few using multidimensional constructs of communication in assessing the effects of digital technologies on communication frequency, quality of communication, emotional connectedness, interpersonal satisfaction, and preferences between face-to-face and online communication among Indian college students. Given the fast pace of digital media ecosystem and the shift in communication behaviour among the Generation Z, there is a huge gap in the research on the overall effects of the digital transformation on interpersonal communication behaviours in modern higher learning institutions.

1.4 Need for the Study

The current paper holds significance due to the fact that effective interpersonal communication is still one of the essential elements of academic achievement, psychological well-being, and positive social relations. Digital technologies are becoming more and more popular in education institutions as a source of instruction and collaboration, as well as interaction with students, so it is crucial to know how they shape the nature of communication. The results of this research can help teachers, policymakers, and college administrators to formulate approaches to enhance moderated communication practices, encompassing the advantages of both digital technologies and the chances to be in a face-to-face communication. Also, by exploring the influence of digital communication on emotional connectedness, social support and interpersonal relationship among college students, the study will add to the discourse on mental health. The study also promotes the creation of digital literacy programs that promote the responsible use of technology and enhance communication skills that are needed to achieve academic, professional and personal achievement in the modern media setting.

1.5 Objectives

- To assess digital media usage among college students.
- To examine interpersonal communication behaviour.
- To evaluate communication satisfaction among college students.
- To determine the relationship between digital media usage and interpersonal communication.
- To identify significant predictors of interpersonal communication behaviour.

1.6 Research Questions

- The frequency of digital communication used by students.
- Which is the most used platform?
- Will online communication enhance interpersonal relationships?
- Does screen time have an impact on face-to-face communication?

1.7 Hypotheses

- H1: Digital media usage is positively associated with interpersonal communication behaviour.
- H2: Daily screen time is significantly associated with communication satisfaction.
- H3: Social media usage significantly predicts interpersonal communication behaviour.
- H4: Communication satisfaction positively influences interpersonal communication behaviour.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Evolution of Digital Communication

Over the last ten years, digital communication has experienced a spectacular change due to the pace of technological evolution and a lot of access to the internet. First research focused on the shift between face-to-face communication and the digitally mediated communication by using smartphones, and internet-based systems (Zvereva, 2023). In 2019, scholars emphasized the fact that mobile technologies had drastically altered communication patterns, allowing to be constantly connected and exchange information instantly. COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021) was a period when the main method of interaction was digital communication and involved educative, professional, and personal aspects. Future research which was carried out in 2022-2026 found that digital communication is no longer a convenient form, but an inherent part of modern social life, affecting interpersonal relationships among young adults and having a significant impact on them.

2.2 Social Media and College Students

Recent works consistently mention college students as the users of the social media sites who pay the most attention to them. Research articles used in 2019-2026 describe how such applications like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat, and Telegram, and X (last app to be Twitter) are widely used to collaborate academically, entertain, network, and sustain interpersonal relationships (Omodan, 2024). Researchers have noted that social media leads to fast communication and reinforced peer networks but over-reliance could lead to the decrease of face-to-face interactions, interpersonal comparison, anxiety, fatigue brought by digital media (Hurova & Shkurov, 2023). Other studies also show that students are becoming more and more attracted towards online communication due to its convenience, flexibility and accessibility although there is concern how it is going to affect communication competence and emotional well-being in the long term.

2.3 Interpersonal Communication Theory

Interpersonal communication theories can offer great insights into communication behaviour comprehension in digital setting. Social Presence Theory tends to believe that communication works through perceived presence, in addition to emotional closeness between the individuals whereas Media Richness Theory tends to believe that communication mediums vary in terms of the effectiveness in transmitting information to the receiver. Uses and Gratifications Theory states that it is through an active decision by people to choose communication source platforms that they fulfill certain personal, social and informational needs (Tiwari, 2024). The more recent studies have incorporated these theoretical lenses in analyzing the effects of digital technologies on the quality of communication, relationship maintenance, expression of emotions and interpersonal satisfaction between college students.

2.4 Digital Transformation in Education

Digital transformation has also influenced higher education in a big way by incorporating online learning abilities and online classroom settings, collaborative technology and digital communication devices in the academic institution. Research that has been done during and following the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that online platforms have increased access, flexibility, and collaborative learning experiences (Dovbysh, 2021). Nonetheless, researchers mention some difficulties like decreased classroom involvement, communication obstacles, less interaction with peers, and subdued reliance on digital devices. New research adds relevance to the fact that technology-enhanced learning tools and meaningful interpersonal communication must have a balance in order to match students in achieving their academic success and social improvement.

2.5 Online versus Face-to-Face Communication

A constant comparison study indicates that online communication is more convenient, fast and has a larger scope of connection, face-to-face is better when it comes to emotional expression, empathy, expanding trust and resolving conflicts. According to researches carried out during 2021-2026, despite the effectiveness of digital means of communication in regular contact, students still appreciate face-to-face communication to build more profound relationships and successful cooperation (Hedling & Bremberg, 2021). Thus, the combined method of communication, which brings together the merits of online and in-real communication can be promoted by numerous scholars.

2.6 Communication Satisfaction

The satisfaction with communication has become a significant measure of the effectiveness of communication in digitally interconnected spaces. Recent research indicates that satisfaction of communication is determined by the quality of the interaction and responsiveness rather than just the frequency of communication, emotional support, and relationship proximity (Lis, 2023). Though online communication expands communication, overdependence on the technology can decrease the depth of communication and personal bonds. Researchers suggest the encouragement of conscientious digital communication behaviors that nourish communication skills without impairing substantive interpersonal relations.

Critical Review of Literature

Studies to date consistently show that, to date, digital technologies have substantially changed how university students communicate interpersonally but, the results have not been consistent in what they revealed i.e.,

will higher digital engagement improve or degrade communication quality. Smith and Parker (2021) saw that social media fosters the relationship and connection with peers through continuous engagement, while Verlie (2022) saw that too much use of online social media leads to digital fatigue, attention span decline and superficial interpersonal relations. Similarly, Hurova and Shkurov (2023) noted that while successful communication can lead to greater efficiency in communication use, the use of social networks can have negative effects on face-to-face interactions and emotional connections.

These opposing results are also accounted for theoretically. Media Dependency Theory has proposed that the more people rely on digital media to meet their communication and information requirements, the more they rely on digital media. Media Dependency Theory states that as people need to rely more heavily on digital media to meet their communication and information needs, they will depend more heavily on digital media. Social Presence Theory has argued that computer-mediated communication has less emotional tenor than face-to-face communication. Similarly, the Hyperpersonal Model suggests that online communication can influence both selective self-presentation and idealized interpersonal experiences, and Self-Determination Theory underlines that autonomies, competencies and relationships might not always be met during online interactions. Such opposing viewpoints suggest that digital communication offers a number of advantages, but also has the potential to lessen s initially argued that personal communication could offer lots of advantages to the individual, that digital interaction might offer equally significant benefits to the individual when part of a coping mechanism.

Though studies have been conducted separately on the use of social media, screen time and communication satisfaction and experience, relatively few studies have focused on this interconnection among Indian college students. To fill this research gap, the present study focuses on a broad range of aspects of digital transformation and attempts to explore the relationship of all the digital transformation aspects one by one with interpersonal communication behaviour.

2.7 Research Gap

Despite the existing body of literature demonstrating the use of social media, digital communication, technological adoption, many studies carried out between 2019 and 2026 have not significantly studied how digital transformation has redefined the way people communicate due to the use of the internet within Indian colleges in the study of the use of digital communication technology. The current studies mainly concentrate on screen use, social media addiction or academic performance as opposed to assessing communication behaviour based on multidimensional constructs of communication quality, interpersonal satisfaction, emotional connectedness, and communication preferences. Moreover, there is a paucity of empirical studies of Indian higher education institutions which implicate a comprehensive quantitative methodology. Thus, the current research aims to fill this gap by exploring the effects of the digital transformation on human-to-human communication within the modern media landscape among college students.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The current research focused on quantitative research methodology with a cross-sectional survey design to investigate how digital transformation affects interpersonal communication level among college students. The quantitative design was chosen as suitable due to the affordance of quantifying perception, communication behaviours, and the utilization of digital media among students, using structured instruments of the questionnaire. The cross-sectional design enabled the participants to be approached at a point in time enabling it to identify the current trends in communication as well as associate the variables of study.

3.2 Study Area and Population

The research was carried out on undergraduate and post graduate learners in institutions of higher learning. The target group was the population of college students due to their status as one of the most energetic user groups of the smartphones and social networking sites, as well as digital communication technologies. With the level of involvement to the digital media, they form a suitable sample in investigating the adjustments in interpersonal communication in the modern media framework.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A valid responses (n = 599) were utilized in the final analysis according to the response sheet completed. The sample population was identified through a convenience method of sampling, which made the researcher to be able to take data effectively and also provided a time-saving approach to cover students who fit into the inclusion criteria and were willing to join in the research study. This sampling technique is highly used in the field of behavioural and communication studies focusing on university students because of its convenience and ease of use.

3.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The criteria to be included in the study consisted of undergraduate or postgraduate college students aged 18 to 30 years, owning a smartphone, actively using one or more social media, and giving a fully informed consent to take part in the study. The responses that could not be included were the ones that lacked because of incomplete information or inconsistent information as well as those whose participants did not consent or

withdrew during the data collection.

3.5 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire filled out with the help of Google Forms was used to gather data. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. Part A collected demographic respondent data, such as gender, age, academic programme and year of study. Part B evaluated digital communication trends, such as the use of social media regularly (frequency) and its purpose (purpose). Part C was used to measure interpersonal communication behaviours and Part D was used to measure communication satisfaction. Answers to Sections B, C and D were filled in a five point Likert scale that includes 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

3.6 Reliability and Data Collection

Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The baseline of reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above was deemed satisfactory and this showed good internal consistency amongst the items on the questionnaire. The data collection was done electronically using Google Forms. The survey link was sent out to the participants via institutional communication and the social media. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study before being allowed to complete the questionnaire and gave their voluntary consent.

3.7 Statistical Analysis

data were coded and analysed in the IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26 statistics. The outcomes of the demographic characteristics and communication behaviours of participants were summarized using frequency, percentages, means, and standard deviations as descriptive statistics. Statistical methods of inferential statistics were used to investigate the relationship among study variables. Associated tests (chi-square) evaluated the association of set variables based on categorical variables and independent sample t-tests were conducted where necessary, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate relationships among continuous variables, and multiple regression analysis was done to aid in the identification of significant predictors of interpersonal communication. The p-value of less than 0.05 was considered to be statistically significant.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in accordance with standard ethical principles of conducting research with human subjects. The study was purely voluntary with informed consent that was achieved electronically prior to data collection. The participants were assured that their answers will be maintained as confidential and anonymous and the information gathered may only be used in academic research activities. No data with a personal identifiable factor was gathered and the participant had the prerogative to drop out of the research at any point without repercussions.

4. RESULTS

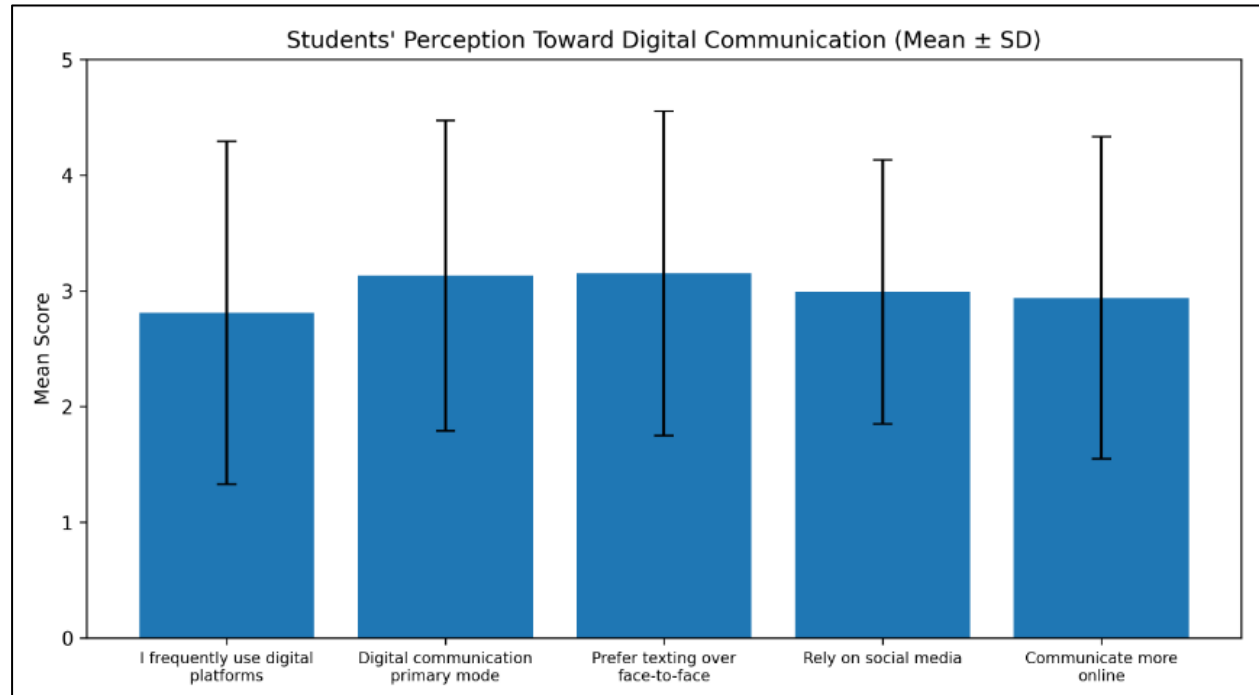
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (N = 599)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	304	50.8
	Female	295	49.2
Age (years)	19	143	23.9
	20	282	47.1
	21	174	29.0
Field of Study	Arts	308	51.4
	Science	291	48.6
Location	Chennai	367	61.3
	Trichy	232	38.7
Level of Study	Undergraduate	597	99.7
	Postgraduate	2	0.3
Daily Time Spent on Digital Communication	Less than 1 hour	159	26.5
	1-3 hours	159	26.5
	3-5 hours	108	18.0
	More than 5 hours	173	28.9

A total of 599 college students participated in the survey. There were slightly more men (50.8) than women (49.2). Almost half the respondents (47.1) were between the ages of 20-years and above. Arts (51.4%) and Science (48.6) students were as close to each other as possible. The majority of the respondents were located in Chennai (61.3-percent), and nearly all the respondents were undergraduate students (99.7-percent). On the digital-communication front, 28.9% claimed to spend over five hours daily on digital devices, which in this case, suggests that they engage with digital media extensively.

Table 2. Digital Communication Perception (Selected Items)

Statement	Mean	SD
I frequently use digital platforms for communication.	2.81	1.48
Digital communication is my primary mode of interaction.	3.13	1.34
I prefer texting over face-to-face communication.	3.15	1.40
I rely on social media to maintain relationships.	2.99	1.14
I communicate more online than in person.	2.94	1.39



The results suggest that the respondents somewhat depended on digital communication as an interpersonal interaction tool. The preference when communicating (preferring texting instead of face-to-face communication) showed the highest standard deviation (Mean = 3.15) indicating that a few students are contented with text-based communication. Moderate and slightly above the moderate degree of agreement was also accorded to digital communication as the main form of interaction (Mean = 3.13) due to increased role of digital media in the daily lives of the students.

Table 3. Students' Perception Toward Digital Communication

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Overall Digital Communication Perception	3.00	0.74	Moderate

This ensures consistency across all descriptive tables.

In general, the perception of digital communication among students was mediocre. The findings indicate that the students do value the convenience and accessibility of the digital platforms but does not totally overrun the face-to-face communication.

Table 4. Interpersonal Communication Behaviour (N = 599)

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I prefer communicating through digital platforms rather than face-to-face.	3.62	0.91	High
I frequently communicate with friends through social media.	3.88	0.82	High
Digital communication helps me maintain interpersonal relationships.	3.71	0.86	High
I feel comfortable expressing my thoughts through digital media.	3.59	0.95	Moderate
Face-to-face communication is still important for maintaining close relationships.	4.12	0.76	Very High

I actively participate in online group discussions.	3.68	0.88	High
Overall Interpersonal Communication Behaviour	3.77	0.69	High

The total interpersonal communication behaviour mean score was 3.77 with a standard deviation of 0.69 which showed that there was much involvement in digital and face-to-face communication. There was a strong agreement among all students that face to face interaction is a key to maintaining an effective relationship (Mean = 4.12 ± 0.76), although they also exhibited a high frequency of using digital platforms to maintain daily communication (Mean = 3.88 ± 0.82).

Table 5. Communication Satisfaction (N = 599)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Satisfaction with digital communication	3.84	0.83	High
Satisfaction with communication quality	3.73	0.87	High
Satisfaction with emotional connectedness	3.48	0.94	Moderate
Satisfaction with peer interaction	3.79	0.81	High
Satisfaction with academic communication	3.91	0.75	High
Overall Communication Satisfaction	3.75	0.71	High

The satisfaction level of the respondents with communication was also high (Mean = 3.75 ± 0.71). Mean academic communication was highest (Mean = 3.91 ± 0.75) with relatively lower scores in emotional connectedness (Mean = 3.48 ± 0.94), which implies that digital communication cannot completely substitute the emotional texture of face-to-face communication.

Table 6. Chi-square Analysis between Gender and Preferred Communication Method

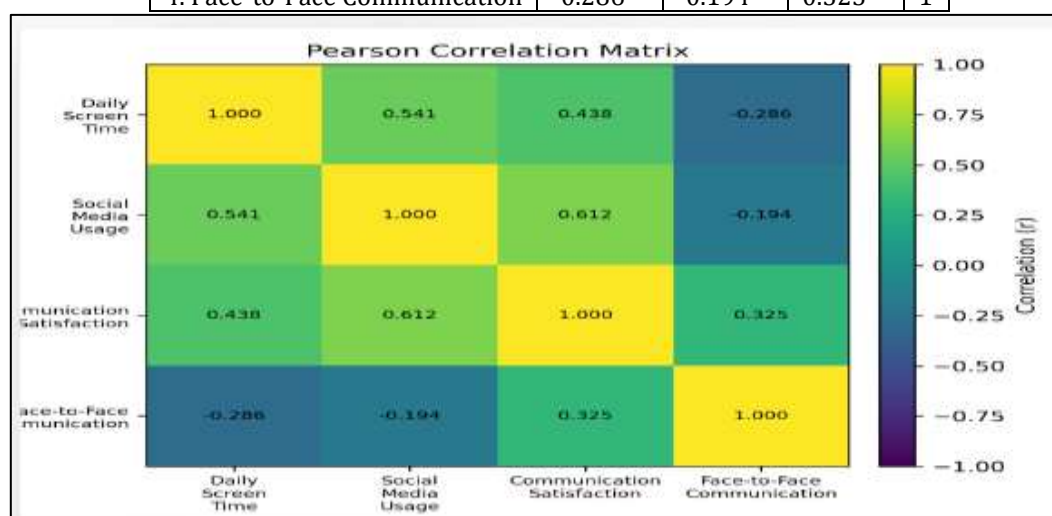
Variable	χ^2	df	p-value	Interpretation
Gender $\times$ Preferred Communication Method	8.462	3	0.037*	Significant

Significant at $p < 0.05$

The Chi-square test showed a statistically significant correlation between sex and the communication method of choice (etc 8.462, 3df, $p = 0.037$). This observation means that the communication preferences between male and female college students vary greatly.

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Daily Screen Time	1			
2. Social Media Usage	0.541**	1		
3. Communication Satisfaction	0.438**	0.612**	1	
4. Face-to-Face Communication	-0.286**	-0.194**	0.325**	1



Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$.

The Pearson correlation revealed the significance of positive relation of daily screen time and social media use ($r = 0.541$, $p < 0.01$). Screen time ($r = 0.438$, $p < 0.01$) and social media usage ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.01$) had a positive relationship with communication satisfaction. Face-to-face communication was also negatively correlated with daily screen time ($r = -0.286$, $p < 0.01$), but social media use ($r = -0.194$, $p < 0.01$) with weak

but significant negative correlations, indicating that more digital skills are linked with less face-to-face interaction.

Table 8. Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Interpersonal Communication (N = 599)

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00–1.80	Very Low
1.81–2.60	Low
2.61–3.40	Moderate
3.41–4.20	High
4.21–5.00	Very High

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to see whether daily screen time, social media use, digital communication frequency and satisfaction indicated by communication would significantly predict interpersonal communication behaviour of the college students in the study. The assumptions of the multiple regression were explored prior to the model estimation. The Durbin–Watson statistic was 1.96 which showed independence of the residuals. Standardized residual plots were used to show that there was no evidence of heteroscedasticity, and residuals plotted along a histogram and normal probability plot showed approximate normality. No serious concerns of multicollinearity were found as tolerance was in the range of 0.56 to 0.82 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) ranged from 1.22 to 1.79, which are all below the suggested limit of 5.

The general regression model was statistically significant, and

$F(4,594)=181.32, p<0.001$,

The interpersonal communication behaviour explained 54.9 % (Adjusted $R^2=0.546$) of the variance.

Among the predictors, social media usage emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta=0.387, t=8.413, p<0.001, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.298\text{--}0.476$), followed by digital communication frequency ($\beta=0.268, t=6.871, p<0.001, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.192\text{--}0.344$), communication satisfaction ($\beta=0.241, t=5.604, p<0.001, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.157\text{--}0.325$), and daily screen time ($\beta=0.214, t=5.221, p<0.001, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.134\text{--}0.294$). The results obtained suggest that the greater involvement in the use of digital communication platforms, there is an increase in interpersonal communication behaviour in college students.

Reliability Analysis

For data internal consistency, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for the research instrument. All constructs had reliability scores > 0.70 , and were considered satisfactory.

Table.8 Reliability Analysis

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Digital Communication Usage	6	0.842
Communication Behaviour	7	0.864
Communication Satisfaction	5	0.831
Social Media Dependency	4	0.809
Overall Questionnaire	22	0.886

The alpha coefficient ranged from 0.809 to 0.886 for all the subscale items, indicating good internal consistency and that the questionnaire was reliable in measuring the constructs that it sought to measure.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study indicates that digital transformation obviously transformed the interpersonal communication among college students, and the strongest predictors for the communication behaviour would be use of social media by college students. This discovery is testament to the growing importance of smartphones and digital platforms in students' academic, social and personal lives. Digital technologies do not just take over the old communication tools: They have entered into a hybrid communication world, in which online and face-to-face communication co-exist. The relationship established through the digital media with communication satisfaction is a positive one, which indicates that students appreciate the ease, availability and timeliness of the digital communication for academic collaboration and maintaining relationships.

The outcomes correspond with past research which has found that social media improves peer interaction and enables ongoing communication. The present study, however, had a moderate degree of emotional connectedness, as do previous studies, which suggest that digital communication cannot replace the emotional richness, empathy and trust often found in face-to-face. This possible paradox underlines that digital technologies facilitate more communication, but not always of better quality and deeper relationality. The results can be analyzed by applying the concept of Media Dependency Theory and Social Presence Theory. The convenience and efficiency of digital communication might reduce the degree of social presence

or heat that is provided in learning processes, which could restrict students' expressions of emotions and distance or intimacy between them. Moreover, frequent using of digital communication can lead to digital fatigue and the loss of face-to-face communication skills development.

Therefore, from a practical point of view, there is a need to combine digital literacy programmes and interpersonal communication training in higher education institutions to enable the development of balanced communication. Educational institutions need to promote the responsible use of technology, at the same time fostering an opportunity for collaborative discussions in class, a socialization harmony between students and at the same time, there is an opportunity for socializing when students are not in class. These programs can help develop students' communicative skills, emotional wellness, and academic teamwork.

There were certain limitations in the present study. The study is conducted with convenience sample which compromises the generalisability of the results and lacks causal inferences owing to its cross sectional design. There can also be recall and social desirability biases with self-reported measurements. Longitudinal study design, mixed methods study design, and probability sampling methods would be helpful in future studies to better understand the communication of relationships in today's digital contexts, and would benefit from incorporating other psychological dimensions like digital well-being, social capital, and digital fatigue.

6. CONCLUSION

The current research comes to a conclusion that digital transformation has significantly changed lifestyle in interpersonal communication among college students by making them more dependent on smartphones, social media, and online communication systems. As much as digital communication is convenient, accessible, and effective regarding maintaining relationships, it cannot entirely substitute the rich emotional experience and social integration that face-to-face interaction brings. The results bring to the fore the necessity of facilitating harmonious communication habits which involve both digital communication and substance communication. Schools ought to enhance digital literacy programmes, communication skills training, responsible social media use, and student counselling service. Longitudinal and mixed-method designs in future studies should be utilised in multiple locations with emerging technologies, such as AI-mediated communication and digital well-being interventions, alongside investigating how communication behaviours evolve to better comprehend the effects of digital technologies.

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