

CELL PHONE USAGE BY COUPLES: ISSUES, POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Without communication and its medium (cell phone), achieving a flourishing intimate bond as a couple is impossible; thus, when communication is absent, it can obstruct harmony, strain their relationship and even feelings of dissatisfaction. Thus, this study examined Cell phone usage by Couples: Issues, Potentials and Challenges. The specific objectives are to identify issues and potential challenges associated with couples' cell phone usage and explore ways to mitigate these challenges. Social Exchange theory served as the theoretical foundation. A cross-sectional research design was employed, using a qualitative data analysis method based on secondary sources. The findings show that there is a significant relationship between cell phone usage and marital satisfaction. There is also a potential strategy to lessen the adverse effects of cell phone use in marital relationships. The study also identified issues in cell phone use by couples, including risks to romantic relationships, increased conflict, heightened jealousy, decreased trust, and even infidelity. Challenges include creating a false sense of intimacy, leading couples to rely less on face-to-face interaction and more on digital communication; fostering an environment prone to temptation; decreasing emotional intimacy; reducing relationship satisfaction; and increasing the risk of divorce. To address the challenges, this study reveals that couples should adopt strategies (such as keeping smartphones out of reach during dinner, outings with friends, sex, or before sleeping) to maintain stability in their relationships. They should also consider consulting counsellors regarding cell phone use and be cautious about sharing personal information through their devices to safeguard their relationship stability. It was concluded that cell phone usage significantly influences couples' lives, both positively and negatively. Furthermore, the study recommends that couples should implement strategies to sustain their relationship, utilise their phones to learn and share best practices, and engage with counsellors regarding responsible utilisation of cell phones.

Keywords: Cellphone, Couples, Communication, Potentials, Usage

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is indispensable when it comes to relationships. Without it, achieving a healthy relationship as a couple becomes impossible; thus, its absence can create barriers, harm coexistence, and even lead to dissatisfaction. In this context, understanding communication, its channels, and the dispositions reflected in messages exchanged as a couple is of utmost significance (Concha-Huarcaya, Castro-Santisteban & Sevillano-Gamboa, 2022). Despite technological advancement, couples are vulnerable to crises in their relationship. The rise of technologies, particularly mobile phones as a communication medium, has a significant impact on couples' lives, whether positively or negatively. The use of mobile

phones plays a substantial role in contemporary society, and its influence on couples cannot be ignored. Phones have fostered a culture of comparison, where individuals measure their lives against those of others, leading to feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction. Communication via mobile devices has facilitated and even strengthened sentimental and interpersonal relationships. Couples often rely on mobile phones for communication, which has been reinforced through the use of mobile devices for interpersonal and couple interactions (Alvidrez & Rojas-Solis, 2017). The use of mobile phones has introduced various issues, potential challenges, and complexities into couples' lives.

A couple consists of two individuals,

typically an adult male and female, who are married or otherwise closely connected through romantic or sexual relationships (Concha-Huarcaya, 2022). The lives of couples are a social phenomenon that underpins many families worldwide. It can be a legally and socially recognised union between two people, usually a man and a woman, governed by laws, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that define the rights and responsibilities of the partners and confer status upon their offspring. Romantic relationships are a universal phenomenon found across all cultures, although the rules, ceremonies, and roles may differ from one society to another. The idea of a couple is complex and debated, lacking a universally accepted definition due to the variety of arrangements and rules that regulate unions. Nonetheless, a marriage-based couple is generally understood as a union regulated by legal systems, traditions, cultural values, and social norms that outline the responsibilities and entitlements of each partner (Garrido-Macías, Valour-Segura & Expósito, 2017).

Cell phones are electronic devices that couples can use for communication through voice calls, text messages, and social media (internet). They have become an integral part of modern-day communication, shaping various aspects of couples' lives. The influence of cell phones on romantic relationships, particularly marriages, has been a topic of growing interest in recent years (Veranes, Peñalver, Jorna, 2021). Couples' lives require effective communication, trust, and commitment to thrive. The use of cell phones can lead to both positive and negative outcomes in marriages. On the positive side, cell phones can facilitate communication and strengthen connections between partners (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs 2011). Cell phones have changed the way people interact and communicate, and couples are no exception. Studies have shown that excessive cell phone usage can culminate in marital conflicts and even divorce (Kolek & Saunders, 2016).

The advent of mobile phones has transformed how we communicate with each other, and their influence on couples has become an increasing concern (Oliveira, 2016). There are ways in which their use can influence relationships. Research indicates that excessive mobile phone use can significantly predict marital conflict and dissatisfaction (Hertlein, Blumer & Mihalic, 2015). The continual flow of curated images and updates can foster unrealistic expectations and encourage a culture of comparison, resulting in feelings of

inadequacy and dissatisfaction (Kolek & Saunders, 2016). Furthermore, mobile phones can facilitate infidelity and weaken marital trust (Wehrli Favez & Notari, 2019). The anonymity and accessibility of online platforms can create a tempting environment, and the ease of connecting with others can obscure the boundaries within couples' lives (Mitchell, Castellino & Williams, 2017).

There are many issues, potential challenges, and concerns linked to couples using mobile phones. The use of mobile phones can have both positive and negative impacts on romantic relationships. They have helped bridge the communication gap between partners, especially in married couples, by providing a platform for them to learn more about each other and build a sense of connection. However, excessive or improper use of mobile phones can lead to adverse outcomes such as breakups, divorce, and infidelity. Mobile phones can also cause conflicts and suspicion between partners, leading to separation (Sola, 2017; Nina, Lena & Betanzos, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Interruptions by cell phones during in-person conversations tend to weaken the flow of quality time in a relationship. It can lead to lower relationship satisfaction and less positive feelings towards partners. Cell phone use may cause conflicts in romantic relationships, and couples who make constant use of their phones often encounter higher levels of conflict. Such usage can also lead to jealousy-inducing activities, like viewing their partner's profile or interacting with past partners, which can further decrease relationship satisfaction.

Concha-Huarcaya et al. (2022) examined the link between cell phone use and couple conflicts, suggesting that proper use can improve satisfaction, enable effective communication, and help sustain a long-term connection between partners. They also noted that misuse may result in misunderstandings, conflicting interests, diminished satisfaction, loss of engagement, and in some cases, relationship breakdowns. Similarly, Oliveira (2016) explored the link between mobile phone use and couples' satisfaction. The study reveals that a quality relationship tends to decline when either partner uses a device frequently during shared moments. Further research indicates that the use of mobile devices is negatively associated with couples' intimacy.

Although these studies highlight extensive

research that examines social media use in relationships, there seem to be relatively few studies on cell phone usage by couples, including issues, potential, and challenges. This creates a knowledge gap that this study on “Cell Phone Usage by Couples: Issues, Potentials and Challenges” aims to address.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the issues in cell phone usage by couples.
2. Investigate the potential in cell phone usage by couples.
3. Identify challenges in cell phone usage by couples; and
4. Explore the possible ways to mitigate the challenges of cell phone usage by couples.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the issues in cell phone usage by couples?
2. What are the potentials in cell phone usage by couples?
3. What are the challenges in cell phone usage by couples?
4. What are the possible ways to mitigate the challenges of cell phone usage by couples?

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

1. There is no significant relationship between cell phone use and couples' marital satisfaction
2. There is no significant way to mitigate the adverse effects of cell phone use on marital relationships.

Literature Review

Cell Phone

Cell phones have become essential in the lives of many couples. Lenhart and Duggan (2014) reported that couples use cell phones during both everyday and significant moments. They negotiate when to use them and when to abstain. He further stated that some couples quarrel and have experienced hurtful incidents caused by cell phone use. Couples utilise cell phones to facilitate communication and support; some maintain their own passwords, while others share (Nikolinakou &

Phua, 2020; Alanazi, 2021). Couples have diverse and evolving needs, which may include intimacy, intellectual stimulation, security, affection, mutual respect, and the pursuit of self-fulfillment (Hashemi et al., 2017). Dialogue functions as a delicate mechanism that creates an environment conducive to responding to these needs. Cell phones are devices that help couples express, share, and respond to their needs (Ziha, Chaitee & Rahman, 2021).

Cell phones have transformed people's lives worldwide. They are relatively cheap and widely accessible to everyone. They provide a platform for couples to discuss their issues and opinions. They help couples with shopping, obtaining both informal and formal education, and evaluating and using business tools (Whiteside, Aleti, Pallant, & Zeleznikow, 2018). Cell phones within relationships extend beyond day-to-day task, increasingly playing role in intimate exchange. One such practice is sexting which involves exchanging sexually explicit or suggestive images and videos, and it is engaged in by both individuals in relationships and those who are single. Lenhart and Duggan (2014) argued that married couples use technologies, mainly social media and cell phones, as sources of support and communication. Couples use them to text their partner, feel closer when apart, and to argue and resolve issues through texts or calls that they find hard to settle face-to-face. Some couples also use their phones to find joy during difficult times or disagreements. They also use them to keep busy when they are separated (Abbasi & Drouin, 2019).

Couple

Couples' lives are a social phenomenon that forms the basis of many families globally. Concha-Huarcaya (2022) postulates that a couple is two individuals (especially an adult male and female) who are married or otherwise closely associated romantically or sexually. Garrido-Macías et al. (2017) posit that a couple can be a legally and socially approved partnership between two individuals, usually a man and a woman that is governed by cultural norms, legal frameworks, customs, and shared values that define the roles and responsibilities of each partner while conferring legitimacy and social status upon their children. The emergence of modern technologies has expanded the ways relationships are experienced. Shared time between partners remains a crucial factor in sustaining relationship quality and stability. Most of the time that couples spend

together happens either during mealtimes, in the evening, or on the weekend. Relationship satisfaction is influenced more by the quality of shared time than by the sheer duration or frequency of time spent together (Oliveira, 2016).

Issues in Cell Phone Usage by Couples

The utilisation of mobile phones is beneficial for couples' communication; it can strengthen their relationships and help them stay connected even when apart. It is a key part of early-stage communication in dating and plays a vital role in establishing romantic connections, especially for maintaining contact between dates (McCormack & Ogilvie, 2018). However, it also has a strong potential for distraction and entertainment, which can act as drivers for participants. These devices can initiate disagreements and addictive tendencies, influenced by the surrounding environment. The growth of social interactions accompanied by the aspiration to identify with various virtual social groups and other factors, makes the cell phone a significant element of modern life, often leading to conflicts and addictions (Sola, 2017; Concha-Huarcaya et al., 2022).

Cell phones have revolutionised the way couples interact. Despite cell phones provide many advantage like keeping in touch with friends and family; they also present risks to romantic relationships. Wehrli et al. (2019) shows that disproportionate use of mobile phones that can result in reduced intimacy, more conflicts, and even infidelity. Stokes et al (2018) revealed that couples who frequently used social media and mobile phones are reported lower relationship satisfaction and higher levels of conflict, with mobile phone use linked to increased feelings of jealousy and decreased trust.

Cell phones can also have a positive impact on relationships. Guldner (2015) emphasise that mobile phones can provide a sense of connection and community for couples who are geographically distant or have busy schedules. They can offer a platform for couples to share their experiences and connect with others who may be facing similar challenges. They can provide a space for couples to express their love and appreciation for each other, which can strengthen their bond, relationships, and satisfaction.

The anonymity and accessibility of online platforms through mobile phones can foster an environment full of temptation, and the ease of connecting with others can obscure the boundaries

of our relationships. Therefore, couples need to recognise the potential risks of mobile phone use and take proactive measures to reduce its negative impacts (Abbasi & Drouin, 2019).

Potentials in Cell Phone Usage by Couples

Mobile devices are among the most popular means of communication. Talking through mobile phones can be beneficial because it helps couples maintain meaningful relationships with those who live far away or nearby. Couples use mobile phones in their communication, which has been reinforced by technologies that enable social and intimate interactions. Consequently, a growing number of partners choose digital platforms to sustain their romantic bonds (Alvídrez & Rojas, 2017; Concha-Huarcaya et al., 2022). Cell phones are a crucial part of communication in the early stages of dating and are vital in establishing romantic relationships, especially for staying in touch between dates (McCormack & Ogilvie, 2018).

Cell phones can also have a positive impact on relationships. For instance, they can provide a sense of connection and community for couples who are geographically distant or have busy schedules. They can offer a platform for couples to share their experiences and connect with others who may be facing similar challenges. They can create a space for couples to express their love and appreciation for each other, which can strengthen their bond, relationships, and satisfaction (Guldner, 2015).

Theoretical Review

This study employs the Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) offers a framework for understanding how people form, maintain, and end social relationships based on the costs and benefits they gain from them (Blau, 1964). The theory was further developed by Elvin L. Peterson in 1966, and it has since become a widely used approach in studying social relationships, including romantic bonds and marriages. This theory suggests that individuals assess their relationships based on the costs and benefits they receive from their partners (Emerson, 1976). In the context of social media, SET can help explain how people balance the benefits of social media use (e.g., staying connected with friends and family) against the costs (e.g., reduced intimacy and increased conflict with their partner).

Social Exchange Theory is relevant to this study in several ways. One way is to explore how both partners perceive the costs and benefits of using social media in marital relationships. Ellison et al. (2011) found that the perceived benefits of mobile phone use, such as increased communication and emotional support, were positively related to marital satisfaction. However, the perceived costs, like jealousy and infidelity, were negatively associated with marital satisfaction. Another way Social Exchange Theory is relevant is that it considers how the impact of mobile phone use varies across families. For example, a survey by Ellison et al. (2012) found that using social media and mobile phones for infidelity was a significant predictor of marital dissatisfaction and separation. Nonetheless, the study also discovered that the levels of trust and communication in the relationship moderated the influence of media use on marital satisfaction. Specifically, the adverse effects of social media use on marital satisfaction were more evident in relationships with lower levels of trust and communication.

Empirical Review

Roberts and David (2016) carried out two investigations to design and validate a scale for "phubbing," defined as the tendency to use or become preoccupied with one's phone in the company of a romantic partner. In the first study, which focused on developing measurement items, data were collected from 308 adult participants. Through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, this phase produced a nine-item instrument assessing phubbing. The second study sought to evaluate a theoretical model proposing that partner phubbing would be associated with lower relationship satisfaction, with this link mediated by phone-related conflict and moderated by attachment anxiety. Using the nine-item Partner Phubbing Scale (PPHUB), the researchers surveyed 145 adults. Across both studies, findings demonstrated that phubbing significantly increased phone-related conflict while exerting a negative influence on relationship satisfaction. A post-hoc test further indicated that both phubbing and mobile phone conflict were strong predictors of satisfaction within romantic relationships. Overall, the evidence suggests that phubbing contributes to heightened conflict around phone use, which in turn undermines relational quality..

Oliveira (2016) addressed the lack of scholarly attention on the role of mobile

technologies in shaping relationship quality among partners. A quantitative approach was employed to examine how mobile device usage during shared wakeful moments affects relationship satisfaction, physical affection, conflict related to mobile device use, rules governing such use, and interference with the relationship. Two hundred and thirty-four adults in committed relationships completed an online survey covering these aspects. Results showed that relationship satisfaction negatively correlated with both the participant's and partner's mobile device use during shared wake time, conflicts over mobile use, and interference caused by mobile devices. Furthermore, disputes over mobile device use and interference mediated the link between mobile device use by both the participant and partner and relationship satisfaction. Lastly, the partner's mobile device use was associated with lower levels of physical affection. These findings demonstrate a connection between mobile device presence during shared wake sites and reduced relationship satisfaction and physical intimacy. The implications for counselling and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Concha-Huarcaya, Castro-Santisteban and Sevillano-Gamboa (2022) examined the Relationship Assessment and Couple Conflicts Due to Cell Phone Use in Peru. The study investigated the link between relationship appraisal and couple conflicts caused by cell phone use, involving a sample of 325 couples aged between 18 and 65 years. To achieve this, the Relationship Appraisal Scale (RAS) and a scale measuring conflicts related to cell phone use were used. The research was conducted within a basic research framework, using a non-experimental, correlational, cross-sectional design. Results indicated that the valuation of the relationship is negatively, moderately, and significantly correlated ($r_s = -0.456, p < 0.05$) with conflicts caused by cell phone use. The study found that couples perceive both positive and negative aspects of mobile phone use; that is, cell phone use impacts relationships, generating conflicts as well as benefits. Inappropriate or appropriate use of mobile devices can influence the dynamics between partners. Consequently, it can be concluded that effective utilisation of cell phones can improve satisfaction, facilitate smooth communication, and promote a lasting bond through various applications. Conversely, misuse may lead to problems, conflicts of interest, low satisfaction, disinterest, and even separation. A mobile device,

such as a cell phone, can either strengthen or undermine the relationship depending on how it is used.

Methodology

A cross-sectional research design was adopted for this study. The population of this study is all cell phone users in Nigeria, specifically those who live in Abraka, Delta State. The sample size is 155.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Demographic of respondents

The demographic data obtained are presented in the following tables below.

Table 1: Sex of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	68	45
Female	82	55
Total	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that 68(45%) of the respondents were male, while the remaining 82 (55%) of the respondents were female students.

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

Age Range (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 31	15	10
31 - 40	48	32
41-50	49	33
51-60	32	21
Above 60	6	4
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 indicates that 15 (10%) of the total respondents were under 31 years old, 48 (32%) were aged 31-40, 49 (33%) were aged 41-50, 32 (21%) were aged 51-60, while 6 (4%) were above 60 years old.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Married	72	48%
Divorced	31	21%
Widowed/Widower	29	19%
Separated	18	12%
Total	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 indicates that 72 (48%) of the total respondents were married, 31 (21%) were divorced, 29 (19%) were widowed/widower, while 18 (12%) were separated.

Data Analysis

The Research Questions were answered using simple percentages and means.

Research Question 1:

What are the issues in cell phone usage by couples?

	Responses Values										Σ	Mean	StDev	Decision	
	SA = 5		A = 4		U = 3		D = 2		SD = 1						
	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx					
Cell phones increase marital conflict	40	200	65	260	27	81	18	36	0	0	150	577	3.85	1.51	Accept
Cell phone increases feelings of jealousy	30	150	52	208	23	69	31	62	14	28	150	517	3.45	1.93	Accept
Cell phones pose the risk of infidelity in marital relationships	66	330	69	276	7	21	8	16	0	0	150	643	4.29	1.77	Accept
Cell phones decreased feelings of trust	45	225	60	240	9	27	21	42	15	30	150	564	3.76	1.27	Accept
GRAND MEAN												3.84	1.37	Accepted	

source: Field Survey, 2025

The responses to items 1-4 in Table 4 above are: 3.85, 3.45, 4.29, and 3.76, respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.85 ± 1.37 . Since the mean value of all the items exceeds the benchmark of 3.0 for an item to be accepted, it can be concluded that issues related to cell phone use by couples include: cell phones posing risks to romantic relationships, increased conflict, heightened feelings of jealousy, decreased trust, and even causing infidelity.

Research Question 2: What are the potential benefits of cell phone usage by couples?

	Responses Values										Σ	Mean	StDev	Decision	
	SA = 5		A = 4		U = 3		D = 2		SD = 1						
	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx					
Cell phones provide a sense of connection, community and intimacy for couples	55	275	65	260	6	18	21	42	3	6	150	601	4.01	1.80	Accept
Cell phones provide platforms for couples to share their experiences and connect with others facing similar challenges, seeking counsel	61	305	69	276	10	30	7	14	3	6	150	631	4.21	1.38	Accept
Cell phones help couples stay connected with friends and family	81	405	46	184	8	24	10	20	5	10	150	643	4.27	1.41	Accept
Cell phones provide space for couples to express their love and appreciation for each other, which can strengthen their bond, relationships and satisfaction.	30	150	52	208	23	69	31	62	14	28	150	517	3.45	1.93	Accept
GRAND MEAN												3.99	1.13	Accepted	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The responses to items 5-8 in Table 5 above are: 4.01, 4.21, 4.27, and 3.45, respectively, with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.99 ± 1.13 . Since the mean values of all the items are greater than the benchmark of 3.0 required for acceptance, it can be concluded that the potentials for the use of cell phones by couples include: providing a sense of connection and community for couples who are geographically distant or have busy schedules;

offering a platform for couples to share their experiences and connect with others facing similar challenges to seek counsel; creating space for couples to express their love and appreciation for each other; and strengthening bonds, relationships, and satisfaction. It also helps couples stay connected with friends and family, fostering opportunities for them to express their love and appreciation, which can further enhance their bonds, relationships, and overall satisfaction.

Research Question 3:

What are the challenges in cell phone usage by couples?

	Responses Values										Σ	Mean	StDev	Decision	
	SA = 5		A = 4		U = 3		D = 2		SD = 1						
	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx					
Cell phones create a false sense of intimacy	48	240	57	228	3	9	30	60	12	24	150	561	3.74	1.89	Accept
Cell phone leads couples to rely less on face-to-face interaction and more on digital communication, creating an environment ripe for temptation.	43	215	47	188	24	72	21	42	15	30	150	547	3.65	1.22	Accept
Cell phones decrease emotional intimacy, decrease relationship satisfaction, and divorce.	81	405	54	216	4	12	8	16	3	8	150	655	4.37	1.15	Accept
Cell phone facilitates conflict, aggression, disappointment and dissatisfaction and creates an environment for infidelity	54	270	36	144	15	45	37	74	8	16	150	549	3.66	1.41	Accept
GRAND MEAN											3.85	1.41	Accepted		

Field Survey, 2025

The responses to items 9-12 in Table 6 above are: 3.74, 3.65, 4.37, and 3.66, respectively, with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.85 ± 1.41. Since the mean value of all the items exceeds the benchmark of 3.0 for acceptance, one may determine that the challenges of cell phone usage by couples include: creating a false sense of intimacy, leading couples to rely less on face-to-face interaction and more on digital communication; fostering an environment ripe for temptation; reducing emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction, and increasing the risk of divorce; facilitating conflict and aggression in marital relationships; higher levels of conflict and aggression; disappointment and dissatisfaction; and creating an environment susceptible to infidelity.

Research Question 4:

What are the ways to mitigate the challenges of cell phone usage by couples?

	Responses Values										Σ	Mean	StDev.	Decision	
	SA = 5		A = 4		U = 3		D = 2		SD = 1						
	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx	F	Fx					
Couples should engage the services of counsellors on the use of cell phones	43	215	77	308	4	12	11	22	15	30	150	587	3.91	1.00	Accept
Couples should hold marriage conferences and workshops on how to use a cell phone best.	48	240	72	288	9	27	19	38	2	4	150	597	3.98	1.73	Accept
Couples should be aware of self-disclosure of personal information on their cell phone to keep their relationships safe and stable	36	180	39	156	36	108	27	54	12	24	150	522	3.48	1.05	Accept
Couples should hold seminars on social media via cell phones with the support of a qualified counsellor	51	255	69	276	6	18	15	30	9	18	150	597	3.98	1.60	Accept
GRAND MEAN											3.84	1.35	Accepted		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The responses to items 13-16 in Table 7 above are: 3.91, 3.98, 3.48, and 3.98, respectively, with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.84 ± 1.35. Since the mean value of all the items is greater than the benchmark of 3.0 for an item to be accepted, it can be concluded that the ways to mitigate the challenges of cell phone usage by couples include: couples should adopt strategies to maintain their relationship stability; they should seek the services of counsellors regarding the use of cell phones; they should organise marriage seminars on social media via cell phones through the expertise of licensed counsellors; and they should be cautious about self-disclosing sensitive data on their phones to ensure their relationships analysis remain protected and steady.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses for this study are tested with the Chi-Square (X²) represented by

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum (O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where O = Observed frequency; E = Expected frequency and Decision Rule =:

1. Accept the null hypothesis if the calculated value of X² is less than the critical value of X²
2. Reject the null hypothesis if the calculated value of X² is greater than the critical value of X²

Test of Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no significant relationship between cell phone use and couples' marital satisfaction. The information presented in Table 4 is used for testing this hypothesis. Below shows the Chi-square analysis

Table 8

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	Cell phones increase marital conflict	40	65	27	18	0
2.	Cell phone increases feelings of jealousy	30	52	23	31	14
3.	Cell phones pose the risk of infidelity in marital relationships	66	69	7	8	0
4.	Cell phones decreased feelings of trust	45	60	9	21	15
Total		181	246	66	78	29

Table 9

Source of Variation	Responses	
	Observed	Expected
Strongly Agree	181	120
Agree	246	120
Undecided	66	120
Disagree	78	120
Strongly disagree	29	120
Total	600	600

$$E = \frac{O}{N}$$

$$= 600/5 = 120$$

Table 10 Chi-Square (χ^2) Summary Analysis

18	12	61	3721	13.1950
1	0			4
24	12	12	1587	56.2978
6	0	6	6	7
66	12	-54	2916	10.3404
	0			3
78	12	-42	1764	6.25531
	0			9
29	12	-91	8281	29.3652
	0			5

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
181	120	61	3721	13.19504
246	120	126	15876	56.29787
66	120	-54	2916	10.34043
78	120	-42	1764	6.255319
29	120	-91	8281	29.36525
				χ^2 115.4539

$$Df = (C-1)(R-1) = (2-1)(5-1) = 1 \times 4 = 4$$

Critical χ^2 -value at 4df and 0.05 level of significance = 9.49

Decision

The calculated value of χ^2 (501.06) is greater than the critical value of χ^2 (9.49); therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that “there is no significant relationship between cell phone usage and couples' marital satisfaction,” is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between cell phone usage and couples' marital satisfaction.

Test of Hypothesis 2

There is no significant way to mitigate the adverse effects of cell phone use on marital relationships.

The information presented in Table 7 is used to test this hypothesis. The following shows the Chi-square analysis.

Table 11

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	Couples should engage the services of counsellors on the use of cell phones	43	77	4	11	15
2.	Couples should hold marriage conferences and workshops on how to use cell phones best.	48	72	9	19	2
3.	Couples should be aware of self-disclosure of personal information on their cell phone to keep their relationships safe and stable	36	39	36	27	12
4.	Couples should hold seminars on social media via cell phones with the support of a qualified counsellor.	51	69	6	15	9
Total		178	257	55	72	38

Table 12

Source of Variation	Responses	
	Observed	Expected
Strongly Agree	178	120
Agree	257	120
Undecided	55	120
Disagree	72	120
Strongly disagree	58	120
Total	600	600

$$E = \frac{O}{N}$$

$$= 600/5 = 120$$

Table 14: Chi-Square (χ^2) Summary Analysis

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
178	120	58	3364	11.92908
257	120	137	18769	66.55674
55	120	-65	4225	14.98227
72	120	-48	2304	8.170213
38	120	-82	6724	23.84397
				χ^2 125.4823

$$Df = (C-1)(R-1) = (2-1)(5-1) = 1 \times 4 = 4$$

Critical χ^2 -value at 4df and 0.05 level of significance = 9.49

Decision

The calculated value of χ^2 (688.28) is greater than the critical value of χ^2 (9.49); therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that “there are no significant possible ways to mitigate the negative effects of cell phone usage on marital relationships,” is rejected. This implies that there are significant possible ways to mitigate the adverse effects of cell phone usage in marital relationships.

Findings

The test of hypothesis 1 and the answers to research question 1 revealed that there is a significant relationship between cell phone usage and couples' marital satisfaction. Cell phones pose a risk to romantic relationships, leading to increased conflict, heightened jealousy, decreased trust, and even infidelity. This evidence corresponds with the research of Wehrli, Favez and Notari (2019), Stokes, et al. (2018), who said that cell phones negatively affect couples and romantic relationships by increasing conflict, decreasing trust and satisfaction. The findings align with the works of

Guldner (2015) and Sola (2017), which reveal positive aspects, including how cell phones help couples stay connected and increase love and intimacy when apart.

Conclusion

Cell phone usage has two-edged impact on the lives of couples. It affects them both positively and negatively, it poses risks such as increased conflict, feelings of jealousy, decreased trust, and potential infidelity, it also offers important benefits. These include helping couples stay connected with family and friends, providing a platform to share experiences and seek advice, and creating opportunities for partners to express love and appreciation, thereby strengthening their bond and relationship satisfaction.

However, cell phones can pose challenges, such as fostering false intimacy, reducing face-to-face interaction, increasing temptation, decreasing emotional intimacy and relationship satisfaction, and even leading to divorce. To address these issues, couples should adopt strategies to stabilise their relationships, seek counselling, and be cautious about self-disclosure over cell phones. Overall, cell phones play a dual role in romantic relationships, capable of both strengthening and undermining them.

Recommendations

1. Couples should strategically maintain their relationship by limiting smartphone use during quality moments like dinner, time with friends, and before sleeping.
2. Couples should join qualified counsellors marriage seminars on social media using their mobile phone to be aware of the impacts of communication.
3. Couples should be careful about sharing personal or sensitive information through their mobile phones to ensure safety in their relationships.
4. Couples should create regular offline bonding activities to strengthen intimacy without digital distractions.

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