CENTER FOR SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITAS TRUNOJOYO MADURA, INDONESIA

Simulacra
e-ISSN: 2656 8721

UNIVERSITAS TRUNOJOYO
MADURA

Social media impact on marital conflict among married couples in three Southwestern Nigerian states

Abiola Adiat Omokhabi[1*], Udukhomose Suleiman Omokhabi[2], Teslim Opeyemi Oloyede[3]

[1]*Department of Adult Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Oduduwa Road, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria 200005*
[2]*Department of Adult Education, Faculty of Education, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Afao Road, Ekiti State, Nigeria 371104*
[3]*Department of Adult Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, P.M.B. 01, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria 342111*

[*]*Corresponding author*
E-mail address: adiatomokhabi@gmail.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v8i1.27215

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of social media on marital conflict among married couples in three Southwestern states of Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. The study population comprised all married couples residing in three local government areas: Ibadan North in Oyo State, Akoko-South West in Ondo State and Ado in Ekiti State. A sample of 345 married couples was selected using convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Self-administered questionnaires: Social Media Use (r=0.85) and Social Media Impact on Marital Conflict (r=0.76) generated by the web-based application were used for data collection and analyzed using one-way analysis of variance. The results indicate that social media networking tools commonly used by married couples are Facebook and WhatsApp, and that social media uses influence marital conflict. In addition, the study revealed that couples aged 40 and above were the primary social media users. There was no significant difference in social media use based on gender, number of children, religion, length of marriage, and educational attainment. Couples should be educated about the potential impact of social media on their relationship. Workshops and information sessions could help couples understand how excessive use or certain interactions on social media can contribute to marital conflict.

Introduction

Humans are social animals; they engage in a variety of interpersonal interactions and marriage is one type of such interaction. According to Afu and Nteh (2020), marriage is the earliest institution in which a man and a woman live together. It is a union that unites people with various personalities, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Adults may complete marriage as one of their developmental goals, regardless of their culture or personal preferences. The majority of the time, men and women who have agreed to live together as husband and wife do so in order to indirectly perpetuate civilization through birth. As human beings, conflict is inevitable since people live together and interact with one another. Conflict is therefore a necessary component of a continuing relationship and occurs in every family (Bammeke & Eshiet, 2018). Conflict between partners is a common aspect of their marital relationship. The state of strain or stress that exists between spouses as they attempt to fulfil their marital responsibilities is known as a marital dispute. When two individuals decide to live together as husband and wife, various expectations and hopes are raised, some of which may come true and others of which may not.

Ijoyah, Moji and Ijoyah (2015) stated explicitly that conflict is unavoidable due to individual differences. Couples cannot avoid conflict since disagreements may arise when they communicate their needs and desires to one another. Husband and wife fight or clash because they are pursuing different needs or goals, which is known as marital conflict (Agboola & Oluwatosin, 2018). There are many different types of conflict in married relationships. For instance, perceived inequality, power, adultery, friendship, drug and alcohol abuse, jealousy, financial difficulties, child-reasoning responsibilities, sexual orientation, and relationships with relatives are just a few of the many topics that can lead to conflict between spouses (Shrout, et al.,2019). It is common knowledge that these disputes can result in divorce, the most unfavorable conclusion to marriage. In many homes social media has permeated every aspect of life in the digital age, impacting our personal and professional relationships. Obar and Wildman (2015) define social media as an internet-based tool that facilitates communication among users through an online community by allowing them to exchange ideas, knowledge, and other forms of expression. This is fascinating since social media has become a vital medium for forming intellectual connections, reaching out to support social movements, raising awareness, exchanging political opinions or interests, and other purposes due to the global proliferation of internet users.

Social media networks have made married life, an institution that traditionally values privacy, more accessible to the public, making marriages more susceptible. The use of social media can be detrimental, particularly to the structure of intimate relationships like marriage. According to research, increased social media use has been linked to marital issues, adultery, and divorce, according to research. It follows that the present divorce rate brought on by social media is not shocking to see rising. Marriages are being significantly impacted by social media and the temptations it brings. One out of every five divorces originate from an internet affair (Adams, 2011). For instance, Facebook has been connected to 66% of divorces in the United States alone, and 81% of the country's top divorce attorneys believe their clients have used social media as damaging evidence against their partners (Gardner, 2013). According to a growing corpus of research, excessive social media use might cause jealousy, mistrust, and relationship dissatisfaction (Clayton, Nagurney, & Smith, 2013).

Asa and Nkan (2017) pointed out that social media usage has emerged as a precursor to marital disputes and breakdown, despite the fact that the causes of marital problems in most societies, including Nigeria, consist of factors like: economic hardship, sickness, sexual incompatibility, unsatisfactory sexual relationship, childlessness, and preference for male children. Married couples these days are more often than not experiencing social media problems. Because social networking sites provide couples with a sense of support and community inside virtual groups, they have tremendous potential to negatively impact family relationships. Couples' offline relationships may suffer as a result of them meeting their social, psychological, and emotional needs (Aydın Sarı & Sahin 2018). Apart from being a source of information, the media has also made interpersonal conflict more intense. Unfortunately, it has been seen that social media monitoring of partners' online behavior leads to jealousy, anxiety, uncertainty, and mistrust, all of which lower relationship satisfaction (al-Anzi, 2021).

In particular, couples may experience loneliness, mistrust, jealousy and privacy issues if they fail to effectively control their social media usage within the parameters of their relationship (Latifi, 2015; Kimeto 2016; Gull et al., 2019) reduced self-efficacy which eventually results in depressive symptoms (Chae, 2015; Ouvrein, 2024) and has a detrimental effect on intimacy and a lower relationship (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016). Additionally, social media use can result in distractions, a disregard for marital responsibilities and a symbolic breach of time in the relationship (Morgan et al., 2017).

Couples who interact on social media lie to themselves, and divorces result from that (Aydın et al., 2018) and disruptions in marriages, manifesting; in conflicts and infidelity (Adegboyega,2022) or cheating (Saleh & Mukhtar, 2015). Nonetheless, McDaniel, Drouin and Cravens (2017) claimed that anxiety, ambivalence, attachment avoidance, and relationship dissatisfaction are the main causes of infidelity-related behaviors among couples on social media. In a recent study, Ehoro and Badey (2022) also underlined how social media, when compared to other factors like economic position, marital type, fertility, spouses' family backgrounds, and educational attainment, greatly contributes to marital instability nowadays. Ghanim and Al-Muhadeen (2021) went a step further and connected excessive social media use to higher divorce rates while scholars like Restya (2019) who also found that couples' recent use of social media increases the likelihood of a marriage failing support this idea.

The majority of research on social media's impact on marital disputes has been done in developed nations like the United States of America, China, and the United Kingdom, to name a few. The study is innovative in that it looks at the relationship between social media use by married couples and marital conflicts in three states in the southwest of Nigeria. Research on the overall effects of social media on marriage and love relationships in Nigeria is lacking, with specific attention paid to couples who live together and belong to the largest ethnic group in the three states in the southwest of the country. This makes it necessary to conduct an investigation to determine the implications of rising social media usage on romantic relationships in marriages. Objectives of the Study: The specific objectives of the study are to: determine the types of social media networking sites married couples frequently use in the marital relationship; assess the extent to which married couples use social media; examine the purposes married couples use social media for; determine if social media use by either of the partner can lead to marital conflict as well and factors that influence social media use by married couples.

Method

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The researchers were interested in investigating social media impact on marital conflict among married couples in three southwestern Nigerian States The independent variable was social media (types, frequency of use, purposes) while marital conflict was the dependent variable. The study was conducted in three southwestern Nigerian States. All married couples (living together) in Oyo, Ondo and Ekiti constituted the population of the study. In each state a Local Government Area was selected in Oyo State - Ibadan North; Ondo State -Akoko-South West and Ekiti State -Ado respectively. These local government areas were chosen due to the presence of universities and the high population of workers who are married residing there could be easily located. For the investigation, a non-probability sampling strategy called the convenience and snowballing method was used. Because there are an endless number of married couples living together and owning mobile phones, it was challenging for the researchers to select a random probability-based sample for the study's population. Married couples living together made up the study's sample size. The study's sample consisted of 450 married couples who reside in the three Southwestern Nigerian states.

A two-section questionnaire tagged Social Media Use and Marital Conflict Questionnaires served as the primary data collection tool for the study. Section A contains the personal information of the respondents. These consist of a questionnaire about their age, sex, religion, education qualification, length of marriage, number of children, and the estimated of times each month that a couple raises a dispute with their spouse on social media. Section B of the study contains these questions on the stated objectives.

The researchers used Google Forms to create a survey that was distributed to study participants. Married couples received the survey link through WhatsApp, which was generated by the web-based platform. Participants were found by the researchers using scholarly and professional social media groups. People were asked to assist in spreading the word about the survey link and encourage their friends and coworkers to take part in the research. Twenty couples, ten male and ten female, from a local government region who were not included in the main survey participated in a pilot test. Cronbach's alpha was used in this test to assess questionnaire items' reliability. The social media use scale's internal reliability was 0.85, married couples' usage of the platform was 0.93, married couples' purpose for using it were 0.78, social media and communication (boundaries, trust, and feelings) and social media's impact on marital conflicts was 0.76.

Prior ethical permission was received from the Department of Adult Education, Faculty of Education, and University of Ibadan for both the protocols and the study. The option to withdraw from the research at any time was provided to respondents, who were duly told that consenting to participate and filling out the questionnaire signified consent.

SPSS version 23 was used to examine the quantitative data. The data was examined using both descriptive (frequency counts and percentages) and inferential statistics of multiple regression analysis and t-test were used to answer the research questions at the significance level of $p < .05$.

Results and Discussion

This study is anchored on the Uses and Gratification Theory (U&GT) developed by Kad, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), the researchers were able to provide the first

explanation for why people interact with the media of their choice to fulfil their desires. U&G is a psychological communication viewpoint that postulates that people actively seek out media that they believe will satisfy particular desires that they must fulfil (Kad et al.,1973). The uses and gratifications theory outlines a set of five presumptions on media use based on these ideas.

The assumptions are according to Rubin (1993):

1. Media consumption is purposeful and driven. Even if their primary motivation is amusement or habit, people always have a purpose when they consume media.
2. People choose media because they believe it will fulfil certain needs and desires.
3. Individual social and psychological aspects influence how they consume media.
4. When it comes to selection and application in the satisfaction of wants and desires, media compete with other types of communication, particularly face-to-face contact. The rivalry is fiercer now than ever because so much of the media we consume is mobile. Even when we communicate face-to-face, media from our mobile devices like apps, social networks, and text messages compete for our attention.
5. People don't respond very strongly to media messages since they are frequent consumers of the media.

In their study on the uses and gratifications of social media, researchers discovered that information seeking, socializing, entertainment, status, leisure, convenience, and personal identity are the key gratifications. Motives for obtaining information examine how various media satisfy the information needs of their audience. This could entail a desire to be current with trends or to constantly be aware of what is happening in other people's lives. People who use social media platforms to satisfy their social requirements are said to be socializing. The uses and gratification theory is pertinent to the present investigation because it suggests that couples who get media content have absolute control over what and how they utilize it to satisfy their wants. Therefore, this hypothesis provided a framework for investigating how a couple's desire for pleasure on social media could affect their marriage.

People use media to satisfy a variety of demands, such as those related to cognitive, emotive, social integration, and tension relief. People with cognitive requirements are those who use media to obtain information and expand their knowledge. People will turn to the media to satiate whatever kind of sentiments, joys, or emotions they are seeking since affective needs are emotional needs. Interaction with family, friends, and society is necessary for meeting social integrative requirements. People go to social media networks to fulfil this demand. Finally, the need to escape and detach from other people is a stress-release demand (Malloli, 2020). This theory explains the significance of media consumption in addressing people's social and psychological needs. For instance, married couples may utilize social media to satisfy each of these five kinds of needs.

- Cognitive needs: A married couple may utilize social media to learn more about certain topics or to gain a better grasp of content that pertains to their relationship, health, or marital well-being.
- Affective needs: Married couples can communicate with each other on social media by phoning each other frequently to share their feelings.
- Integrative needs: Social media can be used by a married couple to boost their credibility, status, or confidence.

- Social integrative needs: Social networking through the use of mass media can help married couples improve their bonds with their loved ones. They might choose to use various media platforms to satisfy their needs for social interaction and connection, for interacting and conversing with friends and family, and for feeling connected to the outside world despite being in a remote place.
- Tension-release needs: A married couple may use social media as a means of escaping a specific unpleasant situation or as a distraction from possible issues. For example, he or she might be arguing with a friend, spouse, coworker, or other relative, but instead of focusing on the fight, he or she can decide to watch a certain media program to divert their attention.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of married couples in the study. The age distribution of the married couples revealed a significant skew towards the older age group, with a notable 71.9% of married couples being 40 years and above. This dominance of older participants is in stark contrast to the younger age brackets, with only 0.6% of couples in the 20-24 years range, and 6.7%, 8.1%, and 12.8% in the 25-29, 30-34, and 35-39-years ranges, respectively. The gender distribution among married couples is relatively balanced but slightly male-dominated, with males representing 51.9% and females 48.1% of the sample. This near-equal representation ensures that the perspectives of both genders are adequately captured in the study.

The length of marriage varies significantly among couples, with a substantial majority (84.6%) being married for five or more years. The proportions for shorter durations of

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of Married Couples in the study*

s/n	Variables	Labels	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age (years)	20-24	2	0.6
		25-29	23	6.7
		30-34	28	8.1
		35-39	44	12.8
		40 and above	248	71.9
2	Gender	Male	179	51.9
		Female	166	48.1
3	Length of marriage (years)	1	15	4.3
		2	21	6.1
		3	13	3.8
		4	4	1.2
		5 and above	292	84.6
4	Number of children	1	61	17.7
		2	84	24.3
		3	113	32.8
		4	59	17.1
		5 and above	28	8.1
5	Educational qualification	Secondary school	3	0.9
		OND/NCE	10	2.9
		HND/First degree	99	28.7
		Masters degree/PhD	233	67.5
6	Religion	Christianity	282	81.7
		Islam	61	17.7
		Others	2	0.6

Source: Field data (2024)

marriage decrease progressively, with 4.3% married for one year, 6.1% for two years, 3.8% for three years, and 1.2% for four years. This indicates that the study primarily focuses on couples with long-term marital experiences. The number of children revealed a diverse family size among the couples. The most common family size is three children, making up 32.8% of the sample, followed by two children (24.3%) and one child (17.7%). Families with four children constitute 17.1%, while those with five or more children are the least common, at 8.1%. The educational qualifications of couples showed a high level of academic attainment. A significant 67.5% of the couples hold a Master's degree or PhD, while 28.7% possess a Higher National Diploma (HND) or a First degree. Participants with secondary school education and those with an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) or National Certificate in Education (NCE) represent a small fraction, at 0.9% and 2.9% respectively. The religious affiliation of the couples is predominantly Christian, with 81.7% identifying as Christians. Islam is the second most common religion at 17.7%, and other religions are almost negligible, at 0.6%.

Social media networking tools frequently used by married couples

Table 2 showed the social media networking tools frequently used by married couples. Facebook is one of the most frequently used social media tools among the participants, with 62.6% indicating they use it. This suggests that Facebook remains a popular platform for maintaining connections and sharing updates among married couples. A significant majority of participants (75.4%) do not use Instagram, with only 24.6% indicating its use. Twitter usage is even less common, with 80.9% of participants not using it and only 19.1% reporting its use. Snapchat is used by a very small fraction of the participants, with 95.1%

not using it and only 4.9% indicating its use. Similar to Snapchat, TikTok is not widely used among the participants, with 81.2% not using it and 18.8% using it.

Despite its rising popularity, TikTok's user base may skew younger, which could explain its lower usage among this demographic. WhatsApp emerges as a highly popular tool, with 93.9% of participants using it. This high usage rate highlights WhatsApp's effectiveness as a communication tool, likely due to its ease of use for messaging, calling, and sharing media. LinkedIn is not widely used, with 75.9% of participants not using it and only 24.1% indicating its use. In conclusion, the married couples in the survey utilized Facebook and WhatsApp the most, while Telegram, WeChat, Google, and Zoom were the least used social media sites. Additional examples include social media apps that promote the sharing of images, such as Instagram, and Snapchat; platforms for sharing and streaming videos, such as YouTube, which has revolutionized the way people engage with video content; and discussion forums, which are crucial because they let users ask questions and receive responses from a variety of sources.

Table 2. *Social Media Frequently used by Married Couples*

s/n	Types of social media tools	No	Yes
1	Facebook	129(37.4%)	216(62.6%)
2	Instagram	260(75.4%)	85(24.6%)
3	Twitter	279(80.9%)	66(19.1%)
4	Snapchat	328(95.1%)	17(4.9%)
5	TikTok	280(81.2%)	65(18.8%)
6	WhatsApp	21(6.1%)	324(93.9%)
7	LinkedIn	262(75.9%)	83(24.1%)
8	Telegram	342(99.1%)	3(0.9%)
9	YouTube	341(98.8%)	4(1.2%)
10	WeChat	342(99.1%)	3(0.9%)
11	Google	344(99.7%)	1(0.3%)
12	Zoom	344(99.7%)	1(0.3%)

Source: Field Data (2024)

This result supports Okwudiri et al. (2021) findings which discovered that married couples used Facebook more frequently than WhatsApp. On the other hand, al-Anzi (2021) found that WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter were the most widely used social media apps among Saudi Arabian married couples.

Extent of usage of social media among married couples

Table 3 shows the extent of usage of social media among married couples. A notable portion of the participants, 21.4%, spend less than 2 hours daily on social media. The largest group, comprising 24.1% of participants, spends between 2-4 hours daily on social media. This moderate usage indicates a balanced approach, where couples might be using social media for both personal and social interactions, maintaining a presence without it being overly time-consuming. A significant 20.3% of participants reported using social media for 4-6 hours daily, and the most intensive users, 34.2 % of participants, spend 6 hours or more on social media daily. Hence, the level of usage of social media in the daily lives of married couples is somewhat high.

Table 3. *Extent of Usage of Social Media among Married Couples*

How often do you use social media	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2 hours daily	74	21.4
2-4 hours daily	83	24.1
4-6 hours daily	70	20.3
6 hours and above daily	118	34.2
Total	345	100.0

Source: Field Data

The purposes of usage of social media among married couples

Table 4 shows the purpose of the use of social media among married couples. Business purposes and entertainment are two significant reasons for social media use among married couples. For business purposes, 22.0% never use social media, while 18.0% always do. In contrast, entertainment has slightly higher engagement, with 14.5% never using it for this purpose and 17.7% always doing so. Maintaining social connections and being informed are prominent reasons for social media use. Discussing with friends within and outside the country and catching up with family have high engagement levels, with mean scores of 3.69 and 3.68, respectively. Specifically, 32.8% always use social media to discuss with friends, and 29.3% always use it to catch up with family, indicating the importance of social media in sustaining relationships. News updates show the highest engagement, with 40.0% of participants always using social media for this purpose, resulting in a mean score of 3.84. Engaging in emotional or sexual relationships outside of one's committed relationship and posting personal issues are among the least common uses of social media. A significant 66.7% of participants never use social media for extramarital relationships, with only 2.6% always engaging in this behavior, resulting in a mean score of 1.59. Similarly, 57.7% never post personal issues, and only 3.2% always do. Watching or listening to various content and watching films are other areas of social media use, though with varied engagement.

The literature also reveals a number of potential explanations or satisfactions for parents Social media use including communication, establishing connections with friends and family, information recording family milestones and entertainment (Asiodu et al. 2015; Baker & Yang, 2018). U&GT claims that there are two distinct forms of gratification that drive media users: gratifications sought, and gratifications obtained, while gratifications obtained refer to the needs met by media use, gratifications sought refer to users'

Table 4. *Purposes of Usage of Social Media among Married Couples*

s/n	Purpose of use	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often	Always	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
1	Business purposes	76 22.0%	58 16.8%	96 27.8%	53 15.4%	62 18.0%	2.90	1.385
2	Entertainment	50 14.5%	56 16.2%	110 31.9%	68 19.7%	61 17.7%	3.10	1.281
3	Discuss with friends living within and outside the country	21 6.1%	29 8.4%	99 28.7%	83 24.1%	113 32.8%	3.69	1.186
4	Catch up with family	21 6.1%	26 7.5%	96 27.8%	101 29.3%	101 29.3%	3.68	1.150
5	News update	20 5.8%	23 6.7%	87 25.2%	77 22.3%	138 40.0%	3.84	1.191
6	Trending information on political issues	37 10.7%	41 11.9%	89 25.8%	88 25.5%	90 26.1%	3.44	1.286
7	Engage in emotional or sexual relationship outside one's committed relationship	230 66.7%	56 16.2%	37 10.7%	13 3.8%	9 2.6%	1.59	0.999
8	Trending information on celebrities	110 31.9%	79 22.9%	88 25.5%	34 9.9%	34 9.9%	2.43	1.295
9	Posting Personal issues	199 57.7%	61 17.7%	56 16.2%	18 5.2%	11 3.2%	1.79	1.092
10	Watching or listening to content of various kinds	57 16.5%	67 19.4%	100 29.0%	73 21.2%	48 13.9%	2.97	1.275
11	Watching films	117 33.9%	71 20.6%	83 24.1%	41 11.9%	33 9.6%	2.43	1.319
				Weighted Mean=2.90				

Source: Field Data (2024)

expectations of the kinds of gratifications they would receive from using media (Kad et al. 1973; Rubin 1993). Social media platforms are thought to be crucial tools for preserving current connections, getting news about recent activity and building a sizable network with little work.

Additionally, according to Quan-Haase and Young (2010) people use social media to get satisfaction like social information, sociability and time passing. According to previous studies by Stanislaw (2015) and Obi and Ezennwanne (2023) married couples use social media for work, education, communication, social interaction, information searching and exposure to popular culture. This result confirmed those findings. They also use it to improve communication with their partners, children and medical professionals as well as to maintain contact with distant friends and family. To sum up married couples primarily use social media to stay up to date on news and stay in touch with friends and family. Entertainment and business objectives are also significant, albeit to a lesser extent. Extramarital affairs and other less frequent private activities suggest a purposeful and varied approach to social media use.

Social media usage and marital conflict

Table 5 demonstrated that social media use had a substantial impact on marital conflict (F= 2.156, p (0.001) <.05). Consequently, the study found that among married couples, social media use increased marital conflict. Data analysis was done using one-way analysis of variance. The results corroborate Saleh and Mukhtar's (2015) study, which found that couples believe social media can result in infidelity

Table 5. *Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showing the effect of social media use on marital conflict among married couples*

Source of variation	Sum of square	DF	Mean square	F	P-value
Marital conflict	3374.179	30	112.473	2.156	0.001
Error	16383.804	314	52.178		
Total	19757.983	344			

Source: Field Data (2024)

and concurred that it results in divorce. Couples typically don't trust each other since social media behavior can present a false impression of a person and make it easier to view and share pornographic images and videos. Social media seriously undermines family cohesiveness and marital stability because it can breed mistrust, anxiety, anxiety, and jealousy, all of which lower relationship satisfaction (Gull et al., 2019). According to the authors, excessive use of social media lowers feelings of happiness by fostering unfavorable emotions like loneliness, a lack of companionship, and a lack of social intimacy in romantic relationships. This result is consistent with a study by Valenzuela, et al. (2014) which found that regular social media users report feeling unsatisfied or unsettled in their relationships, having poorer marriage quality, and considering divorcing.

It also tallied with the works of Widiantari et al. (2019) that couples who use social media are more likely to receive flirtatious messages and approaches from people who might be interested in them. They also found that sometimes their husbands have refused to disclose their marital status online and other people have reported that their spouses have been overheard discussing personal issues like money, accomplishments or sexual fulfillment with people they met on social media which has resulted in unworkable divorces and separation with others. This finding is consistent with earlier studies on the excessive use of social media can result in emotional infidelity and divorce for a romantic partner (Cravens & Whiting 2014; Saleh & Mukhtar 2015; Nelson & Salawu, 2017; Virk, 2017).

The studies found a connection between social media use and emotions that affect the stability of romantic relationships such as emotional detachment, loneliness, envy and mistrust. The findings of Christensen, (2018), Abbasi et al., (2019), González-Rivera & Hernández-Gato, (2019), Arikewuyo et al., (2021), Arikewuyo et al., (2022), Bouffard et al., (2022) and Delle et al., (2023) which confirmed that couples use of social media was consistently linked to a number of detrimental outcomes such as marital dissatisfaction, decreased satisfaction, depression, frustration and partner conflicts if the engagement was prolonged and took place during interactions with a significant other also support this current findings.

Demographic characteristics and social media use among married couples

Social media use among married couples based on their age category

Table 6 showed that there is a statistically significant effect of social media use among married couples based on their age category (F= 5.048, p (0.001) <.05). Hence, the age category of couples indicated their use of social media in the study. Couples aged between 40 and above years are the major users of social media and were followed in succession by those between 35-39, 30-34, 25-29 and lastly 20-24 years of age respectively (Fig 1).

Fig 1: Line graph showing the mean plot of social media use based on their age category
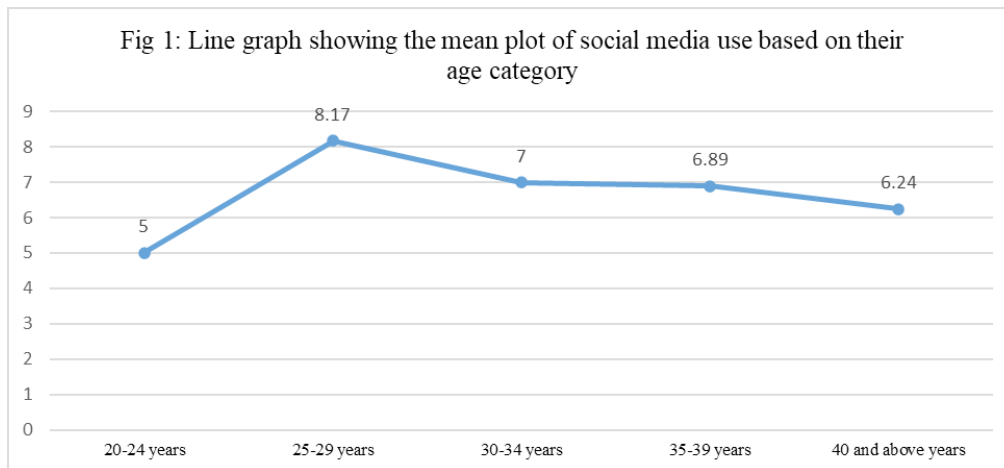
Source: Field Data

Social media use among married couples based on length of marriage

Table 6 showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the use of social media among married couples based on their length of marriage (F= 2.146, p(0.075)>.05). Hence, the length of marriage among married couples did not affect their use of social media in the study. Couples with 5 or more years of marriage are the major users of social media and were followed in succession by those with 2 years, 1 year, 3 years, and lastly 4 years (Fig 2).
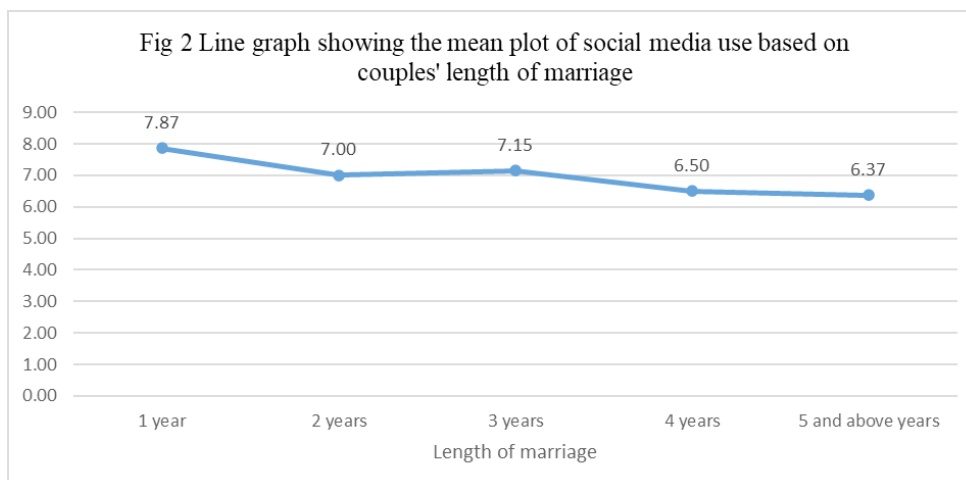
Social media use among married couples based on the number of children

Table 6 showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the use of social media among married couples based on the number of children (F= 2.035, p (0.089)>.05). Hence, the number of children among married couples did not affect their use of social media in the study.

Social media use among married couples based on their educational qualification

Table 6 showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the use of social media among married couples based on their educational qualification (F= 0.187, p (0.905)>.05). Hence, educational qualifications among married couples did not affect their use of social media that is usage of social media among married couples is the same regardless of their academic qualification.

Fig 2 Line graph showing the mean plot of social media use based on couples' length of marriage

Source: Field Data

Abiola Adiat Omokhabi, Udukhomose Suleiman Omokhabi, Teslim Opeyemi Oloyede

Table 6. *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Differences in Social Media Use among Married Couples Based on Their Demographic Category*

Demographic Categories	Source of variation	Sum of square	DF	Mean square	F	P-value
Age	Age category Error Total	99.012 1667.220 1766.232	4 340 344	24.753 4.904	5.048	0.001
Length of marriage	Length of marriage Error Total	43.495 1722.737 1766.232	4 340 344	10.874 5.067	2.146	0.075
Number of children	Number of children Error Total	41.289 1724.943 1766.232	4 340 344	10.322 5.073	2.035	0.089
Educational qualification	Educational qual. Error Total	2.898 1763.334 1766.232	3 341 344	0.966 5.171	0.187	0.905
Religion	Religion Error Total	14.889 1751.343 1766.232	2 342 344	7.444 5.121	1.454	0.235

Source: Field Data (2024)

Social media use among married couples based on religion

Table 6 showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the use of social media among married couples based on their religion (F= 1.454, p (0.235)>.05). Hence, the religion of married couples did not affect their use of social media in the study that is usage of social media among married couples is the same regardless of their religion.

Social media use among married couples based on gender

Table 7 shows that there is no statistically significant difference in social media use among male and female married couples (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = .675, DF = 343, p (0.500)> .05 level of significance). Hence, social media usage among married couples is the same regardless of the gender in the study.

One example is Jabali et al. (2024) research contradicts the results of this study which showed that demographic characteristics like length of marriage, employment status, and educational attainment influenced people social media usage habits. The results are comparable to those of Adzaho et al. (2020) when categorized by age couple's social media usage patterns were found to be similar in terms of demographic differences.

Conclusion

We investigated influence of social media on marital conflict among married couple in three Southwestern Nigerian states namely Oyo, Ondo and Ekiti States using a cross-sectional survey research technique. Second, on the demographic characteristics of married couples in the study. It revealed

Table 7. *Independent T-Test showing the Difference in the Social Media Usage of Male and Female Married Couples*

Social media usage	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	p value
Male	179	6.5866	2.15601				
				1.96	.675	343	.500
Female	166	6.4217	2.38236				

Source: Field Data (2024)

that older age married couples participated more, and males participated more than females though the perspectives of both genders are adequately captured in the study and more of couples with long-term marital experiences. The number of children revealed a diverse family size among the couples.

The most common family size is three children, the educational qualifications of the couples showed a high level of academic attainment. Using a case study method, the study discovered that the majority of married couples use one or more social networking sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp for business purposes and entertainment. Additionally, the study showed that many married couples spend 6 or more hours daily on social media. This reliance on social media has an impact on marital conflict which could lead to creating mistrust between romantic partners, straining bonds, and igniting jealousy. Therefore, to limit the negative effects of social media couples must establish guidelines for their usage of the medium to maintain a healthy relationship.

Acknowledgement

Declaration of Ownership

This article is our original work. The manuscript was conceptualized, analyzed, and prepared by Omokhabi A.A., Omokhabi U. S. gathered, examined information and the manuscript, and Oloyede T. A gathered information and revised the text.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by our institutions.

References

Abbasi, I. S., Drouin, M., McDaniel, B. T., & Dibble, J. L. (2019). The protective influence of relationship commitment on the effects of Facebook addiction on marital disaffection. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, *47*(2), 120–136. https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2019.1613940

Adams, R. (2011). Facebook a top cause of relationship trouble, say US lawyers. *The Guardian*. http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2011/mar/08/facebook-us-divorces

Adegboyega, L. O. (2022). Influence of social media on marital stability of married adults in Ilorin Metropolis. In O. A. Fawole & S. L. Blair (Eds.), *Families in Nigeria: Understanding their diversity, adaptability, and strengths* (Vol. 18, pp. 55–68). Emerald Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1530-353520220000018005

Adzaho, R. D., Amoako, B. M., & Danyoh, J. D. (2020). Social media use and marital communication of Christian couples in Sogakope, Ghana. *Hybrid Journal of Psychology*, *1*(1). https://royalliteglobal.com/psychology/article/view/38

Afu, M. O., & Nteh, K. O. (2020). Consequences of marital conflicts among spouses in Benue State, Nigeria: Implications for counseling. *International Journal of Creative Research Thought*, *8*(4), 4366–4373. https://doi.org/10.1234/ijcrt.2020.123456

Agboola, J. O., & Oluwatosin, S. A. (2018). Patterns and causes of marital conflict among staff of selected universities in Southwest Nigeria. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 5*(8), 306–320. https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.58.4988

Al-Anzi, N. B. H. (2021). Married couples' perception of the excessive use of social media and its impact on marital problems in Saudi Arabia. *University of Sharjah Journal for Humanities & Social Sciences, 18*(1A), 61–94. https://search.emarefa.net/detail/BIM-1258765

Arikewuyo, A. O., Efe-Özad, B., Dambo, T. H., Abdulbaqi, S. S., & Arikewuyo, H. O. (2021). An examination of how multiple use of social media platforms influence romantic relationships. *Journal of Public Affairs, 21*(3), e2240. https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2240

Arikewuyo, A. O., Lasisi, T. T., Abdulbaqi, S. S., Omoloso, A. I., & Arikewuyo, H. O. (2022). Evaluating the use of social media in escalating conflicts in romantic relationships. *Journal of Public Affairs, 22*(1), e2331. https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2331

Asa, U. A., & Nkan, V. V. (2017). Factors associated with marital instability among rural farming households in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal, 13*(15), 290–299. https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2017.v13n15p290

Asiodu, I. V., Waters, C. M., Dailey, D. E., Lee, K. A., & Lyndon, A. (2015). Breastfeeding and use of social media among first-time African American mothers. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing, 44*, 268–278. https://doi.org/10.1111/1552-6909.12552

Aydın, B., Sarı, S. V., & Şahin, M. (2018). The effect of social networking on the divorce process. *Universal Journal of Psychology, 6*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujp.2018.060101

Baker, B., & Yang, I. (2018). Social media as social support in pregnancy and the postpartum. *Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare, 17*, 31–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.srhc.2018.05.003

Bammeke, F., & Eshiet, I. (2018). Issues in marital conflict and violence: Sociological analysis of narratives of selected Yoruba women. *Crawford Journal of Business & Social Sciences, 13*(2), 1–8. http://cjbasscru.org/on7/24/2020

Bouffard, S., Giglio, D., & Zheng, Z. (2021). Social media and romantic relationship: Excessive social media use leads to relationship conflicts, negative outcomes, and addiction via mediated pathways. *Social Science Computer Review, 40*(6), 1523–1541. https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393211013566

Chae, J. (2015). "Am I a better mother than you?" Media and 21st-century motherhood in the context of the social comparison theory. *Communication Research, 42*(4), 503–525. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650214534969

Christensen, S. P. (2018). Social media use and its impact on relationships and emotions (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University). BYU ScholarsArchive. https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/6927

Clayton, R. B. (2014). The third wheel: The impact of Twitter use on relationship infidelity and divorce. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 17*(7), 425–430. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2013.0546

Cravens, J. D., & Whiting, J. B. (2014). Clinical implications of internet infidelity: Where Facebook fits in. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 42*(4), 325–339. https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2013.874211

Delle, F. A., Clayton, R. B., Jackson, F. F. J., & Lee, J. (2023). Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: Simultaneously examining the association between three social

networking sites and relationship stress and satisfaction. *Psychology of Popular Media, 12*(3), 335–343. https://doi. org/10.1037/ppm0000415

Ehoro, O., & Badey, D. K. (2022). New media and marital instability: Exploring the implications of social media on new marriages. *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research, 10*(1), 118–126. https://www. seahipaj.org

Gardner, D. (2013). The marriage killer: One in five American divorces now involve Facebook. *Daily Mail*. https://www. dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1334482/ The-marriage-killer-One-American-divorces-involve-Facebook.html

Ghanim, K. W. H., & Al-Mahadeen, H. T. (2021). Social media applications as a threattomaritalrelationsincontemporary Palestinian society from the spouses' viewpoints (2008–2018). *Al-Azhar Journal of Education, 40*(189), 496–527. https://doi. org/10.21608/JSREP.2021.172101

González-Rivera, J. A., & Hernández-Gato, I. (2019). Conflicts in romantic relationships over Facebook use: Validation and psychometric study. *Behavioral Sciences, 9*(2), 18. https://doi. org/10.3390/bs9020018

Gull, H., Iqbal, S. Z., Al-Qahtani, S. H., Alassaf, R. A., & Kamaleldin, M. M. (2019). Impact of social media usage on married couple behaviour: A pilot study in the Middle East. *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research, 14*(6), 1368–1378. https://www.ripublication.com/ ijaer19/ijaerv14n6_.htm

Ijoyah, J. O., Moji, R. A., & Ijoyah, G. T. W. (2015). Causes and effects of marital conflict on educational and social development of primary school pupils in the north-west zone B educational district, Benue State, Nigeria: Teachers' perception. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences, 53*, 101–106.

https://doi.org/10.18052/www.scipress. com/ILSHS53.101

Jabali, O., Hamamra, B., & Mahamid, F. (2024). Modern relationships and social media: Exploring the digital dynamics of husband–wife interactions. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, 1727. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04289-3

Kad, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 37*(4), 509–523. https://doi.org/10.1086/268109

Kimeto, J. (2016). The effect of social media on marital success: A case of Lang'ata constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya (Master's thesis, Pan Africa Christian University). http://dspace.pacuniversity. ac.ke:8080/123456789/1056

Latifi, Z. (2015). Investigating the effect of participation in the cyberspace in the relations between spouses. *Journal of Educational Practice, 6*(30), 13–16. https://api.semanticscholar.org/ CorpusID:54846285

Malloli, S. (2020). *Unit-3 Uses and Gratification Theory*. Indira Gandhi National Open University. https://egyankosh.ac.in/ handle/123456789/72106

McDaniel, B. T., & Coyne, S. M. (2016). Technoference: The interference of technology in couple relationships and implications for women's personal and relational well-being. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture, 5*(1), 85–98. https:// doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000065

McDaniel, B. T., Drouin, M., & Cravens, J. D. (2017). Do you have anything to hide? Infidelity-related behaviors on social media sites and marital satisfaction. *Computers in Human Behavior, 66*, 88–95. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.09.031

Morgan, P., Hubler, D. S., Payne, P. B., Pomeroy, C., Gregg, D., & Homer, M. (2017). My partner's media use: A

qualitative study exploring perceptions of problems with a partner's media use. *Marriage & Family Review, 53*(7), 683–695. https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2016.1263589

Nelson, O., & Salawu, A. (2017). Can my wife be virtual-adulterous? An experiential study on Facebook, emotional infidelity, and self-disclosure. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 18*(2), 166–179. https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol18/iss2/12

Obar, J. A., & Wildman, S. (2015). Social media definition and the governance challenge: An introduction to the special issue. *Telecommunications Policy, 39*(9), 745–750. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2647377

Obi, R. N., & Ezennwanne, D. N. (2023). Influence of social media on marital relationships among couples in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. *Journal of Family & Society Research, 2*(1), 45–57.

Okwudiri, E., Abdul, O., Oladele, V., & Olowolafe, D. (2021). Influence of social media on marital relationship among couples in Samuel Adegboyega University. *GVU Journal of Communication Studies, 3*, 172–181. http://sau.edu.ng/sjmss/index.php

Ouvrein, G. (2024). Mommy influencers: Helpful or harmful? The relationship between exposure to mommy influencers and perceived parental self-efficacy among mothers and primigravida. *New Media & Society, 26*(4), 2295–2314. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221086296

Quan-Haase, A., & Young, A. L. (2010). Uses and gratifications of social media: A comparison of Facebook and instant messaging. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society, 30*(5), 350–361.

Restya, W. P. D. (2019). Social media and marital infidelity. In *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Psychology* (pp. 106–111). https://doi.org/10.5220/0009438301060111

Rubin, A. M. (1993). Audience activity and media use. *Communication Monographs, 60*(1), 98–105. https://doi.org/10.1080/03637759309376300

Saleh, M., & Mukhtar, J. I. (2015). Social media and divorce: Case study of Dutse LGA, Jigawa State. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 20*(5), 54–59. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-20525459

Shrout, M. R., Brown, R. D., Orbuch, T. L., & Weigel, D. J. (2019). A multidimensional examination of marital conflict and subjective health over 16 years. *Personal Relationships, 26*(3), 490–506. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12292

Stanislaw, J. (2015). Fields of impact of social media on youth – Methodological implications. *Acta Educationis Generalis, 5*(2), 80–86. https://doi.org/10.1515/atd-2015-0066

Valenzuela, S., Halpern, D., & Kad, J. E. (2014). Social network sites, marriage well-being, and divorce: Survey and state-level evidence from the United States. *Computers in Human Behavior, 36*, 94–101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.03.026

Virk, H. (2017). Social media changing inter-personal relationship among urban couples. *IARS International Research Journal, 7*(2). https://doi.org/10.51611/iars.irj.v7i2.2017.129

Widiantari, M. M., Utari, P. P., & Nurhaeni, I. D. A. (2019). Social media effect on divorce. In *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, 339*. 1st Annual International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities. https://doi.org/10.2991/aicosh-19.2019.34