

The Role Of Social Media Communication In Married Couples In Long-Distance Relationships: An Analysis Of The Perception Of Married Women In Lahore

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore the perspectives of married couples, who have experienced long distance relationships, and utilize the instant access of communication through social media to strengthen and maintain their connection despite their geographical distances. Individuals between the ages of 20 and 30 were questioned using a quantitative research design concerning their knowledge of using technology and social media as a form of communication being in long-distance relationship. While conducting and theorizing this research, Social Exchange Theory was used. To evaluate the data, the researcher looked for codes and themes present in the respondent's responses. The results showed that the participants believed that Technology and social media were helpful in enabling them to maintain their communication throughout their long-distance relationship, they felt connected. As it caused relaxation being in long distance relationships and increase affection between couples. Couples that live apart use social media extensively to manage their virtual relationships in ways that balance and bolster their connections over time and space Video calling through WhatsApp proved helpful as a source of communication being in long distance relationship. As social media usage proved cost-effective, easy accessible but on the other hand married couples felt lacking in physical affection additionally, the participants said although long distance relationships require compromises, researche¹rs found that overall the connection had more advantages than disadvantages. The results of this investigation show that Future study is required in the field of relationships and social media. The functions of social media should be balanced, and modern couples must learn to be more adaptable and flexible to the shifting social trend.

KEY WORDS: Social media communication, Long-distance relationships, Technology, Six Degrees, LinkedIn, Relational communication, Marriag.

INTRODUCTION

Social media communication, an internet-based platform, allows people to share information and connect with each other using any device (such as mobile phones or laptops). Long-distance relationships are fundamentally different from regular partnerships. Intimate physical contact and effective communication are made easier for couples who live together. A long-distance relationship is difficult since the primary forms of communication are speaking and writing, and because we are unconcerned with a framework, we cannot tell what is happening or in which scenario our spouse is.

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Relationships are inevitably fraught with conflict and difficulty, and this is usually unavoidable. Because each person has a distinctive perspective and set of values, this happens. (Marianne Dainton et al., 2002)

Reviewing a time when utilising a phone or other type of technology for communication could be difficult for both children and adults. Six Degrees was a website that allowed users to build profiles before "friending" other users to join their group. It was launched in 1997. About 100 million individuals had access to the internet in 2000, and many of them used message boards to make new friends. Utilise this website to publish images, communicate with friends, and share music. The same year, LinkedIn was established as a platform for working industry professionals to network, find work, and work together. Mark Zuckerberg initially created TheFacebook.com as a chat service for Harvard students in 2005, but he later saw its full potential and made it public. Twitter, a website that allowed users to send "tweets" of no more than 140 characters, was founded in 2006 because of the growing popularity of social media and text-based news sources. As well as photo-sharing websites like Photobucket, Flickr, and Instagram, there were several websites that offered social networking capabilities in 2010. Finally, social media emerged as a resource that website owners and online advertisers could employ to make their sites more accessible. In barely 20 years, social media has grown and developed (Hale, 2017).

Marriage's unique qualities are inextricably linked to the purpose and potential of relational communication, which is to make contact with others before emphasising the importance of the message. The more relational communication is practised, the more common it will become. Real communication inside a marriage is also a crucial requirement that cannot be disregarded. (Syam, 2015)

The husband and wife's communication are never constant; it always changes. There are certain duties that must be finished to preserve balance to sustain and establish a positive connection. Four elements—commonality, control, reaction, and the right profound tone—are particularly effective at maintaining the equilibrium. When the link between the husband and wife is destroyed, it becomes more challenging to implement the four elements needed to maintain balance in a harmonious partnership. the practise of using communication channels for courting and romantic connection. Given the media's inherent personality, it should be assumed that in addition to its merits, it also has significant flaws that drastically restrict the intimacy of interactions. Direct encounters, which are uncommon for long-distance couples, do not always result in the couple's further separation. When power couples meet, they should be met, and this brief window of opportunity should be utilised as effectively as possible. The greatest way to meet power couples is in person, so make the most of your time together by staying away from unnecessary conversations. Everyone in this quick encounter feels extraordinary. (Cresswall and John, 2014).

Long Distance Relationships

Regular partnerships and long-distance relationships are fundamentally dissimilar. Living together makes it easier for partners to communicate, make their points, and engage in physical intimacy. However, a long-distance relationship is challenging because the main means of contact are speaking and writing, and because we are unconcerned with a framework, we are unable to detect what is happening or in which scenario our spouse is. Conflict and difficulties always exist in relationships and are typically unavoidable. Every person has their own style of thinking, needs, and ambitions, which is why this occurs. (Marianne Dainton and colleagues, 2002)

Suggested in these social discourses are two potential perspectives on significant distance connections, one in which affections increment given physical partition and the other in which physical absence makes agreeable independence. From one viewpoint, living separated can be upsetting and desolate for social accomplices and most couples likely like

residing in a similar spot. In any case, living in a similar spot isn't consistently conceivable and relating a way off can be very helpful for people, what's more, their connections, for instance, by permitting accomplices opportunities that they wouldn't have on the off chance that they lived in closeness. Then again, being in a similar spot (either for all time or briefly), although facilitative of relationship improvement and immediate friendship, may increase sensations of 'offending one another,' 'being in one another's space,' or 'restricting individual potential.' There are different intentions behind a marriage gone through by certain couples which additionally drive a few assumptions inside it. Besides, they will go through marriage even though they live in various places because of work or education. In the review of raising and keeping up with relationships by Steven A Beebe et al, it is said that a few factors that can cause separation are time, distance, conflict, and death. (Sahlstein, 2004)

Role of social media in Maintaining Long Distance Relationships

Relationship maintenance is the foundation of two or three connections. Regardless of whether individuals notice it, a considerable lot of their normal ordinary exercises connect with relationship maintenance. This incorporates energy (e.g., being affable, keeping away from analysis), being open, giving affirmations about the relationship, communicating one's affection genuinely, overseeing clashes, and sharing undertakings or errands. With regards to long distance relationship, similar essential relationship maintenance procedures are utilized. Connections will weaken if individuals don't effectively work to keep up with them by utilizing some or the entirety of the above-mentioned support exercises. Studies have likewise looked, truth be told at the variables that connect with relationship fulfilment and they are the same, on the off chance that not the equivalent, as the upkeep exercises. (Dindia and Sommer, 2006)

Such factors incorporate fulfilment with communication, impact on the relationship, sexual exercises, one's recreation (how each accomplice spends free time), division of family errands, time together (only the two accomplices), time with different companions/family, and funds. Of these, fulfilment with communication is the most grounded indicator of marital satisfaction. (Stafford, 2005)

One technology that shows promise, given its similarity to face-to-face settings, is video chat frameworks. An assortment of studies has investigated this space and represented the courses in which families utilize the innovation and the challenges related to it. In the first place, studies have shown that sensations of "being there" are one of the biggest advantages of video chat and such frameworks cause individuals to feel nearer to the far-off individual. (Ames et al., 2010)

Perception of Married Women about social media & Long-Distance Relationships

For married women, social media is a blessing, nonetheless. Social media allows them to communicate quickly and efficiently with no delays but where there is light, there is dark. Women often find themselves comparing themselves to social media couples which can add up to their feeling of loneliness. It can be rather harmful to not only the women but also the relationship since often the things on social media are scripted and well edited. Most women think that if social media and computer-mediated communication have never existed, they would never be able to maintain their relationships. (Stafford, 2005)

Yet social media is widely used by couples to keep in touch and try to maintain their relationship regardless of distance. There is no single opinion or perception of married women on social media, they vary in experiences and behaviours, but we cannot discard its importance in the life of long-distant couples. (Fatimah, 2014)

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative method is used for this study. a survey was designed to pick up the best possible results in Lahore, married women who are living in long distance relationship. The primary role of a questionnaire is to compile or find out specific outputs of social media with reference to the long-distance relationship. The sample of the study comprised of 51 respondents. The respondents of our research were mostly female married woman, between the ages of 20-30, they were in long distance relationship for more than 5 years. By mailing a questionnaire to married women involved in long distance relationships, the data was gathered. To assess the data, demographic information regarding the participant's gender, sexual orientation, and marital status was gathered. Data collection took place in July and August of 2022. **Likert Scale** was used to collect answers from the respondents. A Likert scale is a psychometric scale commonly involved in research involving questionnaires. Questions have a three-point in which the choices range from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Some researchers explain how social media affects working individuals and their work while other studies explain how students are affected using social media platforms. There were no studies found that highlight the root causes of conflicts in long-distance relationships and how social media usage can minimize, resolve, or aggravate the conflicts. While thousands of studies have been previously conducted to study various aspects of social media i.e., marketing, assisting in studies, making new friends, and staying connected with people and family around the world. Our research aims to fill the gap in the literature regarding the use of social media in conflict management in long-distance marital relationships. Another reason for conducting this research was to make clear the mental health status of individuals in long-distance relationships and the causes of conflicts between them. Couples who are currently involved in a long-distance relationship, this study may be useful to couples who are contemplating long-distance relationships as well in assessing whether social media and other forms of technology will help them keep their relationship strong.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication through Social Platforms

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube have a vast usage and are not only limited to advertising and marketing. The basic use of social media is communication whether it's for teaching and instruction or for public relations (Lipschultz, 2020). Facebook is the social platform that is considered good for uniting and strengthening family ties and bonds, keeping them connected (Joo et al., 2017).

It has been researched that the most users of social media are the younger generation and the old aged people are likely to use social platforms for communication purposes due to their mobility issues and the urge to stay socially connected with friends and family (Bell et al., 2013).

Important Aspects in Social Media Communication

The most important online things that a person looks at in a relationship are pictures and status updates. Initiation of private messages also starts through liking pictures or responding to a status update. The most important social site for building romantic relationships is Facebook. An ending of relationships also results in removing the partner from your social networks, especially on Facebook (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016).

In recent years, researchers have described social media platforms as sites where emotions develop and are sites for emotion formation. So social media sites aggravate emotions based on the content seen by the viewer (Crabtree et al., 2021).

Communication Preference

In a most recent study on 30 participants, it has been found that close/intimate relationships prefer face-to-face, phone calls, or text to communicate. These interaction methods are vital to providing emotional support and social media plays its role in providing emotional support, especially Facebook (Sutcliffe et al., 2022).

It has been proved that in long-distance marriage relationships, communication satisfaction plays a direct positive role in relationship maintenance (Tukundane, 2020). In one-to-one interviews with intercultural marriages, it was found that sharing leisure time was one of the major components of marital satisfaction. Spending leisure time together was the reason the marital conflicts were resolved (Sharaievskia et al., 2013).

Pakistani Perspective about social media role in long distance relationship

Talking about Pakistan, though it has developed economically still it lacks exposure to social networking and e-commerce due to low IT literacy levels in the country (Naqvi et al., 2020)

A study on random 300 final year students of Pakistan suggested that social media does play a role in assisting students with their studies but also negatively affects their grades and academic performance (Kausar & Awan, 2019). In married women of Rawalpindi, Pakistan it was found that social support is very much beneficial in making adjustments to their married life and plays a significant role. On the other hand, social support drags the timeframe of depression, anxiety, and stress in professional women and housewives. Anxiety and depression directly affect the quality of married life and deteriorate it. Perceived social support increases anxiety, depression, and stress resulting in disturbed marriages (Abbas et al., 2019).

Hypothesis of Study

1. **H1:** It is assumed that married woman in Pakistan feel more relaxed and happier after chatting with their husband at the time of conflicts.
2. **H2:** It is estimated that for maintaining the healthy relationship social media is beneficial, but it cannot compensate for the need of physical relationships.
3. **H3:** It is assumed that spending time on social media it's not really measure of love, but it helps couples stay connected, loyal and passionate about each other.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To assess the root causes of conflicts in long-distance marital relationships.
- To check the role of social media at the time of a conflict situation in distanced couples.
- To explore the outcomes of social media usage in the long-distance relationship between husband and wife.

Research Gap

In the literature review we found out that no study describes the effect of conflict, stress, anxiety, and mental health on time span of being in long distance relationship. So, researcher conducted this research to explain time span being in long distance relationship and its effects. So, we conclude that the couples who were in long distance relationship for 5 years had less conflicts, stress, anxiety, and mental health less affected whereas the couples who were in long distance relationship for more than 5 years had more conflicts stress anxiety and mental health illness. So social media was the source of emotional balance, but it could not compensate the effects caused by being in long distance relationship for longer period in couples.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher kept a keen focus on the “**Theory of Media Ecology**” which is a theory studying the complex interaction between people, technology, media, and the atmosphere, with the goal of growing awareness.

Conceptual framework

The angle that researcher used at the same time as carrying out and theorizing these studies is Social Exchange Theory. Social Ecology Theory analyses methods in near connections and makes experience of the flip of events, support, and decay of those relationships regarding the stability amongst prices and rewards. Nakonezny and Denton (2008) proceeded to make feel of that prices are the factors that avert or prevent an exhibition of a grouping of methods of behaving inner a dating, even though rewards are the delights, fulfillments, and satisfactions that a man or woman appreciates inner a dating. In this manner, on the factor while the prizes are truthful and offset the prices, a sense of fortitude creates in the dating. By studying the results from this attitude, the researcher had the choice to translate how social media is used to regulate the charges and prizes internal a far-eliminated courting. Collett (2010) expressed that once a novel thinks approximately whether they're fulfilled interior their precise courting, they may gauge the prices and benefits and examine whether or not they could be content material intending with the connection or transferring to an optional partner. Partners which might be engaged with a far-eliminated dating have essentially adjusted their prices and rewards and well worth the compensations with the eventual end result of getting the choice to trouble address across the prices. In a situation wherein geological distance is an expense, companions use social media and on-line innovation to assist in associating them on a further person and private level.

Brief about Variables:

In this study, both dependent and independent variables were used. The use of social media for communication was an independent variable. On a social media communication platform that is based on the internet, couples can interact and exchange information through by any means. dependent variable is Love and mental health both felt more relaxed and enjoyable after chatting with their spouse. Among the dependent variables are maintaining relationships and being devoted and passionate about each other while spending time on social media.

HYPOTHESIS NO 1:

It is assumed that married woman in Pakistan feel more relaxed and happier after chatting with their husband at the time of conflicts.

Crosstabulation

Count

	Do you feel more relaxed and happier after chatting with their husband at the time of conflicts?			Total
	Always	Sometim es	never	
5 years	9	17	4	30

Are you in long distance relationship with your husband? If yes, than for how long?	10 years	5	10	4	19
	more than 10 years	1	1	0	2
Total		15	28	8	51

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.166 ^a	4	.884
Likelihood Ratio	1.403	4	.844
Linear-by-Linear Association	.003	1	.954
N of Valid Cases	51		

a. 5 cells (55.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .31.

The results partially agreed with the hypothesis no 2 and it showed that being in long distance relationship for long period of time, sometimes partners feel more relaxed and happier after chatting with their husband at the time of conflicts.

HYPOTHESIS NO 2:

It is estimated that for maintaining the healthy relationship social media is beneficial, but it cannot compensate for the need of physical relationships

Crosstabulation

Count

	Do you think the quality of time you spent on social media with you partner is equally genuine compared to the quality of time spent when physically together?	Total
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		Always	Sometimes	Never	
Do you feel that social media does not give you a space which you need sometime to maintain a healthy relationship?	Always	3	1	10	14
	Sometimes	1	11	16	28
	Never	0	2	7	9
Total		4	14	33	51

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.856 ^a	4	.065
Likelihood Ratio	9.381	4	.052
Linear-by-Linear Association	.875	1	.349
N of Valid Cases	51		

a. 5 cells (55.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .71.

The results of also agree with the hypothesis no 3 , and it showed that for maintain a healthy relationship the quality of time you spent on social media with you partner is not equally genuine compared to the quality of time spent when physically together and it cannot compensate the physical satisfaction.

HYPOTHESIS NO 3:

: It is assumed that spending time on social media it’s not really measure of love, but it helps couples stay connected, loyal and passionate about each other.

Crosstabulation

Count

	Do you really believe that social media helps couples stay connected, loyal and passionate about each other?			Total
	Strongly	Rarely	Not at all	
Strongly	8	3	1	12

Do you think spending more time on social media with you partner is a measure of love?	Sometim es	8	9	3	20
	Not Important	7	8	4	19
Total		23	20	8	51

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.238 ^a	4	.519
Likelihood Ratio	3.237	4	.519
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.298	1	.130
N of Valid Cases	51		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.88.

The results agreed with the hypothesis no 4 , and it showed that social media usage is not really measure of love but it still helps couples stay connected, loyal and passionate about each other.A

DISCUSSION:

Social media usage in marriages and long-distance relationships is beneficial and serves a function. Latent and apparent functions were distinguished by functionalist Robert Merton. The manifest functions of a certain type of social interaction are those that the participants (distance couples) are aware of and want to carry out. (marriage). The results of that are the latent functions activity that participants occasionally are not aware of. These might be detrimental or beneficial. Social media has the purpose of facilitating communication and intimacy between spouses who are separated by distance. The benefits of globalization (social media), which the couples are unaware of, could lead to threaten a marriage and cause it to become dysfunctional. It is crucial to understand that they must talk as frequently as possible to keep their marriage intact. Communication is symbolic and helps couples overcome issues brought on by physical distance

According to the studies cited in the literature review, Due to their physical separation, long-distance couples may have less opportunities to participate in intimacy-fostering behaviours including physical touch, nonverbal cues, and live self-disclosure (McCoy et al., 2013). Geographically near couples can readily engage in in-person encounters to satisfy their closeness demands, but partners in long-distance relationships must put in more effort to do so. (McCoy et al., 2013). This was confirmed by the study's findings.

Participants said it may be annoying and cause misunderstandings to text their partner. Misunderstandings can happen as a result of the absence of verbal and nonverbal cues. Many participants emphasized that resolving disputes requires more work and can take more time. Other Participants admitted they avoid using text when there is a face-to-face

conversation and prefer see their partner in person to prevent misinterpretations. The findings from the survey depicted that the used audio calling least as source of communication.

Social media's arrival offers several advantages for long-distance relationships as well as many disadvantages. The results of this study indicated that respondents' opinions about social media were mixed. Since it has caused them more harm than good, several people opposed it. Due to the influence, it has had on the communication channel, it has been beneficial for others. The entrance of Western culture into our African traditions, as well as the development in industrialization and the spread of globalization, have all contributed to the emergence of social media. Modernization and globalization generated social media.

Therefore, it is important to not undervalue social media's influence on long-distance relationships. Social media has a crucial role in the continuation or dissolution of relationships between couples who live apart. It is important to understand that social media communication has been effective in bridging physical distance and eradicating social challenges among couples who grow apart due to differences in work or career, education, religion, and ethnic and political disputes. However, there are several risks associated with social media that could endanger relationships between couples. Misinformation, societal comparison, suspicion of adultery, a decrease in the frequency of significant physical encounters between spouses, and the alienation of children from normative family dynamics are only a few of these grave risks.

The functions of social media should be balanced, and modern couples must learn to be more adaptable and flexible to the shifting social trends. To foster healthy relationships and preserve families, there should be a balance between spouses' use of social media and their in-person interactions. This is because a heavy dependence on technology and social media can have detrimental effects on interpersonal relationships. While acknowledging the inherent challenges and skilfully managing them socially, spouses must successfully adapt to change and exploit technology breakthroughs like social media. Despite their efforts to adapt to and deal with the socioeconomic and technical realities of twenty-first century family challenges, this is still the case. The benefits and opportunities of modernization, industrialization, globalization, technology, and social media must be fully embraced by separated partners.

CONCLUSION:

In the light of gathering data, we can conclude that for the communication in long-distance marriage couple's social media proved helpful as it increased affection between couples. Video calling through WhatsApp proved helpful as a source of communication being in long distance relationship. As social media usage proved cost-effective, easily accessible but on the other hand married couples felt lacking in physical affection as they cannot be able to touch and feel each other through social media. So, we can say that whatever benefits social media brings but it can never compete physical presence of partner. Despite all, social media is beneficial and comfortable source of communication for couples and helps couples stay connected, loyal, and passionate about each other. So, we can say that completely dependent on social media for communicating cannot completely measure your love for your partner being in long distance relationship but proved to be useful source of communication being in long distance relationship. The result totally agreed with the hypothesis that Pakistani married 88% women use WhatsApp as the main source of communication. Busy schedules and other necessary commitments affect the 84.3% of relationship due to time zone difference.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

This study may be useful in assessing if couples who are already engaged in a long-distance relationship or couples who are contemplating involvement in long distance relationship would find social media and technology beneficial in preserving their connection. Couples

can experiment with the many social media and technological platforms indicated in the study's findings to incorporate into their relationship, even though its findings cannot be applied generally. The findings add to our understanding of how social media and technology contribute to maintaining and enhancing communication between couples who are separated by a great distance.

Social Media for Relationship Maintenance

For maintaining relationships numerous kinds of communication mediums are used ranging from phone calls to communication over social media platforms. Communication through these platforms affects relationships in a negatively and positive way (House, B., McGinty, M., & Heim, L., 2017). Social media has become an unavoidable part of our lives and people and personalities are disclosed through what people write or share on their social media. According to research conducted in 2017, it has been concluded that people posting online posts about intimacy and negativity makes them less attractive. Similar behavior was seen when interacting with people face-to-face. The same feelings of unattractiveness and negative comments arise for a person discussing intimacy and negativity through verbal communication. This proves that communication through social media and in-person have similar effects on a relationship (Orben, A. C., & Dunbar, R. I., 2017).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Some recommendations that should be taken into consideration are Couples in the twenty-first century must learn to be more adaptable and flexible to the shifting social norms and balance the family and social duties. Over-reliance on social media and echnology has mixed effects on social relations. Social relationships are impacted by media in different ways and strongly maintaining balance between the deployment between spouses' use of social media and physical interaction relations are strengthened, and families are maintained. Even so couples attempt to adapt and integrate into the socioeconomic the family of the twenty-first century in terms of technology they must successfully adjust to change and use while acknowledging the difficulties they inevitably provide and skilfully navigating them, technological developments like social media in a social sense. Couples that live apart must maximize their advantages. They need to seize the opportunity provided by modernity, industrialization, globalization, innovations, and social media, but they also need to recognize the dual functions of social media and manage them thoroughly for long-term family survival and societal development.

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