

Engagement in Multiplayer Online Gaming as Digitally Mediated Communication: Examining Social Interaction among Malaysian Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Despite the rapid growth of multiplayer online gaming worldwide, existing research has predominantly examined gaming from psychological and behavioural perspectives, with comparatively limited attention devoted to its role as a digitally mediated communication environment. This study investigates the relationship between engagement in multiplayer online gaming and social interaction among Malaysian young adults by conceptualising multiplayer online gaming as a form of digitally mediated communication behaviour. Guided by Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), a quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 385 Malaysian young adults with experience in multiplayer online gaming. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, independent-samples *t*-tests, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between engagement in multiplayer online gaming and social interaction ($r = .269, p < .001$). Regression analysis further demonstrated that engagement in multiplayer online gaming significantly predicted social interaction ($\beta = .269, p < .001$), explaining 7.3% of the variance. Additional analyses identified significant differences in gaming engagement across gender and gaming platforms. The findings suggest that multiplayer online gaming extends beyond entertainment to function as a digitally mediated communication ecosystem where interpersonal interaction, collaboration, and relationship maintenance are embedded within gameplay. By reconceptualising engagement in multiplayer online gaming from a communication perspective, this study broadens the dominant discourse on digital gaming and contributes empirical evidence from Malaysia to the growing body of communication and media research on interactive digital environments.

Keywords: Multiplayer online gaming; digitally mediated communication; social interaction; Uses and Gratifications Theory; Malaysian young adults.

INTRODUCTION

Multiplayer online gaming has become one of the most significant forms of digitally mediated communication among young adults, transforming the ways individuals interact, collaborate, and maintain social relationships within virtual environments. Recent industry estimates indicate that more than 3.4 billion people worldwide engage in digital gaming, with multiplayer and mobile games representing the fastest-growing sectors of the global games industry (Newzoo, 2024; Gao & Hallikainen, 2024). Unlike traditional digital games that emphasised individual entertainment, contemporary multiplayer online games integrate real-time voice communication, instant messaging, collaborative gameplay, and community participation, enabling players to communicate continuously while pursuing shared objectives. Consequently, multiplayer online games have evolved beyond recreational technologies into interactive communication ecosystems where social interaction is embedded within everyday gameplay. This transformation reflects broader changes in digital communication, in which interpersonal interaction increasingly occurs through participatory digital platforms rather than conventional social networking applications alone.

The rapid expansion of multiplayer online gaming has stimulated growing scholarly interest across communication, media, psychology, and information systems. Early scholarship predominantly examined multiplayer online gaming through psychological and behavioural perspectives, focusing on problematic gaming behaviour, Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), aggression, and psychological well-being (Griffiths, 2010; Kuss & Griffiths, 2012). While these studies substantially advanced understanding of gaming-related risks, they largely conceptualised gaming as an individual behavioural activity rather than a socially embedded communication practice.

More recent scholarship, however, has shifted towards recognising multiplayer online games as digitally mediated social environments where communication, collaboration, and community participation are integral to gameplay (Scheifer & Samuel, 2025; Korkeila, 2023). Rather than interacting solely with game content, players continuously communicate through voice chat, text messaging, guild systems, live streaming, and external communication platforms such as Discord, creating persistent social networks that frequently extend beyond gameplay sessions. Recent empirical studies have demonstrated that multiplayer online gaming facilitates friendship formation, social capital, collaborative problem-solving, relationship maintenance, and community engagement, suggesting that communication has become one of the principal functions of contemporary multiplayer games. Consequently, multiplayer online games increasingly operate as communication ecosystems where interpersonal interaction, collaboration, and social participation are embedded within gameplay.

This conceptual transformation reflects broader developments in digital communication. As communication increasingly occurs through participatory digital platforms, multiplayer online games have emerged alongside social networking sites, instant messaging applications, and online communities as important environments for interpersonal interaction. Unlike conventional social media, where communication represents the primary activity, multiplayer games embed communication within shared objectives, teamwork, competition, and collaborative decision-making. Consequently, communication is not merely a by-product of gameplay but has become one of the defining characteristics of multiplayer online gaming.

Beyond technological advancement, the sustained popularity of multiplayer online gaming is closely associated with the diverse motivations that drive players' continued participation. Earlier studies identified competition, challenge, fantasy, diversion, achievement, and social interaction as key motivations for digital game use (Sherry et al., 2006; Yee, 2006). However, contemporary multiplayer gaming has expanded these motivations beyond gameplay itself. Recent studies suggest that young adults increasingly participate in multiplayer online games to maintain friendships, strengthen social relationships, collaborate with teammates, experience a sense of belonging, and participate in online communities. Communication therefore becomes both a motivation for engagement and an outcome of sustained gameplay. Rather than simply seeking entertainment, players actively use multiplayer online games as spaces for interpersonal interaction, emotional support, identity expression, and collective participation within digitally connected communities. This evolution suggests that multiplayer online gaming should be understood not only as a recreational activity but also as a socially meaningful communication practice that satisfies multiple interpersonal and psychological needs.

The growing importance of communication within multiplayer gaming is consistent with Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which proposes that individuals actively select media capable of satisfying specific cognitive, affective, personal, and social needs (Katz et al., 1974; Wilson & Burrell, 2025). Recent esports research further supports the relevance of UGT in gaming contexts by showing that players continue engaging with esports to satisfy entertainment, escapism, achievement, self-presentation, and social interaction gratifications (Nguyen & Daxauer, 2025). This theoretical perspective has been widely applied to social media, streaming platforms, and digital communication technologies. However, its application within multiplayer online gaming remains comparatively limited despite growing evidence that players utilise multiplayer games to fulfil diverse social and communicative needs, including companionship, collaboration, achievement, identity construction, and social belonging. Accordingly, UGT provides an appropriate theoretical lens for understanding why individuals engage with multiplayer online games and how such engagement contributes to interpersonal communication and social interaction.

Despite the rapid growth of multiplayer online gaming research, several important conceptual and empirical gaps remain. First, the existing literature continues to be dominated by psychological, behavioural, and health-related

perspectives, with substantial attention devoted to Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), problematic gaming behaviour, gaming addiction, aggression, and mental well-being (Chi et al, 2022). Previous Malaysian studies have primarily examined gaming from health and addiction perspectives, focusing on physical health, sleep quality, and gaming addiction, while communication outcomes remain underexplored (Zakaria & Adnan, 2022). While these studies have significantly enhanced understanding of the potential risks associated with excessive gaming, they provide only a partial explanation of why multiplayer online games continue to attract billions of active users worldwide. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to understanding multiplayer online gaming as a digitally mediated communication environment in which interpersonal interaction, collaboration, relationship maintenance, and community participation are embedded within everyday gameplay.

Second, although recent studies acknowledge that communication and social interaction constitute important motivations for multiplayer gaming participation, relatively few empirical investigations have examined whether sustained Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement contributes to broader communication outcomes beyond the gaming environment itself. Existing research has primarily explored gaming motivations, social presence, or online community participation independently, whereas the direct relationship between Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement and Social Interaction remains insufficiently examined. Consequently, current understanding remains fragmented regarding the communicative implications of sustained engagement in multiplayer online games.

Third, previous findings concerning demographic differences remain inconclusive. Earlier studies consistently characterised multiplayer gaming as a predominantly male-oriented activity associated with stronger competitive motivations and higher engagement. However, the rapid expansion of smartphone-based multiplayer games has substantially diversified gaming participation, particularly among young adults. Recent international studies suggest that traditional gender differences are gradually narrowing, while gaming platforms themselves increasingly shape how individuals communicate, collaborate, and participate within online gaming communities. Nevertheless, empirical evidence comparing Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement across gender and gaming platforms remains inconsistent, particularly within Southeast Asian contexts.

Finally, despite Southeast Asia representing one of the world's fastest-growing digital gaming markets, communication-based studies remain comparatively limited. In Malaysia, previous research has predominantly focused on gaming addiction, psychological well-being, academic performance, and problematic gaming behaviour, whereas comparatively little attention has been devoted to examining multiplayer online gaming as a form of digital communication behaviour. This imbalance limits current understanding of how Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement contributes to Social Interaction among Malaysian young adults within an increasingly digital society.

Guided by Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), this study addresses these gaps by conceptualising Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement as a contemporary form of digital communication behaviour rather than merely recreational media consumption. Specifically, this study investigates the relationship between Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement and Social Interaction among Malaysian young adults while further examining whether engagement differs according to gender and gaming platform. By repositioning multiplayer online gaming within the broader context of communication and media studies, this research contributes to the growing body of scholarship on digitally mediated communication and provides empirical evidence from the underrepresented Malaysian context.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between multiplayer online gaming engagement and social interaction among Malaysian young adults. Guided by Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), the study conceptualised multiplayer online gaming engagement as the predictor variable and social interaction as the outcome variable. A purposive sampling approach was adopted to recruit Malaysian young adults aged between 18 and 30 years who had prior experience playing multiplayer online games. Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via social media platforms and gaming communities. Of the 400 questionnaires received, 385 were retained for analysis after data screening, yielding a valid response rate of 96.3%. Female respondents constituted 57.7% ($n = 222$) of the sample,

while 42.3% ($n = 163$) were male. Mobile devices represented the primary gaming platform (65.7%), followed by personal computers (26.8%), consoles (2.1%), virtual reality devices (1.0%), and other platforms (4.4%).

The questionnaire comprised three sections. The first section collected respondents' demographic information. The second measured multiplayer online gaming engagement using items adapted from established gaming engagement and gaming motivation scales, while the third assessed social interaction using validated measures of interpersonal communication and relationship development associated with multiplayer online gaming. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to the main survey, the instrument was reviewed for content validity and pilot tested to improve clarity. Internal consistency reliability was subsequently assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, with all constructs exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70.

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 24). Descriptive statistics summarised respondents' demographic characteristics and gaming behaviour. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess internal consistency reliability. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between multiplayer online gaming engagement and social interaction. Independent-samples t-tests were performed to determine whether multiplayer online gaming engagement differed by gender, while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examined differences across gaming platforms. Statistical significance was established at $p < .05$.

FINDINGS

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 385 valid responses were included in the analysis. Of these, 222 respondents (57.7%) were female and 163 (42.3%) were male. The respondents were Malaysian young adults aged between 18 and 30 years with prior experience in multiplayer online gaming. Mobile devices were the most frequently used gaming platform, accounting for 65.7% of respondents, followed by personal computers (26.8%), consoles (2.1%), virtual reality (1.0%), and other platforms (4.4%). These findings indicate that mobile gaming has become the dominant platform for multiplayer online gaming among Malaysian young adults.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents ($N = 385$)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	163	42.3
	Female	222	57.7
Gaming Platform	Mobile	253	65.7
	PC	103	26.8
	Console	8	2.1
	VR	4	1.0
	Others	17	4.4
	Total	385	100.0

Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliability, and Pearson correlation coefficients for the study variables. Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement recorded a mean score of 3.32 ($SD = 0.83$), whereas Social Interaction recorded a mean score of 3.31 ($SD = 0.90$), indicating moderate levels of both constructs among the respondents. The reliability analysis demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .851 for Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement and .874 for Social Interaction, both exceeding the recommended threshold of .70 (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement and Social Interaction ($r = .269, p < .001$). Although the magnitude of the relationship was small to moderate according to Cohen (1988), the findings suggest that respondents who reported higher levels of engagement in multiplayer online gaming also tended to report higher levels of social interaction.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	1	2
1. Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement	3.321	0.834	.851	—	
2. Social Interaction	3.311	0.904	.874	.269***	—

** $p < .001$.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Regression Analysis

The hypothesis proposing that Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement positively predicts Social Interaction was examined using simple linear regression analysis. As presented in Table 3, the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 383) = 29.98$, $p < .001$, explaining approximately 7.3% of the variance in Social Interaction ($R^2 = .073$, Adjusted $R^2 = .070$). Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement emerged as a significant positive predictor of Social Interaction ($\beta = .269$, $t = 5.48$, $p < .001$). Specifically, a one-unit increase in Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement was associated with an increase of 0.292 units in Social Interaction ($B = .292$, 95% CI [0.187, 0.397]). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported, indicating that greater engagement in multiplayer online gaming is associated with higher levels of social interaction among Malaysian young adults

Table 3 Simple Linear Regression Predicting Social Interaction

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI
Constant	2.341	0.183	—	12.812	< .001	[1.981, 2.700]
Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement	0.292	0.053	.269	5.475	< .001	[0.187, 0.397]

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	p	Cohen's f^2
.269	.073	.070	29.976	< .001	.078

To further examine demographic differences, an independent-samples t -test was conducted to compare Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement between male and female respondents. As shown in Table 4 (Panel A), a statistically significant gender difference was observed, $t(383) = 3.33$, $p = .001$, with a small effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.34$). Male respondents reported significantly higher Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.81$) than female respondents ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.83$).

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was subsequently conducted to examine differences in Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement across gaming platforms. As presented in Table 4 (Panel B), the analysis revealed a statistically significant difference among gaming platforms, $F = 4.20$, $p = .002$, although the effect size was relatively small ($\eta^2 = .042$). Respondents who primarily used virtual reality headsets reported the highest level of engagement, followed by console and personal computer users, whereas respondents who primarily played on mobile devices reported comparatively lower engagement scores. Nevertheless, given the relatively small number of respondents using VR headsets and gaming consoles, these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Table 4 Additional Analyses of Multiplayer Online Gaming Engagement

Panel A. Gender Differences

Gender	n	Mean	SD
Male	163	3.483	0.810
Female	222	3.201	0.832

t	df	p	Mean Difference	95% CI	Cohen's
3.325	383	.001	0.282	[0.115, 0.4	0.343

Panel B. Gaming Platform Differences

Platform	n	Mean	SD
PC	103	3.407	0.508
Mobile Gaming	253	3.259	0.904
Console	8	3.750	0.649
VR Headset	4	4.714	0.000
Others	17	3.185	1.127

F	p	η^2
4.196	.002	.042

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that engagement in multiplayer online gaming extends beyond recreational participation to function as a digitally mediated communication behaviour that facilitates social interaction among Malaysian young adults. Although engagement in multiplayer online gaming explained a modest proportion of the variance in social interaction ($R^2 = .073$), the statistically significant relationship demonstrates that multiplayer gaming contributes meaningfully to interpersonal communication within contemporary digital environments. Rather than viewing multiplayer online games merely as entertainment technologies, the present findings suggest that they increasingly operate as communication environments where interaction, collaboration, teamwork, and relationship maintenance are embedded within everyday gameplay. This finding reflects the broader transformation of digital communication, in which communication is no longer confined to traditional social networking platforms but increasingly occurs through interactive and participatory digital environments. Consequently, engagement in multiplayer online gaming should be understood not simply as media consumption, but as an active form of digitally mediated communication behaviour through which young adults establish, maintain, and strengthen social relationships.

The present findings are consistent with recent systematic reviews demonstrating that multiplayer online games facilitate the development of online social capital, collaborative relationships, and community participation, particularly through collective gameplay and sustained interaction (Scheifer & Samuel, 2025; Korkeila, 2023). Contemporary scholarship increasingly recognises that multiplayer games facilitate communication through real-time voice chat, instant messaging, collaborative decision-making, and community participation, enabling players to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships beyond the gaming session itself. Consequently, engagement in multiplayer online gaming has been associated with friendship formation, social capital development, collaborative problem-solving, and long-term community engagement across diverse gaming contexts (Cole & Griffiths, 2007; Kowert & Oldmeadow, 2015; Kowert & Quandt, 2020). Rather than functioning solely as recreational technologies, multiplayer online games increasingly resemble participatory communication platforms where social interaction is embedded within shared experiences, teamwork, and collective achievement. This perspective is further supported by recent communication and media studies, which argue that the boundaries between gaming and digital social networking have become progressively blurred as players extend their interactions through integrated communication features and external platforms such as Discord and other online communities. These findings collectively reinforce the argument that multiplayer online games have evolved beyond entertainment media to become socially embedded digital communication platforms where communication itself constitutes a primary function of gameplay.

However, the present findings should not be interpreted as suggesting that engagement in multiplayer online gaming invariably produces positive social outcomes. Previous Asian research has primarily examined problematic gaming from a prevention and public health perspective, emphasising interventions and strategies to reduce problematic gaming behaviour rather than examining gaming as a communication environment

(Ahmad et al., 2023). At first glance, these findings appear to contradict the positive relationship observed in the present study. Nevertheless, a closer examination indicates that these contrasting conclusions often arise from differences in research focus. Previous studies have predominantly examined pathological or excessive gaming behaviours, emphasising the negative consequences of uncontrolled gaming participation. In contrast, the present study investigated engagement in multiplayer online gaming from a communication perspective, focusing on how participation in multiplayer gaming environments contributes to interpersonal interaction among young adults. This distinction is theoretically important because engagement in multiplayer online gaming does not necessarily imply problematic gaming behaviour. Rather, it reflects participation in communication-rich digital environments where collaboration, teamwork, and relationship maintenance are integral to gameplay. Consequently, the findings suggest that the social consequences of multiplayer online gaming depend not merely on the amount of time spent gaming, but on the nature of engagement, communication practices, and the social affordances embedded within multiplayer gaming environments. This perspective contributes to a more balanced understanding of multiplayer online gaming by recognising that the same digital environment may generate either beneficial or adverse outcomes depending on how individuals engage with it.

The Malaysian context provides additional insight into the interpretation of the present findings. Malaysia has experienced rapid digital transformation over the past decade (MCMC, 2024), characterised by widespread smartphone ownership, affordable mobile Internet access, and increasing participation in online gaming communities. These developments have fundamentally reshaped how young adults communicate, with digitally mediated interaction becoming embedded in everyday social life. Consistent with this trend, mobile devices emerged as the dominant gaming platform in the present study, accounting for 65.7% of respondents. This finding suggests that engagement in multiplayer online gaming is no longer confined to dedicated gaming spaces but has become integrated into routine communication practices that occur across different locations and social contexts. Unlike traditional gaming platforms that require specific equipment and settings, mobile multiplayer games enable continuous communication through voice chat, instant messaging, team coordination, and shared gaming experiences regardless of time and place. Consequently, multiplayer online gaming increasingly complements, rather than replaces, existing interpersonal relationships by providing an accessible digital environment through which young adults sustain friendships, coordinate activities, and participate in online communities. These findings are particularly important within the Malaysian context, where previous gaming research has predominantly focused on addiction, psychological well-being, and problematic gaming behaviour. By demonstrating that engagement in multiplayer online gaming is positively associated with social interaction, the present study broadens the existing discourse and highlights the importance of examining gaming as a communication phenomenon within rapidly digitalising societies.

Beyond its empirical findings, this study makes an important conceptual contribution to communication scholarship by reconceptualising engagement in multiplayer online gaming as a form of digitally mediated communication behaviour rather than merely a recreational activity or a psychological phenomenon. Previous research has predominantly interpreted multiplayer online gaming through behavioural, psychological, or health-related frameworks, with emphasis placed on problematic gaming, Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), addiction, aggression, and mental well-being. While these perspectives have significantly advanced understanding of gaming-related risks, they provide only a partial explanation of why multiplayer online games continue to attract billions of users and remain embedded in the everyday lives of young adults. The present findings suggest that communication itself constitutes one of the principal outcomes of engagement in multiplayer online gaming. Rather than functioning solely as spaces for entertainment, multiplayer online games increasingly operate as digitally mediated communication environments where interpersonal relationships are established, maintained, and strengthened through continuous interaction, collaboration, and shared experiences (Gao & Hallikainen, 2024). Consequently, this study broadens the dominant discourse surrounding multiplayer online gaming by shifting scholarly attention from gaming as a potential social problem towards gaming as a contemporary communication practice. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing field of digital communication by demonstrating that multiplayer online gaming should be understood as an emerging communication ecosystem in which entertainment and interpersonal communication are fundamentally interconnected rather than conceptually separate.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for communication scholars, educators, policymakers, parents, and game developers. As multiplayer online gaming increasingly functions as a digitally mediated communication environment, greater attention should be directed towards understanding how these platforms facilitate communication, collaboration, and social connectedness rather than focusing exclusively on their potential risks. For educators and youth practitioners, multiplayer games may offer opportunities to foster teamwork, communication skills, and digital collaboration within appropriate learning and community contexts. For policymakers and parents, the findings support a more balanced perspective on gaming by recognising that the quality of engagement and communication practices may be more important than the amount of time spent gaming. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, while the reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias. Furthermore, the study did not differentiate between multiplayer game genres or communication modes, both of which may influence patterns of social interaction. Future research should therefore employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches and examine how different multiplayer game genres, communication modalities, and cultural contexts influence the relationship between multiplayer online gaming engagement and social interaction across diverse populations.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between engagement in multiplayer online gaming and social interaction among Malaysian young adults from a communication perspective. Guided by Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), the study investigated whether engagement in multiplayer online gaming, conceptualised as a form of digitally mediated communication behaviour, contributes to social interaction within contemporary digital environments. The findings demonstrated that engagement in multiplayer online gaming was positively associated with social interaction, suggesting that multiplayer online games have evolved beyond their traditional role as entertainment technologies to become important environments for interpersonal communication, collaboration, and relationship maintenance.

The study contributes to communication scholarship by offering an alternative perspective to the dominant psychological and behavioural approaches that have characterised much of the existing gaming literature. Rather than viewing multiplayer online gaming primarily through the lens of addiction, Internet Gaming Disorder, or psychological well-being, the present study demonstrates that multiplayer online gaming can also be understood as a digitally mediated communication ecosystem in which communication is embedded within gameplay. This conceptual perspective extends the application of Uses and Gratifications Theory by highlighting communication, collaboration, and social connectedness as important gratifications derived from sustained engagement in multiplayer online gaming.

The study also provides empirical evidence from Malaysia, where communication-oriented investigations of multiplayer online gaming remain relatively limited. By demonstrating that engagement in multiplayer online gaming contributes positively to social interaction among Malaysian young adults, the findings broaden current understanding of digital communication practices within an increasingly connected society. These findings encourage researchers, educators, policymakers, and game developers to adopt a more balanced perspective that recognises multiplayer online gaming not only as a recreational activity but also as a contemporary communication environment capable of supporting meaningful interpersonal interaction.

Overall, this study argues that multiplayer online gaming should be understood as more than a form of digital entertainment. As digital communication continues to evolve, multiplayer online games increasingly function as communication ecosystems where young adults interact, collaborate, and maintain social relationships. Recognising this transformation contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of communication in the digital age and provides a foundation for future communication research on interactive digital environments.

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