

Mathews Perez-Vimos

Professor LeBigre

ENGL 21003

Major Assignment 1

Scrolling Toward Separation

As social media continues to grow in popularity, it has become a major role to forming and sustaining relationships. While social media may have its pros, it also comes with its downsides on intimate relationships such as creating emotional distance, making people more introverted and lowering interactions. Many people begin to rely more on interacting virtually, which lowers real life communication skills with friends and even in relationships. Regardless of social media being a bridge to connect with others, it still can divide the strongest of relationships. When couples prefer online validation over direct communication, trust takes a hit. However, solutions exist. Encouraging couples to seek therapy can help improve real life communication, create boundaries around social media and rebuild emotional connections with whom they love.

Social media use makes it difficult for relationships to maintain clear and healthy communication, such as addressing their relationships issues online rather than talking it out with their partner. Platforms such as Facebook, X, Snapchat, and Instagram are used as an outlet and end up replacing meaningful conversations. These actions lead to less time together, missing emotional connection and harmful comparisons to what is seen online. Most disagreements arise

from content seen in social media. To make matters worse, the solution to these issues is mostly fighting over text messages instead of talking it out. Stolz Kim's post "My Phone Killed My Relationship" states that "every time that she saw something she thought was strange, she would contact me demanding explanations" (Kim). This example shows how excessive social media use encourages couples to lash out online rather than direct, in person communication.

A major issue with social media connections is that they limit meaningful engagement in conversations and socialization, resulting in being more of an introvert. Many people focus on being more active on social media 24/7 rather than interacting with friends, family and their significant other. This pattern is shown in Stolz Kim's relationship with Maggie. During their time together, Stolz used to post every aspect of his life online, which made Maggie uncomfortable due to those actions causing tension. Each time Stolz went out, he would post photos that Maggie would see, leading to arguments online rather than in person. Stolz states, "The one relationship I managed to keep during my post-Maggie phase was broken because of my social media habit" (Kim). This example shows the importance of direct interaction, as an excess use of social media can damage real life communication skills. Researchers support this claim, showing that social media use among college students is heavily linked to one prone to jealousy and insecurity (Moore). For these reasons, social media can divide people rather than connecting them, which later weakens and even destroys relationships.

To add on, Stolz Kim reflects "Those years did educate me to experience my connections and friendships in person rather than through my smartphone screen" (Kim). This realization

reveals how the breakup helped him recognize his connection to social media was stronger than the one he had with Maggie. Rather than living in the moment, the couple relied on social media interaction way more than human interaction. This example brings out the importance of communication directly with one's partner, as strong and clear communication between each other is crucial to maintaining a healthy and long-lasting relationship.

Stejin argues that “we simply cannot communicate with everyone we know the information provided with friends on social networking instantly become available to strangers, coworkers, and acquaintances as well” (Stejin). This indicates that although some users may believe their personal stuff is limited to their close friends, it is usually accessible to a much wider audience. Stejin also states “only 22 percent and 15 percent experienced an incident on social networking that ended their relationship” (Stejin), indicating the even though social media does not end all relationships, it still plays a huge role in some. The table below shows the percentage of people who participated in Stejin's theory to determine if information published in social media will damage their relationship. Not everyone has the ability to control their online behavior, and excessive use of social media can lead to serious consequences. Therefore, social media must be approached with caution, mostly when sharing personal information. Platforms such as Facebook, X and Instagram require self-control, as oversharing can expose private information to the audience.

	<i>Gain relationship</i>	<i>Lost relationship</i>	<i>Positive like</i>	<i>Negative like</i>	<i>Positive trust</i>	<i>Negative trust</i>	<i>Positive involved</i>	<i>Negative involved</i>
Nagelkerke R^2	0.112	0.053	0.178	0.109	0.078	0.054	0.039	0.042
Gender (reference = male)	0.241 (1.27)	-0.041 (0.96)	-0.004 (0.99)	-0.127 (0.88)	-0.083 (0.92)	-0.613* (0.54)	-0.301* (0.74)	-0.496 (0.61)
Age	-0.013* (0.99)	-0.006 (0.99)	-0.014* (0.99)	-0.014 (0.99)	-0.012 (0.99)	-0.007 (0.99)	0.012* (1.01)	-0.001 (1.00)
Profile information	0.026 (1.03)	-0.036 (0.96)	0.026 (1.03)	-0.100* (0.91)	-0.061 (0.94)	-0.136* (0.87)	0.043 (1.04)	-0.140* (0.87)
Post content	0.119*** (1.13)	0.122*** (1.13)	0.166*** (1.12)	0.166*** (1.18)	0.136** (1.12)	0.156** (1.17)	0.145*** (1.16)	0.140* (1.15)
Post frequency	0.227*** (1.25)	0.135* (1.14)	0.277*** (1.32)	0.195** (1.22)	0.217** (1.24)	0.043 (1.04)	0.140** (1.15)	0.066 (1.07)
Constant	-2.736	-2.565	-2.816	-2.205	-3.152	-2.278	-2.376	-2.683

One of the more serious challenges that social media poses for relationships is the breakdown of communication between each other. Fortunately, that issue has a strong solution and can be addressed in order to strengthen relationships. A highly effective solution is couples' therapy. In couples therapy, partners can openly talk about the dangers of social media use when it isn't used correctly. Through therapy couples can gain knowledge into how social media can negatively impact their relationship and learn strategies to have a healthy way of communicating: face to face. They also form a deeper understanding of each other, which is another way to form a strong relationship with one another.

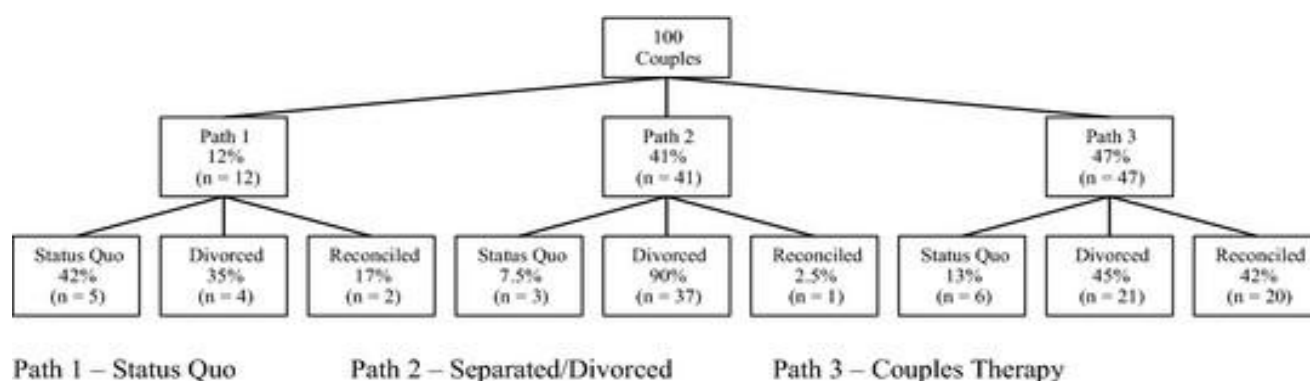
I believe that couples therapy can greatly improve communication between each other, especially since many rely on their smartphones to communicate rather than face to face conversations. This is a major factor that contributes to relationships ending. Through therapy, couples can learn strategies to reduce their time in social media and to focus on real-life connections without any distractions from platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Counseling also reassures couples to participate in more face-to-face conversations. This means solving issues talking rather than texting. Reducing social media use is essential for a healthy relationship to develop a stronger connection with each other. While some may argue that therapy is a waste of time and money to control social media use to have a strong relationship,

research by Stejin and Shouten found that only 2.2 percent of couples experienced a decrease in intimacy. This shows that even if social media can help connect people with friends, an excessive use of it can come at the cost of long-term relationships ending.

Some argue that couples therapy does not help relationships and may even worsen existing problems. In some cases, couples become confused and overwhelmed during therapy, leading them to believe that their relationship is beyond repair. Due to this, they may choose to end their relationship rather than making an attempt to resolve their problems. Dougherty, Harris and Wilde note that when working on resolutions in couples therapy, 41% of participants chose separation and/ or divorce, while only 12% decided to stay together instead of divorcing or continuing couples counseling. This data shows that couples therapy doesn't always lead to big changes, as many relationships remain in doubt. To add on, “this is really sad of the couples that selected a reconciliation attempt in divorce, 36% had reconciled, 6% were seeking reconciliation, 28% had divorce, 17% were in the process of divorcing, and 13% were on hold” (Doherty, Harris, Wilde). These findings add on to the argument that couples therapy may be ineffective, mostly because it doesn't directly address the underlying issues such as addiction to social media that contribute to a strain in the relationship.

With few other solutions in hand, Couples therapy stands out as the most effective approach to addressing social media interference in relationships. Through therapy, couples can work towards working their relationship and recognizing that their lives do not need to revolve around social media. Partners learn that constant use of social media is not necessary and that

putting their relationship as a priority is way more important than digital distractions. Couples counseling provides guidance and support that help partners as individuals to address conflicts caused by an extreme use of social media before their relationship declines further. Doherty, Harris, and Wilde claim that “12% of the couples who go to a treatment stay together” (Doherty, Harris, Wilde), demonstrating that therapy can play a meaningful role in helping couples avoid separation.



In conclusion, couples must proceed with caution when using social media, as excessive use can become harmful to personal relationships. We had built sharing private information online is not wise, since posts can be viewed not only by your close friends but also by strangers who may negatively impact a relationship. Meaningful interaction and face to face communication are way more valuable than maintaining connections through smartphones. The solution proposed-couples therapy- offers a way for partners to address the issues caused by social media use and as a step stool to rebuild their relationship to its strongest. Instead of relying on text messages during conflicts, couples should participate in direct conversations that promote understanding and strengthen emotional connection. By reducing social media use and

prioritizing real life connections, couples can protect their relationships before it is too late to repair the damage.

Citations

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