



THE IMPACT OF THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY ON SOCIAL INTERACTION IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCE DEPARTMENT STUDENTS SEMESTER VI STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF NORTH SUMATERA

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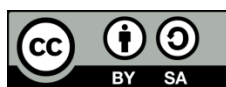
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ABSTRACT

The study highlights the positive impacts of technology use, including easier access to information, maintaining communication with friends who live far away, broadening knowledge, and supporting academic communication and learning. However, negative effects also occur, such as a decline in the quality of personal communication, limited nonverbal communication skills, poor academic concentration, and dependence on technology for social interaction. It is recommended to manage technology use wisely in campus environments, enhance digital awareness, and encourage activities that require face-to-face communication such as group discussions and collaborative projects to help students develop social skills and build better interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: Communication, Social Interaction, Technology.



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1. INTRODUCTION

As social creatures, humans are part of society. They cannot separate themselves from interactions with other humans to fulfill their own needs. This relational habit leads to communication with other people through interactional media. Interaction is a dynamic relationship between people (Alcubilla Troughton, 2023; Hespanhol, 2023).

This interaction pattern gives rise to new types such as symbols, gestures, and communication channels. In line with the rapid development of technology today, everyone in the world is increasingly skilled in developing mechanical devices to make human life easier (Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Tsaramirsis et al., 2022).

The rapid development of digital technology has changed many aspects of life, including social interaction patterns among students (Hanandini, 2024; Yıldız & Nur, 2024). Technology such as smartphones, social media and chatting applications have become familiar habits in students' daily lives (Andersson, 2022; Suhendar et al., 2023). However, excessive or inappropriate use of technology can affect the quality of students' social interactions (Sikumbang et al., 2024).

Research shows that as the use of mediated communication technologies increases, students' personal interactions tend to decrease (Fauzan et al., 2024; High et al., 2023). This can impact students' ability to form meaningful interpersonal relationships, manage emotions, and develop nonverbal communication skills. On the other hand, technology also provides opportunities for students to expand their network of friends and share information throughout the world (Garlinska et al., 2023; Yu & Leung, 2024).

After the Industrial Revolution, human dependence on mechanical devices and communication media can no longer be separated, making it possible for people to stay connected with each other without having to travel to their destination to get information or other needs. This shows that the relationship between new easy-to-use machines and humans is unbreakable (Candra & Jeselin, 2024). These objects are called gadgets. With gadgets, social interactions that should ideally be done face to face no longer need to be done face to face (Diadi et al., 2023; Krisnana et al., 2022). Nowadays, human-to-human interaction is gradually being replaced by human-device interaction. Throughout the world today, people are always dependent on gadgets. Humans prefer to play with their gadgets rather than having to communicate directly with relatives or neighbors around them. People prefer to find friends on social media rather than meeting neighbors on public transportation. Even though they are in the same place but prefer not to talk, each person prefers to play with the telephone they are holding and is happier with the virtual world. Relatives in the virtual world seem closer and more real than neighbors around us. All people seem to prefer

cyberspace and withdraw from their social environment. This has the impact of personality disorders appearing in a person. Examples: indifference, unfriendliness, insensitivity to other people's needs, individualism, etc.

Especially in communication majors who study communication phenomena and social interactions, it is important to understand the impact of technology on students' social interactions. As future communicators, communications students must evaluate how the use of technology impacts their ability to interact effectively, build relationships, and convey their messages (Humaizi et al., 2024).

The aim of this research is to determine the impact of the use of technology on the social interaction of Communication Science students in the sixth semester of the North Sumatra State Islamic University (UINSU). It is hoped that these findings will provide valuable insights for the development of communication research and provide considerations for wise use of technology for students, instructors and educational institutions. The author uses social interaction theory, this theory explains how social interaction, both verbal and nonverbal, builds and maintains relationships between individuals (Deepa et al., 2023; Hadley et al., 2022).

Dalimunthe (2022) stated that social interaction is a relationship between one individual and another individual, one individual can influence another individual or vice versa, so that there is a reciprocal relationship. This relationship can occur between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups or groups and groups. Social interaction is a dynamic relationship that brings people together, groups with groups, and people with groups of people (Gibson et al., 2023; Loo & Fan, 2023). The form is not only cooperative, but also takes the form of action, competition, disputes and the like.

Apart from that, the author also uses the social construction theory of technology, which is one approach among several constructivist ways of studying science and technology that emerged in the 1980s (Dalimunthe et al., 2020). The term 'social construction of technology' can be used to denote two different things. First, a research approach to studying technical change in society, both in historical and contemporary studies. And the second is a theory about the relationship between society and technology (Ritonga et al., 2023, 2024).

2. RESEARCH METHODE

In this research, the author used a qualitative approach method. This research method focuses on in-depth understanding of social phenomena or human behavior based on collecting non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis.

The goal is to explore the perspectives, experiences, and meaning that individuals or groups give to an event or situation (Creswell, 2021). Researchers carried out sampling using interview techniques from 5 UINSU Semester VI communication science students Class of 2021, Public Relations Class 1, with a population of 40 students.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research conducted by the author are the result of in-depth interviews with informants, observations and literature studies or documentation related to patterns of use of digital technology and the impact of the use of digital technology on the social interaction abilities of students majoring in communication science in the sixth semester of North Sumatra State Islamic University.

In general, the results of this research show that the pattern of digital technology use by students spends 10-15 hours per day. They use digital technology such as smartphones, laptops and tablets in their daily lives to meet their needs for information, entertainment and social connectivity. some of them use digital technology to spend time watching films, chatting via social media with friends, and seeing their friends' activities on social media, and scrolling through TikTok to see related information that is currently viral. Based on the data collection that has been carried out, it was found that there are positive and negative impacts that arise from the influence of the use of digital technology on the social interactions of Semester VI Uinsu Communication Science students. The positive impacts that are often encountered are that it becomes easier for students to get updated information at this

time, makes it easier to chat with friends who are out of town and can easily make new friends, and can broaden their knowledge of information that is useful for readers.

Good use of technology can also have a positive impact on students. First, it can facilitate academic communication. Digital technology such as email and WhatsApp can enable students to communicate with lecturers and complete academic assignments. Second, expand the information network. Students can share the information they get through social media and can also build wider relationships through digital platforms. Third, it can support learning. Students can share documents to facilitate students in doing group assignments, providing good feedback and discussing virtually. Fourth, students can more easily find information, references and learning resources via the internet and can support the learning process and develop student insight.

The negative impact of using technology on social interactions is that it can make students less responsive and pay attention to direct social interactions in the campus environment. Students tend to focus more on digital devices than interacting with friends around them, making students less skilled at establishing effective face-to-face conversations. Excessive use of digital technology can also disrupt students' focus and concentration in the learning process, students tend to be more interested in opening social media or entertainment content rather than focusing on lecture material.

It is known from interviews that many students tend to prefer interacting using digital technology. They think that using digital technology can make it easier for them to compose words rather than having to interact directly (Dalimunthe et al., 2024). They find it difficult to speak and express themselves with the person they are talking to, this is motivated by their tendency to interact virtually (Mailin, 2023). However, it was also found that there were some students who preferred to interact directly rather than through virtual interaction. Many of them think that communicating virtually through digital technology can lead to misunderstandings and understanding the intentions and emotions of the other person when having a

conversation. By interacting directly, students can also express themselves better with the person they are talking to, so that misunderstandings do not arise.

In general, students need to be directed to engage in direct communication to increase the intensity of their friendships or social interactions. Advances in communication technology have succeeded in providing comfort through complete features on social media which has reduced student interaction in the real world. Students interact less with people around them and prefer to look at digital images, such as photos, even the statuses they write on their social media as expressions of themselves or the feelings they are experiencing. The ease and sophistication of technology in interacting makes students prefer to use it to ask for assignments or other needs, they think that this makes them quicker to get information or other things.

From the results of the discussion above, researchers advise students to manage the use of digital technology among communication science students so that it does not have a negative impact on social interactions. In creating this, the first step that must be taken is to reduce the use of digital technology while on campus. This can make students more able to mingle and start interacting with friends around them and also avoid dependence on technological tools. The next step is to educate students about the importance of digital awareness, such as understanding when and how to use digital technology well. In addition, encouraging activities that require face-to-face interaction such as group discussions, collaborative projects and extracurricular activities can help students develop their social skills.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explores the impact of technology use on the social interactions of sixth-semester Communication Studies students at Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU). The findings indicate that digital technologies such as smartphones and social media play a major role in students' daily lives, with usage reaching approximately 10–15 hours per day for various purposes, including accessing information, entertainment, and social connectivity.

The positive impacts identified include easier access to information, maintaining communication with friends who live far away, broadening knowledge, and supporting academic communication and learning. However, the negative impacts are also significant, such as a decline in the quality of face-to-face interactions, weaker nonverbal communication skills, disrupted academic focus, and dependence on technology for social interaction. Overall, students need guidance to manage their digital technology use wisely so that it does not negatively affect their social interactions. It is recommended to reduce excessive technology use in campus settings, strengthen digital awareness, and encourage activities that require direct interaction, such as group discussions and collaborative projects. This approach will help students develop stronger social skills and build better interpersonal relationships.

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