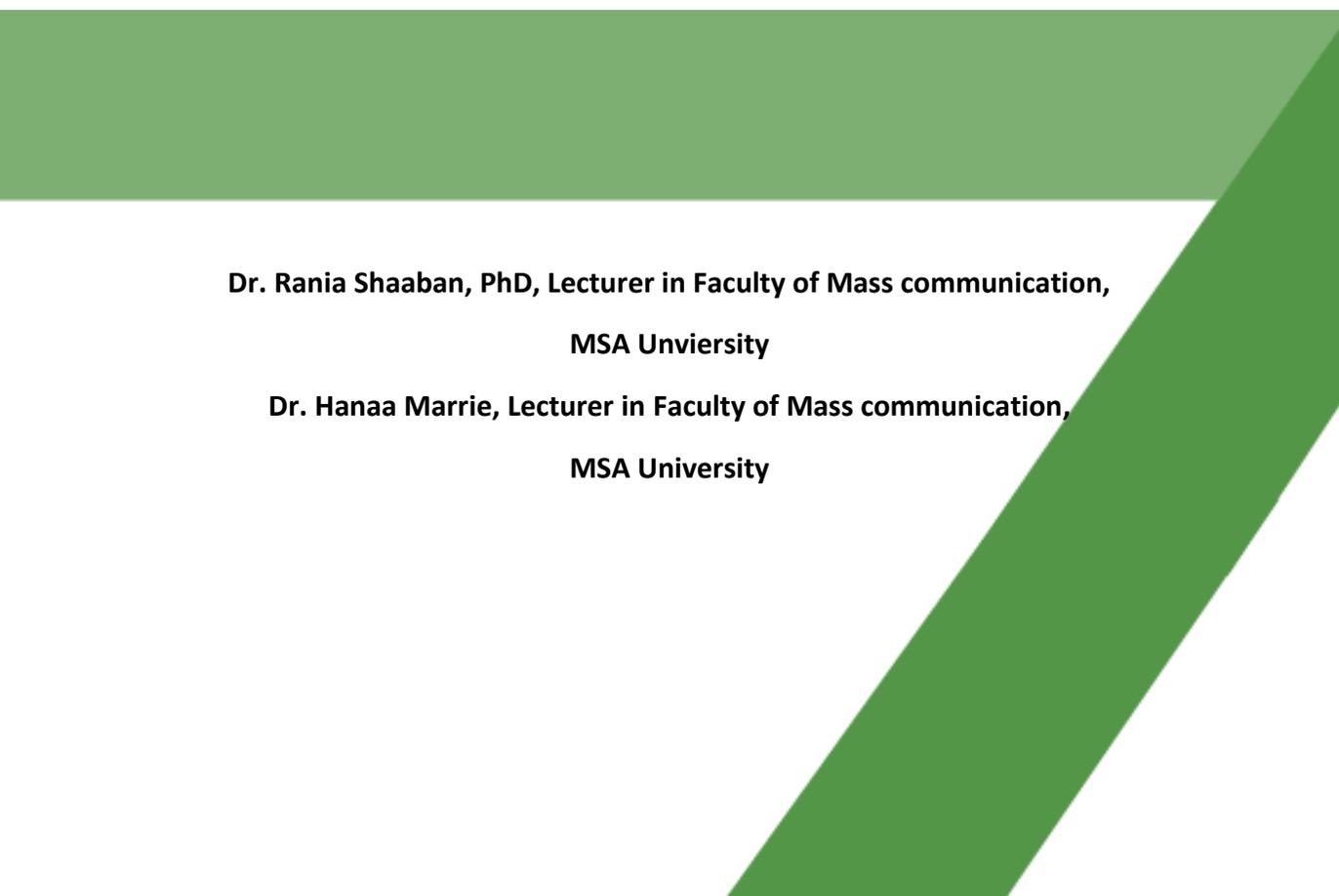




The Effects of the social media Platforms on the couple relationships in the Egyptian society: A Survey study



**Dr. Rania Shaaban, PhD, Lecturer in Faculty of Mass communication,
MSA Unviersity**

**Dr. Hanaa Marrie, Lecturer in Faculty of Mass communication,
MSA University**

1- Introduction

Prior to the current technological communication platforms and the digital age tools, the traditional communication tools were done through face to face communications; thus it used to entitle real human interaction requiring the human presence. However, nowadays the proliferation of the internet, smart phones, and social media had revolutionized the human communication process. The social media now allows people to interact beyond the geographical territories; it is supposed to be a beneficial communication tool if used wisely. Yet, it seems that the social media tools are being abused by the humans in the wrong places leading to disintegration among families and couples. So, are the social media tools attacking or ruining the couple relationships in Egypt?

A booming word in our daily life and it is even becoming part of our daily activities, or even it is considered an addiction for some of us; Social media. The Web 2.0 technology is the shared content and published among users on social media websites (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). One can say that the presence of smart phones and the social media have revolutionized the social interaction among people worldwide.

The social media is actually becoming part of the daily human activities in the recent technological era. It is even considered the air for some people to breathe, which they can't live without. This two words definition consists of the word social which is by common sense means the interaction with people around us. The second word is media, which refers to the communication methods like the traditional ones as TV, newspapers. Yet, the new ones are internet sites and internet apps which are the main foundation stone of this research. Actually the social media usage requires a smart phone with internet connected to such apps and web sites. Or, it needs a

computer or laptop with internet connection. The social media that are tested here in this paper are; the Facebook, whatsapp and online dating apps.

Examples of the social media used in Egypt are Facebook, Instagram, snapchat, Youtube, whatsapp , online dating apps and Twitter. Yet, the researchers believe that every application is used by certain demographics in the country. For example, nowadays the teens are using the instagram and snapchat more often than the other apps. However, the adults are into the Facebook usage more, especially after the revolution in 2011 where it was believed it is one of the revolution's catalyst. The statistics declared that over 2 million Egyptians joined the Facebook in the first 3 months after the revolution had ended. This is because it was said that the Facebook was a main agent in accelerating the fire in the Egyptian revolution in 2011 (Moubarak, 2011). Yet, fewer people are using the Twitter in Egypt , and these are mainly the celebrities, politicians or normal citizens interested in the national and international affairs. Finally, the YouTube and whatsapp are used by all ages of people in the Egyptian society. Since, this research is tackling the effects of social media on marriage, so it is clear enough that we will examine the effects of Facebook , whatsapp and online apps on the stability of the Egyptian couple or marriage of users. According to a recent statistics of Ahmad (2017) & a research made on the media usage in Egypt, it was stated the following the Facebook users and Facebook messenger's users are almost 37 million, while the whatsapp ranks the second popular medium with 34 million Egyptian users. Third, comes the YouTube with 31.5 million Egyptian users. Fourth, is the instagram with 18 million Egyptian users. Fifth, comes Twitter for 1.7 million Egyptian users. And as said before that such social media usage requires internet, where the Egyptian internet subscription is almost 48 million subscribers with a 48% of the total population. Moreover, it is projected to reach 50.8% in 2018 (Ahmad, 2017). This is very promising as in this way , Egypt is reaching the global internet penetration number which is 40.8 % (Ahmad, 2017). Also, the smart phones users reached 26.3

million of Egyptians. Another crucial statistics to be mentioned is that the gender usage of the social media is 64% of male and 34% of female users (Ahmad , 2017). This can be attributed to the cultural norms and traditions in the country which states that the female can not disclose her pictures and things related to her in public. This is especially found among the lower classes in the country. This explains the phenomena where many females use strange nicknames for their user profile names to hide their identify which is a taboo to be exposed to public. Thus, from the above numbers, it is clear that Egypt is the largest country in the Arab countries in the social media usage (Ahmad, 2017). That is why, the Egyptian society was chosen to be the focus of this research.

The Facebook was originally established to enhance the human communications across the globe. Yet, it was proven that Facebook was the reason of “relationship stress and dissolution among the married ones” (Williams, 2012). Moreover, it was said that Facebook was the reason of divorce of 1 in 5 couple divorces (Williams 2012). Another American study stated that 81% of the American divorces took place because of the presence of the social network sites, where Facebook has ranked the top of such networks (Williams 2012). This explains why Facebook is the major medium tested in this research.

Talking about the online dating apps and its usage in Egypt, a recent online dating study ranked Egypt as the easiest country for men to find women online (Hassan, 2018) . According to the study conducted over six months by leisure portal Wogoal.com, Egypt has the highest Total Acquaintance Probability (probability to get acquainted with a woman in this country through an online dating website) among the 60 countries covered by the study (Hassan, 2018). According to this study, Egypt ranked number 1, followed by Indonesia, Nigeria, Ghana, Philippines, Thailand and Iran as the top 7 countries using online dating apps (Hassan, 2018).

The idea of the online dating apps usage will not be publically declared or admitted by the users, as it is against the Egyptian cultural norms. Getting to know a stranger and fall in love with him/her is not acceptable by the old aged parents, and still they may be unaware that their younger generations are using them. The point is that with the wide spread of the social media platforms and being connected to strangers with one click of a mouse, it is believed that the stigma of the digital romance had faded away and now many new successful digital love stories are becoming more successful (Hassan, 2018). Some of the common online dating apps and websites are “Date in Egypt today “which has around 30,000 members. Another social major medium platform in the field is the “Facebook Khatba “(or match maker in Arabic) which has thousands of applicants of both genders (Hassan, 2018). Another dating and marital matching site is the Egyptian, Arabic-language website (Galal, 20013). Other examples of match making websites or apps are: Muslims4marriage.com, LoveHabibi.com, Singlemuslim. com, Muslima.com, MuslimLounge.com, and MeetIs raeliSingles.com). The most popular sites for Middle East matching are the US based <http://www.zawaj.com> (with Web traffic at 2,800,000 page views per month) and [http:// www.MuslimMatch.com](http://www.MuslimMatch.com) (which has attracted 47,649 members) (Shahine 2004).

Another supportive study in the field is about a study done on a sample of students at American University in Cairo, 50% of men and women said they had met at least one member of the opposite sex through the online websites (Galal 2003). Such act is totally forbidden in some middle eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia which has a total segregation between men and women and they are not allowed to chat or meet before marriage , and definitely they are not allowed to have casual chit chat with strangers(Galal 2003). In other middle eastern countries such as Kuwait, 75% of the university students are active social media users and an average percentage of this sample are using the online dating apps. So, it is obvious that the online dating is becoming easier in Egypt nowadays with the presence and the aid of

the smart phones with the presence of Wi-Fi. This allows to log anyone on the online apps, websites or platforms in seconds, opening the doors for more romance exposure which can be easier of done virtually than in real life. And in most of the cases, it is such an act that is not done or declared to be done. Thus, it is done in a hidden way, due to the cultural barriers and the parental control even on the grown up daughters and sons in Egypt.

2- Significance of the study

The significance of this research lies in testing a crucial social phenomenon happening in Egypt nowadays which is the addiction to the social media platforms. It is testing how these new platforms affect the couple relations in Egypt. What is new about this research is that it is tackling some aspects that are considered cultural taboo in the Egyptian society such as preferring to spend time on social media platforms than spending time with the partner, chatting with strangers or comparing the partner to someone else (emotional infidelity) which can lead to cheating among couples. Moreover, it is tackling the online dating apps which are totally rejected by many of the old aged people where they don't believe that their daughters or sons can be engaged in using these apps and talking and dating with strangers. Such private topic in Egypt is not academically addressed before.

In the past decade it has been noticeable that the great influence of the social media tools can have on the life style and the behavior of the people in Egypt. Such phenomenon is currently elevated due to the wide spread of the smart phones in Egypt and actually the availability of the mobile networks with good prices for internet packages. Thus, this facilitates and supports its usage. This led to the phenomenon of the growing number of Egyptians who are using the social media platforms nowadays with huge number of hours per day .

It is obvious that the over use of the social media in our daily life activities, we are faced with few challenges among couples causing family disintegration in the

Egyptian society. For example, first, the over use of time spent on such media, decreases the quality time between couples. Second, the over use of social media can lead to cheating, emotional infidelity, or social comparison among couples. Such phenomenon can lead to separation or even divorce between couples. Third, the online dating is a double edged weapon. It can cause lots of harms for the couples if used by one of the partners with bad intentions. The nature of couple relationships will be examined for the effect of electronic communication on the quality of the relationships. The goal of this study is to effectively show the impact of the text based electronic communication (Facebook, whatsapp and online dating apps) on couple relationships in the Egyptian society. So, this research will shed the light on such dangerous widespread social phenomenon, and will show the recommendations to overcome such a common social problem as a result of the negative excessive use of technology.

3- Operational Definitions

Social media: It is defined as “ the web-based communication tools that enable people to interact with each other by both sharing and consuming information” (Nations, 2018). Another definition for social media Social media is defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of the contents by users “(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media platforms: it is a service or site or method that connects audience together virtually. This term is used here as Facebook, whatsapp and online dating apps.

Couple relations: Any couples that are in love relationship without legal or formal marriage and without residing in one home.

Marriage relationship: it is the legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship and residing in one home.

4- Literature Review

4.1- Effects of Social media on quality time between couples:

Due to the current huge presence of the smart phones, the usage of the social media apps and websites has skyrocketed in the 21st era. This led to the phenomenon that world is becoming a global village without boundaries due to the wide spread of the internet and the availability of the social media where people from all over the world can become friends and share daily activities with just one click. Yet, in this part of the research we will talk about the negatives of using Facebook, and whatsapp. Ironically enough although it is called Facebook, yet it discourage the face to face interaction and encourages the virtual one. As we all experience from the people around us, that the Facebook usage is becoming a recent type of addiction (Nawi & Hamzah; Latifi, 2015). This is a recent phenomenon where people spend hours in front of their mobile or computer screens on the Facebook platform. This can consume and waste several hours daily. Thus, it is obvious this wasted time can be used in other beneficial activities, or even to be spent with family or the partner (Nawi & Hamzah; Latifi, 2015). So, less attention is given to the needs of the other partner, which can create a volcano that may erupt at any time. This leads to the dissatisfaction among couples' relationships (Latifi, 2015).

The researchers believe that people feel at ease sharing their status on Facebook or whatsapp before sharing it with their spouse or partner. So, the partner here comes home and is surprised that his or her couple has an incident in life that was posted on Facebook with hundreds or even thousands that he or she knows nothing about. Here, the partner feels unimportant to his or her couple. Moreover, nowadays people are spending hours on the piece of an iron machine that connects one to virtual life and ignores his or her couple that just lives in less than 5 meters away. It is very surprising how come one can prefer to share his or her status or

feeling with people that can be far away by miles over people who just live with him in the same house under one roof. It was proven in the study done by Aaron et al. (2014) that the over use of Facebook and the bigger the interaction with friends and sharing information with them, the less is the interaction with the other partner (Latifi, 2015). The researchers believe that this may take place due the convenience of the smart phones 24/7 while the partner is busy at work or in the personal life. Yet, this raises the question whether if this implies that the virtual support of the social media may substitute the emotional support of the human partner.

This phenomenon was tested in *Malaysia* by Chan et al. (2008) and tested in *Texas University*, where the results assured that the over abuse usage of the social media results in conflicts and social problems among couples (Latifi, 2015). Also, it was proven in Iran that there is a significant relation between the over use of the social network sites (SNS) and the divorce (Latifi, 2015). This was reinforced by another study in *USA*, where 8% of respondents reported that they argued with their spouse due to their over consumption of time spent on the cell phones and the social media (Lenhart & Duggan, 2014). Supporting this argument, it was concluded in the research of *Valenzuela*, Halpern & Katz (2014) that there was positive correlation between the social network sites, and especially Facebook and lower marriage quality time, marriage unhappiness, marriage troubles and even thinking of separation. However, such results were not proven in *Saudi Arabia* where there was no relation between the use of social media and couples' relationships as 72% of the respondents disagreed that their social media usage affects their marriage relation. (Alanazi, 2015). Thus, for such contradiction among the countries of the world, the researchers are interested to test such phenomenon in Egypt

Talking about the positives of the social media usage and the marriage life concerning the time aspect, the researchers believe that there are some advantages

that have to be mentioned. First, the researchers believe that the social media helps the partners to share common videos and incidents that suit their mutual interest. The researchers believe that the couples can have fun watching or even just sending a funny video to each other. In other words, the healthy marriage is reached when the couples talk offline on stuff that was found online (Krafsky, 2010). This was backed up by a research done in *USA*, on the effects of social media on couples. It was reported that 21% of respondents said that they felt closer to their spouse by the shared materials on social media (Lenhart & Duggan, 2014). Second, the couples can send daily messages on whatsapp asking about each other, when will the partner go home. Third, the social media can help the couples if one of them is traveling for work, to share the daily life incidents through the camera based web apps, like face time, Skype, and Viber. This decreases the feeling of homesickness and increases the bond among the families, even if they are located in different territories of the globe.

Fourth, social media can strengthen the relationships between the couples and their group of friends. Thus, it is tool to help in connecting the couples with good old friends or with the common ones (Krafsky, 2010). This strengthens the bond at the end of the day, as it creates loyalty to one group which is translated in emotional bonding among couples. Fifth, it was said in the research of Lenhart & Duggan (2014) that 9% of respondents stated that the social media helps them to resolve an argument that was unresolved in their face to face communication (Lenhart & Duggan, 2014). However, the researchers disagree on this point. The researchers believe that the non-facial communication helps to engrave more misunderstanding, in the time of the arguments, due to the absence of emotions, facial expressions and body language in the virtual and non-facial communication. Sixth, the same study of Lenhart & Duggan (2014) mentioned that 25% of respondents mentioned that they used to text the spouse when they are still home together but in other areas in the home. The researchers agree for this finding, as this

will be strengthening the relationship even if they are in the same place but in different areas. Seventh, the researchers noted that the daily interactions between the spouses/couples through the textual social media messages for the short quick greetings during work, can enhance the marriage relationship such as the quick chat chatting.

4.2- Effects of Social Media on emotional infidelity

As said before that the social media platforms open the doors for their members to share every single detail about one's life; starting from the personal morning selfie in bed, the daily cup of coffee, the breakfast plate, the selfie on the way to work, the traveling places, the daily outings..etc. The researchers found that some of their friends list on the Facebook is even exhibiting a fake image about themselves and about their daily routine. It was stated that a continuous passive browsing of the news feed of friends, will lead to having a lower self-esteem , a low self worth image, lower self-image, and lower worth feeling (Krasnova et. al, 2013).

The point is that the infidelity does not have to be a sexual one. It can be an emotional one, or an emotional affair. This includes just chatting with another stranger other than the partner, and satisfying the emotional needs by another partner, and in our case this process will be via a virtual media. Thus, one can say emotional infidelity is “a heart affair” (Nelson & Salauw 2017).

One can say that that emotional infidelity is defined as “when one partner goes outside the primary relationship to get his or her emotional needs met” (Nelson & Salauw, 2017). It goes without saying that the emotional infidelity or the online emotional infidelity specifically can lead to emotional, psychological, and physical damage to the original partner's relationships. Such an act is considered as psychological trauma situation which needs serious actions and remedies. It was proven that partners who were betrayed by their other half through emotional infidelity are 6 times more depressed than those who didn't witness any type of

infidelity through their life time relationship (Cano and O'Leary 2000). Emotional infidelity results in lack of trust, grief, and disbelief as if the partner had died (Young et al., 2000). The researchers believe that any type of infidelity may elicit the feeling of revenge against the involved partner. It can even elicit jealous feelings that may include violent actions against the virtual partner as a worst case scenario.

Emotional infidelity occurs when a person allows someone of the opposite sex to fulfill emotional needs that should be met by the original partner. Thus, it is a process of creating a virtual intimacy, attachment and a virtual missing feeling for the new virtual partner (Nelson & Salawu 2017). In other words, one is willing to spend time with the virtual partner over spending time with the original one. The virtual partner is the one that one confides to, sharing his/her daily activities willingly rather than sharing such information with the original partner. This may lead to sharing the problems in homes with this new virtual partner. Such an intimacy can even lead to fantasizing about having a real physical relation with this virtual partner as per Burke (2013) cited in Nelson & Salawu (2017).

It is important to note that the emotional infidelity is called internet infidelity, or cyber infidelity as it is being facilitated by the internet usage. Moreover, it has some signs that an involved partner fall in as per Nelson & Salawu (2017). First, the partner reveals lots of private and daily activities information with the virtual partner. Second, declaring that the virtual partner is "just a friend". Third, disclosing troubles or problems related to the original partner. Fourth, emotional infidelity may take part by comparing the virtual partner to the original partner, even if this comparison takes place through a mental process. Sixth, imagining having a relation with the virtual partner. Seventh, the involved partner prefers and plans to spend time with the virtual partner and enjoys it more than spending this time with the original partner. So such signs can act as precautions for emotional infidelity,

which is as strong as the physical one. Both can disturb the marriage relation or even make it vanish away.

Another point is changing the status of married to non-married, or in relationship to single. This is commonly observed in Egypt nowadays, when the couples are having the regular marriage quarrels, one of the partners just jumps to the conclusion and decided to change the marital status to non-married. The researchers have witnessed these phenomena in the people around them. It was done as a matter that a couple wants to play on the nerves of his/her partner. It was even mentioned that there a murderer case where a woman was killed in *USA* by her husband after changing her status from married to non-married (Nawi & Hamzah, 2010). Another negative aspect of the Facebook is when one of the couples uses negative quotes as a hidden message to the partner. This makes the relation between them worse. In the study of Ngonidzashe (2016), it was stated that 33% of divorces mentioned were because of Facebook inappropriate messages to the other sex. In the same study, it was mentioned that Facebook and whatsapp can hinder the feeling of security, clarity and trust among couples (Ngonidzashe, 2016).

The following results in the study of Nelson & Salawu (2017) that was held in *Nigeria*. In this study that took place in Nigeria, it was proven through a survey that 62% of respondents have witnessed emotional infidelity personally or through their network. In the same study, it was proved that 35% of respondents shared personal and intimate information about themselves with virtual friends on Facebook. In the same study, 40% of respondents indicated that they had disclosed personal information to close friends through Facebook that the original partner knows nothing about. It was proved also in the same study that the self-disclosure of information on Facebook strongly weakness the relation among the original couples. This result was reinforced in another study held in *USA*, it was stated that 27.8% of respondents declared that their partners cheated on them physically, emotionally or

cyberally (Schonian, 2013). And in the same study 5% of respondents stated that they have cheated on their partners whether emotionally or cyberally.

4.3- Effects of online dating apps on couple relationships

Humans are social beings who have always aimed at finding their perfect match since the creation of Adam and Eve. Many cultures view life as incomplete till one embarks a successful relation with a significant other. Reasons why, people throughout the course of history have come up with innovative methods that would help them achieve that task. Starting with matchmakers who used to roam among households with photos of brides to be and grooms who are seeking future wives, till our present time being you can get aquatinted through a super-efficient application on your phone. The end result will always remain to be the irreplaceable need of humans to having a partner in their life. Dating websites have changed the way couples meet. Now evidence is emerging that this change is influencing levels of interracial marriage and even the stability of marriage itself. Match.com went live in 1995. A new wave of dating websites, such as OKCupid, emerged in the early 2000s. And the 2012 arrival of Tinder changed dating even further (Cooper, Delmonico, & Burg, 2000). Online dating gives users the option to seek out partners and manage those relationships in a virtual world while they go about their daily lives while (Blossfeld & Schmitz, 2012). It offers the chance to meet similar minded people based on specified profiles and preferences where there is less reliance on the help of friends.

Online dating has been a revolutionary state since it has been started. But like every coin, it has double sides. Online dating causes some dangerous effects, which if not noted well, will end in a disastrous result. One needs to realize how online dating can affect the habits, activities, hobbies, and time management of one's life. For the first time users, it is fun especially when viewing the profiles of others. But, one might be led to the wrong companion, or one might be misled (

Merkle, 2000). More extensively, online dating can become an addiction that kills one's precious time.

And for those who are in a committed relationship, online dating is a considered a type of cheating that easily ruins the marital life. Such activities don't only affect the marital or romantic life, but also it can affect their health as well, due to the long time at the computers or mobiles, skipping meals and no sleep. It can even lead to escaping from the social life that one might be involved in. In addition, one can experience drastic mood swings especially if the computer happened to be damaged, they become frustrated (Biossfield & Schmitz, 2011). It has been shown that online romantic relationships were considered to be 'real' acts of betrayal in an investigation by Whitty (2002), where community attitudes towards Internet relationships were investigated, and whether they are considered to be acts of betrayal.

On the other hand, there are also some benefits of the online dating. First, the internet can easily provide a wider selection of men and women with various amount of profiles shared online. One can customize his needs in the new partner through these websites or applications. These online apps can aid in finding one's partner that he or she is dreaming of. In addition, the online dating helps one to be introduced to the ideologies and patterns of life of the virtual partner before taking a serious step to meet before mating. Another benefit of online dating is that it is such an ideal tool for the introverts for finding love in online dating as they can spend their energy on people they get to know through such websites. Furthermore, online dating aids in removing the stigma on traditions that we used to believe. Moreover, the issue of gender, equality and sexual orientation are being explored virtually through such websites. It is important to note that that such dating websites are widely used more in the developed nations. Thus, it is obvious that participating in such online dating websites or applications can lead more disintegration among

couples or partners due to the abused consumed time and off course as such an act is considered cheating(Cooper, Morahan, Mathy, & Maheu, 2002).

5- Theoretical framework

There is the *media dependency theory* where it proved that the abuse of social media platforms encourage self-disclosure to other people than the original partners (Nelson & Salawu 2017). It even makes the access easily to such an act. This is due to the sharing of comments, information about oneself on the social media, which strengthen the virtual relation among the communicators on the social platform. On the other hand, it weakens the relation between the original partners. It can even make one desires the presence of the virtual partner to share the daily activities or interests with (Nelson & Salawu 2017). The point is that due to the complex and rapid changing world around us, the people are depending on the media platforms to get all the information they need, to get a job opportunity, to watch movies, to share and receive social comments (Nelson & Salawu 2017). There is positive relation between the use of media, and the importance it takes in one's life. Thus, the more, we depend on the media in different aspects in our life, the more it will become a major factor in our life (Nelson & Salawu 2017. It was stated that some partners resort to Facebook to seek potential partners outside the marriage relation. It was even concluded that women in *Nigeria* resorted to Facebook to overcome their feelings of loneliness and need for intimacy away from the marriage relationship (Nelson & Salawu 2017). It was stated that Facebook is becoming an international easy access tool to create romantic relations among people all over the world (Nelson & Salawu 2017. This is due to the daily interaction with it, or even the several interactions per day with it. This research pointed to the media dependency theory which states that “the more the one satisfies

his needs through the media, the more it will become a foundation stone in his daily activities in life” as per Baran & Davis, 2009 cited in Nelson & Salawu 2017.

The researchers believe that the openness to such social media platforms with huge amount of time, will lead to comparing the personal lives. This is called the *Social comparison theory* which was originated by Festinger in the 1950's. It is mainly stating that there is a basic human tendency to feel good or bad about ourselves based on how we compare to others (Festinger 1954). The authors believe that this tendency to compare one's life to another one may disturb or even rock one's personal life stability. This may even open the door to more cheating, betrayal, and worst case scenario an infidelity. This may take place believing in the metaphor of “the grass is greener at our neighbor” which indicates that people may compare between their spouse and the ones they see on the Facebook. They may even leave their partner, just for the sake of some pictures or a portrayed image of some people on their friends list. The point is that who said that this self-portrayed image on Facebook is real, and not fake. Even if, it is a real self-image, does that allow the partner to even think of leaving his or her other half just to go to the pre-assumed “better half”. This takes place through unfavorable social comparison among these people on the friend list, supporting how the social media can foster any quick online relation to a deep or a love one.

The researchers believe that this can lead to a mental comparison between the partner and anyone of the media platforms. This is believed to be a mental infidelity and not an emotional or physical one. This may take place due to the continuing stalking at pictures or accounts of people having fun in vacations, people got higher promotions, people are happy in their outings, people got married, people are happy in their marriages. Such status that doesn't have to be present in current one's life at the moment of seeing or knowing these news. Our research is concentrating on the couple relationship part. Thus, looking at the news feed of the

happily married couple, or this stunning friend, and comparing her or him with the other half. This may lead to lower life satisfaction or even a lower marital satisfaction life. (Krasnova et. al, 2013). Yet, it was stated that people who feel bad about themselves due to the unfavorable social comparison are those who already lack self-confidence (Panger 2014). Also, it was proved in the same study that people tend to feel bad about themselves more when comparing their life to the public figures (Panger, 2014).

One must discuss the *theory of “Social penetration”* which stated that any two communicators who engage in shallow conversation, can be easily trapped in a later deep and intimate relation and emotional closeness (Altman & Taylor 1973). So, in this way, the shallow social conversation on the social media platforms if occurred on regular basis, such shallow relationship can be converted to a more serious one.

In other words, emotional infidelity can be defined as emotional attachment beyond the friendship level. This research is testing the emotional infidelity through the social media platforms specially Facebook and whatsapp. This was supported by *the ACE model* (anonymity, convince and escape) which was developed in the new technological era, declaring how technology facilitates relations among others (Young, Griffin-Shelley, Cooper, O’Mara, & Buchanan, 2007). The anonymous part is here that individuals present themselves on the technological platforms in the way they wish to, which is less reliable than the face to face communication. And as mentioned before that the internet social platforms make the communication more convenient for use 24/7. Furthermore, it makes the involved partner escape from the unfavorable conditions in the relations with the original partner.

6- Problem Statement

The goal of this study is to effectively show the impact of the text based electronic communications; Facebook, whatsapp, and online dating apps on couple relationships. This research tries to explore, analyze and discover the effects of social media platforms on the couple relationships in the Egyptian society, by trying to answer the main research question which is; Are the social media platforms a tool of attacking and running the couple relationship in the Egyptian society. So, this research will try to shed the light on such dangerous widespread phenomenon that is considered cultural taboo in the Egyptian society.

7- Research Questions

1. What are the negative effects of social media on the quality time on the couple relationship in the Egyptian society?
2. Do social media(Face book mainly) facilitate emotional infidelity among couples in the Egyptian society?
3. Do the online dating apps or websites help people find good spouses in the Egyptian society?
4. What are the opinions of the participants towards the effect of online dating on cheating among the couples in Egypt?

8- Measurements in the Research questions:

The *time spent on social media* was tested in the questions by the number of hours spent on Facebook and whatsapp. There were specific questions directed that one spends more time on social media than with partners. And whether the time spent on social media caused the couple problems and broke the privacy between them. And in worst case scenario it was testing if the social media can let someone think of separation and divorce.

Also, *the quality time between partners were tested*. The quality time was tested through the attention and interaction among couples. It was also tested by losing special moments among the couples. It was also tested through the feeling of being ignored by the partner. On the other hand, the authors tested if there were any positives of the social media on the quality time by having fun together sharing the videos and talking about incidents or videos took place on social media.

Emotional infidelity among couples:

Here the emotional infidelity was measured through opening the doors to talk with someone else than the partner through the social media, even checking or contacting an old partner or by sending messages to another one not the partner. It was also measured through comparison among the partners and other people on the social media. It also measured if someone sought emotional support by someone rather than the partner on Facebook. It was also measured through flirting or liking and commenting on the comments of other than the partner. It also measured being betrayed by a partner if he/she flirted with someone on the social media. Also, it measured if one stated that the relational status on Facebook or hidden it to facilitate emotional infidelity. Also, whether the partner is a friend on Facebook with the other partner not just to facilitate the emotional infidelity he/she is committing.

The online dating apps or websites

This was tested through the comparison between the online dating and the regular one. It was also tested whether the online dating gives better chances by widening the pool of the applicants. It also tested whether the online dating is not accepted culturally in Egypt as it is thought that it gives the girls a bad reputation.

The online dating and cheating among the couples

This was tested whether the participant or his/her partner created or viewed online dating profiles while they are in committed relationships. This was also tested if the online dating can create more cheating and flirting among the couples in Egypt.

The scope of this study is limited to survey questions only and no ethnographic observations or experimental research are conducted. The questions of the effects of social media on quality time between couples were adapted by from the research done by Williams (2012) .

The research questions regarding the emotional infidelity and online dating were adapted from the study of Schonian (2013). It is known that it is better to adapt already done survey questions to ensure their validity and reliability. The study includes current forms of text based on electronic communication and concludes with the ways to use electronic communication between couples in a positive way.

9- Mythology of the study

This research was tested by having self-administered survey electronically. This is due to the widespread of the electronic communication. The information is based on the respondent's perceptions and doesn't try to independently verify the accuracy of these perceptions

Questions asked the respondents to reply in the form of multiple choice questions. Through a carefully constructed survey, the research tackles a question of the perception that impact the electronic communication has on marriage/couple relationships. This survey is limited only to test the

effects of 3 types of social media such as Facebook whatsapp, and online dating apps.

Through these exploratory questions and answers, the study attempts to interpret the responses and use them to analyze the research mentioned hypothesis mentioned above. This study suggests ways electronic communication can be used to impact marriage /couple relations positively and when it is harmful and should be avoided.

A tool for data gathering was using the structured survey questions using Likert Scales. The Likert scales were used to differentiate and identify the different levels of agreement on the researched topics. The answers were grouped where they begin with Strongly Disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and ending in strongly agree.

The online survey was conducted through Google form. Prior surveys were focused on who uses electronic communication and how often. Yet, what is different about this survey that it was testing the effects on couple relationships in Egypt.

9.1 Ethical considerations

The online survey was conducted in this way to save financial cost and time of both the researchers and the respondents. The assumptions are that the participants are already logged to the internet and won't pay extra fees to reply to the survey. While the survey questions were considered tackling private issued in the Egyptian culture, the respondents must have felt comfortable while answering them and sure that they are anonymous and that the results are kept confidential. A benefit of the web based survey is that the respondents are willing to answer the questions honestly especially when it comes to private issues, than when completing the survey in person.

10-Sampling

The goal of this research is to survey as many people as are willing to participate. This resulted in a convenience or available sample. An electronic survey was used to decrease the cost and be more convenient for people who encourage them to participate. The survey is offered to males and females ages starting 20 years old to 60 years old on Facebook, whatsapp, and email. They were told that the surveys will not take more than 10 minutes to answer. There was no personal connection to the survey, so anyone can reply. Therefore, anyone can answer the survey. This resulted in a snowball sampling. Since, the survey was anonymously constructed, and results were kept confidentially, this may result in encouraging the people to answer the survey. The sample was mainly those who know how to read English , have social media platforms and are in a relationship.

The online survey was answered by 113 respondents of both males and females. The females were the majority counting for 92.7% while the males for only 7.3%. This can be explained that some females have less working hours than males, or even some females are not working yet, whether they are stay home mums or females who didn't find jobs yet. The majority of the age range is between 31 to 40 years old. This counts for 40.2% of the total respondents. This may be explained that this the age of married couples in Egypt, and thus may have faced or are facing the current problem of the research study. This is followed by 30.4% of the respondents whose age range is between 21 to 30 years old. This may be explained that this age before marriage like to have adventures in their life, especially if they are not married yet. Their life style entities more fun time, more travelling, and may be the need to get to know new people. This may be satisfied by encountering new people on the social media. Another reason that a big percentage of such age answered the survey is that they have more free time before getting married and less commitments by the house chores and kids' needs.

Then, comes the middle aged people of the sample which represents 17% of respondents of age 41 to 50 years old. This small percentage may be explained due to being busy in the life where work, house chores and daughters' and sons' responsibilities are maximized. Finally, the least percentage of 8% of respondents is of age 51 to 60 years old. This phenomenon is explained that the young ones are the technology literate while the old ones may find difficulty using the Google forms to answer the survey.

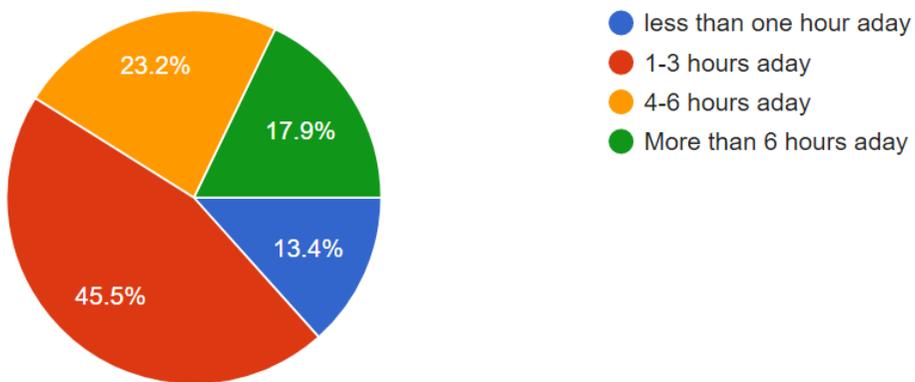
And, defiantly such interesting and feministic topic is more for the interest of the females than the male ones. Plus, the working hours of the females are more flexible allowing them to solve such surveys more than males. Also, the females have more free time left alone without the partners, so this may create a sort of emotional deprivation for some females whose partners spend more time in work . And it is obvious that the recent economic condition of Egypt and the devaluation of the Egyptian pound led to the more increase in prices and things are becoming more expensive. This may have forced the males to search for another job at night or to spend more time in work to have much better salaries to help them cope with the recent inflation. In this matter, the males leave their females long hours per day, which may explain the female needs for love and affection, which can be found through the virtual communication tools. Talking about the marital status, it is important to note that 66.7% of respondents stated that they are married while 26.1% of the respondents stated that they are in a relation.

11-Research findings and analysis

11.1 Results of the effects of social media on quality time:

Graph (1)

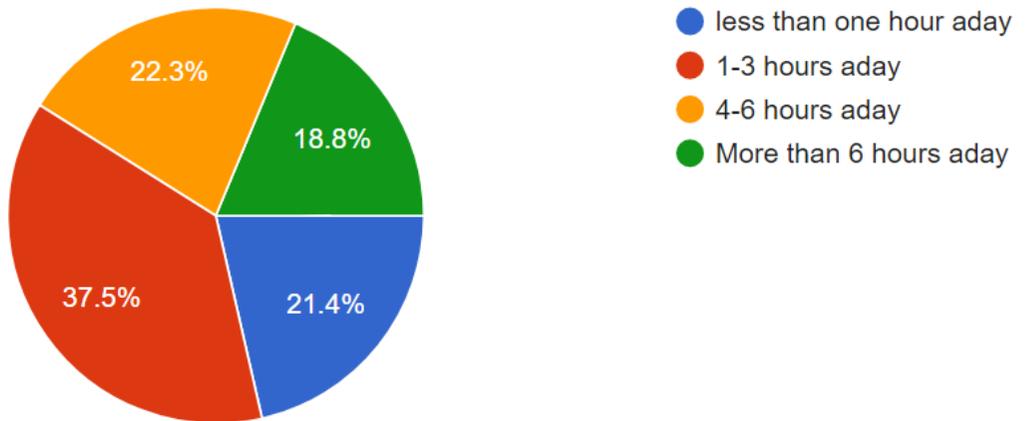
Which of the following describes the time you use Facebook per day?



It is clear from the above statistics that the majority which is 45.5% spends 1-3 hours on Facebook daily and 23.2% of participants spend 4-6 hours daily on Facebook. So, if one suggests that the social media is spent during the leisure time, then definitely there won't be any time left to stay with the other partner. This result supports the study that stated Facebook usage is becoming a recent type of addiction (Nawi & Hamzah; Latifi, 2015). Thus, it is obvious this wasted time can be used in other beneficial activities, or even to be spent with family or the partner (Nawi & Hamzah; Latifi, 2015). This result also supports the study of Shelton (2016), where it was mentioned that by time, with the eroding personal communication among couples due to the excess usage of smart phones, people get used to and prefer the bonding with their smart phones over bonding with their partners .

Graph (2)

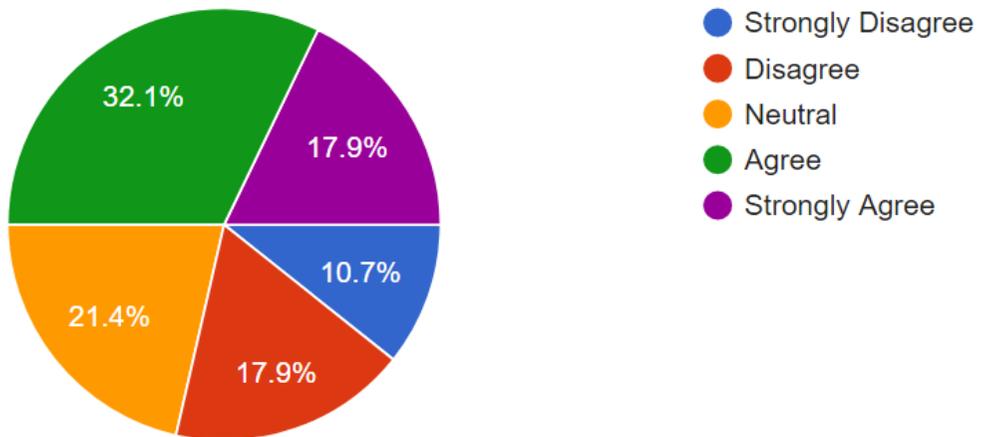
How much time do you spend on Whatsapp?



Here again the majority of participants replied that they use whatsapp for long number of hours per day, 37.5% of participants stated that they use it for 1-3 hours per day. While 22.3 % of participants stated that they use it 4-6 hours per day. This is proving that so much time is consumed on the social media vehicles per day, which will eventually results in less time spent with the partner. The long time wasted in using the smart phones supports the study of Shelton (2016) where it was mentioned that by time, with the eroding personal communication among couples , due to the excess usage of smart phones, people get used and prefer the bonding with their smart phones over bonding with their partners

Graph (3)

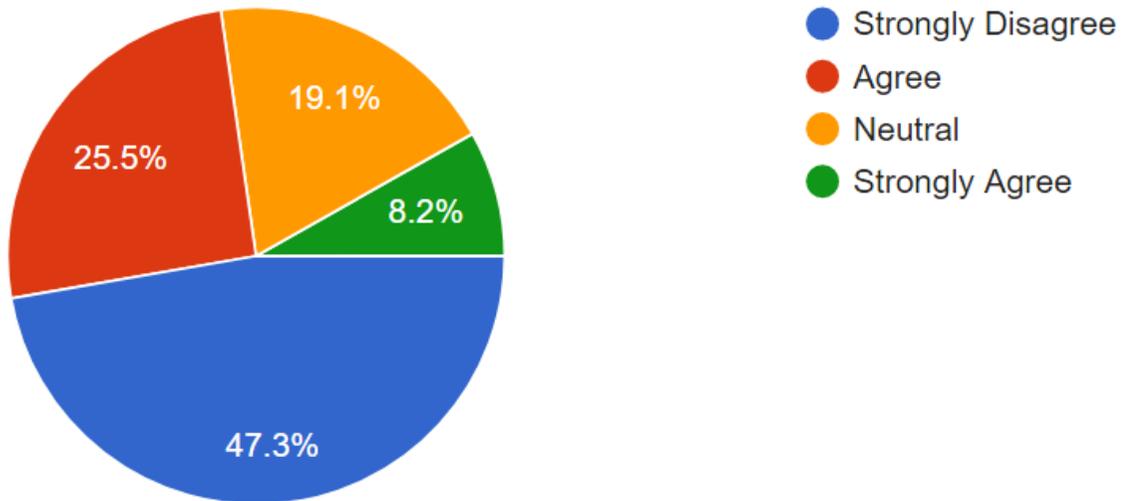
You spend for more time on Facebook or whatsapp than you spend time with your partner?



Here this question answers the first research question where the majority 32.1% of participants declared that they agree that they spend more time on Facebook than with partners, and 17.9% strongly agreed to this sentence. This is supported by the study of Latif (2015) stating that less attention is given to the needs of the other partner, which can create a volcano that may erupt at any time. This leads to the dissatisfaction among couples 's relationships(Latifi, 2015). Supporting this argument, it was concluded in the research of Valenzuela, Halpern &Katz (2014) that there was a positive correlation between the social network sites, and especially Facebook and lower marriage quality time, marriage unhappiness, marriage troubles and even thinking of separation.

Graph (4)

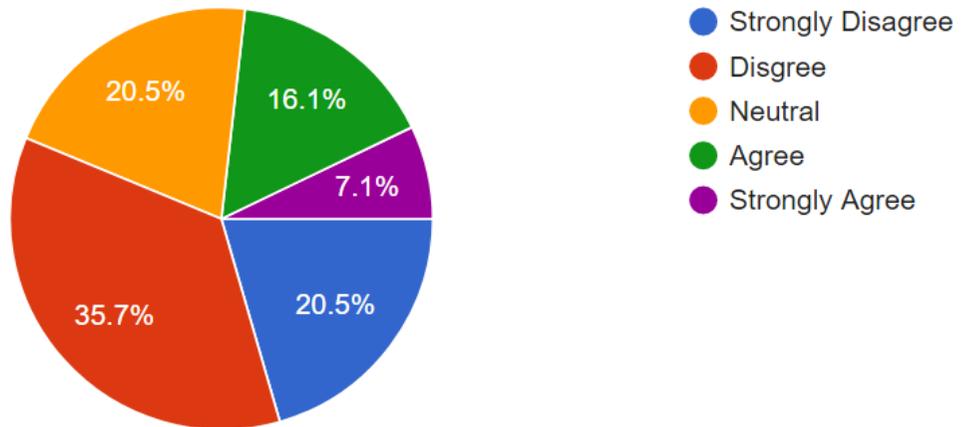
I lose special moments with my partner because of social media communication (Facebook)?



Here testing the quality time among partners, and whether the social media vehicles lead to losing the special moments with the partners; this was totally rejected by the majority of the participants as 47.3% of them strongly disagreed to this statement while 33.7% of participants agreed . This result confirms the result held in Saudi Arabia where there was no relation between the use of social media and couples' relationships as 72% of the respondents disagreed that their social media usage affect their marriage relation (Alanazi, 2015). Yet, this result contradicts the study of Valenzuela, Halpern &Katz (2014) which stated that there was positive correlation between the social network sites, and especially Facebook, and lower marriage quality time, marriage unhappiness, marriage troubles and even thinking of separation.

Graph (5)

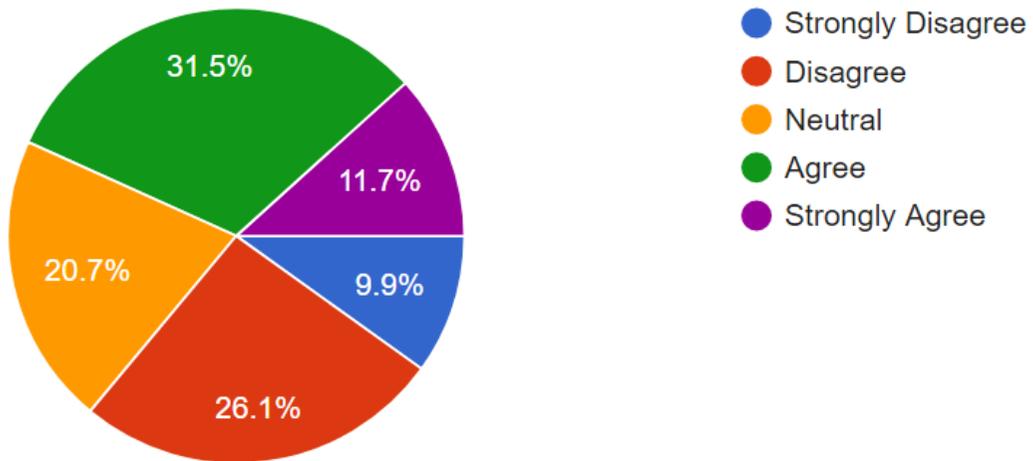
I have problems with my partner because of the time spend using social media?



Here a direct question was asked about whether the time spent on social media causes problems between the partners, and this was rejected by 56.2% of the participants, while accepted by 23.2% of participants. This result confirms the study in USA, where only small percentage; 8% of respondents reported that they argued with their spouse due to their over consumption of time spent on the cell phones and the social media(Lenhart &Duggan, 2014). This result is against the study of Valenzuela, Halpern &Katz (2014), it was concluded in the research of that the more the time spent on social media platforms, the more are the quarrels between the couples and definitely leading to less quality time. Also, this result is against the results of Porter et al, 2012 which stated that the more the couples are engaged in social media platforms, the more the problems are there among the couples.

Graph (6)

Social media communication decreases the attention and interaction for

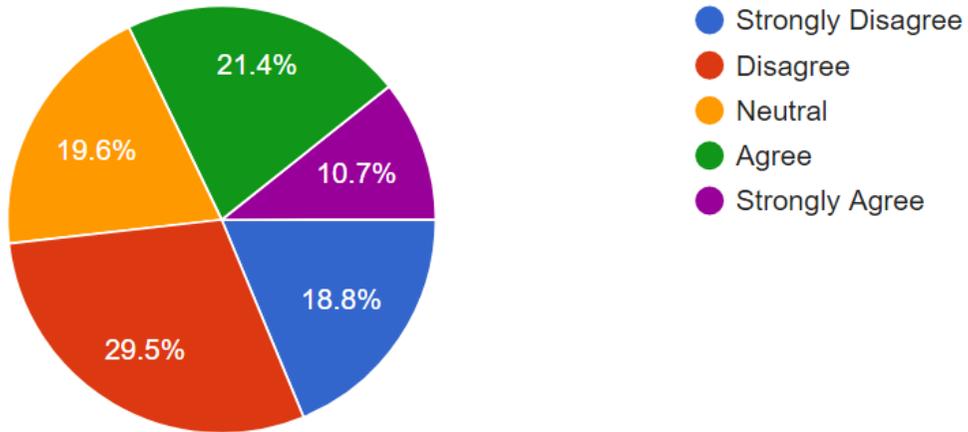


my partner?

Testing the quality time, and if one feels ignored by the partner due to excess use of the social media, this was rejected by 36% of participants, while accepted by 43.2% of participants. So, this showed that social media could seriously cause less interaction and attention in the real life of couples. So, this result supports the study of Marano (2017) where it was even stated that no discussions among couples take place with the presence of the smart phone in each ones' hands. And if any discussion takes place, it will be a shallow one, not a deep and emotional one, and supports the study of Henline & Harris (2006) which stated that the less interaction among couples may lead to the enlargement of problems and more boundaries are built around the problem solving issue.

Graph (7)

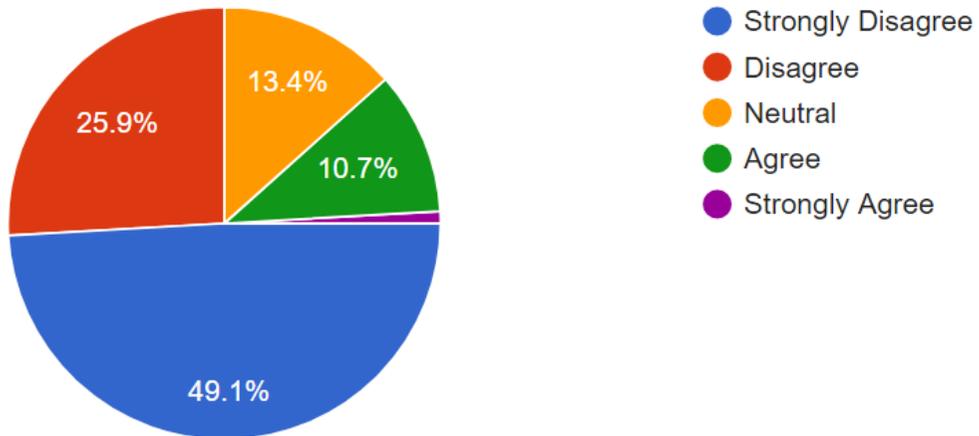
I feel ignored due to my partner's over use of social media?



Testing the quality time between partners, 48.3% of participants rejected that they feel ignored by the partner due to excess use of the social media, while 32.1% of participants accepted it. This proves that still a considerable percentage of participants are feeling lonely and ignored by the partner who is using the social media excessively. Still the 32.1% of participants agreed with the study of Latifi, (2015) and (Berenson, 2015); where it was proven in the study done by Aaron et al. (2014) that the over use of Facebook and the bigger the interaction with friends and sharing information with them, the less is the interaction with the other partner, leading to feeling of loneliness and rejection.

Graph (8)

The over use of the social media can let me feel or think of separation or



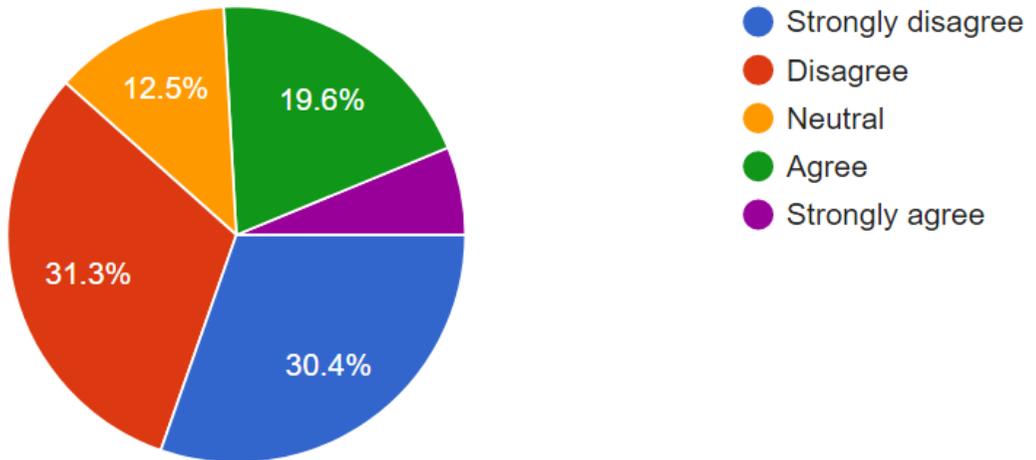
divorce with my partner?

Here testing the amount of time spent on social media and its effects on separation and divorce, it was rejected by 75% of participants indicating that the excess use of social media won't result in the separation or divorce among the Egyptian couples. These results go against the previous results held in Malaysia by Chan et al. (2008) and tested in Texas University, where the results assured that the over abuse usage of the social media results in conflicts and social problems among couples (Latifi, 2015). And also against the results proven in Iran, that there is a significant relation between the over use of the social network sites (SNS) and the divorce (Latifi, 2015).

11.2 Results of the effects of social media on the Emotional infidelity

Graph (9)

Facebook can make you compare between your partner and another one on

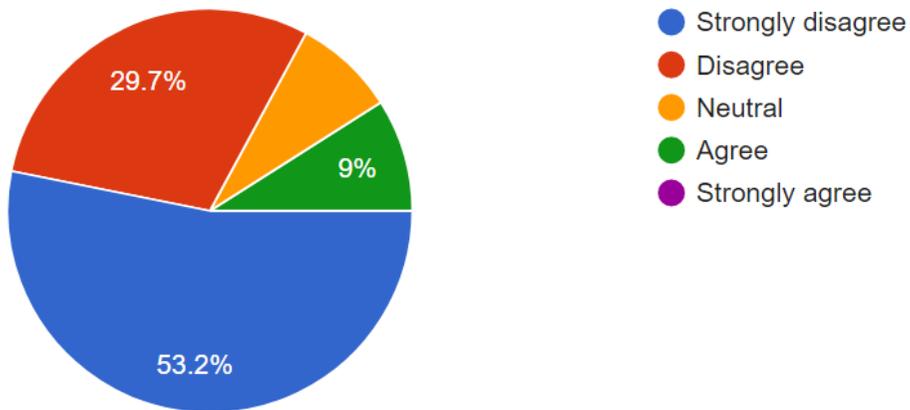


this platform?

Asking about whether social media helps one to compare between someone else and the partner, the results came with rejection from 61.7% while acceptance by 19.6%. Still, 19.6% acceptance of the participants is a considerable amount. This supports the study of Krasnova et. al, (2013) where it was proved in the same study that people tend to feel bad about themselves more when comparing their life or partners to the public figures (Panger 2014).

Graph (10)

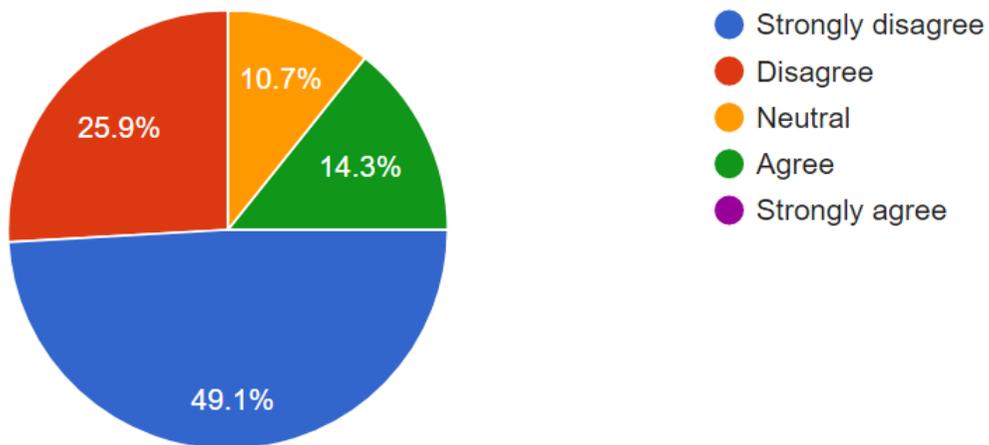
I sought emotional support from someone other than my partner through Facebook



Talking about emotional infidelity, and if someone seeks emotional support from other than the partner; this was rejected by 82.9% of the participants, while only accepted by 9% of participants. These results contradict the results of a similar study held in Nigeria by Nelson & Salawu (2017). In this study that took place in Nigeria, it was proven through a survey that 62% of respondents have witnessed emotional infidelity personally by seeking emotional support through their virtual couples.

Graph (11)

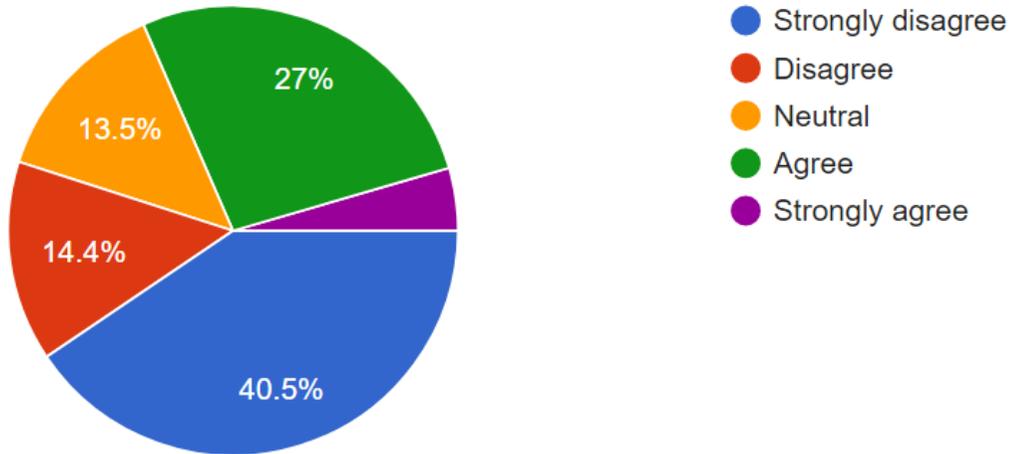
**You contacted a former partner/lover through a technological medium,
example Facebook or Whatsapp?**



Talking about the emotional infidelity through the social media, and whether one contacted an old partner through the media, this was rejected by 75% of the participants, while accepted only by 14.3% of the participants. These results contradict the study of Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe(2007)where It was mentioned that social media in general and Facebook specifically, can help the spouse to reconnect with the ex-partner he/she had a relationship with before

Graph (12)

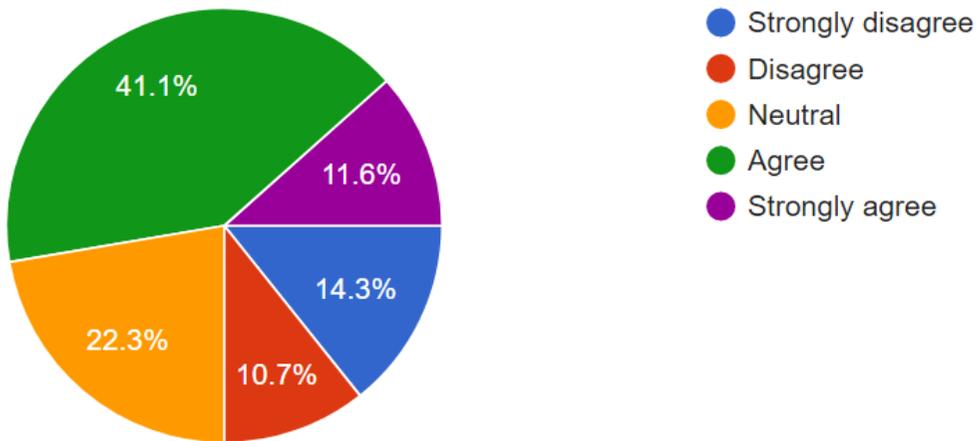
You chat with someone who isn't your partner through whatsapp



Testing the emotional infidelity, and whether, one chatted with other one through whatsapp than the partner, it was rejected by 54.9% of participants and accepted by 27% of participants which is still a considerable amount. These results support a similar result for a survey held in USA. And in the same study 5% of respondents stated that they have cheated on their partners whether emotionally or cyberally (Schonian, 2013).

Graph (13)

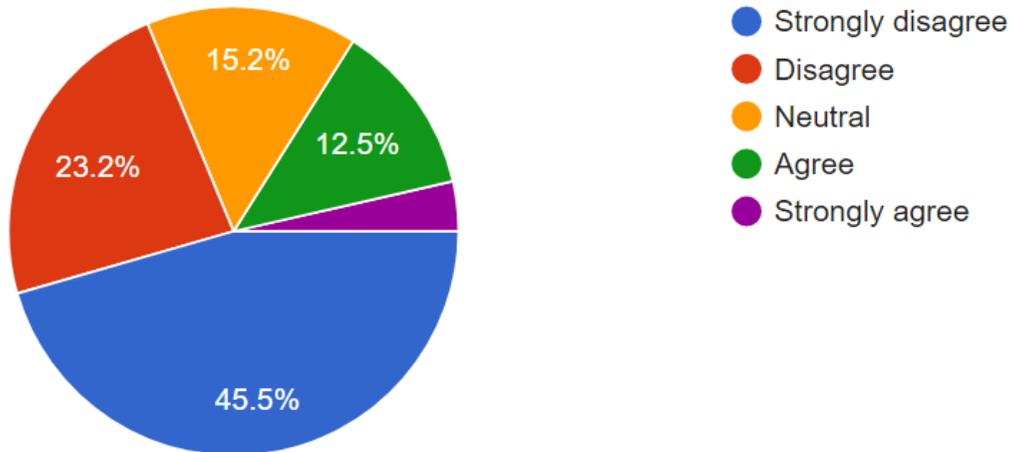
You Acknowledge an element of someone's social networking site who is not your partner (such as "liking a Facebook post")



Testing emotional infidelity, and whether one acknowledges someone not the partner on Facebook by liking or commenting on his/her writings, it was accepted by 52.7% of participants and rejected by 25% of participants. This supports the literature review of a similar study held in Nigeria where sometimes, people just declare that the virtual partner is “just a friend” which may lead to further disclosure troubles or problems related to the original partner or even comparison between this friend and the partner (Nelson & Salawu , 2017).

Graph (14)

Your partner contacted another person through Facebook or whatsapp and was a kind of a love story or flirting.

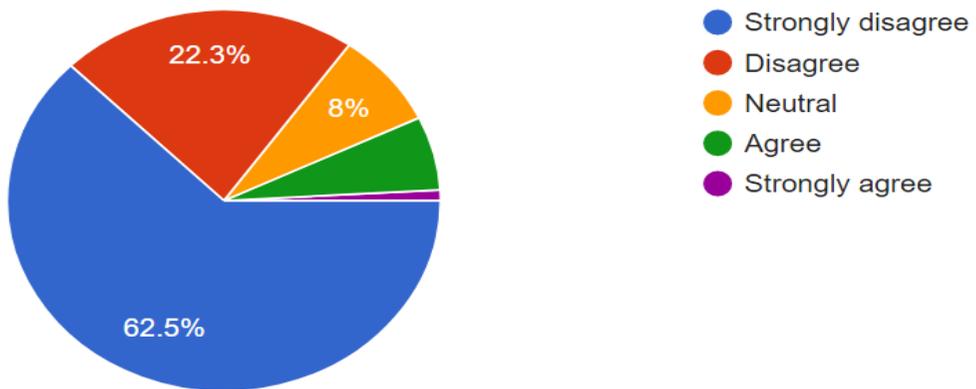


Testing emotional infidelity, and whether the partner contacted one than you by social media, it was rejected by 68.7% of participants, and accepted by 12.5% of participants. These results support a similar study held in USA where it was stated that 27.8% of respondents declared that their partners cheated on them physically, emotionally or cyberally (Schonian, 2013).

11.3 Results of the effects of online apps on the couple relationship

Graph (15)

I viewed online dating profiles while in a committed relationship

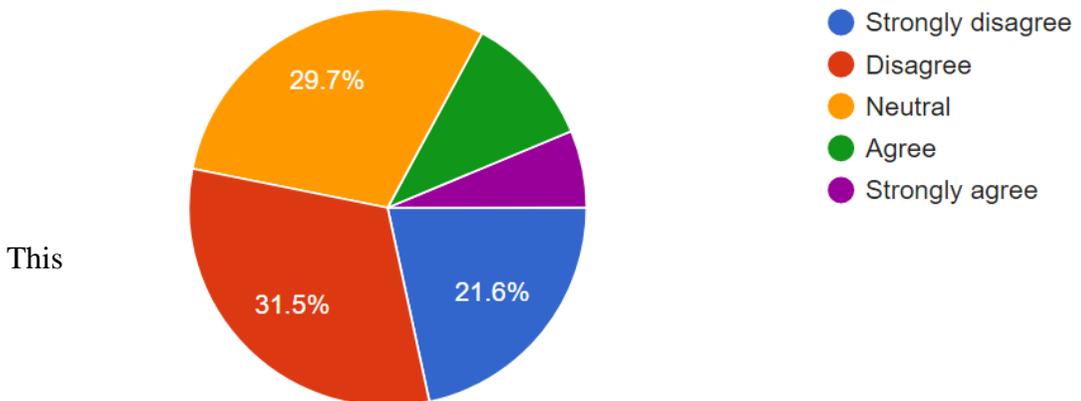


The result indicates that the majority (84.8%) of sample population will not resort to online dating sites while being committed to a relationship. These findings strongly reconcile with the findings of Whitty's investigation (2002) which suggests that online actions can have significant impact regardless of the physical availability of the partners, thus are considered as acts of betrayal.

Generally speaking, this is a positive sign that affirms the strong behavioral values and ethics present within the community, but of course exceptions exist which mark the least percent within our survey.

Graph (16)

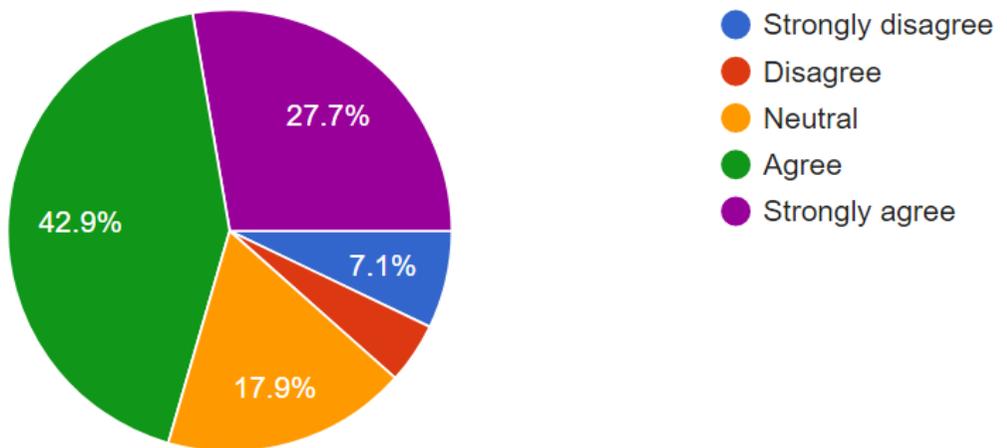
Online dating sites can help your chances of finding 'the one' because it widens the dating pool



survey notes that about 53% have no buoyancy in online dating sites as an alternate way of finding your other significant, while a low as 17% trust online dating to be their gateway to reach their partner. As discussed in the paper, many warn of online dating's psychologically hazardous effects and consequences. Kraut's acclaimed study claims that internet causes loneliness, depression and the destruction of social relationships, and is generally hazardous to psychological well-being (Weiser, 2001, p.723). Beninger argues that online relationships are illusionary, shallow and often hostile (McKenna, 1999, p.6). However, many defend internet mediated relationships, and argue in favor of their positive consequences. Weiser's 2001 study established that social use of the internet may actually improve psychological wellbeing (p.724). This proves how divided people are when it comes to the use on online dating to find a potential lifetime partner.

Graph (17)

Online dating can help more flirting and cheating among the married couples



Nearly 70% agree that online dating is one of the main temptations facilitating matrimonial infidelity or at least virtual adultery. As previously stated, People most likely to use internet for dating are those who are lonely, socially anxious and unable to express themselves in face to face settings (McKenna, 2002, p.12). Due to the abusive practices of online daters and the absence of censorship of such sites, they have regrettably become an unofficial gateway for illicit communications and discrete hidden relationships. We still have a long way to tread and a long list of protocols and regulations to be set to achieve a safer online communication medium reliable enough to offer better terms of communication and credibility to internet and social networks users.

12 –Research Discussion

The current study explored the negative effects of social media (Facebook, whatsapp and online apps) on the relationship among couples in Egypt in regards to the quality time between them, the emotional infidelity and how the online dating apps can lead to more cheating and ruining this relationship. It is very clear from the results that the participants spent huge amount of time on Facebook, and whatsapp daily. It is clear from the above statistics that the majority which is 45.5% spends 1-3 hours on Facebook daily and 23.2% of participants spend 4-6 hours daily on Facebook. Here again the majority of participants replied that they use whatsapp with a long number of hours per day. 37.5% of participants stated that they use it for 1-3 hours per day. While 22.3 % of participants stated that they use it 4-6 hours per day.

The point is if one works 8 hours per day or goes to university for 6 or 7 hours, how come there is enough time for some hours to be spent on Facebook and other hours to be spent on whatsapp. The point is that the amount of free time for the partner is just bits and pieces and definitely it will negatively affect the quality time between the couples. This was proven as some of the respondents declared that they spent more time on Facebook and whatsapp more than the time they spent with their partners. Such behavior was accepted and declared by 32.1% of the participants. So, no time is left for the partner, so no sharing of moments, no sharing of daily activities together due to the vanishing of time left after the social media consumption. And if any discussion is to take place, it will be just a traditional and shallow one as no enough time for deep discussion and solving any problems. This may lead to lack of intimacy between the partners on the long run.

Testing the quality time, and if social media causes less interaction between the couples, this was accepted by 43.2% of participants. Testing the less quality time

because of social media between partners, 32.1% of participants accepted it. So, if one felt ignored or neglected by the partner, definitely it will affect the relationship on the long run. Moreover, testing the quality time among partners, and whether the social media vehicles had led to losing the special moments with the partners; 33.7% of participants agreed. Furthermore, testing the amount of time spent on social media and its effects on separation and divorce, it was rejected by 75% of participants indicating that the excess use of social media won't result in the separation or divorce among the Egyptian couples. Thus, this proves that the social media have negative effects on the quality time between the couples in Egypt, but not to the extent of reaching the separation or divorce phase. On the other hand, it was proven that the social media have some positives on the couple relations as they just talk or share videos found on such platforms if they happen to sit together. This was accepted by 47.5% of the sample. So, it all depends on how one will use the social media tools in getting closer or far away from the partner.

So, in this way the first research question "What are the negative effects of social media on the quality time on couple relationships in the Egyptian society?" was answered through the results that the Egyptians spend huge number of hours daily on the Facebook and whatsapp. This leads to less time and interaction for the partner, and loss of special good moments together. Thus, the huge number of hours spent on the social media has negative effects on the quality time among couples in Egypt, but not to the degree of reaching the separation and divorce.

Also, the huge number of hours spent on Facebook and whatsapp together with the results of the Facebook activity which shows that 82.6% of participants indicate that they use Facebook for browsing and commenting on posts and pictures of others. This may create intimacy with the virtual friends by commenting on the browsed posts. This supports the media dependency theory which states that there is virtual intimacy among communicators who depend on the media in their daily life.

Also, these two measurements and their results support the social comparison theory which indicates the long time duration spent on the media, may result in comparison between one's partner and anyone in the media. This can lead to the emotional infidelity concept or even a mental comparison between the partner and the others. The researchers believe that getting closer to anyone on the social media even in a virtual way, and preferring to share the emotions with him/her over the original partner is still considered an infidelity.

Talking about that the percentage of being deceived or cheated on is always higher than the percentage of admitting deceiving or cheating on your partner, these phenomena may have several explanations. It may be due to the feeling of always of being victim, being the innocent one. Or, due to our culture which isn't easy to admit that one had cheated on his/her partner especially if the respondent is a female. And since, the majority of the female respondents here is 92.7% of the participants. Asking about whether social media helps one to compare between someone else and the partner, the results came with rejection from 61.7%. Also, the question "if you seeked emotional support from other than the partner"; this was rejected by 82.9% of the participants. Talking about the emotional infidelity through the social media, and whether one contacted an old partner through the media, this was rejected by 75% of the participants. Testing the emotional infidelity, and whether, one chatted with another one through whatsapp rather than the partner, it was rejected by 54.9% of participants. Testing emotional infidelity, and whether one acknowledges someone not the partner on Facebook by liking or commenting on his/her writings, it was accepted by 52.7% of participants. Testing emotional infidelity, and whether the partner contacted one than you by social media, it was rejected by 68.7% of participants.

The researchers have explanation that the part of the emotional infidelity was not accepted by most of the participants. This is because the sample who answered

the survey females contribute by 92.7 % of the sample. This is because it is a taboo for Egyptian women to do such act, yet it is somehow acceptable if the men do it. This is because Egypt is high context culture where the people like to communicate by all possible communication tools and are open to speak to others , and is high on masculine factor which means that there are certain jobs specified for men only and some actions are acceptable for males but rejected for females. Thus, although Facebook and whatsapp are established to connect people in the first place, yet they are double edged weapons if used as a method for wasting time, or if it is being misused by talking to strangers, sending private messages to strangers, or checking the ex-couple profile and opening doors to him/her. These acts are forbidden in the Egyptian culture and cannot be admitted or declared , even if the results were answered anonymously.

Talking about the effects of the online dating apps and how it can ruin any relationship. It was clear that it is not accepted by most of the participants in the sample and as said before, this is due to the cultural norms in the country. This was indicated by refusal of the online apps by 84% of the participants. Yet, its presence can be undeclared and these answers don't mean that it is actually not there. As said before, the old aged parents refuse their daughters and sons to get in relationship of the online apps, as it may indicate fake information about the partner, his life style, his social class and family. Yet, it is there in the country, even if not publically declared. This was proven by the question of “the online dating can help you find a good partner” was rejected by 53% of participants, yet it was accepted by other 47% of participants. This indicates that the presence of the online dating apps is strongly proven, yet not easily declared. This may be due to the ease of access of such apps and websites and being introduced to the candidates that fit the criteria that one wants, with just a click of mouse and even can be in different territories in the world. So, this answered the third research question “ Do the online dating apps or websites help people find good spouses in the Egyptian society? This was answered as such

apps are being started to be used in the Egyptian society , yet with more suspicions on its usage due to the cultural barriers in the country.

But the point is that such online dating apps and technology must be used in the good ways that help the humanity and not be against it by ruining the already established re life relations among couples. This was clear as 70% of participants declared that the presence of the online dating asps can easily cause chatting among couples who are in relations and thus ruining such relationships. This answered the fourth research question “What are the opinions of the participants towards the effect of online dating on cheating among the couples in Egypt?” admitting that the online apps can easily ruin a stable relationship among couples.

13- Conclusion

From the above results, it is crystal clear that the social media is becoming a key contributor to relationship conflict among couples in Egypt. This is because some Egyptian couples stay for long number of hours on Facebook and whatsapp, leading to having less quality time and real care for the other partner. Yet, it was proven that if the social media is used in the correct way , it may help the couples to connect together. Moreover, it was also clear that the social media tools can easily destroy the couple relationships if misused as it opens the door for social comparison, and emotional infidelity among couples. It was clear also, that the widespread of the online apps may ring a bell to the cheating among the Egyptian couples. Yet, using the online apps is still a border line issue in the Egyptian culture. So, it is obvious that the social media platforms are a double edged weapon. They were established to be a way of communication tool in the first place. However, if they are used in excessive number of hours or in a way with less integrity , this might lead to more virtual connections with people on such platforms, yet more dis-communication in real life with the partners. Thus, ruining and attacking the couple relationship in Egypt.

14- Limitations

The research was limited only to be collected through online surveys only through Facebook, whatsapp, and emails. It didn't use any qualitative research methods. Thus, focus group research if used, it would have enriched the results. Moreover, it was concentrating firstly on Facebook as a social medium and secondly for the whatsapp and thirdly the online dating apps. Many others social media platforms were not tested in the research. Furthermore, it also included the upper classes only who speak and understand English. Moreover, the survey was conducted for 3 weeks only due to the time constraints.

15- Recommendations

The research recommends that this research can be an exploratory research for the negative effects of social media usage on couple relationships in Egypt through online surveys. But for future research, it is better to consider using other ways of contacting the samples. It is better also to use other demographics and psychographics of people in Egypt to have a full display of the real picture in the Egyptian society.

Tackling the research points of study, it is recommended that the couples give more time for their partners over the usage of the social media platforms. This will help the couples don't feel ignored due to the abuse of the social media by the other partner. It is also recommended to decrease the amount of hours spent on Facebook and whatsapp and that we must use the social media platforms in ways to enhance the quality time among the couples. This can happen by controlling ourselves, leaving the mobiles away while being together with the couple.. Also, there is a good technique when the couples go out together, they decide not to look at their mobiles and if one looked at it, he will pay a fine that goes to charity for example. Moreover, the couples may subscribe in less mobile internet package to force having less time spent on social media and internet. Or there are new and free mobile applications that can limit the social media usage per person. The person decides on the number of hours he/she is willing to spend on the social media, and if one exceeded this limit, the social media will be automatically blocked or stopped from usage. This application is called "Stay Focused".

Talking about the recommendations for the couples to get rid of the emotional infidelity, this must come from inside. They must put themselves in the place of the deceived partner and if they would like to be deceived and be in his/her place. Yet, any search and any chat can be easily deleted from the history and such checking out is not 100% reliable. Also, there are some acts that can be mental ones

only such as mental comparison between the partner and other one on the social media platform. Such an act cannot be discovered, and still it just comes from the inside and integrity of the person. And that there are some acts that the partners must stop doing on the social media platforms such as getting rid of the relationship status, to imply that one is single. And to stop navigating and searching for the old or former partner on such social media platforms. Also, it is important to note that the couples have to be aware that social media provides lots of comparisons even if it is a mental one. It makes the person disgrace his life, and have a lower self-esteem and to believe that the grass is greener in the other side, leading to emotional infidelity. This may lead to separation or divorce at the end of the day.

Furthermore, regarding the online apps, it is recommended that it must be used only by the single ones who are searching for their other half, and not to be misused by the couples in relationships for cheating reasons. Also, there are some tips for the couple to ensure that the other partner is not engaged in online dating apps relationships. First, the couples must have the passwords of the mobiles and social media accounts of each other. Second, the marital status must be included in the social media profiles and connected with the name and profile of the other couples; this is to ensure the presence of the partner in one's life to the contacts on the profile. Third, there are some apps that show the hidden social profiles of the partners. And above all, instead of spying on the other partner, it is important to note that if one feels happy, satisfies and comfortable in his/her relation, he/she wouldn't seek emotional support from someone else. So, it is recommended that the couples get away of the social media platforms and enjoy the quality time together to get away from the emotional infidelity.

Reference List

- Ahmad , Yasser (2017) Blog, and MENA Digital Statistics <http://consultyasser.com/egypt-digital-report-2017-top-online-statistics/2017> Trends Report: The Top Online Statistics in Egypt
- Alanazi, Norah, "A study of the influence of social media communication technologies on family relationships in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia" (2015). ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library. Paper 3133.
- Altman, I. and Taylor, D.A. (1973) *Social Penetration: The Development of Interpersonal Relationships*. Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, New York, 459
- Ayman, Menna (2018) Egyptian marriage rates decrease by 11% in 2017. <https://stepfeed.com/egyptian-marriage-rates-decrease-by-11-in-2017-4791>
- Berenson, T. "Science Says Your Cell Phone Use Could Be Hurting Your Relationship." Time. Time Inc., 1 Oct. 2015. Web. 23 Feb. 2017.
- Blossfeld, H.-P., & Schmitz, A. (2011). Online dating: Social innovation and a tool for research on partnership formation. *Journal of Family Research*, 23(3), 263-266
- Cano, A. and O'Leary, K.D. (2000). Infidelity and separations precipitate major depressive episodes and symptoms of nonspecific depression and anxiety. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68, 774-781.
- Cooper, A., Delmonico, D.L., & Burg, R. (2000). Cybersex users, abusers, and compulsives: New findings and implications. *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*, 7, 5–29
- Cooper, A., Morahan-Martin, J., Mathy, J., & Maheu, M. (2002). Toward an increased understanding of user demographics in online sexual activities. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 28, 105–129
- Festinger, L. 1954. A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7, 117-140.
- Galal I (2003) Online dating in Egypt. *Glob Media J* 2:1–19.
- Hassan, Yasmine (2018, Decemebr). Email from Cupid: how online dating is changing the relationship scene in Egypt. *Egypt Today*.
- Henline, B. H., & Harris, S. M. (2006). Pros and cons of technology use within close relationships. Poster presented at the annual conference of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Austin, TX, October 19-22, 2006.
- Hogan, B., Li, N., & Dutton, W. H. (2011). *A Global Shift in the Social Relationships of Networked Individuals: Meeting and Dating Online Comes of Age*. Oxford: Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Krafsky , Kelli (2010). Facebook and your marriage. Turn the Tide Resource Group ISBN 097695561X, 9780976955610 *Book Couples, the Internet, and Social Media*
- Krasnova, Hanna, et al. 2013. Envy on Facebook: A Hidden Threat to Users' Life Satisfaction? 11th Int'l Conference on Wirtschaftsinformatik, Leipzig, Germany.
- Latifi , Zohreh (2015). Investigating the Effect of Participation in the Cyberspace in the Relations between Spouses. *Journal of Education and Practice* www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.6, No.34, 2015
- Lenhart, A & Duggan, M (, 2014) How American couples use digital technology to manage life, logistics, and emotional intimacy within their relationships. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/02/11/couples-the-internet-and-social-media/> Pew Research Center
- Marano, H. "The New Menage a Trois." *Psychology Today*. Sussex Publishers, LLC., 5 July 2016. Web. 23 Feb. 2017.
- Merkle, E. (2000). Digital dating and virtual relating: Conceptualising computer mediated roman-tic relationships. *Family Relations*, 49, 187–203.
- Moubarak, Ahmed, 2011. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/two-million-egyptians-joined-facebook-revolution/>
- Nawi, M. & Hmazah, M. "(2010) The Impact Of Social-Networking Facebook To Users: Benefit Or Harm" *Malaysian Journal of Youth Studies*. Institut Penyelidikan Pembangunan Belia Malaysia. /2026

- Nelson, Okorie and Salawu, Abiodun (2017). Can my Wife be Virtual-Adulterous? An Experiential Study on Facebook, Emotional Infidelity and Self-Disclosure. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 18(2), 166-179. Available at: <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol18/iss2/12>
- Ngonidzashe , M (2016) "Social Networks and the Social Interaction in Family Relationships among Zimbabweans: A Survey on the Perceptions of Residents in Harare and Mashonaland West Provinces of Zimbabwe" *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* Volume 3, Issue 5, May 2016, PP 62-68 ISSN 2394-6288 (Print) & ISSN 2394-6296 (Online)
- Porter, K.; Mitchell , J; Grace, M; Shinosky, S; Gordon, V (2012) A Study of the Effects of Social Media Use and Addiction on Relationship Satisfaction. *Chapman journal*. Vol 2, No 1
- Shahine G (2004) Modern khatba? Cairo. *Al-Ahram*. Weekly Online. <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/695/feature.htm>
- Schonian, Sarah, (2013). "Perceptions and Definition of Infidelity: A Multimethod Study". UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones. <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations>
- Shelton, M "The Impact of Cell Phones on Romantic Relationships." *Psychology Today*. Sussex Publishers, LLC., 6 Nov. 2016. Web. 23 Feb. 2017.
- Valenzuela , S ; Halpern, D; Katz, J. (2014) Social network sites, marriage well-being and divorce: Survey and state-level evidence from the United States. *Journal nme: Elsevier* .<http://www.elsevier.com/locate/comphumb>
- Williams, Lynessa Marie, "Facebook Ruined My Marriage: Digital Intimacy Interference on Social Networking Sites" (2012).*Media Studies - Theses*. Paper 7.
- Whitty, M. (2002, April). Online infidelity: Is cybersex a real act of betrayal? Paper presented at 8th annual meeting of Society of Australian Social Psychologists, Adelaide, Australia.
- Young, K.S., Griffin-Shelley, E., Cooper, A. O'mara, J., and Buchanan, J. (2000). Online infidelity: A new dimension in couple relationships with implications for 106 evaluation and treatment. *The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*, 7(1-2), 59-74.