A Systematic Literature Review on Consequences of Social Media on Intimate Relationships

Nathasya Mohd Kamali*, Wan Nor Hidayah Wan Afandi1

1Faculty of Business, Accounting and Social Sciences (FBASS), Universiti PolyTech Malaysia, Taman Shamelin Perkasa, Cheras, 56100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

*Corresponding author email: nathasya@uptm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Technology advancement is imminent and has changed the way of communication nature. The high penetration of the Internet has contributed to the changes. People nowadays no longer need to meet each other to communicate physically. They can simply communicate with the usage of technology, such as social media. The Internet has helped with the emergence of social media. The usage of social media is beyond communicating with someone we know. The features such as creating a profile, sharing content, meeting strangers and more; has led it to be one of the most visited and consumed sites on the Internet. There are many effects of social media; effect on relationship is one of it. This paper adopts a systematic literature review to examine the effect of social media on intimate relationships. The findings reveal eight themes which are jealousy, online surveillance, sexting, self-disclosure, sexual function, relationship commitment, convenience, and infidelity.

Keywords: Social media; Intimate relationship; Media effect

Received July 7, 2023; Revised August 21, 2023; Accepted September 5, 2023

Doi: https://doi.org/10.59953/cpa.v39i5(b).23

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet has a significant effect on the quality of human interaction (Sochiano, 1999). The growth of the Internet has been a rapid one for the past few years. The Internet highly penetrated most countries in the world which helped in the development of social media. Social media is the most used application on Internet and the number of consumptions continue to increase (Qualman, 2009; Mustaffa & Hamzah, 2011; Gull et al., 2019). The features of social media that is beyond communicating is very intriguing. Until today, Facebook is still the most used social media (Hu & Lin, 2013). With 2.3 billion active users worldwide, Facebook is the biggest social media company (Facebook, 2018). In 2012, more than 2 billion users across the globe and the number kept increasing year by year. Facebook is the most popular social media, with the usage of more than 300 million active users (Datareportal, 2020).

Meanwhile, since the emergence of social media, researchers have devoted much attention to social media usage in the intimate relationship context. Researches have address changes in intimate communication behaviour due to the usage of social media. Some of the changes include less engagement time (Shim, 2010; Nansen et al., 2009; Mesch, 2006), foster misinterpretation (Sham, Ali & Kootbodien, 2017; Drusell, 2012; Ngonidzashe; 2016) and conflicts (Montgomery, 1981). Of equal importance, social media also has changed how romantic relationships established and maintained (Gull et al., 2019). Public display of affection (PDA) always shown offline, such as holding hands. However, with the help of social media affection display online which called the public display of commitment is shown by liking pictures and posts inside jokes.

Social media distract users from engaging in face-to-face communication; thus, the diminished feeling of closeness with partners. It will result in low relationship satisfaction. A partner who spends more time on social media has a high tendency to experience jealousy due to the ambiguous information they obtain on social media. Thus, it will eventually affect their romantic relationships. The impact of social media on romantic relationships is vital for understanding the use of social networks and how romantic relationships have changed. However, the importance and role of social media in intimate relationship context is still poorly understood (Akanle et al., 2020), thus, justify the relevance and needs of this research to further explore social media usage in intimate relationship.
2. BACKGROUND

Communication technologies have helped to developed relationships, relationship assistance and enhancement (Hertein and Anchet, 2014). The usage of technology can be a threat to a relationship as it can lead to message misinterpretation between partners in a marriage (Henline & Harris, 2006). People use social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, to create and sustain relationships (Parvez et al., 2019). All these social media have allowed people to communicate and interact faster and in more dynamic ways. Social media are diverse online communities which allow users to build a personal profile, invite friends and colleagues, interact, entertain and educate individual through the exchange of public profiles, photos audio and video files, digital information and artefacts, emails, instant messages, and contact information through a virtual world (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Presently, social media serve several functions and types. Six types of social media are accessible which are i) collaborative projects, ii) blogs and microblogs, iii) content communities, iv) social networking sites, v) virtual game worlds, and vi) virtual social worlds.

2.1 Collaborative Projects

This type of social media is the most reflection on User Generated Content (UGC) idea whereby the content is continuously and collaboratively created and added many multiple end-users. These websites allow the users to add, change and delete text-based content. The idea of collaborative project websites is to allow the content to edit my multiple end-users so that the final content will be better outcomes as the content is created by multiple users with many ideas and knowledge instead of just one user. An example of collaborative project websites is Wikipedia.

2.2 Blogs

Blogs were one of the first social media. The blog is a website customarily handled by one person which considered as online diary whereby the users describe life's summaries and activities. Even though one person manages the blog, it still allows interaction with other users in the comment feature. Many companies use blogs to give out information about their company to the stakeholders, such as employees and customers.

2.3 Content Communities

Content communities’ websites allow users to share media content. There is a lot of media content types, such as text, videos, photos, PowerPoint, etc. Examples of websites are text sharing social media Bookcrossing which allows users to share books, photos sharing such as Flickr, video sharing such as YouTube and PowerPoint sharing such as SlideShare.

2.4 Social Networking Sites

Social media sites allow users to create their profile, invite friends to access their profile and interact with them. These personal profiles can include photos, videos, audios, and blogs. One of the popular social media to date is Facebook. Facebook was launched in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, an ex-Harvard student. Facebook may create a virtual group based on their interest, through their accounts, learn from each other hobbies, interests, and relationship status (Ellison et al., 2008).

2.5 Virtual Games World

This kind of website replicates the real world and allows the users to create their personalized avatar and interact with others. These websites let the users play and simultaneously connect with other people across the globe who also in the game. Examples of this website are Warcraft and PUBG.

2.6 Virtual Social World

These websites allow users to create their world and live the world like a real one. Just like the virtual game world, this website will require the users to create their avatar. The avatar can do all the things possible like in the real world such as socializing (talking, making friends, etc. with other avatars) and create content (design their city). Examples of these websites are SimCity and Second Life. In addition, according to Hu & Lin (2013), social media development can be categorized into four stages: namely early stages, exploratory stage, growth stage and transition stage. Due to the substantial functions of social media, types and usage has a significant impact on relationships (Ngonidzashe, 2016; Bovil & Livingstone, 2001; Mesch, 2006). Social media has been recognized as a powerful tool to change and give a significant impact on the way people communicate daily. Based on the background, research question is formed. The formulation of the research question for this study is based on PiCo. PiCo is based on three main concepts which are Population, Interest and Context. Based on the concepts, the author includes intimate partners (Population), the effect of social media (Interest), and social media users (Context). Thus, the research question for this study- What are the social media effects on intimate partners?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Interpersonal communication in relationships has been influenced by technology with its advantages and disadvantages (DeVito, 2005).
Tremendous previous research has been done to investigate the consequences of social media towards society. Many fields, such as education, psychology, have acknowledged the effects of social media, including interpersonal communication field. Social media not only change the dynamic of interpersonal communication within the intimate relationship, but the quality as well. Fisher (2021) has outlined the impact of social media. This includes lack of concern in one-on-one relationship whereby people are prioritizing on social media than face to face communication with family and friends. Other than that, social media can also lessen communication skills. This is because people who often online, talk less in the real world; thus, they might have difficulty in articulating words and giving attention to others while being a listener. Fisher also mentions that social media can drive people to be oblivious about the real world because they are too concern about online communication and online world.

Eincenberg et al. (2017) have suggested the pros and cons of communication technology to an intimate relationship. The pros include allowing partners to stay communicate all day, help to manage and communicating relationship problems and help to improve partners’ intimacy. However, the cons include cyber infidelity, cybersex addiction and online jealousy. This notion is supported by Abassi & Dibble (2019) that note that excessive social media usage can also lead to social media-related infidelity. Social media can affect the quality of romantic relationships by taking time away from partners (Abassi, 2018). This can best be explained by time-displacement theory, whereby people will have less time spend on one activity if they are occupied with other activities. People who spend more time online will spend less time with their partners. This will eventually affect the relationship commitment. Admittedly, in intimate relationships, technology has played its roles in facilitating and maintaining relationships. Coyne et al. (2011) found that married couples use communication technologies such as instant messaging, social networking, texting, blogs and webcams more frequent than dating couples, technology has helped coupled to satisfy their emotional and functional needs (Parker et al., 2013). Empirically, a study done by Hertlein (2012) has discovered that online gaming help couple to fantasize about their relationships and increase the ability to understand partners’ context.

In the same manner, the usage of technology can also be a threat to a relationship as it can lead to message misinformation, social comparison, and infidelity (Akanle et al., 2020). Kwok et al. (2015) have revealed a significant positive relationship between mobile technology penetration and the divorce rate in China, hence, providing empirical data pertaining to technology usage and marriage dissolution. Subsequently, social media can be one of the factors that led to divorce. Communicating on Facebook can lead to marital conflicts (Abbasi, 2017). Due to the tendency to interact with the opposite sex on social media and might lead to infidelity. Social networking sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp have said contributed to marriage breakdown. Lumpkin (2012) discovered that 33% of divorce cases mentioned Facebook as one of the contributors as it led to inappropriate messages to the opposite sex. This aligns with the study by Whitty (2003), which also discovered that partners’ online investigations would often lead to the discovery of online infidelity activities. Similarly, as mentioned by Storey & McDonald (2013), social media can harm romantic relationship by being a platform to cultivate potential harmful communication with alternative partners that will lead to conflicts or relationship dissolution. A study done by Abassi (2018) provides empirical results showing social media addiction related to low relationship commitments. They also exposed individual with a high number of SNS accounts will also have low relationship commitment. Aforementioned, this occurs due to the time displacement theory. This is also can be explained by interdependence theory whereby, people use social media to seek alternatives partners, thus, weakens the commitment in the existing relationship. Furthermore, social media has now become one of the tools for online surveillance. Spouses invest time to stalking and spying their partner’s online activities which eventually lead to jealousy and relationship related conflicts. To add, usage of Facebook anticipated harmful results in an intimate relationship, such as divorce and cheating. A high level of Facebook use can lead to indirect temptation for physical or emotional cheating (Clayton et al., 2013). Partner with high usage of Facebook has a high tendency to ignore their partner and neglected partners’ communication, which will lead to conflict or separation.

The use of social media may absorb and dominate the life of one person and jeopardize other everyday activities. The implications of such actions, however, remained unclear as the literature suggests shredding thoughts. Goodman-Deane et al. (2016) have suggested factors that lead to conflicting findings includes methodology, group of respondents, types of communication technologies and the vary in the effect of those technologies. With all the findings by the above researchers, there are many shreds of evidence pertaining to the impact and consequences of social media towards interpersonal communication and relationship. The evidence is mixed in terms of the pros and cons of social media. Hence this present study will investigate the effect of social media, whether it is a positive or negative one or both towards intimate relationships.

4. METHODS

This paper opted on a systematic review approach. The database chosen for this study is Scopus. Scopus is chosen due to the prominence leading indexed database with over
75 million records from 5000 publishers across the world. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA), which involves four steps which are identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion- was used as the guideline to conduct the systematic literature review. PRISMA is a published standard that commonly used to conduct a systematic literature review. Figure 1 illustrates the flow of the stages of systematic review approach which includes four stages which are identification, screening, eligibility and included stages.

4.1 Stage 1: Identification

The first stage for a systematic review is the identification conducted in March 2020. The process involved keyword identification in searching the database. The keywords are derived from the help of dictionaries, synonyms, thesaurus, keywords from previous literature reviews and possible related terms from word social media. The result of 431 documents was retrieved from this process. Table 1 shows the keywords used in the identification process.

4.2 Stage 2: Screening

This stage refers to the inclusion and exclusion of the articles based on predetermined criteria. The three predetermined criteria are timeline, document types and language. In this study, data to be reviewed were retrieved from the year 2015 until 2019 (5 years). Data that not within that stated year, were excluded from being review.

![Figure 1: The flow diagram of the study (Moher et al., 2009)](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCOPUS keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE-ABS-KEY ( ( &quot;social media&quot; OR Facebook OR &quot;social networking site&quot; ) ) AND ( spouse* OR marriage OR married OR divorce* OR couple* OR *intimate relationship OR <em>partner</em> ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR, 2019 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR, 2018 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR, 2017 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR, 2016 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR, 2015 ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE, &quot;ar&quot; ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE, &quot;English&quot; ) )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The reasoning of the period is due to the author’s interest and intention to study the Internet phenomenon for the recent 5 years. The second inclusion criteria are the document types. For this study, article journals were selected. Other types of documents such as books, chapters in book, proceedings and conference papers were excluded. The reasoning for the exclusion is the author only intended to review primary sources—the last criteria language. Only English language journals were selected to be reviewed. Non-English language journals were excluded to eliminate translation errors and difficulties to review. After this process, out of 431 journals that been screened, total numbers of 215 journals were checked for eligibility, and 18 have remained after the process end.

4.3 Eligibility (Manual screening)

Eligibility is the process whereby the author manually included or exclude the journals based on specific criteria. The author excluded journals that not related to the objective—social media effects on intimate relationship. A total number of 215 journals were checked for eligibility, and 18 have remained after the process end.

4.4 Analysis

The analysis of the systematic review is guided by the research question formed. The remaining journals, after the process of screening and eligibility, were analyzed. In this stage, qualitative appraise of quality is implemented. The process requires researcher to weight the study by placing studies into high, medium, and low categories (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The low-quality studies can be used to supplement, but not as the foundational literature. Hence, out of 18 journals from previous process, 6 journals were excluded as it is not related to the main objective, which is the effect of social media on intimate relationship. The content of excluded journals pertaining to the history of social media and, religious reasoning of social media behaviors and the statistics and evolution of marriage in USA. All those excluded journals do not contain relevant information pertaining to social media and how it affects intimate relationships. The remaining 12 journals were synthesized. According to Robinson & Lowe (2015) in systematic review, often the final analysis of the paper is fewer than 10 papers. The journals were analyzed, and themes and subthemes were extracted. In order to identify the themes, researcher conduct as hematic analysis. The thematic analysis is to extract data and statement that responds to the research question. Then, researcher developed meaningful group through coding techniques.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This systematic literature review has produced eight subthemes related to the effect of social media towards intimate relationships, namely jealousy, online surveillance, sexting, self-disclosure, sexual function, relationship commitment, communication, and infidelity as display in Table 3. Table 4 display the meta-analysis of the included journals. The table display the authors, origin of the journal, date published, design and data collection, participants of the research and the findings of the research. Majority of the research were conducted in the USA; (Haimson et al., 2018; Abassi, 2018; Vaterlaus & Tulane, 2019; Abassi et al., 2019; Abassi and Alghamdi, 2017a; Abbasi and Dibble, 2019; Daspe et al., 2018; Cole et al., 2018). Others were conducted in Pakistan (IQbal & Jami, 2019), Nigeria (Oni-Buraimoh and Adeyelure-Macaulay, 2017), Iran (Alimoradi et al., 2019), and Puerto Rico. (González-Rivera and Hernández-Gato, 2019). There are six pieces of research published in 2019, 3 pieces of research published in 2018 and 2017. In term of approach, 8 researches conducted quantitative while the remaining 4 researched opt qualitative method. From the analysis process, eight themes emerged which are jealousy, online surveillance, sexting, self-disclosure, relationship commitment, facilitate communication and infidelity.

5.1 Jealousy

Jealousy refers to the feeling of anxiety, thought, behavior that resulting in self-esteem and threat to the quality of relationship (White, 1981). From the systematic literature review, social media can trigger jealousy between spouses (Abassi et al., 2019; Daspe et al., 2018; González-Rivera and Hernández-Gato, 2019). This is due to the online surveillance activities by the spouses that will eventually create jealousy. Distrust between the spouses also contributes to the jealousy with their loved one social media activity. Elphinston & Noller (2011) found that those with extreme and dysfunctional Facebook connection appeared to be more insecure and to monitor romantic partners more regularly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
<th>Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Between 2015 until 2019</td>
<td>Other than stated years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document types</td>
<td>Research journal articles</td>
<td>Books, chapters in books, proceeding and conference papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Non-English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This notion aligned with the study done by Tandoc et al. (2015), who revealed heavy social media users would have a higher tendency of feeling envy and showed a higher level of depression symptoms. Social media has triggered a sense of uncertainty, thus, leading to online monitoring. In a study done by Muise et al. (2009) has found the relationship between jealousy and Facebook surveillance. The partner who spends more time on social media have a high tendency to experience jealousy due to the ambiguous information they obtain on social media; thus, it will eventually affect their romantic relationships. Research by (González-Rivera & Hernández-Gato, 2019) has validated psychometric Conflicts in Romantic Relationships Over Facebook Use Scale that can be used in future research to measure jealousy over Facebook use.

### 5.2 Online Surveillance

Based on the article by Iqbal & Jami (2019), social media has now become one of the tools for online surveillance. Spouses invest time to stalking and spying their partner’s online activities. This act is called interpersonal electronic surveillance (IES). Online surveillance is encouraged due to a large amount of information on social media and the nature of anonymity access. Lack of trust and inappropriate content by the spouses are the significant factors that were causing adverse outcomes to the relationship. Marshall et al (2012) report that modern online monitoring is simpler and takes less work than traditional offline monitoring. Such behaviours will lead to jealousy and further to marital dissatisfaction. Marshall et al (2012) added online surveillance might lead to jealousy, mistrust, cultivate higher anxiety which will threaten the intimate relationship. However, a study done by Iqbal & Jami (2019) has pointed out that the time spent on Facebook does not significantly affect marital satisfaction, but the activities done on Facebook does. They argue that activities such as online surveillance have a significant impact on marriage and relationship satisfaction.

### 5.3 Sexting

Social media can affect the intimate relationship in terms of their sexual relationship. This happened due to exposure to sexual content. Sexual content can significantly affect the level of commitments in marriage (Olmstead et al., 2016). According to qualitative research by Oni-Buraimoh & Adeyelure-Macaulay (2017), they discovered that married couples use social media to communicate and flirt with each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Journal</th>
<th>Jealousy</th>
<th>Online surveillance</th>
<th>Sexting</th>
<th>Self-disclosure</th>
<th>Sexual function</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Facilitate communication</th>
<th>Infidelity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iqbal and Jami, 2019, Pakistan</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alimoradi et al, 2019, Iran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaterlaus and Tulane, 2019, USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abassi et al, 2019, USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbasi and Dibble, 2019, USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>González-Rivera and Hernández-Gato, 2019, Puerto Rico</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abassi, 2018, USA</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daspe et al, 2018, USA</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cole et al, 2018, USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oni-Buraimoh and Adeyelure-Macaulay, 2017, Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haimson et al, 2017, USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abassi and Alghamdi, 2017, USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Coding process of themes in the journals.
Table 4: Meta-analysis of journals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author, date, country of origin</th>
<th>Design and data collection</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Findings/results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iqbal and Jami, 2019, Pakistan</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>302 married Facebook users</td>
<td>It is concluded that Facebook use in context of online activities like online surveillance of spouse’s activities and having feelings of jealousy because of Facebook activities of spouse are affecting marital satisfaction. Online engagement with social media was another factor that contributed to low female sexual dysfunction in this study. This study demonstrated that social media addiction negatively affected women’s sexual function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alimoradi et al, 2019, Iran</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>938 married women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaterlaus and Tulane, USA, 2019</td>
<td>Qualitative, Content analysis</td>
<td>132 individuals</td>
<td>Most married couples in this study indicated that interactive technology did influence marital relationships. Positive influences of interactive technology in their marriages—facilitates convenience in communication and opportunities to build marital relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abassi et al, 2019, USA</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>138 cohabiting married Facebook users residing in the United States</td>
<td>The results revealed that Facebook addiction and marital disaffection were positively related, even after controlling for relationship commitment. Additionally, greater relationship commitment weakened the association between Facebook addiction and marital disaffection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abassi and Dibble, USA, 2019</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>243 married/cohabiting romantic partners</td>
<td>The results revealed that there is a positive relationship between mental illness and SNS intrusion, and SNS related infidelity behaviours partially mediated this relationship correlated dimensions: Partner FB intrusion, Conflicts over FB use, and Jealousy over FB use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>González-Rivera and Hernández-Gato, 2019, Puerto Rico</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>300 Puerto Ricans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abassi, USA, 2018</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>252 partners</td>
<td>This finding that higher number of SNSs accounts is related to low commitment could be because an increased number of SNSs accounts may expose users to more online friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daspe et al, 2018, USA</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>3087 adolescents and young adults in relationship</td>
<td>Facebook use positively correlated with Facebook jealousy and intimate partner violence and negatively correlated with age and relationship length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cole et al, USA, 2018</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>115 undergraduate students in relationship</td>
<td>In terms of relationship status, those participants who noted that they were in a relationship on Facebook reported significantly higher relationship satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oni-Buraimoh and Adeyelure-Macaulay, 2017, Nigeria</td>
<td>Qualitative.</td>
<td>20 married couples</td>
<td>Sexting is one of the realities of the ways that the new media is changing social interactions, especially spousal relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haimson et al, USA, 2017</td>
<td>Quantitative, Online survey</td>
<td>119 US Facebook users who reported experiencing a recent breakup</td>
<td>Decisions and behaviours around breakup disclosures on Facebook are varied and complex. Those perceiving Facebook as a more efficient disclosure medium are more likely to announce breakups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abassi and Alghamdi, USA, 2017</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Review paper</td>
<td>Facebook use has increasingly been studied in research to explore how its use causes jealousy, suspicion, compulsive Internet use, partner surveillance, and relationships conflicts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This kind of activity is an effort to maintain and develop the relationship. This notion contradicts to research done by Luo (2014) whereby the study revealed partner with higher texting frequency, reflect the less happy they are in the relationship.

5.4 Self-disclosure

Social media content between spouses is determined by self-disclosure behaviour (Haimson et al., 2017). A study done by Langat (2016) states that social media has threatened interpersonal relationships as it can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Social media also lead to poor listening skills, poor self-disclosure, detrimental interpersonal communication that will eventually lead to poor interpersonal relationships. Jourard (1971), whereby he defines self-disclosure information about one-self with information that might be unknown to the other partner. As an act of revealing, several theories were layout to explain the importance of self-disclosure in the development of the relationship. Partners who disclose their relationship status on Facebook reported having a higher level of relationship satisfaction (Cole et al., 2018). The self-disclosure concept has been explained in the social penetration theory by Altman & Taylor (1973). The theory explained the process of becoming intimate in a relationship. Interpersonal relationships will progressively become intimate with the existence of self-disclosure in the relationship. As the relationship develops, self-disclosure will increase. The theorist has agreed that self-disclosure can enhance intimacy in interpersonal relationships.

5.5 Sexual Function

Research done by Alimoradi et al. (2019) that discovered social media addiction is negatively affected sexual dysfunction among females. The research found that heavy use of social media among women will lead to anxiety and sexual distress. Social media addiction not only affects female sexual desire but men as well. A study done by Muusses et al. (2015) has shown that social media addiction on sexual content has a reverse association with sexual satisfaction among men.

5.6 Relationship Commitment

A study done by Abassi (2018) revealed that there is a relationship between the number of social media account and relationship commitment. Partners with more than two social media account possessed less level of relationship commitment compare to the partner who possessed only one social media account. This happened due to the higher level of alternative relationship online. Marital outcomes are governed by how the spouses communicate with each other, specifically the exchange of negative or positive communication behaviour during the interaction (Bradbury & Karney, 2004). A study done by Rusbult et al. (1998) has discovered that relationship satisfaction has a positive relationship with the level of intimacy and commitment. A high level of relationship satisfaction is the result of a high level of intimacy and commitment. Anderson et al. (2021) have outlined six predictors of relationship satisfaction in the online relationship, which are similarity, commitment, intimacy, trust, attributional confidence, and communication satisfaction. In contrast, Gull et al (2019) suggested social media helps in showcasing promise and commitment in relationship.

5.7 Communicate Conveniently

There is also a positive side of social media towards an intimate relationship. Social media has helped to facilitate face to face communication, whereby it helps partners to communicate even more (Vaterlaus & Tulane, 2019). Whenever the members cannot have face to face interaction due to some obstacle such as physical proximity constraint, they will utilize technology to communicate and maintain family relationships. Eincenberg et al. (2017) have suggested the pros and cons of communication technology to an intimate relationship. The pros include allowing partners to stay communicate all day, help to manage and communicating relationship problems and help to improve partners’ intimacy. Social media also has helped to eliminate interaction barriers. Social media allow people to discuss a variety of topics freely. Social media is a great discussion forum whereby people can share their thought and opinion on given topics. Other than that, social media has made it possible to interact with a bigger audience across the world. This can help information travel faster and efficiently. In intimate relationships, technology has played its roles in facilitating and maintaining relationships. A study done by Coyne et al. (2011) found that married couples use communication technologies such as instant messaging, social networking, texting, blogs and webcams more frequent than dating couples, technology has helped coupled to satisfy their emotional and functional needs (Parker et al., 2013). Aligned with a study done by Hertlein (2012) has discovered that online dating help couple to fantasize about their relationships and increase the ability to understand partners’ context.

5.8 Infidelity

Abassi & Dibble (2019) note that excessive social media usage can also lead to social media-related infidelity. Internet infidelity can be categorized into emotional and sexual infidelity. Emotional infidelity refers to the acts of online flirtation with other people that lead to extra-marital affairs whereby sexual infidelity refers to the acts whereby physical infidelity is committed. A study was done by Fisher et al. (2021) to investigate the aftermath of
online infidelity among genders. The study revealed that female would feel more guilt after committing emotional infidelity while men will feel more guilty after committing sexual infidelity. Social networking sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp have said contributed to marriage breakdown. In dysfunctional partnerships individuals may use social network sites like Facebook more often, as social support provided to them (Mikal et al, 2013). A Lumpkin (2012) study showed that 33 percent of cases of divorce listed Facebook as an addressee as a result of improper communications to the opposite sex. In line with Whitty’s (2003) study, online investigation on partners often led to the discovery of online infidelity activities.

6. CONCLUSION

The recent literature of social media impact reflects basic understanding on the impact of social media towards intimate relationships. Furthermore, there are eight main themes identified that represent the effect of social media. The first theme is pertaining to jealousy, whereby social media activities trigger jealousy among spouses. The second theme discusses online surveillance whereby social media has become a platform for the partners to check and spy on their other half online activities due to a large amount of information and anonymity. The third theme is about sexting. In order to maintain and develop the relationship, partners will use social media to flirt and have a romantic and cute conversation online with their love ones. The fourth is self-disclosure, whereby this act will impact the relationship satisfaction level—next, sexual function. There is also the downside of social media, whereby it will lead to sexual dysfunction and distress, especially among women. The sixth theme is about relationship commitment. The number of social media account will impact the level of relationship commitment. The seventh, convenience. Social media has helped to facilitate face to face communication, especially when there are proximity and physical barriers. The last theme is infidelity, whereby social media can be one of the mediums that promote infidelity because partners could talk to other strangers and might lead to infidelity. Overall, from this literature review, there are the positive and negative side of social media towards intimate relationships.

REFERENCES


Henline, B. H., & Harris, S. M. (2006, October 19-22). Pros and cons of technology use within close relationships. [Conference presentation]. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Austin, TX.


A40–A53.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.012


https://doi.org/10.7763/ijssh.2011.v1.17

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.11.077


American Journal of Family Therapy, 41*(1), 1–12.*
https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2011.635134


