

**BENIN RESIDENTS PERCEPTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE
PROMOTION OF SEPARATION AND DIVORCE AMONG COUPLES IN NIGERIA**

BY

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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DECLARATION

I, DAVID SARAH EBIKOMBOERE declare that every single research carried out in this project work “Benin Residents Perception of the Influence of Social Media in the Promotion of Separation and Divorce among Couples in Nigeria” is a product of my personal research and was written by me.

All ideas and sources cited in this work are testament of my personal finding, and where the views of others have been used and expressed, they were duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was carried out by DAVID SARAH EBIKOMBOERE with Mat. No: ART2201173 of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, under the supervision of Mr. Sunday Akpobo Ekerikevwe (FRHD) and it is sufficient in scope for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree in Mass Communication

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Date

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Ag. Head of Department

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External Examiner

Date

Dedication

This work is dedicated to God Almighty and to my lovely sister, Mrs. Alex Hannah Tamarapreye who knows the value of education and sponsored the programme.

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Abstract

The researcher examined Benin residents Perception of the Influence of Social Media in the Promotion of Separation and Divorce among couples in Nigeria. The main objective of the study is to examine the Perception of Benin resident on the extent social media influence the rate of separation and divorce among couple in Nigeria. Premise on the Technological Determinism Theory, the researcher adopted the Survey research method. The researcher surveyed 400 respondents using 5 point Likert (5) scale questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Findings reveals that majority of couples in Nigeria have phone gadget, have access to social media platforms, spend more than quarter of their day on social media and it contribute greatly to the rate of separation and divorce. The researcher concludes that Social media can be dangerous to a romantic relationship if its use are not properly defined. Based on the conclusion, the researcher recommended that Government should come with policies that will regulate social media utilization in Nigeria, couples should use the social media for a pre-defined purpose and couples should regulate one another and serve as “policeman”.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Social media has come to stay. Over the years, social media has played the function of connecting people together from different part of the world and plays a vital role influencing our day to day human activities and behaviour. This is because to a large extent, it is the media we use all day long in receiving calls, sending messages, chatting with friends, family, business colleagues and acquaintances to share ideas, interact, communicate and pass information from one person to another and also connect with people from different countries, states and continent. Social media has helped many relationships, it has also been found guilty of breaking many marriages, which has resulted to divorce.

Saleh and Muhktar (2015) posited that it is through the social media individuals connect and find themselves mutually compatible and ultimately become spouses and it becomes even easier to break apart just like it connected them. According to Gahler, (1998), cited in Saleh and Muhktar (2015) divorce is one of the most often mentioned major life issues and can cause major mental and psychological damage to persons involved and it is a relief and opportunity for personal growth for others who breaks apart.

While the positive impact of the use of the social media for personal engagement and interest cannot be over stressed, sometimes, it is always a thing of regret to know that people are now so addicted to their cell phones chatting and texting friends and in most cases have incurred hazardous habits and lifestyles using the social media. And some of this negative impact of the use of the social media includes having the guts and access to people's private lives and budging into their inbox not minding their social, educational, political, economic and general status. Everybody is now mate and equal on social media. People now talk to others without regards for whatever position, title and status quo one occupy, because everybody can air their opinion all in

the name of freedom of speech and in return disrespecting their dignified portfolio and office. Through the use of the social media, several social vices has been easily carried out by hoodlums such as kidnapping, murders, cybercrimes and bullying, impersonations, scamming and all forms of evil has been perpetuated by criminals who takes advantage of people in their gestures.

It has become a norm for people to travel miles away to visit friends and people they meet on social media who are total strangers and are unknown, not minding the threat it imposes on life, insecurity and risk attached to it, thereby endangering their lives. Most times job opportunities that are aimed at harming people are posted on the net to attract people who ends up being victims of death. One would wonder if the use of the social media is to the detriment of ones life. Aside from the information, educating, entertaining and surveillance function of the media and the social media inclusive, it is a known fact that the social media has performed several good functions such as through the social media news stories, trends, fashion, new technology and vital information are disseminated to people on a go. They now have access to information around them at their fingertips and are informed about happenings. Brands, companies and business organizations advertise their product and services daily on social media and earn customer engagement and loyalty. Government policies, health tips, business opportunities are all put out on the social space alongside bringing people together.

People from different walks of life meets on social media and build good rapport and relationship that benefits them for a life time. While the social media is a good platform to bond, communicate, create good relationship and friendship, it is also worthy to note that it has contributed largely to the fair share of divorce and separation amongst married couple.

It is no long news that social media connect different people all over the world and if not well managed and controlled can generate serious marital crisis. Because a lot of people meet both single and married people online and still make sexual advances at them. And not creating

boundary on the side of the partner involved can result to cheating. This is as people who are married and are with their spouses gives undivided attention to the opposite sex and interact with them frequently. This in turn create a bond and fondness and on the long run resulting to complete attachment to the person and detachment from their partner that leads to separation from their partners and divorce eventually. We must understand that divorce and separation does not just happen. It takes a gradual process. While there are several reasons that propel separation and divorce among couples, some of which are unresolvable and irreconcilable misunderstanding and issues, difference in culture, religion and social backgrounds, sexual mismatch, personal perception and concepts about life, bad habits and character and financial issues amongst others, social media sometimes fuel the misbehaviour of the initiator of such divorce. Because when people meet new people that offers them better options and opportunity that their partners does not give them, they tend to change. And this is birthed from a place of selfishness, greed, lack of contentment and too many expectations and promises. When people build relationships on lies, deceit and materialism, they can easily be swayed away by anyone who may attend to their needs. Else anyone who has good intention towards their partner and marries them rightly from a Godly and Biblical point of view must know that marriage is meant to be enjoyed and endured. There are good and bad days, lack and plenteous days such as life imposes several challenges on people.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to find out the extent to which social media promotes separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria looking at the perception of Benin residents.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social media has become a platform where people all over the world interact and exchange ideas. The use of social media no doubt has impacted people greatly either for good or bad purposes. To a large extent, social media have resolved the communication gap between individuals in

romantic relationships, especially married couples (Leighton, 2021). It allows couples to stay connected during work hours or when distance is a barrier. The advent of social media in the 21st century has also diverted the attention of people from what is most important to bare fantasies. Chat apps such as Facebook, Whats app, Tiktok, X formerly Twitter, Instagram amongst other do no justice to it as they have shifted the attention of people especially married couples from building physical intimacy with their partners to their phones or garget where they meet people from all works of life.

This is a pointer that social media plays a vital role in the lives of people who have dedicated time to it manifest use. From sending text messages, videos, pictures, to replying a chat on whats app, facebook, X and Instagram, one could spend all day engaging in one content or the other downplaying on activities that would have been done that are most important.

And this cuts across all sphere of life, from a house wife who neglect house chores for a content and get food burnt, to a dad who misses work and important schedules because of football, to a student who neglect his/her books to engage in social media contents, movies, gossips, blogs, fashion, music and various social activities and end up not meeting up with demands and this has wagged a lot of difficult challenges among married couples who through social media meets and connect with other people. In accordance with this, Isaac, Muhammed and Hadi (2023) asserts that smartphone devices and social networking sites are more tenacious and prevalent than any other technology advancement in reconfiguring social life and shaping interpersonal communication.

The evolution of social media and their large usage have provided researchers with the opportunity to investigate computer mediated communication. As a result, scholars such as Saleh & Muhktar, Irum and others have compiled a body of research that has systematically investigated the dynamic, complex interactions between social media usage and romantic

relationship outcome. Researches have shown that Facebook-induced jealousy, partner surveillance, mistrust, posting viral and ambiguous information, compulsive internet use, and online portrayal of intimate relationships such as posting and showcasing ones partner which could be damaging to romantic relationships as the opposite sex could pick interest in them and have access to them (Clayton, 2014). Social media have become a demonic tool with lots of harm.

Research reveals that about 4.95 billion people use the social media worldwide, with the average user accessing 6.7 social media platforms on a monthly basis and in the U.S. alone, Facebook has been linked to 66 percent of divorces and the 81 percent of the nation's top divorce lawyers claiming clients have cited using social networks as damning evidence against their spouses in the past five years (Abramovich, 2013). And those whose partners have left them for another lover are sometimes traumatized, depressed, frustrated and even dies eventually, while some are able to overcome the challenges, find life and moved on. Though some persons move on with a new partner almost immediately, others have attributed such act to already existing relationship that were majorly connected on the social space as their reason of divorcing their partner. This is because a lot of persons flaunt their wealth on social media and gullible individuals will jump on them for their lack of self-control and greed. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the perception of Benin residents on the influence of the social media in the promotion of separation and divorce amongst couples in Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study will achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of social media usage among couples in Nigeria

2. To ascertain the perception of Benin residents on the impact of social media on separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria
3. To find out the extent to which social media influence couples that leads to divorce and separation

1.4 Research Question

The research will answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of social media usage among couples in Nigeria
2. What is the perception of Benin residents on the impact of social media on the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria
3. To what extent does social media influence couples that leads to divorce and separation

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study is restricted to the perception of Benin residents about married couples in Nigeria. So the major focus of this research revolves around finding out what Benin residents think about the influence of the social media on divorce and separation. Thus, the study is not only restricted to Benin residents' perception but on the social media. The study is also restricted to those who are in a relationship.

1.6 Significance of the study

Looking at the multiple issues of divorce and separation among married couples in Nigeria, it raises the concern to find out what is the leading factor to contributing to this marital crisis. This study is therefore important because it will find out if the social media also contributes to this teaming divorce and separation thereby adding to the body of knowledge and already existing

research works and also reveal the extent to which social media plays a role in adding to divorce and separation among couples in Nigeria.

This in turn will open the eyes of couples and people to the manifest use of the social media and streamline it to only positive engagement.

1.7 Limitation of the study

While every research work is geared towards finding solution to a problem or course, it also has its fair share of challenges. While carrying out this research work, the researcher was faced with several challenges that limited getting the best information for the work. This challenges included lack of the human and natural resources like money. The researcher would have consulted books and material far and near to enrich the work, but was unable to do so because of financial constraint. Also administering the questionnaires posed a serious challenge on the researcher because reaching the right respondents was a big problem as not everyone is exposed to using the social media. There were gaps in getting the appropriate materials in the course of carrying out the research because there were no much works done by other researchers in this area of work so it deprived the researcher from effectively doing the work.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Social Media: In this context, social media is various online platform used to communicate, chatt, interact and share ideas between two or more people. Such platform includes facebook, What'sapp, tiktok, instagram, X, LinkedIn, Telegram amongst others

Perception: It is the way and manner Benin residents perceive and see the social media as a tool that cause separation and divorce among couples. It is simply what people think about the extent

the social media influence the promotion of separation and divorce among those in intimate relationships.

Influence: This is the degree at which the constant usage of something affect the user over a long period of time negatively or positively

Promotion: This explains that the social media fuel and help the easy move of divorce and separation among couples

Couples: Couples are two people of the opposite gender in a marriage relationship, who have agreed to share life and everything together before a court, families, church and the society at large, carrying out all the marital rights and rituals.

Divorce and Seperation: While separation is the short time couples live apart pending when the issue is resolved or the complete dissolving or termination of a marriage union

Benin Residents: This is focused at extracting the opinion of people that stays in Benin City, Edo state

Nigeria: The research is focused on looking at various marital crisis that might have happened in Nigeria as a result of using the social media

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Conceptual Review

2.1 Concept of the Social Media

Social media has been defined by various scholars. According to Edegoh & Asemah (2014) social media are defined as internet mediated human systems that are based on the framework of web 2.0 and web 2.0 is the software that accounts for all social interactions and exchange between and among individuals, organization or communities via the web or internet. Social network can also be referred to as a map of specified ties, such as friendship between the nodes being studied. The nodes to which an individual is thus concerned, are the social contacts of that individual. The network can also be used to measure social capital- the value that an individual gets from the social network. Social networking sites include, yahoo messenger, facebook messenger, google talk, Google messenger, iphone, Androids and so on (Asemah, Okpanachi and Edegoh, 2013). Social media are online media that expedite conversation as opposed to traditional media(newspaper, magazines, television and radio) which deliver content but do not allow readers/viewers/listeners to participate in the creation of development of the content.

Similarly, Haenlein (2010, p.61) cited in Asemah, Lilah and Edegoh (2013) defines social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Thus, social media guarantee greater interactive conversation between and among users. Nwammuo (2013m p. 4) fully aligns herself to this line of thought; according to her, social media refers to web and mobile based technologies which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among individuals, organizations and communities. This also informs Dow's (2012) observation that social media essentially refer to a category of online media where people are

talking, participating, sharing, networking and bookmarking online. Social media make it possible for people to generate and publish content as well as engage in online interaction. Healthfield (2013) rightly posits that social media are the tools and platforms that people use to publish content and interact socially online. According to the author, user generated content includes conversation, articles, images or pictures, recipes and anything that an individual might share with others in their daily lives. Thus, as Nwammuo (2013) observes, the concept of social media therefore finds meaning in the ability of users to generate, interpret, restructure, and disseminate content. The writer further asserts that the idea enables users to create and share experiences, information or ideas based on the persuasive technology of the internet and the world wide web (www). Social media are the various online platforms that are used for social interactions. They use highly accessible and sealable publishing techniques and include the various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information and resources

In-line with this (Edegoh, Ekanem and Asemah, 2013) posits that the most known web-based social media include LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter(X) Instagram, Tiktok, Ning, Flickr, Google, Stumble upon and Reddit. And this has given birth to a new way of life according to Ogene (2012) which has essentially raised new voices through interpersonal communication channels. These new voices which began as innocuous interpersonal communication channels have the following increased access to the internet and other computer devices that have supported social networking, grown into global sites for news dissemination. Social media are popular among couples and middle-aged men, women and youths. These categories of people and many others take advantage of the online global environments created by social media technologies and features for interaction and exchange of information.

New media to a large extent are socially constructed phenomena and often time has deviated from the designers original intention. This is to say that the newness of the media is crystallised around the idea of peoples usage. The existence of new media has created new horizons for the ways people communicate with others. People adopt these new media and embed them into their everyday activities. Consequently, these new media has become part of their social context, social practices and more importantly, part of their social space which play a vital role in creating new communication potentials and constructing new social ties (Baghdady in Pecora, Osei-Hwere and Carlson, 2008, cited in Asemah and Edegoh, 2012). Also new media has brought about what is now known as media convergence. The presence of new media has modified the activities of the mainstream media such as the magazine, newspapers, television and radio. A lot of the traditional media now makes use of online platform for audience engagement and visibility and the new media made this possible.

According to Agbo and Asemah (2016) social media are the new communication platforms that exist on the internet that operates on the principles of social network. Asadu (2012) avers that social network is the tie that links individuals (nodes) together. The ties may be strong or weak, but it has influence on members therefore, social media are internet communication platforms that interconnect several people together without any boundary. Agbo and Asadu (2016) went further to buttress that today's new culture and life style is about connection and relationship (Skoler, (2009 as cited by Stassen 2010).

While on the part of Onyechi and Obono (2015) social media are forms of information and communication technology disseminated through social interaction. It is a social instrument of communication that consists of computerized, interactive, networked information and communication. The term, social media refers to various means people interact, create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks (Ahlqvist et al, 2008). It is

an internet-based application that depends on mobile and web-based technologies to create and exchange user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Also Abrams et al (2008) defined it as media based on the use of digital technologies like the internet, digital video and mobile devices. Social media is therefore networking focus. According to the scholars, social media is a two-way method of communication that grants people access to interact with friends or engage in complex social, economical, marital and political discourse. It integrates technology, social interaction and content creation to collaboratively connect online information. It is a highly interactive platform that enables individuals and communities to create, share, discuss and modify information, which transforms users from being content consumers to content-producers.

Chou et al, cited in Havis et al (2013) posits that unlike traditional media, social media are lower cost, reach a more targeted and large audience and facilitate dialogue between senders and recipients of information. Social media technologies take on many different forms including internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks and podcasts.

Mobile social media run on mobile devices according to Kaplan (2012). Mobile social media applications can be differentiated by space – time, which is space located and is the exchange of messages with relevance for one specific location at one specific point-time, space locators which deals with exchange of messages, with relevance for one specific location which are tagged to a certain place and read later by others. Quick timers (only time sensitive), which involves the transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices to increase immediacy and slow timers (neither location, nor time sensitive) concerns the transfer of traditional media application to mobile devices.

The use of social media has grown rapidly. While facebook is very popular among users, daily usage of X(Twitter) has increased from 500 “tweets” per day in 2007 to 50million in 2010 and 140 million per day in the first quarter of 2011 (Twitter, 2011). These two are also

considered popular networking sites that are widely used by most people either married, single or courting couples in Nigeria to interact, share ideas and communicate with people in different part of the world and has equally connected a lot of persons to creating intimate relationships that has led to a forever journey, contributing to the diverse divorce rate among married couples in Nigeria.

2.1.2 The concept of Marriage

The fundamental basis of marriage is defined as “a personal association between a man and a woman and a biological relationship for mating and reproduction. As a social, legal and religious institution, marriage has undergone any number of modifications and changes; nevertheless, its basic realities remain the same. The permanent, indissoluble, sacramental union of the orthodox differs strikingly from the free, easily served, and often not even officially registered marriages.. Biologically, the object of marriage is not to legalize a sexual union, but rather to ensure the survival of the species and of the race. From this point of view, marriage is not merely a sexual relationship, but a parental association. It is the union of a male and a female for production and care of offspring and reproduction is, therefore, another fundamental object or purpose of marriage”. (Stone, 1939: 18).

From the above one can easily draw the conclusion that the main object of the institution of marriage has always been to provide for posterity and the continuance of the human race. Interpreting marriage, Radcliffe- Brown says that in certain societies a man may be said to have relatives by marriage long before he marries and indeed as soon as he is born into the world. This is provided by the institution of the required or preferential marriage. Wimalasena (2016, p166-173) avers that in modern times, the most important aspects of marriage are social, religious as well as legal. Bertrand Russel says that “marriage differs, of course, from other sex relations by the fact that it is a legal institution. It is also in most communities a religious institution, but it is

the legal aspect which is essential". (Russell, 1959: 88). In many societies, it is regarded as preferable that a man should marry the daughter of his mother's brother; this is the form of the custom known as cross cousin marriage. Thus the female cousin of this kind, or all those women whom by the classificatory system he classifies as such, are potential wives for him, and their brothers are his potential brothers-in-law. Radcliffe- Brown says joking relationship for this type of marriage as mentioned above. (Radcliffe- Brown, 1964: 93).

Marriage as a physical as well as a moral union is recognized by society as the basis of a family. It may be a sacrament and in that way an indissoluble union for this life and hereafter, as in the case of a staunch Hindu or Roman Catholic, or a temporary civil contract for a fixed period as in the case of a Mutaa marriage among the Shia Muslims. But whether a sacrament or a civil contract, the relationship, above sexual satisfaction, is to join two members of opposite sexes for the procreation of legitimate children. In the words of H. M. Stone and Abraham Stone, "While particular marriages may, of course, be entered into for any number of other reasons as family pleasure, social conveniences, financial considerations and similar motives, basically the prime objects of marriage are companionship, sexual intimacy and procreation." (Stone, 1939: 21). E. E. Evans-Pritchard say that the sex is mainly bounded with marriage and the first sexual play occurs in imitation of one of the domestic routines of married life. It occurs in response to a cultural, and not to an instinctive, urge. (Evans-Pritchard, 1951: 50). S. J. Tambiah says citing B. Z. Zeligman and a committee of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland that marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both parents. (Tambiah, 1966: 264). Edmund R. Leach was among the first to argue that a definition of marriage in terms of legitimacy is too limited. According to this opinion, any attempt at a universal definition of marriage is inevitably vain, since the institutions commonly classed as marriage are concerned with an allocation of a

number of distinguishable classes of rights. Leach suggests that in most cases the institution of marriage serves to allocate rights to either or both spouses; in some cases it serves primarily to allocate rights to the husband and his wife's brothers. (Leach, 1971: 107) If a universal definition of marriage is to be formulated, it would seem that the one proposed by Prince Peter should serve as a model. The roles of husbands and wives must be defined in terms of the essential rights and obligations and the behavioral attributes entailed in them in any particular society. Gough and Fischer are justified in their concern that confronted with different forms of mating, the anthropologist employing Prince Peter's definition would be unable to decide which institutions should be referred to as "marriage", as "concubinage" etc. However, if the statements were modified so as to define marriage as the jurally valid and socially recognized assumption of the kinship roles of husband and wife, there would be few or no problems concerning the distinction between marriage and its socially recognized alternatives. Such a proviso emphasizes that the publicly acknowledged kinship roles created by marriage- as opposed to its alternatives - derive support from the juridicopolitical domain of the society. There may be more than one jurally valid way of assuming the roles of husbands and wife- as is the case in the some present day. African states which recognize marriages contracted to one or more sets of customary laws as well as marriages contracted in accordance with legal codes based on European models. (Sills, 1972: 10).

It would appear that the cross- cultural study of marriage must rest on the premise that all societies recognize kinship roles which are founded in law as well as those which are based ultimately on actual, assumed, presumed genetic relationships. Fundamental to the understanding of the concept of "lawfully based" kinship is the fact that human mating is everywhere subject to socially derived regulations. While it is normally expected that marriage will lead to parenthood, the roles of husband and wife need not be defined by reference to children who will come to be regarded as legitimate offspring of individuals in these roles. The roles of husband and wife

should be defined in terms of the rights and obligations which attach to them, and marriage must be defined as the lawfully or jurally recognized assumption of these roles. (Ibid, 10).

Marriage involves the allocation of rights and obligations among the parties to the agreement. A number of anthropologists have attempted to classify the various rights which are known to be allocated at marriage in different societies. In discussing the jural elements in marital and other kinship relations, Radcliffe Brown distinguishes personal rights from possessive rights. (Ibid, 12). In most societies husband and wives have personal rights in each other: either spouse may claim certain duties of the other. It is also common to find that a husband has possessive rights in relation to his wife. Her seduction, her abduction, or her murder would constitute a serious infringement of her husband's rights.

In an important contribution to the literature on marriage, Laura Bohannon distinguishes two classes of rights in females which may be allocated at marriage. Rights in a woman as wife are distinguished from rights in a woman as mother. (Ibid, 12). In her discussion of Dahomean marriage, Bohannon shows that rights over a woman's sexual powers and certain of her domestic services were transferred from a woman's patrilineage to the man or woman who made the appropriate bride-wealth payments. In most of the types of the "types" of Dahomean marriage, rights to any children a woman might bear during the course of her marriage were also transferred from a woman's patrilineage to that of her husband. Distinct classes of marriage payments were necessary to the transfer of each of these two classes of rights. However, in certain types of marriage, rights in *geneticem* were retained by the woman's natal patrilineage; this might occur in cases where a lineage was faced with a shortage of male heirs and one of the daughters of the lineage was given in marriage to a man who agreed to make all the bride-wealth payments except those which would have given him jural authority over children of the marriage. Moreover, marriage of a woman of the royal lineage never involved the transfer of rights in

geneticem to the lineage of her husband. (Ibid, 12). Even though, it is usually rights in women which are in the forefront of marital negotiations, Leach has pointed out that marriages also serve to allocate rights in and over men. He suggests that a marriage may serve to do the following: To establish the legal father of a woman's children.

To establish the legal mother of a man's children; To give the husband a monopoly of the wife's sexuality; To give the wife a monopoly of the husband's sexuality; To give the husband partial or monopolistic rights to the husband's labor services; To give the wife partial or monopolistic rights to the husband's labor services; To give the husband partial or total rights over property belonging or potentially accruing to the wife; To give the wife partial or total rights over property belonging or potentially accruing to the husband; To establish a joint fund of property for the benefit of the children of the marriage; To establish a socially significant relationship of affinity between the husband and his wife's brothers. (Leach, 1971: 107-108). Leach therefore, focuses attention on rights in and regarding children, sexuality, domestic and economic services and property. In the last instance, he suggests that marriages may establish between groups of men mutual independencies which could entail any of the above rights as well as others of a political nature. M. L. S. Jayasekara says that Marriage in ancient customary law is essentially a contract between the parties. In the ancient law it was also a contract between the families of the two parties and they had certain rights and duties. (Jayasekara, 1982: 77).

Malinowsky has observed that the different forms of marriages are not stages in an evolutionary series, as Bachofen, Spencer and others would make us believe, but marriage is fundamentally one and its variations are determined by the type of community, its political and economic order and the character of its material culture. (Malinowsky, 1950: 940).

Economic Definition

A family consisting of husband, wife and children is a complete unit in modern society. In most of society of the world, the marriage is patrilocal, where the bride moves to the place of the husband. The family's functions are based on division of labour on the basis of sex-the husband performs all the tasks outside the home and fulfills his economic obligations; the wife bears children, brings them up, and performs other house hold duties of daily routine. However, efficient management of a family largely depends upon economic conditions, and according to H. M. Stone and Abraham Stone, "Economic fitness still constitutes a very important social factor in marriage". (Stone, 1939: 20). In the modern set-up much stress is being laid on the economic value of the girl; the ethical and ideological norms of society are losing their importance.

Social definition

In recent times, the institution of marriage has been free from the many customs, ceremonies and additional expenditures of olden times. Bertrand Russell has beautifully summarized contemporary trends in the institution of marriage in the following words. It is therefore, possible for a civilized man and woman to be happy in marriage, although if this is to be the case, a number of conditions must be fulfilled. There must be a feeling of complete equality on both sides; there must be no interference with mutual freedom; there must be the most complete physical and mental intimacy; and there must be a certain similarity in regard to standards of values. (It is fatal, for example, if one values only money, while the other values only good work.)

Given all these conditions, marriage is believed to be the best and the most important relationship that can exist between two human beings. If it has not often been realized hitherto, that is chiefly because the husband and wife have regarded themselves as each other's policeman. If marriage is to achieve its possibilities, husbands and wives must learn to understand that

whatever the law may say, in their private lives they must be free. (Russell, 1959: 97). Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde describe in their book *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* a marriage is essentially a rearrangement of social structure. What is meant by social structure is any arrangement of person in institutionalized relationships. By a marriage certain existing relationships, particularly, in most societies, those of the bride to her family, are changed. New social relations are created, not only between the husband and the wife, and between the husband and the wife's relatives on the one side and between the wife and the husband's relatives on the other, but also in a many great societies, between the relatives of the husband those of the wife, who, on the two sides, are interested in the marriage and in the children that are expected to result from it.

Marriages, like births, deaths or initiations of puberty, are rearrangements of structure that are constantly recurring in any society; they are moments of the continuing social process regulated by custom; there are institutionalized ways of dealing with such events. (Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, 1950: 43). Robert A. Harper mentions that there are two views in modern American society which are "marriage is a sacred contract and marriage should bring happiness to the individuals who enter it." He further mentions that the idea of marriage as a sacred contract is part of Hebrew and Christian religious traditions; the notion of the right to happiness in marriage is one expression of current emphasis on individualistic satisfaction. In the early society stress was placed upon the efficient working of the family unit as a whole. The question of whether or not a particular individual was pleased with his lot in the family institution was irrelevant. In present individual centered society, however, the question of individual happiness in marriage and family life is considered very important. (Harper, 1949: 1) In order to clear goals of the marriage he says, Quite aside from the present acuteness of personal and social maladjustments, a sheer joy goal in marriage is not a very realistic one. Any system of

marriage must at times be in conflict with the basic impulses of the individual. Marriage makes demands upon the individual which are at times contrary to basic drives, sexual ones in particular. His sexual tendencies must, at least part of the time, be curbed or modified. Some conflict, some tension, some disturbance of the marital calm must appear occasionally for all individuals as a result of the clash between biological drives and social demands. (Harper, 1949: 6).

Harper further emphasizes that one reason why marriage continues in popularity is that it is a strongly established social habit. In the usual course of events, children are born to parents who are married, observe most of the adults around them married, and grow up to view getting married as the normal thing to do. Stated in technical terms, social institutions such as marriage tend to be self-perpetuating. People get used to behaving in certain ways and they tend to go on behaving that way. (Harper, 1949:11). E. O. James tells at marriage in many angles; marriage is essentially a social transaction affecting the relatives both of the bride and the bridegroom; it commonly involves some compensation to the family which is losing one of its members. This may take the form of an exchange of gifts by their respective parents for each other's sons, or the exchange of sisters, or of some female relatives, by the young men themselves. (James, 1952: 38). He further says that although marriage was regarded as a natural or divine institution, or merely as a civil contract, is directed to the control of human conduct in a particularly delicate and vulnerable relationship in which some of the deepest impulses, emotions, passions and experiences are centered. (James, 1952: 146). Furthermore, James says that marriage is a basic institution in human society of universal occurrence, because no other union of men and women meets all the requirements of mating, home-making, love and personality at the human level of biological, psychological, social, ethical and spiritual evolution. (James, 1952: 191). It is in the institution of marriage that this unique attribute which endows reflective rational experience with individuality and makes human beings subjects of rights and duties, finds expression in the man-

woman relationship. (James, 1952: 192).

According to the Sarva Daman Sing (), marriage is the foundation of social existence. Universality of celibacy would be tantamount to racial suicide; hence the Hindu disapproval of the unmarried state for women, and of lifelong celibacy for most men. To be mothers were women created; to be fathers men. Marriage is a bodily rite, *śarīrasaṃkāra*, which every man and woman should perform. He further says that the word marriage conveys the sense of the relationship. Marriage is something more serious than the pleasure of two or more people in each other's company.

It is an institution that assures the multiplication of the race, and forms a vital part of the intimate texture of society. It is an adjustment between the biological purposes of nature and the sociological designs of man. (Sing, 1978: 3). S. B. Hettiaratchi says that traditional law recognizes marriage as a fundamental institution, because it is on marriage that the continuance of the basis of society – the family system – rests. (Hettiaratchi, 1988: 55). The ethical and ideological aspects of the institution of marriage have been stressed by Lowie. The future of marriage will be shaped not merely by utilitarianism but largely on the basis of regnant ideologies... A reversal of the present attitudes to marriage is wholly conceivable; whether or not it shall occur depends on the potency of appeals involving the older ideologies. (Lowie, 1951: 154.). Thus we find marriage a pivotal institution in the social functioning of all cultures. Marriage has been defined by Westermarck as a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized custom or law, and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it. (Westermarck, 1922: 26). He further mentions that these rights and duties vary among different peoples, and cannot therefore all be included in a general definition; but there must, of course, be something which they have in common. Marriage always implies the right of sexual intercourse: society

holds such intercourse allowable in the case of husband and wife and generally speaking, even regards it as their duty to gratify in some measure the other partner's desire. Westermarck further emphasizes that marriage is something more than a regulated sexual relation. It is an economic institution, which may in various ways affect the proprietary rights of the parties. It is the husband's duty, so far as it is possible and necessary to support his wife and children, but it may also be their duty to work for him.

As a general rule, the power over the children is generally of limited duration. Very often marriage determines the place which a newly born individual is to take in the social structure of the community to which he or she belongs; but this cannot, as has been maintained, be regarded as the chief and primary function of marriage, considering how frequently illegitimate children are treated exactly like legitimate ones with regard to descent, inheritance and succession. It is, finally necessary that the union, to be recognized as a marriage should be concluded in accordance with the rules laid down by custom or law, whatever these rules may be. They may require the consent of the parties themselves or of their parents, or of the parties as well as of their parents. They may compel the man to pay a price for his bride, or the parents of the latter to provide her with a dowry. They may prescribe the performance of a particular marriage ceremony of one kind or other. And no man and woman are regarded as husband and wife unless the conditions stipulated by custom or law are complied with. (Westermarck, 1922: 27). The intermixing of cultures affects the institution of marriage and has been changing its shape in different societies in different epochs. Apart from this, the social political, moral and economic conditions of a particular social order have always affected the form of marriage in society.

According to the above mentioned facts, a married life would be fruitful, if the male and the female are sufficiently matched in age, ideas and behavior. John J. Robinson describes in his

book “Of Servness” on love, connections of sexual inter courses and marriage. Be careful. Do the activities in a healthy mentality. It is very easy to enter the married life than a divorce. If you had the correct male partner or female partner, the married life may become a divine one. If it was not, you will be gone to the hell which is chasing after you in twenty four hours. According to the preceding passage, married life will become a divine one, if one has a correct female life partner. Buddhism also approves it. Paṭhama Saṃvāsa Sutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya describes the nature of husband and wife. Living a dead body with a dead body (Chavo chavāya saddhim saṃvasati); Living a dead body with divine being (devangana), (Chavo devāya saddhim saṃvasati); Living a divine being with a dead body (Devo chavāya saddhim saṃvasati); Living a divine being with a divine being. (Chavo devāya saddhim saṃvasati) (Wimalajoti, 2005: 110-116). Buddha has encouraged the type of living a divine being with a divine being. Thus a god should live with a goddess. God and goddess mean the faithful husband and wife who have ideal qualities for married life. Buddha’s opinion was that both these partners should have Saddhā, Sīla, Cāga and Paññā. If the husband and wife are similarly matched by these qualities, they can spend a happy married life and they are considered as a god and a goddess. Saddhā means not only the direction for Triple Gem, but also for the trustworthiness between the husband and wife. Sīla means good behavior. Married life without Sīla, is an unfortunate one with a variety of disputes. Cāga means that both partners should treat both of them equally. Paññā means taking every action by consciousness. If husband and wife equal by these qualities, Buddha has preached that they will affect even at the next birth. (Wimalajoti, 2005: 208-211). Male and female who enter married life should have a mutual understanding. It could result in a real married life. Man has to endure traditional difficulties of women. Some of them mentioned in the Āveṇika Dukkha Sutta of the Mātugāma Saṃyutta in the Sutta Nipāta as follows.

In the olden days, woman has to go to the husband family and separates from relatives (Mātugāmo daharo ca samānāpatikulam gacchati. Ñātakehi vinā hoti.); Woman has to face action in menses which is a biological action. (Mātugāmo utunī hoti.); Woman has to face pregnancy (Mātugāmo gabbhiṇī hoti); Woman has to face the difficulty of delivering children. (Mātugāmo vijāyati hoti); Woman has to associate with the husband. (Mātugāmopurisassa pāri cariyā hoti). (Wimalajoti, 2005: 451-452). The husband should treat with kindness the wife in such situations, as it is incumbent upon him. If partners enter married life with mutual understanding of each other, problems can be minimized. Before entering married life, a woman has to check the under mentioned qualities of the partner. Handsome (rūpavā hoti); Necessary physical resources. (bhogavā hoti); Discipline (sīlavā hoti); Cleverness and lack of lazy. (dakkho ca hoti analaso); Feasibility of giving children. (pañcassa labhati). (Wimalajoti, 2005: 450). These points could be divided into two parts as artha and dhamma. A person should have both these qualities, when he enters married life. Except Discipline (sīla), all the other things can be regarded as artha. Artha means the development of resources. Specially, it means the profession of a person. Rūpavā hoti, the first point mentioned here, emphasizes handsomeness or personality of a person. After getting married, a woman has to depend on her husband. Although this is not directly connected to artha, it also can indirectly be connected to artha, due to the importance of personality on the benefit of the economic aspect. Bhogavā hoti can be given the meaning as the economic background of the male life partner. Husband of the family has serious responsibilities after his marriage. There should be a sufficient economic background for constructing a marriage. At least, the basic needs have to be fulfilled. There are three basic needs in the Buddhist economic philosophy. Providing the basic needs (Food and beverage, costumes, homes and medicines.), those can be mentioned as comfortable life or phāsuvihāra and Road to the Nirvāna or brahma cariyānuggahā. Husband should endeavor aiming these three points for a successful married life. Next fact can be described as dakkhoca hoti analaso which means to be efficient but lazy. Male

has a very responsible task to build a good foundation for the family. Male is the backbone of the family.

The shortcomings in him will affect the whole affairs of the family. Cleverness and endeavors will develop family life. Pañcassa labhati is the next point of the artha. One of the main objectives of married life is procreation of children which could be regarded as a great resource. Therefore, the wife expects children from the husband. The dhamma is the next aspect that should be referred to. It is sīlavā hoti. Although the male life partner is a very wealthy person, if he indulges in misbehavior, married life would be a failure. Sīlavā means development of self-discipline high human qualities. Husband should develop saddhā, sīla, cāga and paññā as the human qualities as mentioned in Buddhist philosophy. Saddhā clears the road for the trustworthiness and sīla shows peace and harmony between the husband and wife. Cāga produces hardship and wisdom as well as the intellectual activities for both of them. Therefore, if married life needs to be more decorative, artha and dhamma should be in the male life partner. It seems that there are three facts which are seen to make a married life a success. Those can be said as matching physically, matching mentally and economic background for building the institution of family. It can be seen that Buddhism has acknowledged these three facts to make family fruitful. Buddha has discussed the reasons as to why there occurs love between man and woman. One is the form of the man and woman. (imēhi kho bhikkhave aṭṭhahi ākārehi itthimpurisaṃ bandhati. Te bhikkhave sattā subaddhā ye phassena baddhāti.) This connection specially occurs as a result of touching. (Wimalajoti, 2005: 80-81).

Accordingly, the form of the man or woman should match each other in a married life. Mental matching between the man and woman, Buddhism has shown, will be a reason for unite the couple at the next birth. Paṭhama Puññahi SandhaVagga of Catukka Nipāta in Aṅguttara Nikāya elaborates this point. Ākaṃkheyyuṃ ce bhikkhave ubho jātipatayo diṭṭheceva dhamme

aññamañña passitum, abhisamparāyaṃ ca ubhoassu sama saddhā sama sīlā sama cāgā sama paññā te dīṭṭheva dhamme aññamaññaṃ passanti. Abhisamparāyaṃca aññamaññaṃ passanti.(Wimalajoti, 2005: 208). It means as follows. If husband and wife like to meet in the next birth, they should be similar in devotion, sila, charity and wisdom. This gives the meaning as the matching of husband and wife mentally. There are some factors which would contribute to smooth functioning of a married life. Buddha has admired the father of Visākhā, because he gave advice and guidance to his daughter Visākhā who was main female devotee of Buddha. It is mentioned in the Manorathapūraṇi (Hewavitarana, Pt. I, 1923: 219-226) that there were advices as follows as; Personal activities of houses should not be given out side. (anto aggi bahi na nīharitabbo); Activities of outsiders should not be brought the home. (bahi aggianto na pavesetabbo.); Giving should be given to givers. (dadantassāva dātabbaṃ.); Giving should not be given for not givers. (adantassa na dātabbaṃ.); Beggars and poor relatives should be given. (dadantassāpi adadantassāpi dātabbaṃ); Stay comfortably. (sukhamnisīditabbaṃ); Eat well (sukhaṃ paribhuṅgitabbaṃ); Should be seated suitable chair. (sukhaṃ nipajjitabbaṃ); Should be respected to parents of husband. (anto dve namassitabbaṃ). Buddha has discussed in the Sattabhariya Sutta the categories of wives as follows. The wife always quarrels with her husband. (vadhaka samā bhariyā); The wife like a thief (cora samā bhariyā); She tries to surrender her husband (ayya samā bhariyā); She is like the husband's mother (mātu samā bhariyā); She is like a sister of the husband (bhaginī samā bhariyā); She always satisfies her husband and she does all the things for her husband; (sakhi samā bhariyā); She does all the things like a slave and she protects the husband very well. (dāsī samābhariyā). (Wimalajoti, 2005: 414-418). Buddha emphasized ten major factors for a successful married life.

Those are fulfilling the necessities of parents, fulfilling the welfare of children, fulfilling welfare of wife, understanding each other and behaving well, taking actions for fulfilling the

necessities of relatives, respecting elders, paying homage to the gods, giving merits to relatives who have passed away, spending the life according to the existing rules and regulations of society and building a good and real family life. House holders who spend their lives happily, Sakka namassa Sutta mentions that Gods also worship them. (Wimalajoti, 2005: 416). Mahā Tanhā Sankha Sutta describes the functions of a pregnant mother step by step. (Wimalajoti, 2005: 602-632). Dutiyā Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya says that confidence should mainly exist between the husband and wife. When Buddha stayed at Ghōshitārāma, Manāpakāyika Gods came and worshiped him and they asked what the reasons are to become Gods. Wives who have been living according to under mentioned facts successful in their lay lives and may become Gods in the next lives. Wife gets up earlier than others. She goes to sleep last. She behaves well and she asks all the things from the husband. She respects all adults such as husband, mother and clergy and she is very hospitable to all people. She helps the internal industries of husband and works strategically. She organizes all the activities well. If there are workers of husbands, they may be treated well and treats patients as well. She pays the salaries on time. She protects the wealth of husband such as gold, silver and various crops. She consumes the asset in a well-planned manner. She lives as a lay devotee who observes the Triple Gem. She avoids five bad activities. She gives alms and donations. (Wimalajoti, Anguttara Nikāya, 2005: 202). Nakulamātu Manāpakayika Sutta can be shown as an important one with regard to marriage and Buddhism. When Buddha Stayed at Migadāya of Bhesakalā forest in Sunsumāragiri, Nakulamātā was preached about what kind of qualities should be there for a good wife and next she and husband will become are in the category of manāpakayika Gods. (Wimalajoti, Anguttara Nikāya, 2005: 208 211).

According to the Sāleyyaka Sutta, (Wimalajoti, Majjhima Nikāya, 2005) there are two categories of mental features which should be controlled. Those are refraining from lust, not associating with younger women who are living under parents and relatives. Buddha said that stress should be eradicated in the married life and he said it could be controlled by the under

mentioned seven facts. (Wimalajoti, Majjhima Nikāya, 2005: 18-28). By seeing, (dassanā pahātabbā); By restraining, (saṃvarā pahātabbā); By using (paṭisevanā pahātabbā); By enduring, (adhivāsanā pahātabbā); By avoiding (parivajjanā pahātabbā); By removing, (vinōdanā pahātabbā); By developing meditation (bhāvanā pahātabbā) Singālovāda Sutta of Digha Nikāya emphasizes very important facts responsible for a successful marriage life. (Wimalajoti, 2005: 288-311). It describes the rights of husband and wife as well as various groups. There are five ways to minister to his wife by the husband such as respecting, courtesy, faithfulness, handing over the authority to her and providing her with adornment. And there are five ways to minister to her husband by the wife such as loving him, performing the duties well, and hospitality to the kin of both, faithfulness, watching over the goods he brings and skill and industry in discharging all her business. Many facts have been presented regarding marriage in many Suttas such as Vyaggapajja Sutta, (Wimalajoti, Anguttara Nikāya, 2005: 235-243) Araṇa vibhanga Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya, (Wimalajoti, Majjhima Nikāya, 2005: 484-494) and Kalahavivāda Sutta of Sutta Nipāta.

In the ancient Sinhala customary law marriage at the highest level was derived from the Brahma form of marriage in Hindu Law, which constituted a Sanskāra or Sacrament thus having a religious significance. The Sinhala marriage had no religious significance as the Sinhala people were and are Buddhists and thus it was purely secular in character. The basis of the Brahma form of marriage was the Kanyādāna- giving away of a virgin to the prospective husband. About this Brahma form of marriage Manu says the gift of a maiden spontaneously after clothing and reverencing her to one learned in the Vēda (and of good character is called Brahma rite.)

Manu, (884: p, 29) cited in . This form has been adopted by other castes that were not learned in the Vedas as pointed out by Mayne. Mayne showed this adoption in India when he said “the essence of the Brahma form of marriage is that it is a gift of the daughter in marriage.

Accordingly it is said that the distinct mark of the Asura form is the payment of money for the bride as the absence of that payment is of the approved form as originally the bridegroom in the Brahma form was a man learned in the Vedas it was inadmissible for a Śudra. But it has long since become lawful for all castes for which the form came to be universally adopted by the Brahmins it was very probably followed by the other classes as a mark of higher social status. (Mayne, 1953: 126). Mayne further says “the presumption of Hindu Law is always in favour of a marriage being in the Brahma or approved form as against it being in the Asura or unapproved form. (Ibid., 126). Therefore, it can be concluded that the Brahmins among the early Sinhalese brought this form from India to meet their needs and thereafter, the chief castes the Khattiyas and others would have adopted it, although no learning in Vedas was necessary for a Buddhist society.

In conclusion the light of foregoing discussion, it can be revealed that various scholars have defined what the marriage is. They have pointed out especially fundamental rights of marriage system. When they define about the marriage, they have expressed their opinions according to the concepts of certain perspectives. Especially, when we discuss the marriage in Sri Lanka, it was deeply affected by the Buddhism. Buddhism has described that marriage could be of maximum happiness and that life which is spent in a very good manner.

CILEx Law School (2019, p.9-12) posits that Society’s attitude towards marriage has changed a lot over the years, shown most obviously by the introduction of same-sex marriage in 2014. This is a good example of how dynamic family law is and how it needs to keep evolving so that it is fit to govern modern family relationships. The word “marriage” may well make you think of wedding celebrations, cake and of the life together that may follow on from the ceremony. From the law’s point of view, the meaning of the word is much less romantic. Marriage is a way of formalising a relationship between two people with the consequence that

they have rights and responsibilities towards each other. It is important to define what a marriage is so that we can see to whom it applies. It also allows the law to recognise relationships that are not marriages and so those people do not have the same rights and responsibilities. CILEx Law School (2019, p.9-12) avers that some people are simply not capable of marrying each other, for example, because one of them is already married or because they are too closely related to each other (most people would agree that a brother and sister should not be able to marry!). If the couple is capable of marrying, they must go through the correct procedures in order to form a marriage.

The common law defined marriage most often quoted in legal textbooks and cases dates from 1866: according to *Hyde v Hyde and Woodmansee* [1866], cited in CILEx Law School (2019, p.9-12) argues that marriage is “the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others”. This definition has become mostly irrelevant to marriage in the 21st century. Most obviously marriage is no longer restricted to being between one man and one woman, following the introduction of same-sex marriage by the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 (M(SSC)A 2013). You might say that many marriages are not “to the exclusion of all others” because infidelity is common, although this part of the definition is true in that a person can only be married to one other person at a time. The latest statistics (2017) estimate that 42 per cent of marriages are not for life because they will end in divorce.

Many cohabiting couples would appear to meet the definition of marriage but they are not married. The crucial legal distinction between married and cohabiting couples is that the former have gone through a ceremony of marriage and the latter have not. A rather more modern definition of marriage was given in *Bellinger v Bellinger* [2001] by Thorpe LJ, who suggested that marriage should be defined as “a contract for which the parties elect but which is regulated by the state, both in its formation and in its termination by divorce, because it affects status upon which depend a variety of entitlements, benefits and obligations”. This highlights the important

fact that marriage changes the status of the parties. Marriage creates certain rights and obligations which cannot be excluded or varied by the couple. In order for there to be a valid marriage, a couple must: have capacity to marry; and take the necessary legal steps to form a marriage (comply with the formalities).

Whether or not the law will allow a particular couple to marry will depend partly on their individual characteristics (e.g. are they both old enough to marry?) and partly on factors affecting them as a couple (e.g. are they too closely related?).

2.1.3 Concept of Separation and Divorce

Individuals from all countries and cultures commonly aspire sharing a lifelong dedicated relationship with an intimate partner (Halford and Snyder, 2012). Yet, such relationships do not always work out well and may end in a separation. A separation refers to a situation in which two life partners (i.e., a married or non-married couple) decide or arrange to stop living or being together van Loon et al().

A separation from a life partner such as through a divorce can be seen as a stressful event followed by both social and psychological distress (Miller et al., 1998). Given the severe nature of the event, a separation from the life partner is found to have some drastic consequences. Based on the literature, we distinguish two consequences of a separation that we expect to be of relevance for a self-employed individual. The first consequence refers to the adverse financial consequences or a reduction in income, and the second consequence concerns the reduction in social functioning.

First, a separation from the partner is found to have severe economic consequences, especially for women. Andreß et al. (2006), for example, found—based on data for Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Sweden—that household income is negatively affected by

separations for both sexes but particularly for women. Morgan (1989) looked into United States women who separated from their life partner through a divorce and found that during the first 5 years after the terminated marriage, 25% of these women experienced a period of poverty. However, it was also noted that there was considerable movement in and out of poverty, suggesting that the economic decline was not necessarily a long-term condition. Another economic consequence following a separation or divorce is the division of assets between the former life partners. Weitzman (1980) found that over the period 1968-1977 in the United States, the majority of businesses were awarded to the husband. However, this was also in a period that an exact division of assets was not required under the law. Nowadays, it can be expected that in some cases, a marital dissolution might also lead to a dissolution of the business owned by both the former life partners.

Second, a separation can have social implications and result in a reduction in social functioning of the individual. Social functioning refers to both the extent that the respondent experiences negative interferences with social activities due to physical and/or mental problems and the total social time available (Ware, 2000). Thus, the reduction in social functioning stems from physical and psychological problems that often come with a separation. Regarding physical problems, it is well known that a separation from the life partner is associated with a deterioration of physical health. Especially, the situation of experiencing chronic stress due to a separation is related to having more health problems (Lorenz et al., 2006; Hughes and Waite, 2009). It is also found that individuals who spend more time being divorced, without remarrying, show more chronic conditions and more mobility limitations than individuals with a continuing marriage (Hughes and Waite, 2009).

Furthermore, Williams and Umberson (2004) found that divorced men and women, compared to married individuals, have a poorer self-assessed health. Regarding the mental or

psychological consequences of a separation, studies have found that individuals who separated from their life partner through a divorce are significantly more depressed 4 years after the divorce than their married counterparts (Menaghan and Lieberman, 1986). These psychological consequences are related to social aspects. One of the main factors found to increase the deterioration of mental health is the loss of emotional support from the life partner after a separation (Amato, 2000). Such emotional support can be seen as social capital (Bosma et al., 2004). In sum, the physical and mental problems after a separation will likely negatively interfere with engagement in social activities and, hence, result in reduced social functioning. Research, indeed, indicates that men who separated from their life partner through a divorce feel that they are functioning less in social situations (Hetherington et al., 1976) and that divorced women often have problems with socialization (Bloom et al., 1978). Besides the negative internal social consequences for the individual, the individual often also loses access to the social network and family of his or her former partner after a separation. Given that it was found that the wife of a self-employed individual plays a crucial role by gathering valuable information by maintaining the network (Bratkovic et al., 2009), a self-employed individual will likely lose valuable resources when separating from his or her partner.

Many studies have focused on the financial and social consequences for individuals after a separation from a life partner such as through divorce (Holmes and Rahe, 1967; Pai and Carr, 2010). This topic has gained more attention partly due to the significant increase in divorce rates over the past centuries. According to Eurostat (2019), the divorce rate in the European Union increased over the period 1965–2016, while the marriage rate decreased during the same period. A similar trend can be seen in the United States in the past century, although from 2000 onward, the divorce rate has declined somewhat due to millennials being pickier and marrying at an older age (Cohen, 2019). In Australia, the number of divorces per 1,000 Australian residents rose in

the 1960s and 1970s and peaked at 4.6 after the introduction of the Family Law Act 1975. Thereafter, the divorce rate steadily decreased to 2.0 in 2017 (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2020).

A separation or divorce is, in many cases, a negative and stressful event. Studies have identified the loss of emotional support, economic decline, and health problems as negative consequences of a separation (Amato, 2000; Poortman, 2000; McManus and DiPrete, 2001). While being married is positively associated with work effectiveness and work performance (Selmer and Luring, 2011), divorces lead to a deterioration of living conditions, which might indirectly result in a reduction of an individual's performance at work (Hetherington et al., 1976).

Issues in separation

Interestingly it has not been thoroughly studied whether and how the separation from a partner influences the performance of self-employed individuals. However, the self-employed tend to operate in highly uncertain business environments, and it is known that (de facto) relationships (such as marriage) offer them stability. Given the importance of the presence of a life partner for self-employed individuals, separations can be expected to have an impact on the self-employed's business. The self-employed represent an important and vital part of today's labor force (VanStel and van der Zwan, 2019). Therefore, in light of the current demographic trend sketched above, studying the consequences of separation from the life partner for the self-employed and their businesses is highly relevant.

Exit from self-employment is seen as an important process for business owners, as well as an important event for the economy, the industry, and related firms (DeTienne, 2010). Exit from self-employment can be defined as “the process by which the founders of privately held firms leave the firm they helped to create; thereby removing themselves, in varying degree, from the primary ownership and decision-making structure of the firm” (DeTienne, 2010, p. 203).

One may categorize exits from self-employment in several ways such as in terms of sale or liquidation (Wennberg et al., 2010), the (in) voluntary character of the exit (Coad, 2014), or what happens after an exit. The self-employed individual may end up in another labor market position after an exit (wage work and unemployment), (s) he may decide to set up a new business (becoming self-employed again) or may end up outside the labor force such as in retirement (Hessels et al., 2018). Hence, separation does not refer to the death of a life partner. A growing body of literature recognizes the importance of exit from self-employment and studies this phenomenon to gain insights into what causes an exit (Wennberg et al., 2010). Given the nature of a separation, its consequences are likely to be radical but also diverse. We investigate the roles of income and social functioning as mechanisms through which separation is related to an exit from self-employment. One of the main consequences frequently mentioned by individuals who separated from a life partner are the implications for one's financial situation such as through reduced household income (Poortman, 2000; McManus and DiPrete, 2001; Sevak et al., 2003; Andreß et al., 2006). Since one's financial situation may impact the possibility and decision to remain in self-employment with one's current business (Bird and Wennberg, 2016), we suspect that a separation may lead to an exit from self-employment because of a decline in household income.

Another main implication of separation is its social effect. Women who separated from their life partner through a divorce, for example, often mention to have problems with socialization and problems with feelings of failure as well as to experience feelings of shame (Bloom et al., 1978). Also, men who separated from their life partner through a divorce indicated experiencing emotional problems due to feelings of loneliness (Bloom et al., 1978). Furthermore, they felt that they were functioning less in both social and work situations (Hetherington et al., 1976). Perhaps even the most important social consequence for both men and women is the loss of emotional support from the partner (Amato, 2000). Based on these findings, we suspect that

an individual's social functioning is affected negatively after a separation from a life partner. Reduced social functioning is likely to negatively affect the self-employed and their businesses. Having less social abilities tends to lead to poorer decision making (Bar-On et al., 2004). Similarly, having better social skills and a higher mental ability is found to be associated with higher salary levels (Ferris et al., 2001). Therefore, reduced social functioning as a consequence of separation from a life partner might be detrimental for the self-employed and eventually lead to an exit from self-employment. Such exits are found to have significant consequences for several actors. For example, there may be psychological consequences for the self-employed individual, cash-flows into the firm, competitive effects for the industry, and a redistribution of wealth in the (regional) economy (DeTienne, 2010). When taking the example of a divorce of a self-employed individual who is married in community of property, the divorce might result in a forced liquidation of the self-employed's business with subsequently the possible negative consequences for the self-employed individual, firm, industry, and economy. From a welfare economic point of view, the liquidation of the firm may be suboptimal for overall welfare. Gaining insights into the mechanisms between separation from the life partner and exit from self-employment may help to develop policies to counter negative welfare effects.

While many studies focus on the mental and physical consequences of the loss of a partner, the consequences of separating from a life partner for a self-employed individual have not yet been considered. Given the severe mental and physical consequences of a separation from a life partner (Menaghan and Lieberman, 1986; Lorenz et al., 2006), it is a valuable addition to study the possible subsequent economic consequences. With that, we move past the point of studying only the direct consequences of losing a partner and introduce a new direction for research focusing on the more down-stream consequences of a separation from the partner.

2.2 Role of social media in marriage

Communication through Social Platforms

Hassan, Hussain & Abid(2024) posited that Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube have a vast usage and are not only limited to advertising and marketing. The basic use of social media is communication whether it's for teaching and instruction or for public relations (Lipschultz, 2020). Facebook is the social platform that is considered good for uniting and strengthening family ties and bonds, keeping them connected (Joo et al., 2017). It has been researched that the most users of social media are the younger generation and the old aged people are likely to use social platforms for communication purposes due to their mobility issues and the urge to stay socially connected with friends and family (Bell et al., 2013).

Important Aspects in Social Media Communication.

The most important online things that a person looks at in a relationship are pictures and status updates. Initiation of private messages also starts through liking pictures or responding to a status update. The most important social site for building romantic relationships is Facebook. An ending of relationships also results in removing the partner from your social networks, especially on Facebook (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016). In recent years, researchers have described social media platforms as sites where emotions develop and are sites for emotion formation. So social media sites aggravate emotions based on the content seen by the viewer (Crabtree et al., 2

Hassan, Hussain & Abid (2024) notes that Social media communication, an internet-based platform, allows people to share information and connect with each other using any device (such as mobile phones or laptops). Long-distance relationships are fundamentally different from regular partnerships. Intimate physical contact and effective communication are made easier for couples who live together. A long-distance relationship is difficult since the primary forms of

communication are speaking and writing, and because we are unconcerned with a framework, we cannot tell what is happening or in which scenario our spouse is.

Relationships are inevitably fraught with conflict and difficulty, and this is usually unavoidable. Because each person has a distinctive perspective and set of values, this happens. (Marianne Dainton et al.,2002). Reviewing a time when utilising a phone or other type of technology for communication could be difficult for both children and adults. Six Degrees was a website that allowed users to build profiles before "friending" other users to join their group. It was launched in 1997. About 100 million individuals had access to the internet in 2000, and many of them used message boards to make new friends. Utilise this website to publish images, communicate with friends, and share music. The same year, LinkedIn was established as a platform for working industry professionals to network, find work, and work together. Mark Zuckerberg initially created TheFacebook.com as a chat service for Harvard students in 2005, but he later saw its full potential and made it public. Twitter, a website that allowed users to send "tweets" of no more than 140 characters, was founded in 2006 because of the growing popularity of social media and text-based news sources. As well as photo-sharing websites like Photobucket, Flickr, and Instagram, there were several websites that offered social networking capabilities in 2010. Finally, social media emerged as a resource that website owners and online advertisers could employ to make their sites more accessible. In barely 20 years, social media has grown and developed (Hale, 2017).

Marriage's unique qualities are inextricably linked to the purpose and potential of relational communication, which is to make contact with others before emphasising the importance of the message. The more relational communication is practised, the more common it will become. Real communication inside a marriage is also a crucial requirement that cannot be disregarded. (Syam, 2015). The husband and wife's communication are never constant; it always

changes. There are certain duties that must be finished to preserve balance to sustain and establish a positive connection. Four elements—commonality, control, reaction, and the right profound tone—are particularly effective at maintaining the equilibrium. When the link between the husband and wife is destroyed, it becomes more challenging to implement the four elements needed to maintain balance in a harmonious partnership in the practise of using communication channels for courting and romantic connection. Given the media's inherent personality, it should be assumed that in addition to its merits, it also has significant flaws that drastically restrict the intimacy of interactions. Direct encounters, which are uncommon for long-distance couples, do not always result in the couple's further separation. When power couples meet, they should be met, and this brief window of opportunity should be utilised as effectively as possible. The greatest way to meet power couples is in person, so make the most of your time together by staying away from unnecessary conversations. Everyone in this quick encounter feels extraordinary. (Cresswall and John, 2014).

Regular partnerships and long-distance relationships are fundamentally dissimilar. Living together makes it easier for partners to communicate, make their points, and engage in physical intimacy. However, a long-distance relationship is challenging because the main means of contact are speaking and writing, and because we are unconcerned with a framework, we are unable to detect what is happening or in which scenario our spouse is. Conflict and difficulties always exist in relationships and are typically unavoidable. Every person has their own style of thinking, needs, a seend ambitions, which is why this occurs. (Marianne Dainton and colleagues, 2002). Suggested in these social discourses are two potential perspectives on significant distance connections, one in which affections increment given physical partition and the other in which physical absence makes agreeable independence. From one viewpoint, living separated can be upsetting and desolate for social accomplices and most couples likely like residing in a similar

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

Role of social media in Maintaining Long Distance Relationships

Cresswall and John, (2014) posits that Relationship maintenance is the foundation of two or three connections. Regardless of whether individuals notice it, a considerable lot of their normal ordinary exercises connect with relationship maintenance. This incorporates energy (e.g., being affable, keeping away from analysis), being open, giving affirmations about the relationship, communicating one's affection genuinely, overseeing clashes, and sharing undertakings or errands. With regards to long distance relationship, similar essential relationship maintenance procedures are utilized. Connections will weaken if individuals don't effectively work to keep up with them by utilizing some or the entirety of the above-mentioned support exercises. Studies have likewise looked, truth be told at the variables that connect with relationship fulfilment and they are the same, on the off chance that not the equivalent, as the upkeep exercises. (Dindia and Sommer, 2006). Such factors incorporate fulfilment with communication, impact on the relationship, sexual exercises, one's recreation (how each

accomplice spends free time), division of family errands, time together (only the two accomplices), time with different companions/family, and funds. Of these, fulfilment with communication is the most grounded indicator of marital satisfaction. (Stafford, 2005).

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

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

For married women, social media is a blessing, nonetheless. Social media allows them to communicate quickly and efficiently with no delays but where there is light, there is dark. Women often find themselves comparing themselves to social media couples which can add up to their feeling of loneliness and connect to someone else with the thought that they would be better than their partner. It can be rather harmful to not only the women but also the relationship since often the things on social media are scripted and well edited. Most women think that if social media and computer-mediated communication have never existed, they would never be able to maintain their relationships. (Stafford, 2005). Yet social media is widely used by couples to keep in touch and try to maintain their relationship regardless of distance. There is no single opinion or perception of married women on social media, they vary in experiences and behaviours, but we cannot discard its importance in the life of long-distant couples. (Fatimah, 2014)

The Relationship between Social Media and Marital Success

Marital fidelity affects trust which is an important pillar of Gottman's Sound Relationship House. Cravens, Leckie and Whiting (2012) made reference to research which showed that relationships suffer similar negative outcomes with online infidelity as they do offline infidelity, with one study showing that 22% of participants divorced or separated as a result of online infidelity. A review of literature by Cravens et al. (2012) explains that participants' experiences following the discovery of their partner's affair included three stages: emotional rollercoaster—a period of intense emotional reactions and uncertainty about the future of their relationship; (2) suspension—where couples spent more time apart, engaged in meaning making activities around the affair, and sought outside support; and (3) trust building—in which couples began to rebuild their relationship through better communication, and work towards forgiveness.

Cravens and Whiting (2014) speculate that social media can also enhance existing relationships or facilitate the development of new relationships, including illicit ones. Being on social media thus exposes couples to jealousy-inducing information, which in turn compels them to search for more information on the SNS in question, which induces even more jealousy (Nitzburg & Farber, 2013). This spiral effect compromises trust in the marital relationship which is a foundational element of long-lasting marital commitment. Nakonenzy and Denton (2008) expound that marital commitment tends build up through reciprocated marital trust and marital trust tends to build up gradually through cumulative marital commitment to the relationship. In this case, reciprocated trust is eroded by jealousy-inducing information that married individuals may spot from their partner's social media usage

The potential negative externalities of social media on the stability of marriages and marital satisfaction, as implied in the example by Noack (2014) above, has attracted a growing interest among researchers. Studies in the US indicate that Facebook, for example, has been linked to 66 percent of divorces; with 81 percent of the nation's top divorce lawyers claiming that clients have cited using social networks as damning evidence against their spouses (Saleh & Mukhtar,

2015). Research in the US has shown that reasons behind such divorce cases associated with social media use include jealousies and distrust (Crystal, 2012).

Dynamics of Social Media in Relationship Maintenance:

Jha & Rahangdale (2024) asserts that Communication Patterns and Frequency: Social media platforms facilitate continuous communication through messaging, comments, and status updates. Couples often use these channels to stay connected throughout the day, exchanging casual banter, sharing updates about their lives, and expressing affection.

Emotional Expression and Support: Social media offers a space for individuals to express their emotions openly and receive support from their social network. Couples may share their joys, sorrows, and challenges online, seeking empathy, validation, and encouragement from friends and followers.

Surveillance and Trust Issues: The accessibility of social media also introduces surveillance dynamics into relationships, where individuals monitor their partners' online activities to gauge their fidelity and trustworthiness. While occasional checking-in can foster reassurance, excessive monitoring may lead to mistrust and insecurity.

Comparison and Jealousy: Social media often fosters a culture of comparison, where individuals compare their relationships and lifestyles with those portrayed by others online. This can trigger feelings of jealousy, inadequacy, and resentment, especially when confronted with curated portrayals of seemingly perfect relationships.

Impact on Intimacy and Privacy: While social media facilitates connection, it can also encroach on intimacy and privacy within relationships. Oversharing personal details or engaging in public disputes online can compromise the sanctity of intimate moments and erode trust between partners.

Strategies Employed in Relationship Maintenance:

Connectedness through Messaging and Sharing: Couples often utilize messaging apps and social media platforms to maintain a sense of closeness and connectedness, exchanging messages, photos, and videos throughout the day. Sharing mundane details and updates strengthens emotional bonds and reinforces the feeling of being actively involved in each other's lives. Jha & Rahangdale (2024) Social media plays a multifaceted role in relationship maintenance, influencing communication patterns, emotional expression, surveillance dynamics, and perceptions of intimacy and privacy. Understanding these dynamics and employing effective strategies are essential for harnessing the potential of social media to enhance rather than undermine relationship satisfaction and well-being.

Public Displays of Affection (PDAs): Couples often engage in public displays of affection on social media, such as posting romantic photos, sharing heartfelt messages, or publicly declaring their love for each other. These acts serve to affirm the bond between partners and signal their commitment to their social network.

Joint Participation in Online Activities: Couples may engage in shared online activities, such as gaming, watching movies or TV shows, or participating in virtual events together. This fosters a sense of camaraderie and shared experiences, strengthening the connection between partners.

Monitoring and Checking-In: Monitoring each other's online activities and checking-in via social media can serve as a way to stay informed about each other's lives and well-being. However, it's important to strike a balance between concern and intrusion to avoid triggering trust issues or feelings of suffocation.

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Saleh and Mukhtar (2015) examined the impact of social media on marital relationship with a focus on how social media can lead to divorce among couples. Using stratified random sampling technique, they distributed a structured questionnaire to 140 respondents as well as

interviewed two more respondents. Their study found that, more women are subscribing to the social media and irrespective of sex differences, social media users are spending more time using the social network sites. Facebook is the most frequently used social network site in the study area. Moreover, majority of the respondents believed social media can lead to infidelity and all of them agreed it can lead to divorce.

Obi, & Ezennwanne (2024) conducted a study on the influence of social media on marital relationships among couples in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. The study adopted a survey research design. The population for the study consisted of 288 teaching staff out of which a sample of 119 married staff were purposively selected. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha with a coefficient of 0.82. Data were analysed using percentages, means, and standard deviations. The results showed that the majority of the respondents used social media platforms like Email (100%), Facebook (96.2%), WhatsApp (98.1%), and Instagram (87.6%) to keep in touch with friends and family (3.53), and finding products to purchase (3.50). The study also showed that married couples spend two hours and more on the platforms (3.31). The study highlighted some of the positive influences of social media such as improving family cohesion and bond (3.90) and also the negative influences which include being distracted from paying attention to what is happening in one's spouse's life (2.71). The findings of the study also showed that making video calls, especially in long-distance relationships (3.80) can be used to improve marital communication. In conclusion, the respondents spend a lot of their free time engaging in social media activities which influence their communication with their spouses. It is recommended that couples reduce the time spent on social media and invest more of it in their spouses.

Hassan, Hussain and Abid (2023) did a study on the Role Of Social Media Communication In Married Couples in Long Distance Relationships: An Analysis Of The Perception Of Married Women In Lahore and the purpose of this research was to explore the perspectives of married couples, who have experienced long distance relationships, and utilize the instant access of communication through social media to strengthen and maintain their connection despite their geographical distances. Individuals between the ages of 20 and 30 were questioned using a quantitative research design concerning their knowledge of using technology and social media as a form of communication being in long-distance relationship. While conducting and theorizing this research, Social Exchange Theory was used. To evaluate the data, the researcher looked for codes and themes present in the respondent's responses. The results showed that the participants believed that Technology and social media were helpful in enabling them to maintain their communication throughout their long-distance relationship, they felt connected. As it caused relaxation being in long distance relationships and increase affection between couples. Couples that live apart use social media extensively to manage their virtual relationships in ways that balance and bolster their connections over time and space Video calling through WhatsApp proved helpful as a source of communication being in long distance relationship. As social media usage proved cost-effective, easy accessible but on the other hand married couples felt lacking in physical affection additionally, the participants said although long distance relationships require compromises, researchers found that overall the connection had more advantages than disadvantages. The results of this investigation show that Future study is required in the field of relationships and social media. The functions of social media should be balanced, and modern couples must learn to be more adaptable and flexible to the shifting social trend.

Jha & Rahangdale (2024) in their research the Role of Social Media in Relationship Maintenance: Dynamics, Strategies, and Implementations, noted that in today's digital era, social media has become an integral part of how individuals maintain and nurture relationships. This paper explores the multifaceted role of social media in relationship maintenance, focusing on its dynamics, strategies, and implementations. Firstly, it delves into the dynamics of social media interactions within relationships, examining how platforms facilitate communication, connection, and intimacy. Secondly, it explores the strategies employed by individuals and couples to effectively utilize social media for relationship maintenance, including boundary setting, communication norms, and privacy management. Lastly, the paper discusses practical implementations of social media in relationship maintenance, such as using platforms for shared experiences, support networks, and relationship enrichment activities. By examining these aspects, the paper provides insights into the complex interplay between social media and relationship dynamics, offering implications for both individuals and professionals in the fields of psychology, communication, and technology.

2.4 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.4. 1. Technological Determinism Theory

The theory According to Asemah (2011, P. 214-215) was formulated by Marshal McLuhan in 1964. The basic premise of the technological theory of Marshall McLuhan is that the media are extension of the human body. The theory holds that the media not only alter their

environment but the very message they convey. The media bring new perceptual habits while their technology create new environment. The theory states that technology, especially the media, decisively shape how individuals think, feel and act and how societies organize themselves and operate. This is in line with this study as through the social media married couples can interact and connect with new people online and become even intimate with them and have change of behaviour due to information shared. Technological Determinism is typically an example of a humanistic theory. McLuhan discusses politics, education, sex and drugs as changing media.

2.4.2 Uses and Gratification Theory

The theory, which is also called utility theory seeks to explain what function a particular kind of media content serves in a particular circumstance. The theory seeks to investigate what people do with a communication content instead of what the communication content does to them Asemah (2011). Folarin (1998) notes that the theory perceives the recipient as actively influencing the effect process since they selectively choose, attend to, perceive, and retain media messages on the basis of their needs, beliefs, etc. The theory claimed that the Media do not do things to people but rather people do things with the media. In other words, the influence of social media and other mediums are limited to what people allow it to be. Therefore, married couples use the social media for their preexisting needs and interact with people to meet those needs that their partners may not be able to meet.

2.4.3. Agenda Setting Theory

The theory says the media (especially the new media) are not always successful at telling us what to think, but they are quite successful at telling us what to think about. The theory was proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in 1972/1973.

An agenda is an issue or subject of discussion. It is a topical issue which elicits a positive or negative comments from the members of the public. Agenda setting on the other hands is the process of reflecting the events in our society. The major assumption of the theory is that the media set agenda for the public to follow. The theory holds that most of the pictures we store, in our heads, most of the things we think or worry about, most of the issues we discuss, are based on what we have read, listened to or watched in different mass media.

That is why most times it is the social media that brings to know, the extent to which people can interact and communicate with entirely new people and build relationship with them. All over the internet, the media has projected failed marriages and divorcement of marriages of celebrities and public figures and how they can connect or reconnect with a partner after divorce, this has made it a norm for people to push for divorce at any slight provocation and announce it on social media as of why such divorce took place to prove a point and apportion blame. Also, projecting divorce cases of people makes people to think and act on divorcing their partners. The media has made divorce seem easy and attainable as sometimes they post stories of people involved all the time.

2.4.4. Reinforcement Theory

The theory was propounded by Defleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach in (1989) and the theory states that the Reinforcement Theory suggests that television and violence will reinforce aggressive behavior, already existing in an individual. Inherent in such a theory is the probability that the violent person because of violence tendencies, perceives violent behaviours as a real experience that is why they tend to be problematic, quarrelsome, always fault finding, pick on their partners and raise issues all the time, whereas the non-violent person may perceive the violent

programmes as entertainment without becoming psychologically involved with the programme. The standpoint of the theory is that, mass mediated violence can simply reinforce the existing aggressive inclinations that people bring to media exposure

This theory better explains the fact that before marriages collapse, it could be as a result of similar experience partners might have seen growing up from the social media, movies they've watched or stories they might have read. So if their parents were violent, cheats or harmed themselves, when such behavior directly raises itself again, such person will remember and quickly respond aggressively or retaliate in self-defense. Because of that awareness, people are always looking out for the triggers of divorce and act accordingly when their partners act in that manner.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

There have been numerous attempts by researchers to formulate a theory that explains the nature of online interaction. While the earliest theories focused on more negative aspects, frequently depicting online communication as depersonalizing, more recently developed theories are more optimistic, characterising online interaction as capable of forming impressions and relationships with those who they meet online. One of such theory is called social information processing theory.

Social information processing theory was developed by Joseph Walter in 1992. It is an interpersonal communication theory that suggests that online interpersonal relationship development might require more time to develop than traditional face-to-face relationships. Once established, online personal relationships demonstrates the same relations dimensions and qualities as face to face relationships. Also, online personal relationships may help facilitate relationships that would not be formed in face to face world due to intergroup difference. The

tenets of this theory aligns with this study because through the use of the social media, impressions and relationships are created even without being physically present because over time one tends to get intimate and personal just interacting with people which could lead to physical connection and affections.

Also, Social Exchange Theory is another theory that explains and predicts relationship maintenance. The theory was developed by Thibaut and Kelley in 1959. It clarifies when and why individuals continue and develop some personal relationships while ending others. Why is it that people maintain certain relationships and end others? Additionally, the theory takes into account how satisfied you will be with the relationships that you choose to maintain. As the name of the theory suggests, an exchange approach to social relationships is much like an economic theory based on the comparison of rewards and costs. The theory looks at personal relationships in terms of costs versus benefits. What rewards do you receive from a given relationship and what does it cost you to obtain those rewards? Before making specific predictions, however, certain assumptions must be understood. This theoretical position argues that the major force in interpersonal relationships is the satisfaction of both people's self-interest. Theorists in social exchange posit that self-interest is not necessarily a bad thing and that it can actually enhance relationships.

Going by the theory, the major force in interpersonal relationships is the satisfaction of both people's self-interest. Self-interest is not necessarily a bad thing and it can actually enhance relationships. This therefore means that human beings weigh out options and rewards versus cost when developing relationships. Thus, people are likely to end a particular relationship when they are not satisfied in the case of marriage. Asemah (2011, P.222).

All these theories put together demonstrates the impact of the social media in the creation of relationships online through communication and sharing of information, maintenance and possible separation from their partner for a more juicy marriage.

Chapter Three:

Methodology

3.0 Preamble

This chapter examines the methodology employ for the study. It consists of the research design, population of the study, sample size, sampling technique, instrument for data collection, method of administration of instrument, validity of instrument, reliability of instrument and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design,

The researcher adopted the descriptive research method for the study. According to Asemah et al(2022), the descriptive research method is used by researchers to ascertain the perception, attitude, impact and influence of a phenomenon on respondents. The survey research method is relevant to the study because it will enable the researcher to ascertain the perception of Benin residents on the influence of the social media in separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria.

3.2 Population of the study

A population is basically the total number of elements in a study. This means the population of the study consists of all residents of Benin metropolis. According to the last census, there are 3, 428,714 residents in Benin metropolis. Out of this number, 1,413,28 persons are couples. Thus, the population of the study is made up of 3,428,714 residents in Benin metropolis.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size for the study is 400 respondents. The sample size was determined using the

Taro Yamane (1968) formulae thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size

N is the population of the study

1 is constant

e is the degree of error given as 0.05

Substituting the figure, we have

$$n = \frac{3,428,714}{1+3,428,714(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3,428,714}{3,428,715 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = 3,428,714$$

From the calculation above the sample size from the population, using the Yamane's sample size determinant is 400

3.4 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique adopted for the study is stratified random sampling and the systematic sampling. Using the stratified random sampling, the researcher divided Benin metropolis into north, south, East and west. These sections were further divided into streets. Thus, the researcher selected five streets each from each of the sections identified as South, North, East and West. 20 respondents each were selected from the four streets in each of the sections as shown in the diagram below.

Table 1: Showing the various sections and number of respondents in Benin metropolis

Sections	Streets	No. of Respondent	Percentage	
North	1	20	20%	100%
	2	20	20%	
	3	20	20%	
	4	20	20%	
	5	20	20%	
South	1	20	20%	100%
	2	20	20%	
	3	20	20%	
	4	20	20%	
	5	20	20%	
East	1	20	20%	100%
	2	20	20%	
	3	20	20%	

	4	20	20%	
	5	20	20%	
West	1	20	20%	100%
	2	20	20%	
	3	20	20%	
	4	20	20%	
	5	20	20%	
Total		400	100%	

From the table above 20 couples were selected from each street using the systematic random sampling of 3 digit sample. This means that for every third house, questionnaire are administered.

3.5 Instrument of Data collection

The questionnaire is the instrument used by the researcher for data collection. A well structured questions derived from the research questions were formulated to be able to answer the research question. The instrument is divided into two sections. Section A is consists of the demographic variable such as the age, marital status and occupation of respondents while section B which consists of the Psychographic variable consists of the actual questions. The question were organized in four scales of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). The acceptable means is 2.5

3.6 Validity of instrument

Validity of instrument is the test that measure the degree to which any measurement instrument can describe or quantify what it is designed to measure (Asemah, et al:2022). The researcher employed the content validity approach through the assistance of the project supervisor. Thus, the project supervisor was given the instrument to ascertain the extent to which it can elicit the desired result in terms of the appropriateness and relevance of the instrument to be able to answer the research question formulated for the study.

3.7 Reliability of Instrument

Reliability of instrument is basically the degree of consistency between two measures of the same thing. It is the extent to which an instrument can measure the same thing when repeated. For the purpose of the study, the researcher adopted the Test-retest reliability approach in which 20 (twenty) couples selected randomly from the population were tested for reliability of instrument with the correlation coefficient obtained in the score, the instrument for the study was adjudged to be reliable.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the field was analyzed using simple percentage and frequency table. The researcher also used simple statistical methods such as means for the analysis of data.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.0 Preamble

The study examines perception of Benin residents of the influence of social media in the promotion of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria. The researcher adopted the descriptive survey method for the study. Questionnaire were administered to 400 (Four Hundred) respondents. Data collected from the field is analyzed as follows:

Table 2: Showing the gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	200	50%

Female	200	50%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The data collected above shows that the female consists of 50% of the total number that constitutes the population of the study. This means that 200 (Two hundred) respondents were females while another 200 (Two hundred) were males. The implication is that there was equal representation of gender. This will reduce biases associated with gender oriented perception.

Table 3: Showing the occupation distribution of respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Civil Servants	174	43.5%
Self-employed/Traders	06	1.5%
Unemployed	220	55%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The data collected and presented in table 2 above shows that majority of respondents were unemployed. Out of 400 respondents, 220 representing 55% of the total number were unemployed. Only 6(six) respondents representing 1.5% were traders/self employed while 174 respondents representing 43.5% of the population were civil servant. The implication of this is that majority of respondents were not only unemployed, but there is possibility that they are likely to spend more time on social media compared to those who are engaged with one activities or the other. This means that the possibility of examining and getting a reliable result from the study will be high since majority of respondents may likely spend more time on the social media.

Table 4: Showing respondents' access to social media platforms

Variables	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total	x	Decision
I always access the social media	314 78.5% 1256	61 15.3% 183	15 3.7% 30	10 2.5% 10	400 100% 1479/400	3.6	Accepted
I don't often access the social media	- - -	03 0.8% 09	324 81% 648	73 18.2% 73	400 100% 730/400	1.8	Rejected
Sometimes, I access the social media	- - -	- - -	308 77% 616	92 23% 92	400 100% 708/400	1.7	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the table above, majority of respondents (375) strongly agreed and agreed that they do not only have a mobile phones but they often accessed the social media through their phones. The frequently used social media by respondents are X formally Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok. This implies that majority of respondents surveyed have access to the social media always.

Table 5: Showing respondents' number of hours spent on the social media

Hours	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total	x	Decision
1 – 2	37 9.2% 148	10 2.5% 30	316 79% 632	37 9.3% 37	400 100% 847/400	2.1	Rejected
3 – 5	312 78% 1248	- - -	44 11% 88	44 11% 44	400 100% 1380/400	3.5	Accepted
6 – 9	384 96% 1536	16 4% 48	- - -	- - -	400 100% 1584/400	4.0	Accepted
10 – 24	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From table 4 above, majority of respondents spent between 3 -9 hours on the social media daily. This is because 312 (78%) of them strongly agreed that they spend 3 -5 hours daily on the social media while 384(96%) and 16(4%) making a total of 100% of the population strongly agreed and agreed that they spend 6 – 9 hours on the social media daily. This means that on the average, majority of respondents do not only access the social media platforms but spent quality time on the social media. This means that the social media constitute about quarter of the total time spent each day in their daily activities.

Table 6: Showing the level of social media usage by couples

Variables	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total	x	Decision
Very High (VH)	284 71% 1136	104 26% 312	6 1.5% 12	6 1.5% 6	400 100% 1400/400	3.7	Accepted
Very low (VL)	- - -	06 1.5 18	293 73.2% 586	101 25.3% 101	400 100% 705/400	1.8	Rejected
Moderate (M)	- - -	- - -	317 79.2% 634	83 20.8% 83	400 100% 717/400	1.8	Rejected
Low (L)	- - -	- - -	200 50% 400	200 50% 200	400 100% 600/400	1.5	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above shows that the level of social media usage by couples in Benin metropolis is very high. This is because out of 400 respondents, 284(71%) and 104(26%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed that the level of social media usage by couples in Benin metropolis. Only 6(1.5%) each strongly disagreed and disagreed that the level of social media usage by couples in Benin metropolis is very high. Additionally, majority of respondents 293 (73.2%), 101 (25.3%) strongly disagreed and disagreed that the level of social media usage by couples is very low. From the analysis given above, it is important to note that there is high level of social media utilization among couples in Benin metropolis.

Table 7: Showing the perception of respondents on the impact of social media on the rate of separation among couples in Nigeria

Variables	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total	x	Decision
Social media platforms have great impact on the rate of separation	316 79% 1264	30 7.5% 90	31 7.8% 62	23 5.7% 23	400 100% 1439/400	3.6	Accepted
Social media platforms do not have impact on the rate of separation	24 6% 96	20 5% 60	309 77.2% 618	47 11.8% 47	400 100% 821/400	2.1	Rejected
The impact of social media platforms on the rate of separation is very minimal	- - -	10 2.5% 30	380 95% 760	10 2.5% 10	400 100% 800/400	2.0	Rejected
The impact of social media on separation is not noticeable	31 124	15 45	314 628	40 40	400 837/400	2.1	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the data presented above, majority of respondents 316(79%) and 30 (7.5%) strongly agreed and agreed that social media have a great impact on the rate of separation among couples in Nigeria. This is because only 31 (7.8%) and 23 (5.7%) strongly disagreed and disagreed that social media have great impact on the rate of separation among couples in Nigeria.

Consequently, majority of respondents disagreed that social media do not have impact on the rate of separation among couples in Nigeria. From the analysis, it is safe to note that social media contribute to the rate of separation among couples in Nigeria.

Table 8: Showing respondents' influence on the divorce among couples in Nigeria.

Variables	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total	x	Decision
Social media contribute greatly to the rate of divorce among couples in Nigeria	318 79.5% 1272	10 2.5% 30	10 2.5% 20	62 15.5% 62	400 100% 1384/400	3.5	Accepted
Social media do not contribute to the rate of divorce among couples in Nigeria.	- - -	- - -	316 79% 632	84 21% 84	400 100% 716/400	1.8	Rejected
The influence of social to the rate of divorce among	- -	- -	384 96%	16 4%	400 100%	2.0	Rejected

couples in Nigeria is low	-	-	768	16	784/400		
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Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the table presented above as shown in table 7, majority of respondents 318 (79.5%) of the total population agreed that the social media influence the rate of divorce among couples in Nigeria. This is because only few of them disagreed with the option that social media do not contribute to the rate of divorce among couples in Nigeria. From the submission, it is important to stress that social media play contributory roles in the rate of divorce among couples in Nigeria.

Table 9: Showing the extent social media influence on couple lead to separation and divorce

Variables	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total	x	Decision
Very High Extent (VHE)	274 68.5% 1096	124 31% 372	02 0.5% 04	- - -	400 100% 1472/400	3.6	Accepted
High Extent (HE)	300 1200	100 300	- - -	- - -	400 1500/400	3.8	Accepted
Very Low Extent (VLE)	- - -	- - -	260 65% 520	140 35% 140	400 100% 660/400	1.7	Rejected
Low Extent(LE)	30 7.5% 120	25 6.3% 75	215 53.7% 430	130 32.5% 130	400 100% 755/400	1.9	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above show that majority of respondents are of the opinion that social media influences couples' separation and divorce rates in Nigeria. Out of the 400 respondents, 274 (68.5%) and

124 (31%) totally more than 70% of the total population agreed that social media influence rate of separation and divorce to a very high extent. Only few number of respondents disagreed that social media influence on the rate of separation and divorce is very high. Moreover, there are indications that respondents view the social media platform as a veritable avenue of reaching out to those who want to engage in one form of relationship or the other.

Table 10: Showing ways social media influence couples into separation and divorce in Nigeria

Variables	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	Total	x	Decision
Online dating	300 75% 1200	50 12.5% 150	50 12.5% 100	- - -	400 100% 1450/400	3.6	Accepted
Easy Access to various persons	400 100% 1600	- - -	- - -	- - -	400 100% 1600/400	4.0	Accepted
Good communication network	318 79.5 1272	82 20.5% 246	- - -	- - -	400 100% 1518	3.8	Accepted
Ability to source for anybody that is flirtious	400 100% 1600	- - -	- - -	- - -	400 100% 1600/400	4.0	Accepted
Online cash assessment	300 75% 1200	100 25% 300	- - -	- - -	400 100% 1500/400	3.8	Accepted
Good interactive mechanism	318 79.5%	82 20.5%	- -	- -	400 100%	3.8	Accepted

	1272	246	-	-	1518/400		
Pornography	300	50	50	-	400	3.6	Accepted
	75%	12.5%	12.5%	-	100%		
	1200	150	100	-	1450/400		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Majority of respondents 300 (75%) and (12.5%) agreed that the social media parade various pornography sites that are tempting. These sites provide an escape route for individuals either married or singles to escape boredom and satisfy their sexual and emotional needs. These sites are often addictive when people indulge them. Pornographic addiction can result to unfaithfulness among couples. This can ultimately lead to separation and divorce.

The table above shows way social media influences couples into separation and divorce. From the data collected majority of respondents agreed that social media influence couples and create a veritable atmosphere for separation and divorce through online dating platforms, good communication network, good interactive mechanism, online cash payment and access, ability to find dating partners, access to various persons cutting across religion, race, nationality and countries as well as access to pornography and other sexual related activities.

4.2 Discussion of findings

The findings of this study is presented belo:

RQ1: What is the level of social media utilization among couples in Nigeria?

The study reveals that there is high level of social media utilization among couples in Nigeria.

Table 4 shows that majority of respondents spend more than quarter of their day on social media.

Many of these respondents are married couples and romantic couples. T

he study indicates that majority of respondents (384 representing 96%) of the population spend between 6-9 hours on the social media daily. There are also indications that majority of respondents agreed that to a very high extent, social media utilization among couples in Nigeria is very high. Thus, it can be decided that Benin residents' perception of the level of social media utilization among couples in Nigeria is very high. Only few respondents strongly disagreed and

disagreed that the level of social media usage among couples in Nigeria is very low. One of the justification of this findings is that prevalence of mobile phones among all and sundry. Mobile phones have become an integral part of everyone in Nigeria. This includes even children. The commonality of the gadget provides an opportunity to explore and expose to varieties of “things” in the internet.

RQ2: What is the perception of Benin residents on the impact of social media on the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria?

The study reveals that social media play a major role in the rate of separation and divorce among Nigerian couples. Table six reveals the extent to which respondents agreed that social media has great impact on the rate of separation among couples. Majority of respondents 316(79%) and 30(7.5%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed that social media platforms have great impact on the rate of separation among couples in Nigeria.

Similarly, respondents also strongly agreed that social media contribute greatly to the rate of divorce among couples in Nigeria. 318 respondents representing 79.5% of the total population strongly agreed while 10 representing 2.5% of the total number of respondents agreed. Thus, the perception of Benin residents on the extent to which social media contribute to divorce among couples in Nigeria is not only on the affirmative but high. Furthermore, table 8 shows that social media influences on couple lead to divorce and separation. Respondents strongly agreed 274(68.5%) that social media influence can lead and have led to separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria.

Additionally, the study also shows various ways through which the social media can greatly influence couple into seeking for separation and divorce. These are through online dating, easy access to various persons especially the rich and the affluence in the society, provision of good,

fast and easy communication network opportunity to look for anyone of choice online payment platform and easy cash transactional processes and platforms for good interactive mechanism such as video calls and voice note. Majority of respondents, 300 (75%) and above agreed that the social media provides accessibility to porn sites which are easily accessed and processed by individual. This opportunity can lead to varieties of sexual escapades and adventures which individual especially couples may want to give a try.

RQ3: To what extent does social media influence leads couples to separation and divorce?

Residents of Benin metropolis believed that social media influence can lead to separation and divorce among couples. They believed that social media provides a new vistas that give individuals opportunity to get exposure and explore of the individual lacks adequate decorum to operate in a self-controlling person. Thus, the various platforms social media provides if not well utilized can make or mare couples' relationships. This is because of how minds could be sharpened and shaped into some certain realization that may be detrimental to African marriage syllogism.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Summary of Findings

The researcher examined the perception of Benin residents on the role of social media in the promotion of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria. The researcher adopted the survey research method for the study. Premised on Technological determinism theory, the researcher surveyed 400 (four hundred) respondents in Benin metropolis to ascertain their opinion on the extent to which social media contribute to separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria. Findings from the study shows the following:

- i. Majority of couples in Nigeria have mobile phone gadgets. This device has become an integral part of every home and society because it is now becoming indispensable

- ii. Majority of couples have access to social media platforms. The study shows that the prevalent social media platforms that are commonly use by couples include whatsapp, facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X formally Twitter.
- iii. The level of social media access by couples in Nigeria is very high
- iv. Couples spend more than quarter of their day on social media. This in turn enable them to access varieties of social media activities
- v. Social media play a great role on the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria.
- vi. Social media contribute greatly to the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria
- vii. Social media exert great influence which ultimately leads to separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria
- viii. Social media influence couples through greater access to pornography, online cash payment, good communication network, visual space through which persons of various status can be accessed etc
- ix. Social media plays a major role on the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria

5.2 Conclusion

The study explore the perception of Benin residents on the influence of social media in the promotion of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria. Findings from the study reveals that Benin residents' perception of the influence of the social media in the promotion of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria to be in the affirmative. In other words, they are of the view that social media contribute greatly to the extent of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria.

Based on the findings, it is concluded that Benin residents perception of the influence of social media in the promotion of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is in the affirmative. Thus, social media influence the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria. Consequently, social media can be dangerous to a romantic relationship if its use are not properly defined.

5.3 Recommendations

Arising from the findings of the study and the conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government should come with policies that will regulate social media utilization in Nigeria
- ii. Couples should use the social media for a pre-defined purpose. This will avoid distraction and site switching when using the social media and internet
- iii. Couples should learn ways to discipline themselves when using the social media
- iv. Couples should regulate one another and serve as “policeman” to each other when using the social media. This will go a long way in averting temptations that can lead to separation and divorce among couples
- v. Social media utilization should be guided through a regulatory framework. This will enable decisive use of the social media in various activities.

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Appendix I

Department of Mass Communication
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University of Benin
Benin City, Edo State
Nigeria

Dear Respondents,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF ITEMS IN QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final year student of the above mentioned Department and Institution. I am conducting a
research on **Benin residents Perception of the Influence of Social Media in the Promotion of
Separation and Divorce among couples in Nigeria**. This research work is in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree in Mass Communication. You have been carefully selected for this study to provide reliable information. This study is strictly guided by research ethics that protects the anonymity of its respondents in confidentiality. I hereby request for your sincere and accurate response to the items in this questionnaire. All provided information would be used purely for academic purpose.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation

Yours Faithfully

David Sarah Ebikomboere
Researcher

Appendix II

Questionnaire

Instruction: Please kindly tick (✓) in the appropriate option below

Section A: Demographic

1. What is your gender? (a) Male [] (b) Female []
2. What is your age bracket (a) 18 – 24[] (b) 25 – 34[] (c) 35 – 44[] (d) 45 and above[]
3. What religion are you? (a) Christianity (b) Islamic (c) Traditional
4. Marital status (a) Single[] (b) Married [] (c) Divorced/Seperated [] (d) Widowed
5. Duration of times spent on social media (a) 2-4hrs (b) 4-6hrs (c) 6-8hrs (d) 8-12hrs

Section B

Social media usage

S/N	Variables	SA	A	SD	D	NS
6	The degree of social media usage among couples in Nigeria is very high					
7	The degree of social media usage among couples in Nigeria is high					
8	The degree of social media usage among couples is moderate					
9	The degree of social media usage is very low					
10	The degree of social media usage is low					

Section C

Social media influence among couples

11	Variables	SA	A	SD	D	NS
12	Social media impact among couples in Nigeria is very great					
13	Social media impact among couples is great					
14	Social media impact among couples is moderate					
15	Social media impact among couples is very low					
16	Social media impact among couples is low					

Section D

Social media influence of the separation and divorce among couples

S/NO	Variables	SA	A	SD	D	NS
17	Social media influence on the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is very high					
18	Social media influence on the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is high					
19	Social media influence on the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is moderate					

20	Social media influence on the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is very low					
22	Social media influence on the rate of separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is low					

Section E

Social media contribution to separation and divorce

S/NO	Variables	SA	A	SD	D	NS
23	The extent to which social media contribute to separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is very high					
24	The extent to which social media contribute to separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is high					
25	The extent to which social media contribute to separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is moderate					
26	The extent to which social media contribute to separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is very low					
27	The extent to which social media contribute to separation and divorce among couples in Nigeria is low					