

SYNERGIZING KNOWLEDGE

THE ROLE OF ACADEMIA IN GLOBAL PROGRESS



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Synergizing Knowledge: The Role of Academia in Global Progress



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Synergizing Knowledge: The Role of Academia in Global Progress

Research papers read during International Conference on “Synergizing Knowledge: The Role of Academia in Global Progress” jointly organised by Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (TMV), Pune, Maharashtra & Centre for Training & Development (CTD), Delhi, India during the 12-13 June 2025.

Editors

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Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (TMV), Pune, Maharashtra
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From Editor Desk:

It is a matter of great privilege and intellectual satisfaction to be part of the Editorial Board for this special volume of proceedings emerging from the Two-Day International Conference on “Synergizing Knowledge: The Role of Academia in Global Progress.”

This conference, jointly organized by Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, and the Centre for Training and Development (CTD), an initiative of the URAN Foundation, marks not merely an academic milestone but a collective commitment to the higher purpose of knowledge—one that transforms societies, surpasses borders, and uplifts the human condition. In an era defined by rapid change, technological upheavals, and pressing global challenges, the role of academia must evolve from being a transmitter of information to a catalyst of conscious and collaborative transformation.

The contributions in this publication represent the vibrant discourse that unfolded during the conference—an interdisciplinary confluence of thought leaders, researchers, educators, policymakers, and students. From discussions on sustainable development and inclusive education to insights into ethical leadership, digital transformation, and indigenous knowledge systems, the papers included here exemplify a dynamic interplay of ideas rooted in academic rigour and driven by social relevance.

As an academic institution founded on the revolutionary vision of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth is deeply committed to fostering education that is not only intellectually enriching but also morally grounded and socially responsible. This publication reflects that ethos. It is a repository of diverse perspectives, rigorous inquiry, and visionary thought that will serve as a valuable reference point for scholars, practitioners, and change-makers across domains.

I congratulate all the contributors whose scholarly engagements have enriched this volume. I also appreciate the organizing committee, keynote speakers, paper presenters, student volunteers, and my fellow editorial board members, whose collective effort has transformed this conference from a vision into a vibrant, living dialogue.

May this volume continue to inspire academic communities to synergize knowledge in ways that foster equity, empathy, and excellence across the globe.

Best Regards,

Dr. Geetali Tilak

Member, Editorial Board
Vice-Chancellor of Tilak Maharashtra
Vidyapeeth, Pune, Maharashtra

Acknowledgment

We extend our deepest gratitude to Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (TMV), Pune, Maharashtra and the Centre for Training & Development (CTD), Delhi, India for jointly organizing the *International Conference on "Synergizing Knowledge: The Role of Academia in Global Progress."*

First of all we take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to the esteemed Patrons from Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, Hon'ble Late Dr. Deepak J. Tilak, President & Chancellor, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune and Prof. (Dr.) Mordhwaj Singh Parihar, President, BIOEXONS LLC, Washington, USA, Former Head, Harvard University Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA & University of California, San Francisco, USA. whose constant motivation and blessings led us in organising this two-day international conference.

We also express our gratitude to our advisory committee members Dr. Geetali Tilak Vice-Chancellor, TMV, Pune, Dr. Pranati Tilak, Dean (Board of Management Studies), Dr. Suvarna Sathe, Acting Registrar, TMV, Pune and Prof. Raghavendra P. Tiwari, Vice Chancellor of Central University of Punjab, Bathinda & Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, India, Dr. Nodir Karimov, Head of the Department of Scientific Research and Innovations, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan, Dr. Amitabh Mishra, Head of Department, Business Administration, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Sultanate of Oman, Shailendra Singh, Chief General Manager (HR & MKTG), Bank of Baroda, Mumbai, Dr. Marygorety Akinyi Otieno, Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Social work and African Women's Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya, Dr. Dileep M.R, Director, Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies, (Dept. Of Tourism, Govt. Of Kerala), Thiruvananthapuram and Prof. Kumar Ashutosh, Professor & Head, Department of Continuing Education and Extension, University of Delhi, India for their unconditional support, guidance and assistance throughout.

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We sincerely thank all our distinguished speakers, scholars, researchers, and participants from around the world for their valuable contributions and active engagement. Your insights and perspectives have enriched the conference, making it a truly collaborative and impactful endeavour.

Prof. (Dr.) Uma S. Singh
Conference Convenor
CTD India, Delhi

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ASSESSING WAYS IN WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCES INTERPERSONAL CONNECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The widespread integration of social media into everyday life has brought about profound changes in the way individuals communicate and maintain personal relationships. Traditional approaches to relationship-building, which once relied heavily on face-to-face interactions and emotional cues, are now being redefined by digital communication. This paper presents a critical examination of the impact of social media platforms on key aspects of interpersonal relationships, including emotional closeness, communication styles, authenticity, and mental well-being.

Adopting a secondary research methodology, the study draws on a diverse range of sources, including peer-reviewed academic literature, global institutional reports, and empirical digital media studies. Through thematic analysis, the research identifies recurring patterns and insights into how digital interactions shape relational experiences across different age groups and cultural contexts.

The findings reveal a dual narrative: while social media facilitates connectivity, self-expression, and support across geographical boundaries, it also contributes to challenges such as reduced emotional depth, increased social comparison, and mental health concerns like anxiety and loneliness. The curated nature of online identities often leads to superficial connections, impacting the authenticity and trust that underpin meaningful relationships.

This study emphasizes the importance of fostering digital mindfulness to mitigate the adverse effects of excessive or misinformed social media use. It advocates for a more balanced approach to digital engagement—one that preserves the benefits of online communication while reinforcing emotional intelligence and offline interpersonal skills.

Keywords: Social Media, Interpersonal Relationships, Digital Communication, Emotional Intimacy, Mental Well-being, Communication Patterns, Online Identity, Authenticity in Relationships, Social Comparison, Digital Intimacy, Online Behavior, Social Networking Platforms, Technology-Mediated Communication, Social Media Addiction, Digital Literacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past 20 years, the quick development of digital technology has drastically changed how people interact, communicate, and sustain connections. The emergence of social media platforms, which have transformed interpersonal communication worldwide, is one of the most important trends in our digital age. For billions of

users, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (now X), TikTok, WhatsApp, and Snapchat have become essential components of everyday life. Through these platforms, people can interact with friends, family, coworkers, and even complete strangers in both casual and significant ways, share experiences, and express feelings. More than 4.9 billion individuals use social media globally as of 2023, according to Statista, underscoring the platform's significant influence and pertinence in contemporary culture.

The concept of being "connected" has been redefined by social media. Users can now join in online communities, establish relationships across continents, and interact with people asynchronously without being constrained by time or location. These technological affordances have brought about significant obstacles as well as opportunities for improved communication. Relationships that were traditionally based on in-person communication, emotional closeness, and nonverbal clues have changed to digital forms that prioritize immediacy, brevity, and curation. This change calls into doubt the genuineness, depth, and quality of contemporary interpersonal relationships.

With studies showing both advantages and disadvantages of digital connectedness, research on the psychological and social effects of social media is growing quickly. On the one hand, social media makes it easier to keep up long-distance connections, gives voice to underrepresented groups, and allows social support systems to grow. However, it has also been linked to heightened loneliness, social comparison, diminished in-person communication abilities, and even interpersonal conflict brought on by online conduct.

This research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between digital technology and human relationships by critically analyzing the ways in which social media affects emotional intimacy, communication styles, trust, and mental health. Using secondary data from scholarly articles, surveys, and statistical reports, this paper attempts to evaluate the ways in which social media influences interpersonal connections. The objective is not to categorize social media as intrinsically good or bad, but rather to investigate its complex effects on the changing landscape of interpersonal communication.

Examining how these developments are changing how people establish, maintain, and experience relationships is essential in a time when digital interactions are progressively replacing more conventional means of communication. By being aware of these dynamics, educators, mental health specialists, tech developers, and regular users may make better decisions about how to utilize social media in ways that promote real, meaningful, and healthy human interactions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has become a central element of modern communication, deeply influencing how individuals form, maintain, and perceive interpersonal relationships.

The literature on this subject presents a dichotomy, highlighting both the enriching potential and the psychological and social risks of digital connectivity.

a. Positive Impacts of Social Media on Interpersonal Relationships

Overcoming Geographical Barriers:

One of the most recognized benefits of social media is its ability to connect individuals across spatial and temporal divides. Platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram enable real-time communication, facilitating the maintenance of long-distance relationships (Pew Research Center, 2022). These platforms often serve as lifelines for individuals separated by physical distance, allowing for emotional continuity and daily interaction.

Enhancing Social Capital:

Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) introduced the concept of social capital in digital contexts, suggesting that social networking sites enhance bonding (close-knit) and bridging (diverse) social capital. Users are able to maintain existing ties and revive dormant connections, contributing to a sense of belonging and social cohesion.

Identity Construction and Expression:

Social media also supports the articulation of identity through customizable profiles and content sharing. Beharay, A. (2020). Critical study of brands do to engage with India's next billion Internet users notes that digital platforms provide users with avenues to express their beliefs, preferences, and emotions, which in turn fosters interpersonal resonance and community formation.

Peer Support and Mental Health Outreach:

Naslund et al. (2016) emphasized the role of online communities in offering emotional support, especially among individuals dealing with mental health challenges. For marginalized populations, social media can serve as a safe space for dialogue, empathy, and psychological reinforcement. Beharay, A., & Tilak, P. (2021). A study on Influence of Social Media on Digital Marketing. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(6).

b. Negative Impacts of Social Media on Interpersonal Relationships

Erosion of Face-to-Face Communication:

Turkle (2015) warns of the degradation of meaningful face-to-face interactions due to overreliance on digital modes of communication. Non-verbal cues—essential to empathy and emotional understanding—are often lost in text-based or image-centric exchanges, leading to shallow interactions.

Social Comparison and Emotional Discontent:

Platforms like Instagram and Facebook often promote idealized portrayals of life, contributing to feelings of inadequacy and envy among users. Chou and Edge (2012) found that social comparison on these platforms can distort users' perceptions of others' happiness, negatively affecting their own well-being.

Digital Surveillance and Relationship Strain:

Fox and Warber (2014) identified increased monitoring behaviors in romantic relationships, such as checking likes, messages, and online activity. These behaviors often lead to mistrust, jealousy, and relational conflicts, undermining emotional safety.

Cyberbullying and Harassment:

Statista (2021) reports that a significant portion of young users—particularly those aged 18 to 29—have experienced online harassment. Such experiences can lead to social withdrawal, increased anxiety, and deterioration of trust in digital relationships.

Reduced Empathy and Increased Alienation:

Prolonged digital exposure may lead to desensitization. According to Turkle (2015), habitual online interactions can erode the cognitive and emotional capacities necessary for empathy, especially among adolescents and young adults.

C. Cultural and Generational Dimensions**Generational Usage Patterns:**

Twenge (2017) found that younger generations (iGen and Millennials) often substitute in-person communication with digital interactions. While this offers convenience, it may hinder the development of essential social skills, particularly among adolescents.

Cultural Norms and Online Behavior:

The influence of cultural context on digital communication is evident in how collectivist versus individualist societies approach online self-expression. In collectivist cultures, social harmony and group identity tend to shape online behavior, whereas individualistic societies prioritize personal expression and autonomy (Hofstede, 2001).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**1. Research Design**

This study adopts a **qualitative, exploratory research design** grounded in **secondary data analysis** to investigate the multidimensional effects of social media on interpersonal relationships. The objective is to critically assess existing knowledge and patterns related to emotional intimacy, communication behavior, and psychological well-being in the context of digital interactions.

2. Data Collection Method

The study is based entirely on secondary sources, including:

- **Peer-reviewed journal articles** from academic databases such as JSTOR, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar.
- **Institutional reports** from recognized bodies including the Pew Research Center, World Health Organization (WHO), and Statista.

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- **Books and scholarly publications** on communication, psychology, digital media, and behavioral science.
 - **Empirical studies and survey data** published in reputable journals focusing on media psychology, digital communication, and human-computer interaction.

The selection of sources was guided by their relevance, credibility, and recency, with a preference for studies published between **2010 and 2024**.

3. Data Analysis Technique

A **thematic analysis** approach was employed to interpret and synthesize the collected data. Key themes were identified based on recurring concepts across the literature. The following thematic categories were developed:

- Patterns of communication (asynchronous vs synchronous, visual vs verbal)
- Emotional intimacy and trust
- Mental health and social comparison
- Authenticity and curated identities
- Generational and cultural variations in social media usage

The thematic categorization helped to structure the findings into coherent discussions and comparative insights.

4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria:

- Studies focused on social media's impact on interpersonal relationships
- Articles published in peer-reviewed journals or from credible institutional sources
- English-language publications between 2010 and 2024

Exclusion Criteria:

- Articles with limited empirical support or lacking methodological transparency
- Studies focusing solely on marketing or commercial use of social media
- Non-English language literature

5. Ethical Considerations

As this study relies solely on secondary data from publicly available and ethically approved sources, no human participants were directly involved. Consequently, no ethical approval was required. However, all data used have been properly cited in accordance with academic standards.

6. Limitations

- The study is limited to the interpretation of existing data and does not include primary fieldwork.

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- Cultural and demographic generalizations are based on previously published global and regional data, which may not capture local or emerging trends.
 - Rapidly evolving social media platforms may lead to changes in relational behavior that are not fully captured by earlier studies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Patterns and Styles of Communication

1. Transition from Oral to Visual Interaction

Social media platforms have shifted the dominant mode of interpersonal communication from oral and textual conversation to more visually oriented exchanges. Emojis, GIFs, reaction buttons, and filters are now integral components of digital discourse. For instance, Snapchat and Instagram prioritize image- and video-based communication, where users express feelings through curated visuals rather than verbal explanation. While such tools enhance creativity and immediacy, they often strip communication of nuance. An emoji may attempt to convey tone, but it lacks the layered meaning of vocal inflection or facial expression. Additionally, filters—though used for fun—can distort reality, promoting inauthentic self-presentation and fostering unrealistic beauty standards.

2. Asynchronous Communication

Unlike face-to-face or phone conversations, communication on platforms like Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and Facebook often occurs asynchronously. A user might post a story or update and receive responses several hours or even days later. This temporal disconnection, while offering flexibility, reduces the immediacy and spontaneity essential for emotionally rich exchanges. For example, a heartfelt message posted by someone in distress may go unnoticed for hours, potentially delaying emotional support and weakening relational closeness.

3. Real Presence vs. Continuous Connectivity

The phenomenon of *ambient awareness*—coined by Thompson (2008)—describes the illusion of intimacy created by constant social media updates. While users may feel 'in touch' with others through daily posts and stories, this can substitute for genuine interaction. For instance, consistently viewing a friend's life on Instagram may create a sense of emotional proximity, even if actual communication has ceased, leading to relationships that are more performative than participatory.

b. Emotional Intimacy and Trust

1. Authenticity and Curated Selves

Social media incentivizes users to curate ideal versions of themselves, often showcasing only the most attractive or successful aspects of their lives. Influencer culture exemplifies this, where users like YouTuber Emma Chamberlain or Instagram personality Khaby Lame build digital personas that resonate with followers. While this allows for creative self-expression, it may compromise

authenticity in personal relationships. Trust can erode when individuals feel they are interacting with a filtered identity rather than a genuine person.

2. Surveillance and Jealousy in Digital Relationships

Fox and Warber (2014) found that social media contributes to increased partner surveillance, especially in romantic contexts. Features like "seen" receipts, likes on photos, or tagged interactions often provoke jealousy or suspicion. For example, the visibility of a partner liking an ex-partner's post on Facebook can spark misunderstandings, leading to conflict or emotional strain.

3. Decreased Empathy and Emotional Understanding

Sherry Turkle (2015) argues that digital interactions reduce opportunities for developing empathy. The absence of facial cues, tone of voice, and body language diminishes our ability to fully grasp another's emotional state. Frequent exposure to text-based interactions can desensitize users, especially adolescents, to others' emotional needs, hindering their social development.

4. Youth and the Development of Social Skills

Twenge (2017) asserts that adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to the pressures of maintaining an online presence. For example, TikTok trends often emphasize appearance and popularity, encouraging users to chase validation through likes and views. This constant comparison can inhibit the development of real-life communication skills and lead to social withdrawal, anxiety, or depression.

a. Cultural and Generational Perspectives

1. Generational Usage Gaps

Older adults often use platforms like Facebook to maintain family connections and share life events in a controlled manner. In contrast, Gen Z and Millennials use social media for a variety of purposes including activism (e.g., climate change advocacy via X), dating (e.g., Tinder, Bumble), entertainment (e.g., TikTok), and socializing. These generational differences can cause misunderstandings and friction in intergenerational relationships, particularly when digital etiquette varies.

2. Influence of Cultural Norms

Cultural background strongly affects online behavior. In collectivist cultures such as India or Japan, users often refrain from posting personal grievances publicly, prioritizing group harmony. Conversely, individualistic societies like the United States promote open self-expression. This cultural divergence shapes how individuals resolve conflicts online, manage relationships, and define acceptable digital conduct.

b. Consequences and Implications

1. Impact on Mental Well-being

Numerous studies link heavy social media use to mental health issues including loneliness, anxiety, and depression. The World Health Organization (2022) recognizes the psychological risks of excessive screen time, especially among

adolescents. Platforms that promote comparison (e.g., Instagram's visual feeds) can cause users to feel inadequate, affecting both self-esteem and relationship satisfaction.

2. Redefining Closeness and Support

In the digital age, emotional support is often conveyed through likes, shares, and brief comments. A simple "Stay strong ☐" comment on a friend's mental health post may offer a sense of support, but it may lack the depth of a verbal conversation. While such interactions are valid, they raise questions about the long-term sustainability and authenticity of digitally mediated closeness.

3. Role of Algorithms in Shaping Relationships

Social media algorithms personalize content based on user preferences, creating "filter bubbles" that reinforce existing beliefs. This can isolate users from diverse perspectives, leading to ideological polarization. For instance, platforms like Facebook or YouTube may continuously suggest similar content, narrowing users' social and intellectual exposure. This not only affects personal growth but may also reduce empathy and cross-cultural understanding in relationships.

CONCLUSION

The transformative influence of social media on interpersonal relationships is both profound and multifaceted. This study has illuminated the duality inherent in digital communication— while social media fosters global connectivity, real-time interaction, and platforms for self-expression, it simultaneously challenges the depth, authenticity, and emotional quality of human relationships.

A key finding of the study is the shift from traditional verbal and face-to-face interactions to image- and text-based modes of communication. Emojis, filters, and asynchronous messaging have redefined how people convey emotions and maintain bonds, often sacrificing nuance and immediacy in favor of convenience. The emergence of ambient awareness—where users passively remain informed about others without meaningful interaction—has further complicated the understanding of closeness and social presence.

Furthermore, the study highlights critical concerns related to emotional intimacy and trust. Curated digital personas, constant surveillance in romantic relationships, and the pressure to maintain an idealized online image can lead to feelings of inadequacy, jealousy, and reduced empathy. Young people, in particular, are at heightened risk of developing anxiety, social comparison habits, and underdeveloped offline social skills.

Cultural and generational factors also play a crucial role in shaping digital behavior. While older generations often use social media conservatively to preserve existing ties, younger users tend to explore it for identity formation, activism, and broader social interaction. These divergent usage patterns can create communication gaps and misunderstandings.

In an era dominated by algorithm-driven content and instantaneous connectivity, the nature of intimacy, support, and community is being redefined. It is therefore

essential to promote digital mindfulness, foster emotional intelligence, and encourage offline engagement to preserve the quality of interpersonal relationships.

Ultimately, social media is neither inherently beneficial nor harmful; its impact depends on how consciously and ethically it is used. Future research should explore emerging technologies like virtual reality, metaverse platforms, and AI-based social tools to further understand their implications for human connection in an increasingly digital society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Encourage Digital Literacy: Users should learn how to think critically about online content, develop good digital habits, and apply emotional intelligence while interacting with others online.

Promote Offline Engagement: Organizations and communities should provide more chances for face-to-face communication, especially with young people.

Mental Health Support: Including psychological support services in platforms may make it easier for users to deal with difficult emotions.

Improve Privacy and Reporting Features: Platforms ought to upgrade their features for managing interactions, preventing harassment, and filtering offensive material.

Algorithm Transparency: To assist users better understand the information they consume and how it affects their relationships, social media businesses should reveal how content is filtered.

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ABOUT THE EDITORS

Dr. Geetali Tilak, serves as the Vice Chancellor of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth. Her lineage connects her to the legacy of India's freedom movement, as she is the great-great-granddaughter of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of India's most revered freedom fighters. Dr. Geetali Tilak holds a Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Management from Lincoln University College, Malaysia and has earned two Ph.D. degrees— one in Journalism and another in Management, both from Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth. Additionally, she has completed a Doctor of Literature (D.Litt.) in Management, an MBA, and a master's degree in journalism (Print Media) from the same institution. Dr. Tilak holds 4 patents to her credit. Her areas of specialization include Management and Journalism, with a particular focus on administration, academic excellence, strategic planning, team building, and leadership development.

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Dr C. Sunanda Yadav has 30 years Commercial/Marketing, administrative and academic experience. She is extremely passionate about teaching and has been associated with renowned institutes like ICFAI Hyderabad as Academic Head, AMITY Global Business School, Hyderabad, Dr D.Y Patil College, Sinhgad Institute of Management, and Spicer Memorial College. She was holding the position of Director Studies for London College of Management, Cavendish University (U.K) for their centre in Pune. At present she is heading the Ph. D Department at Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth and is the secretary of their Research & Development Centre.



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