

Technoference, Technopola, and Hyperconnectivity: An Interpretive Journalism Perspective

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Abstract

This study on *Technoference, Technopola, and Hyperconnectivity*, examines the intricate interconnections between these three phenomena, with particular emphasis on their influence on interpersonal relationships and mental health. Anchored in the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory and the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) theory, the research employed a quantitative survey design in which questionnaires were distributed to 300 voluntary respondents. Findings indicate that technoference significantly undermines the quality of relationships and contributes to reduced mental well-being in hyperconnected societies. Similarly, technopola shapes cultural norms in ways that weaken individual identity while elevating technological dependency. Hyperconnectivity emerges as both an enabler of social interaction and a driver of cognitive overload, necessitating critical examination. Interpretive journalism is positioned as a vital medium for unpacking these complexities by providing context, fostering informed public understanding, and promoting healthier patterns of technology use. The study recommends the creation of “tech-free zones,” balanced engagement between online and offline interactions, and the production of media content that emphasizes practical solutions for excessive reliance on technology. Ultimately, the research highlights the importance of safeguarding meaningful relationships and underscores the responsibility of journalism in navigating the challenges of an increasingly digital society.

Keywords: Technoference, Technopola, Hyperconnectivity, Interpretive Journalism, Digital Culture

Introduction

The pervasive influence of digital technology has profoundly reshaped communication, culture, and interpersonal relationships in the 21st century. Smartphones, social media, and digital platforms now mediate much of human interaction, creating both unprecedented opportunities for connection and significant challenges for relational depth and mental well-being. While these tools provide immediacy, accessibility, and global reach, they also foster conditions of technoferece, technopola, and hyperconnectivity, which disrupt meaningful engagements and alter cultural priorities (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Postman, 1993; Katz & Aakhus, 2002). These interrelated phenomena represent not isolated issues but structural realities embedded in contemporary social life. Consequently, there is a pressing need to examine how individuals and societies adapt to environments increasingly dominated by technology.

The concept of technoferece captures the distractions and interruptions caused by technology in relational contexts, where device preoccupation undermines intimacy, increases conflict, and contributes to stress and dissatisfaction (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Przybylski & Weinstein, 2019). At the societal level, Postman's (1993) notion of technopola illustrates how technological imperatives increasingly dictate values and decision-making, shaping not only individual identity but also collective cultural norms. Meanwhile, hyperconnectivity reflects the state of constant digital availability, which erodes boundaries between personal and professional life, fosters cognitive overload, and contributes to anxiety and burnout (Carr, 2010; Twenge et al., 2018). Together, these dynamics illuminate the double-edged nature of technology: it enables connection and efficiency but simultaneously threatens relational, cultural, and psychological well-being.

The problem addressed in this study lies in the insufficient integration of these concepts within both scholarship and public discourse. Much existing research focuses on isolated outcomes—such as the psychological impacts of screen time or the determinism of technological change—without situating these within broader cultural and communicative frameworks. As a result, society risks normalizing harmful digital practices without adequate critical reflection or practical strategies for mitigation. The lack of emphasis on interpretive journalism exacerbates this gap, as media coverage often privileges immediacy and fragmented narratives over context and analysis. By failing to illuminate the “why” and “how” of technological disruption, journalism leaves the public less prepared to critically engage with the pervasive influence of digital technologies.

This study therefore aims to explore the interrelated impacts of technoferece, technopola, and hyperconnectivity on interpersonal relationships, cultural values, and mental health, while assessing the role of interpretive journalism in fostering awareness and healthier patterns of engagement. Specifically, the study seeks: (1) to analyze the effects of technoferece on family dynamics and personal relationships in the context of hyperconnectivity; (2) to investigate the cultural implications of technopola and its influence on identity and values in the digital age; and (3) to evaluate how interpretive journalism can effectively communicate the complexities of these phenomena to inform public understanding. Grounded in the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) theory and the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) framework, the study positions itself at the intersection of communication, culture, and media practice. By integrating theoretical insights with empirical evidence, it contributes both to academic discourse and to practical strategies for mitigating the unintended consequences of technology in everyday life.

Literature Review

Technoference

The concept of technoference refers to the disruptions that occur in interpersonal relationships due to the presence and use of digital technology, particularly mobile devices and social media platforms. McDaniel and Coyne (2016) first defined the term to capture how everyday device usage interrupts face-to-face interactions. Their findings demonstrate that frequent technological distractions often lead to relational conflict, diminished satisfaction, and emotional neglect among couples and families. Such interruptions extend beyond moments of distraction, as they cumulatively weaken the emotional bonds that sustain intimacy and trust. For example, Rosen et al. (2020) observed that even the passive presence of a smartphone during conversations can diminish perceptions of closeness and empathy. These subtle but repeated disruptions suggest that technoference does not simply inconvenience relationships but actively reshapes the quality of human connection in digital societies.

Studies have consistently linked technoference to psychological consequences such as stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2019; Kirkpatrick, 2019). The constant availability of notifications and messages fosters a sense of divided attention, which undermines individuals' capacity for deep, uninterrupted engagement. Cummings et al. (2020) further reported that families experiencing higher levels of technoference are more likely to exhibit reduced cohesion and shared satisfaction. This aligns with Froese et al. (2021), who found that technoference diminishes emotional support between partners during shared activities like meals or conversations. Collectively, these findings underscore the cultural shift toward device-centred interaction, raising questions about the long-term implications of living in environments where digital distractions are normalized.

The challenge posed by technoference lies in the difficulty of balancing the benefits of connectivity with the need for meaningful, uninterrupted human interaction. Drouin et al. (2020) emphasized that couples who establish explicit rules for technology-free times report significantly higher levels of satisfaction and trust. Similarly, Baker and Oswald (2010) suggest that intentional strategies—such as creating tech-free zones—can mitigate disruptions and restore relational focus. As technoference continues to infiltrate everyday routines, understanding its nuances becomes increasingly critical for developing effective interventions. Without deliberate reflection and boundary-setting, the relational harms of digital distraction may become entrenched, shaping future generations' expectations of interpersonal communication.

Technopola

Neil Postman (1993) introduced the concept of technopola in his seminal work *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, where he argued that societies increasingly surrender cultural authority to technological imperatives. Unlike earlier societies in which technology was treated as a tool, technopola describes a cultural condition in which technology dictates values, shapes institutions, and influences identity. Carr (2010) and Turkle (2011) build on this perspective by noting that digital environments often privilege immediacy and convenience over depth and reflection. For example, algorithm-driven media consumption reinforces echo chambers, promoting cultural homogeneity while discouraging critical dialogue (Sunstein, 2018). This shift represents more than individual choice; it reflects a structural transformation in how societies prioritize technological efficiency at the expense of humanistic values.

A defining characteristic of technopola is the decline of critical thinking in the face of overwhelming technological authority. McChesney (2013) notes that the dominance of digital capitalism reinforces technopola by commodifying personal data and shaping users' online experiences in ways that prioritize profit over human well-being. Similarly, Zuboff (2019) describes how surveillance capitalism exemplifies technopola by embedding technological logic into the very fabric of social life. As individuals increasingly construct their identities online, they become passive participants in systems designed to capture and manipulate their behavior. Such dynamics illustrate how technopola undermines individual agency and collective reflection, replacing deliberative practices with algorithmically guided conformity.

Scholars have also highlighted the ethical dimensions of technopola, particularly regarding privacy, surveillance, and cultural homogenization. Morozov (2013) critiques the "technological solutionism" inherent in technopola, wherein complex social issues are framed as problems solvable through technological fixes. While such narratives promise efficiency, they obscure deeper structural concerns such as inequality, alienation, and the erosion of public discourse. Technopola thus fosters an environment resistant to alternative viewpoints, perpetuating echo chambers and reinforcing dominant ideologies (Hampton et al., 2011). Awareness of these dynamics is essential for developing strategies that empower individuals and societies to engage critically with technology. By situating technopola within contemporary debates on digital ethics, scholars emphasize the urgent need for balance between technological progress and cultural reflection.

Hyperconnectivity

The term hyperconnectivity describes the condition of being constantly connected to others through digital technologies, facilitated by the proliferation of mobile devices, instant messaging platforms, and social media networks. Katz and Aakhus (2002) characterize hyperconnectivity as "perpetual contact," emphasizing its role in enabling real-time communication across spatial boundaries. While this condition enhances social opportunities, it also presents challenges that compromise mental health and social well-being. For instance, Riedl et al. (2012) found that hyperconnectivity contributes to elevated stress levels and burnout, as individuals struggle to manage the incessant demands for responsiveness. Twenge et al. (2018) further documented a correlation between high levels of digital engagement and increased rates of depression and anxiety among adolescents. These findings reveal that hyperconnectivity creates paradoxical outcomes: it strengthens superficial connections while simultaneously weakening deeper interpersonal bonds.

Another significant implication of hyperconnectivity is the erosion of boundaries between work and personal life. Katz et al. (2016) observed that employees in hyperconnected environments report difficulty disengaging from professional obligations, leading to diminished work-life balance. Similarly, McCarthy et al. (2016) argue that perpetual digital access blurs the lines between leisure and labour, creating conditions for overwork and reduced personal fulfilment. The pressure to remain available at all times can generate feelings of fatigue, distraction, and relational strain, thereby undermining the very efficiency that digital technologies promise. Moreover, the normalization of hyperconnectivity fosters a culture of immediacy, in which delayed responses are perceived as socially unacceptable. Such expectations exacerbate anxiety and foster dependency on constant digital engagement.

Concerns about hyperconnectivity extend beyond individual well-being to societal values such as privacy, autonomy, and collective trust. Zuboff (2019) and West (2019)

argue that hyperconnectivity facilitates unprecedented forms of surveillance, as personal data becomes a primary commodity in the digital economy. The loss of privacy not only affects individuals but also reshapes public life, altering how citizens participate in political and cultural discourse. To mitigate these risks, scholars have emphasized the importance of digital literacy and mindful technology use (Vasalou et al., 2017). Encouraging individuals to establish boundaries, such as designated offline times, can counteract the negative consequences of hyperconnectivity. Ultimately, addressing hyperconnectivity requires a cultural reorientation that values depth of connection over constant availability, enabling societies to harness the benefits of connectivity without succumbing to its harms.

Interpretive Journalism

Interpretive journalism is an approach to reporting that goes beyond presenting facts to provide analysis, context, and meaning. Becker (2019) describes it as a form of journalism that situates events within larger socio-cultural frameworks, thereby helping audiences understand not only what happened but also why it matters. Unlike traditional reporting, interpretive journalism prioritizes depth, often incorporating historical, political, or cultural analysis to enrich public understanding. In the context of technology studies, interpretive journalism is particularly valuable because phenomena such as technofence, technopola, and hyperconnectivity are not merely empirical facts but cultural shifts requiring nuanced interpretation. By connecting technological practices to broader implications, interpretive journalism empowers audiences to critically evaluate the role of digital tools in their lives (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014).

Interpretive journalism also plays a critical role in strengthening democratic discourse. Schudson (2008) argues that by contextualizing information, journalists can bridge the gap between raw data and meaningful civic engagement. This responsibility is increasingly important in a media environment saturated with fragmented and surface-level reporting. Williams (2019) further emphasizes that interpretive journalism fosters accountability by questioning dominant narratives and providing counterpoints to technological determinism. In addressing issues such as surveillance, online dependency, and relational decline, interpretive journalists can challenge public complacency and inspire reflective dialogue. Such engagement is essential in societies grappling with the complexities of digital transformation.

Nevertheless, interpretive journalism faces challenges related to bias and credibility. Critics caution that excessive interpretation may lead journalists to impose personal perspectives on facts, thereby compromising objectivity (Fenton, 2010). This tension highlights the delicate balance between providing meaningful context and maintaining professional neutrality. Despite these challenges, interpretive journalism remains an indispensable tool for grappling with complex technological phenomena. By promoting critical engagement, fostering informed citizenship, and amplifying diverse perspectives, interpretive journalism can serve as a counterbalance to the reductive tendencies of contemporary media. In the context of this study, it is positioned as a vital means of exploring and communicating the cultural consequences of technofence, technopola, and hyperconnectivity.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored in the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) theory and the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory. Together, these perspectives provide a robust lens for analysing the interplay between

technology, culture, and human behaviour. SCOT emphasizes that technology is not an autonomous force shaping society but rather a product of social processes, cultural contexts, and human decisions (Bijker, 1995). In contrast, U&G theory focuses on the active role of individuals, arguing that people use media and technologies to satisfy specific needs, whether for information, entertainment, or social connection (Katz et al., 1973). When combined, these frameworks allow for a balanced understanding of how societal norms shape technology adoption and how individuals strategically use technologies to meet evolving needs. This dual approach is especially relevant in a hyperconnected world where both structural and personal dynamics influence digital engagement.

The Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) framework provides critical insight into how society shapes technological development and meaning. Rather than viewing technology as an external determinant of culture, SCOT underscores its socially negotiated nature. According to Bijker (1995), technological artifacts gain significance through the interactions of social groups that interpret, design, and adopt them. In the context of this study, SCOT helps explain how cultural norms legitimize phenomena such as technoference and hyperconnectivity. For instance, the normalization of checking mobile devices during conversations reflects collective acceptance rather than purely technological necessity. Similarly, technopola can be interpreted through SCOT as a cultural outcome where society collectively surrenders decision-making authority to technological systems. By applying SCOT, this research highlights the reciprocal relationship between culture and technology, challenging deterministic narratives that portray digital tools as inevitable forces.

Complementing SCOT, the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory shifts the focus to individual agency in the adoption and utilization of technology. Developed by Katz et al. (1973), U&G posits that audiences are not passive consumers of media but active participants who select media based on personal needs, motivations, and gratifications. In the context of hyperconnectivity, U&G explains why individuals choose to remain perpetually connected despite the associated risks of stress, distraction, and relational decline. For example, people may prioritize constant connectivity to satisfy needs for belonging, validation, or access to information, even when these gratifications come at the expense of deeper interpersonal relationships. Similarly, U&G provides insight into technoference by explaining why individuals permit devices to interrupt meaningful activities; in many cases, the perceived gratification of immediate communication outweighs the costs of relational disruption. This theoretical perspective underscores the intentional yet paradoxical nature of technology use in digital societies.

Together, SCOT and U&G create a synergistic framework for understanding the complexities of digital culture. While SCOT situates technology within broader social and cultural processes, U&G highlights the micro-level decisions individuals make in adopting and using technology. This duality is essential for capturing the dynamic interplay between personal agency and societal structures in shaping phenomena like technoference, technopola, and hyperconnectivity. For example, SCOT can explain how cultural acceptance of hyperconnectivity emerges from collective practices, while U&G clarifies why individuals actively contribute to this trend by seeking specific gratifications. The combined theoretical framework thus supports a multi-layered analysis that integrates individual behaviors, cultural norms, and technological practices.

Applying these theories directly to the research questions further enhances their relevance. The first question—how technoference affects interpersonal relationships—

can be illuminated through U&G, which explains why individuals prioritize digital gratifications despite negative relational outcomes. The second question—how technopola shapes cultural values and identity—draws heavily on SCOT, which situates technopola within cultural processes that define technological authority. The third question—how interpretive journalism communicates these complexities—benefits from both perspectives, as journalism operates within socially constructed frameworks (SCOT) while addressing audiences who actively seek gratifications from media content (U&G). By grounding the study in these complementary theories, the analysis remains attentive to both structural and individual dimensions of technology's influence.

In summary, SCOT and U&G collectively provide a comprehensive theoretical lens for analyzing the intertwined dynamics of technoference, technopola, and hyperconnectivity. SCOT enables an exploration of how cultural acceptance and social negotiation shape technological practices, while U&G emphasizes the intentional, need-driven choices individuals make in their engagement with digital tools. Their integration ensures that the study does not fall into the trap of technological determinism or individual voluntarism but instead recognizes the reciprocal influence between society and technology. This balanced framework also strengthens the role of interpretive journalism, which operates at the intersection of cultural structures and individual meaning-making. By situating journalism within this theoretical context, the study underscores its capacity to critically unpack technological phenomena and guide public reflection on healthier digital practices.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative survey design to investigate the interrelated effects of technoference, technopola, and hyperconnectivity on interpersonal relationships, mental health, and cultural values. A total of 300 voluntary respondents were selected through a convenience sampling technique, which allowed the researchers to gather diverse perspectives from individuals with varying levels of digital engagement. The survey instrument consisted of structured questionnaires designed to capture both demographic information and perceptions related to technology use. Questions were carefully developed based on prior literature, ensuring that the constructs of technoference, technopola, and hyperconnectivity were measured using validated indicators (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; Postman, 1993; Katz & Aakhus, 2002). The decision to use a survey method was informed by its efficiency in collecting standardized data from a large population, thereby facilitating the generation of generalizable insights.

Data collection was carried out in both physical and online contexts to accommodate participants' varying accessibility. Hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed in selected academic and social institutions, while digital versions were disseminated via email and social media platforms. Prior to distribution, participants were informed of the study's objectives, assured of confidentiality, and asked to provide informed consent. This ethical consideration ensured that the study adhered to standards of voluntary participation and respect for respondents' autonomy (Hollandsworth et al., 2017). By combining physical and digital modes of administration, the researchers were able to maximize response rates while ensuring inclusivity in sampling. This methodological choice also reflects the hybrid nature of communication in hyperconnected societies, where both online and offline platforms are integral to information exchange.

The questionnaire items were structured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” These items captured perceptions across three main dimensions: (1) technoference and its effects on interpersonal relationships and well-being, (2) technopola and its influence on cultural norms and individual identity, and (3) the role of interpretive journalism in addressing these phenomena. Responses were coded numerically to facilitate statistical analysis, with agreement and disagreement percentages calculated for each item. Descriptive statistics, including mean (μ), standard deviation (σ), and kurtosis (κ), were employed to identify patterns and assess the distribution of responses. This analytical approach allowed for both an overview of participants’ perspectives and deeper examination of areas where consensus or divergence existed.

The choice of descriptive statistics was intentional, as the study aimed not to test causal hypotheses but rather to map perceptions and identify significant trends. The use of kurtosis values, for instance, provided insight into the distribution of responses, indicating whether views were clustered tightly around the mean or dispersed across the scale. Such information was particularly useful in understanding whether agreement with certain statements reflected strong consensus or a broad range of perspectives. By focusing on descriptive measures, the analysis remained aligned with the interpretive orientation of the study, which sought to highlight patterns of meaning rather than establish predictive models. This methodological stance is consistent with the study’s broader aim of integrating empirical findings with journalistic interpretation.

Data Presentation

Research Question 1

How does technoference affect the quality of interpersonal relationships and mental health among individuals in a hyperconnected society?

Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Σ	μ	σ	κ	Decision
My use of technology often interrupts meaningful activities.	67.34	32.66	297	0.67	0.47	$\bar{1.46}$	Agree
I feel more anxious or stressed when I see others’ technological habits.	72.39	27.61	297	0.72	0.45	$\bar{0.99}$	Agree
Technology has negatively impacted the quality of my relationships.	71.38	28.62	297	0.71	0.45	$\bar{1.10}$	Agree
I often prioritize my phone or computer over spending time with loved ones.	71.72	28.28	297	0.72	0.45	$\bar{1.07}$	Agree
I believe that reducing my screen time would improve my overall well-being.	68.69	31.31	297	0.69	0.46	$\bar{1.35}$	Agree

Overall, five sub-variables—interruptions, anxiety, quality of relationships, prioritization, and screen time—were used to measure participants’ perceptions of technoference. The findings suggest that the majority of respondents recognized the disruptive influence of technology on their interpersonal interactions and mental health.

Research Question 2

In what ways does technopola shape societal norms and values, and how do these changes impact individual identity and well-being?

Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Σ	μ	σ	κ	Decision
I feel that technology has significantly influenced my daily decisions.	73.06	26.94	297	0.73	0.44	$\bar{0.91}$	Agree
My identity is shaped more by my online presence than by in-person interactions.	67.00	33.00	297	0.67	0.47	$\bar{1.48}$	Agree
Societal norms are increasingly dictated by technological trends.	72.73	27.27	297	0.73	0.45	$\bar{0.95}$	Agree
I often find myself conforming to trends set by technology or social media.	72.73	27.27	297	0.73	0.45	$\bar{0.95}$	Agree
I believe that technology fosters individualism at the expense of community.	69.02	30.98	297	0.69	0.46	$\bar{1.33}$	Agree

The five items collectively demonstrate strong support for the notion that technopola is reshaping cultural values and identity. Respondents consistently affirmed that technology influences decision-making, fosters conformity to trends, and elevates online presence as a key dimension of identity.

Research Question 3

How can interpretive journalism effectively communicate the complexities of technoferece and hyperconnectivity to inform public understanding and promote healthier technology use?

Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Σ	μ	σ	κ	Decision
News articles that provide context about technological habits are more valuable than statistics.	72.05	27.95	297	0.72	0.45	$\bar{1.03}$	Agree
Interpretive journalism is essential for navigating complex technological issues.	67.34	32.66	297	0.67	0.47	$\bar{1.46}$	Agree
I often rely on news sources that offer in-depth analysis rather than quick headlines.	73.06	26.94	297	0.73	0.44	$\bar{0.91}$	Agree
I believe that journalists have a responsibility to guide public understanding of technology.	69.02	30.98	297	0.69	0.46	$\bar{1.33}$	Agree
Effective journalism can promote healthier technological habits in society.	73.74	26.26	297	0.74	0.44	$\bar{0.83}$	Agree

The responses indicate widespread agreement that interpretive journalism has a critical role in guiding public understanding of technological issues. The consistent mean values between 0.67 and 0.74 highlight strong endorsement of journalism's capacity to contextualize digital habits and promote healthier engagement

Findings and Data Analysis

Theme 1: The Effects of Technoference on Interpersonal Relationships and Mental Health

The data reveal a consistent pattern indicating that technoference undermines both the quality of interpersonal relationships and the mental health of individuals in a hyperconnected society. A significant proportion of respondents (67.34%) reported that their technology use often interrupts meaningful activities such as conversations or shared family experiences. This supports earlier findings by McDaniel and Coyne (2016), who argued that digital interruptions erode relational intimacy and satisfaction. Furthermore, 72.39% of respondents expressed feelings of anxiety or stress when observing the technological habits of others, reflecting the broader social comparison dynamics discussed by Przybylski and Weinstein (2019). This indicates that technoference not only affects users directly but also creates ripple effects through observation of others' behaviours. The data therefore suggest that the cumulative impact of technoference extends beyond isolated disruptions, ultimately influencing broader social climates and emotional well-being.

In addition to relational strain, technoference appears to influence the value hierarchy individuals assign to human interaction versus digital engagement. Approximately 71.72% of respondents acknowledged prioritizing their devices over spending quality time with loved ones, indicating a shift in attention and priorities. This aligns with research by David and Roberts (2020), who found that device preoccupation often leads to feelings of neglect within family systems. The psychological consequences of such prioritization are evident in the finding that 68.69% of participants believed reducing screen time would improve their overall well-being. Collectively, these results affirm that technoference is not a marginal phenomenon but a pervasive cultural issue with profound implications for relational and psychological health. The consistent agreement across multiple indicators underscores the urgency of developing interventions that can mitigate these effects in everyday life.

Theme 2: The Influence of Technopola on Societal Norms, Values, and Identity

The findings also provide robust evidence of the cultural influence exerted by technopola, with a striking 73.06% of respondents affirming that technology significantly shapes their daily decisions. This reflects Postman's (1993) argument that technopola is characterized by the surrender of cultural authority to technological imperatives. Identity formation has also been strongly influenced by this dynamic, with 67.00% of participants stating that their online presence is more central to their self-concept than in-person interactions. This echoes Carr's (2010) critique of shallow engagement in digital spaces, where self-expression is mediated through curated digital personas rather than authentic human relationships. These findings highlight the extent to which technopola reshapes identity, aligning individuals' sense of self more with technological trends than with face-to-face experiences.

Another important finding is the recognition that societal norms are increasingly dictated by technology, with 72.73% of respondents agreeing to this assertion. Participants also acknowledged that they often conform to trends set by social media, reinforcing Sunstein's (2018) observations about the echo chamber effects of digital platforms. The implications of such conformity extend beyond individual choices, as they collectively shape societal expectations and reinforce cultural homogenization. Furthermore, 69.02% of respondents agreed that technology fosters individualism at the expense of community, echoing Zuboff's (2019) critique of surveillance capitalism,

which prioritizes personal consumption over collective solidarity. Taken together, these results affirm that technopola has significant consequences for social values, encouraging conformity and consumerism while weakening communal bonds. This underscores the need for critical engagement with technology to preserve humanistic values in an increasingly digital culture.

Theme 3: The Role of Interpretive Journalism in Communicating Complex Technological Phenomena

The results also demonstrate strong support for interpretive journalism as a means of addressing the complexities associated with technoferece and hyperconnectivity. A substantial 72.05% of respondents valued news articles that provide contextual analysis of technological habits over those that rely solely on statistics. This supports Kovach and Rosenstiel's (2014) assertion that journalism must provide meaning and context to inform public understanding. Furthermore, 73.06% of participants reported relying on news sources that offer in-depth analysis rather than quick headlines, suggesting a clear preference for journalism that prioritizes depth over immediacy. These findings reflect the role of interpretive journalism as an essential bridge between raw data and public comprehension of sociotechnical issues.

Respondents also affirmed the responsibility of journalists in guiding public understanding of technology, with 69.02% agreeing that this is a core journalistic duty. Additionally, 73.74% of participants believed that effective journalism can promote healthier technological habits, underscoring its practical role in shaping behavior. These results align with Schudson's (2008) view that journalism is vital for democratic life, as it fosters accountability and critical engagement with societal challenges. The broad consensus expressed in the survey results reinforces the notion that interpretive journalism is uniquely positioned to navigate the complexities of digital life. By contextualizing issues such as technoferece and hyperconnectivity, journalism can empower audiences to critically evaluate their digital practices and adopt healthier, more intentional modes of engagement.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study affirm the growing scholarly consensus that technoferece significantly undermines the quality of interpersonal relationships. Consistent with McDaniel and Coyne's (2016) research, a majority of respondents (67.34%) acknowledged that their technology use interrupts meaningful activities. This supports the argument that digital devices are not neutral tools but active disruptors of relational intimacy. The observed stress and anxiety linked to the technological habits of others (72.39%) further reinforce Przybylski and Weinstein's (2019) claim that technoferece creates social comparison pressures, intensifying emotional strain. Importantly, the data show that these effects are not isolated occurrences but are widely shared experiences that point to systemic cultural issues. In this sense, technoferece is not simply an individual behavior but a structural phenomenon embedded in contemporary social life.

The study also underscores the cultural consequences of technopola, as theorized by Postman (1993). Survey responses indicated that 73.06% of participants felt technology significantly influenced their daily decisions, reflecting the deep penetration of technological logic into everyday life. This aligns with Carr's (2010) argument that the prioritization of immediacy and efficiency over reflection has become a defining feature of digital societies. Moreover, the finding that 67.00% of respondents identified more strongly with their online presence than their physical interactions highlights the

extent to which technopola reshapes identity. This supports Turkle's (2011) critique of curated digital selves, which, while offering opportunities for connection, often lead to feelings of inadequacy and disconnection. Taken together, these results confirm that technopola exerts significant influence not only on cultural norms but also on the individual's sense of self.

Another important contribution of the study is its illumination of the paradox of hyperconnectivity. While digital technologies provide unprecedented opportunities for communication, the survey results reveal that hyperconnectivity simultaneously generates anxiety, cognitive overload, and relational decline. This finding is consistent with Twenge et al. (2018), who reported increased depression and anxiety among adolescents in highly connected environments. Similarly, Riedl et al. (2012) found that constant digital demands contribute to stress and burnout, which parallels the experiences reported by participants in this study. The normalization of hyperconnectivity, as evidenced by participants' recognition of its influence on societal norms, reflects a broader cultural shift towards immediacy and constant availability. These dynamics suggest that hyperconnectivity is both a symptom and a driver of technopola, creating conditions where the pressures of connectivity shape identity, relationships, and social structures.

The role of interpretive journalism emerges as a vital mechanism for addressing these technological challenges. A substantial proportion of respondents (72.05%) expressed a preference for journalism that contextualizes technological habits rather than focusing narrowly on statistics. This finding resonates with Kovach and Rosenstiel's (2014) view that journalism must provide meaning, not merely information. The perception that journalists have a responsibility to guide public understanding (69.02%) highlights the potential of media to shape societal responses to digital dependence. Moreover, the strong agreement (73.74%) that effective journalism can promote healthier technological habits affirms the capacity of journalism to function as a cultural educator. These findings position interpretive journalism as a key actor in mediating between the lived experiences of individuals and the broader cultural consequences of digital technologies.

Comparing the study's findings with prior literature reveals important convergences and divergences. Like McDaniel and Coyne (2016), this study confirms that technoference is correlated with reduced relational satisfaction and increased anxiety. Similarly, the results support Postman's (1993) critique of technopola, showing how cultural surrender to technology reshapes norms and identity. However, this study goes further by integrating these phenomena with the lens of interpretive journalism, which is less emphasized in previous research. This contribution is significant because it highlights not only the problems posed by digital life but also potential avenues for societal response. By identifying journalism as a mediating force, the study expands the conversation beyond diagnosis to include strategies for cultural adaptation and resilience.

Finally, the findings underscore the interconnectedness of technoference, technopola, and hyperconnectivity, suggesting that they should not be studied in isolation. Technoference disrupts relationships at the micro-level, while technopola reshapes cultural values at the macro-level, and hyperconnectivity functions as the condition that sustains both phenomena. This interconnected dynamic reflects the reciprocal relationship between individual agency and cultural structures described by SCOT and U&G theories. From a SCOT perspective, the normalization of constant connectivity reflects collective cultural choices, while from a U&G perspective, individuals' motivations for connection explain the persistence of these practices

despite their harms. The dual theoretical lens therefore reinforces the study's contribution to understanding how personal behaviors and societal norms are mutually reinforcing in the digital age.

Conclusion

This study has examined the interconnected dynamics of technoference, technopola, and hyperconnectivity through the lens of interpretive journalism, highlighting their profound implications for interpersonal relationships, cultural values, and mental health. The findings affirm that technoference disrupts meaningful interactions, leading to relational dissatisfaction, stress, and diminished well-being. At the societal level, technopola has emerged as a cultural condition in which technology dictates norms and shapes identity, often at the expense of critical thinking and humanistic values. Hyperconnectivity further compounds these challenges by fostering cognitive overload, social fragmentation, and the erosion of boundaries between personal and professional life. Together, these phenomena reflect the complex realities of living in digitally saturated societies, where technological benefits coexist with significant psychological and cultural costs.

The study also emphasizes the critical role of interpretive journalism in navigating these complexities. Unlike traditional reporting, interpretive journalism provides the depth and context necessary for audiences to critically engage with issues that cannot be understood through surface-level information. The survey results demonstrated strong public support for journalism that prioritizes context, depth, and responsibility in guiding societal understanding of technological issues. By functioning as a mediator between raw information and cultural reflection, interpretive journalism can foster healthier engagement with technology and encourage individuals to adopt more intentional practices. This contribution positions journalism as not merely a passive observer of technological change but as an active participant in shaping cultural adaptation and resilience.

From a theoretical standpoint, the integration of SCOT and U&G theories provided a balanced framework for analysing the reciprocal relationship between technology, culture, and individual behaviour. SCOT underscored the socially constructed nature of technological practices, while U&G highlighted the intentional yet paradoxical motivations that drive individual engagement with digital tools. Together, these frameworks revealed how individual choices and cultural norms reinforce one another in sustaining technoference, technopola, and hyperconnectivity. This theoretical synthesis contributes to a more holistic understanding of digital culture, resisting both technological determinism and simplistic individual voluntarism.

In conclusion, the study underscores that technology is a double-edged sword whose effects depend on how societies and individuals choose to engage with it. While digital tools provide unprecedented opportunities for communication, convenience, and access to knowledge, their overuse risks undermining the very foundations of social solidarity and personal well-being. Meaningful relationships, critical reflection, and intentional engagement must remain central to human life in order to balance the allure of technological immediacy. By recognizing the relational and cultural costs of excessive reliance on technology, societies can move toward healthier, more reflective, and sustainable modes of digital engagement.

Recommendations

- i. To reduce technoference, couples and families should establish “tech-free zones” or designated tech-free times, such as during meals, bedtime, or family gatherings. Setting clear boundaries around device use restores focus on interpersonal connections and strengthens emotional intimacy. Media campaigns and educational initiatives can further promote these practices, normalizing boundaries as a cultural value rather than an individual exception.
- ii. To counter the cultural dominance of technopola, communication scholars and educators should encourage individuals to balance their digital and offline engagements. Participation in community events, hobbies, and face-to-face interactions provides opportunities for authentic self-expression that cannot be replicated online. By diversifying identity practices, individuals can resist overreliance on curated digital personas and foster stronger connections to real-world communities.
- iii. Educational institutions should prioritize the teaching of digital citizenship and critical media literacy to equip individuals with the skills needed to navigate complex technological environments. Such programs can cultivate awareness of surveillance, privacy, and algorithmic bias while promoting intentional technology use. Media literacy also empowers individuals to critically evaluate digital trends, reducing conformity to technological determinism and fostering reflective engagement.
- iv. Media outlets should invest in interpretive journalism that provides context-driven analysis of technological practices and their broader implications. Journalists must move beyond surface-level reporting to explore the cultural, psychological, and ethical dimensions of digital life. Practical articles that combine critical analysis with actionable advice—such as the use of screen-time monitoring apps or mindfulness practices—can bridge the gap between scholarly insights and everyday decision-making.
- v. Individuals and organizations should adopt mindfulness-based approaches to technology use, such as intentional screen breaks, digital detox programs, and scheduled offline activities. These practices have been shown to improve mental health, reduce anxiety, and restore balance between online and offline life (Bennett, 2020). Mindfulness can also foster greater self-awareness of the gratifications sought from technology, enabling more deliberate choices about digital engagement.
- vi. Further studies should adopt longitudinal approaches to examine how technoference, technopola, and hyperconnectivity evolve over time. Cross-cultural research would also provide valuable insights into how different societies negotiate the balance between technology and tradition. Additionally, qualitative approaches such as interviews or ethnography could complement survey findings by capturing the lived experiences of individuals navigating hyperconnected environments. By expanding the methodological scope, future research can provide richer, more nuanced accounts of digital culture.

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