

# Digital Engagement and Social Alienation: A Critical Analysis of the Students of Lovely Professional University

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## Abstract

The relationship between digital engagement and social alienation among youth is a major concern in today's digital age. This study was conducted to study the impact of digital technology on the mental health and social bond of the students of Lovely Professional University. Research suggests that excessive digital engagement leads to feelings of loneliness and social isolation. The usage of social media has increased manifold in the last few years and different age groups have been engaged in its usage. One such pattern is private consumption of customized content. The social-media Algorithms and Artificial Intelligence supply more content of the same nature and reinforce the pre-existing understanding and induced a sense of alienation. The present study is an attempt to examine the impact of the social-media engagement of youth and their engagement in community-based activities. The Study Was qualitative in nature and purposive sampling method was applied to collect the samples and draw conclusions using frequency and percentage.

**Keywords:** Social-Media engagement, Youth, Community relations, Social-alienation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

To lack a sense of belonging, to feel cut off from family, friends, school, or work - the four worlds of childhood is what is meant to be understood as teenage alienation, (Bronfenbrenner 1986). This can be a major psychological burden on a young person. Positive youth development greatly benefits from supportive social relationships and empowerment (Small, S., & Memmo, M., 2004). The detrimental psychosocial effects of social withdrawal and rejection during adolescence (Coleman, 2011; Claes, 1992; Rubin, Coplan, & Bowker, 2009).

The quality of friendships impacts adolescents' psychological well-being and social adjustment. Findings suggest that positive friendships contribute significantly to adolescents' overall adjustment during this crucial developmental stage (Claes, 1992). Social withdrawal in childhood, its causes,

consequences, and interventions, highlighting its significance in understanding social development and promoting children's well-being, (Rubin, Coplan, & Bowker, 2009).

Social isolation in adolescence, examining its psychological impact and protective factors. The study underscores the detrimental effects of social isolation on adolescent mental health. It also identifies key protective factors that mitigate the negative consequences, highlighting the importance of social support and connectedness during this developmental period, (Hall-Lande et al. 2007). Another study explores preadolescents' and adolescents' perceptions of peer groups and their perceived influence, how youth conceptualize peer groups and the extent to which they believe peers influence their behavior (O'Brien & Bierman, 1988). A macro sociological analysis of alienation, tracing its conceptual evolution from Marx to contemporary sociology (Israel, 1971).

Critical analysis of the concept of "alienation" within the realms of social science and education. (Williamson & Cullingford, 1997). The meaning of alienation, exploring, its various dimensions, the nature, and implications of alienation in contemporary society (Seeman, 1959), the dual concepts of alienation and engagement within the context of social change (Seeman, 1972). Presence of alienation themes in contemporary social theorizing. By tracing the hidden continuity of classic alienation themes, the paper sheds light on how these concepts have the ongoing relevance of alienation in understanding social dynamics (Seeman, 1983). Relationship between alienation and juvenile delinquency (Calabrese & Adams, 1990).

Alienation within a comprehensive model of juvenile delinquency (Sankey & Huon, 1999). Adolescent alienation, its correlates, and consequences, factors associated with alienation during adolescence and explore its potential impacts on various aspects of adolescent development (Williamson & Cullingford, 1998). The sociological correlates of alienation among adolescents who have attempted suicide (Wentz, 1979). The impact of alienation on the well-being of Portuguese adolescents (Tomé et al., 2016). Relationship between school-related stress and psychosomatic symptoms among Adolescents' physical and psychological well-being, aiming to understand the prevalence and effects of stress-related symptoms in this population (Natvig et al. 1999). The potential health consequences of alienation from school (Nutbeam et al. 1993).

Relationship between various aspects of alienation and symptom load among adolescents (Rayce et al. 2009) Mediating role of alienation in self-reported health among Swedish adolescents (Safipour et al. 2011). Meaning and measurement of alienation within the sociological context (Dean 1961). How

various psychosocial factors influence the emergence of problem behaviors in individuals. By investigating this interplay, (Jessor and Jessor 1977). Social media platforms have made it easier for young people to maintain connections with friends and family, share their thoughts and feelings, and collaborate on projects (Gibson, J. L,2020).

Most young adults obtain health information from social media, both actively and through passive exposure (Lim et al., 2022). On a professional level, social media can be utilized to broaden or expand our knowledge in a certain area and build our professional network by getting in touch with various experts in a particular organization (Fischer and Reuber, 2021). Social media means internet sites and applications that allow customers to develop and share information or take part in social networking (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Americans use YouTube and Facebook, but that youths under 30 use Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok more frequently ( Auxier and Anderson 2021).

## **2. OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

**Amjad Farhan Alrekebat (2016)** studied the relationship between Internet addiction and self-efficacy among 300 students at AlHussein Bin Talal University, finding a weak correlation influenced by gender but not academic achievement.

**Rui, Chen, and Li's. (2018)** study examines how social media impacts face-to-face communication among Chinese university students, highlighting the complex dynamics and cultural factors influencing digital and traditional interactions.

**Chakraborty's. (2019)** explores urban youth's engagement with digital technologies under Digital India, highlighting the interplay of technology, urbanization, and youth culture, and its implications for digital inclusion policies.

**Prabhu, Kumar, and Sen's (2019)** Prabhu, Kumar, and Sen's (2019) pilot study examines Indian college students' social media usage, providing insights for educational technology integration and emphasizing cultural context in digital engagement and learning initiatives.

**Subrahmanyam and Šmahel's (2019)** Subrahmanyam and Šmahel's (2019) book examines digital media's impact on youth, providing essential insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers.

**Lee, Lee, and Koo's. (2020)** Lee, Lee, and Koo's (2020) study examines social media addiction's effects on Korean adolescents' well-being, providing insights for mitigating digital mental health challenges.

**Alireza Atarodi (2020)** finds significant correlation between cell phone dependency and social alienation in teenagers, highlighting technology's impact on adolescent social well-being.

**Walaa Elsayed (2021)** examines social media's negative impact on adolescent social identity, emphasizing the need for protective measures by institutions.

**Raktavati Holkar (2022)** explores digital platforms' impact on interpersonal skills among urban Indian youth, guiding efforts for positive communication practices.

**(Lim et al., 2022)** Lim et al. (2022) investigate how young adults use social media for health information. Facebook serves as a common source, YouTube for detailed learning, and Instagram for wellness inspiration. The study emphasizes tailoring health promotion to match social media habits.

## 2.1 RESEARCH GAP

The research aims to explore the ramifications of excessive digital engagement among students at Lovely Professional University, Punjab, focusing on its effects on social bonds, physical activity participation, and academic performance. By employing qualitative methods and gathering responses exclusively from students, it addresses a gap in understanding the unique dynamics of digital interaction within this specific university context, contributing to broader insights into youth behavior in the digital age.

## 2.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To Analyse mode of online communication patterns among youth in India.
- ii. To Assess digital engagement's influence on face-to-face interactions, friendships, and community relationships.
- iii. To Explore how digital engagement links to social alienation.
- iv. To Analyze the most common applications used by youth on digital platform for online communication.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Study is quantitative in nature in which survey method was used to collect the data from respondent. And purposive sampling method was applied to collect the data. Data was gathered using closed-ended questions. The questionnaire consists of nineteen questions based on four objectives. Moreover, Likert

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scale was used while framing the questions. The gathered data was analyzed using based on research questions.

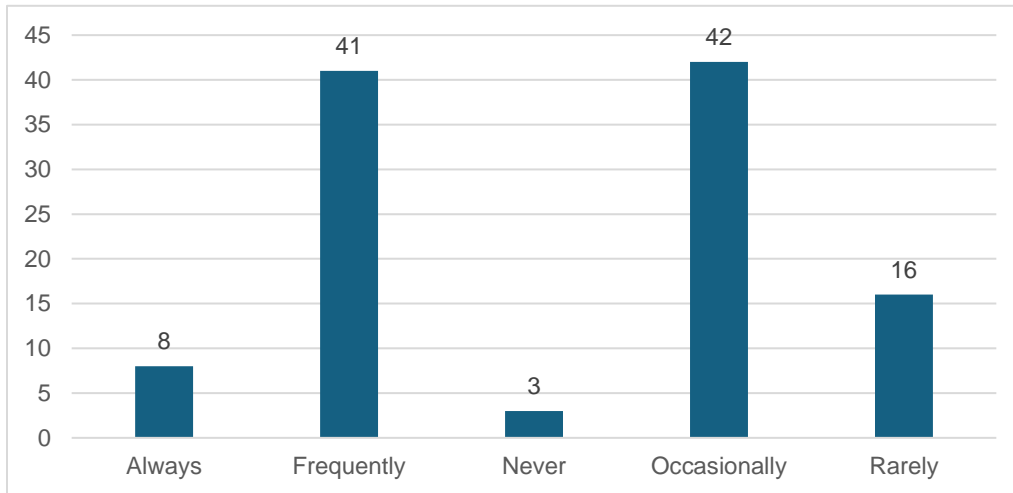
### **3.1. Data Collection Procedure**

All participants completed the voluntary consent section of the questionnaire, emphasizing the freedom to withdraw from the questionnaire at any time and confirming confidentiality. The questionnaire was shared online with students on different social media platforms from April 16 to 29, 2024. After analysing all the responses of the students those who did not filled the selected criteria were excluded from further analysis, for the study, the questionnaire was shared only among the undergraduate students at Lovely Professional University in Punjab. The total number of responses collected from the survey was 155 out of which only 110 were considered for the final sample, as 45 survey questioners were ether not filled properly are some of the responses were missing, from the final sample of 110 , (59) were males, (51) females respondents. To determine the level of psychological alienation of university students, the study was conducted at Lovely Professional University, involving 110 students aged 19-25 involving both boys and girls from diverse streams. The research aimed to analyse the impact of digital engagement on social alienation among youth. the study explored patterns of online activity, social interaction, and the psychological ramifications of excessive digital involvement. Preliminary findings suggest a high percentage between increased digital engagement and heightened social alienation.

## **4. DATA INTERPRETATION AND RESULTS**

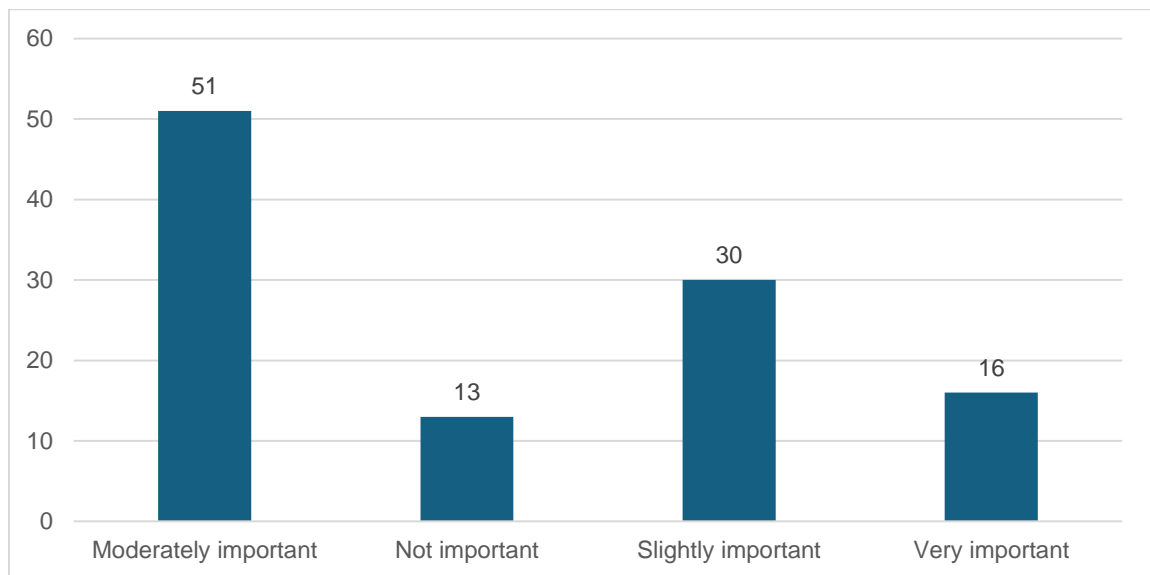
In data interpretation, we delve into the responses collected from participants to uncover trends and patterns. This process entails meticulously reviewing how responses are distributed, spotting recurring themes, and deducing insights about the factors driving the data. By scrutinizing these details, we derive valuable conclusions that can guide decision-making processes and shape future research directions. Through this thorough analysis, we extract profound insights that help us understand the intricacies of the subject matter at hand, enabling us to make informed decisions and advance our understanding of the topic.

**Figure 1: Use of Social Media Platform for Sharing Feelings with others.**



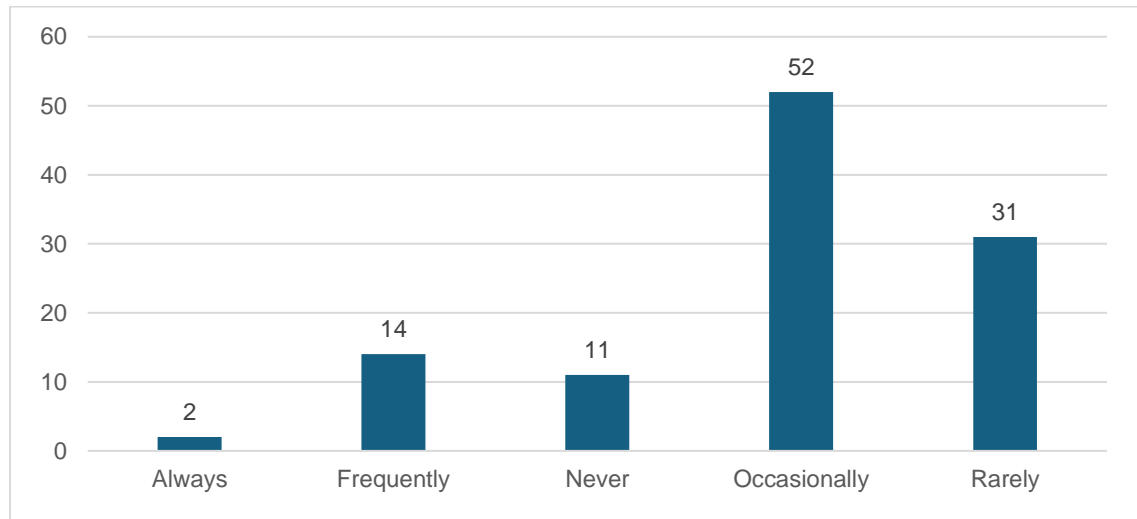
- The preceding figure indicates 29.3% of respondents frequently discuss feelings, 30.2% occasionally, 11.6% rarely, and 5.8% always. This indicates diverse comfort levels and preferences regarding emotional expression on social media.

**Figure 2: Importance of messaging on SNSs.**



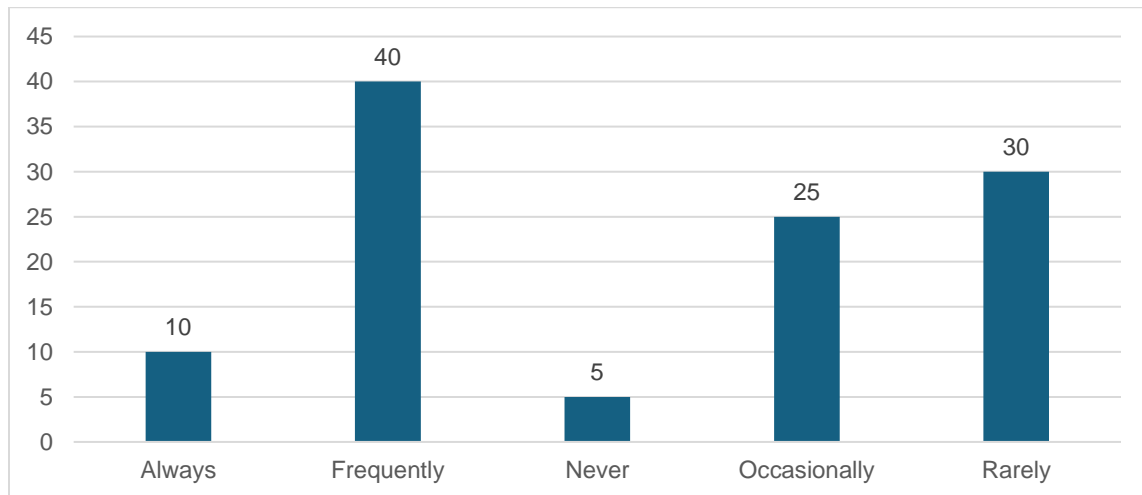
- The data in above shows that 36.4% find viewing and liking messages moderately important, 27.3% slightly important, 14.5% very important, and 11.8% not important. This indicates varying priorities and attitudes toward online social networking engagement.

**Figure 3: Frequency of Participation on Social Media Platform.**



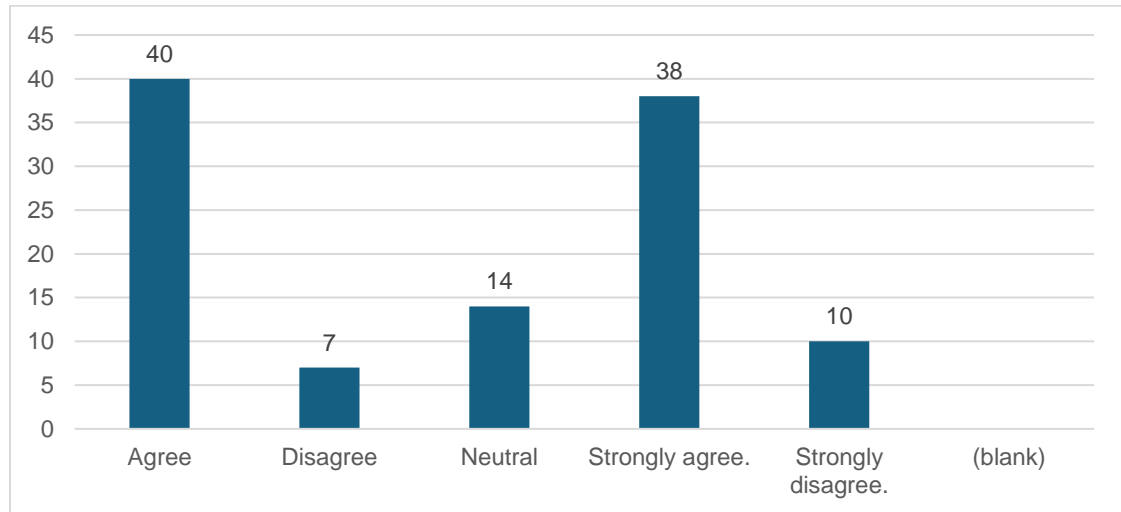
- Analysis shows that 37.1% occasionally participate, 21% rarely, 10% frequently, 1.3% always, and 7.5% never engage in discussions on social media. This reflects varied levels of engagement influenced by individual preferences and habits.

**Figure 4: Frequency of use of social media to share and create content.**



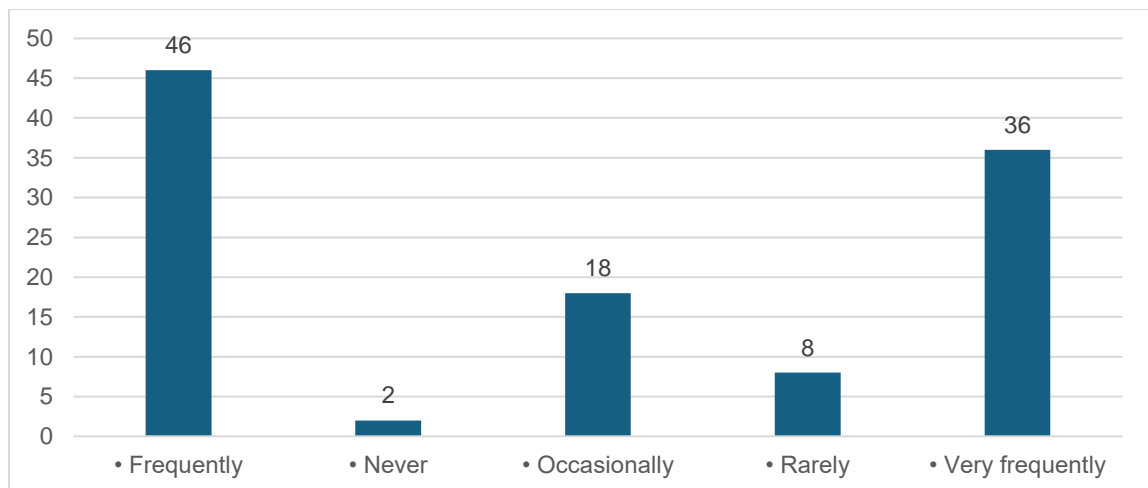
- The analysis reveals that 40% engage frequently, 30% rarely, 25% occasionally, 10% always, and 5% never engage in content creation and sharing on social media. This showcases diverse motivations and engagement levels among respondents.

**Figure 5: Acceptance whether social media has changed the way of communication.**



- In the analysis, 40% agree, 38% strongly agree, 7% disagree, 10% strongly disagree, and 14% remain neutral on social media's impact on their communication habits. This reflects varied perspectives influenced by factors like age and cultural background.

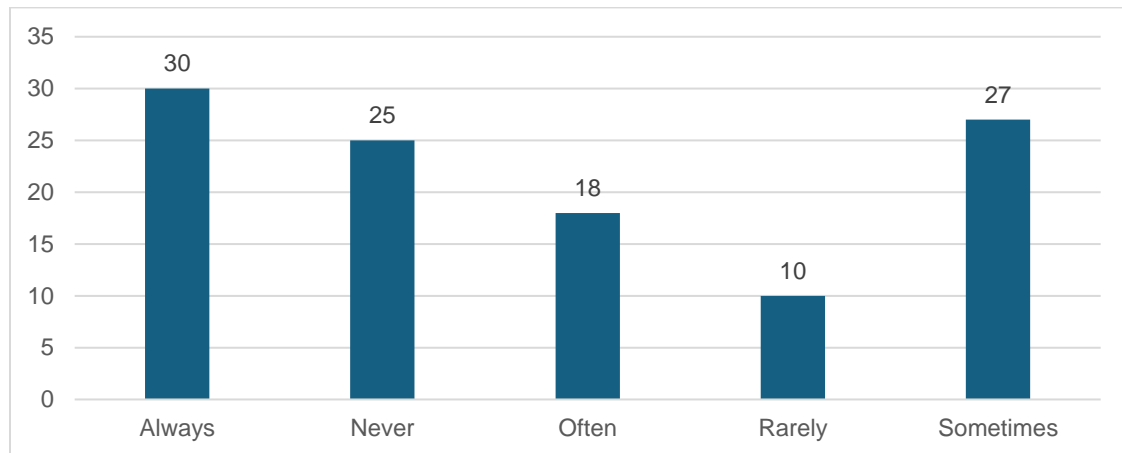
**Figure 6: Usage of Instagram for communication.**





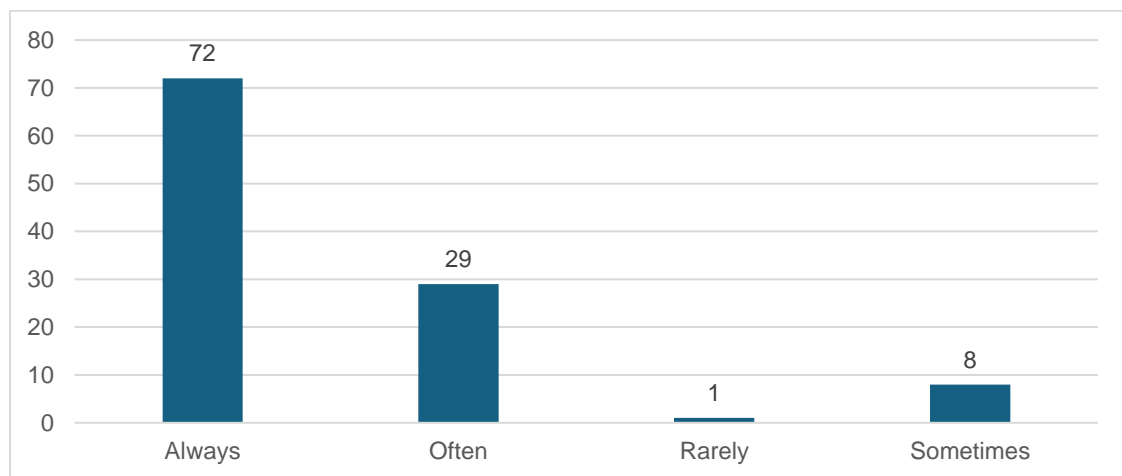
- The preceding Figure shows that, 46% use Instagram frequently, 36% very frequently, 8% rarely, 18% occasionally, and 2% never for communication with friends and family. This underscore varied usage patterns influenced by individual preferences and habits.

**Figure 7: Usage of Snapchat for video chatting.**



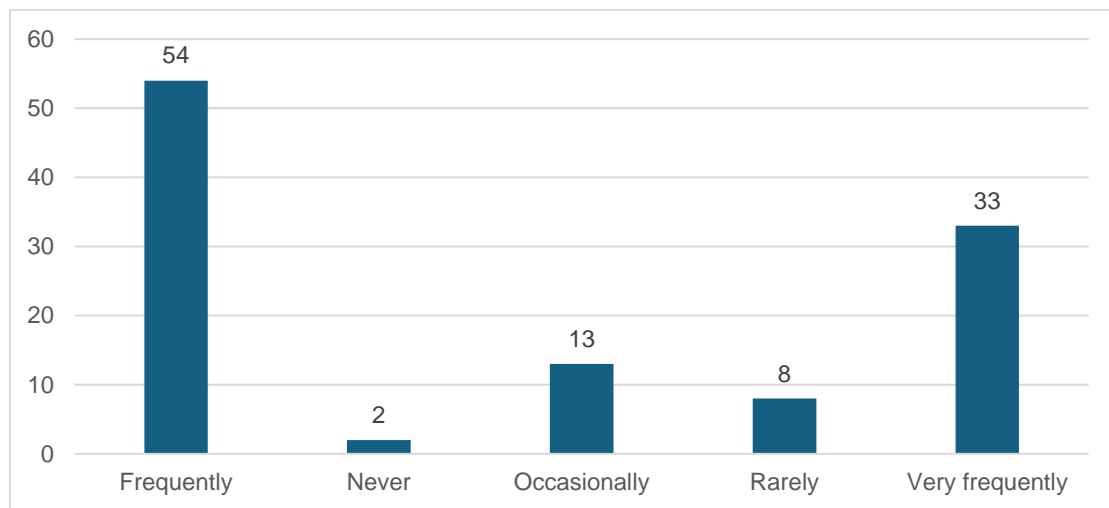
- In the analysis, 30% always use Snapchat for video chatting, 25% have never used it for this purpose, 18% use it often, 27% use it sometimes, and 10% use it rarely. This indicates varied attitudes and behaviors influenced by individual preferences.

**Figure 8: Usage of WhatsApp for communication.**



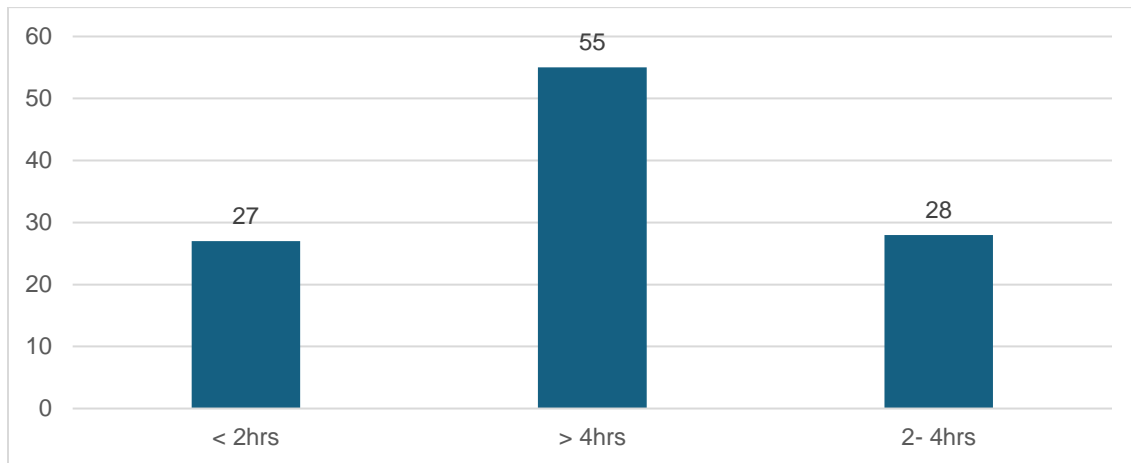
- The analysis shows, 72% always use WhatsApp or other messaging apps for group chats, 29% often, 8% sometimes, and 1% rarely. This showcases widespread acceptance and usage of group chats, with varying frequency levels.

**Figure 9: Usage of YouTube for watching videos and live streaming.**



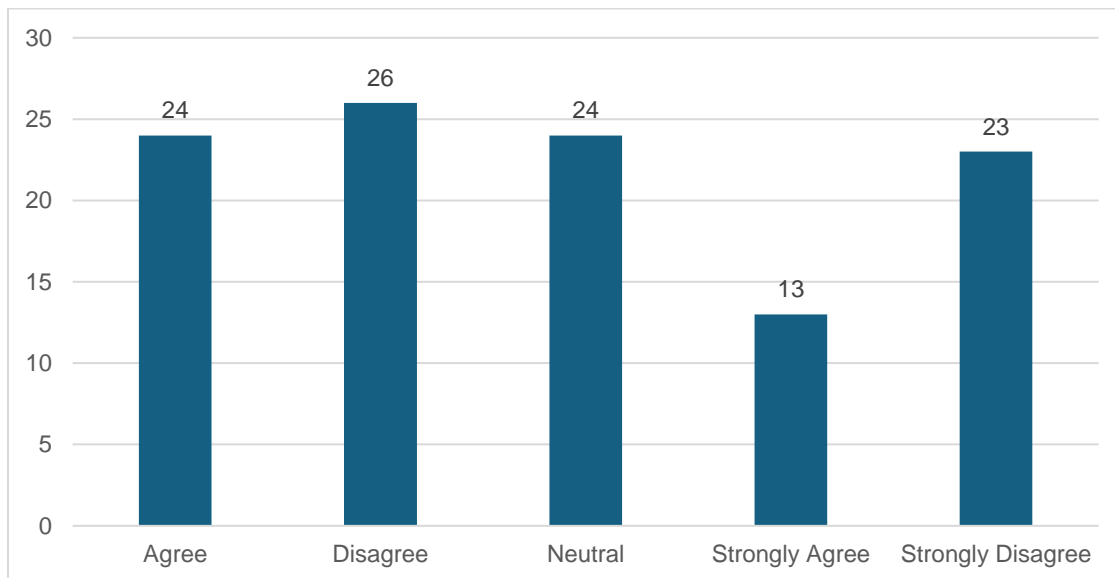
- In the analysis, 54% frequently use YouTube, 33% very frequently, 8% rarely, 13% occasionally, and 2% never for watching videos or live streaming with friends or family. This illustrates varied engagement influenced by individual preferences.

**Figure 10: Average screen time on Digital Devices**



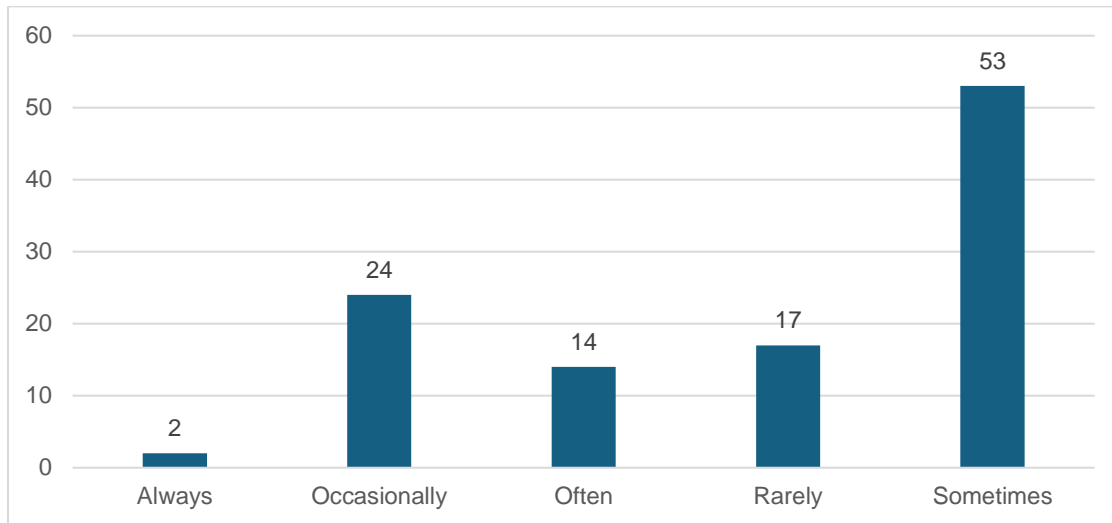
- In the analysis, 55% spend more than 4 hours, 28% spend 2 to 4 hours, and 27% spend less than 2 hours daily on digital devices. This showcases varied screen time habits influenced by individual preferences and lifestyle factors.

**Figure 11: Digital communication enhances face-to face interaction.**



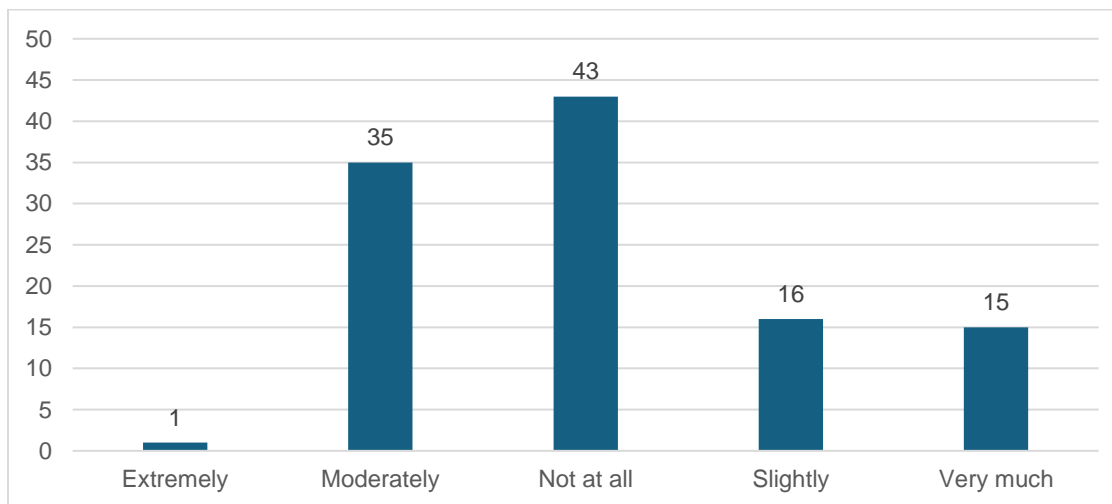
- In the analysis, 24% agree, 26% disagree, and 24% remain neutral on whether digital communication enhances face-to-face interactions. Additionally, 13% strongly agree, while 23% strongly disagree, indicating varied perspectives among respondents.

**Figure 12: Do Digital communication impacts the quality of relationship in positive way.**



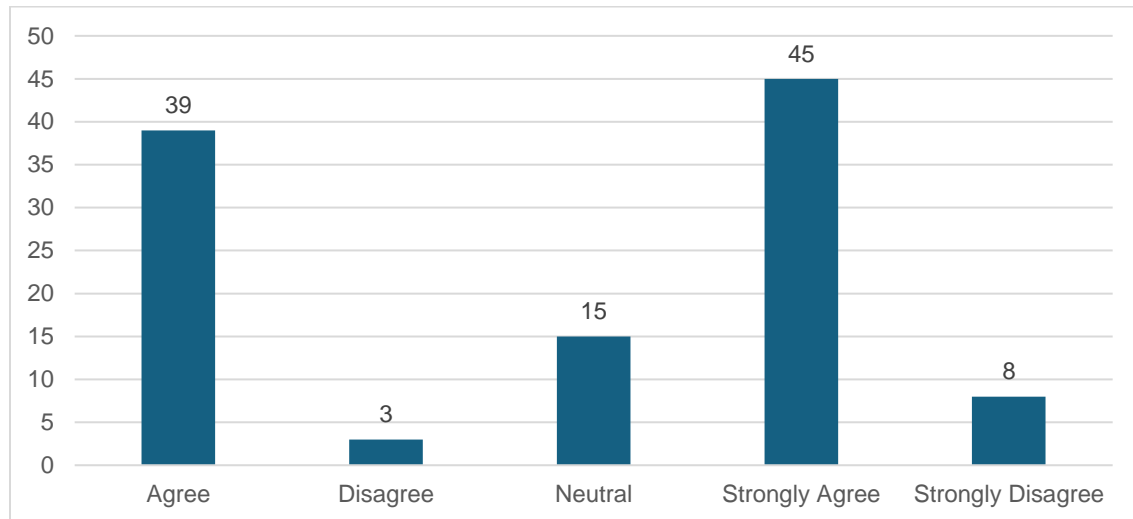
- In the analysis, 53% believe digital communication sometimes positively impacts friendships, 24% occasionally, 14% often, 17% rarely, and 2% always. This shows varied perceptions on the effects of digital interactions on social connections.

**Figure 13: Digital Engagement create influence in building community Relationships.**



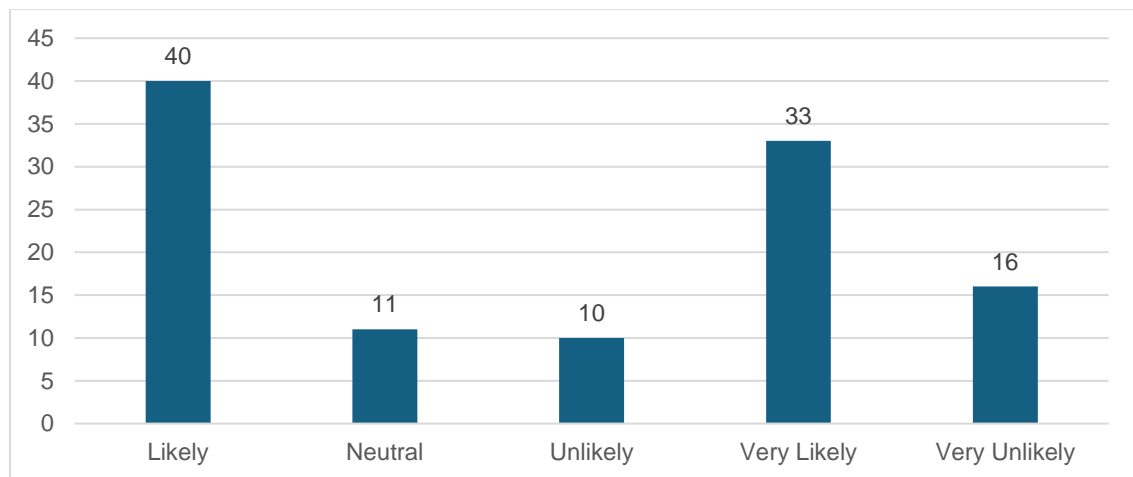
- In the analysis, 43% feel digital engagement has no significant influence, 35% perceive a moderate influence, 15% believe it very much influences, and 16% think it slightly influences community relationships. This illustrates varied attitudes towards digital engagement's impact.

**Figure 14: Role of face-to-face communication in building better relations in comparison to Digital Engagement.**



- In the analysis, 45% strongly agree, 39% agree, 3% disagree, 15% are neutral, and 8% strongly disagree that face-to-face communication is more crucial than digital interactions for fostering deep friendships, indicating varied but largely supportive views.

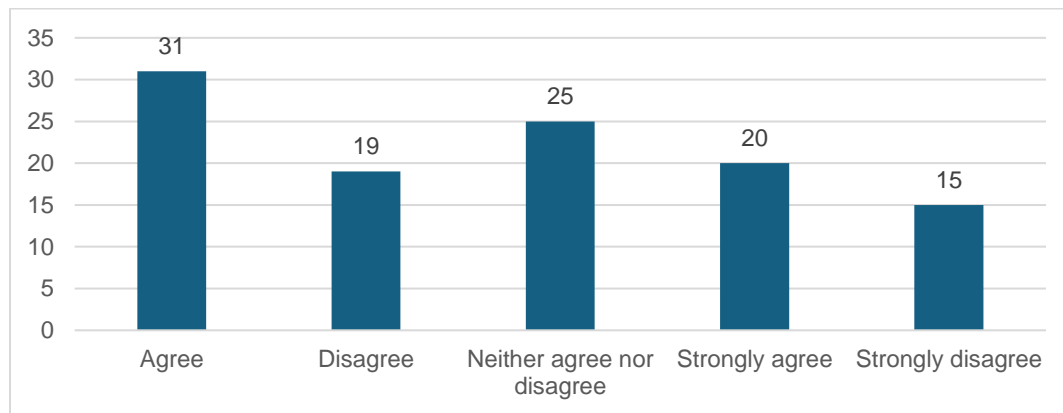
**Figure 15: Prioritizing Face-to-Face Interactions Over Digital Communication for Stronger Relationships.**



- Analyzing responses shows 40% likely, 33% very likely, 11% neutral, 10% unlikely, and 16% very unlikely to prioritize face-to-face interactions over digital communication for strengthening

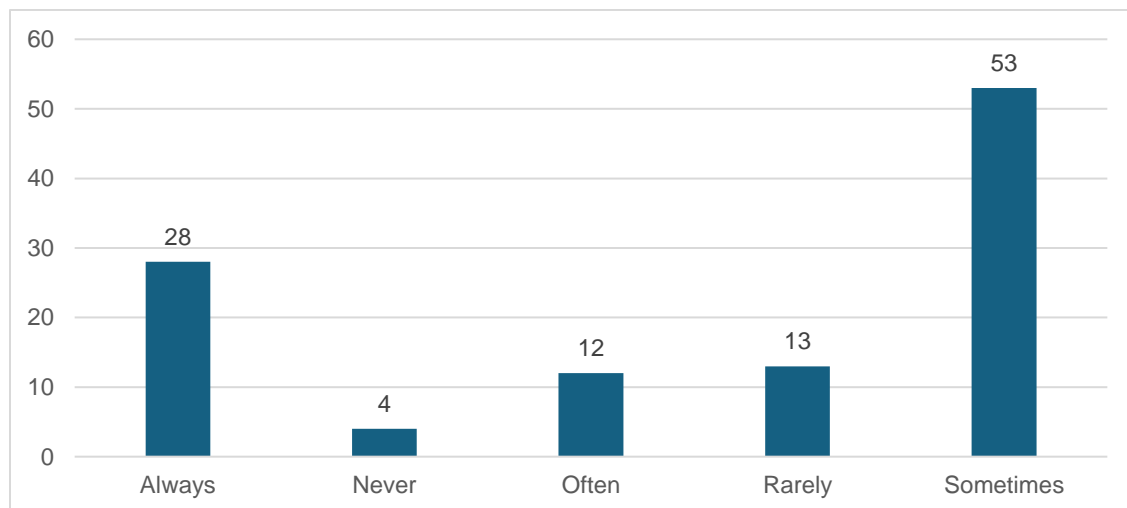
relationships, highlighting diverse preferences and circumstances in relationship-building approaches.

**Figure 16: Digital Engagement and Social Alienation: Assessing Agreement Among Respondents.**



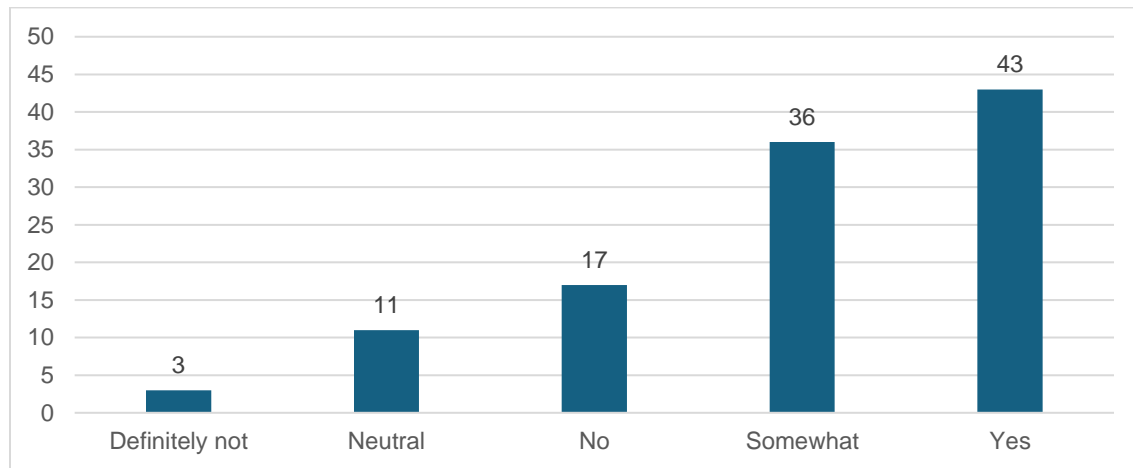
- Analyzing responses shows 31% agree, 20% strongly agree, 25% neither agree nor disagree, 19% disagree, and 15% strongly disagree that digital engagement leads to social alienation, reflecting varied perspectives on its impact on social connectedness.

**Figure 17: Frequency of Feeling Disconnected Due to Excessive Digital Engagement.**



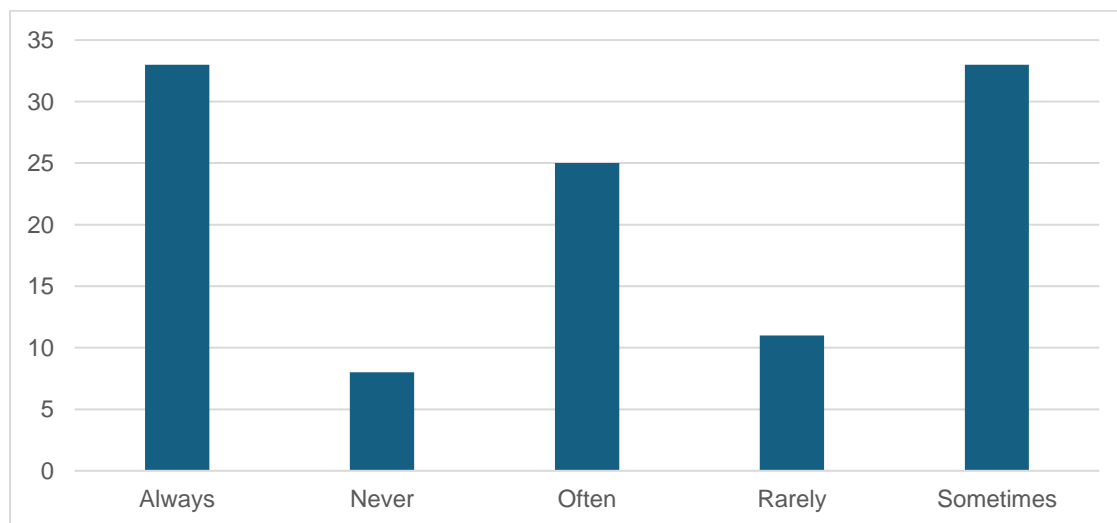
- Analyzing responses shows 53% sometimes, 28% always, 10% often, 5% rarely, and 4% never feel disconnected due to excessive digital engagement, highlighting the complex and varied impact of digital technology on social connectedness.

**Figure 18: Has Digital Engagement Replaced Face-to-Face Interactions in Your Life.**



- 43% agree digital engagement replaced face-to-face interactions, 36% find it somewhat replaced, 17% firmly disagree, 3% deny replacement, and 11% are neutral. The data reflects varied perspectives on societal shifts.

**Figure 19: Impact of digital engagement on personal relationships: frequency assessment.**



- 33% report "Always" or "Sometimes" negative impact, 27% experience "Often" or "Rarely," and 8% claim "Never." The data reflects varied effects of digital engagement on personal relationships.

#### 4.1. RESULTS

- **Frequency of Discussing Feelings on Social Media Platforms:** A substantial portion of respondents (41) reported frequent engagement in discussions about feelings on social media, indicating regular and active participation. Additionally, 42 respondents reported discussing their feelings occasionally, suggesting common but not constant involvement. Conversely, a smaller yet noFigure group of 16 respondents engaged rarely in such discussions, indicating a preference for limited emotional expression online. Interestingly, only 8 respondents claimed to always discuss their feelings on social media, indicating a minority with a consistent and open approach to emotional sharing.
- **Importance of Viewing and Liking Messages on Social Networking Sites (SNSs):** Most respondents (51) considered viewing and liking messages on SNSs moderately important, suggesting a balanced significance placed on this activity. Conversely, a significant portion (30) regarded it as slightly important, indicating a less pressing priority. Notably, a smaller yet noFigure group of 16 respondents deemed it very important, signifying a high value placed on this engagement. However, a minority of 13 respondents found it not important, indicating a divergence in priorities compared to the majority.
- **Frequency of Participation in Discussions on Social Media Platforms:** Most respondents (52) reported participating in discussions occasionally, indicating a common but not constant involvement. Additionally, a significant portion (31) participated rarely, suggesting a tendency to limit engagement in such interactions. Conversely, a smaller yet noFigure group (14) engaged frequently, indicating a more regular involvement in discussions. Interestingly, a minority claimed to always (2) or never (11) participate, suggesting contrasting patterns of engagement among respondents.
- **Frequency of Creating and Sharing Content on Social Media Platforms:** Most respondents (40) reported frequently engaging in content creation and sharing, indicating a regular habit. Additionally, a significant portion (30) participated rarely, suggesting less frequent but



occasional involvement. Conversely, a smaller yet noFigure group (25) participated occasionally, indicating periodic but not consistent content generation. Interestingly, a minority (10) claimed to always create and share content, indicating a consistent and active role, while a small group (5) never engaged in this activity.

- **Perceptions of the Impact of social media on Communication Habits:** A significant portion of respondents (51) acknowledged that social media has altered the foundation of their communication habits, with 38 strongly agreeing. Conversely, a minority (17) disagreed, indicating a contrasting view that social media has not fundamentally changed their communication dynamics. Additionally, a noFigure segment (14) remained neutral, possibly indicating uncertainty or ambivalence towards the statement. These results provide insight into the varied ways individuals engage with social media platforms for emotional expression, interaction, and communication, highlighting the diversity of preferences and behaviors among respondents.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The data provided encompasses various aspects of digital engagement and its impact on interpersonal relationships, communication patterns, and social dynamics. Here's a summary of the key findings:

- ***Online Communication Patterns among Youth in India:*** The data suggests that youth in India engage in diverse patterns of online communication, including discussing feelings, viewing and liking messages on social networking sites (SNSs), and participating in discussions on social media platforms. A substantial portion of respondents frequently or occasionally engage in discussing feelings online, indicating a common but not constant involvement in emotional conversations on social media. Views on the importance of viewing and liking messages on SNSs vary, with the majority considering it moderately important, while others see it as slightly or very important. Participation in discussions on social media platforms varies among respondents, with the majority participating occasionally, while others engage frequently, rarely, or never.
- ***Digital Engagement's Influence on Relationships:*** The data reveals diverse perspectives on the influence of digital engagement on face-to-face interactions, friendships, and community relationships. While some respondents believe that digital communication enhances face-to-face interactions and friendships, others perceive it as potentially detrimental or having no significant

impact. There's a consensus among respondents that face-to-face communication plays a crucial role in fostering deep and meaningful friendships compared to digital interactions. Despite the prevalence of digital communication, many respondents prioritize face-to-face interactions over digital communication when it comes to strengthening relationships with friends, family, and community members.

- **Digital Engagement and Social Alienation:** Views on the relationship between digital engagement and social alienation vary among respondents, with some agreeing or strongly agreeing that excessive digital engagement leads to social alienation, while others disagree or remain neutral. There's a recognition among some respondents that digital engagement can lead to feelings of isolation and detachment from others, although opinions on this matter are divided.
- **Common Applications Used by Youth for Online Communication:** Instagram emerges as a popular platform for communication with friends and family, with most respondents using it frequently or very frequently. Snapchat is commonly used for video chatting, with a significant portion of respondents either using it frequently, occasionally, or sometimes for this purpose. WhatsApp or other messaging apps are widely used for group chats, with a significant majority of respondents engaging in this activity always or very frequently.
- **Screen Time Habits:** Most respondents spend more than 4 hours on digital devices daily, indicating a high level of screen time among the sample. However, there's also a significant portion of respondents who spend 2 to 4 hours or less than 2 hours on digital devices daily, reflecting varying levels of screen time habits among individuals. Overall, the data highlights the complex and nuanced relationship between digital engagement and interpersonal relationships. While digital communication offers convenience and connectivity, it also raises concerns about its impact on face-to-face interactions, social dynamics, and feelings of social alienation. The findings underscore the importance of understanding individual preferences, habits, and attitudes towards digital engagement to promote healthy and meaningful relationships in the digital age.

### 5.1 Implications and Significance of the Findings

The implications and significance of the findings from the data on digital engagement, social interactions, and communication habits among youth are multifaceted and offer valuable insights into

the evolving landscape of social interaction in the digital age. Digital engagement impacts relationships variably, enhancing or hindering connections based on individual usage patterns and existing offline relationship quality.

- Data reveals nuanced effects of digital engagement on relationships: some experience frequent negatives, others minimal impact, reflecting varied usage and offline relationships' quality.
- Data shows diverse attitudes toward emotional expression on social media: some openly share feelings, others limit or rarely engage, informing mental health interventions.
- Data shows varied views on digital communication's impact on face-to-face interactions: enhancing for some, detrimental for others, emphasizing complexity and balance.
- Data indicates a preference for face-to-face interactions over digital for relationship building, emphasizing the enduring value of in-person connections.
- Data reveals differing views on digital engagement's impact on community relationships, emphasizing complexity and the need for nuanced understanding and action.

## 5.2 Limitations of the Study

While the data provides valuable insights into digital engagement and social interaction among youth, it's important to acknowledge several limitations that may impact the interpretation and generalization of the findings:

- Sampling bias may occur if respondents aren't representative of India's youth population, potentially skewing findings, especially across diverse demographics.
- Self-report bias in data stems from respondents' tendency to provide socially desirable or inaccurate information, impacting behavioral representation.
- Data's subjective measures of digital engagement, social interaction, and tech attitudes may lead to variability and inaccuracies due to individual perceptions.
- Study's limited variables might exclude crucial influences like personality traits, family dynamics, and peer influences, impacting digital engagement understanding.
- Respondents' inclination or strong opinions on digital engagement may cause response bias, potentially skewing results towards over/underrepresentation of perspectives.
- Survey design, including question wording and response options, can introduce bias or ambiguity, affecting data reliability. Attention to design principles is crucial for valid findings.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the landscape of digital interaction among youth is multifaceted, showcasing diverse patterns and impacts across different platforms and individuals. While some experience frequent engagement and negative effects on relationships, others report minimal impact. Social media platforms serve as arenas for emotional expression, with varying degrees of openness among users. The importance attributed to digital interactions varies, reflecting subjective perspectives. Attitudes towards digital communication's impact on offline connections range from enhancing to potentially detrimental. Despite the prevalence of digital communication, there remains a strong preference for face-to-face interaction in building and maintaining relationships. The influence of digital engagement on community relationships is perceived differently, illustrating the complex dynamics at play. Understanding these nuances is crucial for navigating the evolving digital landscape and fostering meaningful connections both online and offline.

### 6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Track digital engagement patterns over time to understand their long-term impact on relationships and well-being.
- Use interviews and focus groups alongside quantitative data to delve into individuals' experiences and attitudes toward digital interaction.
- Examine cultural variations in digital engagement to uncover how culture influences communication and relationships.
- Develop and assess interventions to foster healthy digital behaviors and meaningful connections among young people.
- Investigate how VR and AR technologies affect social interactions, considering both their advantages and challenges.