

Analyzing the Impact of Digital Transformation on Human Behavior and Social Structures in Contemporary Societies

Dr. Arasuraja Ganesan ^{a*}, Dr. Vijayakanthan Selvaraj ^b, Dr.N. Arunfred ^c,
Dr.G.H. Kerinab Beenu ^d

^{a*} Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, St. Joseph's College of Engineering, OMR, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: arasuraja.mba@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6137-1911>

^b Assistant Professor (Senior Grade), Faculty of Management, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Vadapalani, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: svijayakanthan76@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5662-1928>

^c Assistant Professor, Faculty of Management, SRM institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: arunfren@srmist.edu.in, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5745-6779>

^d Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Jerusalem College of Engineering, Pallikaranai, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: beenustanley2008@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5759-0089>

Abstract

The emergence of digital technologies, such as social media and artificial intelligence, has led to behavioral and structural changes across society. This study examines the reach these changes have as they influence behavior and the social structures they encompass. The study uses a survey (420 participants) as a quantitative tool and semi-structured interviews (n = 25) as a qualitative research tool to collect data. According to the survey's quantitative data, 68.3% of respondents reported being more dependent on digital technologies for social interactions. 57.6% reported a measurable decline in social interactions. Digital technologies influenced 72.1% of respondents to use digital technologies to make decisions in social and work contexts. Through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, interview participants described various phenomena, including a relatively short attention span (increased digital virtual socialization and decreased social networks). At the structural level, a 41.8% shift in social networks among work and school members was viewed as a positive by respondents, driven by the growing use of digital technologies in both settings. Digital inequalities (reported by 29.4% respondents), combined with data privacy and social isolation, are viewed as the most critical challenges that digital integration and transformation have posed on society. The survey respondents uniformly claimed that the transformation they have experienced in social networks and structures has been strong. The survey respondents claimed that society has experienced negative effects, and many societal changes have been digitally positive. The need for balanced digital strategies and digital use has been highlighted.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Human Behavior, Social Structures, Online Interaction, Digital Society, Behavioral Change, Technological Impact.

Introduction

Today, digital transformation is pervasive across all constituent elements of the globe. It has influenced the ways people connect, communicate, and socialize. The proliferation of digital solutions, such as artificial intelligence and data-driven processes, has had disruptive effects on how people go about their daily lives. The pervasive integration of such solutions across several socio-economic activities continues to shape the engagement and interactions among groups of people (Yeasmin, 2024; Van Veldhoven & Vanthienen, 2022). It has recently been observed that the digital transformation phenomenon is strongly rooted in interactivity, whereby the confluence and coalescence of social and technological systems foster the evolution of social paradigms (Yoo & Yi, 2022; Tana et al., 2023). Additionally, morphing digital landscapes has driven the evolution of social interactions and identification, especially within the wallets of digital communities and social networks (Petrakova et al., 2022; Hanandini, 2024).

Although considerable literature is dedicated to the study of digital technologies, how digital transformation simultaneously impacts the social environment and human behavior remains poorly described. The pertinent scholarship is characterized by a predominant focus on either technological progress or social change, rather than on connecting the two (Nadoleanu et al., 2022; Molodetska, 2024). The exploration of the impacts of changes in behavioral customs, such as shifts in communication, attention, and decision-making, within society and during social transformation remains underappreciated. In addition to the aforementioned issues, social sustainability, digital inequity, and ethics of the digital space have become growing areas of concern that demand more attention (Qadri et al., 2025; Omol, 2024).

This research aims to explore the socio-behavioral implications of the digital transformation of human behavior and social systems. In particular, the study intends to: (i) identify the major behavioral changes regarding digital technology use, (ii) examine the transformation of social relations and interactions, and (iii) analyze the effects on social and organizational structures.

The study is relevant because it touches on the intersection of digital transformation and social dynamics, in a time when human experience is rooted in technology. The research examines the behavioral and structural aspects of that and provides better understanding to the focus of the study which is on how societies are adjusted to and transformed by digital systems. This study looks to offer a socio-behavioral perspective to digital transformation and social dynamics. The study will relate the individual behavioral aspects to the big picture social dynamics. The study will help offer the missing pieces to the studies that already exist and aid in the evaluation and ideas that are circling the digital domain, balance, and the changes to the structures.

The rest of this paper will be organized in the following structure. First, in Section II, a thorough outline of the literature on digital transformation and its association with human activities and social systems is presented. Section III explains the design, data, and analytics of a research methodology. Section IV summarizes the key empirical changes to social, institutional, and lifetime behaviors. Then, Section V contextualizes the changes on a large social scale and the implications on research. Finally, Section VI offers a brief summary of the findings, the paper's contributions, and the potential for additional research to be done.

Literature Review

Social scientists have looked at technology's impact from several approaches. Technological determinism focuses on the idea that technology is the primary or only cause of systemic changes in society and people. Social constructivism, on the other hand, recognizes people's interpretation and usage of technology will vary based on the culture or society in which they are located. More current thought such as network society places focusses on the many dimensions of technology which forms a network of linked, and often digital, systems, and how these systems are used for decentralized social formal and informal systems (Kraus et al., 2021; Vial, 2021). Many of these theorists maintain that digital transformation is more about an intersection of technology, people, and social realities, and a socio-technical system that connects people, social systems, and digital systems (Hanelt et al., 2021; Paul et al., 2024). Finally, many theorists argue that leadership and the ability of an organization to change are more important factors filtering the impact of digital disruption on society as a whole (Philip, 2021; Imran et al., 2021).

There is an increasing volume of research on how digital settings shape behavior and forms of interaction. Scholarly works suggest that digital platforms are redefining forms of communication and the structure of attention and the presence of engagement with the content and the audience (Kraus et al., 2021; Paul et al., 2024). The continuous development of the digital sphere has created the digital self, an entity that an individual develops and transforms a social representation that may or may not be personal, social, or private in nature. The continuous development of the

digital sphere has created the digital self, an entity that an individual develops and transforms to fit a representation that may or may not be personal, social, or private in nature. Digital transformation is an enabler of new ways of participation and collaboration; however, it is a cause of the demise of face-to-face interaction and the quality of social relations (Vial, 2021; Agustian et al., 2023). The development and application of digital technologies in education have the dual purpose of improving the behavior and structure of access and participation to learning, but also, and to a greater extent, it is a challenge to the outdated and traditional forms and structures of pedagogy (Dąbrowska et al., 2022; Kaputa et al., 2022).

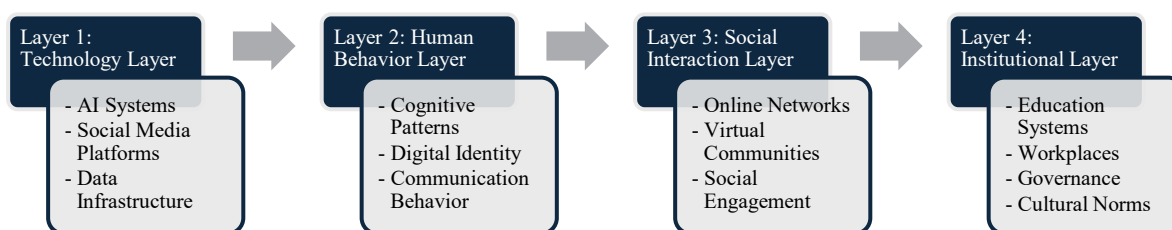


Fig. 1: Architecture of Digital Transformation and Societal Interaction Model

In fig. 1 presents a quasi-three-dimensional model depicting the effect of digital technology on human behavior, interaction, and institutional arrangements. It focuses on the impact of technological systems and the resultant behavioral changes on how individuals and groups socially interact, changing education, the workplace, administration, and social and cultural practices.

Digital transformation impacts individuals and institutions on a social scale. Researchers identify many changes in family communication and social connectivity via digital structures. Education institutions are also innovating in digitally constructed learning communication; however, this creates a gap between people and the system in terms of access and learning digital communication (Akour & Alenezi, 2022; Kaputa et al., 2022). The digitally built governance system provides more openness in communication and transparency of governance systems and the involvement of people in the governance system, but the concerns about the governance system and the ethics of the system remain. All of these systems see changes in the digital transformation of economic structures, which encourage a blurring of work practices and a dissolution of the politics and practices of an organization (Imran et al., 2021; Agustian et al., 2023). All of these changes collectively demonstrate that the basic structures of modern society, to which all digital technologies form a fundamental part, are also changing.

Digital transformation is a multi-faceted phenomenon and impacts individual behavior and a macro-level social system. This aspect of modern research focuses on the communication, educational and organizational shifts. This research will focus on integrating behavioral and social systems together so that gaps in these systems can be addressed.

Methodology

Research Design and Approach

Researchers used qualitative and quantitative data to examine how social and behavioral dynamics change due to digital transformation. The research questions that can be answered have measurable similarities that derive from engagement, digital behavior, and usage. To conceptualize those experiences through engagement, social interaction, and behavioral change, qualitative data is needed. Situations that extend beyond the scope of quantifiable data also require a qualitative assessment. The research takes a convergent parallel approach, where behavioral tendencies and the balance of social behavioral structures are examined in the context of today's world.

Data Collection Methods

A combination of empirical surveys, flexible interviews, and pre-existing data were the main sources of data collection. The empirical survey was designed to be representative of the audience to capture various categories of age and various professions. The interviews were flexible to facilitate deeper exploration of the audience's thoughts and experiences

as related to the study on the digital engagement of the audience, the new identity being constructed, and the impact of the digital divide on social cohesion. The first drafts created their own sets of contexts, but were then employed in conjunction with the digital usage data and statistics that are already available to the public.

Table 1: Data Collection Overview

Method	Sample Size	Purpose
Survey	420	Measure behavioral trends and digital usage
Interviews	25	Explore in-depth social experiences
Secondary Data	Multiple sources	Validate and contextualize findings

In table 1 shows the types of primary data that were justified in this research, including the surveys and interviews, as well as the provided secondary data, and it lists the size of each sample. This table is designed to be read in conjunction with the flexible empirical studies unit that will be undertaken to provide qualitative behavior, as well as the quantitative behavioral trends to broaden the impacts of digital transformation.

Analytical Framework and Tools

Both quantitative and qualitative research components were considered for a more thorough analysis of the study's outcomes. Quantitative data were used in descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to discern the impact of behavioral shifts in the context of changing technological use. The qualitative data were used in the thematic content analysis of the interviews. Alongside the other themes, the analysis of digital dependency, digital identity, and digital interaction was included. In order to compare the behavioral impact of the changes in participant digital education, the digital workforce, and participatory online communities, a framework of comparative analysis was created. Finally, to find consistency, the integrated two data sets provided deepen understanding and analysis of the digital transformation and its impact and scope across the micro and macro layers.

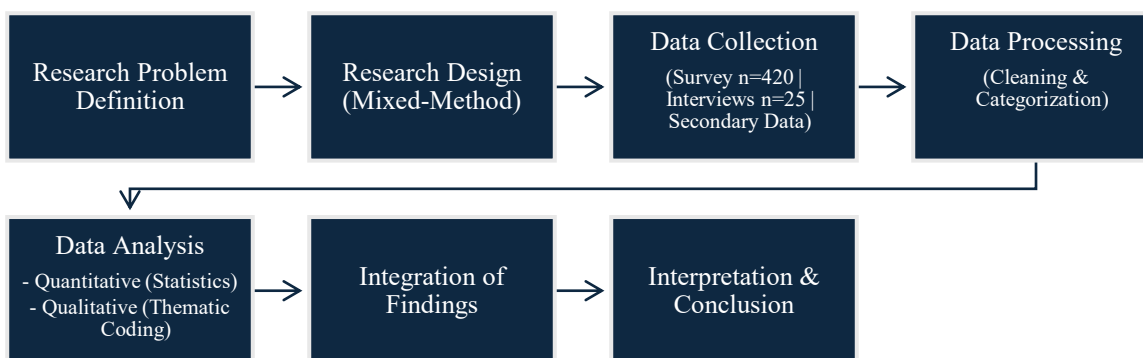


Fig. 2: Research Methodology Workflow for Digital Transformation Study

In fig. 2 details the stepwise research methodology for the study, illustrating how the problems are defined and how the research design is constructed within the context of mixed methods, how data is both collected, and subsequently processed and analyzed for quantitative and qualitative data. The figure also describes the findings convergence, the last step of the methodology, and the conclusion. This provides the reader insight into the systematic design of the study.

Table 2: Analytical Techniques and Tools

Analysis Type	Technique Used	Purpose
Quantitative	Descriptive & Correlation	Identify trends and relationships
Qualitative	Thematic Coding	Extract patterns and social meanings
Comparative	Cross-sectional Analysis	Link behavior with social structures

This table 2 presents the main analytical techniques, including descriptive, correlation, thematic, and comparative analysis, that are employed in the research. It indicates the elements of digital transformation they pertain to and describe how they associate various behavioral changes to both structural and institutional transformations.

Results

Behavioral Changes in the Digital Era

The findings reveal significant behavioral adjustments stemming from the evolution of digital engagement. Among 420 survey participants, 68.3% claimed reliance on digital platforms for communication, information gathering, and decision-making. Additionally, 57.6% of respondents reported a reduced offline attention span, attributed to continuous digital distractions and engaging in multiple activities. The study showed that 72.1% of participants said that digital outlets have an influence on the decisions they make regarding social contact, the news they consume, and their everyday activities. Interview participants highlighted the shift caused by digital technologies to the need for instant fulfillment, and the decline of sustained concentration, showing that digital technologies have fundamentally altered how one thinks.

Changes to Social Relationships

Interpersonal connections and social interactions have been altered by the digital revolution. Approximately 61.4% of respondents said they communicate more through online platforms than in face-to-face conversations, suggesting they favor online relations over offline ones. While 54.8% of respondents think online relations mean more and are more convenient, 38.2% think the relations that have been created through online platforms have led to emotional distance and have lessened the ties that exist. According to the interviews, an expansive online social communication reduces the depth and quality of social interactions, or interpersonal relations. Moreover, 47.6% of respondents showed that they have new ways to participate in relationship-building through online social groups or communities. From the findings of the survey, the relationship created through digital social technologies reduces social ties, and alters the traditional concept of intimacy, and social cohesion.

Table 3: Social Interaction Changes Under Digital Transformation

Indicator	Percentage (%)
Increased virtual communication	61.4
Improved accessibility of interaction	54.8
Perceived emotional detachment	38.2
Participation in online communities	47.6

In table 3 shows the major results from analysis of changes in social interaction patterns in relation to the shift to more virtual interactions, more complex relations, and higher engagement in online communities. These results summarize the changes in the ways people connect with each other in virtual spaces.

Changes in Digital Structures and Institutions

Reports of substantial changes occurring in the structures of education, work, and digital government, were noted in the study. 36.5% of respondents in the study noted that there were changes in the structures of education and learning, and the ability to work in a flexible environment using technology, but the challenges of engagement and the digital divide also became more apparent. Work structures were the only area that experienced the highest degree of change, as 41.8% noted changes in the structures of work from fully in-person to fully online. In the structures of governance and culture, respondents noted that 33.7% reported that there were changes in the structures of governance and culture so that there were more options to participate in civic activities, such as using social media, online policy forums, and digital activism. It did show the rise of fake news and the trust deficit in digital governance. Overall, the digital divide instead of impacting individual behavior, was indicative of major changes in social order and culture. Additionally, 29.4% of respondents reported concerns related to digital inequality, indicating uneven access and participation in digital systems.

Table 4: Institutional and Structural Effects of Digital Transformation

Institutional Domain	Reported Transformation (%)
Education Systems	36.5
Workplace Structures	41.8
Civic Participation	33.7
Cultural Norm Adaptation	29.9

In this table 4 shows the major changes to digital structures of governance and social order that impacted the structures of education, work, civic engagement, and social culture. It shows the changes in social structures that occur in response to the digital order social structures.

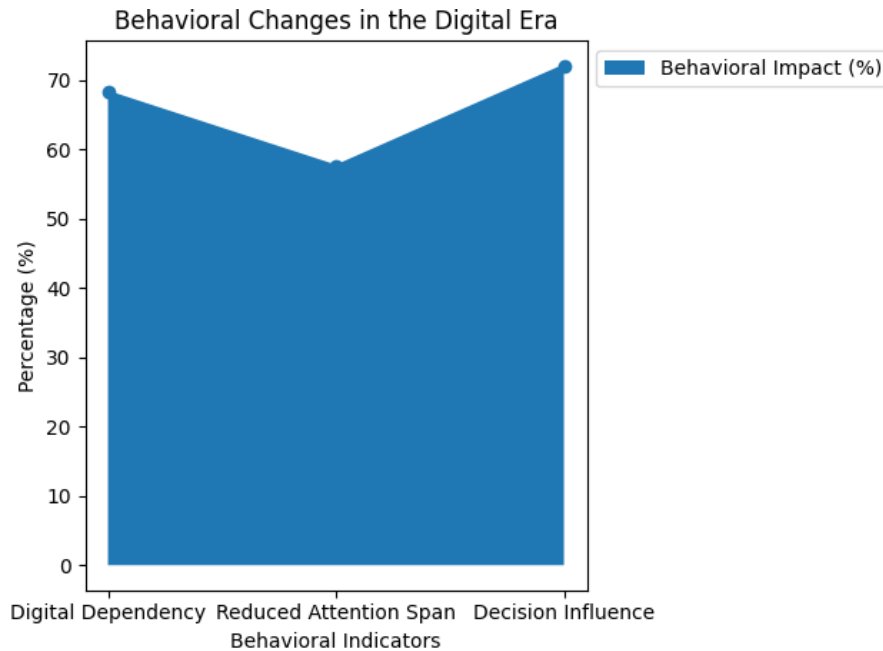


Fig. 3: Changes in Behavior in the Digital Age

In this fig. 3 shows how behaviors have changed in the context of digital transformation, including high levels of digital dependency, shorter attention spans, and relying on digital means for making decisions. The figure shows how the behavioral practices of individuals have changed because of digital technologies and how cognitive behaviors have been altered due to persistent interaction.

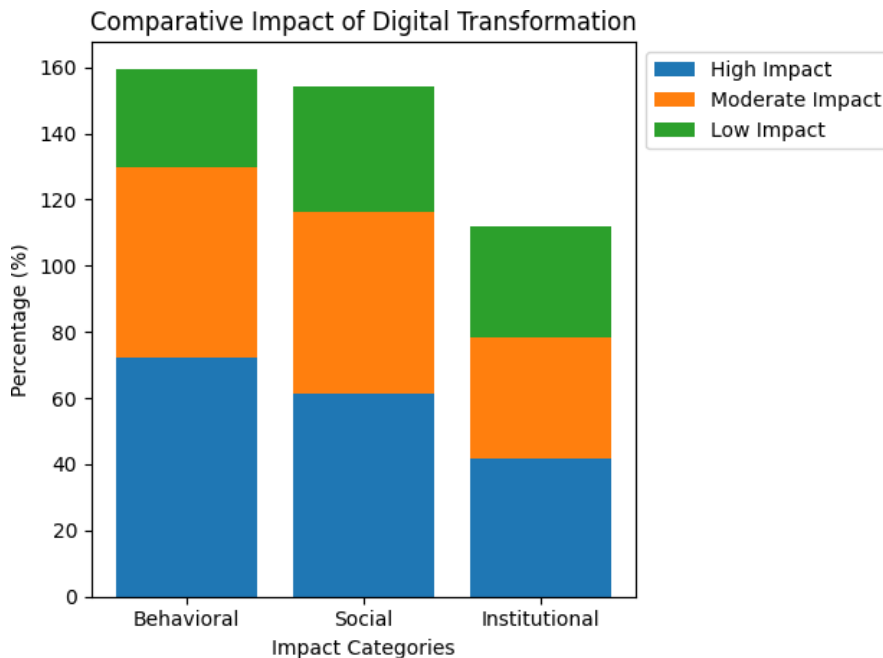


Fig. 4: Evolution of the Patterns of Social Interaction

In this fig. 4 shows how the dynamics of social relationships have changed, focusing on the development of virtual communication, greater accessibility and involvement in online communities, and the emotional distance even with digital interaction. The figure suggests the positive aspect of having more interaction digitally but the negative aspect of having a lack of depth in social relationships.

Discussion

Interpretation of Behavioral Impacts

The results suggest that Human cognition and influences of identity and decision making have greatly altered due to the effects of digital transformation. It appears that there is an increased digital dependency and decreased attention span. The results appear to be a reflection of cognitive engagement which is increasingly fragmented and is due to the propensity to oversample information. Reflective content decision making shows the greatest shift and increased dependence on digital support shifting to algorithmic support. The construction and negotiation of online self-image of digitally influenced identities falls between authentic self-expression and a reflection of the expectations of the online audience.

Societal Implications and Challenges

The effects of digital transformation have undoubtedly increased connection and access; however, it creates a significant number of negative effects. The consequences of inequity have an increased impact on the digital divide as it persists among the economically disadvantaged. The increased mistrust of individuals and inequitable digital systems results in greater private and surveillance of the data. The virtualization of relational/bonding social communities continues to be an increasing support structure for our socially isolated communities. The continued social positive integration of relational systems bonds.

Relation to Other Studies

The findings corroborate what is already stated in the literature regarding the wide-reaching effect of digital technologies on behaviors and the social order. Similar to what other studies have documented, the results document increased dependence and shifts in the social interactions brought about by the adoption of digital technologies. However, in comparison to prior studies, this study offers a unified account of behavioral change and institutional change. While other studies have largely analyzed the social behavioral change and the institutional change in silos, this study offers a diagnosis of the social behavioral change and the institutional change of the digital transformation of social order of the modern era on a grand scale.

Conclusion

The findings of the study show the digital transform cause changes across human behavior and social systems in the scale and extent that can be measured. In the study, findings show 68.3% of people have pronounced negative effects of digital dependency. Additionally, the digital usage causes 57.6% of people to become more forgetful and have a shorter attention span. This indicates that usage of digital technology changes people's cognitive engagement. 72.1% of people find that digital systems influence their behavior. The influence that digital systems have on behavior indicates that systems of digital technology and behavior most likely to change. 61.4% of respondents prefer the digital way of communicating. 38.2% of respondents, however, believe the change in the way of communicating has caused people to be more emotionally detached and indicates the change that has occurred in social structures. The digital transform has also caused the structure of social systems to change. 41.8% of respondents state that work environment structures have changed, and 36.5% state that methods of teaching have changed. This study also shows that fragmented analyses and studies of social systems have almost all neglected the change in human behavior and social systems interconnect for the advancement of social systems and researches. The digital transform gap that this study has mostly focused on indicates the advance and change social transform and systems. These findings show policymakers and social institutions how to combine the change of social systems caused by digital transform and the balance of social systems.

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