Influence of Digital Gaming on Relationship and Social Health

Anganabha Baruah¹

¹Amity University, Noida, India

ABSTRACT

The transition from the stone age to the digital era has radically altered our way of life. No matter their socioeconomic status, everyone around us currently has a mobile device. Immediately, we want to speak with someone, and within a second, we do. Facebook, Instagram, and online games simplify our daily lives, leaving little room for interpersonal relationships. This paper will examine how digitization has affected our interpersonal connections and also changed the way we view relationships from a social/mental health viewpoint. Since technology has lessened the necessity for social interaction, does this imply that we have all become digital natives? To gain a deeper understanding of the topic, this paper proposes a novel perspective supported by prior research. Since this problem has not been substantially investigated, more targeted research is required in the Indian setting.

Keywords: Technology, Relationship, Digitalization, digital native, Social/Mental health

INTRODUCTION

India, along with the rest of the global community, is becoming a technologically advanced nation and increasingly dependent on technology. There is an overpowering presence of technology everywhere we look these days. Everywhere we go, social media, gaming, cashless transactions, and internet chats are available. In this age of digitalization, the topic of how we establish relationships arises and what kind of mental health impact is there. Since technology has diminished the necessity for interpersonal communication, have we gotten lazier? Do we prefer conversing with our friends over physically meeting them? However, we cannot deny that it facilitates our connections in some way. Because not everyone forms relationships in the same manner. For example, a person may be quite reserved in face-to-face interactions but extremely outgoing when communicating online or chatting. A person may not be very active on social media, yet they may be really warm and welcoming in person. Therefore, in order to comprehend relationships, one must consider individual diversity. Nonetheless, the core beliefs of what establishes a relationship remain unchanged. There are other aspects to examine, such as the resemblance between people, how they communicate, and socialisation process. Social exchange perspective[1] and similarity perspective[2] were influential studies on relationships that primarily addressed how connections are formed and sustained.

DIGITAL WORLD AND MENTAL HEALTH

Everyone uses social media primarily to communicate with individuals they know in "real life" circumstances, such as at home, work, and school[3]. Once upon a time, in order to keep in touch with loved ones, we had to make trunk calls through a telephone operator or write letters. Even though letters have an attractive and more personal quality, aren't WhatsApp, Messenger, and other instant platforms more convenient? I wish to speak with my sister immediately, and within 10 seconds I am connected by video or audio, depending on my option. I can ban someone if I don't like them or edit and re-write a text before sending it multiple times. In essence, the need for convenience has reduced the suspense of getting a letter and causes us to become impatient at

times. This is the result of computer-mediated communication (CMC), which influences the formation, development, maintenance, and control of relationships when the internet is used as a communication medium. The CMC channel promotes editing, discretion, and convenience, as well as the ability to tune out ambient disturbances and reallocate cognitive resources to improve message composition[4]. One may argue that as we have become increasingly insecure in our relationships and apprehensive about intimacy, we have turned to technology for methods to be in relationships while protecting ourselves from them[5].

Nevertheless, as social animals, we require relationships in both the virtual and real worlds to exist. Relationships of any type, whether platonic or romantic, are fundamentally significant[6]. Friends provide emotional and social support in addition to aid in times of difficulty[7,8,9]. They give happiness and significance to a person's life and are the major means by which we might reinvent ourselves. Recently, technology has given interpersonal relationships a totally new meaning. It has fostered interaction between the virtual and real worlds by influencing human connections. Digital platforms have integrated the online world into daily life, altering the definition of interpersonal connections. Through research in the social sciences, design, or information technology, etc., this study of the impact of technology on contemporary relationships is just beginning. In general, the use of technology has altered human connections by blurring the borders and regulations for engaging with one another, hence altering the procedures for beginning, maintaining, and terminating personal relationships[10,11]. Using social media, individuals can hone their interpersonal communication skills, increase their social network, and obtain the required knowledge to establish interpersonal relationships[12]. Therefore, the digital world provides a secure environment for socially nervous individuals to acquire communication skills that can also be useful in the physical world.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN DIGITAL SPACE

According to the existent literature on friendships, friendships with peers of the same age are essential for the psychosocial development and overall well-being of adolescents[13]. Furthermore, it is obvious that technology and online communication are currently pervasive among teenagers, particularly as a socialisation tool[14]. People who have grown up in a world of continual internet contact cannot fathom the childhoods of their ancestors, who grew up without it, nor can they comprehend how paradigms of development, socialisation, sexualization, and education have fundamentally shifted[15]. Even when discussing family ties, many people utilise the Internet as an escape from or alternative to home life. Their new online pals or chat groups can substitute for social interaction in the real world[16]. These online social connections are a major factor in attracting and retaining users' interest in social media and online games. In addition, the process of making new friends appears safer and simpler online than in real life[17]. There is also the gift of anonymity, which allows them to conceal embarrassing information about themselves. Many individuals have difficulty interacting in the physical world because of their shyness or nervousness. Others simply lack enough communication skills or have no one with whom they feel comfortable speaking. Digital world interactions may be therapeutic and more comfortable for such people. Even for people with adequate social skills, the allure of fulfilling social demands with less effort online is strong. Unfortunately, this might lead to a spiral of excessive online participation. There are studies on the adverse consequences of the internet world. Multiple aspects of a user's life may be affected by their online activity, according to studies. Friendships, relationships with family and loved ones, and school/work performance are observable components of a person's life that may diminish[18]. They may spend an increasing amount of time online and neglect fundamental everyday activities. Their physical health and mood may also deteriorate as their internet engagement increases[19]. These may indicate that a person's use of social media has become detrimental. A frequent example is "sharing feelings through posts," in which a person believes that everyone online is a friend and, as a result, shares every element of their life in hopes of receiving compassion or acknowledgment. Some researchers discovered that their social life and friendships in the actual world are diminishing in quantity and/or quality[18]. In addition, gender disparities have been extensively discussed in the literature. Compared to boys, girls appear to have a bigger number of friendships[20] with a high level of affective connection. In addition to the presence or absence of friendships, the quality and nature of a young person's friendships have an impact on his or her development and well-being.

SIMILARITY & CONNECTEDNESS

Numerous ideas point to the significance of similarity as a predictor of interpersonal relationships. Similarities in views, beliefs, interests, personality, and even physical appearance have a significant impact on the probability of interpersonal attraction. An intriguing study established the relationship between resemblance and physical beauty and attraction[2]. As expected, similarity and physical attractiveness positively correlate with close relationship[2]. This concept has also been explored in a number of films, where it is shown that "popular people" inevitably become friends, despite the fact that this notion is rather out of date. The concept of attraction between opposites is essentially what was termed complementarity[21]. People typically choose a romantic partner with whom they share similar physical characteristics or socioeconomic standing[22]. One can say that people

desire resemblance with others, whether it is in terms of opinions, interests, or other relationships. Different types of resemblance may have varying effects on relationships. If two individuals share similar interests, a fondness will arise. On the other side, respect for the other person results from attitude similarity. Similarity is the foundation of both offline and online relationships. Popular singing apps allow users who share a passion for singing to communicate. Nonetheless, numerous individual and interpersonal elements contribute to the establishment of relationships[23,24]. Individual factors that lead to friendship include person-ability (i.e., warmth, friendliness), communication competence, physical beauty, and a sense of humour. Similarity, reciprocal liking, and mutual self-disclosure are dyadic elements. In a study of friendships, it was discovered that people tend to associate and create connections with peers whose motivation[25] and achievement[26] are similar to their own[27]. People have a tendency to gravitate toward others who like them[28]. Obviously, who doesn't enjoy being admired? People gravitate toward others who share their views and values[28]. The effect of liking is mediated by trust, while the effect of similarity is mediated by respect and trust. However, research addressing the impact of similarity in personal characteristics has not stated the particular traits that matter in a given environment[29], leaving it to researchers to identify which attributes matter based on the context being examined. Numerous personal qualities have the potential to offer cognitive and informational advantages in the context of angel investing. Relevant personal qualities include any attribute that individuals use to judge if another individual is distinct from themselves[30].

RECIPROCITY IN RELATIONSHIP AND MENTAL HEALTH

Having a reciprocal and equal relationship is a strong predictor of mental health well-being. The social exchange viewpoint[31] says that individuals evaluate relationships based on rewards and costs, which relate to all good and all negative aspects of a relationship. One form of comparison level is our anticipation of what we will receive from the relationship, i.e., comparing the outcome to what we believe the relationship should provide. Another perspective on social exchange is the equity theory, which asserts that we evaluate our connections based on their benefits and costs, but stresses our impression of fairness or balance in partnerships[32]. It implies that in order for a couple to be happy, there must be an equal exchange of care, attention, or effort. It is common knowledge that lack of fairness creates difficulties in romantic relationships. Contrary to popular belief, the online world is most frequently utilised to complement offline interactions because we do not value them[33]. When we are unhappy in real life, it is simple to seek solace from strangers online. Nonetheless, it appears that cultural expectations contribute to the impression of inequality, particularly in gender roles. Typi-cally, women were the primary carers for children. Men spent time with their children and performed a variety of housework, but they were not the primary carers. This may indicate a lack of equity in these marriages, or it may indicate that women simply do not trust their husbands to take care of the children competently. However, transactions may be reciprocal or negotiated[34]. Reciprocal relationships exist when individuals incur a cost while providing a benefit for their partners, without specifying the exact manner of payback but typically with the hope that some form of repayment will eventually occur. These exchanges are often voluntary, and the outcome of relationships created via previous successful exchanges[35]. Trust is an important interpersonal and relational concept[36]. Actors engaging in a social exchange analyse relationships in a behavioural context and, due to trust, look beyond short-term disparities to focus on long-term gains. Thus, social exchange is built on enduring long-term relationships as opposed to one-time transactions[37], and in contrast to economic transactions, which are constrained by the legal framework, the persistence of social exchanges is contingent on the trust between the people.

It has been observed that the characteristics "online daters" seek in others resemble a comprehensive shopping list[38]. These researchers contend that on online dating websites, individuals view themselves and others as commodities. Exchange theory and equity theory can be used to explain the pursuit of a balance between one's own attractive traits and those of others (e.g., appearance, interests, personality). This type of social interaction is also available in the MMORPG industry. In the virtual world of gaming, we create bonds based on resemblance or anticipation that they will be good allies during the level's conquest. Even when we are acting or living a fiction, our self-manifestation and socialisation processes are based on the same real-world principles. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the process in both the virtual and physical worlds is essential.

Although individuals are unique, they are greatly influenced by the society and social ties around them. Therefore, connection quality is one of the determinants of self. It is a fundamental human trait to be drawn to people and to seek out intimate relationships with friends and lovers. Although we are all capable of enduring and even appreciating little moments of solitude, most of us dislike extended periods of solitary. We begin to crave the company of others over time. People have the desire to build and sustain relationships with others. However, not everyone possesses the requisite social skills and resources to begin and maintain close partnerships. By removing the strain of face-to-face engagement, text and chat-based online communication makes it easier for individuals to establish relationships. The Internet facilitates the creation of long-distance connections. No longer is it necessary to be in the same class, workplace, or neighbourhood as another indi-

vidual in order to develop a relationship. Even when physical distance between people is great, the Internet efficiently minimises the psychological gap between them. Everyone can relate to the concept of relationship based on their shared experiences, such as with family, friends, or a romantic partner.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When it comes to relationships in current times, we are gradually becoming dependent on digital world. Technology has defined our way of maintaining relationship without physically interacting. Relationship has always been a difficult notion to grasp, but with the advent of internet communication, it has grown even more intricate. One may compare the ease with which internet relationships are formed to the convenience of a "ready-to-eat" lunch box. However, owing to social media, we can reconnect with long-lost acquaintances or friends. Those who feel isolated might also establish connections and develop acquaintances online. All of these are highly subjective speculations. The majority of parents who complain that their children spend too much time on Facebook, Instagram, or PUBG also spend excessive time online. Such is the allure of virtual space, where equilibrium is essential. Companies are funding concepts such as digital wellbeing and screen time management to reduce excessive internet use.

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