

Research Article

Exploring Digital Dialogue Dynamics: A Study On User Engagement and Psychological Response In Social Media Communication

Cut Tari Auliya N*, Hamidah Dwi Desy Deria, Indah Limy Marlioni

Department of Communication Studies, LSPR Institute of Communication and Business, Jakarta, Indonesia, 10220

*Corresponding Author: deriadwidesy1995@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Social media has significantly transformed human communication, shifting it from one-way message exchange to an interactive form of digital dialogue that is rapid, dynamic, and emotionally charged. Although numerous studies have examined user engagement, most remain limited in their in-depth exploration of how digital dialogue dynamics are interconnected with users' psychological responses within the context of everyday conversations. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of digital dialogue in social media communication by focusing on user engagement and the accompanying psychological responses. This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study design involving 12 active social media users aged 20–35 years, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through digital observation and subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis, which consisted of data reduction, categorization, and thematic interpretation. The findings indicate that social media user engagement is not only constructed through active participation such as commenting and sharing content, but also through passive involvement such as monitoring discussions and repeatedly consuming content. The principal finding reveals that interaction intensity functions as a moderating variable that amplifies psychological responses, including feelings of connectedness, self-validation, emotional anticipation, and digital anxiety resulting from the absence of feedback. The novelty of this study lies in conceptualizing digital dialogue as a layered symbolic and emotional process in which both active and passive engagement hold psychological significance in shaping users' communication behavior over time. These findings enrich the digital communication literature by affirming that dialogue on social media is not merely technical or structural in nature, but constitutes a relational space that mediates the construction of meaning, identity, and emotional regulation in users' everyday lives.

Keywords: Digital Communication; Social Media; Digital Dialogue; User Engagement; Psychological Responses.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed patterns of human communication. Social media platforms have become dominant spaces where individuals exchange information, opinions, and emotions in real time. These platforms offer accessibility, immediacy, and interactivity that were previously unattainable through traditional media. As a result, communication is no longer limited by geographical boundaries or temporal constraints. According to [Boyd \(2010\)](#), social media creates networked publics that reshape how individuals interact and construct meaning. This transformation positions social media as a central object of study in contemporary communication research. Digital communication through social media differs fundamentally from conventional one-way communication models. Users are no longer passive recipients but active participants who continuously respond, react, and contribute to ongoing conversations. [Bimber \(2000\)](#) emphasizes that information technology enhances participation by enabling reciprocal communication processes. These interactions allow users to influence discourse and shape collective understanding. Consequently, communication becomes dialogic rather than linear. This shift highlights the need to examine social media communication as an interactive dialogue.

User engagement has emerged as a key concept in understanding communication dynamics on social media. Engagement is commonly reflected through actions such as liking, commenting, and sharing content. However, these actions extend beyond technical responses and represent psychological involvement. [Abid and Harrigan \(2020\)](#) argue that user engagement is driven by underlying motivations, expectations, and perceived gratifications. Engagement reflects how users emotionally and cognitively connect with digital interactions. Therefore, analyzing engagement provides insight into deeper communicative processes. Psychological responses play a significant role in shaping how users experience digital interactions. Social media communication can evoke feelings of connection, validation, and belonging, while also generating stress and anxiety. [Boyd and Crawford \(2012\)](#) note that digital environments intensify emotional exposure due to constant visibility and feedback mechanisms. These responses influence how users interpret messages and sustain participation. The psychological dimension of communication thus becomes inseparable from its technological structure. Ignoring this dimension limits the understanding of digital dialogue.

Table 1. Overview of Digital Communication and User Engagement in Social Media Studies

Author(s)	Year	Focus of Study	Key Findings	Relevance to This Study
Boyd & Ellison	2007	Social network sites and user interaction	Social media enables profile construction and sustained social connections	Establishes social media as an interactive communication environment
Boyd	2010	Networked publics and digital interaction	Social media reshapes visibility, participation, and self-presentation	Supports the concept of digital dialogue as a social process
Bimber	2000	Information technology and civic engagement	Digital media enhances participation through interactive communication	Highlights participatory nature of digital communication
Bortree & Seltzer	2009	Dialogic communication on Facebook	Dialogic strategies increase engagement and relationship quality	Provides theoretical grounding for dialogic interaction
Carr & Hayes	2015	Conceptualization of social media communication	Social media facilitates interactive and relational communication	Reinforces the shift from one-way to dialogic communication
Boyd & Crawford	2012	Psychological implications of big data and visibility	Digital environments intensify emotional exposure and evaluation	Supports the psychological dimension of digital interaction
Chahal et al.	2020	Social media engagement dimensions	Engagement involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components	Frames engagement as a multidimensional process
Chen & Cheng	2020	Trust and user response in social media	Trust influences engagement and perception	Explains emotional and psychological responses in interaction
Dhiman	2023	Ethical challenges in social media use	Social media can cause psychological pressure and fatigue	Supports analysis of negative psychological responses
Cheng & Lee	2023	Dialogic strategies and relationship building	Responsiveness and ethical communication enhance engagement	Links dialogue quality with psychological outcomes

In response to these developments, this study is guided by three primary research questions. First, how does the interactive structure of social media reshape patterns of digital dialogue among users? Second, in what ways does user engagement reflect deeper psychological involvement in online communication processes? Third, how do technological affordances of social media platforms mediate emotional responses that subsequently influence user participation and meaning-making?. By articulating these research questions explicitly, the study establishes a clear analytical framework and delineates its focus on the interrelationship between platform structures, engagement dynamics, and psychological dimensions within social media communication. This structured formulation ensures conceptual coherence and provides a systematic basis for examining digital dialogue as a technologically mediated and psychologically embedded communicative process.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Communication and Social Media

Digital communication refers to the exchange of messages through internet-based technologies that enable real-time interaction and content dissemination. Social media represents an advanced form of digital communication by integrating user-generated content, interactivity, and networked relationships. [Boyd and Ellison \(2007\)](#) define social media platforms as systems that allow individuals to construct public or semi-public profiles and articulate connections with others. These platforms reshape traditional communication patterns by removing institutional gatekeeping. As a result, communication becomes decentralized and participatory. The rise of social media has altered the role of audiences from passive receivers to active contributors. [Carr and Hayes \(2015\)](#) argue that social media is distinguished by its ability to facilitate interactive communication between individuals and organizations. Users can comment, react, and redistribute messages, creating multidirectional flows of information. This interactivity allows users to shape discourse rather than merely consume it. Consequently, meaning is continuously negotiated within digital spaces.

Social media also functions as a socio-technical environment that influences how communication is produced and interpreted. [Boyd \(2010\)](#) introduces the concept of networked publics to explain how technological affordances structure visibility, persistence, and spreadability of communication. These affordances shape how individuals present themselves and engage with others. Communication is not only mediated by technology but also conditioned by social norms embedded

within platforms. This highlights the inseparable relationship between technology and social behavior. In addition, the scale and speed of social media communication contribute to its complexity. [Boyd and Crawford \(2012\)](#) emphasize that digital communication environments generate large volumes of data that affect how interactions are monitored and interpreted. Users are aware that their communication may be visible to broad audiences. This awareness influences how messages are constructed and shared. Thus, digital communication involves both expressive and strategic considerations. Overall, digital communication through social media represents a significant transformation in human interaction. It enables continuous participation, rapid feedback, and networked engagement. These characteristics distinguish social media from traditional communication channels. Understanding these features is essential for analyzing dialogue and engagement in digital contexts. Therefore, social media communication requires theoretical approaches that address both technological and social dimensions.

Digital Dialogue as a Symbolic Process

Digital dialogue refers to interactive communication in which meaning is co-constructed through ongoing exchanges. Unlike one-way message transmission, digital dialogue emphasizes reciprocity and responsiveness. [Bortree and Seltzer \(2009\)](#) explain that dialogic communication fosters mutual understanding through openness and feedback. In social media contexts, dialogue unfolds through comments, replies, and reactions. These interactions form continuous communicative processes rather than isolated messages. Symbols play a central role in digital dialogue. Text, images, emojis, and hashtags function as symbolic representations of meaning and identity. [Boyd \(2010\)](#) notes that users strategically use symbols to manage impressions in networked publics. These symbolic elements allow users to express emotions and social positions. As a result, digital dialogue extends beyond informational exchange to identity negotiation.

Digital dialogue is also shaped by platform-specific norms and expectations. Each platform provides distinct affordances that influence how dialogue occurs. [Disseldorp and Bouko \(2025\)](#) show that media logic affects how messages are adapted for social media interaction. Users adjust their communication styles based on audience expectations and platform conventions. This adaptation demonstrates that dialogue is context-dependent. Responsiveness is a key feature of effective digital dialogue. [Cheng and Lee \(2023\)](#) argue that timely and human-centered responses strengthen relational outcomes on social media. Perceived ethicality and authenticity mediate the effectiveness of dialogic strategies. When users perceive dialogue as genuine, trust and engagement increase. This indicates that symbolic interaction is closely tied to relational outcomes. Thus, digital dialogue functions as a symbolic and relational process. It involves continuous meaning-making shaped by interaction, representation, and responsiveness. Dialogue is sustained through reciprocal communication rather than message delivery alone. Understanding digital dialogue requires attention to symbolic elements and interactional dynamics. This perspective provides a foundation for examining engagement and psychological responses.

User Engagement in Social Media Communication

User engagement is a central concept in social media research and is often operationalized through observable behaviors. These behaviors include liking, commenting, sharing, and reacting to content. [Chahal et al. \(2020\)](#) describe engagement as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. Engagement reflects the degree to which users invest attention and emotion in interactions. Therefore, engagement cannot be fully understood through metrics alone. Engagement is influenced by both content characteristics and relational factors. [Chen and Cheng \(2020\)](#) highlight that trust and perceived credibility shape how users respond to content. When users trust the source, they are more likely to engage actively. Conversely, misinformation can reduce engagement and damage relational outcomes. This demonstrates that engagement is closely linked to perception and judgment. Social media engagement also develops over time through repeated interactions. According to [Carr and Hayes \(2015\)](#), sustained engagement depends on relevance, interaction quality, and responsiveness. Users are more likely to remain engaged when communication aligns with their needs and expectations. Engagement thus emerges as a process rather than a single action. This process reflects ongoing relational development.

Organizational communication research further emphasizes the role of engagement in relationship building. [Bortree and Seltzer \(2009\)](#) show that dialogic strategies enhance engagement by encouraging participation. Engagement increases when users feel acknowledged and valued. This suggests that engagement is a relational outcome of dialogic communication. It is shaped by interaction quality rather than content volume. In summary, user engagement represents an active and meaningful form of participation in digital communication. It encompasses behavioral actions and psychological involvement. Engagement is shaped by trust, relevance, and interaction dynamics. Understanding engagement requires attention to both observable behaviors and underlying motivations. This perspective supports deeper analysis of digital dialogue.

Psychological Responses in Digital Interaction

Psychological responses are integral to how individuals experience digital communication. Social media interactions can evoke emotions such as satisfaction, connection, anxiety, and frustration. [Boyd and Crawford \(2012\)](#) argue that constant exposure and feedback loops intensify emotional experiences. Users often evaluate their social standing based on digital responses. This emotional evaluation shapes continued participation. Positive psychological responses emerge when users receive recognition and affirmation. Likes and comments can reinforce feelings of belonging and self-worth. [Chahal et al. \(2020\)](#) note that emotional engagement strengthens relational bonds between users and content. These positive responses encourage repeated interaction. Consequently, psychological gratification becomes a driver of engagement. However, digital interaction can also generate negative psychological outcomes. [Dhiman \(2023\)](#) highlights ethical challenges such as pressure, comparison, and emotional exhaustion in social media environments. When expected responses are absent, users may

experience disappointment or exclusion. These experiences demonstrate that social media can function as a source of stress. Psychological responses are therefore not uniformly positive. Crisis communication research further illustrates the psychological impact of digital interaction. [Coombs and Laufer \(2018\)](#) explain that uncertainty and emotional tension increase during crisis-related communication. Social media amplifies these effects due to rapid information spread. Users may experience heightened anxiety when engaging with crisis-related content. This underscores the emotional intensity of digital interaction. Overall, psychological responses shape how users interpret and sustain digital communication. These responses influence engagement patterns and communication outcomes. Digital interaction involves continuous emotional processing alongside message exchange. Understanding psychological responses is essential for analyzing digital dialogue. This approach highlights the human dimension of social media communication.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Type of Research

This study adopted a qualitative research approach with a case study design to explore digital dialogue in social media communication. A qualitative approach was selected to capture in-depth insights into users' subjective experiences and psychological responses during digital interaction. The case study design allowed for a detailed examination of communication dynamics within a specific social context. The research subjects consisted of active social media users aged 20–35 years who regularly engage in digital interactions. This age group was chosen because it represents a demographic that intensively uses social media for both personal and social purposes. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research objectives.

Data Collection Techniques

The study employed digital observation, focusing on interaction patterns and user responses on selected social media platforms. Digital observation enabled the researcher to systematically examine naturally occurring communication without intervening in the interaction process. The observation concentrated on patterns of engagement such as commenting, replying, sharing, and expressive reactions that reflect dialogic exchanges between users. The observation was conducted over a three-month period across two major social media platforms widely used by individuals aged 20–35 years. Data were collected from publicly accessible posts and comment threads that demonstrated active interaction and sustained dialogue. Selection criteria included: (1) posts generating interactive exchanges rather than one-directional responses, (2) visible user engagement through multi-layered comment threads, and (3) indications of emotional expression in textual interaction. All observed data were documented through systematic note-taking and digital archiving (screenshots and interaction mapping) to preserve contextual integrity. Ethical considerations were maintained by analyzing only publicly available content and anonymizing user identities to protect privacy.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings. The analysis process involved several stages, including data reduction, data categorization, and interpretation of themes. During data reduction, irrelevant information was filtered while preserving essential content. The categorized data were then organized into themes related to user engagement and psychological responses. The final stage focused on interpreting these themes to understand how digital dialogue shapes users' emotional and interactive experiences on social media. Trust and perception are additional factors that mediate user interaction in digital environments. [Abdulkareem et al. \(2022\)](#) demonstrate that openness and social media use influence participation through trust-building processes. When users perceive interactions as credible and meaningful, engagement tends to increase. Conversely, low trust can reduce participation and weaken dialogue. This indicates that communication effectiveness depends on both relational and psychological conditions. Social media dialogue therefore operates within a complex framework of perception and trust. From an organizational and societal perspective, digital dialogue has implications for participation and governance. [Asomah \(2025\)](#) highlights that social media can function as a communicative tool for public engagement in developing contexts. Similarly, [Bortree and Seltzer \(2009\)](#) show that dialogic strategies on social media enhance relationship-building outcomes. These findings suggest that digital dialogue supports sustained interaction when managed effectively. Communication is no longer solely informational but relational in nature. This reinforces the importance of dialogue-oriented communication models. Despite growing interest in social media communication, many studies continue to focus on technical or structural aspects. [Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic \(2015\)](#) argue that systematic inquiry should integrate social and psychological dimensions. Limited attention has been given to how users emotionally experience digital dialogue. This gap underscores the need for qualitative exploration of engagement and psychological responses. Therefore, this study aims to examine social media communication as a form of digital dialogue shaped by user engagement and psychological experiences. Such an approach contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary communication practices.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are based on digital observations of active social media users during routine online interactions. The observation focused on identifying patterns of engagement, interaction behavior, and visible psychological responses. The findings indicate that user participation in digital dialogue varies in intensity and form. Engagement was not limited to explicit communication such as commenting or posting. Instead, users demonstrated involvement through a range of observable behaviors. These findings provide an empirical overview of how digital dialogue is enacted in everyday social

media use. The observation revealed that a substantial number of users engaged in social media communication passively. Passive engagement was characterized by activities such as viewing content, scrolling through comment sections, and reacting minimally through likes or emojis. Although these users did not actively contribute verbal responses, they remained consistently present within digital conversations. Repeated viewing behavior suggested sustained attention and emotional interest. This indicates that engagement can occur without direct interaction. Passive engagement thus represents a significant form of participation in digital dialogue.

Active engagement was also identified through observable interaction behaviors. Users demonstrated active participation by posting comments, replying to others, and sharing content. These actions were often accompanied by rapid response patterns and repeated interaction with the same discussion threads. Active users showed higher visibility within digital spaces. Their engagement was often directed toward content perceived as personally relevant or socially significant. This pattern reflects deliberate involvement in digital dialogue. Psychological responses were observable through users' interaction patterns and behavioral reactions. Positive feedback, such as likes or supportive comments, was associated with continued participation and increased interaction frequency. In contrast, the absence of feedback was often followed by repeated checking of notifications or reduced posting activity. These behaviors indicate emotional anticipation and sensitivity to social responses. The findings suggest that psychological responses are closely tied to interaction outcomes. Emotional reactions were evident even in the absence of explicit verbal expression. Overall, the observational data show that digital dialogue is enacted through both visible and subtle forms of engagement. Users participate in social media communication through a combination of passive presence, active interaction, and emotional response. These patterns illustrate that digital dialogue extends beyond direct message exchange. Engagement and psychological responses are intertwined within everyday social media use. The following table summarizes the key observational findings of this study.

Table 2. Observation on Digital Dialogue and User Responses

Observed Aspect	Description	Behavioral Indicators	Psychological Implications
Passive engagement	Users consume content without verbal interaction	Viewing posts, scrolling, liking	Emotional involvement without direct expression
Active engagement	Users participate through direct interaction	Commenting, replying, sharing	Sense of participation and visibility
Positive feedback	Users receive supportive responses	Likes, positive comments	Feelings of connection and validation
Absence of feedback	Expected responses are not received	Repeated notification checking	Emotional tension and digital anxiety
Interaction frequency	Level of repeated platform use	Daily or frequent engagement	Increased emotional sensitivity

The observational phase focused on identifying patterns of interaction and behavioral responses among active social media users. Observations were conducted across multiple social media platforms to capture natural and spontaneous communication behavior. The results indicate that digital interaction occurs in both visible and subtle forms. Not all engagement was expressed through comments or original posts. Nevertheless, users remained psychologically involved in ongoing digital conversations. These findings demonstrate that participation in digital dialogue extends beyond explicit communication acts.

The observation revealed that users interacted with content at varying levels of intensity. Some users demonstrated high interaction frequency by regularly commenting or responding to posts. Others engaged through consistent content consumption without verbal contribution. This variation suggests that engagement intensity is influenced by individual preferences and situational factors. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) note that social media usage patterns differ according to users' motivations and communication goals. Therefore, interaction behavior should be viewed as a spectrum rather than a fixed category. Content relevance played a significant role in shaping interaction patterns. Users were more likely to engage with content perceived as socially meaningful or personally relevant. During observation, posts related to public issues or shared experiences attracted higher attention. Dos Santos and Lopes (2024) emphasize that social media functions as a space for public engagement, particularly during moments of collective concern. This supports the finding that relevance strengthens both visible and invisible forms of participation.

Social context also influenced how users interacted with digital content. Users demonstrated higher engagement when interacting within familiar networks or trusted communities. Conversely, interaction decreased in spaces perceived as overly formal or impersonal. Gálvez-Rodríguez et al. (2016) explain that relational proximity enhances participation in social media communication. This indicates that interaction patterns are shaped by social relationships as much as by content. Overall, the observational findings suggest that digital interaction is multilayered and situational. Engagement is expressed through a combination of active contribution, passive presence, and emotional attention. These patterns highlight the complexity of digital dialogue in everyday social media use. Interaction should therefore be understood as a layered communicative process. This provides a descriptive foundation for examining forms of engagement in greater detail.

The observational findings reveal that user engagement in digital dialogue is not always verbally active. Many users preferred to engage passively by viewing content, monitoring discussions, or reacting through minimal actions such as liking or sharing. These behaviors were consistently observed across different platforms. Although passive users did not contribute text-based responses, they demonstrated sustained attention to content. This indicates that engagement can occur without direct verbal interaction. Digital dialogue therefore includes both visible and non-visible forms of participation. Passive engagement emerged as a dominant pattern among observed users. Users frequently revisited the same discussion threads

without adding comments. This behavior suggests continued interest and emotional involvement. Forgione et al. (2025) argue that passive consumption of social media content still contributes to communication experience and perception formation. Thus, passive engagement should be recognized as a meaningful communicative act. Observation data support this interpretation.

Active engagement was characterized by direct interaction through commenting, replying, and content sharing. These actions increased user visibility and interaction frequency. Active users were often involved in ongoing exchanges with other participants. Ji et al. (2017) note that such engagement enhances relational presence and perceived social influence. Observation confirms that active engagement strengthens users' sense of participation within digital dialogue. However, it was less common than passive forms of engagement. The form of engagement observed was also influenced by communicative purpose. Users engaging in public or organizational discussions tended to adopt more cautious interaction styles. Etter et al. (2021) explain that strategic considerations shape engagement behavior in public communication contexts. As a result, users may limit verbal participation while maintaining observational involvement. This pattern reflects selective engagement rather than disengagement. In summary, digital dialogue accommodates multiple forms of engagement that coexist within social media environments. Engagement cannot be narrowly defined as verbal participation alone. Both active and passive behaviors reflect users' involvement in communication processes. These observational findings demonstrate that engagement operates as a flexible and adaptive response to digital interaction. Understanding these forms is essential for interpreting user behavior in social media dialogue.

Several psychological responses were identified during digital interactions across observed social media platforms. Users frequently experienced feelings of connection when receiving positive feedback such as likes, reactions, or supportive comments. This finding aligns with Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), who explain that social media functions as a space for social presence and emotional exchange. Self-validation was also evident when users' opinions were acknowledged or repeated by others in comment sections or reposts. According to Ji et al. (2017), recognition from other users can strengthen an individual's perceived social value in digital spaces. These observations indicate that psychological responses are closely linked to patterns of feedback within digital dialogue. Emotional attachment to digital interaction was further reflected in users' routine behaviors. Many users were observed checking notifications repeatedly after posting content. This behavior suggests a state of emotional anticipation tied to expected social responses. Forgione et al. (2025) note that frequent social media use can intensify emotional dependency on feedback mechanisms. When feedback was delayed, users showed visible signs of restlessness or concern. Such reactions indicate that digital communication can influence emotional regulation. Digital anxiety emerged as a notable psychological response during observation. Users displayed discomfort when posts did not receive immediate engagement. Some users deleted content after limited responses, indicating emotional dissatisfaction. This behavior supports findings by Etter, Winkler, and Pleil (2021), who argue that social media engagement can shape self-perception and emotional stability. Anxiety was not always expressed verbally but inferred through behavioral changes. These patterns show that absence of interaction can be as impactful as positive engagement.

Self-validation appeared consistently in users who received agreement or endorsement from peers. Users often responded positively when others echoed their viewpoints. This reaction suggests that digital dialogue serves as a confirmation space for personal beliefs. Grunig and Grunig (1989) emphasize that acknowledgment within communication processes reinforces individual confidence. Observations indicate that this validation contributes to continued participation in online discussions. Thus, digital platforms play a role in reinforcing users' psychological needs. Overall, psychological responses observed were diverse yet interconnected. Feelings of connection, validation, and anxiety often occurred simultaneously. Users were not passive recipients but emotionally engaged participants in digital dialogue. Jiang and Luo (2020) highlight that engagement outcomes directly influence emotional responses in online environments. The findings demonstrate that psychological reactions are shaped by both presence and absence of interaction. Digital dialogue therefore functions as an emotionally responsive communication space.

Interaction Patterns and Emotional Intensity

Observation data indicate that interaction frequency significantly influences emotional intensity among users. Users who engaged more frequently exhibited stronger emotional reactions to feedback received. These reactions included excitement, disappointment, or heightened anticipation. According to Lee et al. (2020), frequent interaction increases users' emotional investment in communication outcomes. The data suggest that repeated engagement strengthens emotional sensitivity. Thus, interaction frequency serves as a key factor in shaping emotional experience. High interaction intensity was associated with increased responsiveness to social cues. Users who regularly commented or posted content were more affected by positive or negative feedback. Ferré-Pavia and Bajouk (2025) argue that dialogic interaction heightens emotional awareness during digital communication. Observed users demonstrated quicker emotional shifts following responses from others. This pattern suggests that active participation amplifies emotional involvement. Emotional intensity therefore escalates with sustained interaction.

In contrast, users with lower interaction frequency displayed more stable emotional patterns. These users were less reactive to fluctuations in feedback. Gálvez-Rodríguez et al. (2016) note that strategic or limited engagement often reduces emotional exposure. Observations showed that infrequent users consumed content without strong emotional responses. Their interaction style appeared more controlled and less dependent on validation. This indicates a moderating effect of interaction frequency on emotional stability. Repeated exposure to digital dialogue was found to increase emotional involvement over time. Users who consistently followed specific discussions became more emotionally invested. This aligns with Dos Santos and Lopes (2024), who describe digital platforms as spaces of sustained emotional engagement. Emotional reactions intensified as users became familiar with interaction patterns. The accumulation of interaction experiences shaped users' expectations and responses. Therefore, duration of exposure contributes to emotional depth. Overall, interaction

patterns play a crucial role in determining emotional intensity. Engagement frequency, responsiveness, and exposure duration collectively influence psychological outcomes. Users are shaped not only by content but by how often and how deeply they interact. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasize that social media environments are dynamic systems of interaction. The findings confirm that emotional involvement increases with repeated digital engagement. Interaction intensity thus acts as a moderating variable in users' psychological responses.

Observation data indicate that interaction frequency has a direct relationship with emotional intensity experienced by users during digital communication. Users who engaged more frequently tended to display stronger emotional reactions to feedback received from others. These reactions were evident in both positive responses, such as satisfaction, and negative responses, such as disappointment. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), frequent interaction increases users' psychological involvement with social media environments. The data show that repeated engagement heightens users' sensitivity to social cues. This confirms that interaction frequency contributes to emotional depth in digital dialogue. High interaction intensity was associated with increased sensitivity toward social responses from other users. Individuals who actively commented, posted, or reacted were more affected by feedback patterns. Even minor responses were interpreted as meaningful signals within the interaction process. Ji et al. (2017) explain that active engagement strengthens users' emotional attachment to social feedback mechanisms. Observations revealed that active users monitored responses closely and adjusted behavior accordingly. This suggests that emotional responsiveness increases with participatory intensity.

Users with lower interaction frequency demonstrated more stable emotional patterns during observation. These users tended to consume content without strong emotional reactions to feedback. Their engagement was limited to observation rather than active participation. Gálvez-Rodríguez et al. (2016) note that passive engagement often reduces emotional exposure in digital environments. The data indicate that infrequent users experienced fewer emotional fluctuations. This stability reflects a lower level of psychological dependence on interaction outcomes. Repeated exposure to digital dialogue was found to gradually increase emotional involvement. Users who consistently engaged with specific topics or communities developed stronger emotional expectations. Dos Santos and Lopes (2024) argue that sustained interaction transforms digital platforms into emotionally significant spaces. Observations showed that repeated interactions shaped users' anticipatory behaviors. Emotional responses became more pronounced over time. This pattern highlights the cumulative effect of interaction exposure. Overall, engagement intensity plays a moderating role in psychological response. Emotional involvement is influenced by how often and how actively users participate in digital dialogue. Interaction frequency determines sensitivity to feedback and emotional stability. Lee et al. (2020) emphasize that communication intensity affects emotional investment in online spaces. The findings support the view that digital interaction is not emotionally neutral. Interaction patterns therefore serve as a key determinant of emotional intensity.

Digital dialogue has become integrated into users' daily routines and emotional experiences. Observed users frequently accessed social media during transitional moments such as work breaks or before rest. These interactions were not random but embedded within daily schedules. According to Forgiione et al. (2025), habitual social media use forms part of everyday communication practices. Observation data indicate that digital dialogue functions as a routine activity. This integration reflects its normalized role in daily life. Communication effects were found to persist even after platform use ended. Users often reflected on responses received long after logging out. Emotional reactions such as satisfaction or concern continued beyond the moment of interaction. Etter, Winkler, and Pleil (2021) state that digital communication can extend psychological impact beyond immediate engagement. Observations confirmed that users mentally revisited online interactions. This suggests that digital dialogue has lasting cognitive effects.

Digital dialogue was observed to influence users' mood and emotional state. Positive interactions contributed to improved mood, while lack of feedback generated uncertainty. Users' emotional conditions were shaped by interaction outcomes. Jiang and Luo (2020) explain that social media engagement affects emotional regulation. The data show that emotional responses were linked to perceived social acknowledgment. This indicates a close relationship between communication and emotional well-being. Self-perception was also affected by digital dialogue. Users evaluated themselves based on the responses they received. Acknowledgment increased confidence, while limited interaction reduced perceived social value. Grunig and Grunig (1989) argue that communication processes contribute to identity formation. Observations support the idea that digital dialogue plays a role in self-assessment. This highlights its psychological significance. Overall, digital dialogue functions as an ongoing psychological presence in everyday life. It extends beyond functional communication and becomes part of emotional experience. Users remain mentally connected to interactions even when offline. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasize that social media environments shape continuous social awareness. The findings indicate that digital dialogue influences daily emotional processes. Thus, digital communication occupies a sustained role in users' everyday lives.

Beyond confirming prior literature, this study contributes analytically by conceptualizing digital dialogue as a layered engagement continuum in which passive presence, active contribution, and emotional responsiveness operate simultaneously rather than sequentially. While previous studies tend to categorize users dichotomously as either active or passive, the observational findings suggest that passive engagement is not a weaker form of participation but a structurally embedded mode of dialogic involvement that sustains visibility, anticipation, and emotional investment. In this sense, digital anxiety and self-validation do not merely emerge from feedback mechanisms, but from the tension between visibility and reciprocity within platform architectures. This interpretation advances digital communication scholarship by reframing engagement as a dynamic negotiation between technological affordances and psychological expectation. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies not in identifying engagement patterns per se, but in explaining how interaction intensity functions as a mediating variable that amplifies or stabilizes emotional outcomes within digital dialogue ecosystems.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that social media communication represents a complex form of digital dialogue shaped by interaction patterns and psychological involvement. User engagement occurs in multiple forms, ranging from active participation to passive observation, all of which carry psychological significance. Engagement is influenced not only by content characteristics but also by emotional expectations, relational proximity, and platform-based visibility mechanisms. Psychological responses emerge as reactions to interaction outcomes and vary in intensity depending on feedback dynamics and frequency of engagement. Social media thus functions as a dynamic communicative environment where interaction structures and emotional processes are continuously intertwined.

More importantly, this research contributes to digital communication scholarship by advancing the conceptualization of engagement as a layered and continuum-based process rather than a binary distinction between active and passive users. By demonstrating that passive observation can generate emotional anticipation, self-validation, and digital anxiety, this study extends existing engagement theory beyond visible participation metrics. The findings highlight interaction intensity as a moderating variable that links technological affordances with psychological outcomes. In doing so, the study provides a more integrative analytical framework that connects dialogic communication models with emotional responsiveness in digital environments. This theoretical positioning clarifies the study's contribution to contemporary debates on digital dialogue and user engagement. However, this study is not without limitations. First, the exclusive reliance on digital observation restricts access to users' internal interpretations and subjective reflections, as emotional states were inferred from observable behavioral indicators rather than self-reported narratives. Second, the research focused on publicly accessible interactions within a limited observation period and selected platforms, which may not fully capture private or cross-platform communication dynamics. These methodological constraints limit the generalizability of findings and call for cautious interpretation. Future research is therefore encouraged to address these limitations directly. Combining digital observation with in-depth interviews or surveys could validate behavioral interpretations and strengthen explanatory depth. Expanding the duration of observation and incorporating comparative cross-platform analysis would allow researchers to examine how differing platform architectures shape engagement and emotional intensity. Longitudinal designs may also reveal how sustained exposure to digital dialogue influences long-term psychological well-being. By situating future directions within the identified methodological constraints, subsequent studies can further refine and expand the theoretical framework proposed in this research.

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