EXPLORING EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES INTO TECHNOLOGY–MEDIATED COMMUNICATION IN MULTINATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract

This master's thesis adopted a qualitative lens to research the experiences of young professionals in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent multinational organizations, exploring the influence of TMC on various aspects of communication dynamics and interpersonal relationships. Through in-depth interviews with individuals from diverse professional backgrounds, the research aimed to examine the perceptions of young professionals regarding the influence of TMC on workplace relationships and explore the intercultural communication challenges encountered.

The result reveals the multifaceted role of technology in facilitating effective communication within and beyond organizational boundaries. The findings emphasize the crucial role of technology as a connecting force, enabling seamless interactions in areas such as collaboration, data sharing, task allocation, and online transactions beyond geographical boundaries. However, TMC is reportedly limited in facilitating interpersonal bonds due to the absence of physical presence, and its inability to convey non-verbal cues like emotions and gestures thereby hindering the development of strong interpersonal relationships with a sense of commitment. Cultural identities are interwoven throughout the narrative, with politeness, respect, and courtesy emerging as crucial elements in effective communication. Users also adopt alternative tools like emojis to mimic emotional expressions and promote clarity when engaging in textual communication, especially with colleagues on similar hierarchy. The work emphasized necessity for cultural intelligence, due to the limitations of TMC in conveying critical elements of cross-cultural communication.

Generally, the participants expressed both positive and negative perceptions on the influence of TMC on communication and interpersonal relationships. This indicates the necessity for a dynamic and continually evolving approach, integrating the advances in various platforms to meet their needs for effective interpersonal interaction which can boost commitment and productivity at work.

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Tiivistelmä

Tässä maisterintutkielmassa tutkittiin laadullisella näkökulmalla nuorten ammattilaisten kokemuksia tietointensiivisissä ja teknologiasta riippuvaisissa monikansallisissa organisaatioissa ja selvitettiin TMC: n vaikutusta viestinnän dynamiikan ja ihmissuhteiden eri näkökohtiin. Erilaisia ammatillisia taustoja edustavien henkilöiden syvähaastattelujen avulla tutkimuksessa pyrittiin tarkastelemaan nuorten ammattilaisten käsityksiä TMC: n vaikutuksesta työpaikkasuhteisiin ja tutkimaan kohdattuja kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän haasteita.

Tulos paljastaa teknologian monitahoisen roolin tehokkaan viestinnän edistämisessä organisaatiorajojen sisällä ja niiden ulkopuolella. Tulokset korostavat teknologian ratkaisevaa roolia yhdistävänä voimana, joka mahdollistaa saumattoman vuorovaikutuksen esimerkiksi yhteistyön, tietojen jakamisen, tehtävien jakamisen ja verkkokaupan aloilla yli maantieteellisten rajojen. TMC: n on kuitenkin todettu olevan rajallinen väline ihmissuhteiden solmimisen helpottamisessa, koska fyysinen läsnäolo puuttuu ja koska se ei kykene välittämään sanattomia vihjeitä, kuten tunteita ja eleitä, mikä estää vahvojen ihmissuhteiden ja sitoutumisen tunteen kehittymisen. Kulttuuri-identiteetit kietoutuvat yhteen koko kertomuksen ajan, ja kohteliaisuus, kunnioitus ja kohteliaisuus nousevat esiin tehokkaan viestinnän keskeisinä tekijöinä. Käyttäjät käyttävät myös vaihtoehtoisia välineitä, kuten hymiöitä, jäljitelläkseen tunneilmaisuja ja edistääkseen selkeyttä tekstiviestinnässä, erityisesti samassa hierarkiassa olevien kollegojen kanssa. Työssä korostettiin kulttuurisen älykkyyden tarpeellisuutta, koska TMC: n rajoitukset kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän kriittisten elementtien välittämisessä ovat suuret.

Yleisesti ottaen osallistujat ilmaisivat sekä myönteisiä että kielteisiä käsityksiä TMC: n vaikutuksesta viestintään ja ihmissuhteisiin. Tämä osoittaa, että tarvitaan dynaamista ja jatkuvasti kehittyvää lähestymistapaa, jossa yhdistetään eri foorumeiden edistysaskeleet, jotta voidaan vastata heidän tarpeisiinsa tehokkaan ihmissuhdevuorovaikutuksen osalta, mikä voi lisätä sitoutumista ja tuottavuutta työssä.

Asiasanat: Teknologiavälitteinen viestintä, monikansallinen organisaatio, kulttuurienvälinen viestintä, kulttuurinen älykkyys, ihmissuhteet, digitaaliset viestintävälineet.

Säilytyspaikka: Jyväskylän yliopisto

Muita tietoja

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1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to examine the perceptions of young professionals engaged in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent professions regarding the influence of technology-mediated communication on their workplace relationship.

The scope of organizational communication is undergoing a profound transformation due to the emergence of new technologies and societal advancements (Chew et al., 2023). Over the past few decades, there has been a rapid integration of various technological tools within organizations to facilitate communication. Additionally, organizations are broadening their operational frameworks and horizons to leverage technology-driven platforms in connecting geographically dispersed workers. Notable examples include the utilization of global virtual teams (GVT) and the rise of remote work. In fact, some forward-thinking organizations have embraced the paradigm shift from on-premises to off-premises setups, leveraging global service cloud technologies to establish an entirely technology-driven work environment. Although managers appreciate this intriguing and innovative system for its perceived efficiency, it inherently brings forth the challenge of managing communication dynamics (Alnoor et al., 2022).

Technology permeates almost every aspect of human life, including communication. It has become an integral part of today's world, revolutionizing the way people interact, work, and communicate currently. Through technology, traditional communication methods are rapidly being replaced with various communication platforms, tools, and channels, offering multiple benefits such as accuracy, ease of use, speed, and increased productivity (Chew et al., 2023). Importantly, this evolutionary shift is driven by the strategic objective of establishing a more dynamic and resilient communication system capable of withstanding pandemics and other uncertainties that can impact organizational communication. Doubtlessly, the Covid pandemic further aggravated the evolution of global virtual teams, emphasizing the need to adapt technology-mediated systems for communication in organizations.

This challenge becomes even more critical in multinational organizations, where a highly dynamic workforce with diverse cultural identities and communication peculiarities interacts on a daily basis. Understandably, corporate environments operate within their unique corporate cultures, which are often shaped by the amalgamation of different cultures present in the workplace. Hence, comprehending and unravelling the impact of technology mediation in communication within such a dynamic work environment has become increasingly vital and cannot be underestimated.

Evidently, the increasing prevalence of technology-mediated communication (TMC) in multinational organizations has reformed how they connect with both internal and external stakeholders and collaborate across geographical boundaries. This study aims to explore how young professionals working in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent professions perceive the impact of technology-mediated

communication in their work. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how technology-mediated communication (TMC) is perceived to influence interactions in a multinational organization in the context of relational factors (cultural intelligence and netiquette) and communication dynamics (communication quality). By unravelling these connections, we can gain valuable insights and build a logical narrative on how TMC influence communication efficiency in a diverse organization.

1.2   Problem Statement

Contemporary organizational communication can be broadly categorized into three classes based on the communication medium. Face-to-face communication is the first, oldest and traditional form of communication. Some scholars have also considered it to be the "richest" form of communication as it conveys both verbal and nonverbal messages or linguistic and paralinguistic elements simultaneously (Daft & Lengel, 1986). As depicted in Figure 1, designed by the author, it entails in-person or physical interpersonal interaction between or among employees. The second category can best be described as integrated communication system, as it combines face-to-face communication with technology-mediated communication (Fleischmann et al., 2019). As demonstrated in Figure 2, it appears more efficient since it harnesses the advantages of both face-to-face and technology-mediated communication. Meanwhile, Figure 3 indicates the third category being technology-mediated communication which is the locus of this research. It stands as the most contemporary and extensively adopted

approach to communication across organizations, especially multinationals since the outbreak of covid 19 (van Zoonen et al., 2021). This style relies entirely on technology-mediated communication to convey messages in form of text, voice, visuals, or even a combination of all during interpersonal interactions. It traverses geographical limitations and has the potential of delivering messages instantly. However, it may be accompanied by various challenges, for example due to the difficulty in effectively conveying the paralinguistic features inherent in traditional communication systems within this medium.
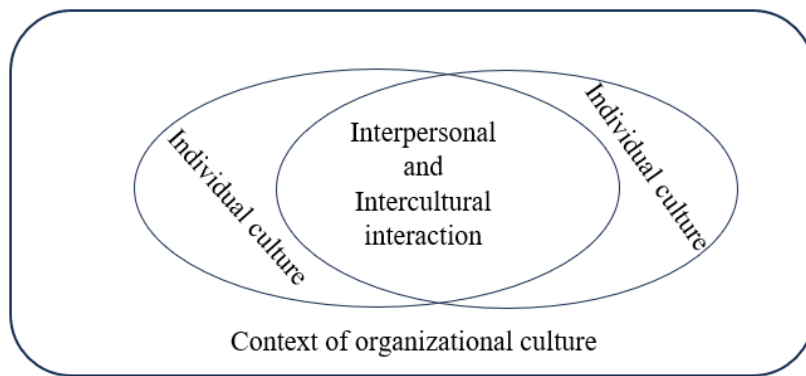
FIGURE 1   Face-to-face Communication in Multinational Organizational Settings
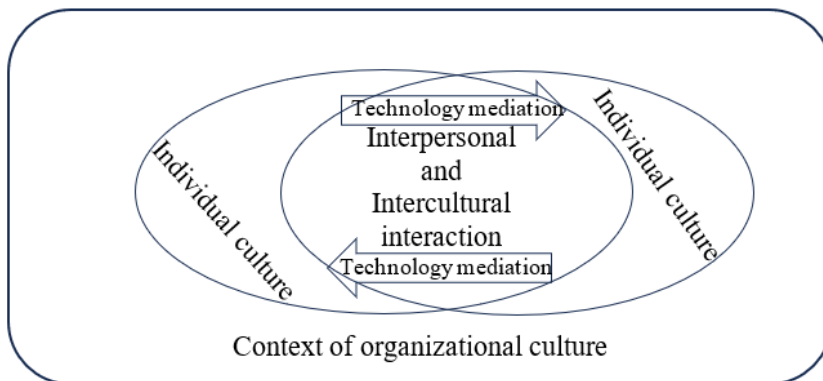
FIGURE 2   Integrated Communication System in Multinational Organizational Settings
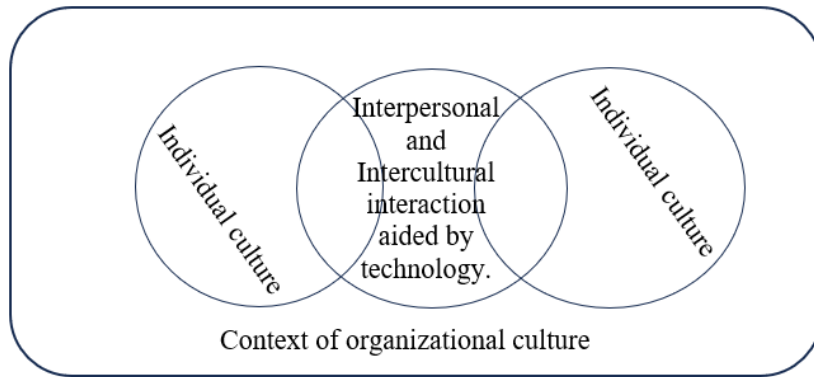
FIGURE 3   TMC System in Multinational Organizational Settings

The prevailing substitution of traditional face-to-face communication with technology-mediated channels in the organizational landscape has attracted extensive research attention transcending decades (Ean, 2011; Santra & Giri, 2009; Siitonen & Olbertz-Siitonen, 2022). For instance, separate studies conducted by Santra and Giri (2009) and Ean (2011) examined the impact of TMC on organizational effectiveness. On the other hand, Kim and Chon (2022) explored the influence of TMC on employee burnout, while Ekowati et al. (2021) investigated the adoption of TMC to enhance organizational performance. In a similar vein, Siitonen and Olbertz-Siitonen (2022) focused on the use of TMC in intercultural communication, and Vainik (2022) confirmed that interpersonal relationship is vital to business success in the landscape of TMC. However, in agreement with Konstantinov et al. (2020) and Chew et al. (2023), I found that research focus on the influence of TMC on intercultural interactions and interpersonal relationship among young professionals in a multinational workplace has remained significantly low.

Evidence from scholarly sources underscore the limited attention devoted to examining the role of TMC in the context of multinational organizations, particularly

among young professionals in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent works where their routine communication depends on TMC (Alnoor et al., 2022). The adoption of TMC for communication among young professionals on similar hierarchy and from diverse backgrounds potentially hold various challenges such as miscommunication, isolation, distraction, disrespect, violation of netiquettes, and ultimately conflict (Chew et al., 2023).

Therefore, this research seeks to bridge research gap and contribute to existing literature by investigating the perceived impact of TMC on intercultural and interpersonal relationships among young professionals in multinational organizations. Essentially, the study focuses on the intricate dynamics that arise from the integration of TMC tools in interpersonal intercultural interaction among young professionals in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent works in multinational organizations. It specifically limits its focus to their perception with the goal of dissecting the nuances and implications of technology mediation in interactions occurring between young professionals from diverse backgrounds. This deliberate limitation allows for a more granular analysis of how TMC influences the quality of relationship and the extent of the challenges it poses to intercultural communication among young professionals.

1.3   Significance of the Study

The significance of this research lies in its potential to illuminate the intricate interplay between technology-mediated communication and the communication dynamics within

multinational organizations. As organizations or corporations continue to expand globally, the adoption of various communication technologies has become a cornerstone of their operations. This study therefore holds several significant implications for understanding its influence on communication quality and comprehension.

Firstly, multinational organizations are increasingly relying on digital platforms to spread, connect, and facilitate communication across geographical boundaries. Thus, understanding how technology mediation impacts communication quality and comprehension can provide insights into optimizing these tools for efficient intercultural communication, which in turn can streamline operations and decision-making processes.

Secondly, effective communication fosters a sense of belonging and engagement among employees. By examining how technology mediation affects communication dynamics, this study can provide insight on how TMC promotes meaningful interactions that resonate with employees' needs, ultimately contributing to higher levels of engagement and job satisfaction.

Thirdly, intercultural communication can often be fraught with misinterpretations due to differences in background nuances, cultural context, and communication styles. Hence, this research can uncover strategies to minimize misunderstandings, leading to improved collaboration and fewer instances of communication breakdowns when using digital medium.

Moreover, this research will contribute to the theoretical understanding of technology-mediated communication within multinational organizations which is

essential for the enrichment of existing literature on organizational communication, cross-cultural dynamics, and digital communication. The insights gained can assist multinational organizations in the development of best practices for integrating TMC tools into daily operations.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Definitions

2.1.1 Organizational Communication

Organizational Communication can be defined as the complex process through which information, ideas, and meaning flow within and across various levels, functions, and units of an organization (Pološki Vokić et al., 2021). It encompasses the transmission, exchange, and interpretation of messages among individuals, groups, and departments to facilitate effective coordination, collaboration, and decision-making within the organizational context (Horan et al., 2021). Organizational communication can be horizontal or vertical if it involves the flow of information across the same or different levels (Dar, 2010). It employs both formal and informal channels, including written, verbal, and nonverbal interactions, as well as the utilization of communication technologies (Keyton, 2017).

2.1.2 Technology-Mediated Communication

Technology-Mediated Communication refers to the utilization of digital platforms, tools, and systems to facilitate the transfer or exchange of information, messages, and ideas between individuals or groups (Gattiker & Stollemmaier, 2012). It encompasses a wide array of communication channels enabled by the internet or technological advancements, including but not limited to email, video conferencing, instant messaging, social media, and collaborative platforms (Siitonen & Aira, 2019). This form of communication

transcends physical barriers, enabling interactions regardless of geographical distances, and has become an integral component of modern communication practices (Siitonen & Olbertz-Siitonen, 2022).

2.1.3 Multinational Organization

A multinational organization, also referred to as a multinational corporation (MNC) or a transnational corporation (TNC), is a corporate entity that operates and conducts business activities in at least two or more countries, typically with a centralized management structure (Miao, 2022). It engages in international trade, services, investment, and production, maintaining subsidiaries, branches, or affiliates in various countries (Dar, 2010). Multinational organizations leverage their global presence to navigate complex legal, cultural, and economic environments (Mao & Hale, 2015).

2.2 Conceptualizing Organizational Communication

Communication is a universal concept facilitating connections among individuals, within societies, communities, and organizations. Its paramount importance lies in fostering relationships that cultivate trust and mutual understanding in society (Kolcun et al., 2014). James Carey, eloquently defined communication as a symbolic process that generates, sustains, repairs, and alters our perceptions of reality (Carey, 1992). He opined that reality is formed through experiences shared with others in communication.

Organizational communication as a discipline became prominent in the United States during the 1940s due to the pressing need to organize individuals effectively and

efficiently in work settings (Keyton, 2017). From 1950 to the late 1970s, organizational communication research centered around enhancing organizational life and productivity. At that time, humans were perceived as rational beings, communication was viewed as a mechanistic process governed by formal logic, and organizations were metaphorically seen as containers. Hence, the concept of communication was described as the intricate ways in which people utilize nonverbal and verbal messages to construct meaning in diverse contexts, cultures, channels, and medium (Keyton, 2017).

However, the 1980s marked a turning point for the field, as focus was shifted towards recognizing the fundamental role of communication in the process of organizing rather than concentrating on its business impact (Allen et al., 1993). In the 1990s, the landscape of organizational communication further evolved to showcase how communication can bring about transformative change within organizations.

Scholarly sources widely acknowledge that communication is an indispensable element of organizations, as even noncommunicative components, such as financial systems, rely on effective communication for their functioning (Keyton, 2017; Poole, 2014). Communication is an inherent necessity at every stage of an organization's lifecycle, from startup, staffing, and product or service development, to interaction with stakeholders like customers, suppliers, and regulators (Horan et al., 2021). Therefore, organizational communication encompasses a broad range of communicative activities involving teams, groups, individuals, and the organization.

McPhee and Zaug (2001) emphasize that communication is intricately intertwined with and tailored to the interrelated functions within organizations. Negotiation, structuring, socialization, coordination, control, and work activity management are typical communication functions that shape the internal dynamics of organizations. These functions, in turn, can manifest through planned or spontaneous encounters, formal or informal means and various modes of communication like verbal, written, nonverbal, or visual (Keyton, 2017).

Organizational communication can be either formal or informal and can interfere intermittently. It occurs through face-to-face or via mediated channels. It typically shapes the everyday reality of employees and management as dyads or groups and individuals, interact within the organization, and processes such as supervision, leadership, conflict management, decision-making, and personnel management unfold (Horan et al., 2021).

Formal communication within organizations are characterized by their adherence to established protocols and norms, guided by the prevailing organizational culture. They engage channels which primarily serve to facilitate work-related activities and responsibilities, encompassing the complex facets of ethical considerations. Such considerations govern not only the responsibility of employees but also determine the appropriate form, content, timing, and intended recipients of the transmitted information. Conversely, informal communication operates outside the confines of officially regulated mediums and is not directly linked to work activities. However, it

assumes a critical role in fostering and nurturing interpersonal relationships, which are essential for the attainment of corporate objectives.

Moreover, communication within the organization entails employees' day-to-day interaction, networking, strategizing and collective sensemaking in pursuit of the business objectives or goals of the organization. It makes sense of the norms or principles of the organization's culture by establishing shared meaning (Ean, 2011). Interestingly, Cornelissen (2020) and Neher (1997) identified and outlined the key determinants of organizational communication efficiency. They include leadership, defining roles, authority, and responsibilities. Meanwhile, rationalization provides a logical foundation for deductions and conclusions or inferences. Conformity permits emotional expression, while coordination enhances problem-solving and conflict management. These functions profoundly influence information flow and interrelationships within the organization.

Baker (2007) asserts that managers have historically dedicated a significant portion of their time to communication in its various forms such as in-person discussions, meetings, memos, reports, emails, letters, etc. However, in today's landscape, employees across different functional groups increasingly find that effective communication has become a crucial component of their work, particularly as service workers outnumber production workers and collaboration and teamwork are prioritized in every workplace.

Consequently, the field of organizational communication encompasses a diverse range of topics, spanning the micro, meso, and macro levels of communication. It entails formal and informal channels, internal practices (such as strategic communications,

presentations, newsletters, work direction, meetings, and performance reviews), as well as external communications (with other organizations, the media, and the public). Additionally, it addresses crucial areas such as diversity, innovation, knowledge management, communication technologies, and organizational learning. However, despite its breadth, organizational communication, as a relatively new academic discipline, struggles to establish coherence across these diverse areas (Muhamad et al., 2019).

Moreover, organizational communication has undergone significant transformations, perhaps surpassing even other facets of organizational practices and theoretical models (Keyton, 2017). In the early 20th century, communication within small organizations primarily relied on informal interactions. However, as organizations expanded in size, formal top-down communication emerged as a key concern for organizational managers. Present-day organizational communication has become exceedingly complex and varied, playing a pivotal role in overall organizational functioning and success (Horan et al., 2021).

Existing studies on organizational communication has highlighted a shift in perspective from traditional views that perceive communication as a mechanistic process to a more contemporary recognition of its transformative potential within organizations. This research aims to build upon the historical and evolving landscape of organizational communication. It acknowledges the influence of technology and the changing dynamics in technology-dependent workplaces on employees' perceptions and engagement with

communication within multinational organizations. The study adopts a novel approach to investigate how employees in multinational organizations perceive and engage with digital communication methods, such as email and virtual meetings, and explores the impact of these methods on workplace dynamics and effectiveness. The findings of this research contribute to a broader understanding of how technology and the changing nature of work in a global and technology-dependent environment shape organizational communication.

2.3   Evolution of Technology Mediated Communication

Communication has long been an intrinsic and indispensable part of human existence, serving as the vital force driving social interactions and connecting people and societies throughout history (Șomăcescu et al., 2016). In examining the evolution of human communication technology, Rogers (1986) identified four distinct generations. The first generation, known as the writing era, emerged around 4000 BC, marked by the utilization of Sumerian clay tablets as a medium for written communication. The second generation, heralded as the printing era, commenced in 1456 AD with the invention of the first mobile printing machine. The advent of telegraphs in 1844 AD ushered in the third generation, known as the telecommunication era, enabling the transmission of messages and the widespread dissemination of ideas and information. Finally, the fourth generation emerged in 1946 AD, characterized as the era of interactive communication, attributable

to the invention of the mainframe computer. This transformative technology revolutionized data processing, particularly within organizational contexts.

Similarly, scholarly sources reveal that communication systems have evolved along with the evolution of society through industries from decades ago (Fay et al., 2010; Fay & Ellison, 2013; Habermas, 1979; Rogers, 1986). For instance, the agricultural society, which lasted over 10,000 years and still continues in most developing countries, is considered the longest era. This type of society was dominated with food as the major resource and was characterized by dominant ocupations of farming and manual labour, with farms serving as working units which can be likened to organizations nowadays. During this era, communication primarily relied on one-way print media, which posed challenges for efficient feedback due to its static nature. The agricultural society was succeeded by the industrial society which began in about 1750 and lasted over 200 years. During this dispensation, energy was the major resource resulting in the emergence of factory workers and steam engines, with steel factories becoming the dominant organizations. Furthermore, communication progressed to one-way electronic media, including radio, television, and films which was largely bureucratic and slow. Lastly, the information society which is still advancing began in about 1955 with information as the driving resource (Rogers, 1986). This generation of society gave rise to the massive production and utilization of computer and different electronic devices, opening up a new industry for information workers, university research, and various digital and mechanized fields. It practically and radically transformed the communication system to be technology-driven, interactive, demassified, dynamic, and mobile.

The emergence of modern interactive communication systems, driven by the transition in communication technology, has exerted a profound impact on interpersonal interactions on both individual and organizational scales (Bob & Sooknanan, 2014). Overall, communication within organizations serve as a cornerstone for growth and sustainability. The effectiveness and quality of communication within an organizational context depend on resource allocation and goal attainment.

TMC can be categorized into two main types: synchronous and asynchronous messaging (Simpson, 2002). Synchronous communication involves real-time exchanges, including video conferencing, audio calls, and text-based online chat. On the other hand, asynchronous messaging refers to communication that occurs over a passage of time without immediate interaction between the sender and receiver. Examples of asynchronous messaging include email, discussion forums, and mailing lists. Although Simpson's classification did not explicitly include social media, it can be argued that platforms like Twitter or Facebook can fall into both categories, with some elements of synchronous and asynchronous communication. Additionally, platforms like blogs can be primarily categorized as asynchronous.

In workplace settings nowadays, individuals utilize various communication channels, including both in-person and mediated methods. Communication technologies employed in TMC encompass a wide range of mediums, such as text messaging (SMS), telephone calls, emails, real-time messaging platforms (e.g., Skype chat, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger), social networking or online communities (e.g., Twitter, Facebook),

video conference and texting tools (e.g., Teams, Skype for Business, Zoom, Google Hangouts), as well as other specialized groupware utilized within organizations (Dienlin, Masur & Trepte, 2017; Garner & Poole, 2013).

One defining feature of TMC is its inherent interactivity, which allows for equal probability of communication among participants. Consequently, traditional media like newspaper, radio, or television, are not typically considered as communication technologies (Sivunen, 2007; Spitzberg, 2002). Importantly, in the context of this study, communication technology refers specifically to texting, phone calls, emails, instant messaging or chatting, text and video conferencing, online communities, and organization-specialized groupware. Meanwhile, technology-mediated communication encompasses both synchronous and asynchronous human-driven communication, facilitated by diverse range of communication media and technologies. This background is critical for understanding subsequent sections of this review through the trajectory of TMC.

2.4   Communication in Multinational Organizations

Multinational organizations are simply defined as corporate entities operating in two or more countries concurrently (Miao, 2022). They can be broadly described as corporations that have a presence in more than one country and conduct business activities across borders. These entities may establish overseas offices, manufacturing facilities, or subsidiaries to expand their market reach and capitalize on diverse resources, expertise,

and consumer bases. Additionally, they have facilities and assets in foreign countries besides their home country, with a corporate headquarters coordinating operations through communication.

Typically, multinational organizations boast a diverse workforce, where employees bring distinct values, beliefs, identities, and communication styles from their respective cultures or backgrounds (Bharadwaj, 2023; Dar, 2010). Embracing this cultural diversity fosters a rich pool of perspectives and innovative ideas but also necessitates effective intercultural communication to promote synergy and avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

Due to the peculiarity of this context, employee diversity in terms of cultural background is a defining characteristic, as multinational organizations operate with different levels of strategic management, including departments, teams, or units with varying leadership roles, responsibilities, and relationships (Bharadwaj, 2023). These organizations are distinguished by their extensive workforce diversity, which necessitates a focus on inclusion. Consequently, this creates a complex context and challenging task for managing intercultural relationships through strategic communication.

Communication in multinational organizations serve two essentially interconnected purposes, as Şomăcescu et al. (2016) contend. Firstly, it acts as a means of disseminating the organization's culture among staff, fostering a shared understanding

of values and beliefs. Secondly, it leverages employee interactions to contribute to the development and propagation of the organization's culture (Chew et al., 2023).

Multinational organizations inherently serve as habitats for intercultural communication, where communication behaviour is innately marked by an individual's cultural background (Bharadwaj, 2023; Johansson & Stohl 2012). Meanwhile, Hannerz (1996) characterizes culture as a framework or context of meaning. Moreover, communication pattern in these organizations differ significantly from local organizations due to the diverse social backgrounds of their employees and interactions with various cultures and socioeconomic environments (Bharadwaj, 2023). Interestingly, Mao and Hale (2015) argue that despite having a corporate system of shared values, multinational organizations still experience interference from different cultural factors.

Intercultural relationships thrive when employees develop cross-cultural communication competence, which involves understanding, respecting, and adapting to different cultural norms and communication styles. This competence which is commonly built through continuous interactions and in-person exposure is crucial for building trust and rapport among employees from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, to effectively navigate this intricate landscape within an increasingly complex work environment, the establishment of an efficient organizational communication system, particularly concerning communication quality and comprehension, becomes imperative. As noted by Emmers-Sommer (2004) and Liu et al. (2010), communication quality mirrors the

depth of commitment, understanding, trust, and satisfaction derived in workplace interactions, especially when using official communication medium.

Given the distinct or unique communication terrain within multinational organizations, the evolution of technology is evidently reshaping the nature of organizational communication and leading to a transformative shift in both culture and communication patterns (Bharadwaj, 2023; Chew et al., 2023). However, research articles addressing TMC with specific focus on communication quality within the multinational context remain scarce, thereby creating a strategic research gap that this study aims to address. Consequently, employee commitment to adapting to these evolving paradigms is crucial, particularly in the multifaceted context of multinational organizations.

Accordingly, O'Rourke (2019) noted that a common cause of multinational business and organizational setbacks often lies in the inability to comprehend and adjust to foreign thought processes and behaviours. Thus, highlighting the paramount place of communication quality and comprehension, in maintaining a cohesive and effective interaction in the heterogeneous landscape of multinationals.

2.5   The Role of TMC in Multinational Organizational Communication

The advances in globalization, communication technologies, current organizational climate and lessons from the pandemic have triggered an increased adoption of information technological tools for efficient and effective communication (Francis et al., 2014). Nowadays, a networked computational technology that processes, transmits, and

stores information for human interaction is essential in organizational communication, especially in multinational settings. This deployment or engagement of communication technology has ushered in opportunities for effective collaboration within an organization and between organizations, market expansion, and flexible remote works (Siitonen & Aira, 2019).

Furthermore, the expansion of TMC has significantly transformed interpersonal communication, offering a spectrum of real-time and remote interaction channels (Bob & Sooknanan, 2014). TMC encompasses various means of communication that leverage technological systems to enhance communication efficiency. It has become indispensable in contemporary organizational communication (Siitonen & Aira, 2019), playing a pivotal role in organizations' daily operations. Additionally, recent organizational shifts towards remote work, global market activities, and cross-organizational collaboration, especially prevalent in multinational corporations, have further emphasized the importance of TMC (Beverungen et al., 2019).

Scholarly sources confirm the substantial impact of TMC in improving information processing within workplaces, facilitating access to organizational power structures, decision-making, and innovation (Bob & Sooknanan, 2014). The integration of technological medium has revolutionized work processes, enhancing time management, flexibility in schedules, collaborative action planning, task efficiency, timely feedback, document creation and distribution, data storage and sharing, retrieval, and effective

organizational management. TMC thus encourages employee engagement and active participation in group activities (Siitonen & Aira, 2019).

Beverungen et al., (2019) noted that the rapid adoption of TMC, particularly among multinational corporations with complex structures, has transformed communication landscapes. As TMC becomes the new normal in organizational communication, its impact on communication quality and interpersonal relations within multinational workplaces remains relatively unexplored (Hancock et al., 2020; Smith, 2019).

Notably, multinational organizations turn to TMC as an indispensable solution or channel for addressing the complexities of intercultural relationships that exist in their workplace. This communication system encompasses various tools and platforms facilitating communication irrespective of geographical distances and time zones. Virtual meetings and video conferencing tools enable real-time face-to-face interactions, enhancing intercultural relationships by providing visual cues and non-verbal elements that promote understanding and empathy. Instant messaging and email offer quick and efficient ways to exchange information and ideas, transcending language barriers through translation features and fostering real-time collaboration across borders. Collaborative workspaces, such as cloud-based platforms, enable employees to collaborate on projects, share documents, and provide feedback, promoting a sense of teamwork and cohesion among diverse teams.

In a nutshell, TMC bridges gaps created by language barriers, enabling seamless communication, and understanding among employees from different cultural backgrounds. The rich array of TMC tools facilitates real-time interactions and encourages open communication, which can lead to improved problem-solving and decision-making processes. TMC platforms provides equal opportunity for all employees to participate and contribute, irrespective of their location or language proficiency. Also, by streamlining communication and collaboration processes, TMC enhances productivity and reduces response times, ultimately leading to increased organizational efficiency.

2.6 Challenges in Managing Communication Dynamics and Relational Factors in a Multinational Workplace

The integration of technology into human interaction or communication, especially in organizational contexts has given rise to a multifaceted and intricate system (Guirdham & Guirdham, 2017; Hämäläinen et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2010). In today's globalized world, multinational workplaces face unique challenges in managing communication dynamics and relational factors as TMC forms an intricate communication system with higher expectations or demands from employees (Hämäläinen, Lanz, & Koskinen 2018). The implications cut across diversity management, netiquette, and cultural appropriation which are some of the most significant elements of communication dynamics and relational factors in a multinational workplace (Horan et al., 2021; Soler-Costa et al., 2021).

Therefore, to ensure inclusion, prevent disrespect and cultural stereotypes, cultural appropriation, which involves the adoption or misappropriation of elements from other cultures, becomes a critical consideration in this context of communication dynamics (Mosley et al., 2023). On the other hand, Netiquette which refers to the appropriate behavior and norms in online interactions, playing a vital role in maintaining respectful and inclusive communication when using digital platforms (Heitmayer & Schimmelpfennig, 2023). TMC can sometimes present unique challenges for maintaining respectful and inclusive communication such as using polite words or tones when texting or writing to seniors or colleagues. Without face-to-face interactions, individuals may feel emboldened to engage in disrespectful or offensive behavior that they would not typically exhibit in person.

Scholars argue that while TMC simplifies organizational communication and reduces bureaucratic barriers, its impact on organizational cultures is far reaching. Accordingly, Beverungen et al. (2019) and van Zoonen et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of understanding how TMC affects communication dynamics, relational frameworks, and structural aspects of organizational communication. Thus, calling for a deeper exploration of the interplay between technology, culture, and communication in multinational workplaces to promote cultural sensitivity and inclusivity when implementing TMC systems.

According to Bob and Sooknanan (2014), the dynamics of group interactions in the workplace have undergone significant changes due to the psychological and social

impacts of TMC. This shift has diminished the influence of dominant or high-ranking individuals, fostering greater equality in conversations among team members. However, TMC curtails or restricts non-verbal cues like personal traits such as voice, and body language which are valuable for conveying deeper meanings in face-to-face interactions.

While acknowledging the numerous benefits and advantages of TMC, it is crucial to recognize its associated challenges and drawbacks, particularly in multinational organizations where diversity and inclusion are crucial for fostering positive employee relationships. The technical nature of TMC undermines essential interpersonal and intercultural communication aspects, potentially leading to distress due to information overload, isolation, depersonalization, and discourtesy.

Furthermore, Peters (2006) categorized the contributions of TMC to organizational communication into two important dimensions. The first perspective focused on the efficacy of the orientation, particularly the content and sequence of the information. TMC enables the rapid dissemination of information, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. While the second perspective is centered on the quality of interpersonal connections established and the level of commitment and contentment experienced within this network of interactions among employees. Building and maintaining strong interpersonal relationships through TMC channels becomes crucial in fostering trust and collaboration among multicultural teams. Notably, these tasks which are necessary for work efficiency require conscious and deliberate efforts to build and maintain a

relationship with colleagues online which is different from the traditional model in face-to-face communication (Czernek-Marszałek et al., 2023).

Practically, to foster and maintain interactions and interpersonal networks despite special, temporal, or geographical boundaries or constraints, individuals must learn or cultivate adaptability towards available communication medium or affordances (Horan et al., 2021; Muhamad et al., 2019). These affordances encompass a range of tools and methods, including phone communication, social media, physical meetings, teamwork platforms, and email correspondences. By integrating these affordances, a comprehensive landscape of opportunities emerges, enabling the effective resolution of work-related tasks without the need for physical proximity (Guirdham & Guirdham, 2017; Hämäläinen et al., 2018).

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that the integration of TMC raises challenges in managing diverse cultural identities and communication peculiarities within the organization. Multinational workplaces consist of individuals from different cultural backgrounds, each with their own communication styles, norms, and preferences. However, TMC platforms may not always cater to the diverse needs of individuals, leading to misunderstandings, miscommunication, and possible exclusion in some cases. Therefore, it is imperative for organizations to establish an inclusive communication environment that acknowledges and respects the diversity of cultural identities and communication practices. This may involve providing training, resources, and support

to employees to enhance their intercultural communication skills and promote a more inclusive and understanding work culture.

Scholarly sources have extensively explored various aspects of TMC in organizational contexts. However, there is a significant research gap in comprehending the experiences and perspectives of young professionals engaged in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent professions within multinational organizations. This study seeks to bridge this gap and contribute to the body of knowledge by unravelling the nuances between TMC, cultural identities, and intercultural communication challenges among young professionals in multinational organizations. In line with this goal, **this research aims to provide answers to the following questions,**

1. How do young professionals in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent professions perceive the influence of TMC on their workplace relationships in multinational organizations?

2. What are the specific intercultural communication challenges faced by young professionals in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent professions in using TMC within multinational organizations?

2.7 Social Construction of TMC

The scope of the study aligns significantly with the philosophical position of social constructionism, which emphasizes the importance of understanding human experiences and phenomenon within their social and cultural contexts (Schwandt, 2014). Social

constructionism views reality as being constructed through social interactions and shared

meanings (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2012). Thus, the social constructivists position identifies the

role of language and cultural contexts in shaping reality. Similarly, this philosophical

ideology encourages the exploration of multiple perspectives and the acknowledgment

of diverse viewpoints while recognizing that realities and meanings can be fluid and

subject to change over time (Schwandt, 2014).

Like Torro et al. (2022), the framework of this philosophical position aligns with

the aim of the study to investigate how young professionals working in knowledge-

intensive and technology-dependent professions perceive the impact of TMC in their

work. It also provides the lens to assess whether TMC adequately supports the

complexity of intercultural and interpersonal interactions in multinational organizations.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Specific Objectives

The major objective of this research is to comprehensively examine the intricate interplay between TMC and communication dynamics within multinational organizations. To achieve this overarching goal, the specific objectives of the study are as follows,

1. examine the perceptions of young professionals engaged in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent professions regarding the influence of TMC on their workplace relationships within multinational organizations.

2. analyze the specific intercultural communication challenges encountered by young professionals using TMC in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent professions in multinational organizations and provide recommendations.

3.2 Data Collection

Given the inherent nature of the research problem, this study adopts a qualitative approach. As articulated by Hennink et al. (2020) and Joyner et al. (2018), a qualitative perspective unravels meanings and understandings within naturally occurring situations. Accordingly, this research employs this approach to comprehend views, experiences, and attitudes encountered by employees in multinational corporations when engaging in TMC. This approach also allows for an in-depth exploration of the

research topic, facilitated by the use of open-ended questions to collate data. Specifically, Silverman (2020) opine that qualitative approach provides researchers with a higher degree of flexibility and rigour to build a coherent narrative suitable for scientific research purposes.

Semi-structured interview is employed as the method of data collection in the study to capture nuanced insights, offering an optimal avenue for acquiring comprehensive accounts of interview participants' experiences and emotions. This aligns with Silverman (2020) which argues that interviews create spaces for mutual analysis, where both parties contribute to meaning-making and knowledge production. Similarly, the semi-structured interviews conducted here fosters collaborative descriptions of technology-mediated communication practices and appropriation factors among employees in multinational organizational communication, facilitating a symbiotic interaction between the researcher and respondents.

The interviews were scheduled and conducted online using Zoom platform during the workers' leisure, making them conducive for active and convenient participation and enabling interviewees to express their perspectives confidently. The interview questions which extracted in-depth insights on communication dynamics and relational factors from respondents is attached in the appendix section for reference.

The choice of a semi-structured interview was weighed against other methods of data collection, including questionnaires and observations. While observations are limited in capturing individual experiences, questionnaires can restrict the scope of

answers. In contrast, semi-structured interviews, provide the necessary flexibility to accommodate a wide range of insightful and varied responses. As elucidated by Silverman (2020), these interviews revolve around guiding questions and central themes, allowing interviewees to dictate the pace and provide diverse answers within the locus of the study.

I leveraged my personal network to contact and connect with employees of multinational corporations operating with technology mediated communication system. Considering the unique characteristics of the study population, which consists of employees within multinational organizations, and the potential challenges associated with accessing them in time due to bureaucratic communication channels and organizational complexities, the snowball sampling technique was employed. This technique involved using initial participants as references to identify and refer other colleagues or individuals working in similar environments who could serve as suitable respondents for the research (Naderifar et al., 2017).

A total of six interviews were conducted, involving both young professionals within one to three years of working experience and experienced professionals with four to six years of experience as shown in table 1. Each interview lasted for an approximate timeframe of 45 minutes. These interviews typically addressed inquiries about how the interplay of cultural factors and technology-mediated communication influences communication quality and interpersonal relationships within multinational organizations. The interviews were recorded and further transcribed from speech to

texts. The transcribed data was anonymized to ensure confidentiality and privacy of interviewees and their organizations.

TABLE 1   Information on the Interviewees

Designation	Career level	Location
Interviewee 1	Early Career	Hungary
Interviewee 2	Early Career	Hungary
Interviewee 3	Experienced Professional	Finland
Interviewee 4	Experienced Professional	Hungary
Interviewee 5	Early Career	Finland
Interviewee 6	Experienced Professional	Finland

3.3   Data Analysis

Wickham and Wickham (2016) describe data analysis as the bedrock of data transformation and presentation. It is the process of examining, categorizing, and arranging the collected evidence to build a logical narrative on the research topic. Data analysis revolves around managing data with activities cutting across organizing data, synthesizing, or simplifying data, identifying patterns, discerning significance, and determining the relevant information to be shared with others. Scholarly sources acknowledge that analyzing interview data can be challenging due to the lack of universally defined or concrete strategies and techniques (Silverman, 2020; Weston et al.,

2001). However, every research should proceed with an analytic method or strategy that prioritizes the data type and the logic for analysis (Weston et al., 2001). Within this strategy, six predominant analytic techniques are applicable according to Braun & Clarke, (2006). They include data familiarization, initial codes generation, recognition of patterns, rationalization, defining the themes, and producing the report. The research data analysis is therefore established on this foundation.

Practically, the analysis phase of the study began by carefully reviewing and iteratively examining the transcribed data severally to achieve a deep familiarity with it and align it with the literature review. Afterwards, the ATLAS.ti 23 qualitative analytical software was used to code the data. The automated functionality of the software enables simultaneous coding, analyzing, significance display, and merging of all transcripts. Furthermore, to thoroughly comprehend and conceptualize interviewee responses, relevant literature was consulted where necessary, and responses were scrutinised using the coded data to construct coherent narratives as proposed by Silverman (2020). Subsequently, all key or major themes and patterns in the analyzed text were further rationalized to produce and present the final research results.

3.4　Research ethics

In course of the research, interviews were conducted with six employees from multinational corporations in Finland and Hungary. Therefore, ethical principles are

essential for upholding the integrity of the research through its validity and reliability (Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017).

To ensure the protection of interviewees' identities, a rigorous application of the principle of anonymity was ensured, meticulously precluding any inadvertent disclosure of personal data or identities within the records. The interview questions were deliberately crafted to exclude any personal identifiers in line with the Privacy Act, especially since such personal data were not critical for the research (Kohonen et al., 2019). Well in advance of the interview sessions, informed consent for voluntary participation was obtained from interviewees through telephonic interactions and, on a few occasions, emails. Furthermore, prior to the initiation of each interview, verbal confirmation of the interviewees' consent was explicitly secured, thereby reiterating their voluntary participation and permission to record.

Additionally, a comprehensive briefing on the broad research objectives and the precise scope of the interviews was communicated to each interviewee before the interview. After the interviews, the recorded data was stored within a secure folder on my personal computer. Subsequently, to mitigate potential data loss, it was backed up on a designated personal drive. This approach was undertaken to ensure the confidentiality and the possibility of refence if the need arises.

Meanwhile, accuracy was rigorously maintained in line with the research design. The semi-structured interview method, carefully crafted and aligned with the research objectives, ensured consistency. All interviews were personally conducted by the

researcher, assuring uniformity in both question formulation and understanding of responses.

Validity refers to the authenticity of research findings, requiring alignment with reality (Kohonen et al., 2019). Several biases can compromise validity, including contextual changes, participant inclination to respond a certain way, and the risk of intervening in the findings' validity. To minimize these possibilities, the researcher cross-checked the background of respondents, their companies, and their career paths with them before the interviews were scheduled. Potential biases stemming from personal factors were examined and considered before fixing the interview time. Interviewee diversity was prioritized, encompassing various nationalities, ages, fields, and home countries to maintain result validity.

Furthermore, supplementary notes were taken during interviews, particularly capturing contextual elements impacting findings. Also, record transcriptions were promptly executed after the interviews, thereby allowing the interviews' nuances to be effectively captured during transcription. Generally, precautions were taken to minimize potential influence on responses.

4 RESULT AND FINDINGS

The main objective of this thesis is to enhance comprehension of the perceptions held by young professionals employed in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent fields regarding the impact of TMC on their work. This was approached by examining the perceived influence of TMC on workplace relationships within multinational organizations, as well as the specific challenges related to intercultural communication faced by young professionals utilizing TMC in such organizations. The study therefore tried to assess whether TMC adequately supports the complexity of intercultural and interpersonal interactions in multinational organizations.

Generally, TMC play a pivotal role in connecting young professionals within their work environments, as evidenced by the majority of participants who affirmed their reliance on TMC for workplace communication or its centrality as their sole mode of communication. Following the Braun & Clarke, (2006) model highlighted earlier in the methodology section and explored by Salmona and Kaczynski (2016), the interview transcript was initially coded and analysed. The coding gave rise to over 180 quotations summarised into nine codes and synthesized into three dominant themes revolving around interpersonal communication, intercultural interactions, and the roles of TMC. These themes cover the objectives of this research, unravelling key nuances and findings. While the themes are discussed individually below, they are found to be interconnected and mutually supportive. Furthermore, the interdependence of these themes signifies

that the overall system of TMC in multinational organizational contexts is constructed upon the collective functionality of these themes.

4.1   TMC Roles among Young Professionals in Multinational Workplace

The results of the interviews revealed that TMC platforms are widely used in various workplaces for both internal and external communication. The most commonly mentioned platforms as demonstrated in figure 4 include email, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Chat, and Slack. These platforms are used for different purposes such as exchanging messages, organizing meetings, sharing documents, and collaborating on projects. One crucial aspect that was overlooked in the findings pertains to the customary workplace interaction commonly observed among colleagues engaging in face-to-face communication or on-site work. From the result, it appears that the utilization of TMC neglects or undermines this significant element and concentrates on work alone.

FIGURE 4   Author-Generated Concept Map Showing the Dominant TMC Platforms used by Interviewees.

Interviewee 4, who works in the IT sector in a banking company, highlighted the ease of communication with colleagues via emails and other platforms like Zoom. The participant mentioned that these platforms are especially useful for work when colleagues are not physically present in the same location. Similarly, Interviewee 5, a medical biller working remotely, described how they rely on TMC for sharing useful information, submission of medical claims to insurance companies, handling tasks related to insurance coverage and coding procedures, and resolving claim discrepancies. The participant emphasized the importance of clarity and accuracy in communication in their field. They mentioned using electronic health records and communication platforms like Teams to ensure that information is shared effectively, and errors or delays are minimized.

In similar vein, Interviewee 1 from the customer service sector discussed how technology-mediated platforms are essential for task assignments, documenting past communication, collaborative work, addressing customer needs and resolving their problems. They mentioned using platforms like Teams, 8 by 8, Google Chat, and email for both internal and external communication. They also highlighted the importance of clarity, understanding, and feedback in good communication.

Interviewee 2, working in a software development company, emphasized the importance of including visual possibilities to enhance clear communication between developers, product support teams, and customers. They mentioned using Teams for communication and highlighted their adoption of video calls to capture some elements of non-verbal communication like body language and emotions, which are crucial aspects for effective communication.

From the perspective in the engineering sector, Interviewee 3 mentioned that TMC is used for almost everything in their software production process. The participant noted that most workers within their organization prefer audio and textual means of communication despite the possibility of using video which facilitates better understanding and provides appropriate feedback. Essentially, users seem to easily undermine nonverbal communication cues which is crucial for effective communication even when interacting via TMC.

Meanwhile, Interviewee 6, working in an IT firm and payment institution, mentioned using various technology platforms for both work-related and non-work-

related communication. The participant highlighted the use of platforms like Slack and Google Cloud for instant messaging, voice calls, and collaboration.

Collaboration was another key area in which technology played a crucial role. Interviewee 4 mentioned that technology allows for easy collaboration, as multiple individuals can access and edit documents, facilitating brainstorming and problem-solving. Interviewee 2 further revealed the effectiveness of technology in facilitating collaboration, especially in a post-COVID work environment where physical meetings are less frequent. The use of technology for sharing tasks, sending messages, and sharing updates became a custom. Task assignment was also mentioned by Interviewee 4, who stated that supervisors can use technology to communicate tasks to be done. Hence, allowing for efficient task allocation, tracking, and completion.

Overall, the results suggest that TMC platforms play a crucial role in facilitating communication in various workplace settings. These platforms enable remote communication, collaboration, and the exchange of information, ensuring effective and efficient communication among colleagues, teams, and customers. The use of these platforms varies across different industries and organizations, with each company having its preferred platform based on factors such as company size and proprietary technology. However, evidence from the result indicates that TMC can be adopted in diverse industries due to its dynamic capability which makes it adaptable to different work settings.

Further critical perspectives of the results suggest that communication styles in the multinational workplace are constantly evolving as organizations seek to leverage

technological advances to meet contemporary business realities. The imperative to adopt suitable communication styles that can address operational needs is compelling organizations to concentrate on the capabilities of technology platforms, inadvertently undermining critical aspects of psychological needs and leaving young professionals to strive and navigate the complex landscape.

The findings also underscore the typical practice of adapting communication styles based on the audience, such as employing formal language in emails and utilizing officially regulated communication channels. For instance, Interviewee 4 highlighted the relevance of tone, especially in the absence of physical touch; the respondent identified the use of emojis in TMC as a means to avoid misinterpretation and enhance the clarity of tone:

> "...so sometimes it helps to have emojis and stuffs like that to help drive your point because you may say something or type something and it might be read in another tone" (Interviewee 4)

On the other hand, certain limitations were identified in communication styles when solely relying on technology platforms. Interviewee 6 noted that messages can be lost in transmission or translation, and tone can be misread without the aid of visual cues. These findings indicate that, despite the convenience of technology platforms, there are limitations in conveying the depth of the message and non-verbal cues, which can ultimately impact the effectiveness of communication.

4.2   Interpersonal Relationships

The findings from the interviews indicate that communication styles vary based on the specific context and the nature of the relationship between the individuals involved in the communication process. For example, when engaging in a communication exchange between two young professionals occupying the same hierarchical position, the tone and style of the interaction may tend to be more relaxed and informal. Conversely, when communicating with a superior or higher-ranking colleague, a formal approach is typically adopted, unless there exists a pre-existing personal relationship that allows for more informal communication. Nevertheless, owing to the potential for storing, retrieving, and occasionally monitoring written exchanges, users tend to adhere to formal communication practices.

Interviewee 5 mentioned the use of virtual meetings, specifically through Zoom, as a means of maintaining interpersonal relations and connections with colleagues. The same participant acknowledged that relationships with colleagues vary depending on shared interests or perspectives. The participant maintained that they communicate more with individuals they consider "like-minded" or with whom they have a personal connection. Thus, highlighting the importance of shared interests and values in fostering stronger interpersonal relationships when interacting through technology-mediated platforms in the workplace.

The result depict that young professionals are constrained by the limitations imposed by the official communication platforms provided by their respective

organizations. A noteworthy aspect that emerged from the interviews is the ability to retrieve and reference previously shared information, which demonstrates the preference for textual and audio information when utilizing TMC. Remarkedly, the interviewees also acknowledged that TMC tends to regiment interpersonal relationships. In a time-constrained workplace, the primary focus is on fulfilling one's assigned tasks. The technology platforms employed are primarily designed to facilitate the completion of job responsibilities and are less effective in fostering interpersonal connections. This formality might limit the spontaneity or natural flow that can be present in face-to-face interactions. In other words, the use of technology potentially standardizes or regulate interpersonal relationships, possibly making them feel more controlled or less flexible compared to more traditional, in-person forms of communication.

TMC seem to increase the burden of interpersonal relationship among young professionals as it requires more conscious commitment to find a colleague with whom you share interests and commit to building some kind of relationships. Interviewee 4 noted that communication in the workplace inadvertently requires being conscious of the recipient and adapting the communication style and tone accordingly. The participant noted that sometimes it helps to have emojis and smileys to help drive your point because you may say something or type something and it might be read in another tone.

Furthermore, participants expressed that face-to-face interactions in onsite work allow for more informal conversations, such as commenting on fashion or food

preferences, suggesting that physical presence can facilitate more relaxed and personal conversations, contributing to a stronger sense of connection among colleagues.

Interestingly, one participant shared an experience where a disagreement during a virtual meeting affected subsequent communication via email. The participant perceived that the tone of their email was influenced by the disagreement, highlighting the potential misinterpretation, or misunderstanding that can arise in digital communication. This suggests the importance of closeness for understanding contexts when communicating through written messages.

Another participant, Interviewee1 mentioned that their work is primarily conducted online, with minimal in-person interactions. This participant described the establishment of personal contacts through informal communication on digital platforms, eventually leading to connections on WhatsApp which mostly ends in vary shallow conversations without any deep sense of bonding. The participant noted a perceived limitation in the depth of interpersonal relationships formed solely through online interactions despite the convenience and efficiency of digital communication. Interviewee1 further opined that physical presence allows for a deeper connection with colleagues, implying that the current system of TMC is not as efficient as face-to-face interactions in developing stronger interpersonal relationships.

Interviewee 2 noted that his organization recognizes the importance of healthy interpersonal relationships for the psychological well-being and commitment of employees. They acknowledged the challenges of building interpersonal connections

and, as a result, make conscious efforts to foster these relationships through virtual coffee breaks and informal meetings organized via Teams. These meetings provide an opportunity for colleagues from different departments to interact, share ideas, and build personal connections, and the networks built from these connections have also been invaluable in providing support for problem-solving at work. Similarly, Interviewee 4 revealed that while adhering to communication norms and practices, simple gestures, such as turning on cameras during virtual interactions, help foster a sense of closeness. Implicitly, the organizations have a pivotal role to play in creating a virtual atmosphere that facilitates conscious connections and encourages young professionals to cultivate interpersonal relationships.

In the same vein, Interviewee3 noted that interpersonal relationship is very useful when relying on technology to communicate issues and seek assistance and support for problem-solving.

"... so, we use technology to send a save my soul, save our soul message that okay, this problem is what this person is having, so who could be of help" (Interviewee 3).

However, the participant expressed a preference for face-to-face interactions when working closely with a team because their interaction only revolve around work-related matters when using TMC. This could imply that the nature of some works defines the communication patterns and priorities within the organization. The participant suggested that meeting in person would bridge the gap created by TMC and foster better

collaboration and understanding among employees, with a deep sense of personal relationship which will also reflect in their commitment to work.

"So, there is really not much time for maybe discussing things that are not work-related. So, most of the time, we just communicate on code writing, problem solving, and all that. So, because the communication line and the type of communication is already defined. Yes. So somehow, nobody really cares so much about all the other parts, like the normal communication and how the other person is feeling and all that. But once we get the problem solved, of course, that is not to say we must offend people, but the communication line is already defined" (Interviewee 3).

From a different perspective, Interviewee 6 bemoan the limitations of TMC in interpersonal relationships, especially for its inability to convey emotions and reactions accurately. The participant stated that non-verbal cues and nuances in face-to-face communication provide valuable information that is vital for interpersonal connections and can not be accurately conveyed in digital communication.

Overall, the findings from the analyzed interviews demonstrate that technology platforms have become increasingly important and widely used for communication in various workplaces. However, there are significant limitations to interpersonal connections or relationships when using TMC. If unaddressed, these limitations have the potential to induce psychological stress and undermine employee commitment. Consequently, organizations must incorporate strategies to foster interpersonal connections within their TMC frameworks.

4.3 Elements of Intercultural Communication

Communication styles are influenced by the context, organizational culture, and the relationship between the communicating parties when engaging with TMC. Effective communication requires clarity, understanding, and the ability to provide and receive feedback. However, the interplay of culture emerges as a multifaceted challenge that significantly influences communication within multinational workplaces when relying solely on technology platforms, these challenges are worsened by the inability of TMC to sufficiently convey emotions and non-verbal cues. The participants highlighted various cultural elements that have a substantial impact on TMC practices. These cultural elements encompass politeness, respect, courtesy, organizational culture, data protection norms, cross-cultural differences, ethics, and language diversity.

4.3.1 Politeness, Respect, and Courtesy

The participants recognize the significance of politeness, respect, and courtesy in communication, particularly in cross-cultural contexts. However, the challenge lies in navigating the nuances of different cultures, where varying levels of formality and respectful language are expected when communicating with individuals of different hierarchical positions. Interviewee 4 noted that this introduces a layer of complexity, necessitating individuals to be mindful of cultural norms to facilitate effective cross-cultural communication.

"I won't write an email the way I will write to my informal friend so there is that challenge of being conscious of who you are writing to. I think it's something you get

used to as you continue working in the workplace there's that challenge of ok, this person I want to write to is he a senior person, you know, also considering the culture like back home right you know, you will not, the way you write to an MD or a manager will not be the way you write to maybe your fellow colleague you know, so yes, there is that social side" (Interviewee 4).

Furthermore, politeness was seen as vital in fostering the aim of communication, even when using digital platforms. Politeness in written conversation which is usually evident in the communication tone can contribute to creating a positive and productive interaction. This is why most textual platforms have incorporated emojis as additional tools to enhance the tone of the text.

"I think that's why in most technologies now they are incorporating emojis although in the workplace not everyone will use emojis (laughs) you know because sometimes somebody can misunderstand your tone as being harsh when you are not actually harsh or offended when you are not actually offended."

4.3.2 Organizational Culture and Practice

Another dimension that affects communication practices in the study is the influence of organizational culture. Quite clearly, the results indicates that organizational culture alone is not sufficient in this context, as TMC comes with a lot of fluidity. The study revealed that open communication practices when using TMC within a workplace can impact how team members interact, fostering accessibility and approachability as attested by interviewee 2. However, individuals must adapt to the communication norms

set by their organization, potentially leading to clashes between organizational expectations and individual cultural practices.

"…there's something peculiar to our office that we call the coffee break. So half an hour every day we have a meeting, and usually these meetings are set up via Teams video calls where, you know it's like a coffee corner where people from different departments different works on special specializations in the company can meet together, rub minds, share ideas, share values, you know find connections between themselves so like okay Coffee Breaks doesn't necessarily have to be about work it's more like a me time, you time, time to get off work and just relax."

4.3.3   Data Protection and Privacy

The study also identifies the impact of cultural norms on data protection and privacy. Compliance with regulations such as GDPR appeared to be crucial for ensuring the security and privacy of individuals' data. This consciousness also significantly impacts the way young professionals from different cultural backgrounds use TMC as they tend to be more cautious not to violate the rules due to fear of the consequences. For instance, the acceptability of sharing a photograph featuring colleagues from diverse backgrounds on one's social media platform is contingent upon various factors. While some individuals may not express any concerns about their inclusion in such posts, others may perceive it as problematic. Moreover, the acceptability of sharing such photographs may also be influenced by the nature of the interpersonal relationship shared between the individuals involved. Consequently, TMC in multinational contexts present a complex

web between intercultural interactions and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, navigating these regulations across diverse cultural backgrounds while upholding effective communication poses a challenge. One of the participants attested to this point as presented in the quote below.

"…I just feel because this is a personal you know, it has to do with people's valuables you are securing so, it's important even within the users that is the staff for examples, you can take people's pictures you must get approval before you post them on any social media or whatever even within the company."

4.3.4   Cross-Cultural Differences and Ethics

The acknowledgment of cross-cultural differences underscores the need to be mindful of diverse cultural norms, behaviors, and beliefs that can influence communication styles, especially when using TMC. Understanding and respecting these differences is paramount to ensuring effective communication across cultures. Thus, users in multicultural landscapes tend to rely more on the organizational culture when using TMC until they are certain of the cultural background of their communication partner. Additionally, the connection between culture and ethics in TMC emphasizes the importance of knowing what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of communication practices, adding another layer of complexity. Notably, this complexity is even more relevant because ethical lines can be rightly or wrongly crossed consciously or subconsciously. In the quote below, Interviewee 2 made reference to an experience of resentment that was triggered by such issue.

"…So, this kind of brought about resentment. So, the purpose of my actions, or the aim of my action, was to foster a smooth transition that it will not be noticed that my boss is on vacation. Business will continue as usual. But it was misinterpreted as me trying to, you know, climb up the ladder. So, yeah, it was actually a big problem because those that understood it the wrong way tried to pose oppositions, you know, be a stumbling block to achieving the goal. So, for that sole purpose, they're like, no, we're not gonna do this. No, we're not going to work as effective. And it was an issue because the way my team is structured is everybody supplies. Every joint supplies. Yeah. So, if one person is lacking in his duties, it affects the whole team."

4.3.5   The Challenge of Language and Translation

The respondents acknowledge that English Language is the official language of communication in most multinational organizations. However, the freedom or opportunity to work remotely and communicated via technology-mediated platforms offer the leverage of Language translation to some users whose primary language is different. It was reported that some users try to translate textual communication into the language they're most comfortable with, and sometimes the translation takes the message out of context leading to potential misunderstandings. This linguistic variety poses a challenge in ensuring clarity and comprehension in TMC, as idiomatic expressions and cultural nuances may not be correctly translated. This aspect elucidates the potential challenge posed by a particular characteristic of TMC. While typically perceived as an advantage, this feature can become demanding when users, who previously did not need

translation during in-person interactions, now contemplate fully utilizing translator options due to their easy accessibility.

"…so, how we do that is, I mean, for example, if my Chinese colleague is given a report and you've said something, for example, that is idiomatic, you think he will not grab, you may want to repeat or say it in a simpler version... So, I agree there's a place of culture or of our grounds in the communication, but as to get worried, not really at the moment, because we can always look for an alternative."

4.3.6   Communication Training and Cultural Intelligence

The importance of communication training in tackling cultural obstacles is underscored by all the participants. Although they acknowledge that such training may not encompass every facet of diverse cultures, it is perceived as advantageous in equipping individuals with a foundation and comprehension of the potential encounters in a digital multicultural professional environment. This highlights the necessity of cultivating cultural intelligence among employees, enabling them to proficiently navigate the intricacies of intercultural communication. The absence of this ability when using TMC can create room for misunderstandings and pockets of conflict.

Considering these cultural elements further underscores the complex dynamics of TMC in multicultural work environments. The participants' experiences reflect the intricate interplay between cultural norms, organizational expectations, and individual practices, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of culture to effectively

navigate the challenges associated with the use of TMC in a multicultural context.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Nature of Work and the Role of Technology

The role of technology in the contemporary work settings cannot be underestimated, as the interviews revealed its significant influence on communication, collaboration, task assignment, and information sharing among the young professionals. The participants emphasized the crucial role that technology plays in facilitating effective communication among team members, both within and outside the organization. This finding aligns with those of Ean (2011), Siitonen and Aira (2019) and Turner et al. (2010) each independently arguing that technological mechanisms have become an integral part of organizational communication, transforming the manner and process of information sharing.

Communication emerged as a central theme in the interviews, as all participants recognized the importance of technology in enabling efficient and effective communication. Interviewee 4, who works in the finance sector, and interviewee 1 who works in e-commerce both highlighted the use of technology for online transactions and communication with colleagues and supervisors. They also mentioned the challenges associated with the use of work platforms and how technology helps in addressing these challenges. Similarly, Interviewee 5, who works in the healthcare sector, emphasized the use of technology for communication through emails, online billing systems, and electronic health record platforms to ensure accurate and efficient patient care. This position resonates with that of Zhu (2019), who posits that technology can play

multifunctional roles in the organization simultaneously, solving problems and facilitating communication. Therefore, limiting its scope to communication alone will be equivalent to inefficient utilization.

Collaboration was another vital area where technology played a crucial role. Interviewee 4 highlighted how technology enables easy collaboration by allowing multiple individuals to access and edit documents, facilitating brainstorming and problem-solving. Interviewee 2 further highlighted the importance of technology in facilitating collaboration, especially in a post-COVID work environment where physical meetings are less frequent. They outlined the use of technology for sharing tasks, sending messages, and providing updates.

Task assignment was also mentioned by one of the interviewees as an area where technology plays a significant role. Interviewee 4 stated that supervisors can use technology to communicate tasks to be done, ensuring efficient task allocation, tracking, and completion. This demonstrates how technology enables effective task assignment and management among young professionals in knowledge-intensive multinational workplace and agrees with Lee (2021) and Maruping & Agarwal (2004).

Technology mediation also facilitates information sharing among the young professionals in multinational organization as observed in the study. According to Interviewee 2, utilizing technology enables the sharing of announcements, staying up to date with news, and addressing billing concerns. Similarly, Interviewees 3 and 6 noted the relevance of technology in delivering work progress updates, addressing challenges,

and exchanging innovative ideas among teams and departments. This exemplifies the capability of technology in promoting streamlined and successful information sharing practices within organizations, consistent with the views of Cui (2017). However, it is important to note that these findings are based on the experiences and perspectives of the interviewees and may not be generalizable to all work settings.

5.2 Perceived Influence of TMC on Workplace Relationship in Multinational Organizations

The participants' responses revealed diverse experiences and opinions regarding the impact of TMC on interpersonal relations, specifically in the context of remote work and virtual interactions. The results highlighted the importance of shared interests and values in fostering stronger interpersonal relationships when interacting through technology-mediated platforms in the workplace. Interviewee 5 mentioned that they communicate more with individuals they consider "like-minded" or with whom they have a personal connection. This suggests that interpersonal relationships may thrive better when there are common interests and perspectives. These findings highlight the need for organizations to create opportunities for employees to find common ground and shared interests, even in virtual settings. Earlier studies by Horan et al. (2021) and Lee (2021) confirmed that it requires active emotional, phycological, and physical efforts to build valuable interpersonal relationship at work through TMC.

The participants further revealed that physical presence facilitate a more relaxed atmosphere for personal conversations, contributing to a stronger sense of connection among colleagues, and this seems to be missing in TMC. They highlighted that face-to-face interactions in the office setting allow for more informal conversations, such as commenting on fashion or food preferences, which proceeds to fuel good interpersonal relationships. This suggests that physical or visual presence can play a crucial role in developing stronger interpersonal relationships, similar to Horan et al.'s (2021) view, which posits that physical presence is likely to trigger spontaneous interactions that will breed voluntary interpersonal relationships at work. Therefore, organizations can consider incorporating opportunities for face-to-face interactions and video conversations, even in remote work settings, to foster a sense of connection and camaraderie among employees.

The participants acknowledged the convenience and ease of communication that technology offers in the workplace. They highlighted that technology facilitates communication, and enables easy collaboration with geographically distant colleagues, most of whom they've never met. This aspect of technology-mediated communication was seen as a positive impact, enhancing productivity, and facilitating effective collaboration. The participants also recognized the importance of record-keeping that technology enables, providing a means for referring to previous conversations.

They further discussed the limitations of TMC in conveying emotions and reactions accurately. Interviewee 6 mentioned the inability of TMC to convey non-verbal

cues and nuances, which are vital for interpersonal connections. This limitation mostly lead to misinterpretation or misunderstanding in digital communication which can increase work-related stress or burnout. Interviewee 1 shared the absence of in-person interaction and relying solely on technology platforms creates an interpersonal vacuum, making it impossible to deeply connect with others. The participants also identified the high risk of getting misunderstood when using TMC as one of the drawbacks. These findings suggest that organizations, in light of these challenges, should consider adopting a more dynamic approach to interpersonal interactions to promote effective communication in a digital context and mitigate these risks. On the other hand, Interviewee 4 recognized the importance of adhering to certain communication norms and practices and suggested that turning on cameras during virtual interactions can help breed some sense of closeness.

Ultimately, the participants' responses highlighted the complex dynamics and implications of TMC in contemporary multinational workplace relationships. Technology has become an integral part of communication in the workplace, particularly with the emergence and advancement of remote work and global collaborations. However, organizations must find a way to adapt technology to fill the vacuum it creates in interpersonal relationships that is critical for psychological and emotional stability as Lee (2021) argued.

5.3 The Perceived Impact of Cultural Elements and Communication Features on the Efficacy of TMC in Multinational Organizations

The synthesis of findings across various dimensions underscores the challenges individuals face in navigating cultural nuances, necessitating a deep understanding to foster effective communication when using digital means. The interviews revealed that politeness, respect, and courtesy are important elements in communication, particularly in cross-cultural contexts. Different cultures have varying expectations for formality and respectful language when communicating with different individuals. Being conscious of one's audience and adapting the communication style accordingly is crucial for effective communication in multicultural workplaces. The findings align with previous research that highlights the importance of cultural intelligence and understanding in communication (Bilyalova et al., 2020; Ozlem, 2020).

The examination of TMC within multinational workplaces has not only revealed the challenges posed by cultural elements but also underscores the weakness of TMC in conveying the fluidity of culture. The research spotlights how digital platforms try to condense and converge cultures when interacting with each other, which resonates with the findings of Salehan et al. (2018). However, the influence of culture remains integral in intercultural communication, naturally surfacing when young professionals interact through TMC, aligning with the views of Koyuncu et al. (2020). This discovery depicts the existence of power dynamics that underlie cultural customs and behaviors, ultimately

shaping the way young professionals engage with one another through TMC, which necessitates cultural intelligence.

The fluidity of culture, as portrayed in this study, goes beyond the traditional confines of static cultural frameworks. It emphasizes the adaptability of cultural expressions in the digital era, where TMC acts as a melting pot of diverse cultural influences. In acknowledging the inevitability of cultural exchanges within organizations aiming to cultivate efficient communication through TMC, this discourse advocates for a paradigm shift, urging organizations to promote cultural intelligence in TMC. This will empower individuals to explore the diverse capabilities of digital platforms, thereby facilitating individual agency and fostering a nuanced comprehension of the power dynamics that underlie cultural exchanges via TMC.

Organizational culture was found to influence the individual cultures and expectations as it creates a neutral ground for communication practices within workplaces. However, individuals are inseparable from their cultures. The rules embedded in the organizations culture provide guidelines for communication behaviors and responses, ensuring that individuals' culture, privacy, and family are not infringed upon. Such rules create a level playing field for employees to interact with individuals from any background in a respectful and appropriate manner. Nevertheless, when it comes to TMC, it appears that organizational culture does not sufficiently capture the dynamism embedded. Open communication and accessible communication channels were also emphasized in the interviews. Organizations that prioritize open

communication, even among senior managers, create an environment of approachability and frequent communication among all employees. While previous studies have shown that organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping communication practices and behavior (Yari et al., 2020), individual cultures are inadvertently persistent because they are indelible (Kemas & Anwar, 2021).

Cross-cultural differences were acknowledged, and interviewees emphasized the need to be mindful of these differences. Cultural norms, behaviors, and beliefs can influence communication styles and preferences. Understanding and respecting these differences is essential for ensuring effective communication across cultures. Bilyalova et al. (2020) and Ozlem (2020) in related works acknowledged the pertinence of cultural awareness and sensitivity in cross-cultural communication. The connection between culture and ethics in communication is inseparable. Interviewees mentioned the significance of knowing what is acceptable and what is not in terms of how to speak to people and work with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This highlights the complex dynamics of culture and ethics in communication and the essence of cultural intelligence in navigating these dynamics.

The interviews amplify the established knowledge that communication styles have changed significantly due to the advances in technology (Siitonen & Aira, 2019; Turner et al., 2010). Communication is influenced by the context, organizational culture, and the relationship between the communicating parties. The use of formal language in emails and officially regulated communication channels follows organizational cultures.

Additionally, the use of emojis in technology-mediated communication is adopted as an alternative to enhance tone and avoid misinterpretation for clarity. Being mindful of idiomatic expressions and ensuring that messages are clear and easily understood by individuals from different cultural backgrounds was seen as important. Simplifying language or providing explanations can be helpful in mitigating potential misunderstandings. This finding underscores the necessity for adaptability and awareness in textual communication in multicultural work environments. It implies that effective communication involves not only the content of the message but also the style, tone, and medium used for communication. Participants acknowledge that incorporating politeness in TMC can foster positive and productive interactions, enhancing communication effectiveness. They stress that their individual cultures make them naturally conscious of maintaining a respectful tone when texting their superiors.

The influence of language and translation in multicultural workplaces was another vital intersection between TMC and culture. Individuals tend to naturally gravitate towards those who understand their primary language. In a multicultural group where English serves as the official language but may not be the primary language for many individuals, textual communication via TMC may involve translation to individuals' mother tongues. This cultural and linguistic diversity is also a salient factor in effective communication and understanding. Accordingly, Roşcovan et al. (2023) spotlight this as one of the limitations of linguistic globalization.

Furthermore, the interviews outlined the elements of good communication, including clarity, understanding, and feedback. Effective communication is characterized by the ability to convey a message with intent, receive the desired feedback, and achieve the intended goal. Clear and accurate exchange of information, mutual understanding, and the ability to provide and receive feedback irrespective of cultural differences were seen as key elements of good communication.

5.4 Challenges and Recommendations for Cross-Cultural Communication among Young Professionals in Multinational Organizations using TMC.

The interviewed workers revealed various challenges with significant implications to effective communication in the context of communication among young professionals from diverse cultural backgrounds using TMC in their workplace interactions. Written messages can often be misinterpreted, leading to miscommunication and misrepresentation of ideas. The absence of non-verbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions, makes it harder to accurately interpret the sender's intentions or emotions. Moreover, delayed responses from coworkers can further exacerbate this challenge. These concerns highlight the complexities and limitations of TMC in the workplace and requires that organizational management continually advance and adapt their communication systems to convey as much information as possible in tandem with the MST (Dennis & Valacich, 1999).

Cultural differences play a significant role in intercultural communication, as highlighted by the interviewees. Different cultural norms and hierarchies can impact the formality and language used in communication. It is crucial for professionals to be aware of these cultural differences and adapt their communication style accordingly to establish effective communication across cultures. For instance, individuals from cultural backgrounds where great importance is placed on titles appreciate being addressed by their titles, even when working in organizations where the workplace culture doesn't necessarily emphasize titles. Organizations should provide cultural sensitivity training to their employees to enhance their understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and improve communication efficiency.

Network glitches is also quite typical with TMC. These glitches can occur due to network downtimes, or issues with third-party service providers. Technical glitches can disrupt communication and cause misunderstandings. For example, if a network connection is lost during a call for assistance, it can lead to frustration and potential transfer of aggression. Thus, organizations can provide support for employees to acquire high speed connections for reliable and efficient communication when working remotely.

The lack of personal touch in technology-mediated communication was associated with miscommunication and misrepresentation in TMC. The interviewees noted that the recipient of a message may interpret it differently than intended due to the limitations of chat or email communication. Typically, the way an idea is conveyed through chat may not be perceived in the same way by the recipient, leading to misunderstandings and

potential rejection of proposals. This emphasizes the importance of being clear and concise in written communication and being mindful of how messages may be interpreted by different individuals. Therefore, TMC platforms that incorporate visual interaction is preferred.

The challenges of data privacy and security were also addressed, emphasizing the necessity for information security measures and personal data protection, especially because of the vulnerability of TMC platforms. Organizations should provide training and guidelines on data privacy and security to ensure that employees are aware of best practices and take necessary precautions to safeguard sensitive information.

These finding highlight the need for organizations to regularly evaluate their TMC platforms and adapt them to suit changing needs as the organization evolves. What may be sufficient for communication at one point may not meet the needs of a growing or changing organization, making it important to assess and update communication tools accordingly. Through these efforts, successful intercultural communication can be achieved, promoting collaboration, and understanding among professionals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

6 CONCLUSION

Insights garnered from interviews with young professionals immersed in knowledge-intensive and technology-dependent roles within multinational organizations, utilizing TMC, offer invaluable knowledge about the dynamics at play in both communication and interpersonal relationships in contemporary work environments. This synthesis of findings addressed the research goals and offered practical suggestions for organizations.

The young professionals in the study significantly acknowledge the multifunctional role of technology in contemporary work settings. TMC was recognized as essential in facilitating communication, collaboration, task allocation, and information-sharing. Participants attested to its crucial contribution to enabling effective communication both internally and externally within organizations, advancing previous research findings on the transformative impact of technology on organizational communication practices.

The influence of cultural identities and communication peculiarities on the effectiveness of TMC emerged as crucial factors in multinational organizations. Participants emphasized the importance of shared interests and values in cultivating stronger interpersonal relationships through technology-mediated platforms. While acknowledging TMC as a facilitator, participants also stressed the significance of physical presence in creating a more relaxed environment for personal conversations, fostering a stronger sense of connection among colleagues. To address this, organizations are

advised to incorporate opportunities for in-person interactions and video conversations, even in remote work setups, to enhance employee connection and camaraderie.

Analysis of intercultural communication challenges revealed certain obstacles in TMC, such as the potential misinterpretation of written messages, the absence of non-verbal cues, and the lack of a personal touch. Cultural disparities in communication norms and hierarchies, along with concerns about data privacy and security, were identified as significant challenges. Thereby signalling organizational stakeholders on the need for comprehensive training, establishing clear communication channels, promoting cultural sensitivity, and prioritizing data privacy and security.

The study underscores the need for a nuanced approach in harnessing the advantages of TMC while addressing its challenges in the multicultural context of multinational organizations. TMC is rapidly evolving with the development and adoption of new platforms. Therefore, organizations in multicultural contexts must consistently adjust and adapt their communication styles and models to mirror face-to-face communication, meeting the needs of their employees while aligning with organizational goals.

Finally, this research provides a logical bases for further empirical scientific investigation into the experiences, behaviors, and interactions of young professionals in multinational organizations, with a specific focus on their utilization of TMC. Ethnographic methods, such as participant observation and wide range of interviews,

can provide rich and detailed data with practical and generalizable implications on the dynamics involved in communication and interpersonal relationships within contemporary work environments.

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APPENDIX 1   Summary of Themes

S/N	Themes	Scope	Related Objectives
1.	Interpersonal relationships	This theme covers the perceptions on social interactions and relationship nuances in the interpersonal exchanges and connections among the young professionals in multinational workplace.	Objective I
2.	TMC Roles	Describes the way respondents use technology in their work activities and communication.	Objectives I & II
3.	Intercultural Communication	Discussions related to cultural influences, values, norms, practices, and the dynamics associated with intercultural communication via TMC.	Objective II