A Comparative Study of Love Life Satisfaction, Interdependent Happiness, Trust Among Long Distance Relationships and Proximal Relationships

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ABSTRACT: Social connectedness and belonging are inevitable needs of human beings. Long distance relationships have become very common in today's generation due to the increased technological connectedness and hence, it calls for an understanding at a deeper level about the dynamics that support the well-being and happiness in relationships in contrast to Proximal relationships. This study aims to compare and examine the love life satisfaction, interdependent happiness, and trust levels of individuals in long-distance relationships and proximal relationships. Quantitative measures of collecting data such as surveys was used for this study. Satisfaction with love life scale (Neto, 2005), Interdependent Happiness scale (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2014) and Trust within close interpersonal relationships scale (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985) was administered on 201 participants from the age range of 18-25 in long-distance and proximal relationships. T-test was employed as the method of data analysis. The results firstly, benefit relationship experts such as counsellors and therapists in gaining knowledge of current trends in romantic relationships. Secondly, Relationship counselling and interventions techniques and preventative methods also can be devised. Thirdly, programs or initiatives that try to enhance communication and interpersonal abilities amongst young adults can be initiated. Additionally, limitations which occurred during the accomplishment of this research and recommendations for the same were discussed.

KEYWORDS: Love life satisfaction; Trust; Interdependent happiness

I. INTRODUCTION

In Social connectedness and belonging are inevitable needs of human beings. It is a bond that people look forward to maintain and sustain to thrive in this world. **Lee and Robins** *(1995)* defined social connectedness as the experience of belonging to a social relationship or network. Social connectedness can be of various kinds, one of them being romantic relationships. A romantic relationship is defined as mutual, ongoing, and voluntary interactions between two partners that is characterized by specific expressions of affection and intimacy (***Collins, et al., 2009***). Modern technology allows people to communicate over great distances, thus love relationships are no longer limited to being physically close. Significant geographic separation between partners is a defining characteristic of long-distance relationships (LDRs), which are becoming more and more prevalent. In contrast, proximal relationships (PRs), in which partners engage in frequent in-person contacts, continue to be the conventional norm. Trust, interdependent happiness, and love life satisfaction are just a few of the components of relational dynamics that can be impacted by the opportunities and challenges that each form of connection brings. For many reasons, romantic relationships are important and have a big impact on people's personal lives as well as the stability of society. They offer vital emotional support that improves mental health and general life happiness. They also promote personal development by helping partners acquire critical life skills like empathy and communication. The absence of an intimate relationship can elicit negative emotions like loneliness, despair, and envy, whereas the acquisition of an intimate partner can elicit pleasant emotions like happiness and joy (**Apostolou et al., 2019**). Similar findings were obtained by a replication study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic (**Apostolou & Kagialis, 2020**). In a similar line, Van De Velde et al. (2010) discovered that a significant risk factor for men's high levels of depression was being single. **Love Life Satisfaction-** Being satisfied with one's love life in all aspects is called, love life satisfaction. Satisfaction with love is a very important research topic in terms of love because it has relations with better physical and mental health outcomes, and social relationships, (**Graham, 2011; Neto, 2005**). **Interdependent Happiness-** Interdependent happiness is a subjective assessment of whether someone is: In harmony with

others, At peace, and Well-connected with others in terms of relational wellbeing. **Trust-** Trust in a relationship basically refers to the idea that, a person feels the sense of security and loyalty with his/her partner Trust is the grass root level of relationships because it allows you to be vulnerable and open up to the person without having to defensively protect yourself," says Romanoff.

In a study Holtzman et al. (2021) compared the differences between LDRs and GCRs in terms of (1) remote communication patterns (texting, phone calls, and video calls) and (2) the link between relationship satisfaction and remote communication responsiveness and frequency. Significantly higher relationship satisfaction was predicted by greater frequency and responsive texting among LDR participants, but not GCR participants. In contrast, voice call frequency was linked to higher relationship satisfaction in GCRs but not in LDRs. In neither group was there a significant correlation found between relationship happiness and the utilization of video calls.

In another study Taneja & Goyal (2020) intended to determine how young adults' trust, commitment, and level of relationship pleasure are affected by a partner's physical proximity in a romantic relationship. The study's findings showed that there was a significant difference in the levels of trust and commitment, but not in the levels of relationship satisfaction between couples in long-distance and proximally close relationships. Specifically, young adults who participated in long-distance relationships (LDRs) elicited higher levels of commitment, while young adults in PCRs showed lower levels of trust.

Gonzalez (2011) investigated relationship satisfaction, perceived partner commitment and trust, and personal commitment and trust in graduate students' long-distance and close-knit dating relationships. The findings of the study also show that Relationship Satisfaction was strongly predicted by Personal Commitment and Personal Trust, but not by Perceived Partner Commitment. The findings also

showed that compared to those in long-term long-distance relationships, those in short-term long-distance relationships reported higher degrees of personal commitment. The findings showed that there was no correlation between

Mays (2011) investigated partnerships that were Long Distance (LD) and Geographically Close (GC), with an emphasis on varying degrees of investment, commitment, and closeness. The results showed that there was a positive association between closeness and investment size, and that those who were sexually active felt that their relationships were closer.

In another study by Butler & Goodfriend (2015), participants in PRs believed people in PRs had higher levels of satisfaction that those in LDRs. Participants who were in LDRs also believed people in PRs had higher levels of satisfaction than those in LDRs

This research is a comparative study that examined the comparison between individuals in long-distance relationships and proximal relationships on love life satisfaction, interdependent happiness, and trust. Maintaining relationships can be challenging for several reasons, and these challenges can vary depending on the individuals involved and the specific circumstances. Here are some common reasons why long-distance relationships can be difficult physical separation, 5 communication challenges, uncertain future, trust issues, external temptation etc. We will try to study those differences here.

This study intends to contribute to social psychology and counselling psychology. A study comparing long-distance relationships (LDRs) and proximal relationships (those with physical proximity) can contribute valuable insights to the field of psychology in several ways such as understanding relationship dynamics, psychological well-being, trust and commitment, impact on personal growth and contribution to relationship science.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A thorough explanation of the research methodology employed in the current study is covered in this chapter. To answer the research questions, a detailed explanation of the methodology—which includes the research design, participants, questionnaires, collecting data, and statistical analyses is provided. A discussion of ethical guidelines is also discussed

Theoretical Framework-
Love Life Satisfaction- Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads (Veenhoven, 1996). Satisfaction with love life has been developed by Neto (2005) from the original satisfaction with life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), which has been classified as one of the subjective well-being components, it is a cognitive evaluation of individual's life satisfaction with respect to their family, work, health, and self

(Diener et al., 1985). However, the satisfaction with love life focusing on the differentiation between satisfaction with individual's love life in general and the actual enjoyment associated with love, after it has been replaced the word life to the love life in the new five items (Neto, 2005).

Interdependent Happiness- Interdependent happiness (IHS; Hitokoto & Uchida, 2014) is a measure of one's happiness which is based on interpersonal harmony, ordinariness, and quiescence. The concept of ''interdependent happiness,'' a type of happiness that is experienced by achieving interdependent goals that are more prevalent in the interdependent daily life (Kitayama et al. 2009).

Trust- Deutsch (1973) defined trust as "confidence that one will find what is desired from another, rather than what is feared" (p. 149). To earn trust, partners must be perceived as motivated to moderate their own self-interest in order to respond to people's needs at times when others are most relying on their good intentions (Holmes, 1981).

Objectives- 1. To study comparison of Love life satisfaction between long distance relationships and proximal relationships. **2.** To study comparison of Interdependent Happiness between long distance relationships and proximal relationships. **3.** To study comparison of Trust between long distance relationships and proximal relationships.

Hypothesis-
1. There will be a significant difference in the level of love life satisfaction between individuals in proximal relationships and those in long-distance relationships.
2. There will be a significant difference in the level of interdependent happiness between individuals in proximal relationships and those in long-distance relationships.
3. There will be a significant difference in the level of trust between individuals in proximal relationships and those in long-distance relationships.

Research Design- Comparative research design was used to compare Love Life Satisfaction, Interdependent Happiness and Trust among Long-Distance Relationships and Proximal Relationships. This method was used, as it is a comparative study, to justify the intergroup comparisons and well as the direction of the results within both groups of relationships.

Sample- A total of 201 responses were collected for this study. The mean age of the respondents was 21.5 years, ranging from 18 to 25. Out of the 201 participants, 133 were in long distance relationships (66.2%) and 68 were in proximal relationships (33.8%). There were 128 female participants (63.68%) and 73 male participants (36.32%). For the 18-21 age range, we had, 92 participants (45.8%) and 109 participants for 22-25 age range (54.2%). Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were used for this study. The exclusion criteria in this study included individuals who were in a marital relationship and those who have gone through major life changes recently such as breakups. Reason being, marriage dynamics are very different than, "Dating" relationships. Major life incidents would have affected ones mental, social, or physical aspects of life, would have impacted the results of the study.

Tools used for Data Collection-
Satisfaction with love life scale (SWLLS)
Neto's (2005) Satisfaction with Love Life Scale (SWLLS) is a variant of the satisfaction with life scale. The only difference is that the word "love" is added in front of life in every statement. There are 5 items in the scale. The scale ranges from 7 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree).

Interdependent happiness scale (IHS)
Hitokoto & Uchida (2014) IHS was constructed based on the Japanese idea of happiness (Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). Still, every culture can relate to this idea of "interdependently attained happiness.". The test has 9 items. Individuals indicates the degree to which the statements accurately describe them using the scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Trust within close interpersonal relationships Scale (TWCIRS)
(Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985) Using the 7-point scale (-3-Strongly disagree to 3-Strongly agree) the individual must indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements as they relate to someone with whom you have a close interpersonal relationship. The scale includes 3 subscales. Predictability (P), Dependability (D) Faith (F).

Statistical Analysis- To determine if long-distance and proximal relationships differed significantly in terms of trust, interdependent happiness, and love life satisfaction, an independent samples t-test was employed. T-tests are frequently employed in hypothesis testing to ascertain whether two groups are distinct from one another or whether a procedure or treatment genuinely affects the population of interest.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1

Demographics		
AGE	**Percentage**	**Number**
18-21	92	45.8%
22-25	109	54.2%
GENDER	**Percentage**	**Number**
Females	128	63.68%
Males	73	36.32%
RELATIONSHIP TYPES	**Percentage**	**Number**
Long Distance Relationship	133	66.2%
Proximal Relationship	68	33.8%

The above table shows the demographic details of the participants.

As seen in table 1, the sample consisted of, 92 participants (45.8%) belonged to the 18-21 age range and 109 participants (54.2%) belonged to 22-25 age range. 128 females (63.68%) and 73 males (36.32%)

Out of the total 201 participants in this study, 133 participants were in Long-Distance Relationships (66.2%) and 68 participants were in Proximal Relationships (33.8%).

TABLE 2
Descriptive statistics

Variable	Group	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Deviation	Range	Min	Max
Love Life Satisfaction	**LDR**	26.09	26	30	6.61	29	6	35
(SWLLS)	**PR**	27.78	29.5	35	6.76	30	5	35
Interdependent	**LDR**	32.01	33	33	5.52	27	17	44
Happiness Scale (IHS)	**PR**	32.65	32.5	32	5.69	25	19	44
Trust Scale	**LDR**	17.68	19	25	11.67	69	-31	38
(TWCIRS)	**PR**	21.19	21.5	28	9.00	38	3	41

NOTE- LDR- Long-Distance Relationships, PR- Proximal Relationships
As seen in table, Satisfaction with Love Life Scale has a mean of **M = 26.09** and standard deviation of **σ = 6.61 for LDR** and **M= 27.78** and standard deviation of **σ = 6.76** for PR**.** The minimum range is 5 and maximum range is 35. Interdependent Happiness Scale has a mean of **M = 32.01** and

standard deviation of **σ = 5.52** for LDR and **M= 32.65** and standard deviation of **σ = 5.69** for PR**.** The minimum range is 17 and maximum range is 44. Trust Scale has a mean of **M = 17.68** and standard deviation of **σ = 11.67** for LDR and **M = 21.19** and standard deviation of **σ = 9.00** for PR**.** The minimum range is -31 and maximum range is 41.

TABLE 3
t Test Results – Satisfaction with Love Life Scale

Group	Mean	SD	t	df	P	Level of Significance	
LDR			-2.55	132	0.0119	0.05	Significant
	26.09	6.61					
PR	27.78						
		6.76					

The P value of approximately 0.0119, indicates the likelihood of obtaining the observed results, or more extreme results, assuming that the null hypothesis is true. The results are statistically significant as the p-value (0.0119) is less than 0.05. With just a 1.19% probability that the reported outcomes could have happened by chance, this p-value indicates that there is strong evidence against the null hypothesis. Since the absolute value of your calculated t-value ($|-2.55|$) is greater than the critical value 1.978098842, there is a statistically significant difference between the population mean and your sample mean.

TABLE 4
t Test Results – Interdependent Happiness Scale

Group	Mean	SD	t	df	P	Level of Significance	
LDR			-0.76	132	0.4477	0.05	Not
	32.01	5.52					Significant
PR	32.65	5.69					

The p-value you provided, approximately 0.4477, indicates the probability of obtaining the observed results, or more extreme results, assuming that the null hypothesis is true. Since the p-value (0.4477) is greater than 0.05, the result is not statistically significant. his p-value suggests there is a 44.77% chance that the observed results could have occurred by random chance, assuming the null hypothesis is true.

TABLE 5
t Test Results – Trust Scale

Group	Mean	SD	t	df	P	Level of Significance	
LDR	17.68	11.67	-2.36	168	0.0194	0.05	Significant
PR	21.19	9.00					

The p value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the difference between the groups is statistically significant. This p-value suggests there is approximately a 1.94% chance that the observed results could have occurred by random chance, assuming the null hypothesis is true. This low p-value (0.0194) indicates that the observed difference between the groups is statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The results of Love Life Satisfaction between Long-Distance Relationships and Proximal Relationships showed that there is a significant statistical difference between both groups one group has different level of Love Life Satisfaction than the other The negative t value also indicates that, the mean of respondents of Long-Distance Relationships is smaller than the mean of respondents of Proximal Relationships suggesting that, the overall performance of individuals in Proximal Relationships is better than those in Long-Distance Relationships. Vowels and Victoria Milne conducted a study that revealed couples in long-distance relationships (LDRs) have poorer relationship satisfaction than those in proximate relationships. (Vowels & Milne, 2018). Interdependent Happiness between Long-Distance Relationships and Proximal Relationships showed that, there is no significant statistical difference between both groups and the difference is not large enough to consider it as

International Journal of Humanities Social Science and Management (IJHSSM)
Volume 5, Issue 1, Jan.-Feb., 2025, pp: 163-169   ISSN: 3048-6874
www.ijhssm.org

statistically significant. Hence, there is not a meaningful difference amongst these groups. The mean of respondents of Long-Distance is smaller than the mean of respondents of Proximal Relationships by a very minimal margin, suggesting that, there is no overall difference in levels of Interdependent Happiness between these groups. A study conducted by Holtzman et al. (2021), trying to link communication patterns and relationship satisfaction and happiness showed that neither LDR nor GCR groups had a significant correlation found between relationship happiness and the utilization of video calls. Trust between Long-Distance Relationships and Proximal Relationships showed

that there is a significant statistical difference between both groups. It suggests that, one group has different levels of trust than the other. The mean of respondents of Long-Distance Relationships is smaller than the mean of respondents of Proximal Relationships suggesting that, the overall performance of individuals in Proximal Relationships is better than those in Long-Distance Relationships. Therefore, Trust is higher in individuals in PR than LDR. In a study conducted by, Gonzalez (2011), the results stated that individuals in short-term relationships (PRs) reported higher levels of commitment than those in long-term relationships.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study consisted of 201 participants from the age range of 18-25. The results of the present study reported that the first hypothesis, that is, there will be a significant difference in the level of love life satisfaction between individuals in proximal relationships and those in long-distance relationships, was significant. The t value was greater than the critical t value, indicating difference in the levels of Love Life Satisfaction between both groups. Proximal-distance relationships had a better average outcome than Long-distance relationships. The second hypothesis that, there will be a significant difference in the level of interdependent happiness between individuals in proximal relationships and those in long-distance relationships, was not significant. The t value was smaller than the critical t value, indicating that there is no statistical difference between the results of both the groups. The third hypothesis that, there will be a significant difference in the level of trust between individuals in proximal relationships and those in long-distance relationships, was significant. The t value -was greater than the critical t value, indicating difference in the levels of trust between both groups. Proximal-distance relationships had a better average outcome than Long-distance relationships.

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