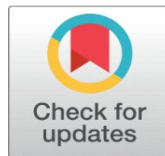
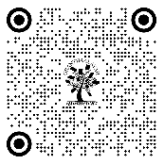


THE IMPACT OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION EVOLUTION ON THE RELATIONSHIPS OF ERICA AND MARK ON FACEBOOK: A STUDY OF 'THE SOCIAL NETWORK'

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ABSTRACT

This study examines two pivotal scenes from "The Social Network" to analyze the nuanced dynamics of communication, emotions, and relationships depicted in the film. The first scene illustrates the consequences of Mark Zuckerberg's creation of Facemask, a website for rating the attractiveness of Harvard students, and its subsequent impact on interpersonal dynamics. Through a rapid sequence of events, the scene showcases the power of communication technology in shaping social interactions, while also highlighting the potential harm of misusing technology and exploiting personal information. Mark's unapologetic attitude and determination to push boundaries underscore the complex interplay of verbal and non-verbal communication, emphasizing the consequences of miscommunication and the misuse of technology within interpersonal relationships. In the second scene, Mark's actions on Facebook symbolize his internal thoughts and emotions regarding Erica Albright. The use of the Facebook platform becomes a metaphor for modern communication and social dynamics, as Mark navigates the complexities of reaching out in the digital realm. Through visual elements such as mouse movements and on-screen prompts, the scene effectively conveys Mark's emotional state and the uncertainties of online connections. This study offers insights into the evolving landscape of communication in the digital age, highlighting the complexities and consequences of interpersonal interactions within online environments.

Keywords: Pivotal Scenes, the Social Network, Social Media Usage, Social Media Impact, Communication Dynamics, Emotions, Relationships, Facemask, Interpersonal Dynamics, Communication Technology, Misuse of Technology, Exploitation of Personal Information, Facebook, Modern Communication, Social Dynamics, Digital Realm, Online Connections, Evolving Landscape of Communication



1. INTRODUCTION

Social media, particularly Facebook, serves as a vital social networking platform, facilitating connections among individuals worldwide. Through Facebook, users can create personal profiles, add friends, and engage in messaging, with automatic notifications for profile updates. Additionally, users have the opportunity to join interest-based groups, categorized by workplace, educational institution, or other demographics. Launched in February 2004, Facebook is privately owned and operated by Facebook, Inc. In today's digital age, Facebook has become an indispensable tool for people worldwide, with Wikipedia reporting over 600 million

active users as of January 2011. Facebook has evolved into a functional networking platform, serving as a significant space for advertising and promoting businesses and innovations. Film, as a component of literature, holds significant storytelling power. "The Social Network," a renowned drama directed by David Fincher, explores the origins and impact of Facebook as a leading social media platform. Mark Zuckerberg's creation of Facebook stands out as a transformative invention that reshaped the global social landscape. Despite Facebook's success in facilitating online connections, its founder's social nature diverges from the platform's communal essence. Fincher's 2010 film, "The Social Network," highlights this incongruity, portraying how Zuckerberg, the world's youngest billionaire, achieved unprecedented success with Facebook but at the expense of his own social life. This paper delves into "The Social Network," analyzing its depiction of social media's effects on individuals' routines, lifestyles, modes of communication, interpersonal relationships, and communication dynamics. Indeed, Zuckerberg's persona in the film serves as a poignant example of the consequences social networks can entail, shedding light on the complexities of human interaction and interpersonal relationship development in the digital age. (Propes, Richard 2022). This paper delves into "The Social Network," analyzing its depiction of social media's effects on individuals' routines, lifestyles, modes of communication, interpersonal relationships, and communication dynamics. However, the existing literature on interpersonal communication and social media often overlooks the nuanced evolution of these dynamics in the context of high-stakes personal and professional environments depicted in films like "The Social Network." This study aims to fill this gap by examining how the evolution of interpersonal communication, as dramatized in the film, reflects broader societal shifts and individual behavioral changes. Specifically, this research investigates the novel intersection of professional ambition and personal relationships, offering insights into how digital communication platforms can both facilitate and hinder interpersonal connections.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

At the film's conclusion, Mark finds himself isolated, having alienated his best friend and formed a tenuous alliance with someone he can no longer trust. Despite his monumental success as the world's youngest billionaire and the creator of the most popular social networking platform, Mark remains haunted by Erica Albright's early prediction of him being perceived as an "asshole." Symbolically craving social acceptance, Mark sends Erica a Facebook friend request, eagerly refreshing the page in anticipation of her response. This action underscores his continued longing for Erica's approval, highlighting the power she holds over him despite his achievements. (Olson, Maxwell. Cooper, James 2022). Mark's decision to send Erica a friend request on Facebook at the end of the film symbolizes his ongoing quest for emotional validation from her, even amidst his material success. This gesture serves as a poignant reminder of how Erica's rejection fueled Mark's pursuit of power, influence, and admiration through his coding skills and the creation of Facebook. It underscores the complexities of interpersonal relationships in the realm of social media, showcasing how digital platforms can both facilitate and complicate communication and emotional connections. In the film's concluding scene, Mark sits in front of his computer, eagerly awaiting Erica Albright's response to his Facebook friend request. This situation is rife with situational irony, as despite Mark's company having accrued billions of dollars in value over the past six years since their breakup, he still yearns for Erica's approval. Despite his immense wealth and influence, Mark is deeply affected by Erica's rejection, highlighting the enduring

impact of their interpersonal relationship. This scene underscores the complexities of communication and emotional dynamics in the realm of social media, illustrating how digital platforms can both bridge and exacerbate emotional distances in relationships. (Olson, Maxwell. Cooper, James 2022). The Social Network' delves into the era surrounding the inception of the social media giant Facebook. The platform's creation emerges from the conflicting perspectives of ambitious young men driven by a fervent desire to connect their friends through an online network. Director David Fincher skillfully adapts the captivating narrative from the book 'The Accidental Billionaires,' serving audiences a compelling drama that embodies both genesis and downfall. Rather than presenting singular viewpoints, the film navigates through dueling narratives, reflecting the ever-evolving truths that shape contemporary social dynamics. Drawing from diverse sources, the movie encapsulates the thrilling fervor of a transformative revolution that not only unites but also fractures relationships within a matter of days. This impeccably scripted and beautifully directed film, enhanced by stellar performances, keeps viewers engaged and intrigued throughout. (Edubirdie).

Mark Zuckerberg, fueled by the bitterness of his breakup with Erica, channels his determination into creating the website Face Mash to tarnish the reputation of female students, particularly Erica. The website's success catapults Mark's popularity, leading the Winklevoss brothers to seek his assistance in developing an online platform for campus students. However, in a mere six years and with 500,000 friends later, Mark finds himself embroiled in legal battles with both the Winklevoss brothers and Eduardo Severin, each suing him for different grievances. What began as a simple act of blogging and programming in a fit of anger within his dorm room evolves into a global social network and a revolutionary shift in communication dynamics. His roommate enters the room, interrupting Mark as he posts on his blog about a scheme to hack into photo databases of various campus organizations "Facebooks" - websites showcasing brief bios and photos of students or staff. Mark and his roommate aim to gather these photos to create a website where users can rate women's attractiveness. As scenes of Mark hacking into databases and downloading photos unfold, they are juxtaposed with shots of conventionally attractive individuals at a final club party. Just then, Mark's friend Eduardo enters and expresses concern after seeing Mark's blog, inquiring about his well-being. Mark, unfazed, requests the algorithm Eduardo employs to rank chess players, revealing their plan to "rank girls" on a website he's created called Facemash. This exchange highlights the evolving dynamics of interpersonal relationships and communication through social media platforms, showcasing how technology shapes interactions and influences behavior. (Olson, Maxwell. Cooper, James 2022). In creating the film "The Social Network," David Fincher aimed to chronicle the history of Facebook and offer insights into the company's future trajectory and its impact on human social interactions. The events depicted in the film adhere closely to historical accuracy, portraying the actual occurrences that accompanied Facebook's rise to prominence under the leadership of Mark Zuckerberg. Furthermore, the film delves into the themes of betrayal, power dynamics, and financial motivations that drive the operations of large corporations like Facebook. Additionally, it seeks to explore how social dynamics within campus environments provide fertile ground for the emergence and growth of social media platforms. Through these portrayals, the film touches upon the nuances of interpersonal relationships and communication within the realm of social media, shedding light on the complexities inherent in digital interactions. (Premium Papers 2023)

Recent studies have explored the intricate dynamics of interpersonal communication within the context of social media. For example, Baym (2021)

discusses how digital platforms have transformed traditional communication models, emphasizing the shift from face-to-face interactions to mediated exchanges. Similarly, Turkle (2022) examines the paradox of social media, where increased connectivity often leads to feelings of isolation and superficial relationships. These perspectives align with the themes presented in 'The Social Network,' where digital interactions simultaneously bridge and widen the emotional gaps between individuals.

Symbolic interactionism offers a valuable framework for understanding these dynamics. According to Blumer (2023), social reality is constructed through interactions and the meanings individuals attach to these interactions. This theoretical lens can be applied to analyze Mark Zuckerberg's actions in the film, particularly his creation of Facebook as a means to seek validation and establish his identity. The film's portrayal of Mark's persistent need for Erica's approval highlights the symbolic power of social media interactions and their impact on personal identity and social relationships.

2.1. OBJECTIVE

- 1) To analyze the depiction of interpersonal communication dynamics in the selected scene from "The Social Network," focusing on Mark's actions on Facebook.
- 2) To explore the emotional intricacies portrayed in the scene and their impact on Mark's behavior and communication patterns.
- 3) To analyze the portrayal of relationships, particularly the interaction between Mark and Erica Albright, within the context of the scene and how it aligns with Communication Theory.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) How do Mark's actions on Facebook reflect his internal thoughts and emotions regarding Erica Albright?
- 2) What symbolic representations of modern communication and social dynamics are evident in Mark's interactions on Facebook?
- 3) How does the use of technology, such as the computer and Facebook platform, influence the portrayal of interpersonal relationships in the digital age?
- 4) What insights do Mark's decision-making processes, as depicted in his virtual interaction with Erica, provide into his character and motivations?

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this scene from "The Social Network," Mark's actions on Facebook can be best understood through the lens of symbolic interactionism theory. Symbolic interactionism focuses on how individuals create and interpret symbols to communicate and make sense of their social world.

Mark's use of the computer and Facebook platform symbolizes his attempt to reconnect with Erica Albright, reflecting his internal thoughts and emotions. The act of logging into Facebook represents his desire for social interaction and validation. As he navigates through Erica's profile, his contemplative state and the significance he places on this online connection are evident, showcasing the symbolic meaning

he attributes to each action. The visual focus on the mouse hovering between "Send a Message" and "Add as a Friend" reflects Mark's deliberation and internal dialogue, highlighting how symbols are imbued with meaning and significance in interpersonal interactions. Mark's decision-making process is shaped by his interpretation of these symbols within the context of his relationship with Erica. When Mark clicks on "Add as a Friend" and awaits a response, the use of technology to initiate this connection illustrates the evolving nature of interpersonal relationships in the digital age, aligning with the principles of symbolic interactionism. The repetitive action of refreshing the page underscores Mark's eagerness and impatience for a response, reflecting his interpretation of the symbol of the "Refresh" button as a means to seek immediate gratification and validation. Overall, this scene exemplifies how symbolic interactionism theory can provide insights into the complexities of communication and relationship formation in the digital era, emphasizing the role of symbols and their interpretation in shaping social interactions and emotional experiences. (Bulmer 1969)

This theoretical framework informs the research questions by focusing on how individuals' interpretations of digital symbols shape their social interactions and relationships. Specifically, the study investigates how the symbolic actions and decisions depicted in "The Social Network" reflect broader patterns of interpersonal communication in the digital age. By analyzing these symbolic interactions, the research aims to answer questions about the emotional and social implications of digital communication platforms like Facebook.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research will adopt a qualitative approach to explore the intricacies of communication as depicted in the scene from "The Social Network," focusing on Mark's actions on Facebook. Qualitative research is chosen for its ability to provide in-depth insights into human behavior and interpersonal dynamics, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the complexities portrayed in the film. The methodology will involve a detailed examination of the scene, considering both verbal and non-verbal communication cues, emotional expressions, and contextual factors. By closely analyzing the dialogue, gestures, and visual elements, the research aims to uncover the underlying meanings and implications of the characters' interactions. Furthermore, this qualitative approach will enable the exploration of how the depicted communication dynamics resonate with real-life social interactions and relationships. By drawing parallels between the film scene and everyday experiences, the research seeks to offer valuable insights into the broader implications of digital communication on interpersonal dynamics. Overall, this qualitative research methodology will facilitate a thorough exploration of the complexities of communication within the context of "The Social Network," providing a deeper understanding of the themes and dynamics portrayed in the film and their relevance to contemporary social interactions.

Methodologically, symbolic interactionism guides the study's qualitative content analysis approach. The research employs thematic analysis to identify and interpret the symbolic meanings embedded in key scenes and dialogues of the film. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how digital symbols, such as the "Add as a Friend" button and the "Refresh" button, influence characters' behaviors and relationships. By applying symbolic interactionism, the study systematically examines the nuanced ways in which technology-mediated symbols affect interpersonal dynamics, providing a robust framework for analyzing the film's portrayal of social media's impact on communication and relationships. Data

Collection: The data collection process involves a careful selection of scenes and dialogues from "The Social Network" that prominently feature communication dynamics relevant to the study. Key criteria for selection include the presence of digital interactions (e.g., use of Facebook features), significant emotional exchanges, and pivotal moments in the characters' relationships. These scenes are identified through multiple viewings of the film and a detailed review of the script.

Data Analysis: The selected scenes are subjected to thematic analysis, a method that involves coding and categorizing data to identify recurring patterns and themes. The analysis focuses on both verbal and non-verbal communication cues, such as dialogue content, tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and the use of digital symbols. The symbolic meanings of these cues are interpreted within the framework of symbolic interactionism, considering how they reflect and influence the characters' social interactions and relationships.

Interpretation Criteria: The criteria for interpreting the findings include the consistency of themes across different scenes, the relevance of the symbolic meanings to the characters' motivations and behaviors, and the alignment of the film's portrayal with existing theories and literature on interpersonal communication and social media. The interpretations are cross-referenced with scholarly sources to ensure validity and reliability.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this pivotal scene from "The Social Network," the narrative unfolds with a crescendo of tension and consequences, illustrating various facets of communication and its impact on relationships.



(Picture 1 and 2) The opening sequence establishes Mark's determined and isolated state, striding through Harvard Square while contemplating the significance of his genius IQ and the pursuit of social validation. The pulsating music sets the tone for a sequence of events that will unfold through a series of interconnected dialogues and actions.

Mark's decision to create Facemask, a website for comparing the attractiveness of Harvard students, becomes the focal point of the narrative. The rapid-fire sequence of scenes showcases the spread of the website, with students voting on the appearance of their peers. This underscores the power of communication technology in shaping social dynamics, albeit in a controversial and intrusive manner.

The simultaneous reactions of various characters, as they discover and participate in Facemask, exemplify the diverse responses to online communication. Some find it entertaining, while others perceive it as invasive and demeaning. The

overlapping voiceovers and rapid cuts between different locations emphasize the widespread impact of Mark's actions. (Picture 3) The disruption caused by Facemash becomes evident when the Harvard network crashes, leading to real-world consequences. The communication breakdown, both online and offline, reflects the potential harm that can arise from misusing technology and exploiting personal information. The dialogue among characters, while minimal in this segment, is a catalyst for the unfolding events, showcasing the power of words in shaping perceptions and actions. Mark's unapologetic attitude and determination to push boundaries highlight a communication style driven by ambition and a desire for recognition. The scene encapsulates the complex interplay of verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as the consequences of miscommunication and the misuse of technology within the realm of interpersonal relationships. The social dynamics within the Harvard community are disrupted, setting the stage for the broader societal impact that Mark's creations will have in the subsequent development of Facebook. In this intense scene from "The Social Network," the complex dynamics of communication, emotions, and relationships are on full display, particularly between Mark and Erica.

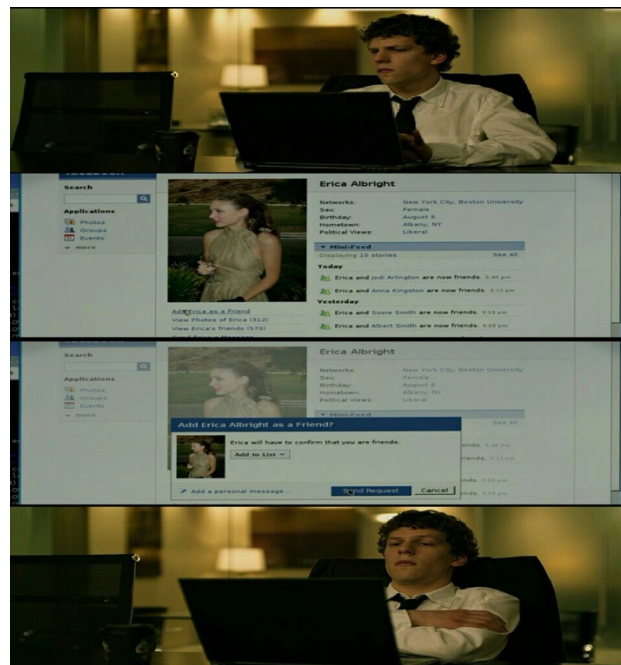


The setting in the club's men's room, where Mark and Eduardo are standing guard, sets the stage for a pivotal encounter. (picture 4 and 5).

Mark's initial happiness is disrupted when he notices Erica in the club, surrounded by friends. The non-verbal cues, such as Mark's immediate departure and Erica's avoidance of eye contact, emphasize the tension and unresolved issues between them.

Eduardo attempts to engage Mark in conversation, reflecting his concern for his friend, but Mark remains focused on his own agenda – the expansion of their project.

This showcases a form of indirect communication, where Mark chooses to deflect personal matters and concentrate on business matters instead. When Mark approaches Erica, the verbal exchange becomes charged with emotion. Erica confronts Mark about the hurtful content he published on "The Facebook," criticizing his thoughtless comments and the impact of his words. The dialogue between them highlights the power of online communication and its potential to cause real-world consequences. Mark's attempt to apologize and seek a private conversation is met with resistance from Erica, who points out the permanent nature of online words and the emotional toll they take. The dialogue unfolds with an underlying tension, revealing the fallout of Mark's actions and the breakdown of their interpersonal relationship. The scene encapsulates the theme of miscommunication and the consequences of thoughtless words in the digital age. Erica's stern words serve as a commentary on the responsibility that comes with online expression, while Mark's initial happiness is replaced by the realization of the impact of his actions on personal relationships. As Mark leaves the scene, and Eduardo observes from a distance, the interpersonal relationships are strained, hinting at the challenges ahead. This dialogue-rich sequence masterfully portrays the intricacies of communication, misunderstandings, and the lasting effects of words within the evolving landscape of social connections. Final : In this scene from "The Social Network," Mark's actions on Facebook reveal his internal thoughts and emotions regarding Erica Albright. The use of the computer and the Facebook platform becomes a symbolic representation of modern communication and social dynamics. As Mark sits down at the computer, the act of logging into Facebook signifies his desire to reconnect with Erica. (Picture 6) The anticipation is built as he types her name into the search box, and when Erica's profile appears, there's a moment of satisfaction for Mark – a subtle smile indicating a sense of accomplishment or excitement.



The visual focus on the mouse hovering between "Send a Message" and "Add as a Friend" reflects Mark's contemplation of the next step in their virtual interaction. This decision-making process is an insight into Mark's internal dialogue, showcasing his contemplative state and the significance he places on this online connection.

When Mark clicks on "Add as a Friend," the subsequent pop-up message confirming the friend request being sent heightens the suspense. The use of technology to initiate this connection demonstrates the evolving nature of interpersonal relationships in the digital age. As Mark returns to his homepage and refreshes the page, the repetitive action underscores his eagerness and impatience for a response. The use of the "Refresh" button becomes a metaphor for Mark's anticipation and the immediacy that technology introduces into social interactions. The absence of an immediate response leaves Mark waiting, creating a tension that reflects the uncertainty of online connections and the vulnerability of reaching out in the digital realm. This brief yet impactful scene masterfully uses visual elements to convey Mark's emotional state and the complexities of communication in the age of social media. **Theoretical Implications:** This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on symbolic interactionism by providing a contemporary analysis of digital communication symbols. It highlights the evolving nature of interpersonal relationships in the digital age and the significant role that online platforms play in shaping social dynamics. By applying symbolic interactionism to a modern context, the study underscores the continued relevance of this theoretical framework in understanding digital interactions.

Practical Implications: The findings of this study have practical implications for understanding the impact of social media on personal relationships. It offers insights into how online communication tools can influence behaviors and emotional experiences, which can be valuable for social media developers, educators, and mental health professionals. By recognizing the potential for miscommunication and the emotional consequences of online interactions, stakeholders can develop strategies to promote healthier digital communication practices.

Social Implications: This study sheds light on the broader social impact of digital communication platforms, emphasizing the need for responsible use of technology. It calls attention to the potential for digital platforms to both facilitate and complicate human connections. By highlighting the consequences of thoughtless online behavior, the study advocates for greater awareness and education on digital literacy and responsible communication.

Implications for Filmmakers: This study offers valuable insights for filmmakers on the depiction of social media interactions in cinema. By accurately portraying the complexities of digital communication and its impact on personal relationships, filmmakers can contribute to a more informed and nuanced public discourse on social media. The study encourages filmmakers to consider the ethical implications of their portrayals and to strive for realistic and responsible representations of online interactions.

Future Research Avenues: Future research could explore the long-term effects of digital communication on interpersonal relationships, particularly in diverse cultural contexts. Additionally, studies could investigate the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, in shaping social dynamics and communication patterns. Further research is also needed to understand the impact of social media on mental health and well-being, providing insights that can inform the development of supportive and inclusive online environments.

7. CONCLUSION

The analyzed scenes from "The Social Network" vividly demonstrate the intricate interplay of communication, emotions, and relationships in the digital age. From the inception of Facemask to Mark's actions on Facebook, the narrative underscores the profound impact of technology on social dynamics and personal connections. The consequences of Mark's creation of Facemask highlight the potential harm of misusing technology and exploiting personal information, leading to a breakdown in interpersonal relationships. Through rapid sequences and overlapping voiceovers, the scene emphasizes the power of words in shaping perceptions and actions, showcasing the complexities of communication dynamics within the Harvard community. In the intense encounter between Mark and Erica, the scene delves into the repercussions of online communication, portraying the lasting effects of thoughtless words and the challenges of reconciling in the digital realm. Erica's stern confrontation serves as a poignant commentary on the responsibility that accompanies online expression, while Mark's internal turmoil reflects the uncertainties of reaching out in the digital landscape. As Mark's actions on Facebook symbolize his internal thoughts and emotions regarding Erica Albright, the scene offers a poignant portrayal of modern communication and social dynamics. Through visual cues and symbolic representations, the narrative captures the complexities of online connections and the vulnerability inherent in virtual interactions. In essence, these scenes from "The Social Network" provide valuable insights into the evolving landscape of communication, highlighting the complexities and consequences of interpersonal interactions within online environments. As technology continues to shape our social interactions, understanding the nuances of digital communication becomes increasingly imperative in navigating the complexities of modern relationships.

8. RECOMMENDATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Investigate Long-Term Effects: Conduct longitudinal research to study the lasting impact of online communication and social media on real-world relationships. This research could reveal how prolonged use of digital platforms affects relationship dynamics, trust, and emotional bonds over time.

Cultural Variations: Examine how cultural differences influence the use and interpretation of social media, exploring communication styles and relationship dynamics across diverse cultural contexts. Understanding these variations can help in developing culturally sensitive communication strategies and social media policies.

Ethical Considerations: Explore ethical issues related to online communication, including privacy, data protection, cyberbullying, and misinformation spread on social platforms. Addressing these concerns is crucial for creating safer and more ethical online environments.

User Experience and Design: Investigate how interface design and user experience affect online communication and relationship formation. The aim is to develop more user-friendly and socially responsible platforms that promote positive interactions and minimize miscommunication.

Psychological Effects: Research the psychological impact of online communication on self-esteem, identity, and mental well-being. Gaining insights into how individuals perceive themselves and others in digital interactions can inform strategies to support mental health in the digital age.

Intervention Strategies: Develop effective interventions to promote positive online communication and address negative outcomes. Focus on fostering healthy relationships, resolving conflicts in digital spaces, and educating users about responsible online behavior.

Implications for Communication Professionals and Policymakers: Provide substantial insights for practitioners and theorists by outlining practical implications for communication professionals and policymakers. Highlight how social media can be leveraged to enhance communication strategies, public relations, and community engagement while mitigating risks.

Guidance for Filmmakers: Offer guidance to filmmakers on depicting social media interactions responsibly in cinema. Encourage realistic and nuanced portrayals that consider the complexities of digital communication and its impact on personal relationships. This can enrich scholarly discussions and contribute to a more informed public understanding of social media dynamics.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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