

# Conflict Resolution Strategies, Relationship Satisfaction, and Sexual Satisfaction among Long Distance Couples: The Influence of Marital Status

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the differences in conflict resolution strategies, relationship satisfaction, and sexual satisfaction between married and unmarried long - distance couples. A descriptive research design was employed, and a sample of 219 adults from Kerala, India, participated in the study. The results revealed that unmarried long - distance couples engage in more effective conflict resolution strategies, specifically positive problem - solving, compared to their married counterparts. However, no significant differences were found in relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction between the two groups. Demographic variables, such as gender and birth order, were found to be significant predictors of relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction. The study's findings have implications for the development of tailored interventions that consider individual backgrounds and relational contexts, encouraging further exploration of the dynamics influencing long - distance relationships. The results can inform the creation of specialized therapies and support services for long - distance couples, enhancing their well - being and reducing the risk of breakup.*

**Keywords:** Long - distance relationships, Sexual satisfaction, Relationship satisfaction, Conflict resolution strategies, Marital Status

## 1. Introduction

“Love knows no distance; it hath no continent; its eyes are for the stars” (Parker, 1912).

This line by Gilbert Parker illustrates the true nature of love and its power to unite people's hearts over great distances and overcome physical obstacles. This expression perfectly shows how a physical separation does not lessen a couple's love for one another.

Romantic relationships are significant and can lead to either pleasure and joy or dysfunction and suffering. Long - distance relationships (LDRs) account for a significant and increasing number of romantic relationships in today's society. The Oxford Dictionary defines a longdistance relationship (LDR) as "a romantic relationship is that between two people who live far apart and can't meet frequently" (Duck, 2007; Weiner et al., 2003). The nature of many intimate relationships is changing as more and more couples pursue long - distance relationships (LDRs). This typically happens when one spouse pursues educational or professional opportunities (Pistole, Roberts, & Chapman, 2010). In the US, over one million adult couples and 40% of college students report being in long - term relationships (LDRs) (Rhodes, 2002; Merolla, 2010). Although long - distance relationships (LDRs) are common, especially among college students (Jenkins, Paolucci, & Rushing, 1994; Guldner, 1996), many important aspects of these relationships are still unknown.

Kerala has the highest number of migrants and income from West Asia among Indian states and union territories (Rajan, 2004). Mass migration from Kerala to other Indian states and

countries had a significant impact on many areas of their lives, which includes their romantic relationships. Migration to the Gulf impacts almost every family in Kerala. Although a large proportion of Kerala residents leave their homes and pursue long - distance relationships, only a limited amount of research has been conducted in this area.

Several studies have examined the dynamics of long - distance relationships, but it remains unclear how marital status affects these dynamics. Some studies have shown that in romantic partnerships, married people experience stronger relationship problems than single adults (Wang, Zhao, & Li Lei, 2019). Likewise, understanding how marital status interacts with multiple aspects of LDR may help explain whether long - distance couples may experience different problems and coping mechanisms than those in long - distance relationships, whether married or not.

In any relationship, conflict is inevitable because it arises from different expectations, demands and perspectives. The function, quality, and strength of romantic relationships depend on how the parties resolve conflicts (Gottman, 1994). In long - distance relationships (LDR), when partners are geographically separated, and face challenges in maintaining intimacy and connection across geographical boundaries, Effective conflict resolution breakthrough becomes especially important. Stafford (2005, 2010) states that LDR couples minimize conflict to maximize their time together. However, this does not mean that LDR couples do not encounter relationship problems. Conflict in long - distance relationships can arise from various factors, including loneliness, your partner's absence from daily life, financial concerns, vacation schedules, work commitments, and

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relationship maintenance (Pistole, Roberts, & Chapman, 2010; Magnuson & Norem, 1999). To create strategies that promote communication, understanding, and resolution and ultimately increase the resilience and sustainability of these relationships, one must have a deep knowledge of the factors that affect conflict resolution in long - distance relationships and how marital status affects them.

Relationship satisfaction is a subjective relationship evaluation (Keizer, 2014). According to a meta - analysis of 93 studies (Proulx et al., 2007), achieving relationship satisfaction in the context of long - distance relationships (LDR), in which partners are physically separated, is an essential thing for couples to overcome because there is difficulty in maintaining intimacy and connection over a distance. Additionally, studying the impact of marital status on relationship satisfaction among estranged couples would provide an additional layer of knowledge to the field.

Sexual satisfaction is not only related to relationship satisfaction but also positively related to other indicators of relationship quality, such as love (Aron & Henkemeyer, 1995; Grote & Frieze, 1998; Sprecher and Regan, 1998). However, research indicates that some couples may feel overall relationship satisfaction but sexual dissatisfaction and vice versa (Edwards & Booth, 1994; Kaplan, 1974). Therefore, it is necessary to study the sexual satisfaction of LDR couples separately.

Sexual satisfaction is often defined as a person's subjective emotional evaluation of their relationship with their partner (Bloom, 2015). According to Lawrance and Byers (1995, p.268), sexual pleasure can be further defined as "an affective response that comes from one's subjective evaluation of the good and bad qualities related to one's sexual relationship. " Minimal physical interaction may pose particular challenges for LDR partners in meeting their sexual needs (Rhodes, 2002).

## 2. Review of Literature

According to Holt - Lunstad et al. (2008), married people report higher levels of life satisfaction than unmarried people. This implies that married people have a higher chance of leading fulfilling lives than unmarried individuals (Yoder., and Du Bois, 2020.) While much research has been conducted on marital status and satisfaction within proximal relationships (PR), less is known about these associations in LDR. According to research on interpersonal connections, long - distance relationships (LDRs) are those in which partners want to maintain a close relationship but see their communication options as limited by geographic factors (Stafford, 2005, p.7). It should be emphasized that although romantic partners are the focus of many studies and theories (Aylor, 2003; Guldner & Swensen, 1995; Maguire & Kinney, 2010; Sahlstein, 2004), this broad term also includes interpersonal connections between friends and family (Stafford, 2005, p.5). In long - distance relationships, apart from the evident signs of distance, some study suggests that attitudes and beliefs can have significant effects. According to Van Horn et al. (1997), the best predictors of LDR and GCR breakup were poorer ratings of relationship satisfaction, a subjective measure. Studies on long - distance relationships

need to consider not just the couple's physical distance (a more objective factor) but also their views of that distance and their satisfaction levels with the relationship's predicted future.

LDRs contribute to conflict due to loneliness, absence from a partner's everyday life, financial issues, holiday plans, and relationship maintenance (Magnuson & Norem, 1999; Pistole et al., 2010). Previous research has focused on the reasons for geographic separations, stressors, and coping methods in LDRs, but studies have yet to examine how conflicts are resolved (Bassick et al., 2015). Extending conflict management to the LDR setting will help to broaden the scope of study on interpersonal disputes and improve knowledge of particular LDR dynamics.

Relationship satisfaction and sexual pleasure are strongly associated, making sexual satisfaction an essential indicator of sexual health. (Patrícia, 2013). Higher levels of sexual satisfaction have been associated with more often engaging in these acts when desired (Schwartz & Young, 2009; Shaughnessy & Byers, 2014; Yucel & Gassanoz, 2010). Given the limitations that long - distance couples have in freely engaging in desired sexual activities due to physical separation, there is an urgent need to investigate how these constraints impact sexual satisfaction, particularly in the context of marital status.

Of all the Indian states and union territories, Kerala has the highest immigrant population and highest income from West Asia (Rajan, 2004). Kerala's large - scale migration to other Indian states and nations has a significant impact on many parts of their lives, including their romantic relationships. Even though a considerable proportion of Kerala citizens relocate and engage in long - distance relationships, just a few research have been undertaken in this field.

## 3. Need of the Study

As the number of long - distance relationships increases, more research examines how people in long - distance relationships (LDRs) manage their relationships despite physical separation (Goldsmith & Byers, 2018). The importance of this research comes from its potential to provide valuable insights into academic knowledge and practical applications, thereby filling essential gaps in our understanding of long - distance relationships (LDR) and the influence of marital status in this context.

While extensive research has been conducted on long - distance relationships, a novel aspect that has received scant attention is the role of marital status. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring how marital status in long - distance relationships influences crucial factors such as conflict resolution techniques, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction. Doing so not only enriches our understanding of LDRs but also provides a fresh perspective for researchers and scholars to enhance existing theories and models.

This study may be helpful to couples using couples therapy in long - distance relationships by providing insight into strategies for effective conflict resolution and maintaining satisfaction. Therapists working with long - distance couple

may also find it helpful to understand how the dynamics of these relationships are affected by the client's marital status. By highlighting significant differences in the needs and motivations of married and unmarried couples in LDR, these findings may help therapists better target therapies and treatment for each group's specific difficulties.

Understanding how a long - distance relationship impacts sexual satisfaction, conflict resolution strategies, and overall relationship satisfaction can give couples the knowledge they need to overcome obstacles and strengthen their relationship. Studies have shown a strong link between sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction, especially in romantic relationships (Vowels & Mark, 2020). Understanding the impact of marital status on sexual satisfaction in long - distance relationships is essential to addressing the larger issue of relationship quality and happiness.

Although a large number of people from Kerala migrate to other states and countries (Rajan, 2004) and maintain long - distance relationships with their partners, more research needs to be done there. Accordingly, our study has the potential to reduce this gap.

## 4. Method

### 4.1 Participants

The study aimed to recruit a sample of adults living in Kerala who were actively involved in long - distance relationships, aged 18 to 35. Purposive sampling was employed to gather data from both married and unmarried individuals in long - distance relationships. A minimum sample size of 176 participants was planned for the research, determined using G\*Power analysis. We successfully recruited a total of 219 participants. Among these participants, 84 were married (38.3%), and 135 were unmarried (61.7%). Inclusion criteria for participants included individuals currently in a long - distance relationship experiencing physical separation between 1 month to 1 year, individuals aged between 18 - 35 years, and participants who willingly consented to participate in the study.

### 4.2 Procedure

Once informed consent was acquired from the subjects, questionnaires were utilized for data collection. Separation. Data were collected by sending Google Forms via WhatsApp and other social media platforms, allowing participants to fill out the questionnaires conveniently. Geographic separation was defined as partners living in different cities or countries. Participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria or fell under the exclusion criteria were not allowed to participate. Exclusion criteria included individuals not currently in a long - distance relationship or who did not meet the criteria for physical separation, individuals dealing with severe mental health conditions, and participants who were currently seeking formal relationship therapy, as therapeutic interventions may have influenced their experiences.

### 4.3 Measures

**The Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI).** Individuals' conflict management skills in romantic relationships are to be measured using the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI; Kurdek, 1994). According to Kurdek (1994), there are four various types of conflict resolution techniques that could be measured using the 16 - item CRSI self - rating: "Positive problem solving (e. g., focusing on the problem at hand), conflict engagement (e. g., exploding and getting out of control), withdrawal (e. g., reaching a limit and refusing to talk any further), and compliance (e. g., giving in with little attempt to present my side of the story)." Higher scores imply a tendency to use these conflict resolution techniques more frequently while disagreeing with a significant other. A 5 - point Likert - type scale was used for participant response (1 = never to 5 = always). The four categories of conflict management methods had internal consistency reliability values .89 (positive problem - solving), .89 (conflict engagement), .86 (withdrawal), and .88 (compliance) (Kurdek 1994). Significant relationships between the CRSI and the Communication Patterns Questionnaire revealed convergent validity (Heavey et al. 1993; p\01).

**Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS).** Measurement of overall relationship satisfaction is done with the Relationship Assessment Scale ("RAS"). All individuals in an intimate relationship, whether married, living together, engaged, or just dating, can use the RAS. There are seven questions on this test. Research has demonstrated that the scale is connected with measures of love, marital happiness, sexual attitudes, honesty, commitment, and participation in a relationship. Its brevity further enhances its usefulness in clinical settings. Each participant was provided with a 5 - point Likert - type scale to answer on (1 being strongly disagreed and 5 being strongly agreed). Higher scores reflected greater relationship satisfaction. Significant correlations with the Dyadic Assessment Scale (Dinkel and Balck 2005) provided evidence of convergent validity. The RAS has shown predictive validity for the stability of relationships in couples (Vaughn and Baier 1999).

**The Sexual Satisfaction Index (SSI).** The present relationship's level of sexual satisfaction is to be assessed using the Sexual Satisfaction Index. Simply adding together all of the responses on each item will give you the SSI's sum score. All item point values are given for scoring purposes; however, respondents filling out the scale are not shown these point values. The SSI's total score falls between 0 and 36. Higher total scores indicate higher levels of sexual satisfaction. Cronbach's Alpha - .86 (Astrid et al. et al., 2024)

## 5. Results

### Normality Test Results

The normality tests indicated that the data did not meet the normality assumption for most subscales (see Table 1). Both the Kolmogorov - Smirnov and Shapiro - Wilk tests revealed significant p - values (<.001) for Conflict Engagement, Withdrawal, Compliance, and Relationship Assessment subscales across both groups. The Positive Problem Solving subscale showed marginal significance (p <.05) for both

groups, while the Sexual Satisfaction Scale was non-significant for married participants ( $p = .200$ ) and significant for unmarried participants ( $p < .05$ ). These findings suggest that non-parametric tests are more appropriate for analyzing differences between the two marital statuses.

**Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were conducted to assess the conflict resolution strategies and relationship satisfaction among married and unmarried couples. The results (Table 2) indicated that unmarried participants ( $N = 135$ ) exhibited generally higher mean scores across various

**Table 1: Tests of Normality**

Kolmogorov - Smirnov <sup>a</sup>					Shapiro - Wilk		
	Marital Status	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Conflict engagement subscale	Unmarried	.123	135	<.001	.922	135	<.001
	Married	.178	84	<.001	.901	84	<.001
Positive Problem - Solving Subscale	Unmarried	.084	135	.021	.970	135	.004
	Married	.102	84	.030	.968	84	.033
Withdrawal subscale	Unmarried	.132	135	<.001	.919	135	<.001
	Married	.167	84	<.001	.882	84	<.001
Compliance subscale	Unmarried	.080	135	.036	.962	135	<.001
	Married	.111	84	.012	.944	84	.001
Relationship Assessment Scale	Unmarried	.132	135	<.001	.903	135	<.001
	Married	.155	84	<.001	.910	84	<.001
Sexual Satisfaction Scale	Unmarried	.084	135	.020	.980	135	.044
	Married	.072	84	.200*	.989	84	.669

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

subscales, including conflict engagement, positive problem solving, withdrawal, compliance, relationship assessment, and sexual satisfaction. In contrast, married participants ( $N = 84$ ) demonstrated lower mean scores across most subscales, suggesting differing dynamics in conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction between the two groups.

**Mann - Whitney U Test for Relationship Satisfaction**

For the Relationship Satisfaction Mann - Whitney U test was conducted to compare the scores between unmarried ( $N = 135$ ) and married participants ( $N = 84$ ). The results indicated no significant difference between the two groups, as the Mann - Whitney U value was 5624.500,  $Z = -0.100$  ( $p$ -value=.920.) This suggests that there was no statistically significant difference in relationship satisfaction scores between married and unmarried individuals (see Table 3).

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

Marital Status		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Unmarried	Conflict engagement subscale	135	38.15	90.511	50.68274	10.298749
	Positive Problem-Solving Subscale	135	21.979	67.101	51.9559	9.255899
	Withdrawal subscale	135	38.519	76.091	50.14341	9.730578
	Compliance subscale	135	35.457	78.967	50.34702	10.090611
	Relationship Assessment Scale	135	21.517	61.473	49.89614	10.205692
	Sexual Satisfaction Scale	135	22.432	71.702	50.75599	10.235231
	Valid N (listwise)	135				
Married	Conflict engagement subscale	84	38.15	70.876	48.90274	9.457153
	Positive Problem-Solving Subscale	84	21.979	67.101	46.85658	10.397832
	Withdrawal subscale	84	38.519	76.091	49.76952	10.473769
	Compliance subscale	84	35.457	70.265	49.44229	9.887121
	Relationship Assessment Scale	84	26.127	61.473	50.16691	9.718496
	Sexual Satisfaction Scale	84	20.673	71.702	48.78502	9.54445
	Valid N (listwise)	84				

**Table 3: Mann - Whitney U Test for Relationship Satisfaction**

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	Relationship Assessment Scale
Mann - Whitney U	5624.500
Wilcoxon W	14804.500
Z	-.100
Asymp. Sig. (2 - tailed)	.920

a. Grouping Variable: Marital Status

Wilcoxon W	8689.500
Z	-1.210

Asymp. Sig. (2 - tailed).226

a. Grouping Variable: Marital Status

**Mann - Whitney U Test for Sexual Satisfaction**

The Mann - Whitney U test was conducted to assess the differences in sexual satisfaction between unmarried and married participants. The test results indicated that the difference in sexual satisfaction levels was not statistically significant,  $U = 5119.500$ ,  $Z = -1.210$ ,  $p = .226$ . (Table 4). Thus, there is no significant difference in sexual satisfaction levels between unmarried and married individuals.

**Table 4: Mann - Whitney U Test for Sexual Satisfaction**

	Sexual Satisfaction Scale
Mann - Whitney U	5119.500

**Mann - Whitney U Test for Conflict Resolution Strategies**

A Mann - Whitney U test was conducted to evaluate differences in conflict resolution strategies between unmarried and married participants across several subscales. The results indicated no significant difference in the Conflict Engagement Subscale (U = 5169.00, Z = 1.107, p = .268) and the Withdrawal Subscale (U = 5423.00, Z = - 0.545, p = .585). Similarly, the Compliance Subscale showed no significant difference (U = 5446.50, Z = - 0.493, p = .622). However, a significant difference was found in the Positive Problem Solving Subscale (U = 4087.00, Z = - 3.486, p < .001), indicating that unmarried participants scored higher in this area. These findings highlight that while most conflict resolution strategies do not differ significantly based on marital status, unmarried individuals exhibit a notable tendency to engage in more effective positive problem - solving approaches (See table 5.1 and 5.2).

**Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis**

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the significance of various demographic variables such as age, gender, number of siblings, birth order and type of family in predicting the Relationship Assessment Scale T scores. The results of the regression analysis are summarized in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1:** Results of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of the Factors Significantly Contributing to Relationship Satisfaction

	Beta coefficient	Std. error	Contributed R <sup>2</sup>	't' - value
Gender	4.014	1.346	0.053	2.982***

Order of birth 1.269 0.622 0.045 2.041\*

Overall Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.045

Overall F - ratio = 6.100; P < 0.003

\*\*\*P < 0.001; \*\*P < 0.05

**Table 6.2:** Results of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of the Factors Significantly Contributing to Sexual Satisfaction

	Beta coefficient	Std. error	Contributed R <sup>2</sup>	't' - value	Sig.
Gender	5.540	1.324	0.075	4.185	<.001

Order of birth 1.860 0.601 0.039 3.093 0.002

Overall Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.106

Overall F - ratio = 6.100; P < 0.003

From Table 6.1., it is evident that gender and order of birth emerged as significant predictors of the Relationship Assessment Scale T scores. The two predictors collectively contributed to 5.3% of the variance in the relationship assessment scores, which is a statistically significant finding (F = 6.100; P < 0.003). Individually, gender significantly predicted the T scores with a contribution of 5.3% (t = 2.982; P < 0.001). The order of birth also contributed to the model, with a contribution of 4.5% (t = 2.041; P < 0.05), indicating that the order of birth may play a role in shaping relationship satisfaction.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the significance of various demographic variables such as age, gender, number of siblings, birth order and type of family in predicting Sexual Satisfaction (See Table 6.2).

The results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis, as shown in Table No.7, indicate significant factors contributing to the Sexual Satisfaction Scale. The analysis identifies gender as a prominent factor, with a beta coefficient of 5.540. This strong positive association suggests that gender plays a critical role in determining sexual satisfaction levels. The standard error associated with this coefficient is 1.324, and the contribution to the variance explained (R<sup>2</sup>) is 7.5%. The t - value for this factor is 4.185, which is statistically significant at P < 0.001, further underscoring the importance of gender in influencing sexual satisfaction.

In addition to gender, the order of birth is also highlighted as a significant predictor in this analysis. The beta coefficient for this variable is 1.860, indicating a positive relationship with sexual satisfaction. The standard error for this factor is 0.601, contributing an additional 3.9% to the explained variance (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.039). The t - value for the order of birth is 3.093, which is statistically significant at P = 0.002. This result implies that the position of an individual within their siblings significantly influences their sexual satisfaction levels.

The overall model's adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is 0.106, meaning that these two factors together explain 10.6% of the variance in sexual satisfaction. The overall F - ratio for the model is 18.57, which is significant at P < 0.001, indicating that the model provides a good fit for the data. In conclusion, the analysis reveals that both gender and order of birth are significant predictors of sexual satisfaction, with gender being the more substantial predictor. Understanding these dynamics can help inform interventions aimed at improving sexual health and satisfaction among individuals.

**6. Discussion**

This study examined differences in conflict resolution strategies, relationship satisfaction, and sexual satisfaction between married and unmarried long - distance couples. The normality tests revealed that most subscales did not conform to normal distribution, justifying the use of non - parametric tests. Descriptive statistics showed that unmarried participants had higher mean scores in Positive Problem Solving subscale of conflict resolution strategies, suggesting that they might employ more proactive and constructive strategies compared to married couples, who exhibited lower scores potentially due to established patterns in their relationships.

The Mann - Whitney U tests indicated no significant differences in relationship satisfaction or sexual satisfaction between the two groups. This challenges the notion that marriage inherently leads to greater fulfillment in these areas. However, unmarried participants did score higher in the Positive Problem - Solving subscale, highlighting their tendency toward constructive dialogue and collaborative solutions when facing challenges related to distance.

Additionally, stepwise multiple regression analyses showed that gender significantly predicted relationship and sexual satisfaction, while birth order also influenced these outcomes. This underscores the importance of considering demographic factors when assessing relationship dynamics.

In conclusion, the study reveals that unmarried long - distance couples engage in more effective conflict resolution strategies compared to their married counterparts, with no significant differences in overall satisfaction levels. These findings suggest the need for tailored interventions that consider individual backgrounds and relational contexts, encouraging further exploration of the dynamics influencing long - distance relationships.

## 7. Limitations

Individuals could experience societal pressure to satisfy specific requirements for sexual satisfaction. This pressure may cause individuals to respond in a way that conforms to social norms rather than openly sharing their true thoughts and feelings.

The study has a lower number of married participants compared to unmarried ones, which may limit the generalizability of findings related to marital dynamics. This difference might influence how we understand conflict resolution strategies and relationship satisfaction among married couples.

Moreover, the frequency of interaction might impact satisfaction levels; couples who meet monthly may differ in satisfaction levels compared to those who meet annually. These factors highlight the need to consider relationship dynamics when assessing satisfaction across different marital statuses.

Another limitation is the possibility that various mediating factors, such as family responsibilities, childcare, and financial obligations, may influence the results. These factors could impact relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, and conflict resolution, potentially affecting the study's findings.

## 8. Social Implications

The observation that unmarried couples employ more effective conflict resolution strategies than married couples suggests the need for relationship education programs to equip all couples with essential communication skills. This insight challenges the societal belief that marriage inherently leads to greater fulfillment, highlighting that satisfaction can exist in both married and unmarried partnerships.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of tailored support for long - distance couples, particularly those who are unmarried. Since unmarried individuals exhibited a greater tendency toward positive problem - solving, practitioners can leverage these strategies to foster better relational outcomes. Developing resources focused on enhancing conflict resolution skills can significantly benefit couples facing the unique challenges of distance.

Additionally, the finding that gender significantly predicts relationship and sexual satisfaction underscores the need to consider demographic factors in relationship dynamics. This awareness can guide future research and discussions around gender equality, promoting healthier dynamics in both married and unmarried couples.

Overall, the insights from this study can serve as a foundation for educational programs aimed at long - distance couples, focusing on effective communication and maintaining intimacy despite physical separation. Ultimately, the findings encourage a deeper understanding of LDRs and the development of resources to support couples in navigating their experiences.

## 9. Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations of this study were carefully addressed to ensure the integrity of the research process. Participants were provided with comprehensive information about the research's purpose, expected duration, and procedures to obtain their informed consent. They were informed of their right to decline participation and withdraw from the study at any time, along with any consequences that might arise from their decision. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study, with precautions in place to protect potential participants from any negative outcomes resulting from their decision to participate or not, regardless of whether they were clients, students, or subordinates. The study was conducted without any form of deception involving the participants. Relevant information regarding the objectives, outcomes, and conclusions of the research was communicated to participants, and efforts were made to clarify any misconceptions they may have had. Moreover, the study ensured that no portions of other individuals' work or data were presented as original creations, and all information was accurately represented without falsification. The researchers took full responsibility and credit for their contributions, ensuring appropriate authorship recognition for all individuals involved in the study.

### Consent to participate

The informed consent form ensured that participants were fully aware of their involvement in the research. Consent was obtained prior to participation, and participants were thoroughly briefed on the research questions and objectives. This process aimed to foster transparency and trust, allowing individuals to make an informed decision about their participation. Participants were informed of their rights, including the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any repercussions. The emphasis on informed consent highlighted the study's commitment to ethical research practices, prioritizing the autonomy and well - being of the participants.

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