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BEYOND THE SCREEN: EXPLORING VIDEO COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND REMOTE WORK PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Remote work has become increasingly widespread, changing how remote workers communicate and collaborate in virtual environments. Due to this, virtual communication now plays an important role in supporting effective remote work performance. Although existing research has examined remote work performance and communication technologies, the contribution of video communication skills to improving work performance and building long-term client relationships has received comparatively little attention. Guided by Media Richness Theory, this study investigates how video communication skills help develop client trust, strengthen credibility, and improve work performance among Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals. This study adopted a qualitative research methodology. A cross-sectional design was used to explore the experiences and perceptions of remote workers at a single point in time. Eighteen experienced remote workers were selected through purposive and snowball sampling for Semi-structured in-depth interviews. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis with the help of NVivo 15. The findings reveal that video communication offers richer verbal and non-verbal cues playing an important role in strengthening client trust, enhancing perceived credibility, reducing misunderstandings, and supporting long-term client relationships. Remote workers also noted that the effective use of video communication enhances client satisfaction levels, encourages repeat business and positively influences remote work performance. The findings show that successful remote work depends not only on technical skills but it also depends on selecting and using rich communication media according to the complexity of task. This study provides practical guidance for freelancers, digital marketers, organizational leaders and communication professionals who aim to improve communication quality and remote work performance. This study expands the application of Media Richness Theory in modern remote work settings by showing how video communication skills helps build trust with clients , collaboration, and maintain long term relationships in freelancing and digital marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of remote work has changed organizational communication and making digital technologies important to professional communication. The development of communication platforms and the growing use of remote and hybrid work have made it possible for organizations to hire talented professionals from all over the world and allow professionals to work together from anywhere (Mumtaz & Arshad, 2025; Shruthi et al., 2024). As a result, now communication is not only an

organizational activity. It now plays an important role in enhancing collaboration, developing trust, improving productivity, and maintaining long-term success in remote work settings (Topić-Rutherford, 2023; Vizcaíno et al., 2025).

Freelancers and digital marketing professionals mainly depend on online communication to build relationships with their international clients, discuss project requirements, manage tasks, and provide their services.As compared to traditional office settings, remote work provides fewer opportunities for face-to-face communication therefore, making effective communication skills important for building successful professional relationships (Khorrami et al., 2024; Gabbianelli & Pencarelli, 2024). Previous studies consistently show that effective communication skills play an important role in enhancing employee engagement, job satisfaction, consumer satisfaction, and overall work performance (Shockley et al., 2021; Patterson, 2016; Nowakowska, 2023).

Although remote work provides many benefits, it also creates communication barriers. The absence of face-to-face communication reduces access to non-verbal cues and instant feedback, which can increase the chances of communication errors and make it harder to develop strong client relationships (Ola et al., 2024; Parekh & Gohil, 2022; Fatima et al., 2024). These communication barriers are highly relevant in Pakistan, where freelancers and digital marketing professionals frequently interact with international clients while dealing with technological issues, cultural variations, and language barriers (Shahzad et al., 2025; Kashif et al., 2022).

Video communication is one of the most effective digital communication tools because it allows people to communicate through spoken words, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, voice tone, and immediate feedback. Recent research indicates that, regular communication through video conferencing improves teamwork among remote team members. It also helps build trust, supports better decision-making, and enhances the overall quality of communication in remote teams (Karis et al., 2016; Phocharoen et al., 2022). From the perspective of Media Richness Theory, video conferencing allows remote workers to share both social and contextual cues more effectively, which reduces misunderstandings and improves stronger interpersonal relationships (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Dennis et al., 2008).

Few studies have specifically investigated video communication skills as a specific communication competency that enhances remote work performance. Many previous studies have largely examined areas such as remote work productivity,online collaboration,communication technologies and employee participation. Qualitative research on the strategic use of video communication skills by Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals is still under-explored. Existing research offers limited insight into how these professionals use video communication to build trust, strengthen credibility, maintain long-term client relationships, and enhance their professional performance in global remote work settings.

This study applies Media Richness Theory (MRT) to investigate the role of video communication skills in improving remote work performance among Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals. It aims to address the existing research gap in this area. Daft and Lengel (1986) argued that effective communication requires choosing a communication channel whose level of richness matches the complexity of the task. Video communication is considered one of the richest communication media because it offers real-time feedback, various verbal and nonverbal cues ,conversational language, and interpersonal connection.These features make it ideal for building relationships, solving problems collaboratively, conducting professional discussions,and managing complex workplace communication. This study aims to extend the application of Media Richness Theory within modern digital workplaces by examining the experiences of Pakistani remote workers. It also provides practical recommendations for freelancers, digital marketers, organizational leaders, and communication professionals to enhance effective communication and improve remote work performance.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the role of video communication skills in building trust and credibility in remote work environments.
2. To investigate the role of video communication skills in collaboration and remote work performance among Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals.
3. To explore the role of effective video communication skills in developing long-term client relationships and professional success in global remote work settings.

Research Questions

1. What role do video communication skills play in building trust and credibility in remote work?
2. What role does video communication skills play in collaboration and remote work performance among Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals?
3. How does effective video communication skills support long-term client relationships and professional success in global remote work settings?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rapid growth of remote work has changed the communication within organizations by making digital technologies important for collaboration, team coordination, and relationship building.In remote work environments, digital communication has become the main channel for completing both regular and challenging work-related tasks.On the other hand, physical workplaces depend on direct communication, which allows quick feedback and real-time exchanges. Therefore, communication has become important organizational skill that affects employee commitment, work efficiency, trust, exchange of knowledge, and overall work performance. Previous studies further indicate that communication is more than a simple exchange of information and plays an important role in maintaining effective working relationships within remote work settings (Shockley et al., 2021; Topić-Rutherford, 2023; Vizcaíno et al., 2025).

Communication quality in remote work is affected by both technological skills and individuals' communication skills, regardless of differences in research perspectives. While some researchers highlight organizational communication strategies, leadership support, and employee commitment as the major factors of successful remote collaboration (Fatima et al., 2024; Marstand et al., 2024), others suggest that successful communication mainly depends on the careful selection and strategic use of digital communication tools that support communication within remote work settings (Parekh & Gohil, 2022; Jia, 2025). Collectively, the previous research suggests that neither technological infrastructure nor communication skills alone are adequate to ensure effective remote communication. Instead, successful remote work depends on how well employees use digital communication tools in different work situations.

Video communication has become one of the most significant communication media in modern remote work because it provides a communication experience that is similar to face-to-face communication while reducing physical barriers. Video communication helps individuals to exchange both verbal and non-verbal cues at the same time through facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, voice tone, and instant feedback. These features help minimize confusions, enhance mutual understanding, and enhance interpersonal communication during complex work-related communication (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Dennis et al., 2008). Similarly, Damian et al. (2006) indicate that synchronous communication media are more suitable for addressing misunderstandings, building agreement, and promoting shared decision-making. They also note that asynchronous media are more suitable for routine communication. Similarly, Fuchs and Reichel (2023) suggest that communication technologies, such as video calls and screen sharing, should be selected according to specific communication goals, specifically when understanding non-verbal cues and solving problems together are required.

Empirical findings suggest that video communication plays an important role in enhancing communication quality within remote work environments. Karis et al. (2016) observed that continuous video communication improves interpersonal relationships by reducing

the social distance between remote employees. Likewise, Ilag (2021) showed that unified communication systems including synchronous video communication improve collaboration, reduce sense of isolation, and increase team performance. .Phocharoen et al. (2022) found that combining synchronous communication with project management systems improves coordination, monitoring, and collaboration among remote teams.Overall, these findings show that the advantages of video communication are more than technological benefits. It functions as a rich communication medium that promotes interpersonal interaction, collaboration, and enhances remote work performance.

Although video communication has gained growing attention in remote work research, previous studies have mainly focused on communication technologies from a broader organizational perspective. Most have highlighted digital platforms,online collaboration, and the use of communication technologies rather than communication skills required to use video communication platforms effectively. As a result, the specific role of video communication skills—including verbal communication, active listening, non-verbal cues, online presence, and interactive engagement, remains under-explored. Earlier studies have not examined extensively the work performance of freelancers and digital marketing professionals. This indicates the need for further research, especially in countries such as Pakistan, where professionals depend on video communication to build trust, maintain client relationships, and promote long-term work success.

Research on video communication in remote work increasingly highlights the importance of trust and perceived credibility. Because remote workers have limited chance to communicate face-to-face with their clients therefore trust development becomes very important for successful remote work. In such settings, communication channels that provide richer verbal and non-verbal cues help reduce misunderstandings and foster professional relationships. Video communication promotes the development of both cognitive trust ,which derives from perceptions of skills and credibility, and affective trust, which develops through social interaction and personal connections (Dinh et al., 2021). Communication through rich media along with informal interactions helps enhance the relationships among remote workers, as highlighted by Zaugg and Davies (2013). Similarly, the identification of verbal and non- verbal cues is important for effective communication in remote work, as emphasized by Sahadevan and Sumangala (2021). Overall, the existing research shows that successful remote collaboration depends not only on technical skills but also on the richness and quality of interpersonal communication that fosters trust.

Professional credibility is widely recognized as a major outcome of successful video communication in remote work. By allowing individuals to show confidence, responsiveness, and credibility during client meetings, video communication strengthens the professional image of remote workers. The features of video communication like facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, and instant feedback make communication clear and help clients to consider remote workers as a professional and credible person. Further the verbal and non-verbal cues during video communication reduce uncertainty, improve understanding of the clients, and build stronger relationships in remote work (Damian et al., 2006; Karis et al., 2016; Fuchs & Reichel, 2023). Video communication is not used only to share information but also to build trust, credibility and long term client relationships.

Previous research shows that successful collaboration in remote work depends on clear and high-quality communication. Remote workers can work more effectively when they share information on time, understand each other, make decisions together, and communicate regularly. However, poor communication creates misunderstandings, makes coordination challenging, and reduce the performance of remote work (Topić-Rutherford, 2023; Harjanto et al., 2023). Previous studies also show that when video communication platforms are used regularly, they strengthen teamwork, reduce feelings of isolation, and improve remote work performance (Ilag, 2021; Saini, 2024). Technology alone is not enough; therefore, remote workers also need good communication skills to use these technologies properly for better results (Aziz et al., 2021).

Success of remote work depends not only on video communication technologies but also on how well remote workers use these technologies. Many previous studies show that communication skills play an important role in reducing misunderstandings, and making communication more effective in remote work. Communication skills like clear speaking, active listening, understanding of verbal and non-verbal cues, and adapting communication according to different situations enable remote workers to communicate properly in remote work (Parekh & Gohil, 2022; Zhao, 2023; Topić-Rutherford, 2023; Martins et al., 2024). These communication skills are very important in freelancing and digital marketing because client trust, long-term relationships, and work success depend not only on technical skills but also on effective communication. Although communication skills have gained increasing attention in the previous studies, qualitative research exploring the role of video communication skills remains under-explored, particularly among Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals. Existing studies have paid limited attention to how these skills promote trust development, collaboration, credibility, client satisfaction, and remote work performance. This limitation provides the foundation of this study and highlights the need for a theoretical framework to explain why richer communication media are more effective for complex work-related communication. Therefore, the next part explains Media Richness Theory as the conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between video communication and remote work performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research uses Media Richness Theory (MRT) as its theoretical framework which was first proposed by Daft and Lengel (1986). The theory explains that effective communication depends on choosing a communication medium that matches the complexity of a specific task. Richer communication media are considered more effective for tasks that require explanation, discussion, relationship building, and collaborative decision-making. They provide real-time feedback, various verbal and non-verbal cues, conversational language and interpersonal connections (Daft & Lengel, 1986).

Among the different digital communication technologies available today, video communication is considered one of the richest communication media. It combines verbal communication with facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, tone of voice, and live interaction. Video communication enables participants to better understand both verbal and non-verbal cues. As a result, it reduces communication barriers and strengthens interpersonal relationships (Dennis et al., 2008). Previous studies also show that synchronous video communication is important for remote professionals. It helps reduce ambiguity, develop mutual understanding and enhance collaboration (Damian et al., 2006; Fuchs & Reichel, 2023). Communication technologies have become an essential part of remote work. They help freelancers and digital marketing professionals manage their work efficiently. As a result, the principles of Media Richness Theory are widely used to explain communication in remote work environments. Research in this area indicates that remote teams perform effectively when they use richer communication media, especially for work tasks that require teamwork, information exchange, and decision-making. Effective communication depends not only on having digital communication tools but also on selecting the right tool for the right task. When the appropriate tool is used, it improves teamwork, builds trust, and helps remote workers make better decisions in remote work (Karis et al., 2016; Ilag, 2021; Phocharoen et al., 2022).

Media Richness Theory, helps explain the role of video communication skills in the performance of Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals. According to this theory, richer communication technologies make it easier to build trust, develop credibility, and improve collaboration during online communication. All these features also help build strong relationships with clients, which can improve remote work performance. The study also expands the use of Media Richness Theory by presenting qualitative findings from Pakistan's expanding freelance and digital marketing sector. The findings show that communication skills have become an essential

factor in achieving professional success in the remote work environments.

METHODOLOGY

The study was based on an interpretivist paradigm and used a qualitative exploratory research design. It examined the role of video communication skills in enhancing remote work performance among Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals. A qualitative methodology was selected to gain a deeper understanding of informants' real-life experiences. It also allowed the study to explore how video communication skills help build trust, promote collaboration, strengthen credibility, improve client satisfaction and enhance overall remote work performance. Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals who had experience working remotely with global clients were selected for the study. Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling were used to select the participants. They were selected for their relevant work experience. Their experiences provided valuable insights into the research topic. Snowball sampling was then used to select other eligible participants through recommendations from the initial informants. Data collection continued until saturation was achieved. This occurred after eighteen semi-structured interviews, when no additional themes emerged from the data.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted online through Zoom to collect the data. This allowed remote workers from different cities in Pakistan to participate in the study. The duration of each interview was approximately 30–40 minutes. Audio recordings were made with the informed consent of all informants. The interview guide was designed in accordance with the research objectives to explore remote workers' experiences and perceptions of video communication. It investigated the role of video communication skills in relation to trust, professional credibility, collaboration, client satisfaction, and overall remote work performance.

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis in NVivo 15. The analysis process started with a detailed reading of interview transcripts, and then initial coding to identify key patterns in the data. Similar codes were then arranged into broader categories, from which themes were developed and refined through continuous comparison within interview transcripts.

By giving attention to credibility, confirmability, transferability, and ethical standards throughout the research process, the quality of this research was maintained. In-depth interviews gave informants more time to explain their work experiences in detail, which helped improve the credibility of this research. A clear coding process was used in NVivo 15 to support confirmability. Remote workers from different freelancing and digital marketing backgrounds across Pakistan were included in this study, which helped enhance the transferability of the findings. Ethical standards were followed throughout the study. Before starting the interview, informants gave their consent to take part in the research. Their names and personal information were kept confidential. All recordings of the interviews and transcripts were stored safely and were used only for this research.

FINDINGS

Main Theme: Video Communication's Role in Remote Work Outcomes

The findings of this study were arranged under one primary theme, **"Video Communication's Role in Remote Work Outcomes."** Most informants mentioned that video communication had become an important part of their remote work activities. They said that, even though they worked from different places, video calls helped them feel more closer with their clients. Informants also stated that verbal and non-verbal communication during video calls made communication easier to understand, improved client relationships, and helped them work together. Many informants believed that these communication skills helped build trust with client, develop stronger professional relationships, and improve their performance in freelancing and digital marketing. As shown in Figure 1, this main theme contains two related sub-themes: "Video Comm. for Trust, Credibility and Client Satisfaction" **and** "Video Comm. and Repeat Business."

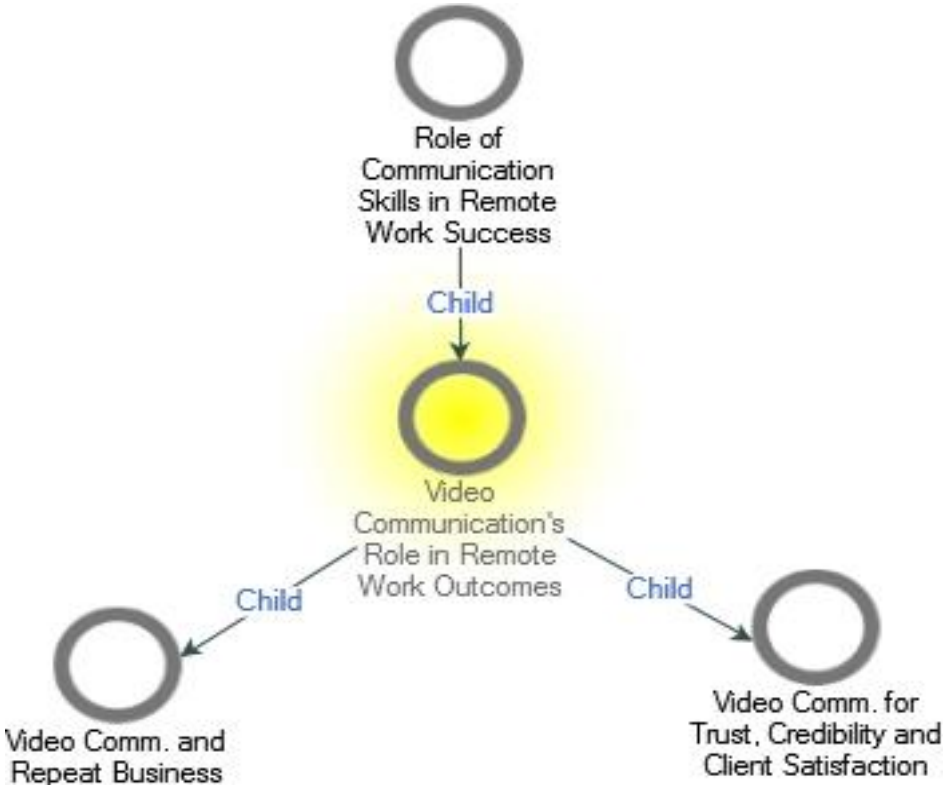

Figure 1. Thematic Map of Video Communication and Two Sub-Themes

Sub- Theme 1: Video Comm. for Trust, Credibility and Client Satisfaction

The first sub-theme shows informants' experiences of using video communication to build trust, gain credibility, and keep their clients satisfied while working remotely. According to the informants, video meetings help clients to directly observe a freelancer's skills, confidence, and communication style. Therefore, clients feel more confident when working with freelancers online because they can observe their skills and credibility during meetings. These findings are aligned with earlier research, which suggests that face-to-face communication through video promotes stronger freelancer client relationships by improving trust and establishing credibility (Gabbianelli & Pencarelli, 2024).

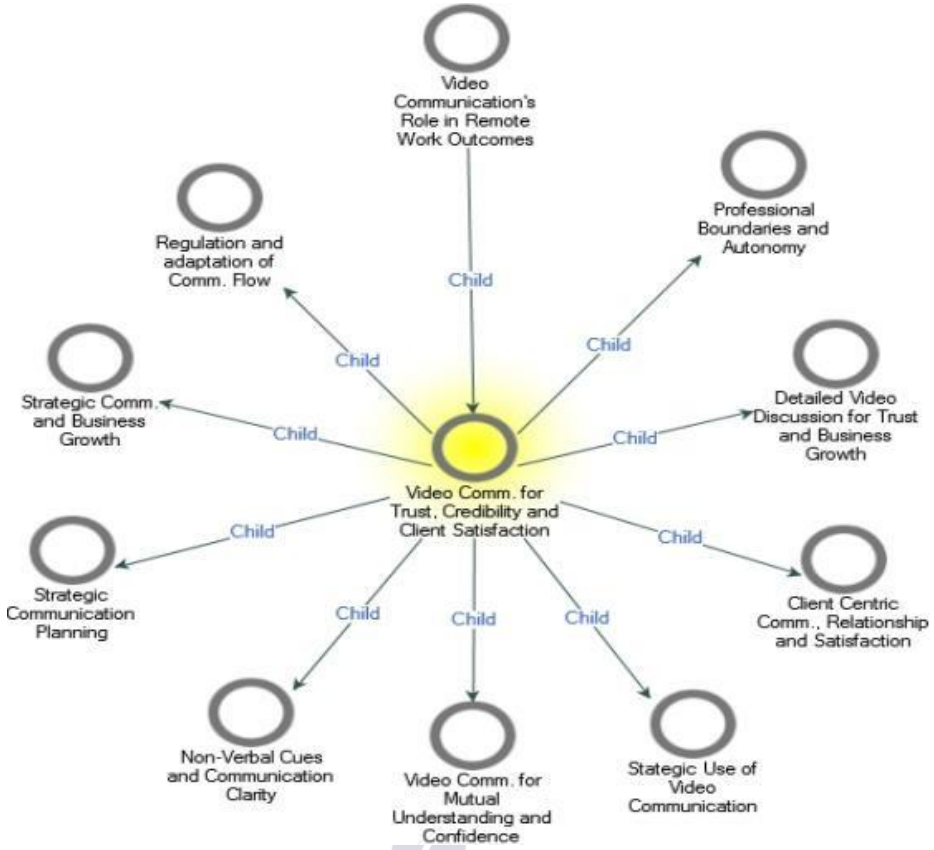

Figure 2. Thematic Map of Video Communication for Trust, Credibility and Client Satisfaction

Informants explained that successful video communication depends on understanding the preferences of each client instead of relying on the same communication style for everyone. They mentioned that focusing on client's communication styles and comfort level with different communication methods helped build stronger client relationships and improved overall client satisfaction. These experiences are aligned with previous research, which found that effective communication strengthens clients' confidence in working with freelancers. (Diegmann et al., 2017).

Several informants explained that clients understood detailed tasks more easily when video calls included screen sharing, step-by-step guidance, in-depth discussions, and visual presentations. These interactive functions enabled freelancers to present technical information more clearly and effectively. They also minimized misunderstandings and enhanced clients' trust in the recommended solutions. The findings of this study are aligned with earlier research, which suggests that richer communication media promote trust building and enhance mutual understanding in remote work environments. (Zaug & Davies, 2013; Fuchs & Reichel, 2023).

Informants highlighted that non-verbal communication was an important component of video calls. Eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice, confidence, and professional body language were perceived as important non-verbal cues. These elements helped foster immediate trust, improve clarity of communication, and build perceived credibility. Informants mentioned that non-verbal cues helped reduce uncertainty in communication and reduce misunderstandings. This finding supports earlier research (Fatima et al., 2024).

Informants mentioned that successful communication extended beyond effective communication with clients. They emphasized the importance of maintaining workplace boundaries while being responsive to clients' concerns. Establishing shared communication plans, respecting working hours, and managing client's expectations with personal freedom were considered essential for maintaining long-term client relationships and avoiding excessive

communication. (Ola et al., 2024). They explained that these strategies improved empathy toward clients, enhanced message clarity, and strengthened client interaction, reinforcing the client-centered communication approach discussed by Topic-Rutherford (2023).

Informants explained that video communication was strategically used for complex projects, trust development and relationship building. They observed that video interaction provided more effective communication. Informants explained that video meetings were highly beneficial during initial interaction with clients, negotiation meetings, and problem-solving discussions. They noted that video communication improved clarity, reduced misunderstandings and improved perceived credibility, which is aligned with the principles of Media Richness Theory. (Damian et al., 2006).

Several informants emphasized that well-planned communication increased client engagement. They explained that preparing presentations, arranging explanations, and identifying client's communication needs in advance were highly important when communicating with global clients across different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. (Mardiania et al., 2024).

Informants explained that video communication enhanced shared understanding by combining verbal communication with facial expressions, voice tone, gestures, and real-time feedback. Informants explained that these non-verbal cues helped reduce misunderstandings and strengthen interpersonal credibility. They also helped freelancers and clients to develop a mutual understanding throughout the project. This finding is consistent with earlier research, which shows that richer communication media enhance trust development and help minimize misunderstandings in remote work settings.(Cakula & Pratt, 2021).

Informant 18 (I18) explained:

"If the client is comfortable and prefers video calls, then obviously we do video calls... video calls are important for the client's comfort."

Similarly, several informants observed that video communication helped strengthen client's trust and satisfaction level. As informant 6 (I6) explained:

"When your clients know you, see you, they kind of trust you more than when they don't know how you look or how you work. Client satisfaction is your utmost priority."

Sub-Theme 2: Video Communication and Repeat Business

The second sub-theme,"Video Communication and Repeat Business," highlights the long-term importance of effective video communication. It not only supports successful project completion but also builds strong client relationships. These stronger relationships result in repeat business. Informants explained that video communication helped build a stronger interpersonal connection with clients. Instead of being transactional, these interactions often changed into long-term client relationships. Informants observed that regular video communication helped clients recognize freelancers more easily. With time, these interactions built greater confidence and loyalty, leading clients to view freelancers as reliable professional partners rather than simply freelancers. Informants explained that video communication played an important role in maintaining long-term client relationships. They also noted that stronger client relationships created greater opportunities for future projects.

Figure 3 shows the findings by highlighting three interconnected codes of this sub-theme: increased confidence and comfort level for future projects, video clarity and trust as predictors for rehire, and non-comm. factors essential for repeat business.

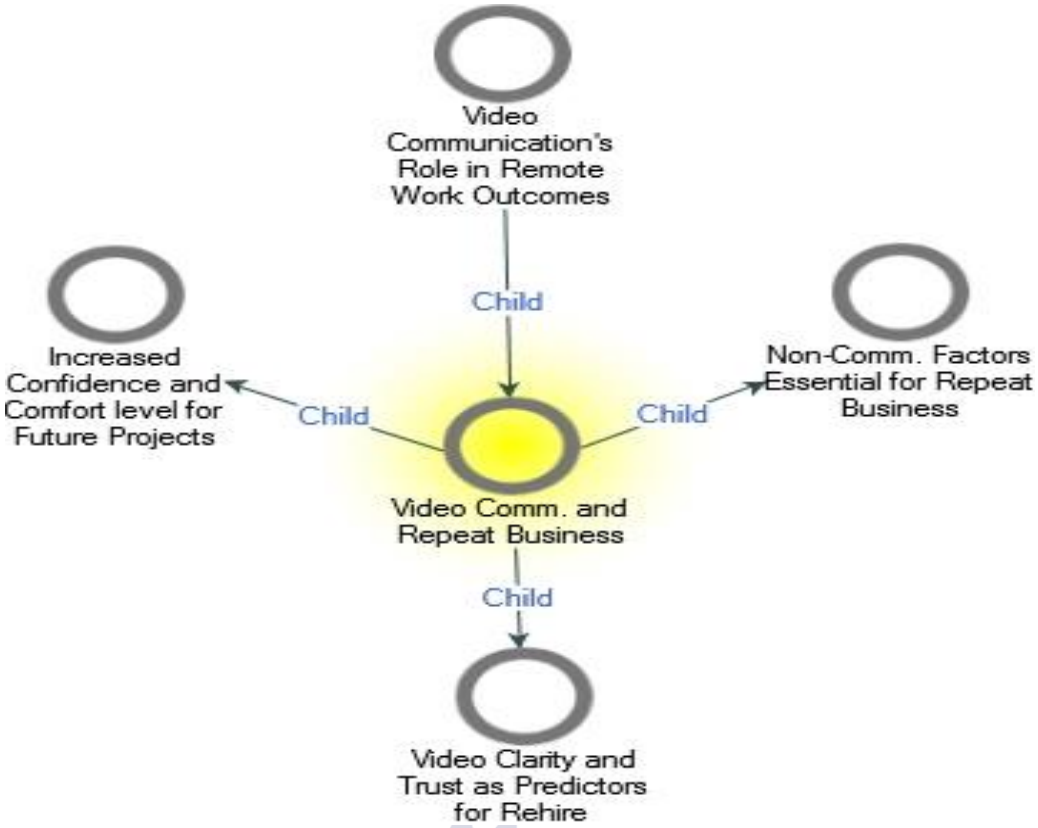

Figure 3. Thematic Map of Video Communication and Repeat Business

During the interviews, informants explained that clients who experienced high-quality video communication during their initial meetings were more willing to offer additional projects in the future. They explained that video meetings allowed freelancers to establish credibility, reflect professionalism, and develop stronger interpersonal relationships with clients. These positive experiences enhanced client's confidence and encouraged long-term collaboration. These findings are aligned with previous research, which shows that communication competence and interpersonal skills play a crucial role in securing repeat business and maintaining long-term client relationships (Yaqoob et al., 2025).

Clients' confidence in freelancer's competence was further increased through face-to-face interaction. By observing communication style, responsiveness, and dedication ,clients developed greater trust in freelancers' kills. Video meetings also provided immediate confidence, which reduced uncertainty and enhanced trust during project completion. As confidence increased through continued video interactions, several informants said that clients became more willing to rehire the same freelancers for future projects.

Maintaining long-term client relationships was also influenced by non-verbal communication, as emphasized by the informants. They also explained that facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, careful attention, and meaningful engagement fostered deeper connections between freelancers and clients. These non verbal cues increased future collaboration beyond a single project. In addition, informants emphasized that video communication created a higher level of authenticity and long-term relationship through the use of non-verbal signals.

The importance of video communication for establishing long-term client relationships was emphasized by informant 12 (I12), who stated:

"If a customer is very serious and has a high demand, like purchasing multiple products or wanting a long-term working relationship, we prefer a video call with them."

Similarly, informant 5 (I5) emphasized that face-to-face communication through video enhanced confidence and trust, stating:

"Since we are social humans, when we interact and talk to each other, it generates a lot of confidence and builds mutual trust."

Overall, the findings show that video communication appeared as an effective and rich communication medium that enhanced trust, credibility, client satisfaction, and long-term professional relationships in remote work. Through the use of both verbal and non-verbal communication, it helped reduce communication uncertainty and improved the quality of professional relationships. As a result, informants indicated that video communication resulted in better remote work performance and increased opportunities for repeat work among Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that video communication is more than a technological communication tool. It serves as an important interpersonal competency that enhances trust, professional credibility, client satisfaction, collaboration, and repeat business among Pakistani freelancers and digital marketers. The study also examined how video communication skills enhanced remote work performance among Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals. Overall, the findings suggest that successful remote work depends not only on technical skills but also on the ability to communicate effectively through rich communication media.

The findings show that trust and perceived credibility are enhanced through video communication during remote meetings. According to the informants, face-to-face communication helps clients to judge freelancers' confidence, professional behaviour, responsiveness, and communication skills more effectively. As a result, clients develop greater confidence in freelancers during face-to-face meetings. These findings aligned with earlier research, which shows that richer communication media enhance interpersonal trust by providing both verbal and non-verbal cues that reduce uncertainty in online meetings (Gabbianelli & Pencarelli, 2024; Fuchs & Reichel, 2023). Likewise, Zaugg and Davies (2013) state that synchronous communication encourages stronger interpersonal relationships by promoting social presence and mutual understanding. The present findings further indicate that within Pakistan's freelancing and digital marketing sector, trust is enhanced not only through the consistency of communication but also through the effective use of video communication skills, such as professional appearance,client-focused communication and flexible communication.

Communication clarity, collaboration, and client satisfaction were also recognized as important outcomes of high-quality video communication. Informants stated that functions such as screen sharing, in-depth video discussions, instant feedback, and real-time clarification helped reduce misunderstandings and promoted more effective project completion. These findings are consistent with previous research, which show that synchronous communication technologies increase collective decision-making and support effective knowledge sharing among geographically dispersed teams (Damian et al., 2006; Ilag, 2021; Phocharoen et al., 2022). Building on previous research, the present study shows that effective communication is influenced not only by technological features but also by how remote workers use them. Informants emphasized that the strategic use of active listening, clear verbal explanations, and appropriate non-verbal communication enhances trust, credibility and improves overall remote work performance.

This study also extends existing knowledge by showing how video communication plays a role in the development of long-term client relationships. During the interviews, informants repeatedly emphasized that effective video communication enhanced client's trust, promoted repeat business, and strengthened client partnerships over time. Previous research has mainly focused on communication technologies within organizational settings. In contrast, the present findings highlight the freelance environment, where long-term remote work success depends on developing and maintaining client-freelance relationships across international borders. Hence, the findings show that strong video communication skills act as a significant advantage for freelancers working within global digital marketplaces.

The findings of this study strengthen the applicability of Media Richness Theory (Daft &

Lengel, 1986) in remote work environments. The theory suggests that communication becomes more effective when richer media are used to perform tasks involving uncertainty and complexity. The informants' experiences resonated with the main ideas of Media Richness Theory.

Many informants said that they mostly used video communication when discussing projects, handling work problems, building trust, and maintaining long-term client relationships. They explained that video calls helped them to get quick responses and understand both verbal and non-verbal cues, which improved communication and made discussions easier to follow. These experiences agree with the main ideas of Media Richness Theory and show the importance of communication in remote work, especially in Pakistan's freelancing and digital marketing sector.

Overall, the informants' experiences reveal that video communication was not only an online communication tool but they believed it was an essential part of remote work because it enabled them to communicate more effectively with their clients. The informants' responses also showed that using communication tools alone was not enough. Informants explained that good communication skills made these tools more effective. This helped them gain clients' trust, maintain professional relationships, and perform better in remote work.

CONCLUSION

The informants stated that having communication technology alone was not sufficient for the success of remote work. They said that remote workers also require good video communication skills to communicate effectively with their clients. According to the experiences of remote workers, video communication made online interaction more clear because it provided verbal and non-verbal cues along with quick responses. All these features helped them communicate more clearly, deal with communication barriers, and build good relationships with their clients. The informants also said that effective communication helped them work better with others, gain clients' trust, build credibility, improve client satisfaction and maintain long-term working relationships. The experiences of remote workers show that video communication skills made their work more effective. These skills helped them work better with their clients and contribute to better results in freelancing and digital marketing.

The data suggest that Media Richness Theory is also helpful for understanding communication in Pakistan's freelancing and digital marketing sector. The informants' experiences supported the main ideas of the theory. Many informants said that richer communication media helped them to work on complex tasks, improve understanding, and build good working professional relationships. They also shared that good video communication skills improve communication with clients, build strong relationships, and achieve better work outcomes. The informants' experiences provide useful insights for freelancers, digital marketing professionals, organizational leaders, and communication trainers. The interview data showed that effective video communication is not only about using technology, it also depends on clear verbal and non-verbal communication, understanding clients' expectations, and using video communication tools properly. The informants said that these communication skills helped them gain clients' trust, work more effectively as a team, and create more chances to get future projects in the international digital market.

Like every study, this study also has some limitations. It focused only on Pakistani freelancers and digital marketing professionals and was completed using a qualitative research methodology. For this reason, the findings may not reflect all remote work settings. Upcoming studies can explore this topic by using quantitative or mixed-method research methodologies. They may also investigate other online communication technologies or compare remote workers from various industries and cultural backgrounds to gain a deeper understanding of this area.

From the informants' experiences, success in remote work depends on both online communication technology and using these communication tools effectively. Strong video communication skills helped the informants communicate effectively with their clients and develop lasting working relationships. These

skills will remain valuable as remote work continues to grow.

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