

The Impact of Technology and Social Media on Marriage and Divorce: A Study in Besilam Village, Langkat Regency

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ABSTRACT

In today's rapidly evolving digital era, technology and social media have become integral parts of daily life. From connecting people worldwide to shaping how we communicate, work, and play, these advancements have profoundly transformed social, cultural, and economic dynamics. This article explores the significant role of technology and social media in the modern world and examines their influence on how we live, interact, and share information. While social media serves as an effective two-way communication tool, its impact can vary depending on how it is used. The concept of communication and information-sharing via computer networks, which predates modern social media, marked the foundation for what we now recognize as social media platforms. As technology and social media continue to advance, they have given rise to new societal phenomena, including divorces stemming from relationships formed through social media interactions. Remarkably, marriage ceremonies can now be conducted via video calls, and divorces can be finalized through video conferences. The ongoing development of technology has significantly broadened societal knowledge. The emergence of diverse social media platforms has further enabled people to expand their social networks and forge new friendships.

INTRODUCTION

The basic function of social media is to enable people to communicate with one another online. Users can send text messages, share photos, videos, and other information, as well as participate in conversations with friends, family, and colleagues. Social media allows users to quickly share information with a large audience. This information can include breaking news, interesting articles, tutorials, and much more. Such information can spread rapidly and reach a wide audience.

Social media also serves as an entertainment platform for many. Users can watch funny videos, follow creative content, listen to music, and access various forms of online entertainment. For businesses and brands, social media is an essential marketing tool, enabling individuals to promote their products and reach the public quickly. They can promote their products and services, interact with customers, and build their brands online.

In the context of education, social media is used to share knowledge, learning materials, and educational information. This may include online courses, study groups, or other educational resources. Social media is also frequently used as a tool for advocacy and activism, allowing individuals to rally support for specific causes, spread awareness about social or political issues, and organize protests or campaigns.

Social media also enables users to express their interests and hobbies by sharing related content. This may include travel photos, cooking recipes, art, or other hobbies. Some social media platforms have features that allow users to sell products or services online, creating opportunities for small businesses and independent ventures to trade digitally.

Additionally, social media facilitates connections with people from various countries and cultures, broadening our perspectives and understanding of the world. However, social media has also been criticized as a platform that makes infidelity easier, becoming one of the triggers for household disputes. Divorce issues linked to social media have become a notable phenomenon in recent years.

Several sources highlight social media's role in online-related issues:

- 1) Social media ranks as the highest cause of divorce, reported in news.liputan6.com, published on October 6, 2017.
- 2) Household divorce causes shift to social media, reported in rilis.id, published on October 17, 2017.
- 3) Social media causes a high divorce rate in Indonesia, reported in tribunnews.com, published on October 1, 2017.
- 4) Active social media use triggers divorce, reported in mediaindonesia.com, published on October 3, 2017.
- 5) Divorce Cases and Social media, published in the print media *Harian Haluan* on January 25, 2015.

Based on the explanation above, it is evident that social media usage can negatively impact the sustainability of marital life. Every couple fundamentally aspires to permanence in their marriage. Permanence in marriage is enshrined in Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, where marriage is defined as a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife, aimed at forming a happy and lasting family, based on the belief in Almighty God.

Marriage is one of the most fundamental social institutions in society, and its continuity has significant implications for individuals, families, and society at large. On the other hand, divorce is a complex process often fraught with emotional, social, and economic consequences. Over the past decades, dramatic changes in marital and divorce dynamics have occurred, with technology and social media identified as potential factors influencing these aspects.

Social media also affects perceptions of marriage by presenting idealized portrayals of other couples' lives, which are often unrealistic. This can create pressure to meet unachievable standards, resulting in disappointment and dissatisfaction in marriage.

The use of technology and social media in the context of marriage can have various effects, both positive and negative. On the one hand, technology enables couples to communicate more easily, even when they are physically apart. This can strengthen emotional bonds and facilitate coordination in daily life. On the other hand, technology also opens doors to potential online infidelity, unfaithfulness, or conflicts arising from differing opinions on social media usage.

Negative Impacts

Social media can become a source of conflict in marriage if one partner feels neglected or jealous due to the other's interactions on social media. For instance, comments or messages from others deemed inappropriate may trigger arguments.

Additionally, social media provides greater access to individuals outside the marital relationship, which can lead to online infidelity. The availability of options for private communication can create opportunities for unfaithfulness.

Another negative impact is the exposure to idealized portrayals of other couples' lives. Social media often showcases these unrealistic portrayals, creating pressure to achieve unachievable standards, leading to dissatisfaction in marriage.

Excessive engagement with social media can also disrupt direct interactions in marriage. This may result in a lack of deep communication and reduced quality time spent together.

Positive Impacts

Despite the challenges, social media offers several benefits for married couples. It allows geographically distant couples to stay connected more easily through text messages, video calls, and sharing daily moments.

Social media can also serve as a source of social support, enabling couples to support each other online by sharing experiences, stories, and encouragement from friends and family in virtual networks.

Moreover, social media can assist couples in planning activities together, such as vacations or social gatherings, by using online groups or calendars to stay organized.

Another positive impact is that social media enables couples to openly express their love and appreciation for each other, which can strengthen emotional bonds in marriage.

Lastly, social media can serve as a resource for information about healthy relationships and marriages. It also provides a platform to seek advice and support from like-minded online communities.

In addition, social media can influence individuals' perceptions of marriage and standards of happiness in relationships. Exposure to idealized portrayals of other couples' lives on social media can create pressure to meet potentially unrealistic standards, resulting in disappointment and dissatisfaction in marriage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The impact of social media on marital relationships and divorce has garnered considerable attention in recent years. Several reports have highlighted the significant role that social media plays in the breakdown of marriages. These reports emphasize the following key aspects:

Social Media as a Cause of Divorce: Numerous reports have pointed out that social media use has become a leading factor in divorce cases. For instance, a 2017 report from *Liputan6* ranked social media as the highest cause of divorce in Indonesia. Similarly, reports from *Rilis.id* and *Tribunnews* have underscored the shift in the causes of divorce, with social media increasingly being cited as a central factor in marital disputes. The ease of accessing online platforms can lead to miscommunication, emotional neglect, or even infidelity, ultimately contributing to the dissolution of marriages.

Online Infidelity and Relationship Breakdown: One of the most prominent issues associated with social media is its role in facilitating online infidelity. With constant access to online communication, couples may face increased temptation, leading to emotional or physical unfaithfulness. The anonymity and ease of interacting with others online may blur boundaries, causing conflicts that strain relationships.

Impact on Marital Perceptions: Social media also plays a role in shaping perceptions of marriage. The portrayal of idealized relationships on platforms such as Instagram or Facebook may set unrealistic expectations for couples. This can lead to dissatisfaction with one's own marriage, as individuals may compare their relationships to the often filtered or curated representations they encounter online. The pressure to meet these unattainable standards can create marital tension and dissatisfaction.

Technology's Dual Role: While technology and social media can facilitate communication and strengthen emotional bonds between couples, it can also introduce conflicts. For instance, disagreements may arise regarding the frequency of social media use or the nature of online interactions with others. The balance between positive and negative impacts depends largely on how couples manage their use of technology.

Changing Social Norms: The increasing reliance on social media has led to shifting social norms regarding privacy, communication, and relationships. As digital communication becomes more integral to daily life, the boundaries between personal and public lives become more fluid. This shift can cause stress in relationships, especially if partners have differing views on the appropriate use of social media.

While social media provides numerous benefits for communication and engagement, its impact on marital relationships presents a complex and multifaceted issue. The negative effects, particularly in relation to divorce, underscore the need for increased awareness regarding how online behaviors may influence marital dynamics. This literature review emphasizes the growing concerns surrounding social media's role in shaping relationship dynamics and its potential to destabilize marital stability.

Marriage, as a fundamental social institution, is an enduring aspiration for most couples. In Indonesia, the permanence of marriage is legally enshrined in Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, which defines marriage as a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman, aimed at forming a harmonious and lasting family, grounded in the belief in Almighty God. This legal framework underscores the importance of marital longevity, which has significant social, emotional, and economic implications for individuals, families, and society at large.

Divorce, however, remains a complex process fraught with emotional, social, and economic consequences. Over recent decades, significant shifts in marital and divorce dynamics have been observed, with technology and social media increasingly recognized as influencing these transformations. These changes reflect broader societal shifts in attitudes toward relationships and the evolving nature of communication.

Social media platforms, in particular, have been shown to influence perceptions of marriage by promoting idealized portrayals of other couples' lives. These representations, often curated or filtered, create unrealistic standards that can lead to dissatisfaction and disappointment within marriages. Couples may feel pressured to meet unattainable ideals, which can strain relationships and undermine marital satisfaction.

The role of technology and social media in marriage is dual-faceted. On one hand, these tools can strengthen emotional bonds by facilitating communication, even in the absence of physical proximity. They enable couples to coordinate daily activities, share experiences, and maintain a sense of connection. On the other hand, the same technologies may facilitate online infidelity, foster unfaithfulness, or give rise to conflicts stemming from differing views on social media usage. As a result, the impact of social media on marital relationships is both positive and negative, contingent upon how couples navigate and manage their digital interactions.

Negative Impacts

Social media can serve as a significant source of conflict in marital relationships, particularly when one partner feels neglected or experiences

jealousy due to the other's online interactions. For example, comments or messages from external individuals, which may be perceived as inappropriate, can provoke arguments and strain the relationship.

Furthermore, the accessibility of individuals beyond the marital bond through social media platforms can increase the risk of online infidelity. The ease with which private communication can occur opens opportunities for unfaithfulness, eroding trust and emotional intimacy within the marriage.

Another negative consequence of social media usage is the exposure to idealized representations of other couples' relationships. These often unrealistic portrayals, commonly shared on platforms such as Instagram or Facebook, can create unattainable standards that foster dissatisfaction and disillusionment within one's own marriage. The constant comparison to curated images of others' lives may contribute to feelings of inadequacy and marital distress.

Additionally, excessive engagement with social media can disrupt in-person communication, weakening the quality of direct interactions between partners. This may result in a decline in meaningful conversations and a reduction in quality time spent together, ultimately diminishing the emotional connection that sustains the marriage.

Positive Impacts

Despite the challenges associated with social media, it also offers several advantages for married couples. One of the key benefits is its ability to facilitate communication between geographically distant partners, enabling them to remain connected through text messages, video calls, and the sharing of daily moments. This enhanced connectivity can help maintain emotional intimacy, even in long-distance relationships.

Social media can also serve as a valuable source of social support, allowing couples to offer mutual encouragement and share experiences with each other within virtual networks. Through the exchange of stories and supportive messages from friends and family, couples can strengthen their bond and feel more connected, even in the absence of physical proximity.

Moreover, social media platforms provide tools for couples to organize and plan joint activities, such as vacations or social gatherings. Online groups, shared calendars, and event-planning apps can streamline the coordination of schedules, fostering collaboration and unity within the relationship.

Additionally, social media provides an avenue for couples to publicly express their love and appreciation for one another. Such expressions can contribute to the reinforcement of emotional bonds, helping to solidify the sense of partnership and mutual respect.

Social media also serves as a resource for information related to healthy relationships and marriage. It offers a platform where couples can seek advice, share resources, and engage with like-minded individuals or communities, thereby gaining insights into ways to strengthen their relationships. However, it is important to note that social media can also shape individuals' perceptions of marriage and influence expectations of happiness in relationships. The exposure to idealized portrayals of other couples' lives on these platforms can create pressures to meet unrealistic standards. This constant comparison may lead to

dissatisfaction and disillusionment, undermining marital satisfaction and stability.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive methodology, utilizing a jurisprudential model to explore the research focus. This approach integrated primary and secondary data to provide an in-depth understanding of the social and situational context within the research area. The study was conducted in Besilam Village, Langkat Regency, between December 2023 and March 2024. Interviews were conducted with Mr. Rahmat, the Secretary of Besilam Village, to gather insights regarding residents whose marital relationships were impacted by divorce attributed to the influence of technology and social media.

According to the data provided by Mr. Rahmat, divorce rates in the village ranged from 25% to 40% of the total 2,456 households. The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method to derive meaningful interpretations. Subsequently, criteria were developed to construct a comprehensive overview of the study's object and provide a robust framework for analysis.

Qualitative descriptive analysis is a methodological approach that emphasizes the detailed description and interpretation of collected data. It involves a meticulous examination and documentation of various aspects of the observed situation, capturing its nuances in real time. This analytical technique aims to offer a holistic and nuanced understanding of the actual conditions, ensuring that findings are reflective of the complexities inherent in the study context.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The formulation of the research problem in this study, grounded in the background outlined above, underscores the significance and urgency of conducting the research in order to provide valuable insights to Besilam Village, Langkat Regency, regarding the impact of technology on marital relationships and the rising incidence of divorce:

1. How does the use of technology and social media in Besilam Village, Langkat Regency, influence communication and interactions between married couples?
2. What are the consequences of technology and social media use on social dynamics and marital relationships in Besilam Village, Langkat Regency, particularly with respect to divorce cases that may emerge?

This study aims to address several key objectives, which form the foundation for examining the identified legal issues. These objectives are:

1. To investigate how the use of technology and social media in Besilam Village, Langkat Regency, influences communication and interactions among married couples.
2. To assess the impact of technology and social media on social structures and marital relationships in Besilam Village, Langkat Regency, with a particular focus on the potential implications for divorce.

Despite the growing interest in the role of technology and social media in shaping marital dynamics, research on this subject remains limited, especially within rural contexts such as Besilam Village, Langkat Regency. Consequently, this study is particularly relevant for exploring how these technological tools influence marriage and divorce, as well as how local communities can effectively respond to these emerging challenges.

The research on the impact of technology and social media on marriage and divorce is still in its nascent stages and has not been fully explored, particularly in rural settings. Thus, this study plays a crucial role in understanding the influence of technology on marital stability and divorce, while offering insights into how communities can adapt to these evolving dynamics.

The research is structured in several key stages, as follows:

1. **Pre-fieldwork Stage:** This phase includes preparatory activities such as focus group discussions, aligning theoretical frameworks with the research design, selecting and refining research tools, conducting preliminary field observations, obtaining necessary permissions from research participants, and finalizing the research proposal.
2. **Fieldwork Stage:** This stage involves the collection of primary data through in-depth interviews with respondents in Besilam Village, Langkat Regency.
3. **Data Analysis Stage:** The data gathered from interviews, observations, and documents will be analyzed systematically. The analysis will interpret the data within the context of the research questions, followed by a process of validating the findings.
4. **Report Writing Stage:** The final phase involves compiling and synthesizing the research findings, presenting the results in a comprehensive report, and providing meaningful interpretations of the data collected throughout the study.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the study on the impact of technology and social media on marriage and divorce in Besilam Village, Langkat Regency, several key conclusions emerge. The research indicates that technology and social media can have a positive effect on communication among married couples. Digital platforms make it easier for couples to interact, exchange information, and strengthen emotional connections. This use of technology has the potential to enhance marital communication by facilitating ongoing interaction and providing a sense of closeness, even in situations where physical distance might otherwise be a barrier.

However, despite these benefits, the study also highlights some challenges, particularly regarding privacy. The exposure of couples' private lives on social media can significantly influence how their marriage is perceived by others. While some of these perceptions can be positive, showcasing happy moments and shared experiences, the negative aspects of this exposure – such as the oversharing of personal details or conflicts – can impact the public image of the relationship and introduce new tensions within the marriage itself.

Social media also plays an important role in shaping public perceptions of marriage and divorce in Besilam Village. The dissemination of information about marital issues through digital platforms can influence societal attitudes toward the institution of marriage, often changing how people view marital stability and the factors that contribute to divorce. These shifts in public perception can create a ripple effect, influencing individuals' decisions and expectations regarding their own relationships.

The role of technology in reshaping the dynamics of social relationships within the community is another important finding. The way couples interact in marriage is increasingly shaped by their digital behaviors, which can modify traditional social patterns. Through the use of digital platforms, couples may either strengthen their bonds or, in some cases, experience strain, depending on how they manage technology in their daily lives.

Ultimately, the study underscores the need for awareness and responsible management of technology use in the context of marriage. It is essential for the people of Besilam Village to understand the dual nature of technology's impact – both its potential to enhance marital connections and its capacity to introduce challenges related to privacy and communication. To minimize these risks, it is crucial that couples take proactive steps to manage their online presence and communication strategies.

In light of these findings, several recommendations emerge. First, there is a need for educational programs aimed at raising digital awareness among married couples, helping them understand how technology and social media can both positively and negatively affect their relationships. Such initiatives should focus on equipping couples with the tools to navigate the digital landscape while maintaining a healthy balance between online and offline interactions.

Additionally, encouraging couples to manage their online privacy collaboratively is essential. By setting clear boundaries on what is shared on social media, couples can protect their personal lives from external scrutiny and prevent potential conflicts. This could involve educating couples on the importance of safeguarding their privacy in a digital world that often prioritizes openness over discretion.

Training in digital communication skills should also be considered. Providing couples with resources on how to communicate effectively through digital platforms can improve their ability to handle disagreements and maintain healthy relationships. By teaching couples how to express themselves clearly and respectfully in an online environment, they can avoid misunderstandings and conflict escalation.

Promoting positive marital norms through social media is another recommendation. Social media can be a powerful tool for encouraging healthy relationship behaviors and reinforcing the value of commitment in marriage. Socialization programs that emphasize the benefits of strong, supportive marriages could help shift societal norms and foster a community-wide understanding of the importance of marital stability.

Furthermore, providing couples with resources to manage the stress that may arise from technology use is crucial. This could involve helping couples set

limits on their social media use, or encouraging designated "offline" time, which would allow them to reconnect with each other without digital distractions. Reducing the pressure of constant online engagement can improve relationship quality and reduce the stress that may result from excessive technology use.

Lastly, the development of digital ethics guidelines at the village level could help establish a framework for responsible and respectful technology use within the community. These guidelines would emphasize positive behaviors and set expectations for how individuals should interact online, promoting a healthier digital environment for everyone.

Through these strategies, the study suggests that Besilam Village can navigate the challenges and opportunities that technology and social media present in the context of marriage and divorce, fostering stronger relationships and healthier community dynamics.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Every research certainly has limitations. Limitations in the sense of research limitations affect the researcher's ability to explore the data being studied, the limitations of available data, or external factors of the research such as time and resource limitations. So further research is needed for the perfection of this research.

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