
DIGITAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal Communication Patterns and Communication Barriers to Roleplay Couples on Social Media

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Abstract

This study aimed to find patterns of interpersonal communication and communication barriers that occur in role-play pairs on Twitter. This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method. The research informants were three pairs of role players. The results showed that three patterns of interpersonal communication occurred between the pair of role players, namely primary communication patterns, secondary communication patterns, and circular communication patterns. In interpersonal communication between the pair of role players, obstacles were found, namely misunderstandings in interpreting the message content, conflicts in relationships, obstacles caused by the network, and obstacles caused by the busyness of role-play players.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication Patterns; Social Media; Roleplay Pairs; Twitter; Telegram

Introduction

Interpersonal communication occurs when two people are in the same place and are aware of each other's presence. Interpersonal communication can be done anywhere and in various ways, directly or through intermediary media. Interpersonal communication is communication that occurs between individuals with one to exchange messages. Everyone who is seen in interpersonal communication can be a communicator and communicant at the same time. According to J. T. Wood (2018), interpersonal communication is the main way to build and repair a relationship. The communication aims to have a common meaning so that interpersonal communication can produce a deep similarity of meaning along with the closeness of each individual involved (A. Wood & Smith, 2005). Communication is also the main means for building a future in interactions and interpersonal relationships between two or more people.

Interpersonal communication arises when a person begins to exchange ideas and thoughts with each other. In interpersonal communication, people can communicate their feelings, ideas, emotions, and information directly to each other. Communication is done in the form of verbal or non-verbal. Interpersonal communication is not only about what is said and received but also about how to state and use appropriate body language and facial expressions. Wood & Smith (2005) dissects the meaning of inter, which means between, and person, which means human. Thus, interpersonal communication is communication that occurs between humans. In this definition, Wood asserts that interpersonal communication is only interpersonal communication and is personal.

Wood & Smith (2005) offers four patterns of interpersonal communication, namely (1) primary communication patterns that use verbal symbols and nonverbal symbols, (2) secondary communication

patterns, namely the process of delivering messages using a second tool or media, and (3) linear communication patterns or the process of delivering messages that run from one point to another by the communicator to the communicant as a terminal point, and (4) circular communication patterns or there is feedback from the communicant to the communicator. As long as there is feedback from the message sent, circular communication will continue.

With the development of technology, people tend to use media technology to communicate through social media. Bowman (2010) worries that people who over-communicate through social media can be affected by social media. Bowman (2010) saw the symptoms of adolescent dependence on technology in communication. In addition, it can be seen that there is a decrease in the self-identity of teenagers because they cannot distinguish between self-identity in the real world and the virtual world.

Social media often affects people's ability to interact and communicate (Paul, 2020). Social media is a collection of applications in cyberspace that use the internet and is based on technology from Web 2.0, which allows users to create and exchange information that they enter on the internet with other social media users (Kaplan, 2010). Social media includes communities that share content, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other community-focused communication forums. Social media is different from mass media. The difference between social media and mass media is the two-way and one-way communication pattern. In social media, two-way communication can occur, while mass media only focuses on one-way communication.

The results of a survey conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers stated that internet users in Indonesia currently reach 132.7 million or around 52 percent of the total population of Indonesia, namely 256.2 million people. Based on the internet users, about 92 percent are in the age range of 15-44 years, amounting to 129 million people (APJII, 2016). In addition, of the total number of internet users, the number of internet users who use social media is around 129.2 million, or around 97% (APJII, 2016).

Social media can influence the way people engage with one another at all places and ages. According to Paul, there is a shift in the way people communicate. According to Booth (2010), there are three problems regarding the role of social media. First, when someone communicates through social media, they tend to trust the people they communicate with. Second, by reducing direct communication, there is a tendency to interact with people who have the same point of view so that there is no diversity of viewpoints. The influence of technology is increasingly changing the pattern of communication in society. They tend to avoid direct interaction and prefer interaction using media, one of which is social media. According to Booth (2010), a person is currently becoming more social and more interactive with others, but there is a shift from direct communication patterns to communicate using social media.

Social media is often used as a means of role-playing or communication between couples who meet in the virtual world. Role-play is an activity to play a role made by players, and they interact with other players who also play their respective roles (Bowman, 2010). Forum role-play can be defined as the activity of doing role-play through forum media. In role-play forums, users can interact as themselves and as the characters they play, both in the chat box provided in the forum (instant messenger) or in the form of posts containing stories they make like the characters they play.

Role-play on role-play forums is played by taking turns expressing the character's self that is driven through the stories created by the players. These players are also known as role-players. Role-players can do various kinds of interactions in role-play forums, interactions between role-players and through characters created in forums, and interactions carried out in the form of games, such as playing games and commenting on characters between role-players.

Previous research conducted by Apsari (2014) found two communication patterns in the role-playing community; communication with fellow role players and communication patterns with fellow imaginary characters (OC). Subsequent research by Changena (2020) explains the motive for playing role-play, which shows a change in behavior and the meaning of role-playing for the players. Based on the things described above, the author is interested in studying the communication patterns in role-play couples with the title "Interpersonal Communication Patterns and Communication Barriers to Roleplay Couples on Social Media."

Theoretical Framework

The communication pattern is defined as a simple description of the relationship of two or more people in the process of sending and receiving messages so that the messages conveyed can be understood. The communication pattern is identical to the communication process, which from the communication process will give rise to patterns, models, forms, and some small parts related to the communication process (A. Wood & Smith, 2005).

Wood & Smith (2005) describes communication patterns in Primary, Secondary, Linear, and Circular Communication Patterns. The primary communication pattern is the process of communicators conveying messages to the communicant using symbols as media. There are two symbols in the primary communication pattern; verbal symbols and nonverbal symbols. Verbal symbols are the easiest language to find in everyday life and use because they are considered capable of expressing the communicator's thoughts. While nonverbal symbols are signs, in contrast to language, nonverbal symbols are used using body parts, such as eye movements, hand movements, lip movements, and others.

The secondary communication pattern is delivering messages using a second tool or medium. This communication pattern can be used to communicate with many people and someone far away. Meanwhile, the linear communication pattern is the process of delivering messages that run from one point to another by the communicator to the communicant as a terminal point. Linear communication can occur in face-to-face communication (face to face), personally (interpersonal), group (group), or through media (mediated communication). In this communication process, if a message planning is delivered before starting communication, it will be more effective. The last is the circular communication pattern which means around or round. In this communication, there is feedback from the communicant to the communicator, which determines the success of the communication. As long as there is feedback from the message sent, circular communication will continue.

Role-play games are adopted from psychology, especially psychotherapy or psychiatric therapy. Santrock (1995) states that role-play is a fun activity and is carried out by a person or group of people to get pleasure. In the field of psychology, role-play is one of the methods used for conscious group guidance and counseling. Santrock also stated that the role-play method would allow children to overcome frustration and is a medium for therapists to analyze conflicts and overcome them.

Van Fleet & Peterson (2005) stated that role-play is an intervention that was developed related to using a set of systems from a counselor's method to optimize one's abilities. Role-play can also be used for therapy for someone who has difficulty with himself, developing adaptive behavior, controlling oneself from aggressive nature, increasing the ability to empathize, processing one's emotions, and solving problems effectively and wisely. Corsini (2010) states that role-play can be used as a tool to diagnose and discover someone by observing their behavior when they spontaneously play a role in situations or events that occur in real life. In addition, the role-play technique can be used as a teaching medium through the modeling process of group members. With the role-play learning model, it will be more effective in mastering skills related to interpersonal.

The use of Role-play on social media has several terms, such as:

1. Fams/Bestie (Family/Friends)
Players can find family and friends during role-play, just like in real life. Starting from simple communication, over time, they can form friendships or create a family if they feel comfortable and have trust with other players.
2. Couple
When playing role-play, role-players can also form romantic relationships with other players they like through the intense communication they have.
3. Plot/Imagine
An activity for role-play players where they can create a story of their composition with a preferred plot. Usually, imagine using casual language without any third-person point of view as if they were really in the activity. While the plot uses a third-person point of view, or there is a narrative.
4. IC (In-Character)
The players play characters that match the original characters of their idols. Usually, this type of player will update the latest information about the character he is playing.
5. OOC (Out of Character)

- Players who do not play an idol according to their original character.
6. Semi IC/Less OOC
It is a merger between the two previous types, sometimes playing according to the original character played, sometimes not according to the character they played.
 7. Fan service
The main reason for role-play is to act as if the players are real characters or idols. This fanservice is one thing that does not escape this game, such as asking for support, posting activities or photos, to fan-talk between idols and their fans.
 8. Nick RP
Nick or this nickname aims to make the players have a different nickname if there is a character or character that is the same as a differentiator with other accounts.
 9. Temporary Swap (TS)
If the role-play player wants to change his character for a moment, he can have a different atmosphere by doing TS.

Material and Methodology

This study used the descriptive qualitative method. According to Creswell (2015), qualitative research is research to discover or understand the meaning of several individuals or groups of people by asking questions related to research. Qualitative research emphasizes the in-depth understanding of a problem by examining the problem by emphasizing the meaning, reasoning, definition of a particular situation, and relation to everyday life based on the participant's point of view (Moleong, 2017). Qualitative research seeks to find and describe in a narrative way the activities carried out and the impact of the actions taken on their lives. The object of this research is interpersonal communication among role players on Twitter.

Data collection was carried out through indirect observations and interviews via email to role player pairs. The research object used is a role-play account on Twitter with a partner using (1) observation. Observation techniques are used to obtain data from data sources in the form of an event, behavior, and place. Observations can also be done directly or indirectly (Sutopo, 2006). (2) The interview technique aims to obtain information, explanations, points of view, and evidence in an event where it takes time to answer the questions asked (Moleong, 2017). Furthermore, data analysis was carried out using three stages according to Miles & Huberman (1994): data reduction, data display, and conclusions or verification. In addition, data validity techniques were also carried out to test research data.

Result and Discussion

1. Primary Communication Pattern

Based on the results of informants' statements and direct observations on Twitter, it was found that the communication process between players and role-play pairs on Twitter was carried out using verbal and nonverbal symbols. In the question and answer, the informants admitted that in communicating in role-play, they used verbal communication to form an interpersonal relationship. Without messages sent verbally, informants admit that they will have difficulty sending messages or building relationships with other individuals. It can be seen in the following informants' explanations:

Informant-1: "I think it is up to our partners and us to maintain communication. I think communication, such as chatting with role-players, is very important because we are only dating in the virtual world, so we can only expect news through text. And what keeps us awake is how we prioritize our partner, such as notifying him first when he wants to go away or when he wants to be off, taking the time even a little to give him a little attention."

Informant-2: "Really, those who chat can't be counted because they are too frequent."

Informant-2 stated that they communicated via chat. It shows that they communicate primarily interpersonally. During the observation, the role-play account on Twitter social media also found the following verbal symbols:

A1: "I forgot that she doesn't like purple, and I went for purple stuff."

G: "Luckily, just two items."

A1: "I tried the day before yesterday, okay?"

G: "oh, I forgot, sorry. I'll try this out."

A1: "I have an old girlfriend."

G: "my girlfriend is older."

The conversation between the two informants above was carried out in a primary interpersonal communication pattern. They talk to each other about the games they usually play. In addition to finding forms of verbal communication, in several other conversations that occur, non-verbal communication can also be found. For example, the symbols during communication were found in a conversation between role-player pairs. When 'A1' posted a photo of the character they played, 'G' as his partner replied to the post by giving a gift that expressed his love for his partner. In other posts, you can also find other symbols used in communication, such as using photos to express affection. There is also the use of various kinds of emoticons, such as the following image:



Figure 1: Examples of primary communication patterns

Figure 1 shows the conversation between A1 and G. G said that when he first communicated with a new friend, he communicated politely and used words or sentences that were easy to understand. A1 also said the same thing: the other person's language was the reason for his interest in starting a communication. Through this explanation, it can be seen that communicating between the role-play pairs uses primary communication patterns. Communication is carried out through conversation or verbal communication through chat because of the role-playing activities carried out using Twitter. In addition to verbal communication, the couple also uses non-verbal communication in the form of photos, memes, emoticons, or photos that show the interaction between the couple.

1. Secondary Communication Pattern

The secondary communication process is the delivery of messages using other tools or media supported by communication technology. Two of the three couples use Telegram to support their communication communicating with their partners.

F: "Yes, via Telegram to make communication easier and smoother. However, it remains limited as a role-player."

Based on the informant's statement, choosing Telegram as a chat application other than Twitter is more helpful for smoother communication.

M: "My partner and I use Telegram to communicate. Because there is more flexibility in communicating, such as the "sticker" facility because my partner and I like to communicate by including stickers so we can feel the other person's expression."

M uses a Telegram add-on application because there is a sticker facility so he can better express his feelings.

A1: "He uses Telegram because it is more efficient to communicate regularly and not slow."

According to A1, Telegrams are used in daily communication with their partners because they are considered more efficient. After all, Telegrams rarely have errors.

T: "We use Telegram more often to chat every day. The reason is that Telegram is more convenient for chatting and smoother than direct messages on Twitter."

T admits that he is more comfortable communicating with his partner via Telegram. The Telegram application also admits that problems rarely occur when communicating via Twitter.

Based on the explanation of the informants above, it is known that the communication tool they use is the Telegram. This explanation proves that the role player pairs use secondary communication patterns. Not much different from the communication on Twitter, two of the three couples admit that they prefer to communicate using Telegram because it is easier to access in chatting. Another thing is caused by the Twitter application, which often crashes it can hinder communication. In addition, Telegram is considered superior by having additional features such as stickers to make it easier to express their feelings.

1. Circular Communication Pattern

This communication pattern is still closely related to verbal and non-verbal communication patterns. The circular communication process means that the communication has feedback or reciprocity from the communicator to the communicator in response to the message received as evidence that the communicator can convey the message well. There is a dialogue between the partners to reciprocate and respond to the ongoing conversation. One of the informants gave an example of a circular communication pattern that occurs in the telegram application as follows:

A1: "You don't take care of Zepeto."

T: "Take care of my mouth every day."

*"*sends photo*."*

"Then collect it all."

"Lucky box tickets are starting now. I want to be diligent in collecting too."

"So if there is a new lucky box, you don't have to wait for the ticket every day again."

"because I have collected a lot."

A1: "Oh my god, the ticket."

"I'm just by the mission, so never."

"hard work"

*T: "*sends photo*."*

*"The clothes are also new from when the new items came out
"even though no one took a photo."*

The communication continued; the two of them exchanged stickers hoping that the communication would continue until they got a new topic of discussion. In observations on Twitter on other couples, circular patterns can also be found, such as each partner often responding to tweets shared by their partner or mentioning their partner so that the ongoing communication is not interrupted. The informants also acknowledged this communication pattern in the interview. They acknowledged that the intensity of communication was very high. This communication runs almost daily via text messages to keep the communication going.

M: "It's so intense that we update each other daily so we can feel a sense of priority. So, that's what made us decide to have a relationship because our communication was very intense and made each other feel comfortable."

F: "Communicate every day and non-stop."

Based on the two statements, to maintain communication, F and M discussed daily activities, the characters used, everything they encountered, and events that occurred in the role-play.

G: "Every day when I have free time."

Al: "Every day."

It explains a circular communication pattern in role-player pair communication because communication occurs daily. In addition, G and Al maintain communication. Both of them often pay attention, such as asking about their partner's routine activities, whether their partner has eaten, and what activities they are doing. They also stated that they often discuss gossip in role-play, help each other with assignments or other work, and share opinions and solutions.

Al: "Quite intense, with daily communication from morning to late at night."

T: "It's intense. I really can't count the daily chats because it's too often, so they get used to each other and can decide whether it's going to be serious or not"

To stay in touch with each other, Al and Tl are always spontaneous and try new topics when communicating, such as discussing their daily activities, their respective activities, hobbies, and even personal topics. In addition, the informants also said that they would follow how the other person responds by adjusting the discussed topic. They always try to make the communication more interesting so that the communication will continuously get feedback from the interlocutor.

In communicating, a person can have a dual role, he can be a communicator, but at other times he can also be a communicant. Feedback or response in this communication is important because, with the response, it will be seen whether the communication that took place was successful or failed. This pattern will occur continuously as long as they find a common understanding in the relationship.

4. Barriers to Communication

During communication through social media, role players often encounter obstacles, such as:

1. Misunderstanding in interpreting the message content

This misunderstanding occurs because the communicant cannot see directly how the communicator conveys the message. It was expressed by a pair of role players regarding the misunderstanding:

1. G: *"By providing good explanations and understanding and not provoking anger or emotions of the interlocutor."*
2. Al: *"I explain my intentions to my partner in more detail and make sure that my partner understands what I mean."*
3. F: *"avoid abbreviations that may be difficult for partners to understand, use clear punctuation marks, followed by emojis to describe expressions during typing."*
4. M: *"As much as possible, my partner and I are always honest about what happened or about our feelings, and usually every month, we always deep talk about how we feel during this month. If there has been a misunderstanding, we should immediately apologize and explain what happened. Then, it's best if our partner has apologized and explained we should accept that explanation and forgive what happened so that we can correct each other."*
5. Al: *"Be open to each other when they feel uncomfortable with their nature or treatment."*
6. T: *"Usually, because everyone reads the typed in a different tone, to reduce misunderstandings, I like to send voice notes, so my partner knows what I want to say is like"*

Informants stated that they avoided using sentences or abbreviations that might be difficult for their partners to understand. They prefer to explain things in easy-to-understand language or add emoticons as symbols to clarify the expressions used when conveying messages. Each partner avoids using words that are difficult to understand, does not use abbreviations, uses everyday language, uses clear punctuation marks, and uses emoticons.

2. Conflict in Relationships

Having a relationship with someone cannot avoid a conflict in it. With a conflict, the relationship can become closer or stretch, depending on how each individual involved tries to deal with the situation. In the interview, the informant stated how to deal with obstacles or conflicts in the relationship. He and his partner will try to discuss the problems that occur directly to the core of the problem. They try to solve the problem so that there is no misunderstanding between them. Honest and open communication can also be a solution to avoid conflict.

"Obstacles due to problems that occur in relationships, discussing core problems and their resolution until communication returns to smooth and normal as before."

In dealing with conflicts, they discuss the problems directly and honestly with each other to avoid conflict.

3. Barriers Caused by Network

With the use of social media and internet networks in communicating, there is the possibility of an error signal or application. Of course, in this case, the role-play player is trying his best to overcome this because they cannot communicate with their partner without an error network or application.

"Obstacles due to signal or application errors, there is no effort to overcome them. After finding an improved signal or application, explain why communication could be interrupted or interrupted. "

'F' in the interview stated that he did not have any effort to overcome the obstacles caused by the network. He can only wait until the network or application returns to improve, informing his partner about the obstacles he is experiencing.

Communicating through social media and internet networks cannot be separated from network disturbances or application errors, but has not been found a solution other than waiting for the

application or network to return to normal. When things get better, they will tell their partner and explain the obstacles they are experiencing.

4. Barriers Caused by Busyness

Every role-play player certainly has a personal life in the real world. When one of the partners has a busy life, this can interfere with communication between the two. The informant acknowledges this depends on how to deal with busyness without affecting the ongoing relationship. The following are some statements of informants:

"There is always a busy life every day, but it depends on how my partner and I make it so that it doesn't affect our relationship by keeping us informed if we have a little free time. Hopefully, one of them can understand that his partner is busy. However, sometimes busyness can have a big impact if we can't handle it well like one of us is selfish."

'M' stated that there is one way to overcome this obstacle, namely by giving news when he is free. Even though they don't have as much time to communicate, as usual, the couple will understand how busy they are by giving this news.

"No, it is used to encourage each other and help complete the busyness that is being lived while you can. Support systems"

Meanwhile, according to 'Al,' the busyness of the couple is not an obstacle. Instead, he uses it to encourage and support each other.

Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis, it shows that the intensity of communication carried out by the pair of role players is carried out on Twitter and Telegram. In communicating in role-play, role players use verbal communication to form an interpersonal relationship. Without messages sent verbally, informants stated that they would have difficulty sending messages or building relationships with other individuals. The informant involved in this communication pattern has a dual role, he can be a communicator, but at other times he can also be a communicant. Feedback or response in this communication is important because, with the response, it will be seen whether the communication that took place was successful or failed. This pattern will occur continuously as long as they find a common understanding in the relationship.

In the primary communication pattern, the informant uses verbal and non-verbal communication. According to J. T. Wood (2018), non-verbal communication is not only movement and body language but also how words are spoken. Researchers estimate that nonverbal behavior affects 65% to 93% of communication meaning (Hickson et al., 2004). The pattern of secondary communication is shown by the use of the Telegram chat application to maintain established communication. The Telegram application was chosen as a supporting application because it is easier to access and has fewer errors. Telegram also has additional features such as stickers to make it easier to express yourself. In this secondary communication process, the longer it will be more effective and efficient because it is supported by increasingly sophisticated information technology (Devito, 2009).

Circular communication patterns are carried out by role-play couples in communicating so that there is feedback or a response from the partner. They still maintain good communication as long as the couple has an interest in maintaining communication. In this pattern, each individual has a dual role as a communicator or a communicant. It will happen continuously as long as they have the same understanding and meaning of the message in the relationship. In a communication pattern like this, the communication process continues between the communicator and the communicant. (Devito, 2009).

In interpersonal communication between role-player pairs, various obstacles were found during communication through Twitter, misunderstandings about the meaning of the message, conflicts in relationships, obstacles caused by the network, and obstacles caused by busyness. According to Cruden and Sherman (In Pace & Faules, 2001), the limitations of communication facilities and equipment, in

terms of technology, are decreasing with new findings in the field of advances in communication and information technology, so that communication channels are reliable and efficient as communication media. Other obstacles occur because of emotions and personal prejudices, perceptions, skills or incompetence, the ability or inability of one's senses, and so on.

The emergence of internet media as a new media also contributes to changes in people's communication patterns. New media can affect how individuals communicate with others, such as role players on the internet. It shows that role-players on Twitter can communicate with other role-players because of the forums provided by Twitter and Telegram that help them in interpersonal communication.

Conclusions

This study concludes that the pattern of interpersonal communication in role-playing on social media Twitter is a primary, secondary, and circular communication pattern. In the primary communication pattern, the role player uses verbal symbols in the form of text and nonverbal symbols, namely the use of emoticons, meme photos, and gifts to express themselves. It is to assist the interlocutor in understanding the message's meaning. The telegram chat application shows the pattern of secondary communication, which the informant uses to maintain the established communication. The Telegram application was chosen as a supporting application because it is easier to access and has fewer errors. Telegram also has additional features such as stickers to make it easier to express yourself. The pattern of circular communication is indicated by the presence of feedback or getting a response between role-play pairs interested in maintaining communication. In this pattern, each individual has a dual role as a communicator or a communicant. It will happen continuously as long as they have the same understanding and meaning of the message in the relationship. In interpersonal communication between role-player pairs, various obstacles were found during communication through Twitter; misunderstandings about the meaning of the message, conflicts in relationships, obstacles caused by the network, and obstacles caused by busyness.

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