

The Transformation of Communication Patterns in Tesabela Village: A Social Collectivity Perspective

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Abstract

The development of digital technology and increasing social mobility have changed the communication patterns of rural communities and have the potential to impact the sustainability of collective values that form the basis of social life. This study aims to analyze the shifting forms of communication patterns in the Tesabela Village community, the dynamics of social collectives that occur, and their implications for the sustainability of community values of togetherness. The study used a qualitative approach with a purposive sampling technique in selecting informants consisting of traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, and village officials who understand the social dynamics of the community. The number of informants was 8 people. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed descriptively-interpretively. The results of the study indicate that community communication patterns have shifted from symbolic-communal communication based on direct interaction to more personal, administrative, and supported by digital technology. However, social collective values have not disintegrated, but have transformed into a more contextual and situational form. Social solidarity is no longer built through routine daily interactions, but is actualized in social moments that have cultural significance. The novelty of this research lies in the finding that shifts in communication patterns in rural communities do not automatically lead to individualism, but rather give rise to new forms of social collectivity that adapt to technological developments and lifestyle changes. This finding enriches the study of the sociology of communication by demonstrating that digital communication transformation can go hand in hand with the sustainability of collective values in rural communities.

Keywords: Communication Patterns; Social Change; Social Collectivity; Tsabella village.

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Introduction

In recent years, changes in the communication patterns of rural communities have become an increasingly evident and measurable phenomenon. Data released by Statistics Indonesia (BPS) in 2024 indicate that 72.78% of Indonesians aged five years and above had accessed the internet, representing a substantial increase from 69.21% in 2023. Similarly, a survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) reported that the national internet penetration rate reached 79.5% in 2024, while internet penetration in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province stood at 72.11%. These figures illustrate the extensive diffusion of digital technology into rural areas, including those across NTT. Throughout many rural communities, face-to-face interaction, which has traditionally served as the hallmark of social life, has gradually declined in both frequency and intensity. Social gatherings in communal spaces, such as house yards, village halls, and community deliberation meetings, are no longer as vibrant as they once were. Instead, many community members, particularly younger generations, spend increasing amounts of time using smartphones and communicating through social media rather than engaging in direct interpersonal interactions (Diana & Sari, 2024). Wiryany et al. (2022) further argue that advances in information and communication technologies have fundamentally transformed Indonesia's communication system, whereby physical interactions have increasingly been replaced by digitally mediated networks.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in Tesabela Village, West Kupang District, Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. Covering an area of 2,146 hectares and home to approximately 1,120 residents according to the 2020 population census, Tesabela Village has historically been recognized for its strong social cohesion, as reflected in the long-standing practices of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), community deliberation, and active participation in various communal activities. However, preliminary observations suggest that several forms of these traditional social interactions have begun to change. Community participation in collective activities, including *gotong royong* and neighborhood meetings, has gradually declined, particularly among younger residents. Communication that was once conducted collectively has increasingly shifted toward more individualized and restricted exchanges through instant messaging applications. Information concerning village activities is no longer primarily disseminated through communal forums but is instead communicated via short text messages, thereby reducing opportunities for collective social interaction. This finding is consistent with [Yain et al. \(2026\)](#), who reported that digital transformation within local communities has diminished the intensity of face-to-face social interactions and weakened communal solidarity. Likewise, [Septayana & Sumardi \(2023\)](#) found that the growing shift toward virtual communication has contributed to increasingly distant social relationships among community members.

From a normative perspective, rural communities should serve as social spaces in which solidarity and collective cohesion are nurtured and sustained. In his theory of social solidarity, Émile Durkheim distinguishes between mechanical solidarity, which characterizes simple societies founded upon shared values and norms, and organic solidarity, which develops in more complex societies through the division of labor and mutual interdependence ([Durkheim, 1969](#)). Within the context of rural Indonesia, these two forms of solidarity should ideally coexist, allowing value-based social bonds to endure despite ongoing processes of modernization. Similarly, Ferdinand Tönnies, through his concepts of *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society), argues that rural communities should retain the characteristics of *Gemeinschaft*, namely intimate, enduring, and intrinsically grounded social relationships ([Tönnies, 2001](#)). Furthermore, *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), as a manifestation of Indonesia's social collectivity, should remain a fundamental pillar of communal life, as emphasized in studies on rural social resilience ([Gea et al., 2026](#); [Rolitia et al., 2024](#)). Accordingly, the *das Sollen* (the normative ideal) of rural society lies in preserving collective bonds, encouraging active social participation, and maintaining strong social solidarity amid ongoing social change.

In practice, however, a considerable gap exists between this normative ideal and the empirical reality. Statistics Indonesia (BPS) reports that the proportion of rural households with internet access has continued to increase steadily, reaching 84.61% in the most recent survey period, while face-to-face social interaction has exhibited a declining trend. [Pratidina & Mitha \(2023\)](#) found that excessive social media use negatively affects the quality of direct interpersonal interactions within communities. Similarly, [Syahrani \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that social media has reshaped communication patterns and social interactions in rural communities, with virtual networks increasingly complementing and at times replacing traditional face-to-face relationships. In Tesabela Village, several residents have likewise begun to perceive a decline in the sense of togetherness and social solidarity that once characterized rural life. Social bonds that were previously cultivated through direct interaction and shared collective values are now increasingly challenged by changing lifestyles, greater social mobility, and the expanding penetration of modern communication technologies ([Juditha, 2020](#)). This discrepancy between *das Sein* (the empirical reality) and *das Sollen* (the normative ideal) constitutes the central point of departure for this study. The shift in communication patterns should therefore not be understood merely as a technical transformation in the ways people communicate; rather, it reflects a more profound transformation in collective consciousness, social relationships, and the forms of social cohesion that underpin rural community life.

Previous studies have made significant contributions to understanding the relationship between communication technology and social change. [Ginting et al. \(2024\)](#) argue that the emergence of the network society has transformed patterns of social interaction from physical to digitally mediated communication through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Salazar and [Garcia \(2017\)](#) found that declining levels of face-to-face interaction are associated with reduced social participation and weakened community solidarity. Similarly, [Regev \(2024\)](#) identified a shift from communal relationships toward more individualistic and rational forms of social relations, shaped by changes in residential and household organization. Within the Indonesian context, [Mahsin et al. \(2023\)](#) demonstrated that communication patterns and social participation in rural communities are increasingly influenced by the use of social media. Likewise, [Salsabila & Anshori \(2025\)](#) revealed that digitalization and social media have significantly reshaped social interaction by creating both new challenges and opportunities for interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, [Hukunala et al. \(2024\)](#) examined the social transformation of rural communities in the

millennial era and found that virtual communication networks increasingly complement, and in some cases replace, traditional face-to-face interactions.

Despite these valuable contributions, previous studies have generally conceptualized changes in communication as a linear transition from communal communication patterns toward increasing individualism. Such a perspective is insufficient to capture the more complex dynamics of social transformation, particularly the possibility that collective values are not entirely eroded but instead reconstituted in new forms. Moreover, existing research has predominantly focused on changes in communication media, the declining intensity of interpersonal interactions, and the growing prevalence of individualized communication patterns. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to understanding how new forms of collectivity emerge and evolve amidst these communication shifts. This limitation becomes particularly evident in the context of Tesabela Village, where residents continue to demonstrate forms of collective engagement under certain circumstances, albeit in ways that are more limited or qualitatively different from those observed in the past. This suggests that ongoing communication changes should not be interpreted solely as a process of declining collectivism, but rather as a transformation in the ways collective social bonds are constructed and sustained.

Within this context, the concept of social collectivity serves as a crucial analytical framework for understanding these dynamics in greater depth. From a sociological perspective, social collectivity refers to a social unity constituted through shared values, norms, and collective orientations that bind individuals into a meaningful social whole, regardless of the intensity of their physical interactions. This concept is rooted in Durkheim's notion of collective conscience (conscience collective), which refers to the shared beliefs and sentiments that constitute the foundation of social solidarity (Durkheim, 1969). Building upon this tradition, Salte (2022), through the concept of Digital Gemeinschaft 2.0, reinterprets Tönnies' notion of *Gemeinschaft* by demonstrating that digital communities are capable of reproducing community-based social ties within virtual spaces, albeit in more fluid and flexible forms. This argument is further supported by Mazya et al. (2022), who examined how digital technologies have fostered the emergence of Neue-Gemeinschaft (new communities) among rural communities in Banyuwangi, where digital transformation has created opportunities for the development of new forms of collectivity mediated through digital platforms. Likewise, Kizilhan & Bal (2016), drawing upon network society theory, argue that digital communication networks not only disrupt traditional forms of social organization but also facilitate the emergence of new social structures organized around information flows. Accordingly, in the context of this study, social collectivity is conceptualized not as a static entity dependent solely upon face-to-face interaction, but rather as a dynamic and evolving social formation encompassing both traditional bonds rooted in physical proximity and newly emerging forms of social cohesion mediated by digital technologies.

The novelty of this study lies in its application of the social collectivity perspective to examine shifts in the communication patterns of rural communities. Unlike previous studies, which have primarily emphasized formal social groups or social capital, this research positions social collectivity as the principal unit of analysis for understanding the dynamic, informal, and flexible forms of solidarity that characterize contemporary rural society. Moreover, the study contributes a localized empirical perspective by focusing on Tesabela Village, a setting that has received limited attention in the sociology of communication literature. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How have the communication patterns of rural communities shifted? and (2) How does social collectivity evolve in the context of changing communication patterns? Based on these questions, the objectives of this study are to: (1) analyze the forms of communication pattern shifts in Tesabela Village; (2) examine the dynamics of social collectivity within the context of changing communication practices; and (3) explain the implications of these communication shifts for the sustainability of social collectivity within rural communities.

This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it advances scholarship in the sociology of communication and social change by extending the application of the concept of social collectivity to the context of digitally transforming rural communities in Indonesia. Furthermore, it challenges the dominant linear perspective that equates communication change with the erosion of social solidarity by demonstrating that shifts in communication practices do not necessarily signify the decline of collective life. Instead, such transformations may give rise to new and evolving forms of social collectivity. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for village governments, community leaders, and other stakeholders in designing strategies to strengthen social cohesion amid changing communication practices in an era characterized by rapid social and technological transformation.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the shifting communication patterns within rural communities and the accompanying

dynamics of social collectivity in the social life of Tesabela Village. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to explore participants' meanings, perceptions, and lived experiences comprehensively while providing a systematic and contextual description of social reality (Creswell, 2014). The research site was selected purposively, as Tesabela Village exhibits characteristics that align closely with the objectives of this study, including observable shifts from face-to-face communication toward digitally mediated communication and changes in community participation identified during preliminary field observations.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. A total of twelve informants participated in the study, comprising traditional leaders, religious leaders, village officials, and community members, including both youth and adults, who were considered to possess direct knowledge and experience of the changing communication patterns within the village. The inclusion criteria required participants to: (1) have resided in Tesabela Village for at least five years; (2) actively participate in community activities; (3) have directly experienced changes in local communication patterns; and (4) be willing to provide information openly. Participant recruitment was conducted iteratively until data saturation was achieved, indicated by the recurrence of information and the absence of emerging themes.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, were conducted to explore participants' experiences and perspectives regarding changes in communication patterns and the dynamics of social collectivity. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Participant observation was undertaken through limited participation in community activities to examine patterns of social interaction, communication practices, and collective activities in everyday village life. Documentary data, including village archives, photographs of community activities, and other relevant documents, were also collected to complement and corroborate the findings derived from interviews and observations (Sugiyono, 2019). The study drew upon both primary data, obtained from interviews and field observations, and secondary data derived from official village documents and relevant scholarly literature.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview transcripts were first prepared verbatim and repeatedly reviewed to develop a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives. Subsequently, open coding was conducted by assigning labels to meaningful units of data. Codes sharing conceptual similarities were grouped into broader categories, including digital technology use, changing patterns of social interaction, community participation, and forms of social solidarity. These categories were then synthesized into overarching themes that guided the analysis: (1) shifts in rural communication patterns, (2) the transformation of social collectivity, and (3) the adaptation of communal values within village life. The categorized data were organized into thematic narratives to identify recurring patterns, similarities, and differences across participants' accounts. Finally, findings were continuously interpreted and verified by comparing evidence obtained from multiple data sources and collection methods until credible conclusions were established (Miles et al., 2018).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, village officials, and community members. Methodological triangulation was achieved by cross-validating evidence obtained through interviews, observations, and documentary analysis. In addition, member checking was conducted by returning preliminary interpretations to participants to confirm the accuracy of meanings and enhance the credibility of the findings. Throughout the research process, the researcher served as the primary research instrument, actively engaging in both data collection and interpretation. To minimize subjective bias, continuous reflexivity was maintained, openness to diverse participant perspectives was emphasized, and all interpretations were grounded in empirical evidence obtained during fieldwork. These procedures were undertaken to enhance the objectivity, credibility, and overall trustworthiness of the study.

Results and Discussion

Shifts in the Communication Patterns of the Tesabela Village Community

Communication Based on Collective Cultural Symbols

The interview findings indicate that the traditional communication patterns of the Tesabela Village community were deeply rooted in cultural symbols that embodied shared collective meanings. These symbols functioned as collective communication media that were commonly understood by community members, including the sounding of the *gong* or church bells, each of which conveyed specific social messages. According to Informant YS (community leader, interview, July 19, 2025), communication within the village

community continues to be strongly influenced by cultural values as collective references, although noticeable changes have occurred over time. In the past, official village events or announcements of a death could be communicated simply by striking the *gong* or ringing the church bell a specific number of times, and community members immediately understood the intended message. Today, however, such symbolic communication is no longer considered sufficiently effective and has largely been replaced by formal written invitations for village meetings.

"Collectively, the communication pattern of the Tesabela Village community is still strongly guided by cultural values, particularly through cultural symbols. However, communication patterns have gradually changed. In the past, whenever there was an official village event or a death, it was sufficient to strike the gong or ring the church bell several times, and everyone immediately understood the meaning of the sound. Nowadays, this method is no longer considered adequate, and formal invitation letters are required to inform people about village meetings." (Interview, July 19, 2025).

The findings further reveal that local cultural wisdom continues to function as an important medium of social communication, particularly through cultural practices such as sharing *sirih pinang* (betel nut) and drinking *sofi*, a traditional local beverage, during customary gatherings. These practices extend beyond ordinary social activities; they serve as symbolic mechanisms through which customary discourse, norms of politeness, and collective values are communicated and reinforced. Nevertheless, participants also emphasized a gradual shift in the cultural significance of these practices among younger generations. Rather than interpreting them as expressions of cultural identity and communal values, many younger community members increasingly perceive them as routine social activities that are situational and pragmatic in nature.

The Shift from Collective to Individualized Communication

Informant MS (traditional leader, interview, July 19, 2025) confirmed that the communication patterns within Tesabela Village have undergone a substantial transformation. According to the informant, traditional authority once played a central role in regulating social life, and community members rarely questioned the words or decisions of customary leaders. However, this pattern has gradually weakened, particularly among younger generations, who are increasingly reluctant to embrace the village's traditional cultural values. The informant further explained that, in the past, conflicts among community members were commonly resolved through customary reconciliation processes, reflecting the strength of collective communication and shared cultural norms. Today, these practices have become less prevalent as collective communication has progressively declined.

"Communication patterns in Tesabela Village have gradually changed. In the past, whatever was said by customary leaders was never questioned by community members. Today, however, it has become increasingly difficult to encourage younger generations to return to their traditional cultural values. This situation began with the gradual weakening of collective communication within the community." (Interview, July 19, 2025).

The findings suggest that this transformation reflects a shift from collective to more individualized and administrative forms of communication. Information that was previously disseminated through culturally embedded symbolic practices is now primarily communicated through formal administrative mechanisms, such as official written notices and letters. Field observations further indicate that this shift has been reinforced by increasing interethnic interactions and the growing migration of rural residents to urban areas. Exposure to diverse cultural environments and urban lifestyles has encouraged younger generations to adopt communication practices that are more individualistic, pragmatic, and oriented toward immediate personal needs rather than collective interests.

Internal and External Factors Driving the Shift in Communication Patterns

Informant EB (youth leader, interview, July 22, 2025) identified both internal and external factors underlying the shift in communication patterns in Tesabela Village. Internally, cultural symbols that once served as a unifying medium of communication have gradually lost their effectiveness, as younger generations no longer interpret these symbols in the same way as previous generations. Externally, the village's proximity to urban areas has increased young people's exposure to smartphones and digital communication technologies, encouraging more modern communication practices.

"The shift in communication patterns in Tesabela Village has been influenced by various factors. Internally, cultural symbols as a means of community communication are no longer as effective because their meanings depend on whether younger generations continue to preserve them. Externally, the village's close proximity to the city has enabled young people

to adopt modern communication technologies, particularly smartphones."(Interview, July 22, 2025).

The findings also indicate that broader structural changes have contributed to this transformation. Greater access to information, advances in digital technology, and increased interaction with urban environments have encouraged more individualistic, critical, and technology-oriented communication practices, particularly among younger villagers.

Dynamics of Social Collectivity in the Village Community

The Persistence of Social Collectivity in Situational Forms

The findings indicate that social collectivity in Tesabela Village remains evident, although it is no longer sustained through frequent and routine interactions. Instead, collective practices are primarily expressed during customary ceremonies, religious events, and other significant community occasions. In everyday life, social interactions have become less frequent as residents are increasingly occupied with work and family responsibilities.

"When there are customary ceremonies or religious services, everyone still participates and helps one another. People work together to prepare the venue, equipment, and food, and during these occasions the spirit of togetherness and mutual cooperation remains strong. However, in everyday life, we rarely gather as we used to because everyone is busy with their own activities." (Interview, July 22, 2025).

"The sense of togetherness still exists, but we no longer interact face-to-face every day. People continue to attend village activities, customary events, and religious gatherings and help one another. Outside these occasions, however, interactions have become less frequent because most residents are occupied with work and family. Even so, whenever someone needs assistance, community members are still willing to help according to their abilities." (Interview, July 22, 2025).

Overall, the findings suggest a transition from routine, community-based interaction to more selective and situational forms of communication. Social collectivity has not disappeared; rather, it has been reconfigured in terms of its expression and frequency within everyday village life.

The Transformation of Solidarity: From Physical Presence to Flexible Support

The findings indicate that solidarity and mutual care remain central values within the Tesabela Village community, although their forms of expression have changed. Social support is no longer exclusively demonstrated through physical presence but is increasingly provided through financial contributions and digitally mediated communication.

"If we cannot attend in person, we still provide support by sending money or contacting people by phone. In the past, everyone came directly to help, but now many residents are occupied with work and other responsibilities. Even so, people continue to show concern by contributing in whatever way they can."(Interview, July 22, 2025).

"The sense of togetherness still exists, but it is expressed differently. We no longer have to gather as frequently as before. Communication now often takes place through phone calls or social media, yet people continue to support one another during village events, religious activities, or when someone is in need."(Interview, July 22, 2025).

These findings suggest that solidarity has shifted from direct, face-to-face engagement toward more flexible forms of support. Digital communication enables community members, particularly younger generations, to remain socially connected despite increasing mobility and time constraints. Consequently, togetherness is increasingly understood through diverse forms of participation rather than physical presence alone.

Discussion

Negotiating Meaning: From Cultural Symbols to Communicative Rationality

The shift in communication patterns in Tesabela Village from collective cultural symbols to formal and digital communication represents more than a change in communication media; it reflects a fundamental renegotiation of social meaning. From the perspective of Symbolic Interactionism, Mead (1934) argues that meaning is not inherent in objects but is continuously constructed through social interaction. As communication in Tesabela Village has shifted from the symbolic use of *gong* sounds and church bells to

formal letters and digital messages, not only has the communication channel changed, but so too has the system of meanings that binds individuals into a social community. Cultural symbols that once functioned as a shared social language, understood without explanation, have gradually lost their cohesive power because younger generations no longer construct and reproduce the same meanings attached to these symbols (Halik, 2024). This finding challenges the deterministic assumption within Symbolic Interactionism that symbolic change automatically generates stable new meanings. Instead, the findings point to what Rahman et al. (2026) describe as a "meaning vacuum" a transitional period in which traditional symbols have lost their communicative effectiveness while new symbolic systems have yet to become socially institutionalized.

The findings further reveal a more complex process than that suggested by classical Symbolic Interactionism. Whereas Mead viewed negotiation as a constructive and dialogical process, the case of Tesabela Village demonstrates that it may also be fragmented and disruptive. When younger generations perceive practices such as sharing *sirih pinang merely* as ordinary social activities rather than customary rituals, the transformation does not simply involve replacing one meaning with another. Instead, it reflects the erosion of the collective meanings that previously sustained social cohesion. Consequently, changes in communication practices do not necessarily lead to the reconstruction of shared meanings; they may instead produce symbolic ambiguity that weakens collective identity and community cohesion.

From Mechanical to Situational Solidarity: Reinterpreting Durkheim

This study finds that the transformation of solidarity in Tesabela Village does not follow the linear progression from mechanical to organic solidarity proposed by Durkheim (1893). Instead, the findings suggest a more nuanced form of situational solidarity, in which social cohesion is sustained neither solely by shared values nor by functional interdependence, but emerges selectively during culturally significant events. Interview data show that community members continue to participate in customary ceremonies and religious activities, while everyday social interactions have become less frequent. These findings challenge Durkheim's binary framework by demonstrating that mechanical and organic forms of solidarity can coexist and operate contextually within the same community.

This interpretation also extends previous research. Aisyah & Haryono (2025) argue that flexible interpersonal communication helps maintain social ties amid social change. While their study emphasizes the adaptive benefits of communication flexibility, the findings from Tesabela reveal its potential downside. When solidarity is expressed only on particular occasions, the normative foundations of collective life may gradually weaken. Likewise, Mulyani & Hanani (2023) contend that transitions between mechanical and organic solidarity are shaped by local sociocultural contexts rather than following a deterministic trajectory. Building on these insights, the concept of situational solidarity proposed in this study offers a theoretical refinement of Durkheim's framework, providing a more comprehensive explanation of solidarity dynamics in contemporary rural communities.

Digital *Gemeinschaft*: Transformation Rather Than the Demise of Community

The findings demonstrate that the transformation of social collectivity in Tesabela Village cannot be understood simply as a shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, as conceptualized by Tönnies (1887). Rather than signaling the decline of communal life, the findings suggest that collective values are being renegotiated through more modern and individualized communication practices. As one informant remarked, "*the values are still there, but the way they are expressed has changed.*" This illustrates the emergence of a digital *Gemeinschaft*, in which social bonds are preserved but increasingly mediated by digital technologies and expressed in more flexible ways.

Salte's (2022) concept of Digital *Gemeinschaft* 2.0 provides a useful framework for interpreting this phenomenon by arguing that digital communities can reproduce communal ties within virtual spaces. However, the findings from Tesabela extend this perspective by revealing that the emerging form of *Gemeinschaft* is neither fully digital nor entirely traditional, but hybrid. Digital communication complements, rather than replaces, face-to-face collective practices during culturally significant occasions. This finding is consistent with Mazya et al. (2022), who describe the emergence of *Neue-Gemeinschaft* in rural Banyuwangi, where digital transformation facilitates new forms of platform-based collectivity. Similarly, Polnaya et al. (2023) found that although smartphones and the internet have transformed communication among indigenous communities, traditional norms and values have adapted rather than disappeared. Thus, the transformation of social collectivity in Tesabela suggests that *Gemeinschaft* has not disappeared; instead, it has evolved into a more adaptive and context-dependent form.

Modernization, Innovation Diffusion, and Young People as Agents of Change

The role of younger generations in transforming communication patterns in Tesabela Village can be understood through the complementary perspectives of modernization and innovation diffusion. From Giddens' (2010) modernization theory, advances in science and technology encourage individuals to adopt

more rational, efficient, and pragmatic forms of communication. Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovation theory further explains that younger people, as early adopters, play a central role in disseminating new technologies (Badri, 2021). Tesabela Village's proximity to Kupang City has accelerated this process, as communities located closer to urban centers tend to adopt innovations more rapidly through learning and imitation (Zang et al., 2025). Consequently, the village has become increasingly receptive to digital communication technologies and new forms of information exchange.

However, the findings also extend these theoretical perspectives. Rather than replacing traditional communication entirely, modernization has primarily reshaped administrative communication, while cultural practices such as sharing *sirih pinang* and drinking *sofi* continue to be maintained. Likewise, the diffusion process involves not only technological adoption but also the spread of more individualistic values acquired through migration, education, and urban experiences. This suggests that communication change is shaped not only by technology itself but also by broader sociocultural processes, including mobility, education, and increasing social diversity (Nnanna et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025).

Implications for Social Collectivity: Between Revitalization and Fragmentation

The findings reveal an ambivalent impact of changing communication patterns on the sustainability of social collectivity in Tesabela Village. On the one hand, digital communication has revitalized community participation by enabling residents who cannot be physically present to contribute through financial assistance or remote communication. On the other hand, greater reliance on digitally mediated interaction risks fragmenting collective life when shared communication practices become confined to specific cultural occasions (Polnaya et al., 2023).

These findings provide a critical extension of Putnam's (2000) argument on the decline of social capital. Rather than disappearing, social capital in Tesabela has been reconfigured from relationships grounded in physical proximity to networks based on flexible digital connectivity. This interpretation is consistent with Kawung and Tulung (2024), who argue that ritual interaction has increasingly shifted from face-to-face encounters to technology-mediated communication. However, the present study demonstrates that traditional ritual interaction has not been displaced; instead, it continues to coexist with digital communication during culturally significant events. Similarly, Schilder et al. (2025) suggest that contemporary solidarity is increasingly expressed through episodic collective moments.

These findings highlight the need for policies that move beyond restoring traditional communication patterns. Instead, efforts should focus on strengthening local institutions, enhancing digital literacy, and fostering inclusive deliberative mechanisms that integrate both traditional and digital forms of communication. As Herman (2024) argues, digital communication simultaneously facilitates the wider transmission of cultural values while exposing local traditions to global cultural influences. Viewed through the lens of Symbolic Interactionism, these changes reflect the continuous reconstruction of social meanings through interactions shaped by technology and social mobility. Consequently, the transformation of communication in Tesabela Village represents not only a technological shift but also a redefinition of the meanings that underpin collective life.

Conclusion

This study identifies three key findings. First, the transformation of communication patterns in Tesabela Village does not represent a linear process of increasing individualization but rather an adaptive and context-dependent transformation of social collectivity. Communication has shifted from symbolic and communal forms toward more personal, administrative, and digitally mediated practices without eliminating social solidarity. Second, solidarity that was once sustained through routine daily interactions has become increasingly situational, emerging primarily during culturally significant events such as customary ceremonies and religious activities. Third, although communication practices have changed, collective values continue to underpin the social identity of the village community. Social support has evolved from physical presence to more flexible forms of participation, including financial contributions and digitally mediated communication.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the sociology of communication by demonstrating that social collectivity should be understood as a dynamic process that is sustained not only through the frequency of face-to-face interaction but also through the community's capacity to reconstruct collective meanings using new communication media. The concepts of situational solidarity and digital *Gemeinschaft* proposed in this study extend Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity and Tönnies' concept of *Gemeinschaft*, while also challenging the linear assumption within Symbolic Interactionism that changes in communication inevitably produce stable new meanings. This study has several limitations. The qualitative design and relatively small number of participants limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the

research was conducted in a single rural setting Tesabela Village, West Kupang District whose sociocultural context may differ from that of other rural communities in Indonesia. The cross-sectional nature of the study also prevents an examination of communication change over time. Finally, the analysis focuses primarily on social collectivity and does not fully address other important dimensions, such as the political economy of communication or power relations underlying communication change.

Future research should examine these concepts across diverse rural settings to assess their broader applicability and employ longitudinal approaches to capture the evolution of communication practices and social collectivity over time. Further studies could also explore the roles of gender, generation, power relations, and the political economy of communication in shaping rural communication dynamics. From a practical perspective, village governments and community leaders should integrate digital communication with local cultural practices, strengthen digital literacy particularly among younger generations and develop hybrid communication mechanisms that combine face-to-face and digital interaction to sustain social cohesion in the context of ongoing social and technological transformation.

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