



The Transformation of Interpersonal Relationships through Social Media in the Digital Age

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Abstract

The given qualitative research will discuss the changing nature of the social communication in the digital context, with the emphasis on the implication of the social-media devices on managing interpersonal relationships. With the increasing role of digital environment in mediating between people, queries are raised about the quality, genuineness, and emotional relevance of this communication. One of the highest qualities of the research was in-depth interviews with a diverse sample; it enabled four interconnected themes to be discussed: intensified connectivity in contrast to the superficial interactions, reduced face-to-face communication, an increase in online debates and lack of communication, and impacts of social comparison on self-esteem. Findings show that although social media makes communication quick and convenient, in many cases it provides interactions that are performative and affectively remote. The interviewees have noted that they experienced a loss in face-to-face communication and replaced quality conversations with short and unemotional online messages. Online feeding grounds were also found vulnerable to tension which more often than not happened due to a lack of non-verbal communication as well as to the high cost of mismatched meaning. Besides, long-term contact with curated content in cyberspace was said to deteriorate psychological well-being and the self-perception of people using it. The research provides an empirical contribution, which helps to understand the strategies that people follow to manage these changes in communication and the necessity of digital literacy and emotional awareness in order to develop more profitable and beneficial social relationships in the digital environments that exist today.

Introduction

Within the last twenty years, there has been an abrupt change in human communication which was predetermined by the extremely fast development of digital technologies and the commonly used adaptation to them. On the one hand, social media platforms have become a core aspect of current communication activities by helping people in the development of identity, interpersonal maintenance, and network creation (Sutrisno, 2023; Masood et al., 2023). These platforms have redefined the spatial-temporal boundaries to allow users to maintain relations within broadening distances and non-homogeneous time zones (Hassard & Morris, 2022; Riu & Wilson, 2024), who now use Facebook and Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Although the gains of digital connectivity such as immediacy, conveniences, and all-inclusiveness have been widely emphasized, concerns have been raised about the repercussions that it carries on the richness, genuineness, and viability of interpersonal relations. Face-to-face communication has always been the basis of social relations in the past as it allowed enjoying emotional closeness, gestures, and a sense of being together (Hadley et al., 2022; Koester, 2022). However, in the digital era, the features gradually give way or

supplement the mediated communication that can weaken emotional associations and potentially change the configuration of social groups (Petricini, 2022). New forms of social norms created by social media give priority to self-curation, algorithmically produced visibility, and asymmetrical messaging that switches the focus away towards dialogic and towards performative communication. These changes are worthy of withstanding scrutiny, especially in the context of the increased dependence on social media as the main method of socialization, especially among the younger generations.

Increasing amounts of empirical evidence appear, proving that the popularization of digital communication technologies leads to a paradoxical effect: social isolation and loneliness can be produced in common users as they tend to feel even more isolated and lonely, despite the upkeep of massive virtual networks of the closest people or the likes (Sarwar et al., 2023). As much as such networks seem to be durable and strong, the levels and degree of emotional investment in such relationships is significantly lower compared to what would be experienced in traditional and online settings. The ever-omnipresent presence of social media also contributes to what researcher's label as ambient awareness, or passive knowledge-retention about other people, without attempting to have a reciprocal conversation with it, thus encouraging a false impression of intimacy between people (Salter, 2023).

The process of digitalization of social interaction also triggers the remodeling of personal boundary and the following blurring of the public and the personal spaces. The modern audience is becoming more likely to be emphasized to stay online, be available and prompt, which leads to emotional burnout, excessive social comparison and performance pressures (Koyuturk et al., 2023). Such pressures go on to define how individuals perceive the nature of their relationships as well as the way they choose to invest disinvest in them. In romantic endeavors, a relatively recent term of neglecting the partner in favor of a mobile phone, known as phubbing, has been empirically associated with reduced measures of responsiveness in the other partner and a decrease in relationship satisfaction (Arikewuyo et al., 2021).

The modern social media literature has left behind an increasing amount of statistical documentation with regard to time usage and network scale, but this body of literature is deficient in comprehending the subtle, subjectively presented aspects of on-line communication. There is a large body of literature that explains why these measures lack the ability to uncover various emotional, psychological, and social conditions present in the daily use of technology by users (Bru et al., 2021). In comparison, a qualitative inquiry, especially on the basis of social constructivist approaches, can reveal the experiences of various people, mechanisms of interpretative approaches, and dynamics of relationships on the basis of which social media is used (Singh et al., 2022).

Further, cultural and situational factors play a decisive role in regulating trends in social media use on the community level. Although the Western-cent red research dominates the field, empirical research in the non-Western context has revealed different interpretations of presence, reciprocity, and community building. This variability reminds that the paramount aspect of digital interaction is necessity to locate this process within local social-cultural contexts, ideals, and norms of communication.

This weakness has inspired the current study that seeks to provide a contextual and interpretive reflection of the negotiation of interpersonal relations of individuals in the social-media age. By performing a qualitative study of life-history accounts, the evidence of the transformation of interaction patterns, the perceived advantages, and disadvantages of the type of platforms, and how digital media facilitates emotional intimacy, conflict management, and authenticity are outlined. Important insights and practical advice into modern social life and digital-literacy

projects, communicative action, and mental-health framing in a more digitized world are provided by the findings.

Method

In an attempt to discuss the nuances and subjectivities of the usage of social media as well as its effects upon intimate relationships participants of the study revealed, a qualitative approach to research design with the application of interpretive phenomenological approach was chosen. As far as meanings must be clarified, patterns must be identified and profound comprehension of social phenomena which cannot be measured in numbers or analyzed statistically must be obtained, the qualitative methodology was considered the best. In such a paradigm, the emphasis is on the perception of participants regarding how they negotiate their online activities and internalize them, especially in terms of feeling close emotionally, connecting with others, and engaging in modern forms of Internet communication.

Research Setting and Context

The investigation was conducted in a city in Indonesia where the internet connection and the use of social-media have become part of people living. The research was focused on the individuals often using such communication platforms as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, etc. The choice of such platforms was explained by their popularity and also by the ability to serve various communicational purposes, such as instant messaging, sharing photos and videos, having stories, and algorithm news feeds. The situation was specifically selected to provide an appropriate setting to study the digital interaction that has been entrenched in the local social practices and how cultural sensitivity infuses relationships on the social media network.

Participants and Sampling

There was the recruiting of participants using purposive sampling where by the aim of promoting detailed analysis, relevant, and non-homogeneous overviews through the use of a group of people of varying social status and social media interaction. Fifteen participants engaged in the study were obtained, which resulted in a sample consisting of men and women with an age range of 19-40 years. The entry requirements of the study included participation in at least two major social media outlets and the regular use of such resources to personal, relational, and social ends. The sampling covered the maximum variation in order to represent the most diverse samples in the gender scale, employees (students, professionals, entrepreneurs), and social context (single, married, living with parents, etc.); the diversity has allowed this study to explore in detail its research questions with a variety of relational experiences and challenges in the modern world of digital reality.

Data Collection Methods

The semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used as the main form of data collection in the current study. Such a method gave the researcher some freedom, as it allowed discussion of emergent themes, as well as some soundness in terms of the overall uniformity of the interviewing process, since the interview guide provided some set of pre-selected baseline questions. The interview would last 45-90 minutes and visits (face-to-face or video based) would be arranged according to the preference and convenience of the participant. The conversation focused on the experiences of the participants with social media, perceptions of closeness between individuals, authenticity, conflict, and emotional connection and the differences between being online and meeting someone in person was structured in a way that they were, first, guided in answering by a structured interview guide that contained open-ended questions. Audio recording of interviews was done with consent of the participants but all

interviews were thereafter manually transcribed as a matter of methodological authenticity and the best attempt to maintain an analytic accuracy. At the same time, field notes were taken to record the tone, the expressions on the face and the setting of every interview. These observations were some additional information that added meaning to the qualitative analysis, in the sense that it included context in the sense to complement the verbal transcription. The ethical measures were strictly followed, and every respondent was informed about confidentiality, voluntary participation, and his right to leave the study even in the process.

Data Analysis

This writer used the themes analysis under the six steps of data exploration data familiarization, developing initial codes, searching for themes, writing themes review, defining and naming themes, and pulling up the end-report. Thematic analysis was selected in my case because it allows representation of patterns and meaning on a cross-narrative level and can be adjusted so that inductive (emerging out of the data) and deductive (based on the literature) themes could both be identified. The reading of transcripts was performed thoroughly to reach the levels of familiarity and engagement. The codes were also compiled manually and checked successively to ensure consistency and coherence. Themes were then clustered into patterns that indicated themes in the social interaction behavior used by the participants, their emotional experience and their relational adjustments in the era of digitalization. Reflexive journaling and peer debriefing was also used to increase credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis. To effectively analyses the codes, quotes and categories, NVivo software was applied and effectively organized in a good manner.

Result and Discussion

The fact that social media has propagated itself has entirely transformed the process through which people develop and maintain interpersonal relations as well as how these relations can be interpreted. In hope of explaining this multidimensionality in the sphere of current digital communication, the present research implemented a sequence of in-depth interviews that recorded not only the practice of social platforms, but also the emotional and social consequences of these practices. The results were obtained on the basis of personal stories told by the participants, shedding light on changing patterns of connection, disconnection and emotional control in the digital environment. En masse, the voices of these interviewees highlight the two successes and limitations that can follow maintaining positive relationships in a world that has been and is becoming screen and algorithm-increasingly mediated.

Increased Connectivity but Superficial Interactions

One of the main conclusions produced by this exploration as regards the nature of authentic living in the realm of the digital age is the seeming nature of social life as paradoxical. The respondents indicated that the social media applications have massively expanded their social circles, as they are able to maintain relationships with a diverse group of people, comprising of old friends, distant family members, colleagues, and even casual friends. However, in parallel to this clearly increased connectivity, the nature of the interaction has changed to become both shallow and decentralized. The respondents mentioned that online communication can be defined as fast, concise, rather impoverished in emotions. The architectural characteristics of the social media platforms under consideration can be seen as one of the main reasons that determine the phenomenon of superficial interaction among the participants. These are sites that are specifically oriented at the fast exchange of the information, which prompt the usage of likes, emojis, stickers, and short answers and buttons to reactions. Such affordances generate

a quantifiable experience of engagement that is associated with no imperative to support the construction of a contentious discussion or a stronger emotional connection. As one of the participants put it, this meta-observation is as follows:

"Now I can talk to many people at once, but most of it is just small talk or commenting on stories. We don't really share feelings or serious things anymore."

The shift in substance to interaction frequency in any relationship describes the modern online behaviour that can be identified as a transactional level instead of a substantive level. Even though individuals are always in touch with each other using the nomadic communication technologies, the content of the conversations flooding through the lines is often empty or performative. In addition, the feeling of need to portray a life of good mannerism and good behaviour in social media by use of curated posts, selfies and statuses drives a person toward the goal maintenance of image rather than meaningful talk. On a regular basis, participants described the sense of being socially obligated to participate in messages or online discussion, as stated by one of the interviewees: "I feel like I have to respond I can look anti-social."

"I like replying to friends' stories or reacting with emojis, but it's more to show I'm still around. It doesn't mean we're close or that we really talk anymore."

According to the contemporary scholarship, the persistence of the online existence has become an alternative to the real relations dynamics creating an illusion of closeness that does not always work together with the emotional intimacy. Participants also claimed that they became emotionally detached even when their digital presence became constant. Consistent status reporting, online presence, and IM usually conceal the lack of meaningful relationship contact. As a result, a social life leads to emotional isolation since even though everyone has a social life, they can also feel isolated at the same time, which is typical of digital-age relationships. Most of the respondents admitted that in spite of the fact that they are aware of what other people are doing through the research, they do not often ask or are asked about their well-being in the personally significant terms.

Decreased Face-to-Face Interactions

The current research shows a serious decline in face-to-face communication, which could be best explained by the unmatched comfort that the digital communication provides. According to the informants, the technological advancements have made it easy to maintain contact with the individuals; however, it also has reduced the importance of physical meetings. Messaging systems and social media sites, like WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook messenger, have become the default mode of meeting new people, daily status updates and the maintenance of friendships, as opposed to the real-life, embodied interaction. This tendency is indicative of a larger transition of social practices in which people find it more efficient and immediate to communicate with one another via digital means rather than accept the time and effort it takes to organize a face-to-face meeting.

Again and again, informants stated that demanding programming and instant nature of social media constituted a reason they chose to have short online interactions instead of spending time on physical meetings. One of the participants remarked that he or she loves online meet-ups because of convenience as the primary factor. It gives me the chance to share information when I feel like doing so and at the same time, I am able to go on with other assignments."

"I used to meet friends every weekend, but now we just text or send memes to each other. It feels enough, but when I think about it, we haven't actually met in months."

The digital aspect of social interaction has in the actual sense replaced the physical co-presence need, an act that has not been motivated by emotional detachment, but more by convenience and standardisation of online interaction in a modern lifestyle. Chosen interlocutors drew particular attention to the fact that technological affordances have led to the preservation of a reductive limitedly observational form of social work; the process of assessing another person as to the new status, image, or virtual story is often interpreted as a sign of health, thus weakening the necessity of initiating a personal conversation or a personal meeting on their own initiative. One of the respondents explained that it is now a compulsory task that he no longer feels the urge to call people because a brief message is sufficient to make sure that they are fine.

"Before, if I didn't see my friend for a while, I would call and ask to meet. Now I see their Instagram stories and think, 'they're doing fine', so I don't bother."

In the mentioned quote lies a real dichotomy that exists in modern digital existence: people can feel and have more of a sense of connection online when they are seen, and the widespread use of non-interactive or so-called passive observation can and usually does replace the significant involvement. This change of paradigm, consisting of a reduction of face-to-face interaction, presents far reaching social and emotional consequences. Respondents indicated that the perceived impoverishment of emotional fulfilment in exchange of frequent digital messages was due to the failure of the textual forms to create such an effect in the same way that physical forms of communication, tone of voice, nonverbal expression, facial expression, and even eye contact, enable people not only to empathize and understand each other, but also to create an emotional connection. Attenuated social connections and increased detachment can be the cause of such experiential deficit over prolonged periods. Screen-mediated configuration of sociality has transformed many relationships into more predictable and transactional form to many respondents because face-to-face interactions have been replaced by pre-planned virtual chats.

It was also revealed that generational variability came out strongly in the data. The younger respondents, especially the so-called digital natives felt more at ease with friendships that occur purely online yet the older members questioned the fact that few people are actually meeting and interacting in real life. However, here, too, within the age groups there existed a kind of unanimous recognition that the intensity of in-person communication cannot be matched up to the online communication, even though the latter has the benefits of being fast and convenient.

Emergence of Online Conflicts and Miscommunication

The empirical study of the digital communication has shown a positive growth in the incidence of intra-personal conflicts and misinterpretation. Quite a considerable number of the respondents have described the instances where even such simple messages could be decoded wrong, the tone of the voice could be interpreted, and even the silence without the intention to cause offence or misunderstanding could be perceived as disrespect or suspicion. The process behind this trend is the lack of non-verbal communication intonation, expressions and the use of body language which is essential in determining the communicative purpose when communicating face-to-face. In text-based conversations, it is masterly easy to lose the

contextual information and consequently one ends up interpreting the contents in diametrical perspectives than what was arousing the speaker of the sentence. Thus, the participants of the study reported instances of consistently misinterpreting the emotional valence of written words. In the one of the interviews, there is the following note: I have said things that came out sarcastically when I really meant it.

"I once sent a short reply because I was busy, and my friend thought I was angry. It turned into an argument that wouldn't have happened if we were talking in person."

One of the current issues of digital communication is that it can lead to reception that something compressed or delayed is the sign of mined interest, irritation, or lack of respect, even though it is not reflected in the intention of the person who transmitted it. The lack of synchronicity between visual and aural clues, including facial expression, vocal inflexion, and so on, presents vast opportunities of interpretation and those opportunities can easily change into misunderstanding. Even in the case of disagreements that are communicated through written forms of digital media, participants noted that there is often an increase in the argument due to the fact that electronic messages are archival forms of perceived offense that can easily be reread many times by the recipient, again in a critical way that is tied to resentment and festering relationship deterioration. This is captured by the following quote based on the interviews of the participants:

"My friend and I got into a fight over a chat about politics. The way I typed something came off wrong, and even though I tried to explain, he kept bringing up the screenshot of my first message."

This kind of communication (digital) is associated with an outstanding capacity of persistence: messages are stored, perused and are occasionally published, thus aggravating and extending social conflict instead of further reducing it. Asynchronous digital communication only makes it harder to deal with disputes. In contrast to the synchronous in situ or the telephone exchange, text messages have often received time-delayed responses that often are interpreted by their recipients as a sign of neglectful Ness and lack of respect. The delay in this time frame is usually said to be a result of a busy schedule or a form of notification fatigue; however, at times when this delay happens, the presumptions of immediate reciprocity raise issues of interpersonal stress and worry.

These dynamics are further complicated by the fact that social media can make even insignificant points of contention extremely public, some of which can be inflated from squabbles between close friends to quarrels with more distant contacts. The kind of publicity creates what several of the interviewees referred to as a culture of performative conflict, in which people not only argue to support their own side of the issue but because of a desire to have a discourse in the public sphere. Besides, despite the fact that the digital space helps to start talking, it also contains the possibilities to quickly withdraw, e.g., ghosting or un-friending a person and in this way to avoid the direct negotiation process but remain in unresolved tension.

Social Comparison and Declining Self-Esteem

One of the significant outcomes of the current research is that the phenomenon of social comparison practices is on the rise in the context of social-media activities, and the estimated

bidirectional dimension of it is that self-esteem of many study participants diminishes as well. The online age, characterized by the never-ending stream of curated photographs, selfies, personal achievements, and life-style reports, has created a space where the users are exposed to the repetitive images of life that are presented as near-perfect. This kind of exposure, of course, only encourages the comparison on both appearance, and accomplishments, material objects and social markers of approval such as likes, comments and follower figures. The respondents noticed that social media, on the one hand, mediates connection and entertainment, and, on the other hand, it creates psychological pressure to share idealized self-representation. Upon seeing what others have accomplished, go on vacation, have a relationship, and have also spent time perfecting their personal brands, users tend to undervalue their situations. A participant gave an account that says, social media makes them compare themselves and no matter how they know it is absurd, they still leave the situation feeling bad about themselves.

"Every time I open Instagram, it feels like everyone else is doing better than me traveling, buying things, getting promoted. I start feeling like I'm not doing enough with my life."

The current quote underlines psychological pressure related to upward social comparison, because of which users feel that other people are more successful, happier, or beautiful. This is further enhanced by the development of a tendency to forget the fact that these images are products of a well-thought-out content, not the actual representation of the reality. In addition, a significant group of the respondents indicated that self-perception on the social media is significantly affected by the reaction to or lack of reaction on the social media. Expectation of a bigger number of likes or comments than someone had on a post might lead to feelings of inadequacy or rejection. This reliance on outside recognition therefore displaces self-esteem as an occasion of internal assurance to the complete instability and caprice of the online permission. As simply phrased by one of the interviewed:

"When my post doesn't get many likes, I start doubting myself, like maybe I don't look good or maybe people aren't interested in me anymore."

There is an inherent interrelationship between self-esteem and popularity brought about by algorithmic induction, and therefore maintains a circular method where the users blend social-media experience and social media popularity with self-worth.

The Psychological and Social Consequences of Digital Interaction

Substantial visual exposure to curated images, beauty-enhancing applications, and all the promotional material only worsen the state of body dissatisfaction and distorted self-perceptions specifically, in younger members of the study, leading to increased comparative pressures in an inferiority and envy complex with anxiety attached. The testimonies given by the participants confirm the ubiquity of the so-known syndrome of highlight reel where only the most outstanding moments are shown resulting in distorted comparative judgments. In spite of the fact that online users are cognitively aware that the online space has nothing to do with any realistic presentation of the life story, the affective meaning of the particular phenomena remains and this is precisely why the on-line interactions may be described as the psychological complexity of the interactions. The subjects that reported more time staring at screens each day reported having even more significant links between the use of social media and self-comparison; they engaged in self-censorship when it comes to social media, where they would

avoid sharing anything unless it matched their perceived standards of impression worthiness. These habits only strengthen the necessity to create a positive digital identity and further separate users and their true identities. Together, this paper clarifies revolutionary impacts of social media on personal interactions putting in the forefront behaviours of shallow interaction, dwindling face-to-face interpersonal communication, augmented virtual hostilities and psychological implication of social comparison. It fills the gaps in the existing knowledge by shedding light on the specific methodological and contextual shortcomings of past studies, especially of those in the non-Western digital landscapes.

Empirical evidence of the present study is in line with the observation by Boland et al. (2022) that connection through increased connectivity has resulted in what this scholar calls as the connection without conversation where sustained communication via digital devices pushed out meaningful conversations. Unlike Turkle who only concentrates on western teenage and young twenty somethings, the participants in the current study cut across a wider age bracket and geographical position (Gliniecka, 2021). The qualitative interview results show that despite the convenience of online communication, people who do it regularly have emotional distancing, which is consistent with the claim by De Villiers et al. (2022) that digital communication can only build weak-tie relationships with less emotional depth. Notably, the findings indicate that such patterns seem to go beyond younger generations to show how adults and professionals rely on social media as a daily interaction method (Chyn & Katz, 2021).

The second important theme is decreased physical communication, which is also echoed by the argument of Twenge et al. (2021) who believed that the internet leads to a decline in real life socializing. Recent surveys indicate that adolescents spend much less time on real-life interactions with their peers, as shown by Foulkes & Andrews (2023) understandably attributed to an increase in mental health issues. The current study replicates these findings and compensates one of the methodological limitations of the study by conducting qualitative interview to answer the question of why people feel drawn to online interactions: as a matter of time, practical convenience, and addiction to the digital media (Filazzola & Cahill, 2021). The participants reported a change of preferences toward digital interaction with the influence of social norms and peer pressure, thus demonstrating a structural shift in a social response in modern times. However, this is counterpointed by the emotional remorse of many interviewees- participants who regularly missed purposeful communication, an element that is not always reflected in quantitative studies that take place on a large scale.

The current study locates the source of online conflicts and miscommunication, proving that tone and immediacy are some of the most important resources that can help reduce relational tension, which is not often present in online communication. The literature has reviewed the issue of online attack and trolling (Waziri, 2022), although little has been discussed regarding personal disputes among friends and relatives. This gap is filled in the current study, which records the experiences of ordinary users feeling alienated because of the messages they do not comprehend, seem rude, and take too long to get back to. The results correspond with the theory of social process of information developed by Saberi et al. (2021) when he argues that the users become accustomed to the online environment, but due to the lack of non-verbal cues, the messages are often distorted. The study offers realistic observations on how asynchronous communication can give rise to unsolicited unpleasantness, where subjects express the lasting impacts on the trust and the warmth of relationships.

The topic studied is the most unique to the study, as it includes the research of social comparison and the drop in self-esteem. It is founded on the literature, which has already reported the negative psychological outcomes of the upward comparison on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook (Scheel et al., 2021). These prior studies however rely heavily on survey backed strategies and sample on the most part young adults in western communities. The current study is different in the sense that it provides qualitative explanations of the individuals with different socioeconomic backgrounds, thus presenting how social comparison works both among different age groups and along with the classes. The curated online depiction led to emotional distress, withdrawal, performance pressure as per the report of the interviewees. The fact that they base their self-worth on such metrics as likes and comments goes hand in hand with the research of Broadbent et al. (2023), but the study goes much beyond this point to show how all of that forces long term dissatisfaction and change of identity presentation. Moreover, the fact that users are motivated to hidden unattractive or uncontroversial artifacts unless these fulfill some aesthetic or performative requirement indicates that a culture of impression management is becoming even more profound, which has not been theorized well in the previous literature (Vlachou & Panagopoulos, 2023).

This paper confirms the findings by Schaffert (2022) who argue that the usage of social media fuels envy and depression as users constantly encounter an image of ideal lives. More importantly, though, the current work highlights the interpersonal implications of the digital decline of self-esteem, showing how not only is envy and anxiety leading to self-censorship, inhibited openness, and increased relational distance, but also that it negatively affects the process of genuine connection (Oluwatoyin, 2021). As a result, this analysis expands the current studies of digital self-esteem into some of its recent implications in dealing with social closeness and trust in communication.

Conclusion

The current research explains the complex implications of the social media on interpersonal relations in the modern digital environment. Despite the width of connections digital platforms provide, the quality of connection in them can often be described as superficial and low on the emotional integrity. The participants claimed that they lost a lot of face-to-face communication, had a lot of online conflict due to miscommunication, and experienced various negative psychological effects, such as social comparison and decreased self-esteem. Through the focus on the lived experiences of users, this qualitative study can fill a crucial gap in the current literature to provide such rich details and data that are not purely quantitative but offer a complicated picture through narratives. It shows that the problem does not lie just in the amount of using the social media, but in the way it recreates the perception, communication patterns, and mood. We are living at a time when we have an ever more digital environment, so to maintain healthy and substantial relationships deliberate dialogue, a high level of emotional sensitivity as well as a proper balance between online and off-line relationships are needed.

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