

Relationship between Access to Digital Technologies and Marital Communication among Married Individuals in Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central, Nairobi City County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Digital technologies are a defining feature of social life throughout the world, with implications on human interaction and relationship communication. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between digital technologies and marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study adopted cross-sectional research design. The target population was 800 married individuals from selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County. Stratified sampling method was used to collect data from a sample size of 260 married individuals. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was used to undertake cross-tabulation analysis, chi-square tests, percentage distributions, and mean and standard deviation scores. Descriptive analysis revealed that majority (66.1%) of the respondents had high access to digital technologies while 18.3% had moderate access and only 15.6% had low access. In terms of communication effectiveness, 73.5% recorded poor marital communication while 26.5% of the respondents had effective marital communication. Cross-tabulation analysis showed that poor marital communication was most prevalent among respondents with high access to digital technologies. Chi-square test showed a statistically significant association between access to digital technologies and marital communication, $\chi^2 (2) = 13.905, p < .05$. A conclusion was drawn that high access to digital technology is linked to elevated communication problems among married individuals. The study recommends that people in marital relationships should intentionally regulate their access of digital technology to safeguard marital communication. Marriage and family therapists should integrate digital technology assessment into their routine couple therapy.

Keywords: Digital Technologies, Access, Marital Communication, Churches, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has increasingly become a common feature of social life throughout the world, influencing how humans interact and navigate relationships. The proliferation of smartphones, laptops, the internet, and social media continues to have profound impact on communication (Dudar et al., 2021). Access to digital technology means that internet connectivity, digital devices, and platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram are available and usable (Lapierre & Custer, 2021). The presence of these tools and the ability to use them independently increases changes of engagement, but also introduces risks of distraction and miscommunication if not properly managed (Aljasir, 2022; Allen, 2024). Access to digital technology therefore serves as a potential factor underlining the quality of communication between married couples (Vaterlaus et al., 2020). Digital environments often challenge self-control by simultaneously enabling social connections or access to information, while exposing users to immediate and potentially distracting gratifications (Bennett et al., 2025).

Marital communication is one of the pillars of relationship stability and satisfaction ((Zihad et al., 2021). Effective marital communication is characterized by clarity, emotional depth, and mutual responsiveness between couples (Zihad et al., 2021). It communication occurs in environments where partners actively listen, express thoughts and emotions clearly, and avoid harmful language, whether interactions take place online or offline (Apostu, 2021). Such communication fosters mutual understanding and emotional safety, both of which can be enhanced or undermined by how digital technologies are accessed, used, and regulated (Booth et al.,

2025). As digital interactions increasingly intersect with face-to-face communication, understanding its link to marital dynamics has become a critical area of scholarly inquiry. Empirical evidence across the world underscore both the benefits and challenges of digital technology in marital relationships. In the Middle East, studies indicate that while access to digital technologies enhance convenience and connectivity, they are also associated with diminished emotional depth and weakened family values. In Turkey, Tammissalo and Rotkirch (2022) observed that increased reliance on digital communication can disrupt interpersonal engagement and emotional connection within families. Similarly, in Jordan, Alberto (2022) reported that although social networking platforms facilitate connection, they can interfere with meaningful marital communication and contribute to the erosion of family values.

Within the African context, the rapid expansion of mobile technologies and internet penetration has transformed communication patterns among married individuals, yet it has also introduced new relational challenges (Booth et al., 2021; Bukhari et al., 2024). Studies in Sub-Saharan Africa suggest that increased access to smartphones and social media has enhanced connectivity but has also been linked to distractions, reduced face-to-face interaction, and emerging conflicts in marital relationships. These findings underscore a growing concern that unregulated access to technology may compromise the quality of spousal interactions. Despite these developments, there remains limited scholarly focus on how access to digital technologies specifically relate to marital communication within faith-based settings, which play a central role in shaping family life and values across many African societies (Demircioğlu & Göncü Köse, 2021).

In Kenya, concerns have been raised about the potential of digital communication access to disrupt marital communication through distraction, reduced emotional presence, and misaligned usage patterns. Although studies have increasingly examined digital technology in marital contexts, the evidence remains fragmented and insufficiently focused on communication processes. For instance, prior research has explored social media engagement patterns (Kimeto, 2016), mobile device use and marital satisfaction (Kagwiria, 2022), and the broader effects of digital communication on family relationships (Kyalo, 2024). Other more recent studies link specific platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook to outcomes like spousal abuse and marital stability (Mbula et al., 2025; Mwarari et al., 2025). However, these studies are largely platform-specific and outcome-oriented, with limited focus on how access to digital technologies affect the effectiveness of marital communication. This study therefore sought to examine the relationship between access to digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi City County, Kenya, with a view to contribute process-oriented perspectives to the growing body of knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The general literature stream converge on the idea that digital technology constitutes an integrated system of devices and platforms that mediate modern communication (Dudar et al., 2021; Krönke (2020). However, Krönke (2020) and Afrobarometer (2022) provide complementary but somewhat contrasting perspectives on digital access in Africa. While Krönke (2020) highlights the transformative potential of access to smartphones and computers, Afrobarometer (2022) underscores the uneven distribution of such access, noting that basic phone ownership is more widespread than smartphone use. The two studies agree that digital access is expanding, but diverge on the extent to which this access is sufficiently advanced to support meaningful digital interaction. This disparity is an important point to note, because it suggests that not all forms of access are associated with communication quality. This is potentially due to variations conceptual focus since the study by Krönke (2020) discussed access to digital technologies within the broader discourse on digital divide while Afrobarometer (2022) study undertook a comparative analysis of penetration of digital technologies across various regions in Africa.

Studies on social media usage globally converge on the dominance of platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram in everyday communication. Obeng et al. (2023) and Didiugwu et al. (2015) agree that these platforms enhance communication and support among married individuals. However, their findings contrast with Abu et al. (2021), who associate similar platforms with jealousy and conflict. This divergence suggests that the effects of access depend on contextual and behavioral factors. Further, Sironi and Kashyap (2021) provide evidence that internet access facilitates relationship formation, a finding that aligns with Dudar et al. (2021) on

the enabling role of digital technologies in interpersonal connection. However, their findings diverge from Abu et al. (2021), who report that access to digital platforms may also generate conflict through jealousy and mistrust. This contrast underscores the dual nature of digital access as both a facilitator and a disruptor of relationships. This is a significant tension to highlight as it paints digital technologies as amoral, and shifts responsibility to the user. This may be explained by cultural variations in relationship norms. For instance, the research by Obeng et al. (2023) was conducted in Ghana which is an African country where relationship norms differ markedly from the study by Dudar et al. (2021) in Ukraine, which is a European country and thus comparatively more individualistic.

Zhou et al. (2023) and Gomes et al. (2021) both acknowledge the dual role of digital technology, agreeing that it can enhance communication when used intentionally but undermine intimacy when excessive or poorly regulated. Their findings align with Chadha et al. (2025), who links social media addiction to reduced marital communication. However, these studies diverge in their primary focus, with Zhou et al. (2023) emphasizing mental health, Gomes et al. (2021) focusing on marital satisfaction, and Chadha et al. (2025) examining life satisfaction. For the present study, these works are important in highlighting outcomes of digital use, yet they overlook communication as a central construct, indicating a conceptual gap. Sultana and Bukhari (2024) and Oluchukwu (2021) both emphasize the negative implications of digital media, particularly in fueling mistrust, conflict, and reduced intimacy. These perspectives are in line with Mbula et al. (2025), who linked WhatsApp use to spousal abuse, but contrast with Obeng et al. (2023), who highlights positive communication outcomes. This disagreement underscores the inconclusiveness of research on the nexus between digital technologies and relationship outcomes. These differences can be attributed to differences in measuring marital communication across studies. Oluchukwu's (2021) study for instance studied access to social media in relation to marital conflict while Mbula et al. (2025) focused on the influence of WhatsApp use on spousal abuse.

Within Africa, Obeng et al. (2023) and Wamuyu (2019) both confirm widespread access to social media, particularly via smartphones. For instance, in the Kenyan context, Kharono et al. (2021) aligns with Afrobarometer (2022) in confirming widespread mobile phone penetration, but extends the discussion by demonstrating high levels of smartphone-based internet usage. This finding supports Krönke's (2020) assertion about the growing role of digital access in communication. However, Kharono et al. (2021) diverges from studies like Abu et al. (2021), which link access to relational tensions, by portraying digital access largely as an enabler of communication without interrogating its negative implications. This makes the study useful in establishing the prevalence of access in Kenya, but its failure to connect access with marital communication dynamics highlights a conceptual gap. Wathigo (2019) provided a closer link to marital dynamics by demonstrating a negative correlation between social media use during conversations and marital communication. This finding agrees with Abu et al. (2021) and Mbula et al. (2025), who associate digital engagement with relational strain. However, it contradicts Obeng et al. (2023), who report improved communication through social media. This divergence highlights the complexity of digital technology's role in marriage. These inconsistencies may be due to methodological differences in the studies. Mbula et al.'s (2025) research adopted a mixed-methods study design, combining survey data from 263 respondents with insights from key informant semi-structured interviews while the research by Abu et al. (2021) utilized a literature review methodology.

Other studies in Kenya such as Wamuyu (2019), Kharono et al. (2021), and Mbula et al. (2025) collectively confirm high levels of digital access and usage, aligning with global and regional trends. However, most of these studies are conducted outside faith-based contexts, despite the importance of such institutions in tempering marital behavior. Further, Wathigo's (2019) research is important in connecting technology use to communication, it focuses on usage during interactions rather than access as a variable, revealing a conceptual gap that provided the impetus for the present study. This gap potentially reflect differing research priorities where some studies (Mbula et al., 2025; Wathigo, 2019) emphasized behavioral use patterns while others (Wamuyu, 2019; Kharono et al., 2021) focus on structural access, leading to fragmented understanding on how digital technologies influence marital communication.

The reviewed empirical literature provided the scholarly mural upon which the present study extended research on the relationship between access to digital technologies and marital communication among married individuals within the church context.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two complementary theories informed this research. These were: Rational Choice Theory (RCT) and the Theory of Relational Dialectics (TRD). Rational Choice Theory sees behavior as a function of individual decision making after considering costs and benefits to make the most of desirable outcomes (Steinmetz & Pratt, 2024). Accordingly, it clarifies marital communication as marital partners consciously or unconsciously decide when and how to communicate based on reward perceptions (such as, understanding and emotional safety) versus costs (such as conflict, misunderstanding, and emotional strain) (Bezar et al., 2021). In this study's context, increased access to digital technology potentially expands the range of communication options but also introduces competing alternatives (such as online engagement versus spousal interaction). This means that the quality of marital communication depend on how partners prioritize and allocate their attention and communication efforts within these digitally mediated cost–benefit considerations (Herfeld, 2022).

The Communication Theory of Relational Dialectics (RDT), attributed to Montgomery in 1988 and further improved in 1996, proposes that marital relationships are informed by dialectical needs, which must be addressed through communication (Guest & Denes, 2023). As a complementary theory, TRD explains relationships as ongoing processes shaped by tensions between opposing needs such as openness versus privacy and connection versus autonomy (Scharp & Thomas, 2021). This theory offers a direct illumination of marital communication domains of openness, support, conflict management, and clarity, since marital partners must continuously negotiate how much to share, how to remain supportive yet independent, and how to manage disagreements constructively (Suter et al., 2024). These dialectics are intensified because constant connectivity characterized by high access to digital technologies can enhance openness and support through frequent interaction, while also creating potential challenges around availability, privacy boundaries, and miscommunication, thereby influencing whether marital communication is experienced as effective or strained (Wolfe et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research design provides a structured framework guiding data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Mbanaso et al., 2023). The selection of suitable research design is informed by the study objectives, time, and resource constraints (Taherdoost, 2021). The present study utilized cross-sectional research design. This involved collecting at a single point in time to examine relationships among variables (Khoa et al., 2023). Cross-sectional design was appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to quantitatively assess the relationship between access to digital technologies and marital communication among married individuals without the need for prolonged follow-up. It also allowed for the identification of patterns and associations across a relatively large sample efficiently, making it suitable for survey-based research (Dewi, 2021).

The target population comprised 800 married individuals from five selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi (House of Power Churches, 2024). Inclusion criteria required participants to have been married for at least one year and to be conversant with digital technologies, while unmarried, newly married, separated, or divorced individuals were excluded. A sample size of 260 married individuals was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. Stratified sampling was used to ensure proportional representation across the five churches (Nguyen et al., 2021; Khoa et al., 2023). Within each stratum, purposive sampling was used to select respondents that met the inclusion criteria.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire (Khoa et al., 2023). Access to digital technologies was measured using 5 items on a 5-point scale ranging from 1=never to 5=always. The items measured access to internet in the house, on mobile phone, on personal computer, and at the workplace as well as subscription to various digital channels. Marital communication was measured using Couple's Communication Scale (CCS) developed by Conrad et al. (2018). Since the CCS was developed to assess couple's communication in patients with cancer, the items were adapted to suit marital communication within the context of digital technology access. The scale contains 16 items measured on a 5-point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree and covered marital communication themes such as openness and sharing, support and understanding, conflict management, and communication clarity. A pilot study involving 10% of the sample was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the instrument within the research context (Khoa et al., 2023). Cronbach's alpha

coefficients confirmed acceptable internal consistency (Kennedy, 2022). Based on the criterion of $\alpha = .70$ and above as an indicator of acceptable internal consistency, both access to digital technologies ($\alpha = .879$), and couple communication showed excellent reliability ($\alpha = .966$).

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and percentages were used to summarize data and identify general trends. Composite mean scores for access to digital technologies were computed on a 5-point scale and classified into high access (above 3.5), moderate (2.5 to 3.5), or low access (less than 2.5). The cut-off points anchors the categories around the midpoint of the 5-point Likert scale. Setting boundaries at ± 0.5 (2.5 and 3.5) created equal intervals that meaningfully separated responses leaning toward low access (< 2.5) from those leaning toward high access (> 3.5), while retaining 2.5–3.5 as a moderate range. The composite mean score for marital communication was transformed into a dichotomous of poor versus effective marital communication whereby a score of 3.5 and above denoted effective marital communication while all other scores below this cut-off. This dichotomization captured responses that consistently leaned toward agreement (indicating effective marital communication) as a distinct category, effectively leaving all other scores in the poor communication classification. Inferential analysis was conducted using the Chi-square test after diagnostic tests indicated that assumptions for regression analysis were not met, necessitating data transformation. The findings were presented using tables and figures to enhance clarity and facilitate comparison across variables. Interpretation focused on identifying statistically significant relationships between access to digital technologies and marital communication.

The study adhered to established ethical principles for research involving human participants (Khoa et al., 2023). Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee (ISERC) of Pan Africa Christian University, alongside a research permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) which is the regulatory body that license studies done in Kenya. The married individuals were provided with detailed information about the study and gave their informed consent. Participants reserved the right to withdraw their consent at any stage (Taherdoost, 2021). Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through the use of codes instead of names, and no personal identifiers were disclosed. Participation was voluntary, with no coercion or incentives, and all data were securely stored with restricted access, ensuring compliance with ethical and legal research standards.

RESULTS

The study achieved an excellent response rate of 99%, with 257 out of 260 targeted respondents participating. This provided assurance of high reliability of statistical estimates (Holtom et al., 2022). The majority of respondents were relatively young, with 33.1% aged 20–29 years and 28.4% aged 30–39 years, meaning that 61.5% were below 40 years, indicating a predominantly youthful sample likely engaged in active family and career roles (Mwaila & Yousif, 2022). Gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 52.1% male and 47.9% female, ensuring representation of both perspectives. In terms of education, most respondents had tertiary education (62.3%), followed by secondary education (30.0%), suggesting a highly literate group capable of understanding and utilizing digital technologies (Theuri, 2021). Regarding marital duration, nearly half (48.6%) had been married for 10 years or less, while a majority (51.4%) had been married for over a decade, indicating substantial marital experience (Kagwiria, 2022). This demographic profile depicts a predominantly young, educated, and experienced group of married individuals, well suited to provide meaningful insights into the subject of access to digital technology and marital communication.

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for respondents' access to digital technologies on a 5-point scale where 1=never 2=rarely, 3=frequently 4=very frequently 5=always. The table shows that respondents reported relatively high levels of access to digital technologies, with the highest access reported for internet access on mobile phones ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.11$) at the workplace ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.38$), at home ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.42$), subscription to various digital channels ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.51$), and internet access on personal computers ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.54$). The results suggest relatively high access to digital technologies. The established trends in the present study are consistent with the research in Ghana by Obeng et al. (2023) which examined social media practices among married individuals and found that married individuals had wide access to digital technology.

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation of Access to Digital Technologies

Access to digital technologies items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have internet access on my mobile phone	3.97	1.105
I have internet access in my workplace	3.88	1.375
I have internet access in my house	3.73	1.423
I have subscribed to various digital channels	3.52	1.508
I have internet access on my personal computer	3.51	1.541

The distribution of the respondents by overall level of access to digital technologies is presented in Figure 1. The figure shows that majority (64.2%) had high access to digital technologies while 17.1% had moderate access and 18.7% had low access. The numbers may be explained by the fact that the research was undertaken within an urban context, where the presence of technological infrastructure is relatively more widespread. The finding agrees with the study in Bangladesh by Abu et al. (2021) which reported that over 65% of the participants in their study had access to both a range of digital technologies. The results are also in line with the findings of the study in Ghana by Obeng et al (2023) which examined social media practices among married individuals within a residential area and found that married individuals had wide access to digital technology. This consistency in research results across multiple studies implies that widespread access to digital technology among married individuals is nowadays a universal phenomenon and not necessarily geographically restricted.

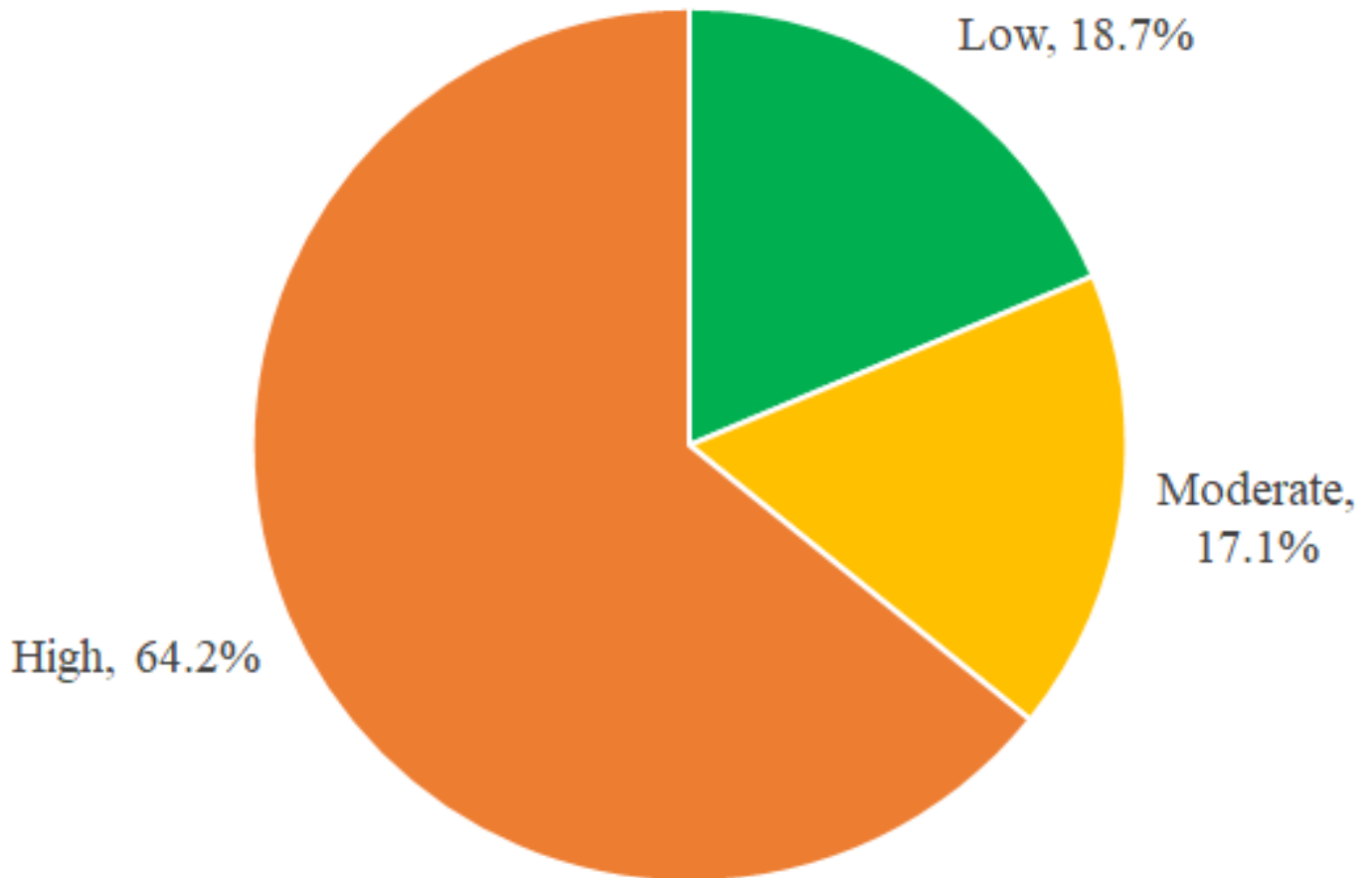


Figure 1 Overall level of Access to Digital Technologies

Figure 2 presents the distribution of respondents by overall marital communication score assessment. The figure reveals that 73.5% recorded poor marital communication while 26.5% of the respondents had effective marital communication. This means that most of the respondents experienced marital communication challenges. This finding affirms the results of a previous study by Mwangi (2021) who examined the association of social media to marital relationship among young married individuals in Kilimani Division in Nairobi City County and found that married individuals exhibited ineffective communication as precious time is spent on social media instead of interaction between spouses, critical to marital stability.

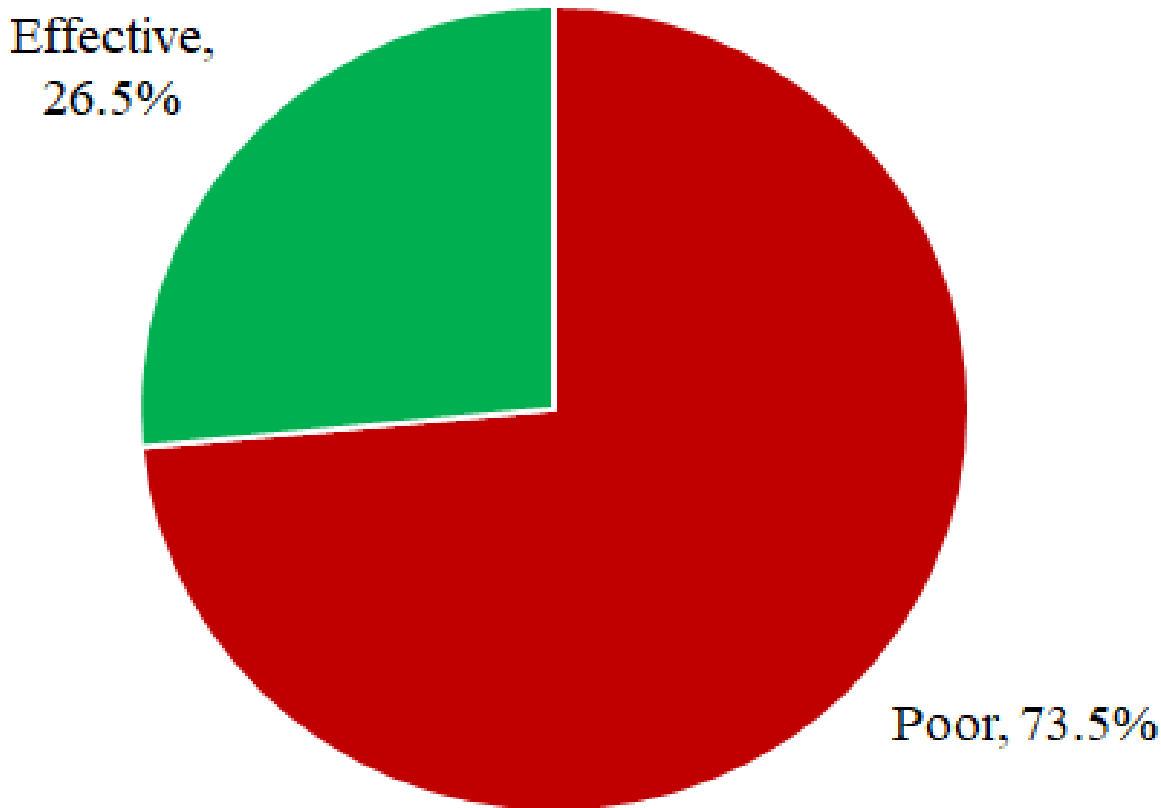


Figure 2 Distribution of Respondents by Overall Marital Communication

Table 2 presents the crosstabulation of marital communication (poor vs. effective) across levels of access to digital technologies. The table shows that poor marital communication was most prevalent among respondents with high access to digital technologies, where 80.0% reported poor communication compared to 20.0% who reported effective communication. Among those with low access, 70.0% reported poor communication and 30.0% reported effective communication. The most balanced distribution was observed among participants with moderate access to digital technologies, where 53.2% reported poor communication and 46.8% reported effective communication. These findings are in line with Abu et al. (2021) whose study established that widespread access to social media among married individuals was associated with poor marital communication characterized by jealousy and conflicts arising from online interactions. These findings suggest that higher levels of access to digital technologies were associated with a greater proportion of poor marital communication as compared to moderate access.

Table 2 Access to Digital Technologies * Marital Communication Crosstabulation

			Access to Digital Technologies			Total
			Low	Moderate	High	
Marital Communication	Poor	Count	28	25	136	189
		% within count	70.0%	53.2%	80.0%	73.5%
	Effective	Count	12	22	34	68
		% within count	30.0%	46.8%	20.0%	26.5%
Total		Count	40	47	170	257
		% within count	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The statistical significance of this association was further tested using Chi-square test as shown in Table 3. The results indicate a statistically significant association between access to digital technologies and marital communication, $\chi^2 (2) = 13.905, p < .05$, suggesting that marital communication differs across levels of digital access. The finding agrees with the Rational Choice Theory's assertion that individuals make decisions based on perceived costs and benefits of available options (Bezar et al., 2021; Steinmetz & Pratt, 2024). In this case,

differing levels of digital access potentially shape partners’ choices regarding communication behaviors, thereby affecting communication quality. Similarly, the finding supports the Relational Dialectics perspective that communication patterns in relationships are dynamic and linked to contextual factors such as technology, which can introduce relational tensions requiring negotiation (Scharp & Thomas, 2021; Suter et al., 2024). Thus, the observed differences in marital communication across levels of digital access are consistent with the theoretical propositions that relational outcomes are shaped by individual choices and evolving communicative dynamics. This finding is supported by the likelihood ratio test ($\chi^2(2) = 13.022, p < .01$) and the linear-by-linear association ($\chi^2(1) = 5.454, p < .05$), indicating a significant linear trend. The results suggest that access to digital technologies is significantly linked to marital communication. The finding concurs with Wathigo (2019) whose correlational analysis revealed a negative relationship between social media networking use and marital well-being, particularly in relation to communication during marital conversations.

Table 3 Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.905 ^a	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	13.022	2	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.454	1	.020
N of Valid Cases	257		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.58.

The established association is line with Abu et al. (2021) and Wathigo (2019), who highlighted relational strain associated with higher engagement in digital platforms. These results suggest that increased access to digital technologies change communication dynamics between spouses, which potentially affect the quality and effectiveness of marital communication processes. The quantitative findings however disagree with Obeng et al. (2023), who reported that social media improved communication and support among married individuals in Ghana. While Obeng et al. (2023) found predominantly positive outcomes of digital access on marital relationships, the present findings indicate that high access corresponds with poorer communication outcomes. This discrepancy may be attributed to methodological differences, as Obeng et al. (2023) relied primarily on descriptive statistics without establishing inferential relationships, whereas, the present study employed chi-square analysis to demonstrate statistically significant associations. The difference in research results imply that the nexus between digital technologies and marital communication is subject to behavioral factors rather than access alone.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study have practical implications in real-life contexts such as counseling, church-based programs, and community initiatives. The association between high access of digital technology and poor marital communication suggests that couples should be guided toward developing balanced and intentional patterns of digital technology access. Counsellors and church-based marriage programs can incorporate digital literacy and relationship management sessions that emphasize boundary-setting, reduced access during shared moments, and intentional communication practices. Additionally, drawing from Guest and Denes (2023), practitioners can assess usage patterns and guide couples toward self-regulation strategies such as planned online access.

The study contributes to existing theoretical frameworks by extending both the Theory of Relational Dialectics and the Rational Choice Theory. Consistent with Bezar et al. (2021) and Pinto-Bustamante et al. (2023), the findings demonstrate that increased access to digital technologies introduces unintended relational consequences, thereby reinforcing the notion that individual choices in technology use carry social costs. The study further expands the Theory of Relational Dialectics by showing that increased access create new tensions which couples must negotiate through communication (Scharp & Thomas, 2021; Suter et al., 2024). At the same time, the results empirically anchor the Rational Choice Theory as discussed by Steinmetz and Pratt (2024), illustrating that repeated digital engagement, though perceived as beneficial, may result in relational costs. By examining access to digital technologies, the study advances a more nuanced theoretical understanding of how digital behavior shapes marital communication.

From a policy perspective, the results of this study are relevant for institutions such as churches, counseling centers, and policymakers involved in family welfare and social development. The demonstrated relationship between access to digital technology and marital communication challenges suggests the need for institutional frameworks that promote responsible and balanced technology access. Churches and faith-based organizations can develop structured marital enrichment programs that incorporate teachings on regulating access to digital technology. This is supported by insights from Bezar et al. (2021) and Pinto-Bustamante et al. (2023) on the unintended relational consequences of technology use. Policymakers and social service providers can integrate digital wellness education into family support programs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

High access to digital technologies is linked to elevated communication problems among married individuals. Couples with higher access were more likely to experience poor marital communication, suggesting that the availability of digital tools potentially contribute to distraction or over-reliance on virtual interaction at the expense of face-to-face engagement. Moderate access to digital technologies by married individuals appears to strike a more balanced outcome, implying that controlled use of digital technologies can prevent relational strain. Thus, the mere access to digital technologies can inadvertently exacerbate communication challenges, signaling the need for married individuals to establish boundaries and intentional patterns of access to protect the quality of their marital relationships. Thus, people in marital relationships should intentionally regulate their access to digital technology in order to safeguard marital communication. Given that high access to digital technologies were associated with the greatest proportion of poor communication, couples should establish mutually agreed boundaries such as time of access so that device-free times can be set during meals, conversations, and before bedtime to foster face-to-face interaction.

LIMITATIONS

The contribution of this scholarly work notwithstanding, a few limitations of the study are worth noting in retrospect. Firstly, the use of cross-sectional design means that the data was captured at a single point in time. This methodology constrained the analysis to the establishment of association between the study variables rather than testing of causal direction. Thus, it was not possible to ascertain whether high access to digital technologies leads to poor marital communication. Secondly, conclusions have been drawn from self-reported data. This exposed the study to risks of various biases such as social desirability bias, recall errors, and subjective perceptions of access to digital technologies and quality of marital communication. Thirdly, the undertaking of the study in faith-based context reduces the representativeness of the study to other social spheres since respondents shared similar religious and behavioral norms that may regulate access to digital technologies and marital dynamics. Lastly, given that the study location was urban, the do not necessarily reflect patterns in rural settings. These limitations provide grounds for further research extension.

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