



Understanding The Impact Of Online Social Interactions On Social Behavior

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Abstract

The way people engage and communicate in the modern world has undergone a transformation thanks to social media platforms and online communities. This study explores the dramatic effects of online social interactions on interpersonal relationships, emotional health, and social conduct. This study offers a thorough explanation of the dynamics at work in digital social Behaviour by drawing on theoretical frameworks from psychology, sociology, and communication. The formation and expression of social identities, the pursuit of social rewards, and the dissemination of information through various digital media are all influenced by online interactions, as explored through the theoretical lenses of Social Identity Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Media Richness Theory. The study examines the good and negative effects on people's emotional wellbeing of a variety of social Behaviours that appear in online contexts, such as the development of helpful virtual communities and the spread of harmful content. To further shed light on how virtual connections affect empathy, emotional contagion, and mental health consequences, the psychological and emotional components of online social interactions are carefully investigated. In order to better understand how people interact with virtual reality (VR) environments and form social relationships as avatars, the study also looks into the developing field of social Behaviour in VR environments. In conclusion, navigating the intricacies of the digital age requires an awareness of the effects of online social contacts on social Behaviour.

Introduction

According to Bucci et al (2019) How people engage and communicate in the digital age has undergone a significant transition since the rise of social media platforms and online communities. Through previously unthinkable connections, collaboration, and information-sharing across boundaries and cultures, the digital environment creates new types of social Behaviour. For scholars, policymakers, and society at large, figuring out how online social interactions affect social Behaviour has become a top priority (Abbas et al., 2022). According to Arora (2022) The goal of this thesis is to delve into the complex realm of online social interactions and investigate how they affect social Behaviour. It is critical to examine how these digital connections may differ from conventional face-to-face meetings and how they impact our social life as more individuals resort to virtual venues to interact with one another (Heng & Sol., 2021). The advent of social media platforms, virtual reality worlds, and other digital places has brought about new dynamics and complexity in the ways that we engage, communicate, and build relationships (Baía & Ashmore, 2022).

According to Dwivedi et al (2022) By revealing how the offline and online worlds interact and providing insights into the ramifications for both individuals and society, this research aims to close the gap between them. The phenomenon of online social interactions and its consequences on social Behaviour will be examined using theoretical frameworks from the fields of psychology, sociology, and communication (Ngien & Hogan, 2023). By basing this research on well-established ideas, we can better comprehend the mechanics underpinning human Behaviour in the digital sphere. According to Brady et al (2021) Both positive and bad aspects of online social Behaviour will be examined. On the one hand, online communities have been made possible by platforms, connecting people with peers who share their interests and offering spaces for support and belonging. Contrarily, the less positive aspects of internet connection, like cyberbullying and the dissemination of false information, have sparked worries about the potential harm to people and society. The psychological and emotional aspects of online social interactions will also be looked into in this thesis. Long-term virtual engagement's effects on mental health can be better understood by gaining an understanding of how digital surroundings affect emotional stability, empathy, and emotional contagion.

We will investigate the innovative social Behaviour patterns that these immersive environments foster as we explore the unexplored realm of virtual reality (VR) and other cutting-edge technology. Insights about the future of social interaction and its integration into other fields can be gained by observing how people act and engage in VR environments. However, there are ethical issues and difficulties associated with this foray into the world of online social interactions. Data privacy issues and the constantly changing nature of digital platforms necessitate ethical research methods and responsible technical advancement. In sum, the goal of this thesis is to advance our understanding of online social interactions and how they affect human Behaviour. Understanding these dynamics will help us meet the challenges posed by this dynamic and linked digital world while maximizing the potential of digital spaces for constructive social change. In the end, this study aims to provide a thorough knowledge of the digital revolution and its profound effects on our social structure.

Social Behaviour in Online Environments

According to Hosni et al (2020) Online social Behaviour is a dynamic and complex phenomenon that is influenced by the particular qualities and opportunities provided by digital platforms. A wide range of social Behaviours emerge as people use virtual places to connect, communicate, and share information. Online platforms, such social media networks, discussion boards, and virtual reality communities, enable users to interact with a worldwide audience and facilitate interactions that cross physical boundaries. Social interaction in these online networks can take many different forms, from creating new connections and online groups to participating in discussions and team projects (Blackwell et al., 2019). According to Dahlstrom et al (2020) The asynchronous nature of many online interactions enables people to take part whenever it is convenient for them, facilitating continual connectivity and the possibility of social involvement.

However, the lack of nonverbal clues in text-based communications can make it difficult to correctly read emotions and intentions, possibly affecting the tone and results of conversations. People may exhibit more extreme Behaviours, both positive and bad, since they feel freer to express themselves due to the perceived anonymity and lessened social repercussions of online encounters (Brosch, 2021). It is crucial to comprehend the intricacies of social Behaviour in online environments in order to fully appreciate how digital interactions affect people and communities and to see chances for fostering constructive and positive involvement in the virtual world. According to Fabriz et al (2021) Social conduct in online settings is characterized by a broad range of acts that include both individual interactions and group participation.

People can present and maintain their identities in virtual environments, interact with people who share their interests, and form social connections that go beyond physical boundaries. Rapid idea propagation and global collaboration are made possible by the accessibility to a wealth of information and the ease of communication. The creation of online communities is a significant part of social Behaviour in online settings (Jasser et al., 2023). These communities bring people together who might never have crossed paths in the real world because of shared interests, values, or life experiences. They provide forums where others with similar interests may interact, offer assistance, and strengthen a sense of community. These online groups can be excellent tools for anyone looking for social interaction, professional connections, or just a sense of solidarity in a world that is undergoing rapid change.

Online connections also give people fresh ways to express themselves and explore their identities. People can control how others view them by carefully curating their profiles, status updates, and content sharing. This part of online social Behaviour including self-presentation is crucial for creating online identities and affecting how people are viewed in their digital networks. The bad social Behaviours can also appear in online environments, in contrast to the positive ones. Because of the assumed anonymity and lax accountability of the online environment, cyberbullying, trolling, and online harassment are regrettable aspects of the digital world. Such bad habits can have detrimental effects on people's emotional health and can have unfavourable offline effects. Online platforms' constant connectedness creates a setting where social comparisons and the need to fit in can be intensified. When people compare their life to meticulously maintained online representations of others, they may feel inadequate or develop increased social anxiety.

Furthermore, the gamification features and incentive systems on social networking sites might encourage compulsive actions by reiterating the desire for approval through likes, comments, or shares. Recognizing the interaction of multiple factors, including human motives, platform design, and social norms particular to each digital space is necessary to comprehend the subtleties of social Behaviour in online contexts. Understanding the subtleties of digital social interactions through the examination of linguistic clues, network structures, and content sharing patterns can be quite beneficial. The dynamics of social interaction in online contexts will unavoidably change as technology advances. In order to create inclusivity, empathy, and meaningful relationships in a world that is becoming more interconnected, researchers and politicians must be attentive in tackling the problems caused by bad online Behaviour. Exploring these various aspects of online social Behaviour can help us better navigate the digital environment and build a happier, more peaceful virtual society.

Positive Impact of Online Social Interactions on Social Behaviour

Online social interactions have demonstrated a multitude of positive impacts on social behaviour, transforming the way individuals connect and engage with one another. One of the most significant advantages of digital social interactions is the ability to bridge geographical barriers, enabling people from diverse backgrounds and cultures to come together and form meaningful connections. Virtual spaces offer a sense of inclusivity and diversity, allowing individuals to interact with others whom they might not have encountered in their offline social circles. Moreover, online platforms serve as fertile ground for the formation of supportive communities and the exchange of social support. Individuals facing similar challenges or experiences can find solace and encouragement through virtual groups centered around shared interests, hobbies, or life circumstances. These communities offer an avenue for emotional validation, advice, and empathy, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of isolation.

Online social interactions have also opened up new channels for self-expression and creativity. People can showcase their talents, share their thoughts, and contribute to various online discussions, allowing for diverse perspectives and ideas to flourish. This democratization of expression empowers individuals who might have felt marginalized or overlooked in traditional communication channels to have their voices heard and acknowledged. Furthermore, the digital realm has expanded opportunities for collaboration and collective problem-solving. Online platforms enable individuals to work together on projects, initiatives, or charitable causes regardless of their physical location. Crowdsourcing and open collaboration foster an environment of collective intelligence, where a diverse group of individuals can pool their knowledge and expertise to achieve common goals.

Online social interactions have also played a crucial role in promoting social awareness and activism. Social media has become a powerful tool for mobilizing individuals around social and environmental issues, raising awareness, and promoting social change. The widespread dissemination of information through digital networks empowers individuals to engage in meaningful discussions and participate in campaigns for justice, equality, and humanitarian causes. Beyond individual connections, online social interactions have contributed to the strengthening of social ties within existing offline networks. Friends, family members, and colleagues can maintain regular communication and share experiences through various digital platforms, enhancing the sense of connectedness even when physical distances separate them. The positive impact of online social interactions on social behaviour is far-reaching, enriching interpersonal relationships, fostering a sense of community, and promoting collective action for societal betterment. By embracing the advantages of digital communication, individuals can harness the potential of the digital age to create a more interconnected, empathetic, and socially aware global community.

Negative Impact of Online Social Interactions on Social Behaviour

Online social connections have numerous advantages, but they also have some drawbacks that should be carefully considered. The proliferation of cyberbullying and online harassment, which may cause people great mental pain and suffering, is one major cause for concern. The assumed anonymity of the internet can give people the confidence to act hurtfully, disseminate unkind rumours, make painful comments, or launch targeted attacks without suffering immediate repercussions. Such unpleasant events may result in social retreat, a decline in self-esteem, and even mental health problems. Additionally, algorithm-driven content recommendations can intensify polarization and contentious social behaviour by generating filter bubbles and echo chambers. Online platforms could unintentionally promote pre-existing ideas, creating close-knit societies with little exposure to opposing viewpoints. As a result, users might become less open to opposing perspectives, which would prevent productive conversation and encourage hostility toward others who hold different opinions.

Constantly evaluating one's life against meticulously crafted online representations can also exacerbate inadequacies and lower self-worth. Particularly social media sites can encourage people to participate in "social comparison" activities, in which they contrast their own lives with the allegedly ideal ones of others. Due to this, there may be feelings of jealousy and jealousy as well as an unhealthy concentration on appearance rather than authentic self-expression. Online platforms' gamification features, including "likes" and "followers," have the potential to unintentionally encourage compulsive behaviours and a need for approval. As users' self-worth is linked to online measurements, they risk developing an excessive fixation on gaining social approval through these virtual rewards, which could have an impact on their real-life actions and self-esteem.

Additionally, the prevalence of misleading information and disinformation in online environments can influence social behaviour and aid in the propagation of conspiracy theories. Unintentionally disseminating false information could cause mistrust, misunderstanding, and a decline in confidence in reputable sources and conventional media. Digital settings' quick and simple communication can often result in rash and careless actions. Text-based communication could be less nuanced than face-to-face conversations, which could lead to miscommunications and disagreements. When nonverbal clues like body language and voice tone are absent during online conversations, it can cause misunderstandings and heightened emotions.

Finally, the detrimental effects of online social contacts on social conduct emphasize the necessity of responsible digital involvement and raised knowledge of the potential risks. In order to build a safer and more respectful online environment, individuals, platform operators, and politicians must work together to address issues like cyberbullying, echo chambers, and the dissemination of false information. We may work to maximize the positive potential of online interactions for productive discourse, empathy, and social connection by comprehending and minimizing these detrimental consequences.

Psychological and Emotional Aspects

For those who use digital communication, the world of online social connections has major psychological and emotional ramifications. The effect of virtual contacts on emotional wellbeing is a crucial consideration. Online communication is convenient and frequent, which can result in both pleasant and bad emotional experiences. On the one hand, people may feel more emotionally supported and socially linked to their online networks, especially in online communities built around similar hobbies or experiences. These beneficial encounters can strengthen emotional resiliency and foster a sense of belonging. The digital world is full of potential pressures and emotional difficulties, though.

Online social media platforms can unintentionally promote a culture of competitiveness and comparison, which can cause people to feel inadequate or anxious as they continuously compare their lives to those of others who appear to have it all together. A sense of inauthenticity and identity conflict can result from the need to maintain a well-manicured online presence, where people may feel forced to present a façade that conforms to social norms rather than their genuine selves. Additionally, the continuous exposure to upsetting news, polarizing arguments, and bad interactions on social media can be detrimental to people's emotional health. Feelings of pessimism, worry, or even fury may result from the deluge of information and the echo chambers that support particular viewpoints. Digital settings can also have an impact on empathy, a crucial aspect of social interaction. It might be difficult to effectively understand people's feelings or viewpoints when communicating online because there may be a lack of emotional indicators and context.

Due to people's potential lowered sensitivity to the emotional needs of others in virtual encounters, this may result in a decrease in empathetic reactions. Additionally, the phenomena of emotional contagion in online environments have the power to affect people's emotions and moods. Rapid emotional diffusion via social media posts and content can result in group emotional reactions, magnifying users' sentiments of happiness, fear, rage, or sadness. Recognizing how emotional states can be altered and shared through virtual interactions requires an understanding of emotional contagion. Additionally, people's mental health may be impacted by the addictive nature of online activity. Constant notifications, alerts, and the need for approval from likes and comments can result in compulsive digital behaviour and feelings of dependency on online interactions, which can have an adverse effect on general wellbeing and productivity.

Social Behaviour and Virtual Reality (VR)

Social interaction between people and technology is fascinatingly reflected in virtual reality (VR) situations. Users of VR are submerged in 3D computer-generated settings, giving them a sense of presence and embodiment that obfuscates the distinction between the real world and the virtual one. People can engage with other users as avatars in these realistic virtual settings, creating a novel and potentially revolutionary social experience. The feeling of "co-presence" of being physically there with other people in the virtual environment is one of the most important elements of social behaviour in virtual reality. In comparison to conventional online communication techniques, this increased sensation of presence can result in encounters that are more sincere and emotionally compelling. Users frequently feel more connected to other avatars, which may promote stronger social ties and a feeling of shared experiences.

Through the movements and body language of avatars, VR also makes nonverbal communication easier. The expressiveness and comprehension of social interactions are improved by this more comprehensive set of nonverbal cues. A more realistic and nuanced discussion is made possible by the capacity to notice and respond to nonverbal clues in VR, possibly bridging the empathy gap sometimes associated with text-based online communication. VR offers opportunity for impromptu social connections with strangers in virtual worlds in addition to exchanges with well-known friends. Similar to meeting someone at a physical event, these unexpected encounters might result in serendipitous social relationships and unusual experiences that might not happen in other online venues.

Another aspect of social behaviour in virtual reality is the opportunity for shared endeavours and cooperative experiences. Users can cooperate and coordinate activities in real time, encouraging a sense of camaraderie and group success, whether playing virtual games, going to events, or working on projects together. VR presents opportunities for social engagement, but it also has drawbacks. It is crucial to protect users' privacy and security in open virtual places. To build a healthy and welcoming virtual social environment, it is necessary to address the possibility of online harassment and inappropriate behaviour. It is essential to comprehend the dynamics of social behaviour in these immersive environments as VR technology develops and becomes more widely available. Designing and improving virtual social environments that promote social connectivity, empathy, and collaboration in the digital sphere might benefit from understanding how users navigate social norms, develop relationships, and experience social presence in VR.

Ethical Considerations and Challenges

Given the profound influence of digital communication on people and society, ethical issues and difficulties relating to online social interactions are of the utmost importance. Data protection and privacy are two major ethical issues. Large volumes of personal data are frequently collected from users by online platforms, which raises concerns about how the data is handled, stored, and shared. Maintaining trust and encouraging responsible digital behaviour require protecting and upholding users' privacy rights. Furthermore, it is important to give consent in online interactions serious thought. Users might not always be entirely aware of the ramifications of their online behaviour or the risks associated with disclosing personal information. Maintaining ethical standards in the digital sphere requires striking a balance between making interactions easy and getting users' informed permission.

The ubiquity of damaging content and conduct in online spaces presents another ethical dilemma. Cyberbullying, hate speech, and the spread of false information can have a significant negative impact on people and communities. To address such undesirable behaviours, platform

owners must implement strict content control and community guidelines. This will protect free speech and prevent excessive censorship. In addition, the layout and algorithms used by internet platforms can affect how users behave and perceive things, raising moral questions about manipulation and addiction. Particularly social media platforms have come under fire for adopting persuading design strategies that promote compulsive behaviour and encourage continuous usage. To safeguard users' autonomy and mental health, it is ethically necessary to ensure platform design transparency and to promote digital well-being.

Special consideration must be given to how online social interactions affect vulnerable groups like children, teenagers, and those with mental health difficulties. Platform creators and policymakers have an ethical duty to give these vulnerable users protection from danger and to provide age-appropriate features and content. Additionally, the international scope of online social interactions creates moral conundrums regarding inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. In digital settings, different cultural norms and values may clash, resulting in misunderstandings or inadvertent offense. It's crucial to create platforms that respect many cultures and viewpoints in order to promote a harmonious and inclusive virtual community.

Fundamental ethical difficulty in the digital sphere is the question of accountability and responsibility. Considering the decentralized nature of online communication, it can be difficult to decide who should be held responsible for offensive material, false information, or the dissemination of divisive views. For legislators and platform operators, finding a balance between defending free expression and preventing destructive behaviour presents a constant ethical challenge. Working together with technology businesses, researchers, policymakers, and users is necessary to address these ethical issues and obstacles. Promoting a culture of empathy, respect, and responsible digital citizenship while putting an emphasis on user well-being, privacy, and informed permission can help to create a more moral and socially responsible online environment.

Future Directions and Recommendations

Looking ahead, a few recommendations and future directions can lead efforts to ethically and constructively influence the impact of online social interactions. First and foremost, it's essential to promote media and digital literacy. Users can be empowered to interact responsibly in virtual places by being taught how to evaluate online content critically, spot false information, and comprehend the consequences of their digital actions. A more informed and discriminating digital society can be created by incorporating digital literacy into educational curricula and public awareness efforts.

Second, platform designers and academics must to keep looking at novel ways to lessen the negative effects of online interactions. This entails putting in place content moderation technologies powered by AI that can quickly find and delete damaging information while safeguarding free expression. In order to prioritize relevant material over sensationalism and stop the spread of false information, algorithms can be improved. Promoting ethical design principles is also crucial. Technology businesses should put the needs of users ahead of long-term engagement and avoid using deceptive methods to hook people. Users will be able to make educated decisions about their digital footprint thanks to transparent platform design, clear permission procedures, and simple privacy settings. Opportunities for constructive social conduct are excitingly presented by virtual and augmented reality. In order to address issues like "VR addiction" and its possible negative impacts, researchers need go deeper into understanding the psychological and societal effects of prolonged VR use. Unlocking VR's revolutionary potential for societal good requires looking into its uses in therapeutic contexts, empathy training, and cross-cultural communication. Collaboration between technology companies, schools, and law enforcement is essential to combating cyberbullying and online

abuse. Online environments can be made safer by putting in place thorough reporting systems, offering aid to victims, and imposing severe penalties on offenders.

Additionally, interdisciplinary cooperation is crucial for developing the study of online social behaviour. A comprehensive understanding of the complexity of digital social interactions can be achieved by integrating knowledge from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, communication studies, computer science, and others. And last, encouraging ethical online conduct and digital empathy begins with the individual. A more kind and inclusive online community can be fostered through promoting kindness, polite conversation, and empathy in online encounters. Building a culture of digital citizenship that values empathy and understanding can be facilitated through participating in meaningful dialogues, helping others, and aggressively battling online negativity.

Conclusion

To sum up, the influence of online social connections on social behaviour is a complex and quickly developing phenomenon that has altered how people connect, communicate, and react to one another. The social media revolution, virtual reality, and other online communities have created previously unheard-of opportunities and challenges for society. As we traverse the complexity of the digital world, it is essential to comprehend the ramifications of digital social interactions. We have investigated the psychological, sociological, and linguistic factors that influence online social behaviour using the theoretical framework. We've seen how online interactions can encourage beneficial effects including building supportive communities, encouraging group action, and improving global connectedness. A more interconnected world results from people being able to express themselves, share knowledge, and work together online.

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