

Digital Communication Effects on Interpersonal Relationships

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Digital Communication Effects on Interpersonal Relationships, satisfaction, social connectedness, intimacy, relationship quality, Daft and Lengel theory

Abstract

Research related to the effects of digital communication on interpersonal relationship which contributes by four factors. However, there are still very limited studies in satisfaction, social connectedness, intimacy and quality that can contribute toward digital communication effect in the context of Malaysian society. Research objectives for this research are (1) to determine the relationship between satisfaction and digital communication, (2) to ascertain the relationship between social connectedness and digital communication, (3) to examine the relationship between intimacy and digital communication (4) to investigate the relationship between relationship quality and digital communication. This study applied the Daft and Lengel in the 1980s Theory as the main theory to further strengthen the relationship between each variable. Quantitative methods were applied in this study and data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to 401 respondents who are the people from Section 7, Shah Alam. The findings shown there is the relationship between digital communication and satisfaction. The study also found that there is a relationship between social connectedness and digital communication. It is also found that there is a relationship between intimacy and digital communication, and lastly the study also found that there is a relationship between relationship quality and digital communication. Hence, this study contributes to the field of digital communication and interpersonal relationship through the establishment of a more comprehensive variables related to participation in training and adoption of innovation and help to develop the Daft and Lengel theory.

1. Introduction

Digital communication is a way of sharing information through modern day digital technology, such as text messaging, emails, video calls and many more it has change the way people in our society nowadays stay connected with each other. Social media platforms, messaging apps, and video calls have made it possible to stay in touch with each other instantly, overcoming the barriers of physical separation. This constant connectivity allows families,

friends, and romantic partners to maintain their bonds, even if they are living far away from each other (Watson, A., Lupton, D., & Michael, M., 2021). The ability to share updates, photos, and thoughts in real-time has brought many closer, fostering a sense of shared presence despite being physically distant. Over the last 10 years, we have seen the rise of Digital Communication where it transformed societal interactions, with many individuals starting to increasingly prefer to interact digitally. According to Koay Ting, Y. Azizi Hj, Y., Choi S., Ismail, M., Peter, V., & Halimah, M., (2019), 76.9% of Malaysians are using the internet and 89.4% of them access internet service via smartphone which 96.3% and 89.3% using it for communication and social networking.

While digital communication help provide continuous connectivity for society to interact with each other, it also raises the question about how digital communication will affect the quality, social connectedness, intimacy and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship. For instance, while some forms of digital communication, like video calls help enable a richer, more intimate interactions due to the presence of visual and audio, others, like texting, may fall short of capturing the similar feeling of satisfaction as face-to-face in person exchanges. According to Pollmann et al., (2021), text-based communication does not include the non-verbal and visual cues that are associated with face-to-face interactions which may increase the risks of misinterpretation, emotional distance, or over-dependence on digital exchanges for reassurance. This research aims to uncover potential answer to how the satisfaction, social connectedness, intimacy, usage of digital communication will correlate with "The Effects of Digital Communication on Interpersonal Relationship among people in Section 7 Shah Alam".

Digital communication has quickly become the way for most people to stay in touch with friends, family, and partners. However, it is very unclear how the digital communication will affect interpersonal relationships satisfaction. Different digital communication methods, such as texting and video calls allow people to connect in various ways, but each method has its own strengths and weaknesses. For example, while video calls allow a person to see each other's facial expressions and body language, according to Pollmann et al., (2021) texting lacks these things, and does not show any non-verbal and visual cues which can often lead to misinterpretation that can eventually affect relationship satisfaction.

As people engage more through the digital communication platform rather than face-to-face, concerns also began to arise about potential isolation which will affect an individual's social connectedness. According to Stevic, Schmuck, Karsay, Matthes, (2021) researchers have found that increased digital media use may detract the feel of need to engage in social interactions, the study was done among a group of parents and children which the problem occurs when individuals prioritize online communication over in-person interactions, that will contribute towards isolation and affect an individual social connectedness to others negatively. The digital communication styles when interacting in the digital world also raises a concern about the potential impact on interpersonal relationship intimacy. Digital conversations can range from informal into a more formal, restrained interactions. Informal styles, marked by emojis, slang, and relaxed language, often encourage a sense of intimacy and comfort, making it easier for individuals to express their thoughts and emotions Song et al. (2018). On the other hand, formal communication can create a barrier and limit the depth of interaction between individuals to express their feelings which can create misunderstandings or feelings of disengagement effecting interpersonal relationships intimacy negatively (Albalawi and Nadeem, 2020).

However, little research has explored the extent to which digital communication styles can affect intimacy which creates a gap in understanding how those digital communication style choices will affect interpersonal relationship intimacy. 2 There are also concerns about whether the high usage of digital communication will improve or harm the quality of our interpersonal relationships. Constant interactions in the world of digital communication may create a sense of closeness in a relationship, but they can also become tiring or boring overtime, possibly affecting weakens and lower the quality interpersonal relationship between individuals. According to Camerini et al. (2023) boredom is characterized by a lack of engagement in satisfying activities therefore, when we are engaged in the same activity time and time again it will be less satisfactory and lowers our relationship quality, that includes constant interactions in the world of digital communication. Thus, this study aim to fulfill this objectives; (1) To determine the relationship between satisfaction and digital communication, (2) To ascertain the relationship between social connectedness and digital communication, (3) To examine the relationship between intimacy and digital communication, (4) To investigate the relationship between relationship quality and digital communication.

2. Literature Review

Digital communication

Digital communication can be described as various methods of exchanging information using technology, that includes emails, instant messaging, social media, video calls, and many more. The rise of digital communication has change in which the way people connect, communicate, and maintain relationships. In the early 2000s, with the increasing popularity of society's adoption towards technologies, it makes digital communication became an essential part of an individuals in the way they interact with others (Baym, 2015). The creation of platforms like

Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram has allowed individuals engage in an instant connection, shaping new norms and expectations in the digital world of communication. As constant connection in interpersonal relationship that was previously impossible now possible. Digital communication may bring a significant effect on interpersonal relationship. For example, voice calls and video calls which is the mediums of digital communication enable friends and family to stay connected despite physical distance, often helping to sustain relationships that might otherwise fade over time which may affects the feeling of social connectedness in an individual. This was proven by research by Nguyen et al. (2021) that the Digital media with high social presences such as video calls that made visual and auditory cues available can help create feelings of connectedness of an individual with others.

Satisfaction

The various methods of digital communication play a significant role in determining interpersonal relationship satisfaction. Each digital communication methods such as texting, voice calls, and video calls give different levels of satisfaction. Taken from the journal of New Media & Society, video call, a digital communication medium that enables a higher level of interaction by combining visual and auditory elements, creating a sense of presence that can enhance the feeling of satisfaction compared to texting (Nguyen et al. 2021). Studies also suggest that while some individuals prefer texting as the main medium for everyday communication, others rely on video calls for more meaningful or emotionally charged exchanges.

Text-based communication, such as texting or instant messaging, lacks important non-verbal cues, including facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice, which play a vital role in conveying emotions and intentions. Since non-verbal signals are absent in texting, individuals nowadays rely on emoticons (text-based symbols), emoji (graphical symbols), and other text-based methods non-verbal communication, such as capitalization to emphasize or intensify emotions (Choi and Aizawa, 2019). These replacement of non-verbal signals in form of text-based formats, often can lead to misunderstandings, confusion or misinterpretation of the intended message because each individual interpret this replacement of non-verbal communication differently. It will also contribute to a lack of effective communication which can make an individual feel lower level of satisfaction in relationship and one of the most pivotal reason why relationships fall apart nowadays (De Netto et al., 2021).

According to Pollmann et al. (2021), the emotional deepness and joy found in face- to-face interactions are often diminished in text-based communication, making it more challenging for individuals to connect on a deeper level. The inability to perceive emotional nuances can strain relationship dynamics and reduce feelings of intimacy and support. Therefore, it is crucial for individuals to carefully choose their communication mediums, ensuring they foster understanding and emotional connection. Utilizing face-to-face interactions or even video calls when possible, can help enhance satisfaction and maintain strong relationships, as these methods allow for a more complete exchange of emotional information.

Studies by Holtzman et al., 2021, has also consistently showed the significant impact of texting and voice calls brings towards relationship satisfaction, the research focuses on the differences in relationship satisfaction between long-distance relationships (LDRs) and geographically close relationships (GCRs) in different digital communication methods. In LDRs, the increase in usage and responsiveness of texting have been strongly correlated with higher relationship satisfaction, as these forms of communication will help bridge the physical distance between partners and foster a sense of connection. Texting allows for immediate exchanges, enabling couples to maintain emotional intimacy and support despite being apart. In contrast, voice calls are more often associated with relationship satisfaction in GCRs, because it is easier for partners to engage in more immediate, conversations that strengthen closeness and understanding. The study also highlights these distinctions, illustrating how different communication methods plays unique roles in enhancing relationship satisfaction based on the dynamics of the partnership. Their findings highlighted the different impacts that digital communication bring as effective use of texting and voice calls can improve relationship satisfaction differently.

Social Connectedness

As digital communication technologies continue to evolve in our time, the reliance on the use of digital communication has impacted how individuals perceive and experience social connectedness. Social connectedness, can be defined as an individual's sense of belonging or closeness with others around them, can be positively or negatively influenced by heavy reliance on digital communication channels like texting, video calls, and voice calls. This literature review explores the multifaceted relationship between digital communication reliance and social connectedness. Past research done by the journal of "Communication Technologies and Relationships" highlighted that digital communication allowed individuals to stay connected despite distances and subsequently enhancing the feelings of connectedness for an individual with others, especially, among those in long-distance relationships (Holtzman et al., 2021). However, the heavy reliance on digital communication to interact with others can sometimes lead to reduced face to face interactions, which is critical for deeper emotional connection and intimacy.

Research by Yavich et al. (2019) found that heavy reliance on digital communication, without balancing it with in-person interactions, can contribute to feelings of loneliness and social isolation. When digital communication is the main form of interaction for an individual, nonverbal cues that help convey empathy and build trust are often absent, potentially weakening relationships and reducing social connectedness over time (Choi & Aizawa, 2019). In addition, a past study has also shown that digital communication can be a valuable substitute for face-to-face interactions when used to maintain existing relationships rather than as the only sole communication method for an individual in their daily life. Holtzman et al. (2021) demonstrated that when digital communication is used to enhance and not replace in-person interactions, individuals report a higher level of social satisfaction and connectedness.

Intimacy

Digital communication gives a huge impact on relationship intimacy especially in terms of the style people use to converse with each other such as formal or informal communication. Informal communication, characterized by casual language, humor, and personal anecdotes, fosters a sense of closeness and warmth between individuals makes them feel more comfortable to share sensitive topics with each other. This style encourages openness, allowing partners to express their feelings and thoughts freely, which can enhance emotional bonding while formal communication. While formal communication involves a much-structured language and professionalism, which can sometimes limit emotional expression. This literature review will explore the relationship between digital communication styles and relationship intimacy. Based on research done by Song et al. (2018) the findings indicate that informal communication is a strong connector of the effectiveness of formal communication in influencing decision-making. This statement suggests that informal interactions help establish a foundation of trust that enhances the ability of formal communications to achieve desired outcomes. This proves that engaging in informal communication enhance the level of trust towards an individual which will more likely make them share their vulnerabilities and personal experiences, deepening the interpersonal relationship intimacy between the individuals. The relaxed nature of informal communication often invites spontaneous reactions and playfulness, creating an environment that are prone to enhance intimacy.

In contrast, formal communication tends to involve structured language and adherence to social norms, which may limit emotional expression. This style can create a sense of distance, making it challenging for individuals to connect on a deeper level. Past studies done to investigate the specific barriers to effective communication by teachers and students of the EFL (English as foreign language) programs of higher education in the Saudi Kingdom, finds that the characteristic of formal communication contributes to misunderstandings or feelings of disengagement between the teachers and students (Albalawi and Nadeem, 2020). This happens when communication is overly structured, it can inhibit the natural flow of conversation and prevent individuals from expressing their emotions or concerns effectively. Therefore, although formal communication is often necessary in a professional or serious environment, its presence in interpersonal relationships may hinder intimacy. For instance, when partners communicate in a formal manner, they may naturally create barriers that will prevent the sharing of genuine emotions, leading to feelings of disconnect and isolation affecting intimacy in interpersonal relationship. Thus, understanding the nuances of communication styles is essential for nurturing intimacy in relationships.

Relationship Quality

In today's digital age, the impact of digital communication on interpersonal relationships has been something that is being researched by many. Tools like social media, messaging apps, and video calls have changed how we connect with one another, presenting both opportunities for closeness and challenges for relationship satisfaction. A study by Holtzman et al., (2021) emphasizes that a high use of digital communication can foster stronger feelings of connection, particularly when it serves to maintain long-distance relationships. This suggests that how often and in what ways we communicate digitally is crucial in improving the quality of our interpersonal relationships. Moreover, digital interactions play a significant role in how we feel about our relationships which can affect the overall quality as well. Research by Drouin et al. (2021) highlights that engaging in supportive communication through digital means like sharing experiences or offering encouragement can lead to greater relationship satisfaction and a sense of intimacy. Their work underscores that it's not just about how much we communicate online, but how we communicate that truly matters.

However, it's essential to recognize that leaning too heavily on digital communication can sometimes backfire. Przybylski and Weinstein (2023) found that replacing face-to-face interactions with digital ones can lead to feelings of isolation and dissatisfaction in a relationship. While digital tools can make it easier to connect, they can't always replicate the emotional depth of in-person conversations. This balance between digital and traditional communication methods is crucial in order to maintain a healthy quality of interpersonal relationships. Finally, understanding how digital communication affects our relationships quality can help us

develop better communication habits. Lee and Ma (2022) found that individuals who use digital tools to support in-person interactions tend to report higher satisfaction in their relationships. Their research suggests that when we use technology to enhance face to-face time, we cultivate more meaningful connections. This is a vital takeaway for anyone looking to strengthen their interpersonal relationships quality because as technology continues to evolve, it's important to understand how our digital habits shape the way we connect with others, ultimately influencing the quality of our interpersonal relationships.

Media Richness Theory

Media Richness Theory offers us a look through in which to understand the digital communication and its effects on interpersonal relationships. Developed by Daft and Lengel in the 1980s, this theory talks about the different communication media that have various capacities to convey information effectively. For instance, richer mediums like face-to-face conversations or video calls allow for more refined interactions because they can convey visual and auditory verbal cues. This richness makes it easier for an individual to express messages, essential for effective communication. Research has shown that individuals who use richer mediums often report higher satisfaction in their relationships, highlighting how deeper emotional connections can be formed through these interactions (Liu & Ma, 2021).

In the side of interpersonal relationships, Media Richness Theory underscores the significance of emotional and social presence. The medium we choose can profoundly impact our feelings of connectedness with others. When engaging in digital communication, richer media facilitate non-verbal cues such as body language and tone of voice, both of which are crucial for expressing empathy and building intimacy. For example, studies suggest that people who frequently use video calls tend to develop stronger social bonds compared to those who stick to text-based communication (Wang et al., 2023). This points to the idea that it's not just about how often we communicate, but also about the richness of those interactions that truly strengthen our relationships.

Moreover, the theory has important implications for understanding intimacy in digital interactions. Sharing emotions and experiences through richer media fosters deeper connections. Research by Hu and Chiu (2022) highlights that couples who utilize video chats report significantly higher levels of intimacy than those who rely solely on leaner forms of communication. This deeper emotional engagement nurtures a sense of closeness and understanding that is vital for healthy interpersonal relationships. It reinforces the notion that while frequency of contact is important, the quality of those interactions is what truly nurtures our connections. Finally, Media Richness Theory also sheds light on how our usage patterns in digital communication can influence relationship dynamics. It suggests that individuals who regularly engage with richer media are more likely to enjoy improved relationship quality. A study by Zhang and Zhao (2024) found that consistent use of video calls and live chats leads to stronger emotional bonds. Understanding these patterns allows individuals to make informed choices about their communication strategies, enhancing their relationships through appropriate media selection. By applying Media Richness Theory, we gain valuable insights into how different forms of digital communication can shape interpersonal relationships and emotional connections.

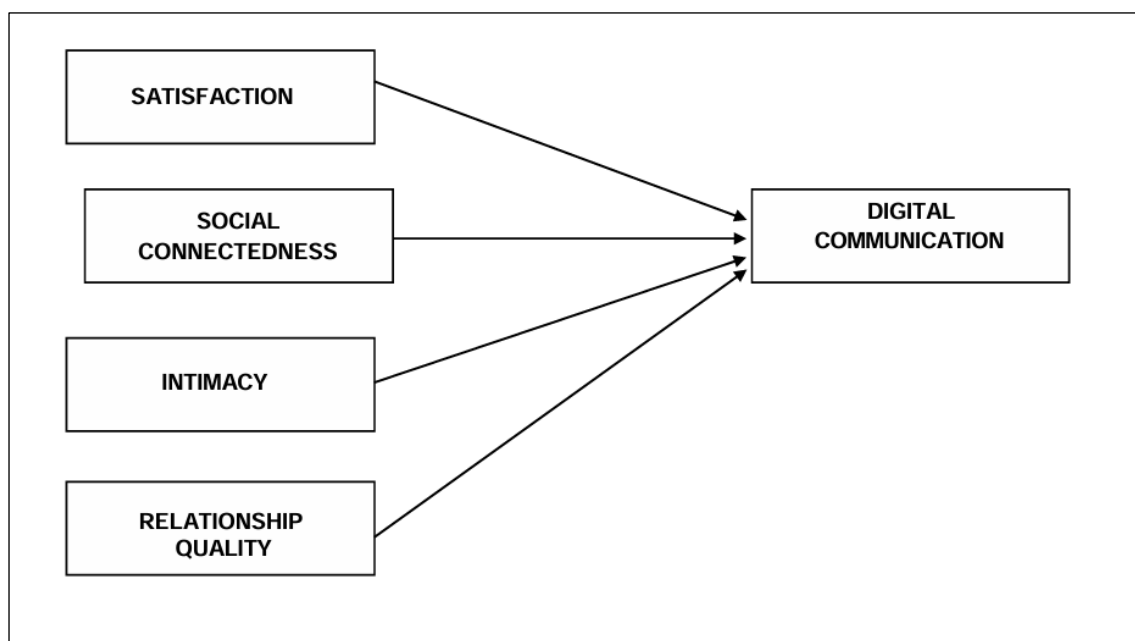


Fig. 1 *Research Framework*

3. Methodology

This research employs a quantitative methodology. Quantitative research, as defined by Taherdoost, 2022, is a structured approach that uses statistical or computational techniques to analyze numerical data systematically. This methodology is driven by data, focusing on objective measurement and the use of surveys or other standardized tools to gather information. The purpose of quantitative research is to define a phenomenon by collecting numerical data to address specific questions in research such as how many and what percentage in various fields (Taherdoost, 2022).

The respondents for this study are individuals living in Shah Alam, more accurately in the urban area of Section 7. Shah Alam was established as a planned city and became the state capital of Selangor in 1978. Section 7, like many other parts of Shah Alam, was developed with a goal focusing on modern urban living, structured residential areas, commercial, and recreational spaces. The area has seen rapid growth over the years, becoming a vibrant hub for both business and urban area activities. It is known for its well-planned infrastructure, with key landmarks such as the Shah Alam Stadium and nearby shopping centers.

Targeting people between the ages of 17 and 30 help the study to reach a group that are constantly involved in digital interactions as they are still young and was born during an era where digital interactions is the main medium to stay connected with others. Moreover, this age target is where an individual is in a stage of life where they are exploring and forming significant relationships, which will significantly allow for an understanding of how digital communication may play a crucial role in interpersonal relationship Satisfaction, Social Connectedness, Intimacy, Relationship Quality. By focusing on this age group, the study can help capture data that reflects on both the flexibility and complexities of digital communication within modern interpersonal relationships.

4. Analysis

Profile of respondents

This subtopic is covering the respondent's responses in this study's response Table 1 illustrates the respondent's demographics including gender, age, educational level, employment status. The table indicates that 401 people responded to the survey. There were 200 females and 201 males who responded, with a percentage of (49.9%) for female and (50.1%) for male. There were 183 (45.6%) respondents who were between the ages of 17 to 20 that make it the highest group age among the respondents. Moreover, 120 (29.9%) respondents who were between the ages of 20 to 23 make it the second lowest group age and with a total of 98 (24.4%) respondents aged 24-30 that make up the lowest group. From table 4.1 indicates that the group with the largest percentage of respondents, 115 (28.7%), was those with a Bachelor's Degree, followed by those with Diploma, 104 (25.9%) respondents. 92 (22.9%) of respondents is from the High School level, whereas 90 (22.4%) the lowest group of respondents came from the Master's Degree. As seen in table 4.1, indicates that the group with the largest percentage of respondents 208 (51.9%) respondents are student, whereas 191 (47.6%) respondents are employed. Besides that, the group with the lowest percentage of respondents is 2 (.5%), which is unemployed.

Table 1 :Frequency of Respondents

Demographic Factors	N	%
Gender		
Male	200	49.9
Female	201	50.1
Age		
17 – 20 years old	183	45.6
20- 23 years old	120	29.9
24 – 30 years old	98	24.4
Level of Education		
Master's Degree	90	25.9
Bachelor's Degree	115	28.7
Diploma	104	25.9
High School	92	29.9

Employment Status		
Employed	191	47.6
Unemployed	2	0.5
Student	208	51.9

Instrument Reliability

Cronbach's alpha values, which may assess the internal reliability of the instruments used for this research are applied in this study to evaluate the instrument's reliability. The variables include and Digital Communication Effects on Interpersonal Relationship, Satisfaction, Social Connectedness, Intimacy, and Relationship Quality According to Table 2, the Digital Communication Effects on Interpersonal Relationship variable indicates a Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = .901$ and $\alpha = .920$ for Satisfaction. Additionally, Social Connectedness and Intimacy alpha values are $\alpha = .709$ and $\alpha = .810$. and the last variable which is Relationship Quality values are $\alpha = .845$. Overall, the Cronbach's alpha value overall are excellent and good for the research objectives.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Analysis

Variable	Items	α
Digital Communication Effects on Interpersonal Relationship	10	.901
Satisfaction	10	.920
Social Connectedness	10	.709
Intimacy	10	.810
Relationship Quality	10	.845

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between Satisfaction and Digital Communication

In this section, the differences between Satisfaction and Digital Communication will be explained as the first objective of the study is to examine the relationship between these two variables. This revealed a strong relationship between Satisfaction and Digital Communication, with a significant value or ($r = .897^{**}$, $p > .001$). The result in Table 3 indicated that these two factors will have an impact on one another, therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3 : Correlation between Satisfaction and Digital Communication effects on Interpersonal Relationships

Satisfaction	Digital Communication
r	.897**
n	401
p	.001

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between Social Connectedness and Digital Communication

The second objective of the study is to examine the relationship between Social Connectedness and Digital Communication, hence in this part, the hypothesis between Social Connectedness and Digital Communication. This revealed that a moderate relationship between Social Connectedness and Digital Communication, with a significant value of ($r = .442^{**}$, $p > 0.01$). The result in Table 4 indicated that these two factors will connect with one another. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4: Correlation between Social Connectedness and Digital Communication

Social Connectedness	Digital Communication
r	.442**
n	401
p	.001

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between Intimacy and Digital Communication.

The third objective of the study is to analyze the relationship between Intimacy and Digital Communication, whereby the hypothesis relating the two will be examined. A strong relationship between Intimacy and Digital Communication, with a significant value of ($r = .752^{**}$, $p > 0.01$). The outcome in Table 5 demonstrated these two elements correlated and the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5: Correlation between Intimacy and Digital Communication

Intimacy	Digital Communication
r	.752**
n	401
p	.001

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between Relationship Quality and Digital Communication.

The fourth objective of the study is to analyze the relationship between Relationship Quality and Digital Communication, whereby the hypothesis relating the two will be examined. A strong relationship between Relationship Quality and Digital Communication, with a significant value of ($r = .834^{**}$, $p > 0.01$). The outcome in Table 6 demonstrated these two elements correlated and the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 6: Correlation between Relationship Quality and Digital Communication

Relationship Quality	Digital Communication
r	.834**
n	401
p	.001

5. Discussion and Recommendation

Objective 1: To determine the relationship between Satisfaction and Digital Communication.

Based on the findings, this research successfully achieved its objective of determining the relationship between Satisfaction and Digital Communication. The findings support the objective of the hypothesis that there is a relationship existing between these two variables. With a result of .897**, the study indicates a strong correlation, suggesting that Satisfaction and Digital Communication plays a huge role in influencing each other. Satisfaction and digital communication are connected with each other because digital communication platforms play a huge role in giving individuals the ability to interact with others instantly, especially in this digital era. The ability to be able to communicate with others through mediums such as messaging apps, voice calls, video calls, or on social media will make individuals feel at ease of their relationships, reducing the feelings of loneliness and any doubt of uncertainty in them because they can talk to them any time they wanted to. This consistent and instant interaction creates a place where individuals feel heard, valued, and emotionally supported, all of which will contribute to a higher relationship satisfaction hence which is one of the reasons why digital communication and satisfaction correlate with each other.

Other than that, digital communication help allow the expression of emotions and affection in creative digital ways, that can help strengthening bonds between individuals and heightening their relationship satisfaction. In the digital communication world, features such as emojis, GIFs, and voice notes can add depth to conversations, making interactions feel more personal, close and engaging. Researchers has clearly proven that there is a relationship between Satisfaction and Digital Communication. This can be seen in Nguyen et al. 2021 past study where a digital communication medium, video call creates a sense of presence that can enhance the feeling of satisfaction. Video calls play a huge role on enhancing the satisfaction of an individual in their relationship because they allow individuals to see facial expressions, hear vocal tones, and observe body language elements as if they are talking physically with each other, which are often lost and non-visible in text-based communication. The ability to have an interaction similar to a face-to-face conversation, even virtually, creates a sense of presence and closeness, making conversations feel more meaningful and authentic ultimately increasing overall relationship satisfaction. Thus, proving that there is a relationship between Satisfaction and Digital Communication.

Objective 2: To ascertain the relationship between Social Connectedness and Digital Communication.

Other than the findings of the first objective, this research also managed to achieve the second objective which is to ascertain the relationship between Social Connectedness and Digital Communication. The hypothesis has been proven that there is a relationship between Social Connectedness and Digital Communication with a result of .432**, indicating that the relationship between these two variables is moderate and will influence each another. Digital Communication and social connectedness can correlate with each other due to these digital communication platforms such as messaging apps, social media or, calls that can help individuals maintain relationships and stay connected with others. The ability to keep in touch with loved ones or other people, although living far from each other, helps individuals maintain a sense of connection with others ensuring that their relationship remain strong and fulfilling even when face-to-face meetings are not possible hence, making them socially connected with one another.

Past researchers has proven that there is a relationship between digital communication and social connectedness for instance a based on the journal of "Communication Technologies and Relationships" a research by Holtzman et al. (2021) found that individuals who often use digital communication to communicate with others experience a higher levels of connectedness, as these platforms allow for continuous engagement regardless of if there are not any physical appearance present hence, proving that the hypothesis of there is a relationship between Social Connectedness and Digital Communication to be true.

Objective 3: To examine the relationship between Intimacy and Digital Communication.

As for the third objective, this research managed to achieve the objective of ascertaining the relationship between Intimacy and Digital Communication. The hypothesis has been proven that there is a relationship between Intimacy and Digital Communication with a result of .752**, indicating that the relationship between these two variables is moderate and will influence each another. The relationship between Intimacy and digital communication are closely related, as we all know nowadays, digital platforms provide individuals with various ways to express emotions, share personal experiences, and maintain close relationships with others.

Intimacy, which refers to the deep emotional connection between individuals, is strengthened through this continuous and meaningful communication which we can say are mostly being done in the digital world nowadays. Most of the time when people are communicating with each other in the digital world they often use an informal

communication style makes individuals feel comfortable sharing sensitive topics, which help strengthening emotional bonds and enhance the intimacy of a relationship. A past Research by Song et al. (2018) has also proven that engaging in informal communication enhances the level of trust towards an individual which will more likely make them share their vulnerabilities about themselves and personal experiences, deepening the interpersonal relationship intimacy between the individuals hence, proving that there is a relationship between Intimacy and Digital Communication.

Objective 4: To investigate the relationship between Relationship Quality and Digital Communication

As for the fourth and final objective, this research managed to achieve the objective of Investigating the relationship between Relationship Quality and Digital Communication. The hypothesis has been proven that there is a relationship between 46 Relationship Quality and Digital Communication with a result of .834**, indicating that the relationship between these two variables is strong and most definitely will influence each another. The relationship between Relationship Quality and digital communication can be seen in the ways digital communication mediums help build interpersonal relationships.

As highlighted by Holtzman et al. (2021), frequent use of digital communication creates a stronger feeling of closeness within an individual, especially those who are in a long -distance relationship. This suggests that how often we communicate with others digitally is crucial in improving the quality of our interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, a past research by Lee and Ma (2022) has also found that individuals who use digital communication mediums to enhance face-to-face communication with others report a higher relationship satisfaction for example, when a person is at home, they use digital communication mediums to get close with others that will significantly enhance communication when meeting face-to-face. This suggests that by using digital communication to enhance face-to-face time with each other, individuals will overall improve the quality of their relationship. Hence, proving that the hypothesis of Relationship Quality and Digital Communication influences each other is true.

Contribution to the Theory

This research contributes to Media Richness Theory by showing how different digital communication mediums impact interpersonal relationships. Developed by Daft and Lengel (1980s), Media Richness suggested that each communication mediums are different in their ability to effectively send information, with mediums such as face to-face interactions or video calls that are currently being more effective in showing messages and emotions. This study helped this theory prove that a richer digital communication medium, such as video calls, can help enhance interpersonal relationships due to the presence of non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice similar to a real-life interaction. These aspects help contribute to a stronger emotional connection, supporting Media Richness theory that a richer media improves social and emotional presence. Furthermore, another finding in this research highlights that the choice of communication medium directly impacts our interpersonal relationship satisfaction, intimacy, and overall relationship quality.

Media Richness Theory suggested that a richer media will build deeper connections, and this study supports this claim by showing that individuals who engage in video calls and voice calls experience a much stronger bonds compared to those who rely mainly on text-based communication. This study also contributes to Media Richness theory in terms of exploring the role of communication styles in digital interactions. It reveals that an informal communication, that are filled with emoji's, GIFs, and interact in a casual language, build closeness and intimacy among individuals, while formal communication, which tends to be much more structured and professional, may prevent emotional connections from happening. This insight supports the Media Richness Theory that a richness is not only about the communication medium but also about how the medium is being used. Finally, this research also has contributed to the use of Media Richness Theory beyond business and organizational settings, by applying it to interpersonal relationships. By analyzing how different digital communication methods can influence satisfaction, social connectedness, and intimacy, this study has proven that selecting the appropriate medium may help enhance relationship quality as well. For example, texting may be suitable for daily interactions, whereas video calls are more effective for emotionally significant conversations such as when someone is sad and want to vent out, supporting the idea that media richness is crucial in maintaining a strong relationship.

Implication of Study

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that digital communication has a huge impact on interpersonal relationships. This can be seen clearly in the way it influences satisfaction, social connectedness, intimacy, and relationship quality. Digital communication is not just a medium nor a platform for the younger generation to communicate with each other it plays a crucial role in keeping people of all ages connected, helping them build, create and maintain meaningful relationships. One of the key findings of this from this study is that digital communication help enhances relationship satisfaction. The ability to send a quick message, share a moment

through a photo, or have a face-to-face conversation via video call helps people feel more connected and emotionally supported. These instant interactions create a sense of reassurance, reducing feelings of loneliness and strengthening bonds making an individual feel satisfied with their relationships.

The study also showed the role of digital communication in maintaining social connectedness. While face-to-face interactions can be considered as important, digital communication mediums allow people to keep in touch with each other more easily. Sharing updates about their lives can make them feel like they are a part of a larger community and give them a sense of belongingness in society, it does not matter whether it is staying connected with family, keeping up with friends, or engaging with online groups, digital communication helps people feel a sense of belonging which help them feel socially connected with others. Other than that, researchers have also found that, Intimacy in relationships is another area where digital communication plays a significant role. The researchers have found that Simple things like emoji's, voice messages, and video chats make it easier for individuals to express emotions and deepen their bond with each other. This type of informal communication builds trusts and comfort, making people feel more at ease and feel more comfortable in sharing their thoughts and feelings. Lastly, the study confirms that digital communication plays a huge role in improving relationship quality. Having a frequent and meaningful interactions through digital communication mediums help sustain and improve the quality of a relationships even if it is just checking in with a loved one, having a small daily conversation, or just simply sharing the things happening in your daily lives, these digital interactions create trust, transparency, and emotional closeness which will eventually improve the relationship quality of an individual.

In summary, this research underscores the importance of digital communication in modern relationships. While face-to-face interactions will always be valuable, balancing them with digital communication can enhance relationships in many ways. By using technology mindfully, people can maintain strong, meaningful connections, no matter where they are.

Recommendations

For future research on this topic, it is recommended that researchers include more wide range of participants beyond the current sample. While this research mainly focuses on examining the impact of digital communication on interpersonal relationships among individuals in Section 7, Shah Alam, future studies could explore different geographical areas or cultural backgrounds to provide a much deeper understanding of the topic. Additionally, future research should also consider comparing analysis between various age groups to study how digital communication affects interpersonal relationships across different age range. Investigating the perspectives of older age group such as and above compared to the younger group as this study may offer give a deeper insight into age gap differences in digital communication usage and its effects on interpersonal relationship quality. Another suggestion for future research is to try and collect data using the, qualitative method.

While this study collects data using the quantitative methods, qualitative approaches such as doing interviews or focus groups can give a more detail exploration of personal experiences, emotional responses, and communication patterns in digital communications. This would allow for a richer and deeper understanding of how digital communication shapes interpersonal relationships. Lastly, researchers should consider to analyze the role of specific digital communication mediums, such as social media, instant messaging, and video calls, in building interpersonal relationships. Instead of studying the impact of various digital communication mediums, future research should do more targeted recommendations for individuals seeking to maintain interpersonal relationship in the digital age seeing which mediums works the best in that area.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

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