

**A MIXED- METHOD ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION STYLES, CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT AND PERSONAL GROWTH INITIATIVE IN LONG DISTANCE AND
PROXIMAL ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS**

A Thesis submitted in the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY (CLINICAL)

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**A Mixed-method analysis of communication styles, conflict management and personal growth initiative in long distance and proximal romantic relationship**” being submitted in partial fulfillment of requirement for the award of degree of **Master of Arts in Psychology**, submitted in the **Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology**, Patiala is a bonafide work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Sohinee Ganguly, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and that no part of this thesis has been submitted for the award of any other degree.



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This is to certify that above statement made by the student concerned is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis entitled, “**A Mixed-method analysis of communication styles, conflict management and personal growth initiative in long distance and proximal romantic relationship**” being submitted in partial fulfillment of requirement for the award of Degree of **Master of Arts in Psychology**, submitted in the **School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala**, is an authentic record of my own work carried out under the supervision and guidance of Dr Sohinee Ganguly, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala and refers other researcher’s work which are duly listed in the reference section.

The content written in this thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree of this or any other university.

Date: May 19, 2024



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This is to certify that the above declaration made by the student concerned is correct and true to the best of my knowledge.



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ABSTRACT

This study explores communication styles, conflict management strategies, and personal growth initiatives in long-distance relationships (LDRs) compared to proximal relationships. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, qualitative interviews were conducted first, followed by quantitative analysis. The sample for interviews consisted of 10 males and 10 females in LDRs. Subsequently, quantitative data were collected from 20 males and 20 females in long-distance relationships, as well as 40 males and 40 females in proximal relationships. The qualitative phase involved in-depth interviews with participants, while the quantitative phase utilized structured surveys assessing communication skills, conflict management, and personal growth initiative. Initial analysis of quantitative data revealed noteworthy differences in communication patterns and conflict resolution strategies between long-distance and proximal relationships. Qualitative findings illuminated themes such as trust, communication challenges, and personal growth opportunities in LDRs, while proximal relationships emphasized physical proximity and immediate conflict resolution. This research contributes valuable insights to both theoretical understanding and practical applications for individuals navigating diverse relationship contexts.

Keywords: Communication styles, Conflict management, Personal growth initiative, Relationship satisfaction, Trust, Distance maintenance behaviors.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the modern era characterized by globalization, technological advancements, and changing societal norms, long-distance relationships (LDRs) have become increasingly prevalent. Defined as a relationship, with a romantic intention, where the partner's are geographically separated and maintain their connection through various forms of communication, LDRs present unique challenges and opportunities for personal growth. Understanding the dynamics of LDRs involves delving into various psychological concepts and theories that shed light on the intricacies of human relationships, adaptation, and development.

One fundamental aspect of LDRs is their impact on personal growth. While distance can pose significant challenges to relationship satisfaction and communication, it also gives individual's a chance for self-reflection, independence, and resilience. As partners navigate the complexities of maintaining intimacy across distances, they often engage in processes of self-discovery and growth, fostering a deeper understanding of themselves and their needs within the relationship. Several psychological theories offer insights into the mechanisms through which LDRs influence personal growth. Attachment theory, proposed by Bowlby (1969), suggests that individuals develop internal working models of relationships based on their early attachment experiences. In the context of LDRs, partners may experience heightened attachment-related anxiety or avoidance due to the physical separation, leading to increased self-awareness and exploration of attachment needs.

Furthermore, Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) emphasizes the role of costs and rewards in relationships. In LDRs, partners may engage in ongoing evaluations of the benefits and drawbacks of maintaining the relationship, contributing to individual growth as they negotiate compromises and prioritize relational goals. Moreover, the Stress and Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) elucidates how individuals perceive and respond to stressors in their environment. LDRs often entail coping with the stress of separation, uncertainty, and

communication challenges. Effective coping strategies, such as active problem-solving or seeking social support, can facilitate personal growth by enhancing resilience and adaptive skills.

This research seeks to explore the intricate interplay between long-distance relationships and personal growth by examining how individuals navigate the complexities of LDRs and the impact on their psychological well-being, this study aims to contribute to more acceptance in distance-mediated romantic connections.

1.1. Long distance relationship

According to Stafford and Canary (2006), distance in LDRs extends beyond mere physical space and encompasses factors such as communication barriers, time zone differences, and cultural disparities that contribute to the perceived challenges of maintaining the relationship. Furthermore, LeFebvre and Blackburn (2018) emphasize the role of accessibility and ease of physical proximity in defining distance, noting that partners may experience distance even when living in close geographical proximity due to factors such as conflicting schedules, transportation limitations, or social barriers.

Therefore, a comprehensive definition of distance in LDRs acknowledges both the objective geographical separation and the subjective experiences of partners navigating the challenges of maintaining intimacy and connection across distances. This definition aligns with contemporary perspectives that recognize distance as a dynamic and multifaceted construct shaped by various individual, relational, and contextual factors.

1.2. Personal growth initiative

It refers to the proactive and intentional efforts individuals undertake to improve themselves, develop new skills, achieve personal goals, and enhance their overall well-being. It involves a mindset of continuous self-improvement, exploration, and self-discovery, characterized by initiative, perseverance, and a willingness to step outside one's comfort zone. Personal growth initiative encompasses various domains of life, including psychological, emotional, social, and intellectual aspects, and is driven by intrinsic motivations for self-enhancement and fulfillment. According to Robitschek et al. (2012), personal growth initiative comprises four key components:

- Readiness for change: The willingness and openness to embark on a journey of self-discovery and growth, embracing new opportunities and challenges.
- Planfulness: The ability to set clear and achievable goals, develop action plans, and implement strategies to progress toward personal development objectives.
- Using resources: Actively seeking out and utilizing internal and external resources, such as knowledge, skills, social support, and feedback, to facilitate growth and development.
- Intentional behavior: Engaging in purposeful and deliberate actions aimed at self-improvement, learning from experiences, and adapting behaviors to align with personal values and aspirations.

1.3. Dyadic Communication styles

Effective communication is fundamental to the success and satisfaction of relationships, particularly within dyads such as married couples or romantic partners. Dyadic communication, characterized by the interaction between two individuals in a close relationship, has an important role in exchanging information, expressing emotions, and building mutual understanding.

Understanding and assessing the quality of communication within dyads are important for any relationship and resolving conflicts.

The Dyadic Communication Assessment Scale (DCAS) emerges as a valuable tool designed to evaluate the intricacies of communication within dyadic relationships. Developed to assess various dimensions of effective communication, the DCAS offers insights into the strengths and areas for improvement in dyadic communication dynamics.

- **Responsive Communication:** This subscale assesses the extent to which partners in a relationship demonstrate attentiveness, openness, and sensitivity to each other's needs and concerns. High scores on this subscale suggest a healthy communication pattern characterized by active listening, empathy, and responsiveness to verbal and nonverbal cues from the partner.
- **Blocked Communication:** The Blocked Communication subscale evaluates barriers or hindrances in communication within the dyad. It encompasses factors such as avoidance, defensiveness, or reluctance to engage in open and honest communication. Low scores on this subscale may indicate difficulties in expressing thoughts and feelings, resolving conflicts, or addressing relationship issues openly.
- **Self-Disclosure:** Self-Disclosure refers to the willingness and ability of individuals in a dyadic relationship to share personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences with their partner. This subscale assesses the level of openness and vulnerability in communication, reflecting the depth of intimacy and trust between partners. Higher scores on this subscale suggest a greater degree of self-disclosure and emotional intimacy within the relationship.

1.4. Conflict Management Styles

It is an essential aspect of interpersonal dynamics, influencing how individuals address and resolve conflicts in various contexts, such as relationships, workplaces, and communities. Conflict, defined as a perceived divergence of interests, goals, or values, is inevitable in human interactions due to differences in perspectives, needs, and expectations. Effective conflict management entails understanding and addressing these differences constructively, aiming to reach resolutions that are satisfactory to all parties involved.

In interpersonal relationships, conflicts may arise from misunderstandings, competing priorities, or divergent viewpoints. How individuals respond to conflict can significantly impact the outcome of the relationship. Conflict management encompasses a range of strategies and approaches that individuals employ to address conflicts, ranging from assertive communication and negotiation to avoidance or accommodation. Understanding the various conflict management styles can help individuals navigate conflicts more effectively and cultivate healthier relationships. In this context, exploring different conflict management styles can provide valuable insights into how individuals approach and handle conflicts, as well as strategies for enhancing communication, fostering collaboration, and promoting mutual understanding. By understanding and applying effective conflict management techniques, individuals can work towards resolving conflicts constructively and strengthening their relationships. Conflict Management Styles Assessment by Blake Group:

- Owl (Collaborating): Owls focus on improving relationships by reducing tensions and strive for win-win outcomes in conflict resolution.
- Turtle (Avoiding): Turtles prioritize avoiding confrontation over their goals or relationships. They find it easier to withdraw from conflict than to face it, sometimes even sacrificing relationships or goals associated with the conflict. Turtles prefer to minimize conflict to maintain peace.
- Shark (Competing): Sharks prioritize their goals over relationships and are willing to achieve them at the expense of the relationship involved. They are assertive and may use power or dominance to impose their solutions on others, prioritizing task accomplishment over interpersonal harmony.
- Teddy Bear (Accommodating): Teddy Bears prioritize relationships over their own goals and are willing to sacrifice their goals to maintain harmony in relationships. They avoid conflict to prevent damage to relationships and strive to please others, often accommodating the needs of others at their own expense.
- Fox (Compromising): Foxes balance concern for their goals and relationships. They seek compromises where both parties give up part of their goals to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. Foxes aim for a middle ground between extreme positions, prioritizing reaching agreements for the common good.

Overall, in LDRs, effective communication, personal growth initiative, dyadic communication styles, and conflict management are deeply intertwined. By recognizing the interplay between these factors and leveraging appropriate strategies, couples in LDRs can navigate challenges, strengthen their connection, and foster relational satisfaction and growth.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

It synthesizes key findings from research on long-distance relationships, personal growth initiative, communication styles, and conflict management styles, highlighting their interconnectedness and implications for relational well-being.

2.1 Communication styles

In a research titled Long distance romantic relationships: Connections among conflict, uncertainty, maintenance and mediated communication use by Frahm. 2010, A qualitative research design involving undergraduate participants was used to answer the three research questions. It reveals that while the phone is preferred for discussing conflicts due to its immediacy and ability to convey tonal cues, text-based communication platforms like Facebook and text messaging often exacerbate uncertainty and relational tensions. Despite recognizing the negative implications of mediated communication, participants continue to utilize these platforms for convenience, underscoring the complex interplay between communication choices, conflict management strategies, and relational dynamics in LDRs. In another study titled as Attachment, Relationship Maintenance and Stress in Long distance and geographically close relationships by Pistole et al. 2010. highlights an interesting aspect of communication in long-distance relationships (LDRs) by emphasizing the role of maintenance behaviors, including openness in communication, in both LDRs and geographically closer relationships. It suggests that, apart from shared tasks, partners in both types of relationships utilize maintenance behaviors with similar frequency. The observation that shared tasks prevale more in normal relationships due to their routine nature suggests that in LDRs, such tasks require additional planning, potentially leading partners to focus more on their conversations.

Moreover, when physically together, LDR partners may prioritize engaging in higher quality activities before performing shared tasks, underscoring the importance of communication in optimizing the limited time spent together.

In ‘Gender differences in negative relative aspects: The role of personality and communication style’ a study conducted by Psihologija, 2020 with a sample of 400 participants, comprising 69% females aged between 19 to 51 years, this research aimed to delve into the nuances of negative exchanges—conflicts and antagonism—across various relationship types: mother, father, sibling, partner, and friend. Employing the Big Five Plus Two personality questionnaire, the Network of Relationship Inventory (NRI), and the Communicator Style Measure (CSM), the study uncovered compelling gender-specific patterns. Communication styles played a crucial role, with daughters displaying assertive communication leading to stronger confrontations with parents, while sons with expressive communication faced heightened negativity within the family. Notably, more assertive males engaged in negative exchanges with partners, suggesting their active involvement in relationships

2.2 Conflict management styles

Lee, Bassick. 2016, conducted a study on ‘Fighting electronically: Long distance romantic couples, conflict management over mediated communication’, particularly focusing on how couples' conflict styles influence their choice of communication media for initiating conflicts. Through a comprehensive online survey involving a college student sample, the research investigates the interplay between various conflict styles (volatile, hostile, validating, avoiding) and communication modes (texting, email, phone calls, video chat, face-to-face meetings), while considering the influence of demographics, attachment styles, and extroverted personality traits. Findings illuminate distinct associations between conflict styles and communication channels:

email tends to be linked with hostile conflicts, phone calls with volatile and hostile styles, and video chat with validating conflict resolution. Surprisingly, texting is not directly associated with any conflict styles but rather with preoccupied attachment styles. Additionally, face-to-face meet.

In a study titled Approach in managing conflict in a long distance marriage by Sakinah et al. 2022, a qualitative exploration involving ten participants practicing long-distance marriage was conducted, the study identifies a spectrum of internal and external factors contributing to conflicts, including stress, communication barriers, limited affection, third-party interference, and financial worries. Drawing on insights from participants, the research underscores the significance of role delineation, mediation, and authoritative interventions in conflict resolution. Moreover, it highlights spirituality, interpersonal encounters, effective communication, and robust support systems as pivotal themes in managing conflicts within long-distance marriages.

Similarly gender differences were found in conflict management styles in a study 'Conflict management styles and gender' by Athanasios, Vasilias (2008). It delves into the vital realm of conflict management within the context of Greek private organizations, aiming to scrutinize potential gender-based disparities in conflict management styles. Employing a standardized self-report questionnaire, the research examines the conflict management practices of 103 participants, comprising 50 males and 53 females, across seven private organizations in Attica, Greece. The findings unveil that women exhibit a greater propensity for employing the compromising conflict management style compared to their male counterparts. This discovery challenges traditional gender role expectations, suggesting that women may possess a more constructive and collaborative approach to conflict resolution.

2.3 Personal Growth Initiative

In the research conducted by Pisor, Ross (2022), *Distinguishing Intergroup and Long-Distance Relationships*, It talks about the intricacies of intergroup and long-distance relationships within human sociality, shedding light on their distinct functions and varying importance across different contexts. There was a total sample size of 125 individuals. By emphasizing the significance of understanding these relationship dynamics, the study indirectly addresses the theme of personal growth. It underscores the importance of self-awareness and introspection in recognizing one's own social networks and interactions, as well as the influence of past experiences and social context on individual preferences and behaviors. Through reflection and learning from past interactions, individuals can overcome biases, cultivate empathy, and foster more meaningful connections with others. In another study done by Pisor et al. 2022, *Long-distance social relationships can both undercut and promote local natural resource management*, indicate that while long-distance relationships can present challenges to local natural resource management, they also offer opportunities for learning, collaboration, and innovation. By fostering interdependence and knowledge exchange across distances, individuals and communities can expand their perspectives, adapt to changing circumstances, and develop resilience in the face of environmental and social pressures. Furthermore, research suggests that successful management of natural resources relies on building trusting relationships, promoting information sharing, and leveraging diverse perspectives to find creative solutions to collective challenges.

Regarding gender differences, the study *Gender difference in the relationship between academic self-efficacy, personal growth initiative, and engagement among Turkish undergraduates: A multigroup modeling* by Sahin, Uslu. 2023, did not find significant variations in the structural model across genders. Moreover, the role of gender as a mediator of Personal growth initiative(PGI) in the relationship between academic self efficacy (ASE) and school engagement remains unclear. Contradictory findings exist in the literature regarding gender differences in

ASE, with some studies indicating higher ASE beliefs among male students, while others suggest the opposite. Similarly, research on the role of gender in PGI is scarce and inconclusive, with some studies reporting higher PGI among women and others finding no significant gender differences.

2.4 Research Gap

While studies have explored each of these aspects separately, there is limited research that investigates how individuals in long-distance relationships navigate conflicts while considering their personal growth initiatives and the dynamics of gender differences. Understanding how these factors interact and influence conflict resolution strategies is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems for individuals in long-distance relationships. Although some studies have compared proximal and long-distance relationships, there is a lack of research specifically focusing on the differences in conflict resolution strategies and communication patterns between these two types of relationships. While it is acknowledged that long-distance relationships present unique challenges due to physical separation, it is unclear how these challenges manifest in conflict management compared to geographically close relationships.

Therefore, this would help in understanding specific communication styles and conflict resolution strategies employed by individuals in long-distance relationships, highlighting the distinct challenges they face and the potential advantages they may have over proximal relationships in managing conflicts. While quantitative studies provide valuable insights into patterns and trends, qualitative research offers a deeper understanding of individuals' experiences, motivations, and perceptions. By integrating both approaches, researchers can gain a holistic understanding of the dynamics involved in conflict management within long-distance relationships, capturing both the quantitative data on communication styles and conflict resolution strategies and the qualitative insights into individuals' personal growth initiatives and gender dynamics.

CHAPTER 3: RATIONALE, OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS OF STUDY

3.1 Rationale

With advancements in technology and globalization, more individuals are engaging in romantic relationships that transcend geographical boundaries. However, while long-distance relationships offer opportunities for connection and personal growth, they also present unique challenges, particularly in terms of communication and conflict resolution. Therefore understanding the dynamics of conflict management within long-distance relationships is essential for several reasons. First, conflicts are inevitable in any relationship, but they can be particularly challenging to navigate in the context of distance and limited face-to-face interaction. Communication styles play a pivotal role in shaping conflict resolution strategies and relationship dynamics. By understanding the interplay between communication styles, conflict resolution strategies, and relational dynamics, researchers and practitioners can offer targeted guidance and resources to help couples navigate conflicts more effectively. Moreover, the study of gender differences adds another layer of complexity to the dynamics of conflict management in long-distance relationships. By exploring gender-specific patterns in conflict management, this study aims to shed light on potential disparities and inform gender-sensitive interventions and support services. Additionally, conducting a comparative analysis between long-distance and proximal relationships can provide valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities presented by each relationship type. By examining how communication styles and conflict resolution strategies differ between these two contexts, it can help identify factors that contribute to successful relationship maintenance and personal growth, ultimately informing best practices for individuals in both types of relationships.

3.2 Objectives of the current study

1. To study the impact of Dyadic communication styles on Personal growth initiative and conflict management styles in Long distance relationships.

2. To study the impact of Dyadic communication styles on Personal growth initiative and conflict management styles in Proximal relationships.
3. To conduct a comparative study between long distance relationships and proximal relationships
4. To find gender differences in Dyadic communication styles, Personal growth initiative and conflict management styles.

3.3 Hypotheses for the study

H1: There is a significant positive correlation of blocked communication with competing and avoidance conflict management styles.

H2: There is a significant negative correlation of blocked communication with personal growth initiative, accommodating, collaborating and compromising conflict management.

H3: There is a significant positive correlation of self disclosure with personal growth initiative, accommodating, collaborating and compromising conflict management.

H4: There is a significant negative correlation of Self disclosure with competing and avoiding conflict management styles.

H5: There is a significant positive correlation of responsive communication with personal growth initiative, accommodating, collaborating and compromising conflict management.

H6: There is a significant negative correlation of responsive communication with competing and avoiding conflict management styles.

H7: There is a significant difference in gender in communication styles, personal growth initiative and conflict management in Long distance relationships.

H8: There is a significant difference in gender in communication styles, personal growth initiative and conflict management in proximal relationships.

H9: There is a significant difference in communication styles, personal growth initiative and conflict management in long distance relationships and proximal relationships.

CHAPTER 4 METHOD

4.1 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1.1 Sample:

A total of 20 participants, comprising 10 males and 10 females were interviewed. Participants have to be in long distance relationship.

4.1.2 Sampling Criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- The age range was to be between 20 years to 28 years
- Participants should be in long distance relationship (different states or different nations)
- Participants should be in long distance relationship for minimum of 6 months.

4.1.3 Procedure:

Firstly, a questionnaire was prepared using a concept of Relationship Maintenance behaviors given by Staffor and Canary. Participants were sorted based on inclusion criteria. Then the interviews were taken. Each interview lasted up to approx 25- 30 mins and was conducted whether online or offline.

4.2 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.2.1 Sample

A total of 124 people (22 Long distance relationship Males, 22 Long distance relationship Females, 40 Proximal relationship Males, 40 Proximal relationship Females) of age range 20-28 years participated in the study. Snowball and Convenience sampling was done.

4.2.2 Design

Independent Variable: Communication styles

Dependent Variables: Personal growth initiative and Conflict management styles

4.2.3 Statistical analysis

In the present study descriptive statistics and Correlation analysis for both long distance and proximal relationships were computed. Regression Analysis was performed on Proximal relationships. Independent sample t test was computed to find gender differences in long distance and proximal relationship.

4.2.4 Tools used

- The Dyadic Communication Assessment Scale (DCAS): is a tool used to evaluate the quality of communication within dyadic relationships, such as couples or close partners. It consists of items assessing various aspects of communication, with responses indicating the frequency of engagement in each behavior. Initially containing 26 items, the scale underwent expert review and refinement to produce an 16-item version. It has three subscales: Responsive communication, Self disclosure and blocked communication. The DCAS helps researchers and practitioners understand communication dynamics in relationships, offering insights into strengths and areas for improvement.
- Personal growth initiative scale -1: It consists of nine items. Participants respond to each item on a Likert scale, indicating the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements related to their engagement in self-improvement activities, setting goals, and taking action towards achieving them. The scale provides valuable insights into an individual's motivation and readiness for personal growth and development.
- Conflict management styles assessment: developed by Thomas and Kilmann, is a tool used to evaluate how individuals respond to conflicts in various situations. It typically consists of a series of scenarios or statements that depict different conflict scenarios, and respondents are asked to indicate how they would likely respond in each situation. It consists of 15 items. Based on their responses, individuals can be categorized into different conflict management styles, which are the subscales- such as collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating, or competing. This assessment helps

individuals and organizations understand their preferred approaches to handling conflicts and provides insights into areas for improvement in conflict resolution skills.

4.2.5 Procedure

The participants were informed in detail about the study protocols and written consent was obtained from them. The subjects were informed about the procedure and were given instructions. The instructions given were – “You are requested to fill the questionnaire which will measure the relationship dynamics. Do not think too hard, as there is no right or wrong answer. The first answer that comes to your mind is generally right. The information collected from you will be kept confidential. Please respond as honestly as you can”.

CHAPTER 5 RESULTS

5.1 QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The common responses were identified and thematically categorized and the frequencies were noted.

Table 1: What is the duration of your relationship?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1 year or less	4	40%	3	30%
2-3 yrs	4	40%	3	30%
4-5 yrs	1	10%	2	20%
6 yrs and more	1	10%	2	20%

Fig 1: Duration of LDR- Female responses.

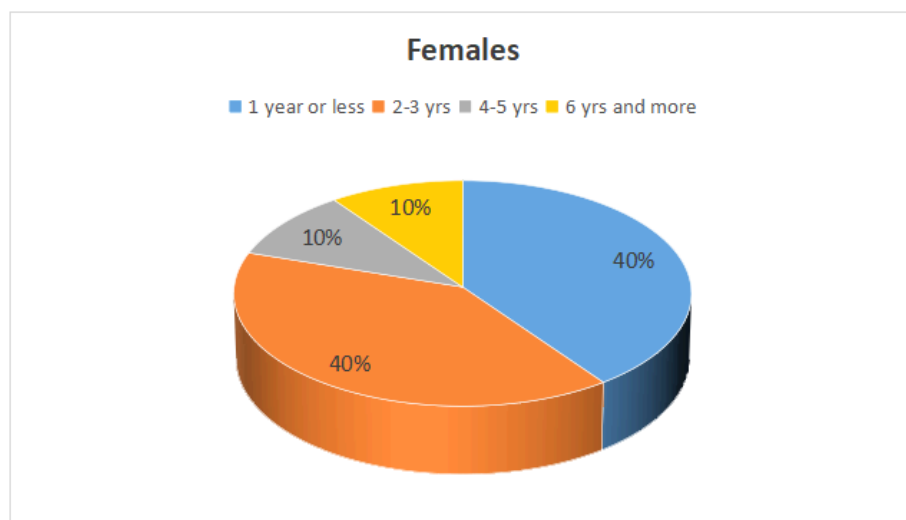
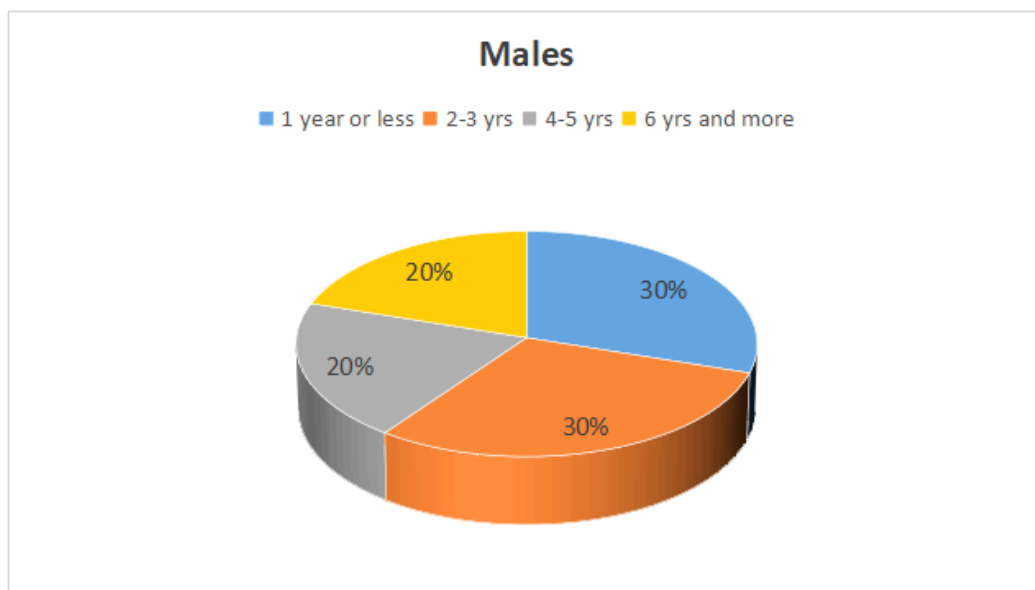


Fig 2- Duration of LDR- Male responses.



In response to the question ‘What is the duration of your relationship?’, 40% of females and 30% of males reported relationships in ‘1 year or less’ category. In "2-3 yrs" category, Their were 40% females and 30% males. For relationships lasting "4-5 yrs," 10% of females and 20% of males fell into this category. Similarly, in relationships lasting "6 yrs and more," 10% of females and 20% of males were represented. both female and male participants were represented.

Table 2: How do you communicate with your partner?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Video calls preferred	7	70%	8	80%
Voice calls preferred	1	10%	2	20%
Text preferred	2	20%	0	0

Fig3: Medium of communication- Female responses.

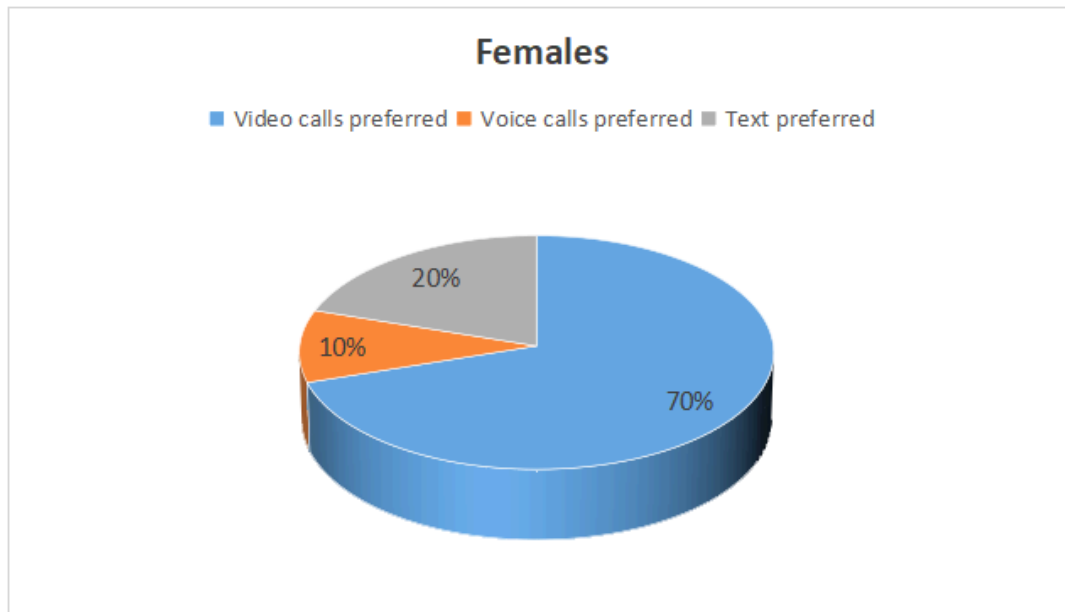
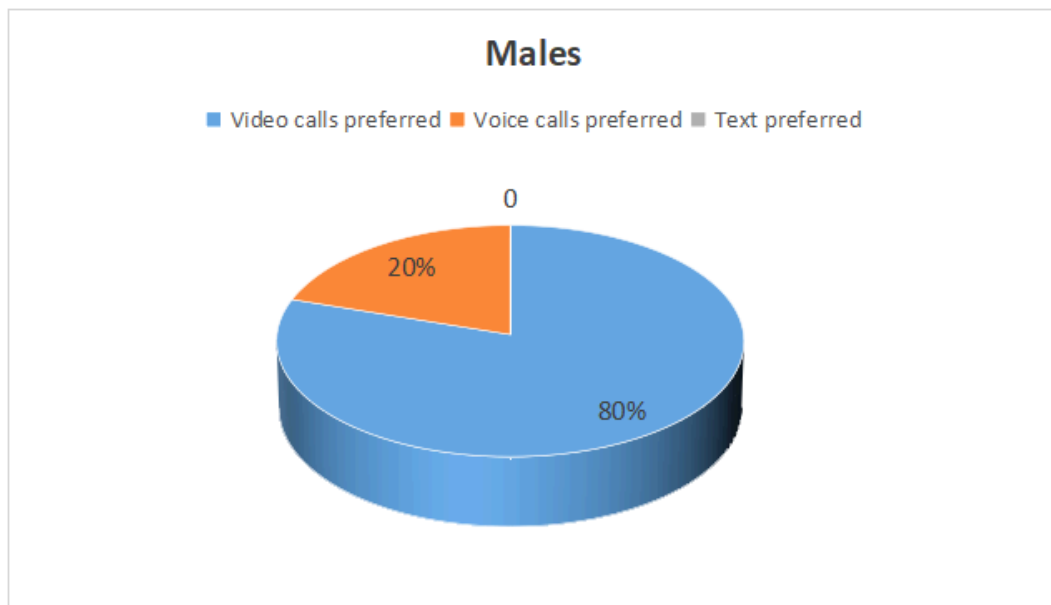


Fig 4: Medium of communication- Male responses.



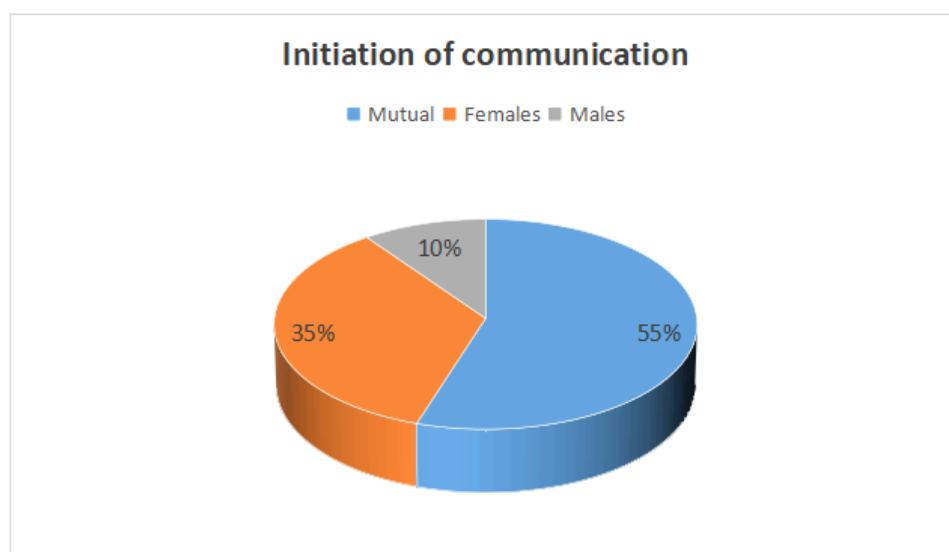
In response to the question "What is your preferred medium of communication?", There were three categories - "Video calls preferred," "Voice calls preferred," and "Text preferred." Among females, 70% preferred video calls, 10% preferred voice calls, and 20% preferred text. In comparison, among males, 80% favored video calls, 20% favored voice calls, and none preferred

text. This suggests a strong inclination towards video calls among both genders, with males showing a slightly higher preference compared to females.

Table 3: Who generally initiates communication?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Mutual	11	55%
Females	7	35%
Males	2	10%

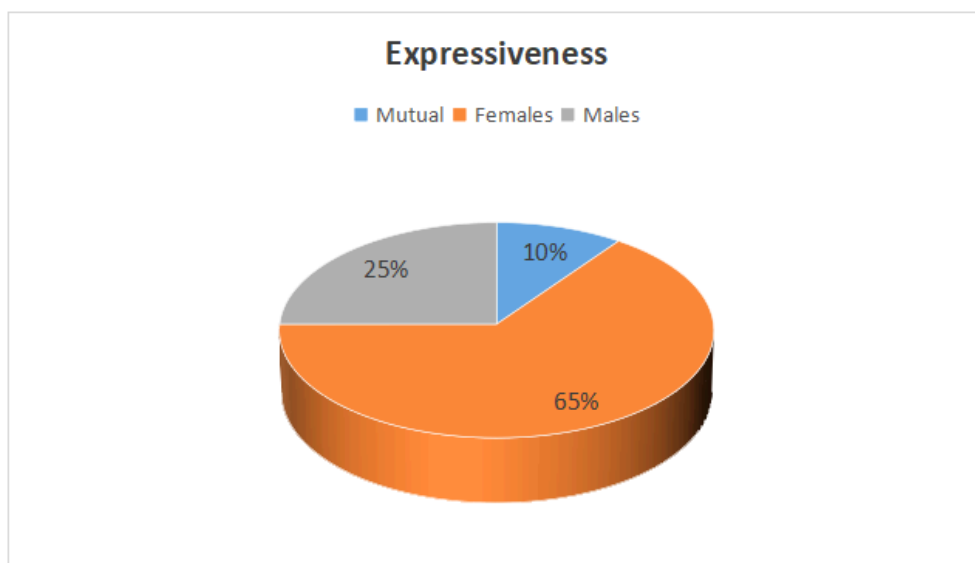
Fig 5: Initiation of communication



In response to the question “ Who initiates the conversations more?”, The categories include "Mutual," "Female participants," and "Male participants." Among the total participants, 55% opted for a mutual initiation of conversations. 35% opted females as the initiator of the conversion, and 10% opted males to be the initiator in conversations.

Table 4: Who is more expressive?

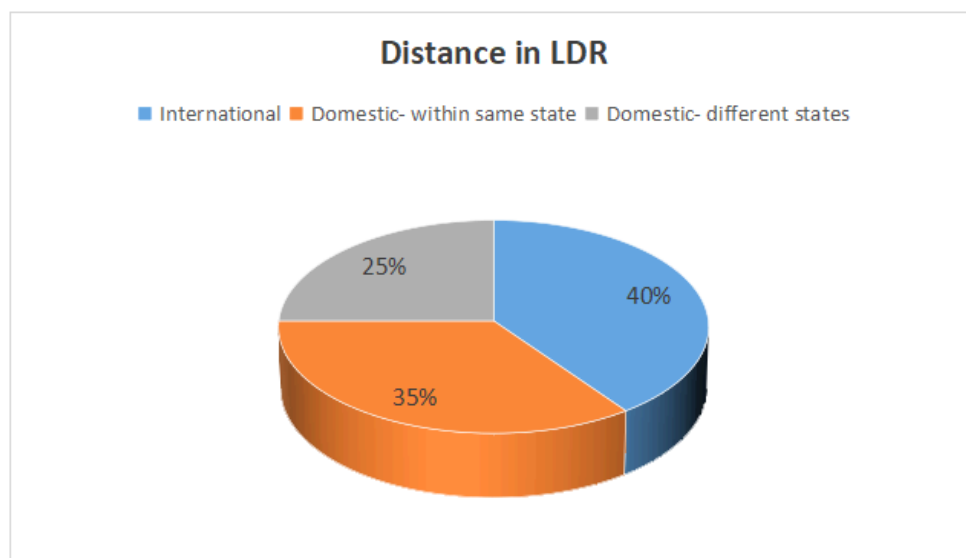
Category	Frequency	Percentage
Mutual	2	10%
Females	13	65%
Males	5	25%

Fig 6: Expressiveness

In response to the question “ Who is more expressive?”, The categories include "Mutual," "Females," and "Males." Among the total participants, 65% opted for Females being the initiator of conversations. 25% opted for males were reported to initiate the conversation, where as 10% opted for mutual.

Table 5: Where is your partner located?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
International	8	40%
Domestic- within same state	7	35%
Domestic- different states	5	25%

Fig 7: Distance in LDR

In response to the question “Where is your partner located?”, "International," "Domestic- within the same state," and "Domestic- different states." were the answers. 40% reported their partners being located internationally, 35% indicated their partners were within the same state domestically, and 25% stated their partners were in different states domestically. This distribution suggests that a significant portion of participants have partners located internationally, followed by those within the same state, with the least percentage having partners in different states domestically.

Table 6: What is the purpose of separation?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
studies	1	10%	2	20%
career	6	60%	6	60%
family	3	30%	2	20%

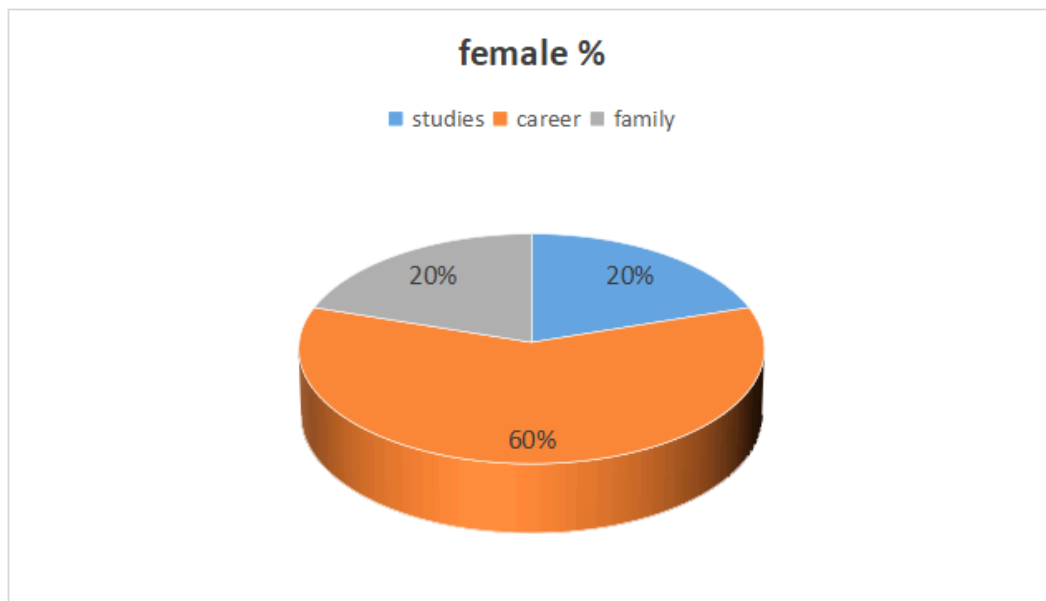
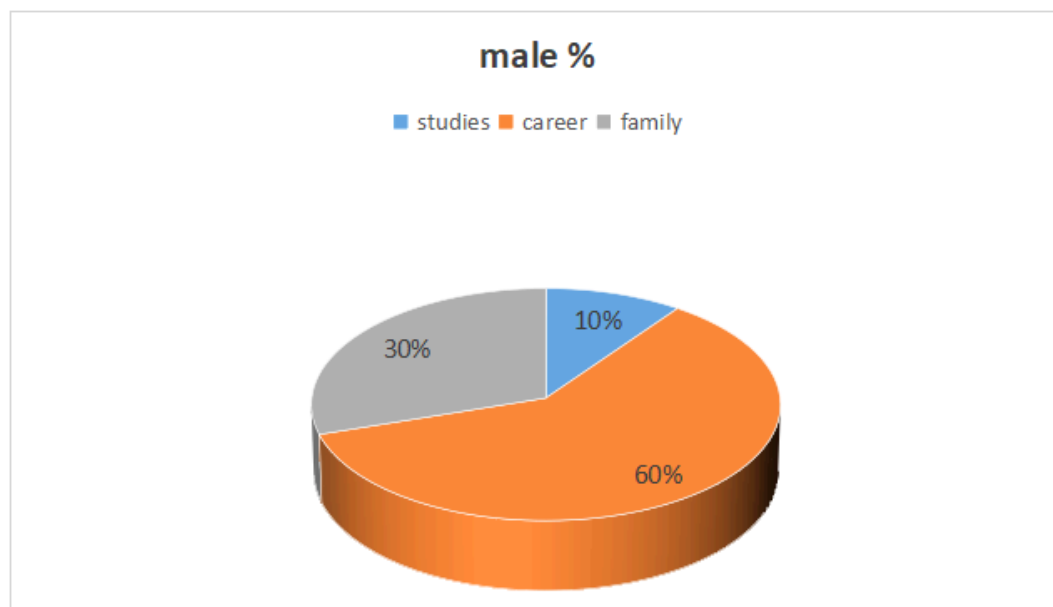
Fig 8: Purpose of separation - Female responses

Fig 9: Purpose of separation : Male responses



In response to the question “What is the purpose of separation” , responses categorized into "studies," "career," and "family." Among females, 20% indicated a focus on studies, 60% on career, and 20% on family. Similarly, among males, 30% reported a focus on studies, 60% on career, and 20% on family. This suggests that the majority of both females and males prioritize their career.

Table 7: Do you have any discussions related to future plans?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Marriage planned	5	50%	3	30%
Career first	3	30%	3	30%
Family issues	2	20%	4	40%

Fig 10: Future plans: Female responses.

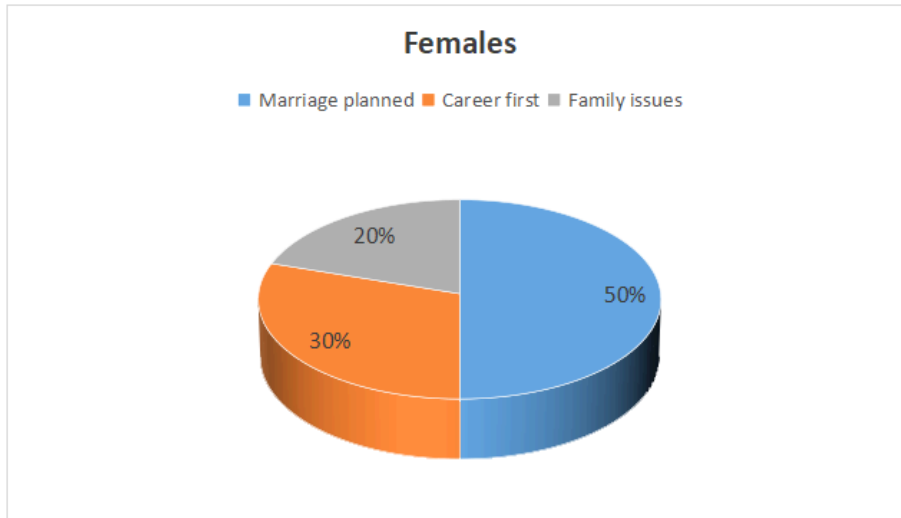
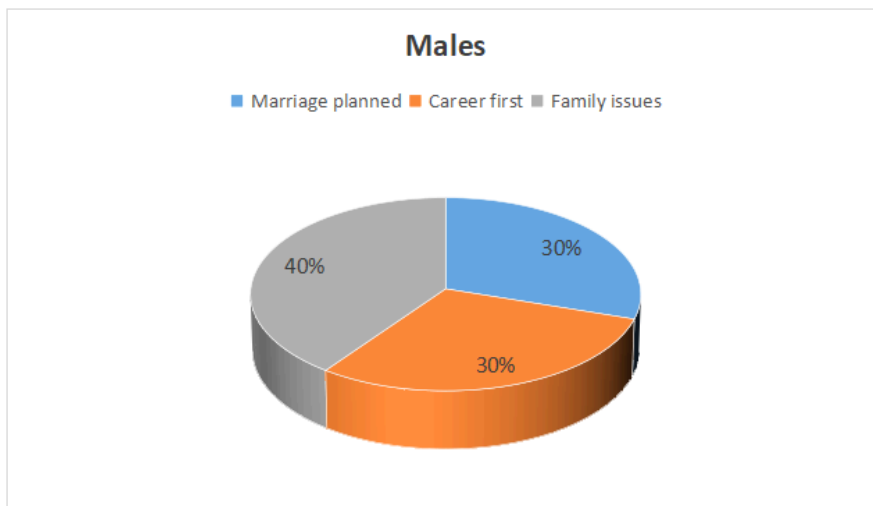


Fig 11: Future plans- Male responses



In response to the question “Do you have any discussions related to future plans together?”, the table displays the distribution of participants based on their reported priorities regarding marriage, career, and family issues. Among females, 50% indicated that marriage was planned, 30% prioritized their career first, and 20% cited family issues. Similarly, among males, 30% reported planning for marriage, 30% prioritized their career first, and 40% cited family issues. This suggests that while there is some variation, both males and females consider marriage and

career as important factors, with family issues also being a significant concern for a notable portion of the participants, especially among males.

Table 8: How is it important for you to reassure your partner?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Insecurities	4	40%	1	10%
Uncertainties	2	20%	1	10%
False assumptions	1	10%	2	20%
Emotional Validation	3	30%	6	60%

Fig 12: Importance of Reassurance : Female responses

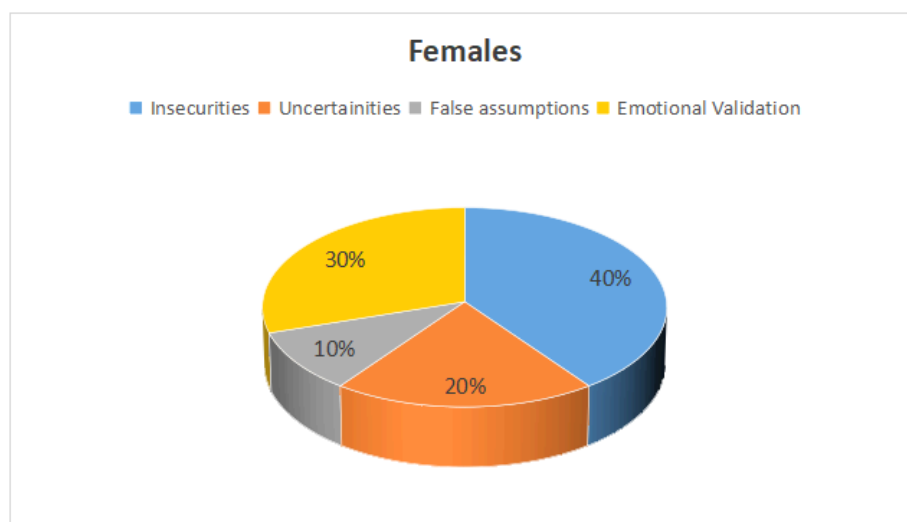
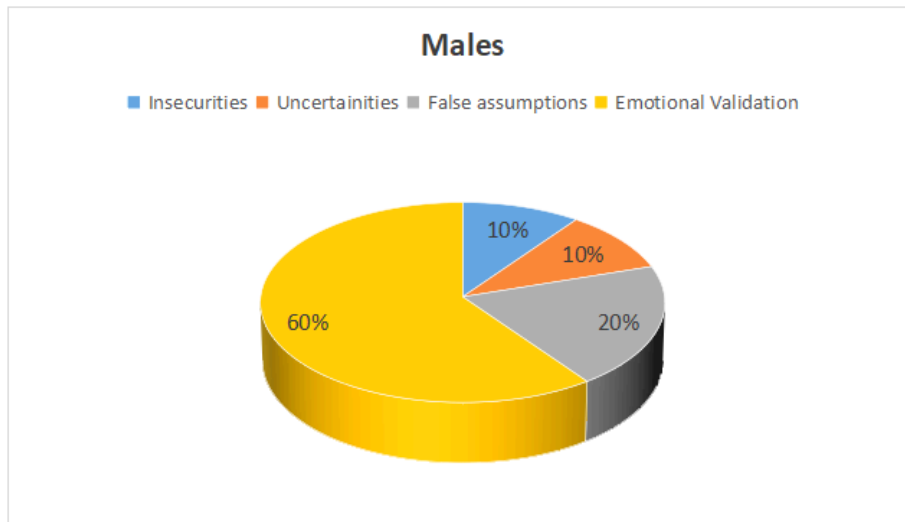


Fig 13: Importance of Reassurance- Male responses.



In response to the question “How is it important for you to reassure your partner?”, among females, 40% expressed that reassurance was related to addressing insecurities, while 20% cited uncertainties and 10% cited ‘reassurance reduced false assumptions’. Additionally, 30% highlighted emotional validation as a reason for reassurance. In comparison, among males, 60% emphasized emotional validation as the primary reason for reassurance, while 10% mentioned insecurities and uncertainties each, and 20% reported reduction of false assumptions. This indicates that both genders perceive emotional validation as a significant factor in the importance of reassuring their partners, with some variation in the reasons cited for reassurance between females and males.

Table 9: During challenging times how do you initiate conversations with your partner?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Keep quiet and Introspect	2	20%	0	0
Solution focused	1	10%	2	20%
Confront	3	30%	6	60%
Active listening	3	30%	1	10%
Avoidant	1	10%	1	10%

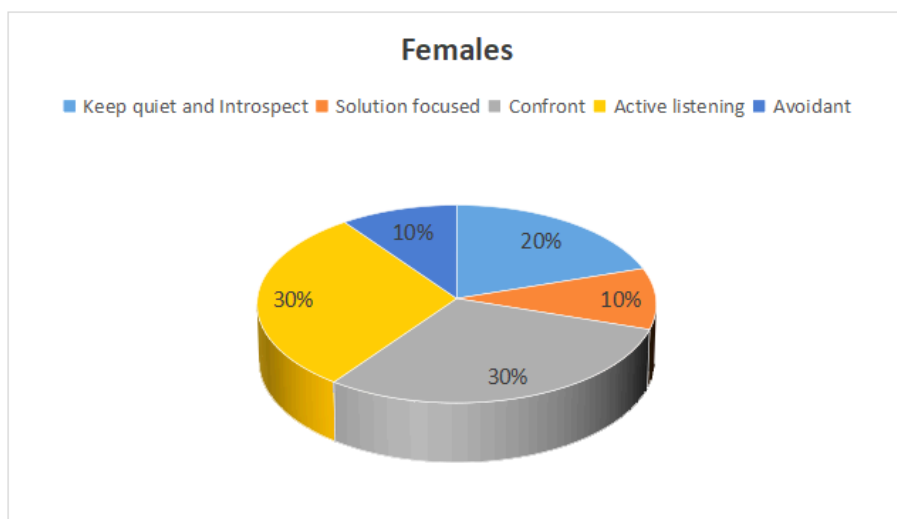
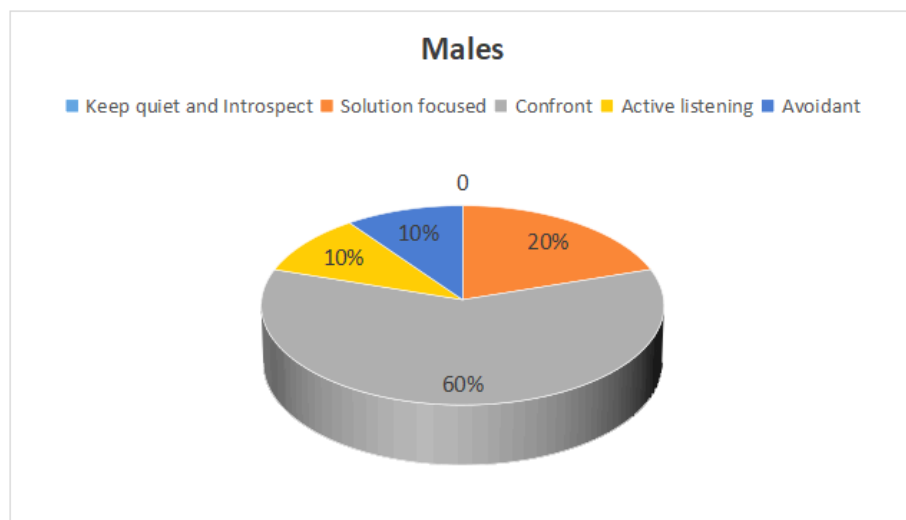
Fig 14: Openness- Female responses.

Fig 15: Openness: Male responses.



In response to “In challenging times how do you initiate conversations with your partner?”, among females, 30% preferred confrontation in openness to communication, while 30% opted for active listening. Additionally, 20% indicated a preference for keeping quiet and introspecting, and 10% each chose solution-focused and avoidant approaches. In contrast, among males, the predominant choice was confrontation, with 60% selecting this strategy. Solution-focused and active listening were chosen by 20% and 10% of males, respectively, while quiet and introspect was not chosen and avoidant approaches were selected by 10% each. This suggests that males tend to favor more confrontational communication as compared to females, who exhibit a more balanced distribution across various approaches.

Table 10: How do you handle conflicts in your relationship?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Emotional support	4	40%	2	20%
Avoidant	3	30%	1	10%
Active listening	2	20%	1	10%
Assertive	1	10%	2	20%
Solution focused	0	0	4	40%

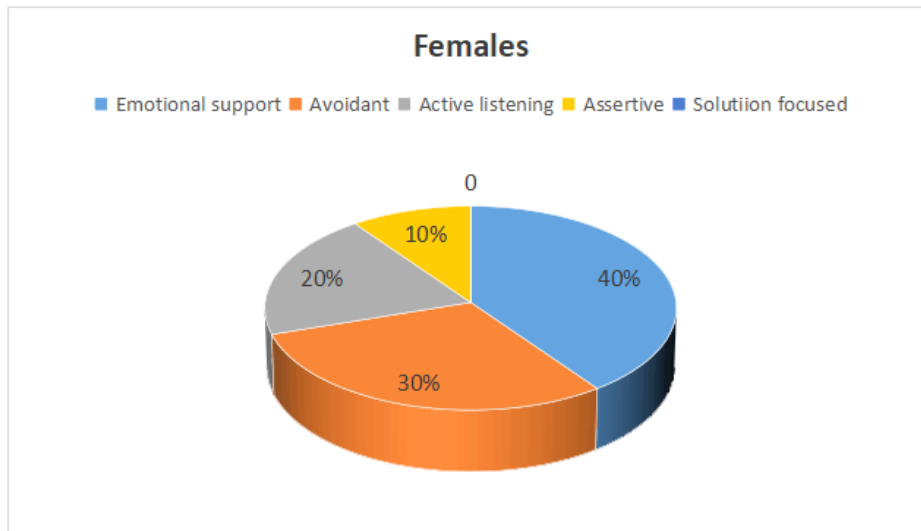
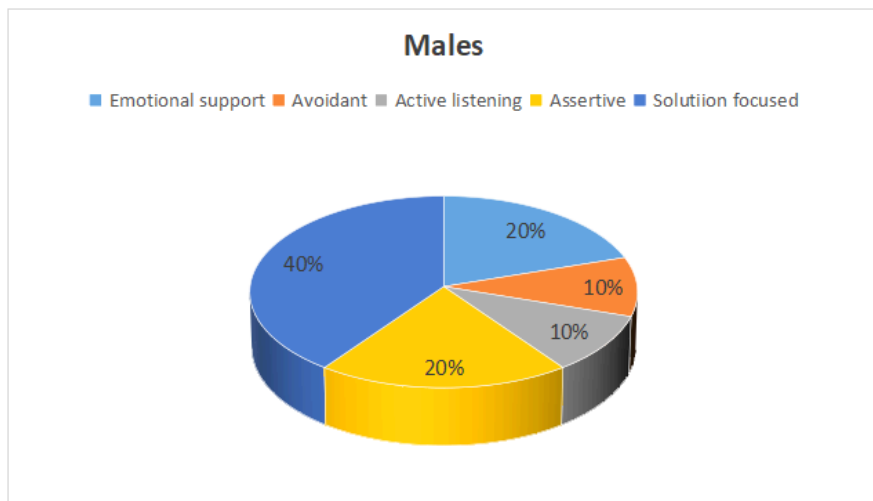
Fig 16: Conflict management- Female responses.

Fig 17: Conflict management: Male responses.



In response to “How do you handle conflicts in your relationship?”, among females, emotional support emerged as the most preferred strategy, with 40% of respondents selecting it. Avoidant behavior and active listening were each chosen by 30% and 20% of females, respectively. Assertive communication was the least preferred choice among females, with only 10% indicating it. In contrast, among males, solution-focused approaches were the most favored, selected by 40% of respondents. Emotional support and assertive communication were each chosen by 20% of males. Avoidant behavior and active listening were each preferred by 10% of males. This suggests that while females tend to prioritize emotional support and avoidant strategies, males lean towards solution-focused and assertive approaches in handling conflicts within their relationships.

Table 11: How do you share tasks and responsibilities to support each other?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Academics	6	60%	4	40%
Career	3	30%	3	30%
Don't help	1	10%	3	30%

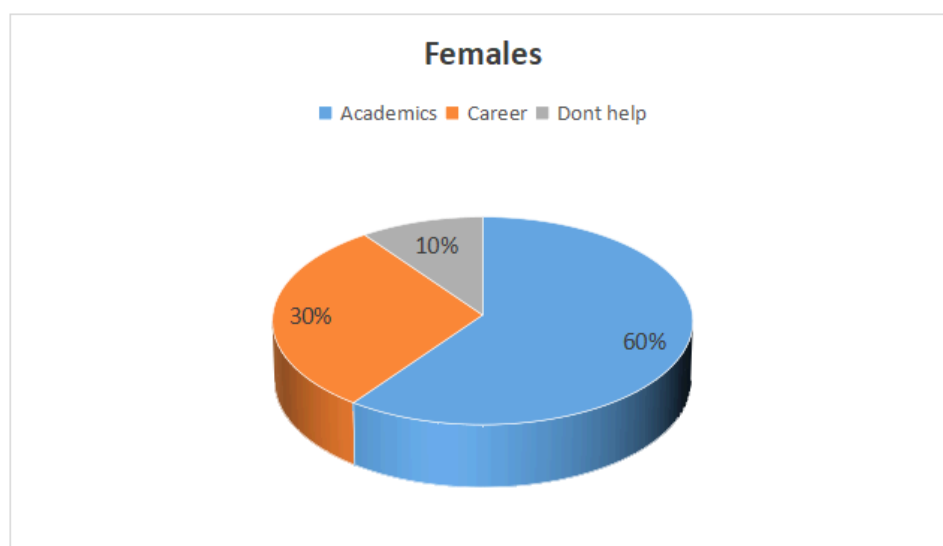
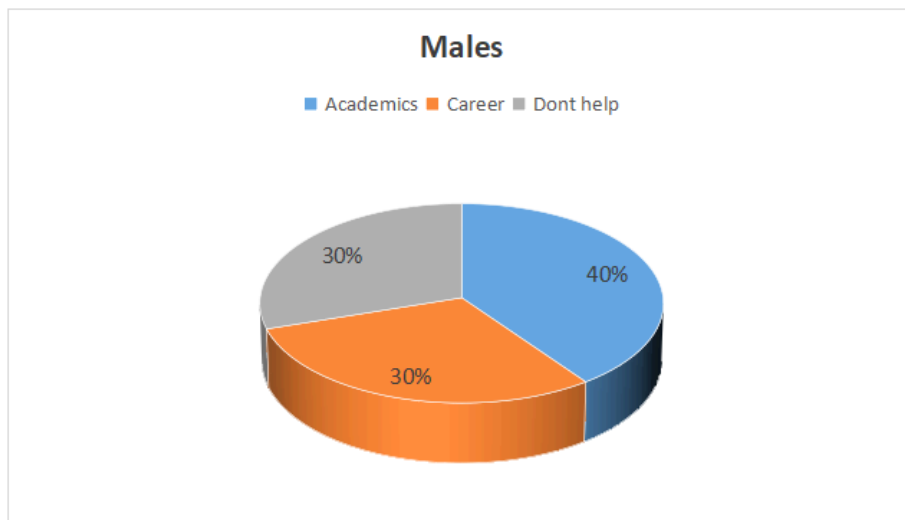
Fig 18: Shared tasks - Female responses

Fig 19: Shared tasks- Male responses



In response to “How do you share tasks and responsibilities to support each other?”, among females, the most common area of support is in academics, with 60% of respondents indicating their involvement in this domain. This suggests a significant emphasis on educational support within female relationships. Additionally, 30% of females reported sharing responsibilities related to their careers. However, there was a small percentage (10%) of females who indicated that they do not help each other with tasks and responsibilities. Among males, there was 30% of males who supported in career and 40% in academics. Interestingly, a higher percentage of males (30%) indicated that they do not help each other compared to females. This indicates some variation in the level of support and cooperation among males compared to females in sharing tasks and responsibilities to support each other.

Table 12: What advice do you give to your partner?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Family conflicts	2	20%	1	10%
Career	2	20%	3	30%
Insecurities	1	10%	0	0
Emotional validity	3	30%	5	50%
Different mindset	2	20%	0	0
Problem solving	0	0	1	10%

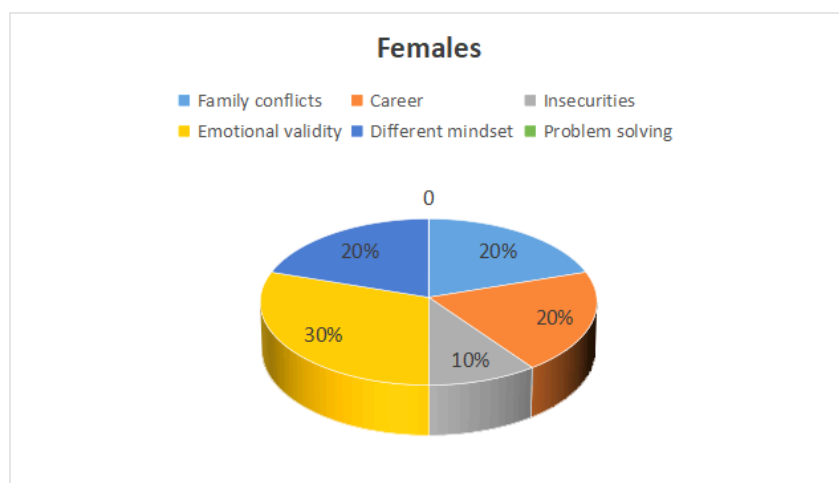
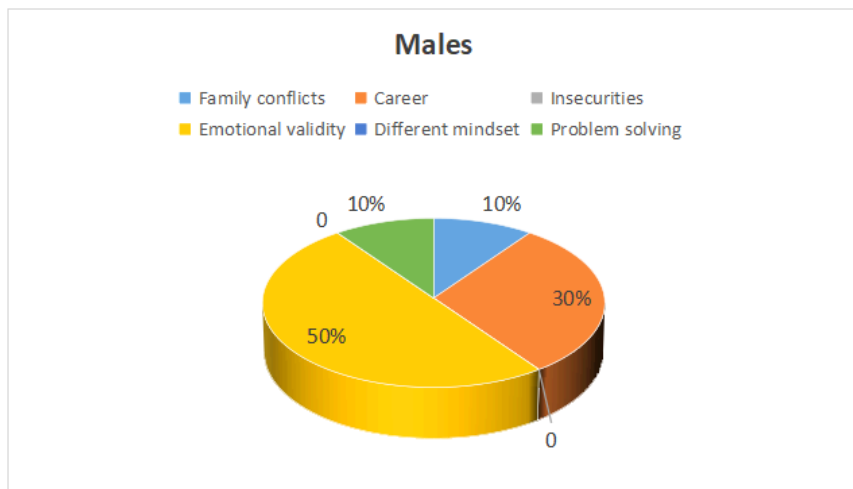
Fig 20: Advices- Female responses

Fig 21: Advices- Male responses



In response to “why are advices important from partner?”, among females, the most commonly cited factor contributing to conflicts is emotional validity, with 30% of respondents indicating this aspect. This suggests that females may perceive conflicts arising from the need for emotional validation within their relationships. Additionally, family conflicts, to get a different mindset and career-related issues were each mentioned by 20% of females, indicating a relatively balanced influence of personal and professional factors on conflicts. And 10% reported importance of advice to help remove insecurities. In contrast, among males, emotional validity emerges as the most significant factor influencing conflicts, with 50% of respondents mentioning it. This suggests a strong emphasis on emotional understanding and validation within male relationships. Career-related issues were also cited by 30% of males, indicating the significance of professional matters in conflict dynamics. Other factors such as family conflicts and different mindsets were 10%. Overall, the results highlight the importance of emotional validation and career-related concerns as key contributors to the importance of advice taking in both female and male relationships, albeit with some variations in emphasis between genders.

Table 13: Do you do any activities with your partner to maintain positivity in relationship?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Online movies/ music	3	30%	7	70%
Video games	1	10%	1	10%
Food deliver	1	10%	0	0
Trips	1	10%	1	10%
Sexting	3	30%	1	10%
Online cooking	1	10%	0	0

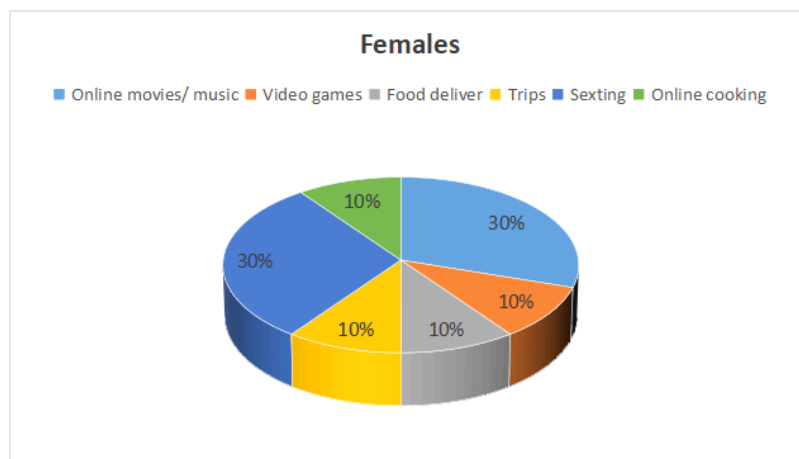
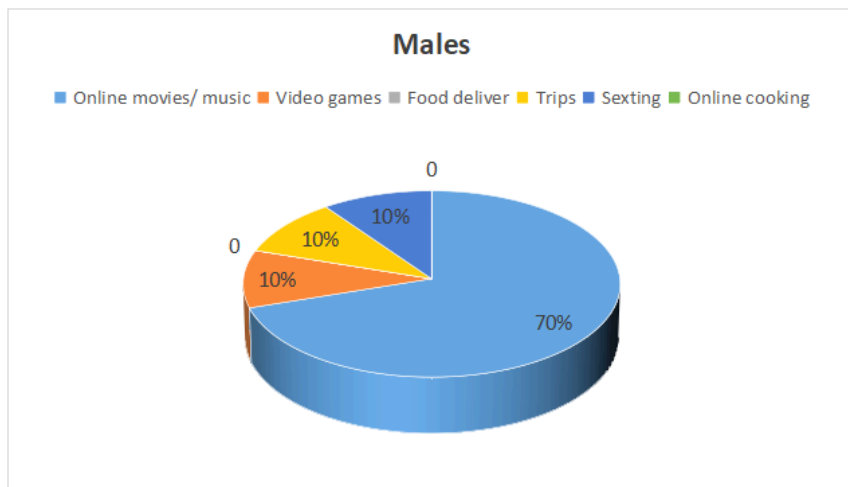
Fig 22: Positivity- Female responses

Fig 23: Positivity- Male responses



In response to “Do you do any activities with your partner to maintain positivity in relationship?”, among females, online movies/music and sexting are the most prevalent activities, each mentioned by 30% of respondents. This suggests that females may prioritize shared leisure activities and intimate communication as means of fostering positivity in their relationships. Additionally, activities such as video games, trips, and online cooking and ordering food were cited by 10% each, albeit less frequently, indicating a diversity of approaches to maintaining positivity. In contrast, among males, online movies/music emerges as the most common activity, cited by 70% of respondents. This suggests a strong preference for shared entertainment experiences among male partners. Sexting is also mentioned by 10% of males, albeit less frequently compared to females. Other activities such as video games and trips were mentioned but with lower frequencies. Overall, the results highlight a range of activities that couples engage in to cultivate positivity in their relationships, with variations observed between genders in terms of preferences and frequency of engagement.

Table 14: How does being connected with partner's family and friends help in your relationship?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Feels involved	7	70%	7	70%
Resolve conflicts	1	10%	3	30%
Sense of security	2	20%	0	0

Fig 24: Social network- Female responses

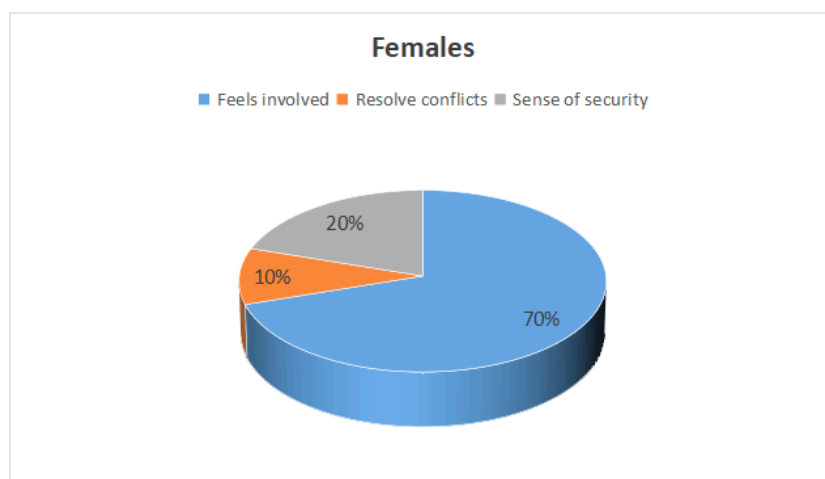
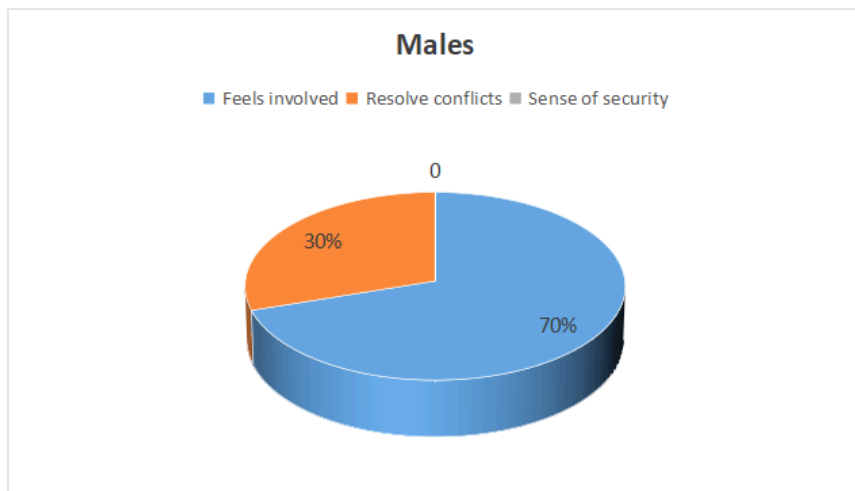


Fig 25: Social network - Male responses



In response to “How does being connected with partner’s family and friends help in your relationship?”, among females, feeling involved emerges as the most commonly cited benefit, mentioned by 70% of respondents. This suggests that females perceive being connected with their partner's family and friends as a means of fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging within their relationship. Additionally, 20% of females mentioned a sense of security as a benefit, indicating that such connections may contribute to feelings of stability and support and 10% reported that such connections help in resolving conflicts. In contrast, among males, feeling involved is also the most prevalent benefit, cited by 70% of respondents. Similar to females, this underscores the importance of familial and social connections in fostering a sense of belonging and integration within the relationship. Notably, resolving conflicts is mentioned by 30% of males as a perceived benefit, suggesting that connections with the partner's family and friends may play a role in mediating or mitigating relationship challenges. Overall, the results highlight the multifaceted benefits of being connected with one's partner's social network, with both genders emphasizing feelings of involvement as a central aspect of relationship enrichment.

Table 15: Do you share conflicts with people other than your partner?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Keep Private	6	60%	9	90%
Share for advice	1	10%	1	10%
Share to vent	3	30%	0	0

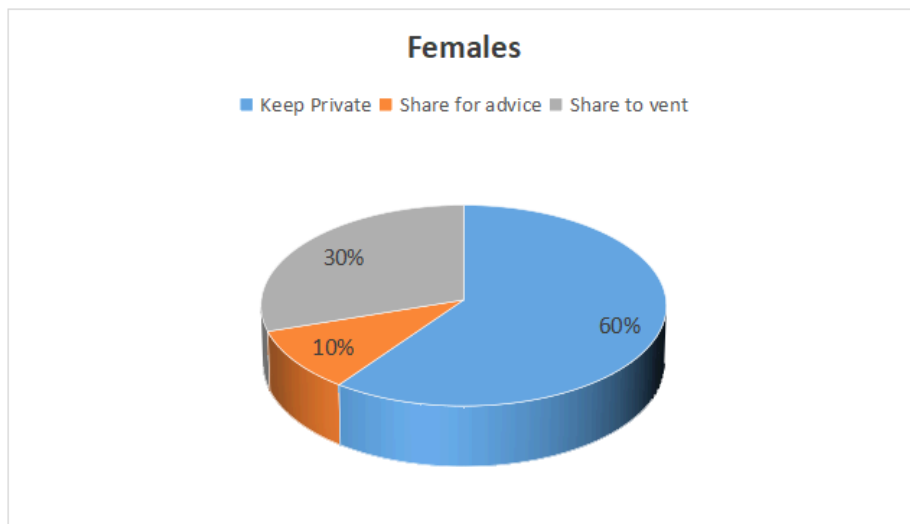
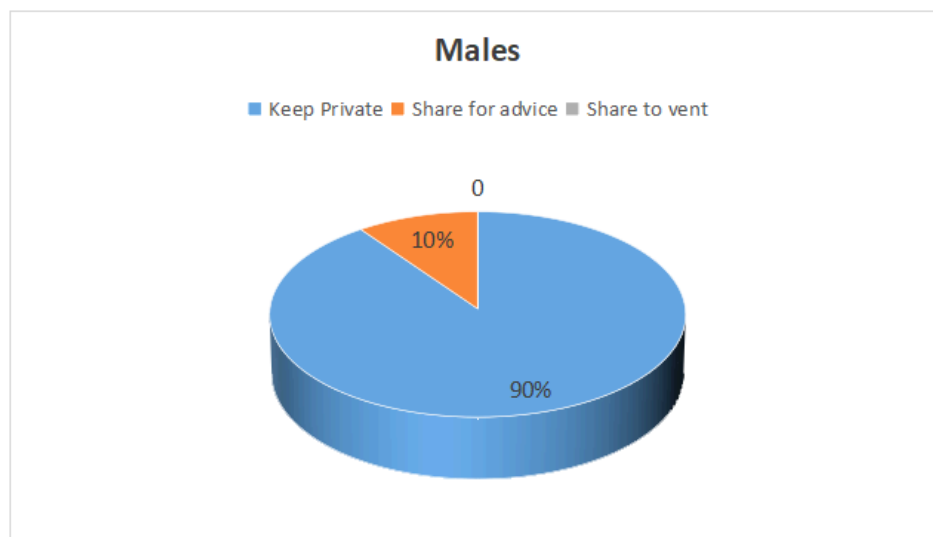
Fig 26: Share conflicts- Female responses

Fig 27: Share conflicts- Male responses



In response to “Do you share conflicts with people other than your partner?”, among females, the majority (60%) prefer to keep conflicts private, indicating a tendency to maintain discretion regarding relationship challenges. Additionally, 30% of females share conflicts to vent, suggesting a need for emotional release and support outside of the relationship. A smaller proportion (10%) opt to share conflicts for advice, indicating a desire for external perspectives and guidance. In contrast, among males, the overwhelming majority (90%) prefer to keep conflicts private, highlighting a strong inclination toward privacy and discretion in handling relationship issues. A minority (10%) share conflicts for advice, demonstrating a limited propensity to seek external guidance or perspectives. Notably, none of the male respondents indicated sharing conflicts to vent, suggesting a potential gender difference in coping mechanisms and support-seeking behaviors.

Table 16: How has LDR impacted your goals?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Career	7	70%	4	40%
Sense of responsibility	1	10%	3	30%
Emotional well being	2	20%	2	20%

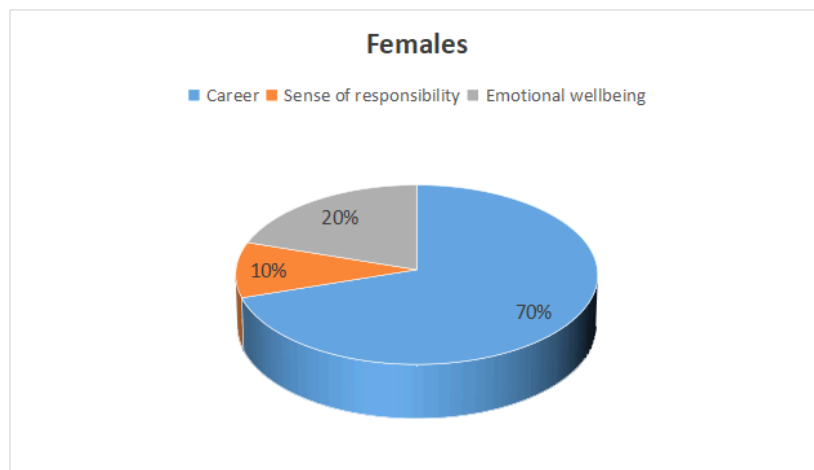
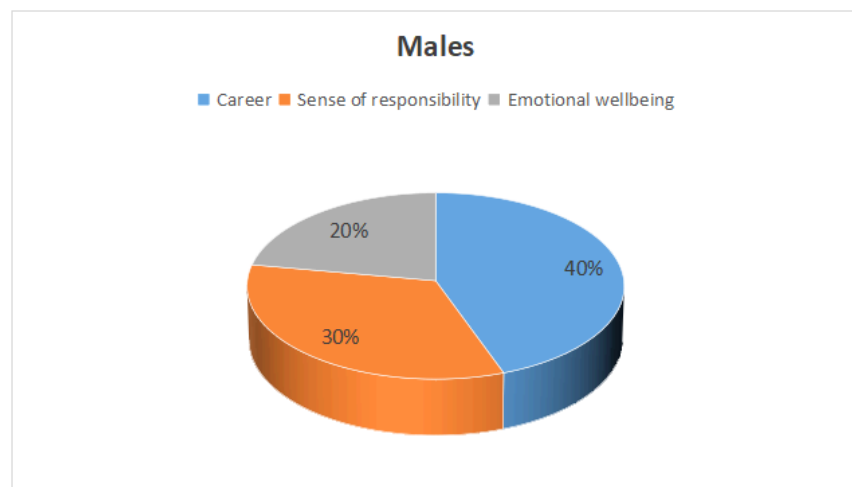
Fig 28: Goals- Female responses

Fig 29: Goals- Male responses



In response to “How has LDR impacted your goals?”, among females, a significant majority (70%) reported that LDR influenced their career goals, indicating that maintaining a long-distance relationship has implications for their professional aspirations. Additionally, 20% of females mentioned that LDR impacted their emotional well-being, suggesting potential challenges or adjustments in managing their emotional health within the context of distance. A smaller proportion (10%) identified a sense of responsibility as being influenced by LDR, implying that maintaining the relationship may affect their perceived obligations and commitments. Among males, career goals were also significantly impacted, albeit to a lesser extent compared to females, with 40% indicating such an influence. This suggests that maintaining an LDR may prompt males to consider how their career choices align with the demands of the relationship. Additionally, 30% of males mentioned a sense of responsibility being affected by LDR, indicating an awareness of the relational commitments and obligations associated with distance. Similarly, 20% of males cited an impact on their emotional well-being, suggesting that managing emotions and psychological well-being may be a consideration in navigating the challenges of LDR.

Table 17: How has LDR impacted your personal growth?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Expressiveness	4	40%	3	30%
Confidence	1	10%	0	0
Emotion Growth	3	30%	5	50%
Patience	2	20%	1	10%
Time management	0	0	1	10%

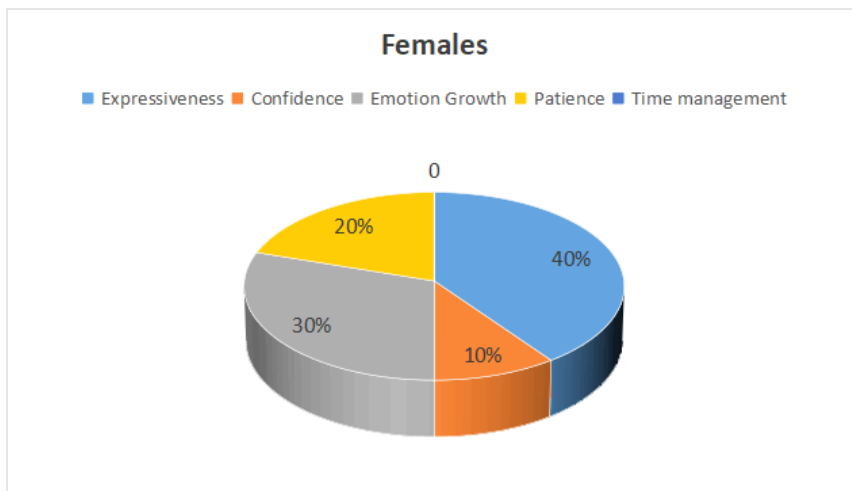
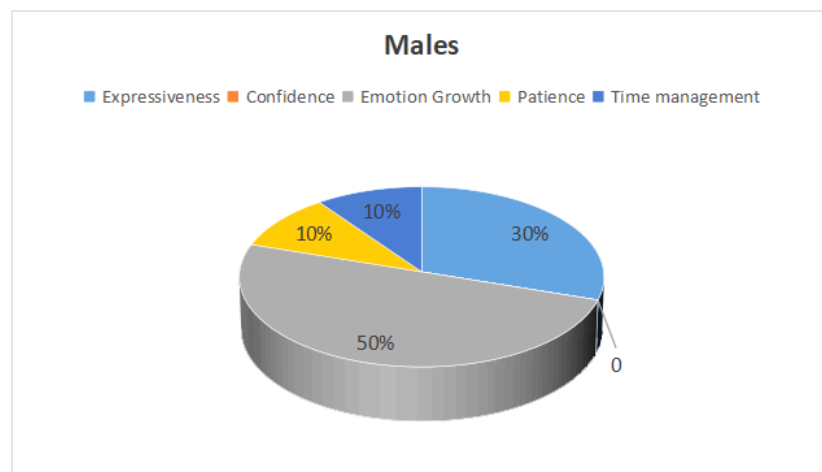
Fig 30: Personal growth- Female responses

Fig 31: Personal growth- Male responses



In response to “How has LDR impacted your personal growth?”, among females, the most frequently reported aspect of personal growth impacted by LDR is expressiveness, with 40% of respondents mentioning its influence. This suggests that maintaining an LDR may provide opportunities for females to enhance their ability to express themselves effectively, possibly due to increased reliance on communication methods such as texting or video calls. Additionally, 30% of females identified emotional growth as being impacted by LDR, indicating that distance may foster emotional resilience and maturity. A smaller proportion (20%) mentioned patience, suggesting that navigating the challenges of distance may contribute to the development of patience in managing relationship dynamics. Confidence was mentioned by 10% of females, albeit less frequently compared to other aspects, indicating that LDR may have a varied impact on individual confidence levels. Among males, emotional growth emerged as the most frequently reported aspect of personal growth influenced by LDR, with 50% of respondents indicating its impact. This suggests that distance may prompt males to confront and manage their emotions more effectively, contributing to their emotional growth and resilience. Expressiveness was mentioned by 30% of males, indicating a similar trend as observed among females, whereby LDR may provide opportunities for enhancing communication skills. Additionally, 10% of males cited patience and time management as being influenced by LDR, suggesting that managing the demands of a long-distance relationship may necessitate the development of these skills

Table 18: How does sharing vulnerabilities with your partner impact you?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Increase understanding	4	40%	1	10%
Emotional support	5	50%	3	30%
Remove false assumptions	0	0	1	10%
Not share	1	10%	5	50%

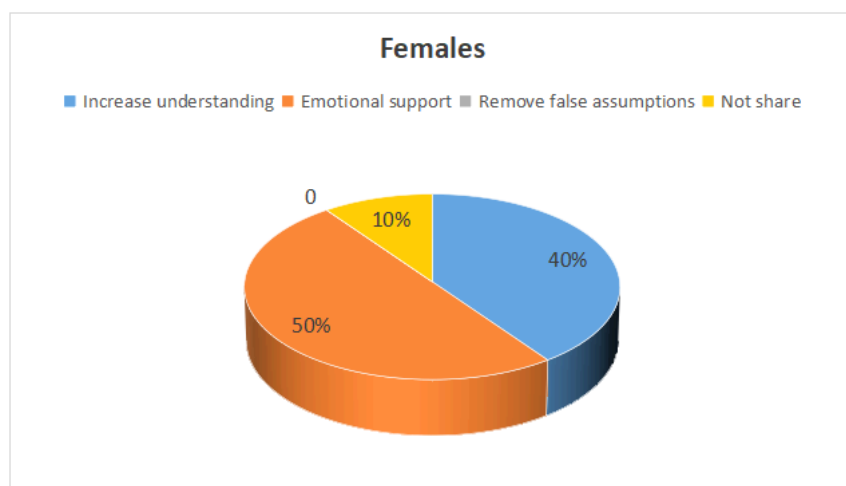
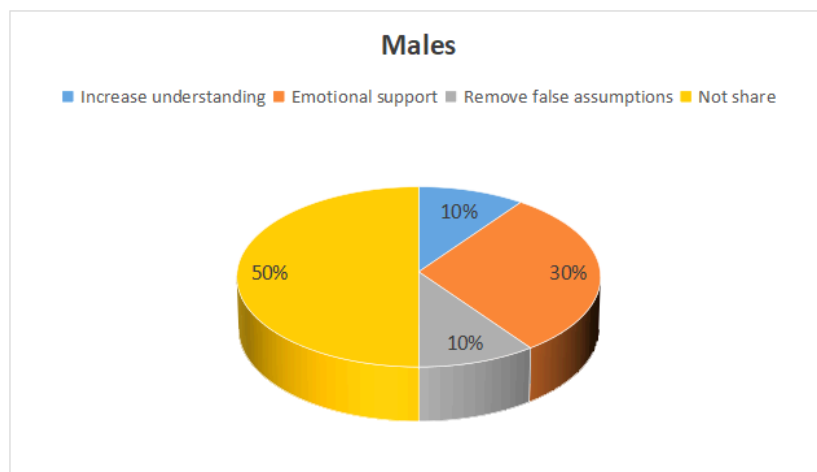
Fig 32: Vulnerabilities: Female responses

Fig 33: Vulnerabilities: Male responses



In response to “How does sharing vulnerabilities with your partner impact you?”, among females, the most frequently reported impact of sharing vulnerabilities is emotional support, with 50% of respondents indicating its significance. This suggests that sharing vulnerabilities fosters a sense of emotional connection and support within the relationship, allowing females to feel understood and validated by their partners. Additionally, 40% of females mentioned that sharing vulnerabilities increases understanding, indicating that it enhances communication and empathy between partners, leading to a deeper understanding of each other's feelings and experiences. A smaller proportion (10%) indicated a preference for not sharing vulnerabilities, suggesting that some females may be hesitant to open up about their vulnerabilities or may perceive it as unnecessary in their relationship dynamics. Among males, emotional support emerged as the most frequently reported impact of sharing vulnerabilities, with 30% of respondents mentioning its significance. This indicates that sharing vulnerabilities allows males to receive emotional support from their partners, fostering a sense of connection and trust. Additionally, 10% of males mentioned that sharing vulnerabilities helps remove false assumptions, suggesting that it facilitates clarity and understanding within the relationship by dispelling misconceptions or misunderstandings. However, a notable proportion (50%) of males indicated a preference for not sharing vulnerabilities, implying that most males may feel uncomfortable or reluctant to disclose their vulnerabilities within the relationship.

Table 19: How does being able to trust your partner impact you?

Category	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Sense of security	2	20%	0	0
Emotional wellbeing	2	20%	1	10%
Ensures future	3	30%	5	50%
Reduces overthinking	2	20%	0	0
Personal growth	1	10%	4	40%

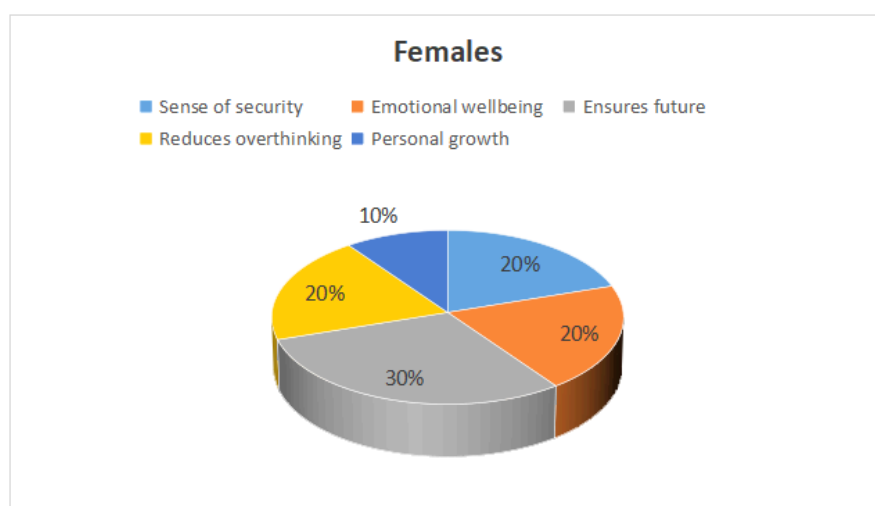
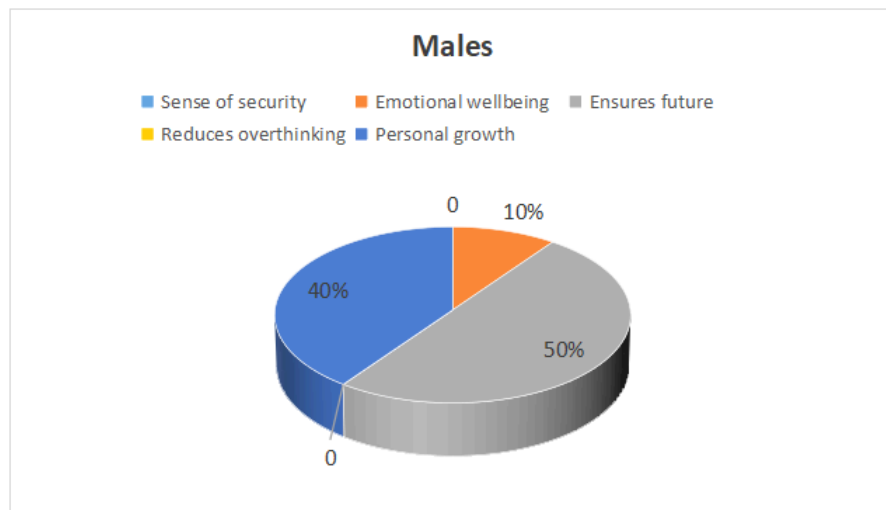
Fig 34: Trusting - Female responses

Fig 35: Trusting- Male responses



In response to “ How does being able to trust your partner impact you?”, among females, the most frequently reported impact of trusting their partner is ensuring the future, with 30% of respondents mentioning its significance. This suggests that trust in the relationship provides females with a sense of confidence and assurance about the future trajectory of their partnership, contributing to a stable and secure relationship dynamic. Additionally, 20% of females mentioned that trust reduces overthinking, indicating that it alleviates anxieties and insecurities by fostering a sense of certainty and reliability in the relationship. Emotional well-being and a sense of security were each mentioned by 20% of females, highlighting the importance of trust in promoting emotional stability and a feeling of safety within the relationship. Personal growth emerged as the least frequently reported impact, with 10% of females indicating its significance, suggesting that while trust may contribute to personal development, it may not be the primary focus for females in the context of trust within the relationship. Among males, ensuring the future was the most frequently reported impact of trusting their partner, with 50% of respondents mentioning its significance. This suggests that trust plays a crucial role in providing males with confidence and assurance about the future prospects of their relationship, contributing to their overall sense of security and stability. Additionally, personal growth emerged as a significant impact, with 40% of males indicating its significance, suggesting that trust fosters an environment conducive to personal development and self-improvement for males within the

relationship. Emotional well-being was mentioned by 10% of males, indicating that trust contributes to their emotional stability and happiness within the relationship.

5.2 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The mean, standard deviation, correlation, regression and independent sample t tests were performed for the variables being studied.

5.2.1 Results of Proximal relationship

Table 1- Descriptives Statistics

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Responsive	80	57.52	28.00	277.02	16.00	2504.0
Self disclosure	80	16.05	17.00	3.44	7.00	20.0
Blocked	80	19.09	19.00	3.36	12.00	24.0
Personal growth	80	40.54	41.00	6.31	27.00	54.0
Collaborating	80	8.86	9.00	1.54	6.00	12.0
Competing	80	7.06	7.00	2.03	4.00	12.0
Avoiding	80	7.66	7.00	1.73	4.00	12.0
Accommodating	80	8.24	8.00	1.92	4.00	12.0
Compromising	80	8.05	8.00	1.97	5.00	12.0

Table 2- Correlation Analysis for Communication styles, Personal growth initiative and Conflict management styles in Proximal relationship

Correlation Matrix

	Responsive	Self disclosure	Blocked	Personal growth	Collaborating	Competing	Avoiding	Accomodating	Compromising
Responsive	—								
Self disclosure	-0.156	—							
Blocked	-0.037	0.094	—						
Personal growth	-0.120	-0.200	0.106	—					
Collaborating	0.228*	-0.295**	-0.034	0.035	—				
Competing	-0.121	-0.135	-0.077	0.440***	0.104	—			
Avoiding	0.084	-0.146	-0.067	0.027	0.501***	0.331**	—		
Accomodating	0.167	-0.013	-0.187	0.061	0.020	-0.186	0.078	—	
Compromising	0.168	-0.246*	-0.348**	0.141	0.148	0.148	0.306**	0.610***	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

As shown in the table, significant correlations were observed between certain independent and dependent variables:

A significant negative correlation was observed between Responsive and Competing ($r = -0.406$, $p < .001$). A significant negative correlation was identified between Responsive and Avoiding ($r = -0.281$, $p = 0.012$). Responsive communication is also positively correlated with Accommodating conflict management at ($r = 0.276$, $p = 0.013$). A significant negative correlation emerged between Self-disclosure and Collaborating ($r = -0.295$, $p = 0.008$). Self disclosure is also negatively correlated with Compromising conflict management at ($r = -0.246$, $p = 0.028$). Blocked communication style and Compromising conflict management have a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.348$, $p = 0.002$).

However, no significant correlations were observed between Responsive, Self disclosure and Blocked with any of the dependent variables.

Table 3 - Regression Analysis for Responsive communication style and Competing conflict management:

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		
		Beta	t	Sig.

	B	Std. Error				Adjusted R square	F
(Constant)	12.506	1.403		8.911	0.000		
Responsive	-0.205	0.052	- 0.406	-3.922	0.000	0.154	15.383

- a. Criterion: Competing
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsive

Adjusted R square value is 0.154. 15.4% of the variance in the outcome variable is accounted for by the predictor variables included in the model. The B value is -0.205, indicating that for each one unit decrease in Responsive, the outcome variable decreases by 0.205.

Table 4- Regression Analysis for Responsive communication and Avoiding Conflict management.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Adjusted R square	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t			
(Constant)	10.875	1.256		8.658	0.000		
Responsive	-0.121	0.047	- 0.281	-2.586	0.012	0.067	6.689

- a. Criterion : Avoiding
- b. Predictor: (Constant), Responsive

The adjusted R-square value (0.067) indicates the proportion of variance in Avoiding Conflict Management explained by Responsive Communication. 6.7% of the variance in Avoiding Conflict Management is accounted for by Responsive Communication. The B value is -0.121, indicating that for each one unit decrease in Responsive Communication, Avoiding Conflict Management decreases by 0.281.

Table 5- Regression Analysis for Responsive communication and Accommodating conflict management

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Adjusted R square	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	4.728	1.401		3.375	0.001		
Responsive	0.132	0.052	0.276	2.533	0.013	0.064	6.416

- a. Criterion: Accommodating
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsive

The adjusted R-square value (0.064) indicates the proportion of variance in Accommodating Conflict Management explained by Responsive Communication. 6.4% of the variance in Accommodating Conflict Management is accounted for by Responsive Communication. The B value is 0.132, indicating that for each one unit increase in Responsive Communication, Accommodating Conflict Management increases by 0.132.

Table 6- Regression Analysis for Self Disclosure and Collaborating conflict management.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Adjusted R square	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	10.980	0.795		13.815	0.000		
Self disclosure	-0.132	0.048	- 0.295	-2.724	0.008	0.075	7.420

- a. Criterion: Collaborating
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Self disclosure

The adjusted R-square value (0.075) indicates the proportion of variance in Collaborating Conflict Management explained by Self-Disclosure. 7.5% of the variance in Collaborating Conflict Management is accounted for by Self-Disclosure. The B value is -0.132, indicating that for each one unit decrease in Self-Disclosure, Collaborating Conflict Management decreases by 0.132.

Table 7- Regression Analysis for Self disclosure and Compromising conflict management

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Adjusted R square	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	10.317	1.033		9.990	0.000		
Self disclosure	-0.141	0.063	-0.246	-2.245	0.028	0.049	5.038

- a. Criterion: Compromising
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Self disclosure

The adjusted R-square value (0.049) indicates the proportion of variance in Compromising Conflict Management explained by Self-Disclosure. 4.9% of the variance in Compromising Conflict Management is accounted for by Self-Disclosure. The Beta value is -0.246, indicating that for each one standard deviation decrease in Self-Disclosure, Compromising Conflict Management decreases by 0.246 standard deviations. This coefficient is statistically significant ($t = -2.245, p = 0.028$).

Table 8- Regression Analysis for Blocked communication and Compromising conflict management

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Adjusted R square	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t			
(Constant)	11.950	1.208		9.892	0.000		
Blocked	-0.204	0.062	- 0.348	-3.278	0.002	0.110	10.743

a. Criterion: Compromising

b. Predictors: (Constant), Blocked

The adjusted R-square value (0.110) indicates the proportion of variance in Compromising Conflict Management explained by Blocked Communication. 11.0% of the variance in Compromising Conflict Management is accounted for by Blocked Communication. The B value is -0.204, indicating that for each one unit decrease in Blocked Communication, Compromising Conflict Management decreases by 0.204.

Table 9- Independent sample t test- Males > Females.

		Statistic	df	p
Responsive	Student's t	0.971 ^a	78.0	0.167
Self disclosure	Student's t	-4.310 ^a	78.0	1.000
Blocked	Student's t	-3.199 ^a	78.0	0.999
Personal growth	Student's t	2.745	78.0	0.004
Collaborating	Student's t	2.153	78.0	0.017

Competing	Student's t	2.323	78.0	0.011
Avoiding	Student's t	0.193	78.0	0.424
Accommodating	Student's t	2.852	78.0	0.003
Compromising	Student's t	4.889	78.0	< .001

The results revealed significant differences between the groups in terms of (Males > Females): The mean score for Personal Growth was significantly higher in one group compared to the other ($t(78) = 2.745$, $p = 0.004$). Significant differences were observed in the mean scores for Collaborating between the groups ($t(78) = 2.153$, $p = 0.017$). There were significant variations in the mean scores for Competing between the groups ($t(78) = 2.323$, $p = 0.011$). The mean score for Accommodating significantly differed between the groups ($t(78) = 2.852$, $p = 0.003$). Significant differences were found in the mean scores for Compromising between the groups ($t(78) = 4.889$, $p < .001$). Responsive, self disclosure and blocked communication did not have any significant differences.

Table 10- Independent Sample t test- Females > Males:

		Statistic	df	p
Responsive	Student's t	0.971	78.0	0.833
Self disclosure	Student's t	-4.310	78.0	< .001
Blocked	Student's t	-3.199	78.0	< .001
Personal growth	Student's t	2.745	78.0	0.996
Collaborating	Student's t	2.153	78.0	0.983

Competing	Student's t	2.323	78.0	0.989
Avoiding	Student's t	0.193	78.0	0.576
Accommodating	Student's t	2.852	78.0	0.997
Compromising	Student's t	4.889	78.0	1.000

The mean score for Self-disclosure was significantly lower in one group compared to the other ($t(78) = -4.310, p < .001$). Significant differences were observed in the mean scores for Blocked between the groups ($t(78) = -3.199, p < .001$)

However there was no significant difference found in Responsive, self disclosure, personal growth, Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding, Accommodating and Compromising conflict management.

5.2.2 Results of Long distance relationships

Table 11- Descriptives Statistics: Long distance relationship

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Responsive	44	27.93	29.00	3.78	18	33
Self disclosure	44	17.00	18.00	3.49	8	20
Blocked	44	20.43	21.00	3.19	14	25
Personal growth	44	41.05	43.00	7.69	19	52
Collaborating	44	8.80	9.00	2.16	4	12
Competing	44	7.11	7.00	1.40	5	10

Avoiding	44	6.48	6.50	1.96	3	11
Accommodating	44	8.45	9.00	1.41	6	11
Compromising	44	7.75	8.00	1.43	4	10

Table 12- Correlation Analysis- Long distance relationship

	Responsive	Self disclosure	Blocked	Personal growth	Collaborating	Competing	Avoiding	Accommodating
Responsive	—							
Self disclosure	0.707***	—						
Blocked	0.610***	0.704***	—					
Personal growth	0.112	0.149	0.359*	—				
Collaborating	0.206	0.345*	0.678***	0.571***	—			
Competing	-0.161	0.010	0.140	0.164	0.338*	—		
Avoiding	0.136	0.139	-0.350*	-0.324*	-0.586***	-0.232	—	
Accommodating	-0.003	-0.232	-0.169	0.248	0.047	-0.133	0.088	—
Compromising	-0.089	0.177	0.136	0.219	0.163	-0.067	-0.131	0.335*

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Significant correlations were observed between several variables: There is a significant positive correlation between Self disclosure and collaborating conflict management ($r= 0.345$, $p= 0.002$). Blocked communication styles also have positive correlation with Personal growth initiative ($r= 0.359$, $p= 0.017$) and Collaborating conflict management ($r= 0.578$, $p < 0.001$).

However no other significant correlations were found in data of long distance relationship.

Table 13- Independent Sample t test- Males>Females

		Statistic	df	p
Responsive	Student's t	-0.834	42.0	0.796
Self disclosure	Student's t	-0.428	42.0	0.664
Blocked	Student's t	0.422	42.0	0.338
Personal growth	Student's t	0.820	42.0	0.208
Collaborating	Student's t	1.484	42.0	0.073
Competing	Student's t	0.106	42.0	0.458
Avoiding	Student's t	-1.320	42.0	0.903
Accommodating	Student's t	2.500	42.0	0.008
Compromising	Student's t	2.320	42.0	0.013

The mean score for Accommodating was significantly higher in one group compared to the other ($t(42) = 2.500$, $p = 0.008$). Significant differences were observed in the mean scores for Compromising between the groups ($t(42) = 2.320$, $p = 0.013$).

However, Responsive, self disclosure, blocked communication, Collaborating, Competing and Avoiding conflict management did not have any significant differences.

Table 14: Independent sample t test- Females>Males

		Statistic	df	p
Responsive	Student's t	-0.834	42.0	0.204
Self disclosure	Student's t	-0.428	42.0	0.336
Blocked	Student's t	0.422	42.0	0.662
Personal growth	Student's t	0.820	42.0	0.792
Collaborating	Student's t	1.484	42.0	0.927
Competing	Student's t	0.106	42.0	0.542
Avoiding	Student's t	-1.320	42.0	0.097
Accommodating	Student's t	2.500	42.0	0.992
Compromising	Student's t	2.320	42.0	0.987

There were no significant differences in the mean score of Responsive, Self disclosure, Blocked communication styles, Personal growth, Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding, Accommodation and Compromising conflict management between the two groups.

Table 14: Independent sample t test: Males proximal relationship and Males Long distance

		Statistics	df	p	Standard error diff
Responsive-Males	LDR	Student's t	60	0.167	1.237
	Proximal	Student's t	48.159		1.193
Self disclosure- Males	LDR	Student's t	60	0.004	0.979
	Proximal	Student's t	55.772		0.889
Blocked-Males	LDR	Student's t	60	0.164	0.796
	Proximal	Student's t	35.480		0.853
Personal growth-Males	LDR	Student's t	60	0.029	1.881
	Proximal	Student's t	34.512		2.038
Collaborating-Males	LDR	Student's t	60	0.130	0.521
	Proximal	Student's t	35.882		0.557
Competing-Males	LDR	Student's t	60	0.205	0.527
	Proximal	Student's t	55.151		0.481
Avoiding-Males	LDR	Student's t	60	0.941	0.487

	Proximal	Student's t	41.419		0.495
Accommodating-Males	LDR	Student's t	60	0.014	0.476
	Proximal	Student's t	52.167		0.445
Compromising-Males	LDR	Student's t	60	0.151	0.441
	Proximal	Student's t	55.715		0.401

For the variable Responsive there was no statistically significant difference between males in LDR and males in proximal relationships ($p = 0.167$). Similarly, for the variables Blocked, Collaborating, Competing, and Avoiding, there were no significant differences between the two groups.

However, significant differences were found between males in LDR and proximal relationships for the variables Self-disclosure, Personal growth, Accommodating, and Compromising. Males in LDR reported significantly higher levels of Self-disclosure ($p = 0.004$), Personal growth ($p = 0.029$), Accommodating ($p = 0.014$), and Compromising ($p = 0.151$) compared to males in proximal relationships.

Table 16: Independent sample t test- Females of proximal relationships and Females of Long distance relationship.

		Statistics	df	p	Standard error diff
Responsive-Females	LDR	Student's t	60	0.632	0.769
	Proximal	Student's t	37.240		0.810
Self disclosure-females	LDR	Student's t	60	0.003	0.736

	Proximal	Student's t	25.241		0.907
Blocked-Females	LDR	Student's t	60	0.161	0.897
	Proximal	Student's t	50.766		0.848
Personal growth-Females	LDR	Student's t	60	0.608	1.665
	Proximal	Student's t	36.852		1.762
Collaborating-Females	LDR	Student's t	60	0.010	0.401
	Proximal	Student's t	28.811		0.466
Competing-Females	LDR	Student's t	60	0.060	0.422
	Proximal	Student's t	56.282		0.382
Avoiding-Females	LDR	Student's t	60	0.363	0.475
	Proximal	Student's t	37.589		0.499
Accommodating-Females	LDR	Student's t	60	0.040	0.414
	Proximal	Student's t	59.056		0.363
Compromising-Females	LDR	Student's t	60	0.214	0.417
	Proximal	Student's t	49.055		0.399

For the variables Responsive, Blocked, Compromising, Personal growth, Competing and Avoiding, there were no statistically significant differences between females in LDR and females in proximal relationships.

Significant differences were found between females in LDR and proximal relationships for the variables Self-disclosure, Collaborating and Accommodating. Females in LDR reported significantly higher levels of Self-disclosure ($p = 0.003$), Collaborating ($p = 0.010$), Accommodating ($p = 0.040$) compared to females in proximal relationships. However, females in LDR reported significantly lower levels of Competing ($p = 0.060$) compared to females in proximal relationships.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

A. QUALITATIVE

The qualitative results gave us essential information on gender differences. The data was represented in tables and pie charts. Following are the emerging themes:

Theme 1: Communication

This theme talked about the factors related to communication. Communication is a medium through which information between two people is exchanged. Due to increased utilization of technology and globalization, LDRs heavily depend on various communication technologies such as phone calls, video chats, texting, and social media platforms to stay connected. However, Unlike face-to-face interactions, partners in LDRs rely on these tools to maintain communication and intimacy. Therefore, verbal communication becomes the primary mode of interaction in LDRs, as opposed to non-verbal cues like touch or body language. This can lead to a deeper focus on sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences through conversation. Due to time zone differences or busy schedules, partners in LDRs often need to schedule their communication sessions in advance. This scheduling can create a structured approach to communication but may also lead to feelings of pressure or routine.

Subtheme 1: Medium of communication:

The preference for communication mediums in long-distance relationships (LDRs) plays a pivotal role in maintaining intimacy and connection between partners. The qualitative findings reveal a clear preference for video calls among both females and males, highlighting the importance of visual engagement and nonverbal cues in fostering emotional connection and relational satisfaction. The predominance of video calls over voice calls and text messaging underscores the significance of face-to-face interaction, even in the absence of physical proximity. This preference aligns with previous research emphasizing the role of visual communication in reducing feelings of loneliness and enhancing relational closeness within LDRs (Kernsmith & Kernsmith, 2018). The absence of a preference for text messaging among

males may reflect a desire for more immediate and immersive forms of communication, while females exhibit a more balanced preference across mediums. “It's always like video call. I prefer video call. And at times when video call is not available, then simple calling and thereafter text. WhatsApp is the easiest way to feel connected. So yes, hardly on SMSs. But yeah, I'm connected with WhatsApp, video calls, FaceTime and calls.”

“Mostly video calls, mostly. Okay. Most of the time video call”

Subtheme 2: The initiation of conversations-

within romantic relationships serves as a crucial indicator of communication dynamics and relational engagement. The qualitative findings reveal a notable trend towards mutual initiation of conversations among participants, suggesting a shared responsibility and active participation in maintaining communication channels. This mutual engagement underscores a sense of reciprocity and mutual interest in sustaining the relationship, reflecting a collaborative approach to communication. Additionally, the observation that females are perceived as the initiators in 35% of cases highlights the role of women in driving interpersonal communication and fostering relational connection. This aligns with existing research emphasizing women's propensity for relational maintenance behaviors and their role as primary communicators within intimate relationships (Roberts & Dunbar, 2011). Conversely, the lower percentage of males initiating conversations may reflect traditional gender norms or communication patterns, where men may exhibit a tendency towards passive communication roles or rely on non-verbal cues to signal interest. “Yeah, I think it's from both the sides, so some days he calls, some days I call.” “It depends on the situation like whenever I need her, like what we can say. Whenever I need her, I need to talk to her. Like I am missing her, then I call her. And when she misses me, then she calls me. Yeah, so it's mutual. Yeah.”

Subtheme 3: Expressiveness

The significant percentage of participants identifying females as more expressive aligns with traditional gender stereotypes and societal expectations regarding women's emotional openness and communication skills (Hall, 2015). Women are often socialized to be more emotionally expressive and verbally communicative, which may contribute to their perceived dominance in

initiating conversations within romantic contexts. This finding resonates with existing literature highlighting women's tendency to engage in relational talk and emotional expression as means of building intimacy and connection within relationships (Tannen, 1990). Conversely, the lower percentage attributing expressiveness to males may reflect cultural norms discouraging emotional vulnerability or expressive communication among men (Vandello & Bosson, 2013). The limited instances of mutual expressiveness underscore the potential for shared emotional engagement and reciprocal communication patterns within romantic dyads. “Yeah, like, I am the more talkative one. And he just listens to whatever I'm saying and gives his opinion and he's like, he doesn't call me Roopal, he calls me ‘Guddu’. So, he just does that, “you're on here or you shouldn't have done that”. Yeah. I tell him everything, like everything that happens in my day and then he tells me what, how his university was and then he went to work, how did that go and everything. So, but I can say I am the more talkative one in the relationship.” “I act like typical men do. But I do have links and I think a lot about her, but I don't express much.”

Subtheme 4: Location of partner

The substantial percentage of partners located internationally highlights the globalization of romantic relationships and the increasing prevalence of cross-cultural connections facilitated by advancements in technology and transportation (Dainton & Aylor, 2002). This trend underscores the evolving nature of modern relationships, wherein individuals are increasingly open to forming romantic bonds with partners from diverse cultural backgrounds despite geographical distances. The significant portion of participants with partners within the same state domestically suggests the enduring appeal of proximity in fostering intimacy and shared experiences within relationships (Pistole et al., 2010). Conversely, the smaller percentage of partners in different states domestically reflects the challenges posed by distance even within the same country, which may necessitate navigating logistical hurdles adjusting communication patterns to maintain relational satisfaction (Stafford & Merolla, 2007). “

Theme 2: Importance of Reassurance

Females and males alike prioritize emotional validation as a crucial aspect of reassuring their partners, reflecting a fundamental need for empathy, understanding, and support within intimate connections. However, the reasons driving this need vary slightly between genders, with females

more inclined to seek reassurance to address insecurities and uncertainties. This suggests a greater sensitivity to emotional vulnerabilities and a desire for validation in navigating relationship dynamics among females. Conversely, males predominantly emphasize emotional validation as a means to reassure their partners, indicating a focus on fostering emotional intimacy and connection.

Subtheme 1: Insecurities

Insecurities can arise from various sources, such as past experiences, self-doubt, or fear of rejection. Receiving reassurance from a partner helps reduce these insecurities by providing emotional validation, support, and affirmation of one's worth and value within the relationship. It reinforces the feelings of acceptance and belonging, leading to a sense of security and confidence in oneself and the relationship. “And he felt that I'm decent looking, so I would get hit on. And he didn't know how I would take it. So he was very insecure about that. But I think I'm a very loyal person, like very, very loyal. So yeah, like, he never, when he wanted me to like reassure him, I kept him on calls the entire day as well, if that's what he wanted.”

Subtheme 2: Uncertainties

Uncertainties can arise due to changes in circumstances, future plans, or the dynamics of the relationship. Reassurance helps partners navigate these uncertainties by giving some clarity, reassurance, and confidence in the strength of their connection. It involves open communication, honesty, and commitment to addressing concerns or doubts, which helps partners feel more secure and grounded in the relationship. “Sometimes there are some instances where I have to and sometimes it's the other way around as well because obviously there is a distance and sometimes it gets a little uncertain about things.”

Subtheme 3: False assumptions

False assumptions or overthinking can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and erosion of trust within a relationship. Reassurance helps remove these assumptions by promoting transparency, clarification, and mutual understanding between partners. It involves actively addressing misunderstandings, clarifying intentions, and reaffirming trust and commitment, which fosters a more honest and authentic connection. “Yeah I think they are pretty important because if let's

say both of us are over thinkers which we are so if either of us does not communicate very clearly or you know does not provide the reassurances one of us will spiral back into you know that rough thing and that negative aspect that you know it'll lead to more overthinking.”

Subtheme 4: Emotional validity

Emotional validity refers to respecting one's and acceptance of one's feelings and experiences within the relationship. Reassurance validates partners' emotions by providing empathy, validation, and support during times of distress or vulnerability. It involves active listening, empathy, and validation of each other's feelings, which strengthens emotional intimacy and fosters a deeper sense of connection and understanding. “It is difficult for me to be expressive. As a guy. My partner always discuss her expectations and the need to have some expression of love. And sometimes if I don't say “I love you”, she says “you don't love me”. “Now you have changed because of the distance””

Theme 3: Conflict management

Conflict arises in each moment of our lives. Whether personal or in relation to us. When ever there is more than one person there will be different opinions and that will normally lead to conflicts. Similarly two people can be different in terms of their personality, behavior and thought processes and imaginations. Therefore, even though the partners in LDR have less contact to delve into bigger fights. There are many more challenges of LDR, which can lead to conflicts. And to solve them it needs much greater acceptance, patience to understand. Therefore, it is important to know the conflict management strategies of partners in LDR.

Subtheme 1: Openness

Females demonstrate a more diverse range of strategies, with a notable emphasis on active listening and introspection, with confrontation and solution-focused approaches. This multifaceted approach suggests a willingness to engage in open dialogue, empathetic understanding, and self-reflection as means of addressing relationship challenges. In contrast, males exhibit a stronger inclination towards confrontation as the primary means of initiating conversations, indicating a preference for directness and assertiveness in addressing difficulties. While solution-focused approaches are also evident among males, they are less pronounced

compared to confrontation. The absence of quiet introspection and avoidance strategies among males suggests a tendency towards immediate engagement and problem-solving rather than withdrawing from conflict. “I mean, we both try to listen to each other's point of view to what the other person has to say about the situation. And first we listen to what the other person has to say. Then we give what we want to say about things. Then they listen to what I'm saying, what problems I had regarding the situation. Then we talk it through and then we come to a conclusion that this might be done, this was done wrong, this could have been done. So we both take each other's point of views and ideas of what they have to say about the situation.” “Like, it is always me who initiate the conversation after any conflict. As being a male partner, I'll say, I have to bow down, I have to accept defeat.”

Subtheme 2: Conflict management strategies

Females exhibit a preference for addressing conflicts through emotional support, indicating a focus on empathy, validation, and nurturing emotional connections during challenging situations. The prevalence of avoidant behavior among females suggests a tendency to withdraw or minimize confrontation in favor of preserving harmony and avoiding escalation. Additionally, active listening emerges as a moderately utilized strategy among females, highlighting a willingness to understand and empathize with their partner's perspective. In contrast, males demonstrate a stronger inclination towards solution-focused approaches, prioritizing problem-solving and practical resolutions to conflicts. The adoption of assertive communication by males underscores a willingness to express their needs and boundaries directly, albeit to a lesser extent compared to solution-focused strategies. The balanced distribution of avoidant behavior and active listening among males suggests a nuanced approach to conflict management, incorporating both engagement and restraint as necessary. “I think he understood and I understood him quite well and he was all about like, yeah, go heal yourself and I am there to help you in any way that I can. So, it was a really good understanding on which we came in the relationship. So, the foundation became very strong in our relationship.” “I express my feelings and then sometimes she proposes a solution or I propose a solution and then we like work on it.
“

Subtheme 3: Advices

Among females, emotional validity emerges as a primary factor influencing conflicts, indicating a strong need for emotional understanding and validation within female relationships. This suggests that conflicts may often stem from a lack of emotional validation or understanding of each other's feelings and perspectives. Therefore, there is a need to get support from partner in terms of advices. There is an emphasis of female participants to respond to the need to get advices on particularly family conflicts, to get a different mindset, and to resolve career-related issues. Similarly, among males, emotional validity also emerges as a significant factor influencing the need for advices, highlighting the importance of emotional understanding and validation within male relationships. The emphasis on career-related issues among males further underscores the multifaceted nature of conflicts, with professional matters playing a significant role in conflict dynamics. “ Like sometimes I miss. So, I was in National Defence Academy earlier and I get these anxiety attacks. So, in which I wish that I was back in India. So, whenever I am facing those, I call my partner and then she just calms me down and we move forward.”

Theme 4: Activities together

Apart from the communication, partners in LDR do not have the space to perform activities together the way a proximal relationship partners would. It is important because it makes people much more connect on a different level, understanding if they actually have the same interests, have common topics to talk about and feels involved in partner's life.

Subtheme 1: Shared activities

The distribution of tasks and responsibilities among couples reveals intriguing insights into gender dynamics within relationships. Among females, there is a notable emphasis on providing support in academics, reflecting a commitment to educational advancement and intellectual development within the relationship. This prioritization of educational support may signify a mutual investment in each other's personal growth and success. Additionally, a significant portion of females also contribute to sharing responsibilities related to their careers, indicating a willingness to collaborate and contribute to each other's professional endeavors. However, the

presence of a minority who do not engage in mutual support suggests potential variations in individual preferences or circumstances within female relationships. In contrast, among males, while academic support remains a prevalent area of involvement, there is a higher proportion of males who support in career-related responsibilities. This suggests a potentially broader scope of support provided by males, encompassing both academic and professional domains. However, the higher percentage of males indicating that they do not help each other compared to females hints at a potential disparity in the perceived roles and responsibilities of partners within male relationships. This variation in the level of support and cooperation among males compared to females underscores the complexity of gender roles and expectations within relationships, highlighting the importance of open communication and mutual understanding in navigating shared responsibilities and fostering equitable partnerships. “

Subtheme 2: Positivity

Among females, online movies/music and sexting emerge as the most prevalent activities, with 30% of respondents mentioning each. This suggests that females prioritize both shared leisure activities and intimate communication as means of fostering positivity in their relationships. The diversity of activities mentioned, including video games, trips, and online cooking and ordering food, indicates a varied approach to maintaining positivity among females, with a focus on both leisure and intimate interactions. In contrast, among males, online movies/music stands out as the most common activity, cited by 70% of respondents. This indicates a strong preference among male partners for shared entertainment experiences, highlighting the significance of leisure activities in fostering positivity within male relationships. While sexting is also mentioned by a smaller proportion of males, other activities such as video games and trips are mentioned with lower frequencies, suggesting a more focused preference for specific types of engagement among males.

Theme 5: Environmental influence

These factors include external factors that can influence a relationship.

Subtheme 1: Social Network

Among females, feeling involved emerges as the most commonly cited benefit, mentioned by 70% of respondents. This suggests that females prioritize the sense of inclusion and belonging fostered by connections with their partner's social network, emphasizing the importance of integrating into their partner's familial and social circles. Additionally, 20% of females mention a sense of security as a benefit, indicating that such connections contribute to feelings of stability and support within the relationship. Furthermore, 10% of females report that such connections help in resolving conflicts, highlighting the potential role of external support systems in mediating relationship challenges. Similarly, among males, feeling involved is cited by 70% of respondents as the most prevalent benefit, underscoring the significance of familial and social connections in fostering a sense of belonging and integration within the relationship. The alignment of responses between genders emphasizes the universal importance placed on feelings of involvement within the partner's social network. Notably, 30% of males mention resolving conflicts as a perceived benefit, suggesting that connections with the partner's family and friends may serve as a source of mediation or support during relationship challenges.

Subtheme 2: Share conflicts

Among females, the majority (60%) express a preference for keeping conflicts private, indicating a tendency to maintain discretion and confidentiality regarding relationship issues. This inclination towards privacy suggests a commitment to resolving conflicts internally within the relationship, without involving external parties. However, 30% of females report sharing conflicts to vent, indicating a need for emotional release and support outside of the relationship. This suggests that for a significant portion of female respondents, sharing conflicts with others serves as a coping mechanism to alleviate emotional distress and seek validation or empathy from trusted individuals. Additionally, a smaller proportion (10%) of females opt to share conflicts for advice, indicating a desire for external perspectives and guidance in navigating relationship challenges. In contrast, among males, the overwhelming majority (90%) prefer to keep conflicts private, highlighting a strong inclination towards privacy and discretion in handling relationship issues. This suggests a tendency among male respondents to internalize and

manage conflicts independently within the confines of the relationship, without seeking external support or intervention. Notably, the absence of male respondents who share conflicts to vent suggests a potential gender difference in coping mechanisms, with males less likely to seek emotional release or validation from external sources.

Theme 6:Self development

Subtheme 1: Goals

Among females, a significant majority (70%) report that LDRs influence their career goals, indicating that maintaining a relationship across distances can have substantial implications for their professional aspirations. This finding highlights the challenges individuals, particularly females, may face in balancing their personal and professional lives while navigating the complexities of a long-distance relationship. Additionally, 20% of females mention that LDRs impact their emotional well-being, suggesting potential challenges or adjustments in managing their psychological health and coping with the emotional strain of separation. This underscores the importance of emotional support and communication in mitigating the negative effects of distance on individuals' mental health. Furthermore, a smaller proportion (10%) of females identify a sense of responsibility as being influenced by LDRs, indicating that maintaining the relationship may alter their perceived obligations and commitments. This suggests that individuals in LDRs may experience shifts in their priorities and sense of accountability as they navigate the demands of maintaining a relationship across distances. Similarly, among males, career goals are significantly impacted, albeit to a lesser extent compared to females, with 40% indicating such an influence. This suggests that males in LDRs also grapple with reconciling their career aspirations with the demands and constraints imposed by distance. Additionally, 30% of males mention that a sense of responsibility is affected by LDRs, highlighting an awareness of the relational commitments and obligations associated with maintaining a relationship across distances. Moreover, 20% of males cite an impact on their emotional well-being, indicating that managing emotions and psychological well-being is a consideration in navigating the challenges of LDRs for males as well. This underscores the importance of emotional resilience and coping strategies in effectively managing the emotional complexities of distance.

Subtheme 2: Personal growth

Among both females and males, emotional growth emerges as a predominant theme, suggesting that navigating the complexities of distance prompts individuals to confront and manage their emotions more effectively, fostering resilience and maturity. Additionally, the emphasis on expressiveness underscores the role of LDRs in enhancing communication skills and encouraging individuals to articulate their thoughts and feelings more clearly. While patience and time management are cited to a lesser extent, they highlight the necessity of developing these skills to navigate the demands of maintaining a relationship across distances.

Subtheme 3: Purpose of separation

The substantial percentages indicating a focus on career align with broader societal trends emphasizing individual achievement and professional fulfillment as central priorities in contemporary life (Wilkinson & Hallam, 2019). The convergence of priorities between females and males underscores the changing landscape of gender roles and expectations, with both genders placing significant value on career advancement and personal development. This shared emphasis on career highlights a shift away from traditional gender norms that may have previously assigned primary responsibility for family and household duties to females while expecting males to prioritize their careers (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Instead, the findings suggest a more egalitarian approach to relationship dynamics, wherein both partners prioritize their professional goals and aspirations. Additionally, the notable percentage indicating a focus on studies among both genders reflects a commitment to educational pursuits and personal growth, further emphasizing the value placed on continuous learning and self-improvement within intimate relationships (Kenny et al., 2006).

Sub theme 4: Future plans together

While marriage remains a focal point for half of the female participants, a comparable proportion of males prioritize family concerns, suggesting a shared recognition of the importance of familial relationships and responsibilities. These findings challenge conventional gender norms that might expect females to prioritize marriage while males focus primarily on career advancement

(Eagly & Wood, 2012). Instead, they reflect a more complex interplay of personal aspirations and relational dynamics, wherein both genders engage in discussions that encompass a broad spectrum of life goals and values. Furthermore, the substantial percentage prioritizing career aspirations among both genders highlights a commitment to individual growth and professional fulfillment within the context of romantic partnerships. This suggests a shift towards more egalitarian relationship dynamics, wherein partners support each other's personal and professional ambitions while navigating the complexities of shared aspirations and commitments (Wilkinson & Hallam, 2019).

Theme 7: Transparency:

Subtheme 1: Vulnerabilities

Among females, sharing vulnerabilities primarily results in emotional support and increased understanding, fostering a deeper connection and empathy with their partners. This suggests that vulnerability serves as a catalyst for emotional bonding and validation among female respondents. Conversely, while emotional support remains significant for males, a substantial proportion express reluctance to share vulnerabilities, indicating potential discomfort or hesitation in disclosing personal insecurities. However, those who do share vulnerabilities highlight its role in fostering trust and dispelling misunderstandings.

Subtheme 2: Trusting

Among females, trust primarily assures the future of the partnership, providing a sense of stability and confidence in the relationship's trajectory. Additionally, trust alleviates anxieties and promotes emotional well-being by reducing overthinking and fostering a sense of security. While personal growth is mentioned less frequently among females, it still contributes to their development within the relationship context. In contrast, for males, trust predominantly ensures the future of the relationship, instilling confidence and stability. Moreover, trust significantly facilitates personal growth, fostering an environment conducive to self-improvement and development. Emotional well-being also emerges as a noteworthy aspect, indicating the role of trust in promoting happiness and stability among male respondents.

B. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

There was a sample of 124 participants via google forms. Various hypothesis were formed. And the data collected was coded and put in spss to get the result. The results revealed the following:

The data partially supports this hypothesis **‘that there will be a significant positive correlation of Blocked communication with Competing and Avoiding conflict management styles’**.

While no significant correlation was found between Blocked communication and Competing or Avoiding conflict management styles in long-distance relationships, a significant negative correlation was observed between Blocked communication and Compromising conflict management in proximal relationships. This finding underscores the nuanced interplay between communication dynamics and conflict resolution strategies, as individuals who resort to blocked communication may be less inclined to seek mutually acceptable solutions through compromise, especially in closer proximity. This interpretation aligns with existing research emphasizing the importance of effective communication in facilitating collaborative problem-solving and resolving conflicts constructively (Jones, 2019). However, the absence of a direct correlation between blocked communication and competing or avoiding styles in long-distance relationships suggests that other factors, such as communication frequency or medium, may influence conflict management approaches differently across relationship contexts (Dainton & Gross, 2008). Thus, while the data partially supports the hypothesized positive correlation between blocked communication and competing/avoiding styles, it underscores the need for further investigation into the nuanced dynamics of communication and conflict resolution within intimate relationships, taking into account contextual factors and individual differences. The qualitative results shed light on the nuanced dynamics of communication and conflict management within both long-distance and proximal relationships, providing insights that complement the quantitative findings. The prevalence of mutual initiation of conversations and the emphasis on emotional validation and active listening in handling conflicts suggest an underlying theme of mutual understanding and support among participants. Additionally, the prioritization of career goals and the significance of maintaining positivity through shared activities underscore the resilience and adaptability of individuals in navigating the challenges of distance. However, the preference for confrontation in challenging times and the inclination towards emotional support in handling conflicts reveal potential areas of tension and divergence in communication styles

between genders. These findings resonate with the observed negative correlation between blocked communication and compromising conflict management, suggesting that while individuals may strive for open communication and conflict resolution, gender-specific communication patterns and coping mechanisms may influence the effectiveness of interpersonal interactions. Therefore, while the data partially supports the hypothesis of a positive correlation between blocked communication and competing and avoiding conflict management styles, the qualitative insights highlight the need for a deeper understanding of the contextual factors and individual differences that shape communication dynamics within romantic relationships.

The results partially support this hypothesis ‘There will be a significant negative correlation of Blocked communication with Personal growth initiative, Accommodating, Collaborating, and Compromising conflict management’. While a significant positive correlation was found between Blocked communication and Personal growth initiative in long-distance relationships, no significant correlation was observed between Blocked communication and Accommodating or Collaborating conflict management styles in either long-distance or proximal relationships. However, a significant negative correlation was identified between Blocked communication and Compromising conflict management in both long-distance and proximal relationships. This suggests that individuals who engage in blocked communication may struggle with finding mutually acceptable solutions or making concessions during conflicts, irrespective of the distance factor. Notably, a surprising positive correlation was found between blocked communication and personal growth initiative in long-distance relationships, indicating that individuals who resort to blocked communication may exhibit a heightened focus on personal development or self-improvement within the context of distance.

The hypothesis **‘There will be a significant positive correlation of Self-disclosure with Personal growth initiative, Accommodating, Collaborating, and Compromising conflict management.’** received partial support. While a significant positive correlation was observed between Self-disclosure and Collaborating conflict management in long-distance relationships, no significant correlation was found between Self-disclosure and Personal growth initiative or any other conflict management styles in either long-distance or proximal relationships. This suggests that while individuals may be inclined to engage in open communication and collaboration during conflicts in the context of distance, other factors may influence the

relationship between self-disclosure and conflict management styles, particularly in proximal settings. These findings underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between communication patterns and conflict resolution strategies within different relational contexts (Dainton & Gross, 2008; Guerrero et al., 2019).

The data partially supports the ‘**There will be a significant negative correlation of Self-disclosure with Competing and Avoiding conflict management styles**’ hypothesis. No significant correlation was found between Self-disclosure and Competing or Avoiding conflict management styles in either long-distance or proximal relationships. This indicates that while there may be an intuitive expectation for self-disclosure to negatively correlate with competitive or avoidant conflict management approaches, the empirical evidence from this study does not support such associations within the examined relational contexts. These findings align with previous research highlighting the nuanced nature of communication patterns and conflict resolution strategies within intimate relationships (Guerrero et al., 2019; Dainton & Gross, 2008).

This hypothesis ‘**There will be a significant positive correlation of Responsive communication with Personal growth initiative, Accommodating, Collaborating, and Compromising conflict management**’ did not receive support from the data. No significant correlations were found between Responsive communication and any of the dependent variables in either long-distance or proximal relationships. These findings diverge from expectations and previous theoretical frameworks that posit responsive communication as a facilitator of constructive conflict resolution and relationship enhancement (Afifi & Metts, 1998; Guerrero et al., 2019).

The hypothesis ‘**There will be a significant negative correlation of Responsive communication with Competing and Avoiding conflict management styles**’ was **partially supported. In proximal relationships**, a significant negative correlation was observed between Responsive communication and Competing and Avoiding conflict management styles. However, no significant correlations were found in long-distance relationships. These findings align with previous research highlighting the importance of responsive communication in fostering constructive conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction in face-to-face interactions (Guerrero et al., 2019). The lack of significant correlations in long-distance relationships may be

attributed to the unique challenges posed by distance, such as limited nonverbal cues and asynchronous communication channels, which may impact the effectiveness of responsive communication strategies (Afifi & Metts, 1998).

The results partially support the hypothesis ‘**There will be significant gender differences in Communication styles, Personal growth initiative, and Conflict management in Long distance relationships**’. Significant gender differences were found in Personal growth initiative and Collaborating conflict management styles in long-distance relationships, but no significant differences were observed in other variables. aligning with previous research indicating variations in relational priorities and conflict resolution strategies based on gender (Garcia & Sikka, 2014; Winstanley et al., 2020). However, the absence of significant differences in other variables suggests that while gender may influence certain aspects of relationship dynamics in long-distance settings, it may not necessarily predict differences across all domains of communication and conflict management. Male participant answered about personal growth-*“I used to be very a guy who would immediately give solution, but then I realized that she needs something else. It took me a lot of time to know that it only my emotional support which is need and not the advices. S o yeah there was a change and a huge growth after that”*, Female participant answer-*“I think I know what men need, and I must express my self. So like I am used to express as such that I will blabber and tell too much of details. Butt in reality I now know that he will not understand or maybe listen to each any every thing so I have understood How to summarize it and speak with some clarity.”*

This hypothesis ‘**There will be significant gender differences in Communication styles, Personal growth initiative, and Conflict management in Proximal relationships**’ was also partially supported, As there were significant difference in male participants from females. Males were shown to have more compromising and accommodating conflict management. This challenges the stereotyped thinking. There may be a perception that assertiveness or dominance in conflict resolution is a masculine trait, leading males to adopt accommodating or compromising strategies to avoid being perceived as aggressive or confrontational. This perception of masculinity can influence how males approach conflict management in interpersonal relationships. However, Males may be more inclined to accommodate or

compromise in conflicts with romantic partners, family members, or authority figures to maintain relational harmony or preserve social status.

The findings partially support this hypothesis ‘**There will be a significant difference in communication styles, personal growth initiative, and conflict management in Long distance relationships and Proximal relationships**’. Significant differences were found in some conflict management styles (Compromising, Accommodating) between long-distance and proximal relationships, but no significant differences were observed in communication styles or personal growth initiative.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

The research findings reveal a complex interplay among communication styles, personal growth initiative, conflict management, and relationship contexts. While correlations emerged, such as blocked communication's link with personal growth initiative and conflict management styles like compromising, the patterns varied across long-distance and proximal relationships. Gender differences were evident in long-distance relationships regarding personal growth initiative and collaborating conflict management but not in proximal relationships. Additionally, conflict management styles differed between long-distance and proximal relationships, while communication styles and personal growth initiative remained consistent. These results underscore the nuanced nature of relational dynamics and highlight the necessity for further investigation to gain deeper insights into their impact on relationship satisfaction and longevity.

7.2 Implications

The present research has the following implications:

- Based on the identified differences, interventions could be developed to enhance communication skills, conflict resolution abilities, and personal growth initiatives in both long-distance and proximal relationships. These interventions could be tailored to address the unique challenges faced by each type of relationship
- Counselors and therapists could integrate the findings into their practice to better assist individuals and couples navigating long-distance relationships. Also, educational programs aimed at promoting healthy relationships could incorporate insights from this research to educate individuals about effective communication, conflict resolution, and personal development strategies.
- As technology continues to evolve, there is an opportunity to develop new tools and platforms that facilitate communication and connection in long-distance relationships. Future innovations could leverage virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and other

technologies to enhance the quality of interaction and support personal growth initiatives even across distances.

- Future research could delve deeper into the specific mechanisms underlying the differences observed between long-distance and proximal relationships in terms of communication styles, conflict management strategies, and personal growth initiatives. Longitudinal studies could track these variables over time to explore how they evolve and influence relationship outcomes.

7.3 Limitations

While this research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of long-distance and proximal relationships, several limitations should be acknowledged:

- The study's findings may be limited by the characteristics of the sample, which primarily consisted of individuals from a specific demographic or cultural background. Generalizing the results to broader populations may therefore be challenging and could overlook important variations in communication styles, conflict management, and personal growth initiatives.
- The reliance on self-report measures for assessing communication styles, conflict management strategies, and personal growth initiatives introduces the potential for response bias.
- The research's cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality or infer temporal relationships between variables. Longitudinal studies could provide a more nuanced understanding of how communication dynamics, conflict resolution strategies, and personal growth evolve over time within both long-distance and proximal relationships.
- The study may not fully capture the impact of emerging communication technologies (e.g., social media platforms, virtual reality) on long-distance relationships.

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APPENDIX A

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Questions asked interview were as follows:

Q1. What is the duration of your relationship?

Q2. How do you communicate with your partner?

Q3. Who initiates conversations in your relationship?

Q4. Who is more expressive in your relationship?

Q5. Where is your partner located?

Q6. What is the purpose of this geographical separation?

Q7. Do you have any discussions related to future plans together?

Q8. Why is it important for you to reassure your partner?

Q9. During challenging times how do you initiate conversations with your partner?

Q10. How do you handle conflicts in your relationship?

Q11. How do you share tasks and responsibilities in your relationship to support your partner?

Q12. What advice do you give to your partner?

Q13. Do you do any activities in your relationship to maintain positivity?

Q14. How does being connected with your partner's family or friends impact your relationship?

Q15. Do you share conflicts with people other than your partner?

Q16. How has LDR impacted your goals?

Q17. How has LDR impacted your personal growth?

Q18. How does sharing vulnerabilities with your partner impact you?

Q19. How does being able to trust your partner impact you?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Scale 1- Dyadic Communication Styles

Questions	Rarely	Sometimes	Neutral	Often	Always
1. Whether I think I understand my partner's point or not, I act as if I do					
My partner is unaware of, or ignores my gestures, advances and my other non-verbal behavior					
The way my partner responds to the issues I bring up makes me feel he/she is attacking me					
My partner listens attentively regardless of her/his other engagements					
He/she is open to new ideas					
My partner commands me to do things					
My partner is open to my suggestions					
I listen to my partner					
My partner is quick to compliment me when I do things well					
When my partner speaks, he/she presents a positive image of me					
My partner withholds her/his feelings toward me					
We discuss what happens at home					

My partner will rather work on her/his decision than ask for my opinion					
We discuss our experiences at the end of each day					
When my partner has neglected to treat me well, I let her/him know about it					
We have interest in hearing about what we think of each other and our behavior					

Scale 2- Personal growth initiative

Questions	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree
Q1. I know how to change specific things that I want to change in life.						
Q2. I have good sense of where I am headed in life						
Q3. If I want to change something in my life, I initiate the transition process						
Q4. I can choose the role that I want to have in a group						
Q5. I know what I need to do to get started toward reaching my goals						
Q6. I have a specific action plan to help me reach my goals						
Q7. I take charge of my life						
Q8. I Know what my unique contribution to the world might						

be						
Q9. I have a plan for making my life more balanced						

Scale 3- Conflict Management Styles Assessment

Questions	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I discuss issues with others to try to find solutions that meet everyone's needs.				
I try to negotiate and use a give-and-take approach to problem situations				
I try to meet the expectations of others				
I would argue my case and insist on the advantages of my point of view				
When there is a disagreement, I gather as much information as I can and keep the lines of communication open.				
When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as				

possible.				
I try to see conflicts from both sides. What do I need? What does the other person need? What are the issues involved?				
I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on				
. I find conflicts exhilarating; I enjoy the battle of wits that usually follows.				
Being in a disagreement with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious				
I try to meet the wishes of my friends and family				
I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right.				
To break deadlocks, I would meet people halfway				
I may not get				

what I want but it's a small price to pay for keeping the peace				
I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.				