

The Impact of Technological Interference in Couple Relationships

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Abstract: *The present study is an attempt to explore the Impact of Technological Interference in couple relationships. In this study, the frequency of technology interference in romantic relationships was examined. The study surveyed 100 participants who are married or cohabiting or dating couples who were in relationship for over 4 months. The participants completed Technoference questionnaire developed by Mc Daniel and Coyne. The statistical method applied was Mean and Standard Deviation. The use of mobile phone especially during conversations has been a bothering element in couple relationships. Many participants felt frustrated how mobiles are prioritized over them and experienced conflicts related to mobile use during shared activities.*

Keywords: Technology, Interference, Couple relationships, Impact, Technoference scale

1. Introduction

The technology has crept into our daily lives so much that it has become herculean task to be away from our mobiles. It brought bane along the boons that it possesses. The study shows that the relationships are getting affected in various contexts in a relationship.

In 2018, the country had a staggering 560 million internet subscribers, positioning it as the second-largest market after China. Notably, Indian mobile data users exhibit high monthly data consumption, averaging 8.3 gigabits (GB). This surpasses the average of 5.5 GB in China and falls within the range of 8.0 to 8.5 GB observed in South Korea, a technologically advanced digital economy (McKinsey Global Institute, 2019) [2].

The figures above indicate the inevitable prevalence of technology in our day to day lives. It helps in starting a relationship. Dating apps such as Bumble, Hinge, Tinder etc., help lot of individuals to select their partner depending on their intention to start a relationship. For example, Hinge provides matches who want to have a long-term help commitment. Tinder mostly offers wide options for short term relationships. These also help individuals who are comfortable in online interactions. Technology is also a boon to maintain a relationship. Text messages, emojis, voice calls, video calls help a couple to maintain a relationship at ease which was a dream prior to 2 decades. It also helps couple to be in touch with each other in long distance relationships.

However, when couple are cohabiting, the pattern is more dependence on mobiles. Many couples prefer to communicate through chat rather than having face to face contact. This is especially evident during conflicts between the couple. They prefer to fight on chats rather than having a dialogue on a disagreement. Couple spending time together without mobiles has started declining.

Interference of technology in day to day lives is referred to as “Technoference” by Mc Daniel and Coyne. The couples who do not have the awareness that the mobiles intervene in their day-to-day relationship project or displace their frustration in different ways, which is not healthy for the couple. When couple have a disagreement and trying to resolve it through chats increases their frustration rather than resolving the problem as mobiles are not substitution face to face conversations. With increased use of mobiles, the quality time spent by the couple is declining which is not healthy for the relationship. It is important for couples to have some digital detox to have a healthy relationship.

2. Review of Literature

- The Relationship between Mobile Device Usage and Couple Satisfaction -Emily Kathryn Oliveira.
- Partner phubbing: Why using your phone during interactions with your partner can be detrimental for your relationship -J. Beukeboom, Monique Pollmann
- Daily Technology Interruptions and Emotional and Relational Well-Being -Brandon T McDaniel, Michelle Drouin.
- Technology as the third spouse-The impact of smart phones on newlywed couples -Sarah Mandel.
- Mobile Phone Use in Romantic Relationships -Audrey Juhasz & Kay Bradford

Problem of the study

“The impact of Technological Interference in Couple relationships.”

Objective of the study

To study the effects of technology on romantic relationships.

Hypothesis

Excessive mobile use leads to increased frustration among couples.

Sample

The study surveyed a random sample of 100 individuals in relationship for over 4 months. All the participants are from Hyderabad. In this survey, 70 females and 30 males participated.

Instrument

To collect data, Technoference questionnaire developed by Mc Daniel and Coyne was used.

Statistical Analysis

For the collected sample data, parametric statistical tools of Mean and Standard Deviation are used.

The table below represents the data collected, respective mean and standard deviation of the collected sample.

Table 1

N	Mean	Standard Deviation
100	16.63	6.78

Interpretation

The findings indicate considerable technology interference in couple relationships.

3. Discussion

It is concerning that smartphone dependency is on the rise, with individuals checking their phones up to 150 times a day. The habit of phone use has led to a paradox known as the “present-absent paradox,” where we are physically present but mentally absent due to smartphone distraction, negatively affecting those around us [3].

In any interpersonal relationship, the present-absent paradox is quite frustrating. It is all the more in a couple relationship. Couple relationships indicate two individuals having a commitment whether short term or long-term commitment. This study included couples who are in a relationship for more than 4 months, reason being it is not possible to understand the level of technical interference in the couple relationship if it is less than the said period.

There is a concept called Phubbing. Phubbing - one's engagement with the smartphone during a face-to-face conversation with another person or group of people [4]. In romantic relationships, this form of engagement with mobile phones is known as partner phubbing. Irrespective of the gender, partner phubbing is observed in couple relationships.

This increased reliance on mobiles for the communication has led to declining face to face communication between the partners. Whether the couple are dating or cohabiting, the reliance on mobiles has increased to maintain a relationship. They are finding it convenient to continue or stop a conversation through mobile devices. Though the technology favors long distance relationships to maintain the relationship, it has its own negatives of over reliance on it.

The research problem is the impact of technology interference in couple relationships. Mean score of 16.63 indicates a moderate level of technology interference in relationships. A standard deviation 6.78 shows variation in

responses among participants. Thus, the study shows that technology interference is a significant factor in relationships, with varying experiences among couples.

4. Conclusion

Thus, it can be concluded that there is significant impact of technology in couple relationships. Regular detox moments between couple, enhancing face to face interactions would enhance couple relationships.

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5. Future Scope

Further research could explore relationship satisfaction, coping strategies.

References

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