INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ON MARITAL COMMUNICATION AMONG MARRIED INDIVIDUALS IN SELECTED HOUSE OF POWER CHURCHES IN EMBAKASI CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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THERAPY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for examination.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband; David Mathu, and our children; Tiffany, Taffy, and Jayda, for their unwavering support in the course of my studies.

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ABSTRACT

While existing research has extensively documented the direct influence of digital technologies, especially on bringing about a paradigm shift in the way people relate, a critical gap remains in understanding how the adoption of digital technology influences marital communication within faith-based communities. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was informed by the Rational Choice Theory and the Communication Theory of Relational Dialects. The study adopted a convergent–parallel mixed-methods design. The target population was 800 married individuals from House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County. The stratified sampling method was used to collect data from a sample size of 260 married individuals. Another purposive sample of 5 pastors participated in key informant interviews, and 18 married individuals were selected to participate in focus group discussions. The study used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 31 to undertake cross-tabulation analysis, chi-square tests, percentage distributions, and mean and standard deviation scores. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis with aid of Atlas's software. Results showed a statistically significant association between access to digital technologies and marital communication, χ^2 (2) = 13.905, $p<.05$. The results also revealed a statistically significant association between frequency and duration of digital technology use and marital communication, χ^2 (2) = 6.93, $p<.05$. However, there was no statistically significant association between motives of digital technology use and marital communication, χ^2 (1) = 3.02, $p>.05$. In terms of strategies for enhancing marital communication, the highest-rated strategies were boundary management (M = 4.09), safety, privacy, and risk awareness (M = 4.09), and healthy information consumption (M = 4.00). Thematic analysis revealed the themes of digital technology dependence, irresponsible use, information and entertainment and social connection motives, conflict and loneliness, and the need for self-regulation. A conclusion was drawn that high access as well as high frequency and duration of digital technology use is linked to elevated communication problems among married individuals. The study recommended that people in marital relationships should intentionally regulate their access, frequency, and motives for digital technology use to safeguard marital communication. Marriage and family therapists should integrate digital technology assessment into their routine couple therapy. Future research should adopt a more integrative conceptual framework to better fathom the mechanisms through which digital technology use affects marital communication.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDs	Compact Disk
CPS	Current Population Survey
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MFT	Marriage Family Therapy
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
NLSY	National Longitudinal Survey of Youth
SNS	Social Networking Sites
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TV	Television
USA	United States of America
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WIFI	Wireless Fidelity

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Access to Digital Technology	This refers to the ability to obtain and effectively use digital devices, internet connectivity, and related resources for communication, learning, work, and participation in society (Afza et al., 2023). In this study, the term was used to refer to access to the internet and social media.
Digital Technology:	Refers to the combination of hardware and software that facilitates communication (Dudar et al., 2021). In this study, it refers to various hardware and software such as smartphones, laptops, the internet, and electronic platforms, including social media.
Frequency and Duration:	It refers to the number of times and tenure of an event (D'Arrigo et al., 2023). In this study, it refers to the number of times married individuals use digital technology in a day.
Influence:	This is to affect or change how something develops, behaves, or thinks (Cambridge University Press, 2026). In this study, the term was used to refer to the change in marital communication resulting from access and usage of digital communication.
Marital Communication:	Refers to clarity of information, appropriate language, and content, as well as timely and

active listening during communication (Hofmeister, 2024). In this study, marital communication was indicated by three mutually reinforcing dimensions: openness and sharing, support and understanding and conflict management. Marital communication is effective when the overall score is high, and poor when the overall score is low.

Married Individuals: This refers to a man and a woman legally or formally united in matrimony, recognized by social, cultural, or religious norms (Alberto, 2020). In this study, the term refers to married individuals of selected House of Power Churches.

Motives for Digital Technology Use: This refers to a psychological phenomenon that directs behaviour, while digital technology use implies utilisation of digital technology to fulfil utility (Morwitz & Munz, 2021). In this study, the term was used to mean digital interactions, emotional engagement, and behavioral dependence.

Strategies for Promoting Constructive Use of Digital Technologies: This refers to the intentional responsible, and purpose-driven online interactions to enhance marital understanding, emotional connection, and

relationship quality (Ralte, 2024). In this study, the term was used to refer to intentional online use, healthy information consumption, impulse control, boundary management, safety and risk awareness.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study by outlining key components such as the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, assumptions, rationale, significance, scope, and limitations. Together, these sections establish a foundation for a comprehensive investigation into how digital technologies shape marital communication among married individuals, as may be manifested in the House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The chapter ends with a summary.

Background to the Study

Communication among married individuals is the avenue to share thoughts, emotions, and feelings in the experiences of daily living. However, the marital communication as an interpersonal and transactional process by which married partners achieve and maintain understanding with each other has recently been a subject of the emergence of digital technology (Nkurunziza & Munganyinka, 2024). Emergence of digital technology facilitated by the internet, availability of digital devices and social media platforms has resulted in a significant change in the way married individuals communicate and maintain their social relationships (McCormack & Ogilvie, 2020). Arguably, the rapid integration of digital technologies into everyday life has transformed how married individuals communicate and interact. These technologies have redefined connection, shared experiences, and the negotiation of togetherness across distances (Yıldız & Nur, 2024). Digital communication tools such as social media, messaging apps, and video calls have reshaped marital interactions by

providing constant connectivity, creating new interaction scenarios and restructured relational patterns (Jabali et al., 2024).

The adverse influence of digital technology use on marital communication in a marriage can be moderated by interventions, the structured strategies, or resources accessible to and deployed by married individuals to improve the healthy use of digital technology among married individuals (Booth et al., 2021). This includes seeking counselling and sharing best practices through church workshops or peer groups (Bukhari et al., 2024). This is reflected in the frequency of exposure to and engagement with these initiatives. Effective interventions are expected to enhance constructive technology use and reduce harmful behaviors, thus reinforcing healthy, constructive communication in marriage (Demircioğlu & Göncü Köse, 2021). Hence, there is a potential moderating influence of interventions on the relationship between digital technology use and married individuals' communication that warrants investigation.

Marital communication represents the effectiveness, clarity, and emotional depth of interactions between spouses (Zihad et al., 2021). Marital communication is experienced in an environment characterized by active listening where married individuals pay attention to each other, communicate their thoughts and feelings clearly, and avoid using hurtful words, whether while communicating online or offline (Apostu, 2021). This results in mutual understanding, emotional safety, and responsiveness all of which can be enhanced or impaired depending on how digital technologies are accessed, used, and regulated (Booth et al., 2025).

The use of digital technology for communication follows patterns of use in terms of time and frequency in North America. In the United States of America (USA), a study by Quiroz and Mickelson (2021) revealed that individuals in marital

relationships spent an average of four hours per day on social media, with women taking the lead. The long online hours married individuals spent online ameliorated the deterioration of marital communication among married individuals. This is worse when married individuals are addicted to social media, with reports indicating such individuals experience negative communication outcomes and enhanced conflict (Bouffard et al., 2022). This finding is supported in the northern neighbor, Canada, where Parsakia and Rostami (2023) noted that while technology facilitates dating among people, when they get into serious marital relationships, the frequency raises privacy concerns and lowers intimate communication, leading to reexamination of what genuine intimacy entails.

Researchers have attributed the widespread use of digital technology to various factors that could potentially impact marital communication in Europe. Gomes et al. (2021), remarking on the status of marital communication in Portugal, intimated that phubbing reduces intimacy as it disrupts people being disrupted by events around them. Such married individuals experience communication difficulties leading to relationship dissatisfaction, with the possibility of the marriage ending in divorce and separation. In a similar vein, Kristiina and Anna (2022) in Finland also posited that digital communication, if applied without care, has the potential to deprive married individuals' intimacy, leading to the nurturing of a virtual world even if they may be under the same roof. This is congruent with Tammisalo and Rotkirch (2022) in Finland, who posited that ubiquitous technology, including social media, continues to negatively shape intimate relationships.

In Asia, there is a general decline in marital communication, which is directly attributed to the erosion of the art of communication due to ubiquitous communication gadgets and job demands (Zhou et al., 2023). The concern is replicated by Yu and

Hang (2024), who noted marital life takes place alongside several other prominent family changes, including the deinstitutionalization, individualization, and notably deterioration of communication. In addition, Latifa et al. (2021), in a study conducted in Indonesia, noted that one of the major issues complicating marital communication is technological intrusion into marriage. However, the study noted that technology is impersonal and cannot replace the emotional connection between married individuals. As a result, Chadha et al. (2025) have noted that the rate of divorce and separation, attributed to social media, has spiked in Indonesia and India, respectively.

In the Middle East, there is evidence that, though technology is beneficial on many fronts, it is blamed for the fall of family values and the lack of marital communication depth. Remarking on the status of marital stability in Turkey, Tammisalo and Rotkirch (2022) posited that while digital communication fosters accessibility and convenience, it also disrupts family values, emotional connection, and interpersonal engagement. Similar sentiments were shared by Alberto (2022) in Jordan, who posited that even though digital technologies, including social networking, have benefits, such as assisting people to be connected, negative aspects have emerged, including interfering with the intended marital communication, leading to the destruction of family values.

Sampled studies in Africa show that social media is responsible for increased cases of communication breakdown and lack of emotional intimacy among married individuals. Ehoro and Badey (2021) highlighted that marital communication is becoming more complicated by the lack of communication depth directly traced to social media usage in Nigeria. The same study also showed that nonsocial media users enjoy close emotional relationships emanating from communication, with 11.4% of nonsocial media users showing marital satisfaction compared to those on

social media. Omeje et al. (2022) conducted a study among teachers in a similar context and highlighted that high social media interaction contributes to poor marital communication and directly leads to marital instability. In Rwanda, Nkurunziza and Munganyinka (2024) remarked that there have been concerns over the negative aspects of the use of digital technology as it interferes with communication among married individuals, fueling marital conflict.

In Kenya, the rapid advancement and integration of communication technology into daily life, characterized by increased frequency of use of the same, have fundamentally altered how families interact and maintain relationships (Kyalo, 2024). Nyambura (2020) added that family life, especially marital life, has increasingly shifted to online, characterized by diverse digital technologies, applications, and platforms, which have ushered in sweeping transformations in how marital life is practiced, experienced, and structured. As a result of a lack of communication depth, resulting from social media usage and intrusion, there is notable evidence that younger married individuals in major metropolises like Nairobi are increasingly feeling the pressure to shift from their relationships to the new exciting online secret lover (Mogambi, 2025; Wamunyu, 2020). Similarly, Mwangi (2021), in a study on social media use and the well-being of married individuals, indicated that increasing adoption of social media has contributed to marital instability due to interference with normal communication, raising suspicion and mistrust. It is against this backdrop that the present study sought to extent research through the investigation of the influence of digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Evidence shows that the growing use of digital technologies such as smartphones, social media, and instant messaging platforms has significantly changed how married couples communicate. While these tools make it easier for couples to stay connected and communicate more conveniently, they have also been linked to challenges such as reduced face-to-face interaction, misunderstandings, emotional distance, and marital conflict (Abu et al., 2021; Akanle et al., 2021; Hepfler, 2021; Baggs, 2025).

In Kenya, research has explored how digital technologies affect family relationships, showing both positive effects like improved connectivity and negative effects such as digital distractions and cases of digital infidelity (Kagwiria, 2022; Mwangi, 2021; Njiru & Odundo, 2024). However, there is still limited research on how factors such as access to digital technologies, how often and how long they are used, and the reasons for using them influence communication between married partners, especially within faith-based settings.

In addition, little is known about how digital technologies affect marital communication among married individuals in the House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. This lack of context-specific evidence makes it difficult for church leaders, counsellors, and family practitioners to develop effective strategies that encourage healthy and constructive use of digital technologies in marriage. Therefore, this study sought to examine how digital technologies influence marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, focusing on access, usage patterns, motives, and strategies for promoting better communication.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of digital technologies on communication among married individuals in selected Houses of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the influence of access to digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals in the Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.
2. To examine the influence of the frequency and duration of digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.
3. To determine the influence of motives for digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.
4. To examine strategies for promoting constructive use of digital technologies to strengthen communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions.

1. How does access to digital technologies influence the marital communication among married individuals in House of Power churches, Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya?

2. How do the frequency and duration of digital technology use influence marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya?
3. What is the influence of motives for digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya?
4. What strategies can be used to promote the constructive use of digital technologies to strengthen marital communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya?

Assumptions of the Study

This study operated under several key assumptions that guided its methodology and interpretation of findings. First, the study assumed that married individuals have access to digital technology in the form of digital devices such as smartphones and laptops/computers, as well as access to digital platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, which may influence the way they communicate. Secondly, married individuals have some patterns or habits in how they use digital technology, for example, in terms of frequency of use or timing, which may again influence communication as married individuals. Thirdly, the study assumed that there are motives behind use of digital technology among married individuals; for example, for reasons of business, entertainment, passing information, to mention a few, which may influence marital communication. Fourthly, it was assumed that married individuals are aware of the coping mechanisms they use to deal with the negative influence of the use of digital technology on marital communication, and lastly, the study assumed

that respondents were aware of interventions that can be put in place to enhance the use of digital technology for communication among married individuals.

Lastly, the study was guided by the pragmatic philosophical approach, which recognizes that reality can be both objective and subjective, and that knowledge comes from a combination of measurable evidence and people's lived experiences. From this perspective, marital communication and digital technology use were seen as both observable behaviors and personal, socially shaped experiences. Knowledge was therefore developed by drawing on both quantitative data and qualitative accounts from participants. This perspective supported the use of a mixed methods design, allowing the integration of numerical findings and narrative insights to provide a fuller understanding of how digital technologies influence marital communication.

Justification of the Study

Digital technologies have fundamentally altered the landscape of marital communication, bringing both opportunities and challenges to the forefront of relationship dynamics. As married individuals increasingly rely on digital tools such as social media, messaging apps, and video calls to stay connected, understanding how these technologies influence marital communication has become an urgent necessity. This study is justified by several key considerations that highlight its significance in the context of Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) and its broader implications for family well-being and public policy. This gap is further supported by Nguyen (2021), who found that media richness (such as video calls) enhances social connectedness more effectively than lower-social-presence media like texting. Addressing these gaps contributed to the understanding of marital communication in

the digital age, which is essential for developing effective interventions tailored to married individual’s s' needs.

Marriage and Family Therapy requires a deep understanding of the unique characteristics and communication patterns within relationships to provide effective, customized interventions. A study by Aljasir (2022) highlight how the use of digital technology behaviours such as "phubbing" (ignoring one's partner in favour of a mobile phone) negatively impact on marital communication. The studies indicate how the use of digital technology can compromise marital communication. Marital communication is a crucial determinant of mental and emotional well-being. Liu et al. (2024) conducted a meta-analysis linking various forms of digital technologies to psychological well-being, showing that while phone calls can enhance emotional connection, excessive reliance on social networking platforms can negatively impact relationship satisfaction by displacing meaningful in-person interactions. Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, conflict, and emotional disengagement, all of which contribute to stress, anxiety, and marital dissatisfaction. Conversely, high marital communication fosters emotional closeness, trust, and mutual support between spouses. This study provides valuable insights for improving relationship dynamics and promoting mental well-being in an increasingly digital world.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to both the theoretical and practical understanding of how digital technologies influence communication among married individuals, particularly within the context of House of Power churches in Nairobi County, Kenya. The church ministers to diverse

demographics, chief among whom are the technologically savvy individuals. As the custodian of ethical standards, it behooves church leaders to continue relying on up-to-date information that enhances the capacity of church leaders to adequately support their members. Thus, the current study, which addresses key areas of marital communication, coping mechanisms, and interventions in the digital age, is likely to offer insights that can benefit the church.

This study has the potential to inform therapeutic interventions and marriage counselling practices aimed at fostering healthier communication patterns among married individuals in the digital age. Unlike church ministers, who may not dig deeper into understanding issues that affect individuals psychologically, counsellors and therapists are duty bound to understand the underlying issues affecting people. Thus, their work is made easier if there are evidence-based studies that explain phenomena presented by clients. Though digital technology is ubiquitous in Kenya, especially in urban setups, limited studies have been done to address the challenges it poses to marital communication. Consequently, therapists and counsellors may find the findings of this study relevant to advancing their work.

Social media continues to disrupt communication in developing countries like Kenya. Digital communication has increased the social network of people, meaning there is a continued integration value, especially among young people. Because technology keeps evolving, digital technology provides a wide area of research that should be explored by researchers. This is especially important in the area touching on intimate relationships and communication, which continues to be shaped by the continued integration of various cultures in the social media space. Consequently, this study opens opportunities upon which researchers and academicians can advance future studies.

In the broader context of policy formulation, this study's findings can guide policymakers in creating initiatives that support families in adapting to the challenges and opportunities brought about by digital communication technologies. By promoting digital literacy and effective communication strategies within families, policies can encourage healthy communication practices. Educational programs can also be developed to raise awareness about the influence of digital technologies on marital communication, particularly in a marriage context. These programs can help married individuals across different socio-economic backgrounds foster better communication, leading to improved family relationships.

The communication in marriage is closely linked to the mental and emotional well-being of individuals. By understanding how digital technologies affect this communication, the study contributed to public health efforts aimed at promoting healthy family relationships. Findings can be used to design public health campaigns that encourage healthy digital technology practices, thereby reducing the risk of relationship stress, marital conflict, and other negative consequences. Additionally, the study supports community-based interventions aimed at strengthening relationships and improving communication in the digital era.

This study contributes to theory by extending both Rational Choice Theory and the Communication Theory of Relational Dialectics using evidence on how digital technology influences marital communication. The findings show that married individuals often make deliberate choices about using digital technologies based on perceived benefits and possible relational costs, while also experiencing ongoing tensions such as autonomy versus connection and openness versus privacy in their digital interactions. In this way, the study helps refine how both theories explain

marital communication within a faith-based context and highlights areas for further theoretical development.

The study also offers methodological insight by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in a mixed methods design, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Overall, the findings support the refinement of theoretical models that explain how digital technology shapes communication in marriage. Future studies could build on these results by exploring other mediating and moderating factors that influence the relationship between digital technology use and marital communication.

Scope of Study

This study focused on the influence of digital technologies on communication among married individuals, specifically within the context of House of Power churches in Embakasi Nairobi County, Kenya. It explored how the use of digital technology in communication influences communication among married individuals. Specifically, the study focused on how access to digital technologies, the frequency and duration of digital technology usage, and motives for using digital technology influence communication among married individuals. The study was conducted in the House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, which provided a diverse range of married individuals to participate. The study targeted married individuals who are members of selected House of Power Churches in this area, as the congregation's community and church-based support structures offer a unique setting for understanding how digital technologies influence married individuals' communication in a spiritual and community context.

Limitations of the Study

The study was anchored on convergent-parallel mixed methods design. This implies that the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, but separately, thus requiring a high level of technical knowledge. The researcher managed the risk of data mix-up by relying on well-trained data collection personnel. The study was limited to the target population of 800 members of Houses of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. This then means that findings cannot be generalized to other church denominations, rural settings or married individuals outside the selected churches. This limitation was informed by the need to limit the findings to a church set up in a metropolitan area. The particular denomination, Houses of Power Churches, was preferred, as it has several church plants in Embakasi Central Sub-County, making it easy to deal with people in a similar context..

Although stratified proportionate sampling was employed to ensure that married individuals from different parts of the constituency and demographic backgrounds were represented, there may still be challenges in capturing the full diversity of married individuals in Embakasi Central Sub County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Factors such as socio-economic status, educational background, and marital duration could influence communication in ways that could not be fully captured by the study. To mitigate this limitation, the study analysed data across demographic subgroups, exploring potential variations in how the use of digital technology influences marital communication.

The study relied on self-reported data from married individuals, which may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias. Participants may inaccurately recall or selectively report their use of digital communication tools or their communication. To

minimize these biases, validated instruments were used, and careful attention was paid to the phrasing of questions to encourage accurate and honest responses as well as the use of multiple sources of data collection. Additionally, pilot testing was conducted to ensure that the questionnaires were easily understood and provided consistent data.

Delimitations of the Study

The study specifically focused on how digital technology influenced communication. The study has conceptualized digital technology to include digital technologies, frequency and duration of digital technology use, the intention behind digital technology use, and regulating digital technology, with any other conceptualizations excluded. Given that the study relied on self-reported data, it excluded nonverbal cues and in-person interactions, among other marital communication dynamics that may play a significant role in married individuals' relationships. However, this exclusion was intentional to provide a clear analysis of the specific influence of the use of digital technology on marital communication. However, this was communicated as a gap that future researchers can explore.

The study focused on married individuals in the House of Power Churches in Embakasi Nairobi County, Kenya. It excluded single-parent households, cohabiting married individuals, or non-marital family units to concentrate on the dynamics unique to married individuals and their communication practices in the context of digital technology. Households without access to or use of digital communication devices were considered, as the aim was to assess how the use of digital technology affects married individuals. Similarly, the study excluded visiting congregants. The study reported this as a limitation that future researchers can exploit.

The study was geographically limited to House of Power Churches in Embakasi, Nairobi County, Kenya. Consequently, any other church within Embakasi Central was excluded. Similarly, any other House of Power Churches located in areas outside the said geographical location did not participate in the study. This boundary allowed the research to focus on a specific local context, where married individuals are in selected Houses of Power churches. This delimitation was reported in the final report for future studies.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the study, providing an overview of its key components, including the background, statement of the problem, assumptions, rationale, significance, scope, and limitations. The primary aim of the study was to explore the influence of the use of digital technologies on communication among married individuals in House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study focused on understanding how use of digital technologies affects communication among married individuals, the coping mechanisms adopted by married individuals to mitigate any negative influences, and the potential interventions to enhance the effective use of digital tools. Building on this introductory chapter, the next chapters delved deeper into the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the influence of digital technologies on communication among married individuals. The chapter begins with general literature review, then advances to an empirical literature review. The chapter also discusses the theoretical framework, the literature synthesis matrix, and the conceptual framework and ends with a chapter summary.

General Literature Review

Digital technology is the set of hardware and software such as smartphones, laptops, the internet, and electronic platforms, including social media, that facilitates communication (Dudar et al., 2021). The Internet, along with mobile phones and accompanying digital platforms, has become a part of communications within intimate partner relationships, including married individuals. Digital communication technology in the world is developing very rapidly, which has a significant influence on marital communication between people. Access to digital technology refers to the capacity to acquire and effectively utilize digital devices, internet connections, and related tools for communication, education, employment, and active participation in society (Krönke, 2020). In practical terms, this entails access to the internet, access to social media, and subscription to various digital channels. Several studies have been conducted to determine the influence of communication technology on human relationships. However, the use of digital technology, especially social media, can influence interpersonal relationships positively, but only if it is used appropriately, carefully, and promptly.

Appropriate use of digital technology is reflected in the frequency and duration as well as motives for use. Frequency and duration refer to the number of

times married individuals use digital technology in a day (D'Arrigo et al., 2023). Motives for digital technology use is a psychological phenomenon that directs behaviour, while digital technology use implies utilisation of digital technology to fulfil utility (Morwitz & Munz, 2021). Various motives such as digital interactions, emotional engagement, and behavioral dependence can either facilitate or hinder effective marital communication. Effective marital marital communication depends on the clarity of information, appropriateness of language, and content, as well as timely and active listening during communication (Hofmeister, 2024). It manifests through openness and sharing, support and understanding and conflict management. Use of digital technology is constructive only when the user is intentional, responsible, and purpose-driven in their online interactions to enhance marital understanding, emotional connection, and relationship quality (Ralte, 2024). It spans intentional online use, healthy information consumption, impulse control, boundary management, safety and risk awareness.

The frequency and duration of digital technology indicate the level of attachment one has developed with social media use (Hertlein, 2021). Indicators include; daily screen time, number of digital interactions with one's spouse, or time spent on entertainment vs. direct communication (Tammisalo & Rotkirch, 2022). These patterns are critical in understanding marital communication – excessive or misaligned usage times can lead to emotional neglect or conflict, while well-aligned patterns may foster connection (Mascheroni & Zaffaroni, 2025). Thus, how and when technology is used potentially affects the depth and responsiveness of spousal interactions.

The intentions behind digital technology use are the primary reasons married individuals use digital platforms, namely; for interaction (e.g., chatting with a spouse),

entertainment (e.g., watching videos), or information seeking (e.g., reading news) (Agrawal, 2021). These motivations help clarify the underlying intentions of digital technology use and its implications for communication. For example, if spouses are motivated by relational connection, digital communication may enhance emotional intimacy (Parsakia & Rostami, 2023). Conversely, if technology is used mainly for personal entertainment, it may reduce meaningful interaction, thus negatively impacting communication (Widdicks et al., 2022).

Another dimension of digital technology is how individuals regulate their use of digital technology. Regulation involves the ability to balance different motives of use through the conscious management of digital access, usage patterns, and motivations within the marital context (Vaterlaus et al., 2020). This is based on the observation that digital technology presents a particularly difficult setting for self-control, as it enables users to pursue various goals such as staying connected with others or seeking information while simultaneously exposing them to numerous instantly rewarding distractions (Bennett et al., 2025). Regulation of digital technology use manifests in whether and how married individuals set boundaries around when, why, and how digital tools are used (Muttaqin et al., 2022; Tong et al., 2021). Regulation is closely tied to marital communication: by limiting distractions, setting shared rules, and aligning intentions, married individuals can reduce misunderstandings and foster a more focused, respectful communication environment (Oye, 2025).

Marital communication is concerned with the clarity of information, appropriate language, and content, as well as timely and active listening during communication (Hofmeister, 2024). Marital communication is reflected in three mutually reinforcing dimensions: openness and sharing, support and understanding

and conflict management (Kılıçarslan & Parmaksız, 2023). Openness and sharing denote the extent to which spouses freely express thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences without fear of judgment, while support and understanding reflect the degree of empathy, emotional responsiveness, and validation present in interactions (Lapierre & Custer, 2021). Conflict management, on the other hand, captures the ability of spouses to handle disagreements constructively, resolve misunderstandings respectfully, and maintain emotional control during sensitive discussions (Omokhabi et al., 2025). These dimensions are interdependent, such that weakness in one dimension is likely to undermine the overall effectiveness of communication, while strength in one enhances the others (Lugonzo et al., 2023). Marital communication is effective when the overall score is high, and poor when the overall score is low.

In Africa, a report by Kronke (2020) pointed out that on average across 34 countries, one in five adults (20%) have access to both a smartphone and a computer, while 43% only have access to a basic cell phone. In 15 out of 34 countries, at least half of adults have access to a smartphone or a computer or both. However, descriptive survey research by Afrobarometer (2022) in which data was collected using interviews indicated that ownership of cell phones, not necessarily smartphones, is reported to be wider with countries such that access varies widely across countries from a high of 96% in Gabon and Morocco to just over half (57%) in Angola and Malawi. According to Kronke (2020), countrywide ownership of cell phone is likely to revolutionize means of communication which is a concern of the current study with focus on married individuals.

In Kenya, a descriptive survey by Kharono et al. (2021) found out that mobile phone penetration among adults was 98%, with 43% of adults using the internet, (96% of them on smartphones rather than computers) and 17% using social media

(98% of them on smartphones). Kenya has seen broad uptake of mobile technology, with higher phone penetration than the global average (67%) and near-universal use of mobile banking through M-PESA (as of 2016, 96% of Kenyan households used mobile banking). The study also pointed out that penetration of mobile phones has eased communication especially when internet is accessed. However, the study focused on general population of adults and there was no attempt to examine the reported access to mobile phone effects on marital communication in terms of active listening, clarity of communication and appropriateness of the content.

Empirical Literature Review

Empirical literature was reviewed based on specific objectives which included; the influence of access to digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals, the influence of the frequency and duration of digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals, the influence of motives for digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals, and strategies for promoting constructive use of digital technologies to strengthen communication among married individuals in churches.

Access to Digital Technology and Marital Communication

Access to Internet and Marital Communication. The rapid diffusion of the internet has been one of the most significant social phenomena of the new millennium. Sironi and Kashyap (2021) examined the association between internet access and partner formation in a longitudinal survey in the United States. The study used the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97) and Current Population Survey (CPS). Data was analyzed using logistic regression. The study found that the relationship between internet access and partnership states (in the NLSY97) or partnership status (in the CPS) is age-dependent, with individuals in their mid and late

20s indicating a positive relationship between internet access and union formation, as the internet was reported to provide seamless communication among partners. Further, the association increases as individuals enter adult life, especially as they build relationships as married individuals in their partnership. However, the study focused on partner union as the dependent variable, while this study focused on marital communication.

In South Africa, a study by Patridge (2022) was carried out on internet penetration and communication. The study was done in both urban and rural setups. The findings indicated that internet penetration stands at 76%. However, advanced technology infrastructure is concentrated around urban cities and in metropolitan areas, with limited access to it in rural and/or remote areas. Moreover, only 10 per cent of households in the country have fixed internet access, with the significant majority being located in metropolitan areas. The study also noted that internet penetration has brought about a paradigm shift in the way people communicate, especially in using social media platforms. However, the study focused on internet connectivity and ease of communication in the general population, while the current study focused on the influence of internet access on marital communication.

In Kenya, internet penetration is the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa at 84% ahead of countries such as South Africa and Ghana at 76% and 35% respectively (Internet World Stats, 2021). Access to digital technologies has been reported not only to improve the bandwidth of communication, but notably, the Internet has broadened the scope for social interaction by enabling new possibilities for individuals to find and meet people outside their existing physical social network (Sironi & Kashyap, 2022).

Access to Social Media and Marital Communication. Popular forms of social media accounts have emerged worldwide, such as email, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter (X), Instagram, Myspace, Snapchat, Tik-Tok and YouTube, to mention a few. However, their use may differ with respect to factors such as age, gender preference, and utility value (Zhou et al., 2025). However, among young adults, Instagram was the most commonly used, followed by Snapchat and TikTok. However, the studies were based on the general population, but not specific to married individuals. The current study focused on married individuals.

In Bangladesh, Abu et al. (2021) assessed the influence of social media on interpersonal relationships among married individuals. One of the objectives of the study was to establish the influence of access to technology on interpersonal relationships. A descriptive research design was used in the study, and data were collected using open and closed-ended semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The study found that 71% of married individuals aged between 20 and to-40, with only 11% using above 51, respectively, had access to digital technology and mainly used social media as a communication tool. Specifically, 52% of respondents used social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Imo. Moreover, over 65% had access to both laptops and desktop computers. It was also found that 88% of the married individuals felt jealous when their respective partners were in contact with someone of the opposite gender on social media, which led to conflicts between them. However, the study focused on how access to social media affected the way they relate, while this study focused on marital communication with regard to active listening, appropriateness of the content, and clarity of information.

In Ghana, Obeng et al. (2023) examined social media practices among married individuals in a Ghanaian residential area. The study was informed by the emerging role of social media in maintaining stable marriage relationships. The study used a descriptive survey design, a non-probability convenience sampling technique, and a structured questionnaire to collect data from 30 married individuals (60 subjects) in a selected residential area in Ghana to identify the significance of social media use among married individuals. The study also employed percentages and frequency tables to analyze data. The study found out that married individuals had wide access to digital technology, with 90% of respondents agreeing to use Facebook, WhatsApp, while 30% used Instagram. The study findings corroborated the findings of the study by Didiugwu et al. (2015) which also established that the majority of married individuals used Facebook and WhatsApp as a means of communication. The study also found that social media improved communication and support among married individuals. However, the study was descriptive; hence relationship among the study variables could not be established for generalization, a gap that was addressed in this study by the use of inferential statistics.

Otieno (2025) investigated the role of digital technology in relationship dynamics. The desktop study was conducted in Kenya. The findings found that the impact of digital technology on multidimensional aspects is informed by the context of the person, with married individuals using social media as tools for building emotional intimacy, relationship maintenance, and income generation. On the other hand, the findings posited that when individuals are not intentional in social media use, it exacerbates feelings of insecurity and jealousy, which leads to dysfunctional relationships. Consequently, the study suggested the extent to which married individuals should strategically harness technology as a supportive tool for enhancing

relational functioning and promoting greater marital stability. The study relied on extant literature, thus opening a methodological gap. The current study sought to bridge the gap by using convergent parallel mixed methods design and relying on primary data.

In Kenya, internet access is at 84%, which is the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, fueled by expanded ICT infrastructure and mobile phone technology, notably smartphones, which have enhanced the use of social media (Mbula et al., 2025). Wamuyu (2019) assessed social media trends and narratives in Kenya. The study was carried out nationally, in which a sample of 9,740 respondents aged between 14 and 55 from 17 counties was selected through cluster sampling. Data were analyzed descriptively and presented in tables of frequencies and percentages as well as graphs. According to the findings, indeed, access to social media stands at 54.3% and 46.1% among people living in urban and rural areas, respectively (Wamuyu, 2019). Similarly, the report by Wamuyu (2019) on social site use showed that WhatsApp at 88.6%, was most popular followed closely by Facebook at 88.5%, YouTube at 51.2% and Google+ at 41.3% while LinkedIn (9.3%) and Snapchat (9.0%) were reported to be of rare use. However, both studies were done for the general population, which may be different from specifically married individuals from a church population. A gap that was addressed in this study.

A study closer to the present study was conducted by Wathigo (2019) on the relationship between social media networking use and marital wellbeing among married individuals in Nakuru County, Kenya. One of the objectives closer to this study was to establish the relationship between the level of social media networking use and marital well-being among married individuals in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study utilized a correlational research design, with 220 respondents selected through

purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling methods from a target population of 7,694 married people. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages and Pearson Correlation, while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. A correlation analysis indicated there was a negative correlation between the use of social media during marital conversations and communication in marital relationships. However, the study focused on married individuals from the general population. The current study focused on a religious setup that has not received adequate attention.

Access to Digital Technologies and Marital Communication

Zhou et al. (2023) investigated the role of digital technology on the quality of marriage and the mental health of married women. The study was conducted in China, and 7,068 married women were sampled. The findings showed that well-utilized social media usage was beneficial for the health of married women, though this is contingent on the type of media and the relationship dynamics. However, the findings also showed that excessive or poorly managed media quietly eroded relational closeness in marriage. Conversely, excessive or poorly managed use of digital technology was found to gradually undermine marital closeness.

Specifically, social media use led to increased comparison with online characters, and time spent online reduced cooperation or communication around chores, leading to a reduction in intimacy. The study sought to unpack the role of digital platforms on the psychological well-being of married women, thus opening a conceptual gap. The current study sought to bridge the gap by examining the influence of access to digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals in the Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Gomes et al. (2021) investigated the role of social media on marital satisfaction among young married individuals. The study was conducted in Portugal with 384 married individuals. The findings showed that married individuals' deficient communication weakens emotional intimacy, though small communication tension encouraged marital satisfaction, as it opens an opportunity for married individuals to engage more and express themselves more openly. The findings also showed that digital communication played a dual role; it increased communication between married individuals when the objective was to strengthen relationships. However, the findings also showed that it becomes harmful when it leads to distraction, withdrawal, or excessive time online. The study focused on the role of digital technology on the psychological well-being of married women, thus opening a conceptual and contextual gap. The current study sought to fill these gaps by investigating access to digital technology/social media platforms and marital communication.

In India, Chadha et al. (2025) examined the nexus between digital technology and marital satisfaction focusing on 385 married individuals. The findings showed that social media addiction lowered marital communication, therefore negatively impacting the quality of life of married individuals. Specifically, the findings noted that digital technology may be used as an escape from marital unhappiness, but this is more hurtful and increases social media use. Paradoxically, the findings also showed that individuals with high self-esteem may indulge more in social media as tools for networking, increasing their risk of getting addicted, thus injuring their relationships. However, the study introduced life satisfaction as the dependent variable, thus opening a conceptual gap. The current study sought to bridge the gap by treating marital communication as a dependent variable.

Sultana and Bukhari (2024) investigated the impact of digital media on marital sex in Pakistan. The study noted that while social media has improved communication generally, when married individuals spend an inordinate amount of time on social media, it prevents them from being intimate. Specifically, social media is a friendly platform that makes it simple for married individuals to cheat, which may lead to separation and divorce. Social media also makes it easy for married individuals to track each other's online activities, and for the emotionally unstable, it may increase anxiety, jealousy, and mistrust, thus decreasing marital satisfaction. However, this was a desktop study design, where the researchers utilized documentary evidence to make conclusions. The current study was anchored on convergent parallel mixed methods design and utilized primary data.

Oluchukwu (2021) examined the role of social media in marital conflict in Nigeria. The findings showed that the newly married individuals were more vulnerable to social media conflict due to unresolved expectations about technology use. The newly married individuals were also vulnerable, as they are still adjusting to their marital routines and are still experimenting with different communication patterns due to the fact that they are more engaged in social media. The findings also showed that married individuals with longer marital tenure survive social media conflict, as they have developed stronger boundaries and communication norms. Further, the findings showed that social media can be leveraged to reconcile married individuals, as it is a common vehicle for married individuals and their concerned friends and relatives. However, the study was conceptualized to investigate the role of social media as a conflict resolution tool. The present study focused on examining the influence of access to digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals.

How the Frequency and Duration of Digital Technology Use Influence Marital Communication

Both frequency and duration of digital technology use have potential implications on marital communication. This section of the chapter empirically reviews past studies related to how these two factors influence the communication of marital partners.

Frequency of Use of Digital Technology Frequency of technology use is concerned with how often an individuals' attention focuses on their technological gadgets such as mobile phones, television screens, or computers (Akam, 2023). Warwas et al. (2021) examined the frequency of using websites and social media by various age groups in Europe. The study focused on frequency of using websites and social media by three age groups (18-34, 35-54, 55+) from Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Spain to form opinions about scientific topics. The age groups targeted are likely fit within the range of married individuals. The findings come from studies performed within a European project entitled concise which is researching the role of communication in creating EU citizens' perceptions about science. The results show that young, heavy users take the lead in using all digital sources, except for general websites, where the middle-aged show dominance. However, the study did not consider whether the respondents were married or not, a concern that was addressed in this study.

In Kenya, Adhiambo et al. (2024) explored prevalence and patterns of media exposure and use among adolescent Generation Z in secondary schools in Western Kenya with a focus on Kakamega, Kisii, and Siaya Counties. Using descriptive and correlational research designs that included questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and content analysis, data was collected from a sample of 384 learners

drawn from a population of 190,555 learners using a stratified random sampling method. Additionally, 56 parents and 48 teachers were selected based on the principle of data saturation. Using descriptive and correlational research designs that included questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and content analysis, data was collected from a sample of 384 learners drawn from a population of 190,555 learners using a stratified random sampling method. Additionally, 56 parents and 48 teachers were selected based on the principle of data saturation. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics as well as thematic analysis. Results showed that Generation Z accessed social media whenever they access the phone, with virtually free time being spent on social media. However, the study focused on a younger generation whose patterns of use may differ from adults who are married, which was also a concern in the current study, besides correlating with marital communication.

Regulating Time. Regulating social media time use among married individuals can significantly enhance their communication by reducing digital distractions and fostering more intentional, face-to-face interactions (Nguyen, 2021). When married individuals set boundaries around screen time, they create space for meaningful conversations, emotional connection, and active listening – key elements of a healthy relationship (Morris, 2020). Excessive social media use often leads to miscommunication, emotional detachment, and even conflict due to divided attention or unrealistic comparisons. By consciously limiting social media engagement, married individuals are better able to prioritize each other, strengthen intimacy, and build a more resilient bond grounded in presence and mutual understanding (Akam, 2023).

Another mixed methods study was conducted by Mwangi (2022) who investigated the influence of social media on the marital relationships of young middle-class married individuals in Kilimani Division, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Among the objectives was to determine the influence of digital technology use on married individuals' communication and intimacy. The findings revealed both positive and negative influences, with excessive or secretive use of social media contributing to misunderstandings and decreased relationship satisfaction. The study recommended that the usage of these social media sites should be regulated among the married individuals themselves. Specifically, the notion of excessive use of social media points to the relevance of ongoing regulation of social media time use and its influence of marital communication among married individuals.

Time Spent on Digital Technology and Marital Communication. Globally, statistics indicate that digital consumers spend an average of 1 hour and 58 minutes daily on social networking and chatting. In Pakistan, Shaikh (2018), in exploratory research, examined the influence of social networking sites on the relationship between spouses. Among other concerns of the research was to examine patterns of use of digital technology, notably social media, among married individuals and how it has affected relationships among spouses. The study utilized descriptive survey research, and simple random sampling was used to select 60 spouses. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics. According to the findings, 43.3% of respondents spent between 4-6 hours daily on social media, while 20% spent between 7-9 hours daily. Additionally, the majority of respondents (35%) used social media at any time, while 26% used social media in the evening. The study also noted that social media communication has yielded to tension and what has been dubbed a communication e-treason due to among others; rather than spending quality time for interaction in the evening or available time during the day, the married individuals are deep in the social media. However, the study was descriptive and quantitative; hence, the findings cannot be generalized to another

situation besides being narrow. The gaps were addressed using correlation analysis as well using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure balanced findings.

In Ghana, Kolan et al. (2023) explored the influence of social media on marriages in Northern Ghana. The study used a sequential mixed method (quantitative and qualitative design). Participants were selected sequentially through probability and purposive sampling techniques. Simple random sampling was the method chosen for determining the sample for those who took part in the study. Both closed and open-ended questionnaires were administered to respondents through an online survey. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically, while quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics. Findings relevant to the current study indicated that respondents spent an average of 21.7 hours per week on SNS, with most respondents (83.6%) visiting SNS multiple times in a day, with a mean score of 0.89 hours per visit. Males reported less online engagement than females. The weekly mean time spent on SNS was 23.3 hours compared to the 19.9 hours spent by female respondents on SNS. Interestingly, very few respondents reported having a specific time of the day to engage in day- the majority of respondents (69.1%) visited social media platforms at any time of the day. The study also found that frequent online engagement has heightened partner monitoring, suspicion, jealousy, and mistrust between married individuals, affecting long-term relationships' well-being. Moreover, the majority of respondents (63%) agreed that the use of social media ruined social communication among married individuals. However, in both studies, descriptive statistics to analyze the relationship among variables could not be established. The study utilized inferential statistics, specifically Pearson's correlation, to examine the relationship between the use of digital technology and marital communication.

Kenya SIMELab (2018) surveyed social media use in Kenya. One of the objectives was to examine social media practices, which included time spent on social media. The survey sampled 3,269 respondents aged between 14 and 55 from eight counties drawn from Kenya's former eight administrative provinces – Nairobi, Coast, Central, Western, Nyanza, Eastern, Rift Valley, and North Eastern. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, and data was analyzed using graphs and percentages. According to the findings, the vast majority of Kenyans spend more time of less than 30 minutes in a typical day using social media platforms of their liking, followed closely by the time of between 30 minutes and one hour. They spend less time of between two to three hours using social media available to them. However, the study was descriptive, and no attempt was made to examine the relationship between the patterns and marital communication, a concern that was addressed in this study.

Nyambura (2020) examined the impact of social platforms on family and household interactions in Limuru Town. The study used a descriptive survey design interviews and questionnaires were administered to respondents selected through simple random sampling. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. According to the findings, the respondents accessed social media daily due to internet access at home. The respondents also indicated that they spend at least an hour connecting with friends before embarking on normal work on their computers during work hours. Additionally, 37.2% spent 0- 2 hours, 30.2% spent 2-4 hours, while 32.6% spent 4- 6 hours connecting with friends using social media. According to Nyambura, the indicated exponential use of social media, although it has diminished face-to-face communication among members of the family, majority agree that it has improved family ties. The study contradicts findings by Kimeto (2016) and Wathigo (2019),

who posited that social media use has resulted in strained relations among family members, especially married individuals. The contrasting findings rationalize the need for further research.

Mwangi (2021), who anchored his research on descriptive study design, examined the role of social media in marital stability among middle-class Kenyans. By conceptualizing marital stability as the dependent variable rather than marital communication, the study broadens the conceptual map, meaning the findings may not understand the role nuances, such as the role digital technology plays in shaping marital communication. In terms of context, the study was focused on middle-class married individuals, suggesting the findings may not reflect the experience of other demographics. Again, the study was grounded on a quantitative descriptive study design, meaning the study did not benefit from the rich emotional experiences of the participants. This methodological gap was filled by adopting a mixed-methods study design.

The Motives for Digital Technology Use on Marital Communication among Married Individuals

Use of Digital Technology for Interactions and Marital Communication.

Interactions constitute a key activity in social media use. In America, Owens et al. (2025) found that 61% of millennial-aged individuals had checked up on an ex-partner using social media, with 24% of all partnered individuals reporting that they were bothered by their partner's use of digital technology. The authors point out that digital technology has been used by married individuals to link up with experts, establish new relationship alongside their current marriage relationship as well as flirting, reported to cause communication breakdown and strained marriages. There is

a need to examine the nature of communication breakdown in terms of active listening, language appropriateness and clarity of information.

Similarly, Stockdale and Coyne (2020) found that social networking sites are commonly used to maintain social connections. Stockdale and Coyne (2020) examined motivations for social networking site use over time during the transition from late adolescence to emerging adulthood. The objective of the study was to determine how motivations for social networking site use change over a three-year period and how these motivations relate to behavioral and mental health outcomes. The study employed a longitudinal research design using data from three waves of a broader intrafamily life study. The sample consisted of 385 participants who reported using smartphones. Findings indicated that using social networking sites to connect with others remained relatively stable across the three-year period, highlighting social interaction as a persistent motive for digital engagement. However, increases in using social networking sites to socially connect were associated with problematic social networking site use, anxiety, delinquency, and empathy over time. The study concluded that while social interaction motivates sustained social media use, excessive engagement may have unintended psychosocial consequences.

Stockdale and Coyne (2020) quantitatively examined motivational trends over time. Despite demonstrating the importance of social connection as a driver of digital technology use, both studies focused on young adults rather than adults in marital relationships. Despite demonstrating the importance of social interaction as a motive for digital engagement, the study primarily addresses coping processes among general social media users rather than examining marital communication, thereby presenting a conceptual gap concerning the influence of socially motivated digital technology use on marital communication quality.

In Ghana, Kolan et al. (2023) carried out a study whose one of the objectives sought to find out reasons for using digital technology, notably social media, among married individuals in mixed method research. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and qualitative data were thematically analyzed. According to the findings, primarily, respondents (55%) subscribe to social media for socialization, thus expanding their social network and linking up with old friends. Other ways that respondents use social media are to satisfy information needs (27%) and communicate with their spouse or family (18%). Data from interviews also corroborated the same. This resonates with Chuang and Liao (2021) findings, which revealed that the media opportune people to socialize and interact with friends. Respondents also agreed that use of social media among married individuals has interfered with the quality time married individuals would spend interacting with open communication. However, the study was descriptive, hence the significance of the relationship among variables could not be established, a gap that was addressed in this study by the use of correlational analysis

Konlan et al. (2025) examined the influence of social media dependency on marital relationships in northern Ghana. The objective of the study was to determine how reliance on social media for social interaction affects romantic relationships. The researchers employed a sequential mixed-methods design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Although the exact sample size is not detailed in the summary, the study collected data from couples in northern Ghana to explore patterns of social media engagement and relational outcomes. Findings revealed high levels of social media dependency among couples, largely driven by social interaction motives such as communication, networking, and online engagement. However, excessive engagement also intensified partner monitoring, jealousy, suspicion, and mistrust,

which negatively affected the well-being of romantic relationships. Couples therefore developed informal regulatory mechanisms to limit excessive social media use. The study concluded that while social media facilitates interaction, overdependence on digital communication can disrupt relationship harmony (Konlan et al., 2025).

In Kenya, Ndonye, (2022), carried out a study on news consumption habits on social media among unemployed millennials in Kasarani Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. One of the objectives sought to examine motivation of millennials to use social media. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics. Notable findings in the study indicated the variety of social interactions and connecting with new friends as key motivators of using social media. The study concluded that the ability of respondents to access content of interest escalated the use of social media. However, the study was limited to millennials without considering whether they were married or not. The current study focused on married adults as respondents in the church context.

Use of Digital Technology for Emotional Engagement and Marital Communication. Marengo et al. (2021) investigated how positive feedback on social media influences users' emotional well-being, with the objective of examining whether receiving "Likes" on Facebook affects perceived self-esteem and happiness. The study employed a quantitative methodology using an online survey combined with objective behavioral data from Facebook. The sample comprised 2,349 adult Facebook users (589 men and 1,760 women) aged above 18 years, with the majority between 18–25 years. Participants were recruited globally through online platforms and allowed researchers access to their Facebook activity, including profile updates and number of Likes received. Findings showed that frequent profile updates and sharing of personal content increased the amount of feedback users received from

their online networks. Moreover, the frequency and intensity of positive feedback were positively associated with perceived happiness, with self-esteem partially mediating the relationship.

In China, Zhu et al. (2021) content analyzed the reasons for use of social media among adults mainly the elderly. According to the study, their motivations to use social media can mainly be divided into three; sense of loneliness, subjective well-being and killing time. Moreover, the same Zhu et al.'s reports that data from the Tencent National survey and big data research centre shows that 75.8% of elderly users read news and information online, while 45.9% of them follow and browse WeChat articles. However, the study focused on elderly without considering whether are married individuals or not, a gap that was filled in this study by examining patterns of digital technology among married individuals and impact on marital communication.

In Ghana, Mingle et al. (2016) carried out a comparative analysis survey to examine social network participation among students with one of the objectives aimed at establishing the use of social media. Data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics. The study used stratified sampling to select respondents in four senior high schools, two private and two public. According to the findings, majority of respondents (46%) indicated that they watched photos and pictures for entertainment, 32% updated their posts while only 11% held discussions. However, firstly, the study focused on students whose social media activities may differ from adult married individuals and secondly, the dependent variable was academic performance. The current study examined social media activities among married individuals as well establish how it influences marital communication.

Oriaso and Waithera (2025) examined the relationship between social media addiction and psychological factors among university students in Kenya. The researchers employed a descriptive research design using a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study was conducted at the University of Nairobi and targeted 13,869 students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, from which a sample of 136 respondents was selected through simple random sampling using Cochran's formula. Findings revealed that high levels of social media use were associated with increased stress and anxiety, driven by fear of missing out (FoMO), exposure to idealized online personas, and pressure to maintain a desirable online image. Despite highlighting emotional motives underlying digital technology use, the study focused on psychological outcomes among students rather than communication within marital relationships, thereby presenting a contextual and conceptual gap concerning how emotional engagement motives influence marital communication among married individuals.

A study closer to this study was carried out by Mwangi (2021) who examined influence of social media on marital relationship among young married individuals in Kilimani Division in Nairobi. The study was a descriptive survey in which both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. According to the findings, 44%, 40%, and 16% used social media for family and friends' connections, and entertainment and business respectively. Moreover, the study also found that use of social media use among married individuals inhibited effective communication as precious time is spent on social media instead of interaction between spouses which is critical to marital stability. However, the study was done in a general population and perhaps, the findings may be different when it comes to

church adherents. Moreover, data was analyzed through thematic and descriptive statistics which does not allow determination of relationship among variables, a concern addressed in this study.

Behavioral Dependence on Digital Technology and Marital Communication. An aspect of behavioral dependence on digital technology with implications on marital communication is fear of missing out. Phuong (2025) examined the role of social media in fostering the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and fear of social exclusion among users in Vietnam. The objective of the study was to determine how social media engagement contributes to psychological dependence and emotional responses such as FoMO. The study adopted a quantitative research design using a survey administered to 300 social media users aged between 18 and 45 years in Vietnam. The findings revealed that perceived centrality of social media significantly influenced user engagement and addiction, which subsequently increased the likelihood of fear of social exclusion and FoMO. The study concluded that behavioral dependence on digital platforms may emerge from users' desire to remain socially connected and avoid exclusion.

Phuong's (2025) findings align with those of Kolas and von Mühlenen (2025), who also found that psychological states, such as boredom increase, craving for social networking site use, reinforcing habitual engagement. However, while Phuong (2025) emphasized fear of social exclusion as a driver of behavioral dependence, Kolas and von Mühlenen (2025) focused on mood modification and boredom as triggers of increased usage. Despite highlighting behavioral dependence as a consequence of social media engagement, the study primarily focused on psychological outcomes among general users and did not examine marital communication dynamics within

marriages, thereby presenting a conceptual gap concerning how behavioral dependence on digital technology influences marital communication.

Williams (2024) investigated the relationship between social networking site (SNS) use and relationship satisfaction among individuals in monogamous relationships. The objective of the study was to determine how SNS usage patterns, including posting behavior and investment in online interactions, relate to relationship satisfaction and psychological well-being. The study employed a quantitative survey design involving 295 young adult men and women who completed an online questionnaire assessing SNS usage, partner-related posting behaviors, social anxiety, general anxiety, and self-esteem. Results showed that individuals with higher levels of general and social anxiety reported greater SNS use frequency and engagement. These findings complement those of Phuong (2025), who also identified psychological factors as drivers of frequent social media engagement. However, while Phuong (2025) emphasized FoMO and fear of social exclusion as key mechanisms of dependence, Williams (2024) focused on the link between SNS engagement and relationship satisfaction within romantic partnerships. Despite examining relationship contexts, the study did not directly assess how specific motives for digital technology use shape marital communication, presenting a conceptual gap relevant to the present study.

Kolas and von Mühlenen (2025) explored mood modification as a motive for social networking site (SNS) use, particularly in relation to behavioral dependence. The researchers employed an experimental research design involving 114 undergraduate students (85.09% female). Participants were exposed to either a boredom-inducing or control condition and then completed a Go/No-Go task featuring SNS-related visual cues. The findings revealed that boredom significantly increased

craving for SNS use and that participants experiencing boredom were more likely to engage with SNS during waiting periods. However, no significant differences were observed between participants with higher or lower risk of SNS addiction. These findings support those of Phuong (2025), which also identified behavioral patterns that reinforce frequent digital engagement.

Strategies for Promoting Constructive Use of Digital Technologies to Strengthen Communication among Married Individuals

Intentional and Purposeful Online Use. Ralte (2024) investigated the influence of constructive media use on marital quality among couples who relate through media platforms. The phenomenological qualitative study's findings were informed by the views of a sample of 10 married individuals. This cross-sectional study design shows that responsible and purpose-driven media use enhanced well-being and predicted reduced problematic media use. The findings also observed that healthy social media helped in building authentic relationships while balancing personal agency with cultural constraints. The findings by Baggs (2025) seem to offer contradictory results. On the positive side, democratizing the dating scene helps couples to evaluate their mates, given the alternatives in the dating scene. The negative side is where online sites are abused, where couples do not take time to know each other, and casually engage. However, the study by Sharabi and Dorrance-Hall (2024) was conducted among dating individuals, thus opening a contextual gap, which the current study filled by focusing on married individuals.

Nkurunziza and Munganyinka (2024) investigated the role of intentional digital communication on marital quality among married individuals in Rwanda. The descriptive-correlational design was used, and the findings were informed by interviewing 218 married individuals. The findings indicated that healthy digital

communication enhanced marital commitment and quality, contrasted with poor digital habits. The study showed that digital messaging, through video calls, helps in supportive or loving messages, therefore, reinforcing connection. However, the findings suggest that the use of online communication does not sit well with conflict management, reserving those for in-person dialogue. The same finding was posted by Kılıçarslan and Parmaksız (2023) who noted that intentional social media use reinforced marital communication, which contrasts with couples with phubbing tendencies. However, the study treated digital communication as a mediator variable in the relationship between marital commitment and marital quality, suggesting a conceptual gap, whereas the current study treated communication as a dependent variable.

Healthy Information Consumption. Nasir and Ishak (2025) investigated the role of healthy social media engagement on marital dyads' communication. The correlational study design was conducted in Malaysia, and the findings were informed by interviewing 120 study participants. The study found that filtering and evaluating the credibility of information reduced misunderstanding among married individuals. The study also indicated that limiting negative or sensational social media content helps sustain the couple's emotional stability, therefore encouraging healthy communication and marital communication. Marital communication quality is further reinforced since digital platforms provide an opportunity for learning and a possible avenue for fostering common ground and shared values, a finding replicated by Arbi and Musyarofah (2026). However, Nasir and Ishak (2025) were grounded on a correlational study design, thus opening a methodological gap, which the present study bridged by using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design.

Kagwiria (2022) investigated the role of healthy digital communication on marital quality among Christian couples in Kenya. The explanatory research design and the findings were informed by interviewing 367 participants. The findings showed that couples gain more from digital communication by filtering communication, retaining information that affirms marital relationships rather than weakening the bond, a finding affirmed by Mwarari et al. (2025). This is achieved by practicing active listening by avoiding interruption, focusing on empathy, and setting boundaries around media and digital devices. However, the study was conceptualized as entailing social media use, mobile phone calls, and gaming as shaping the level of marital satisfaction, thus opening a conceptual gap. The current study addressed the gap by focusing on healthy communication that strengthens communication among couples.

Impulse Control. Mehmood et al. (2025) investigated the influence of impulse control on the marital relationship and psychological health among marital dyads. This was a correlational study design, which was conducted in Pakistan using a sample of 250 married individuals. The study showed that marital dyads with poor impulse control found it difficult to sustain healthy marital relationships as they often responded defensively or prematurely, weakening intimacy. The study found that practicing social restraint strengthened clarity and empathy in communication, thus improving the quality of marital relationships, a finding reinforced by Omokhabi et al. (2025). The study also demonstrated that couples who cannot retrain themselves expose themselves to stress and anxiety, while the converse is true: couples who know how to regulate impulse have healthier emotional exchanges and reduced distress. However, this study was anchored in a correlational study design, thus opening a

methodological gap, which the present study bridged with a convergent parallel mixed methods design.

Obi and Ezennwanne (2023) investigated the influence of online charting on the quality of marital dyads' communication in Nigeria, and the findings of the study were informed by interviewing 400 married individuals. The correlational study method found that setting a digital boundary on smartphone usage during communication between couples encouraged couples' communication. This is because the couples interpret that they were valued when their partners were not disrupted by digital gadgets. In the context of digital communication, the researchers demonstrated that couples appreciate it if their partners use short breaks or deep breathing during communication, a similar sentiment shared by Nwanekwu and Uba (2024). However, the study was anchored on a correlational study design, thus opening a contextual gap, which the current study filled by using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design.

Emotional Regulation. Jabali et al. (2024) sought to establish the role of emotional regulation on digital platforms and their impact on marital quality. The descriptive study design was conducted in Palestine, and the findings were informed by interviewing 388 married individuals. The study found that controlling emotional control and monitoring a marital partner's activity online reduced suspicion thus, helping couples to maintain emotional closeness. The study additionally showed that social media control helps marital partners to avoid commenting on ambiguous posts that paint their partners in a bad light. Similar findings were registered by Ahmed et al. (2023) who noted that emotional radiation helped in controlling online communication impulsiveness, thus improving communication. However, the study sought to determine the role of social media on marital relationship dynamics, thus

opening a conceptual gap, which the present study addressed by treating communication as the dependent variable.

Mbula et al. (2025) investigated the influence of social media as a tool fueling marital conflict in Kenya. The correlational mixed study design and the findings were informed by a sample of 263 incarcerated women. The study showed that emotional regulation was a protective mechanism, helping couples to navigate content on digital platforms. The findings also demonstrated that emotional regulation helped couples to manage emotional outbursts caused by participating in unregulated anger, jealousy, and suspicions. The study also indicated that if not managed, unregulated online emotions may cause conflict and hinder constructive dialogue between couples. Consequently, the study observed that emotional regulation buffered against spousal abuse by reframing online tensions into opportunities for communication. Similar findings were obtained by Bouffard et al. (2022), who noted that marital partners who were emotionally regulated were stable while engaging with digital content. However, the study was conducted using women, thus limiting the context, which the current study filled by studying married individuals.

Constructive Online Participation. Azkiya (2024) studied the influence of online engagement on marital stability in Indonesia, guided by a qualitative study design, through focus group discussions. The findings showed that constructive online participation fostered transparency and honesty among marital dyads. The findings also demonstrated that constructive participation transforms digital spaces into tools for connection, trust, and marital growth. The study additionally established that couples who practiced mindful online interaction reported higher marital satisfaction and resilience against stressors. The same findings were inferred by Johnson et al. (2024), who noted that constructive online communication augmented emotional

connection and marital harmony. However, the study investigated the impact of online interaction on family harmony, thus opening a conceptual gap. The current study addressed the gap by examining the role of constructive online participation in strengthening communication among married individuals.

Chigozi and Chikwendu (2024) examined the moderating role of digital activities on the relationship between marital intimacy and marital satisfaction. The findings of the descriptive study design were informed by the views of 384 married individuals. The study established that couples who discussed online behaviors, collaboratively set boundaries, and increased transparency reduced suspicion and built trust, therefore enhancing communication. The study additionally indicated the joint online activities, including watching content together and co-managing social media, thus fostering connection and promoting partnership in digital spaces. Enhanced communication was also enjoyed by couples who set screen time so that digital communication does not overshadow in-person communication. The same findings were replicated by Baggs (2025), who noted that structured online communication helped in sustaining long-distance marital relationships. However, the study treated digital intimacy as a moderating variable, thus opening a conceptual gap, which the present study filled by treating constructive digital communication as an independent variable.

Boundary Management. Nguyen (2023) explored the challenges and motivations associated with social media connections and communication sustainability in Switzerland. The study concluded by interviewing 30 study participants. The study indicated that the participants struggled with balancing between connection and disconnection, meaning that social media communication has become a major avenue for communication and relationships. This finding is

reinforced by Reinecke et al. (2022), who noted that self-awareness helped the couples to overcome the difficulties surrounding social media use and the associated risks. The difficulty is caused by negotiating between openness and privacy, autonomy and intimacy, and external and internal demands. However, this was a qualitative study design, thus opening a methodological gap, which the current study filled by using a mixed study method, specifically a convergent parallel mixed methods design.

Aviram (2024) investigated the role of boundary setting on marital stability among couples undergoing therapy in Israel using a sample of 51 married individuals. The findings showed that rigid boundaries constrained and hindered couples from openly communicating with each other. However, when couples set boundaries that are permeable, the married individuals felt greater flexibility and intimacy, though this also led to confusion if the roles were not clearly delineated. Nasir and Ishak (2025) offered the same perspective on WhatsApp communication between couples, noting that it was difficult to put boundaries on the platforms in certain contexts, leading to potential conflict. The study additionally indicated that couples undergoing marital instability and recovering from online-related conflict experienced effective communication if the couples and therapists co-created boundary rules. However, the study was conducted among married individuals undergoing therapy, thus limiting the study, which the current study addressed by conducting the study among married individuals.

Safety, Privacy, and Risk Awareness. Nyarks and Hope (2022) investigated the benefit of risk awareness and safety in marital communication in the UK. This was a desktop study design in which the findings were informed by a synthesis of existing literature and data. The findings showed that privacy and balanced disclosure

encouraged marital communication, while overexposure created tension. The study showed that risks led to overreliance on and misinterpretation of online information, which degrades the flow of information among marital dyads. The findings also suggested that disjointed information led to breaches of confidentiality, as the couples may share the contacts with external stakeholders. The findings were replicated by Moniz and Almeida (2025), who noted that privacy and couples giving consent to support each other helped in improving communication and quality. However, the study's findings were informed by extant literature, thus opening a methodological gap, which the current study filled by relying on primary data.

Akter et al. (2024) examined the role of social media privacy regulations on communication between family members. The study found that privacy and control may be privacy-invasive, limiting the autonomy of family members, and may therefore be counterproductive in encouraging communication. Instead, the study noted that privacy should be a family-centered design, where each member of the family is responsible for their safety and mobile privacy. In the case of marital partners, the study proposed that privacy and risk management do not work, as they are judged as interfering with each other’s privacy. The focus should be more on transparency and accountability rather than imposing electronic-mediated restrictions. Similar views were shared by Dorazahi et al. (2025) who noted that couples ended up sharing limited information on their media accounts, as this raised questions about the safety of profiles, raising major security concerns. However, the study focused on the whole family, thus opening the context of the study, which the present study bridged by focusing on marital parties.

Digital Self-Regulation

Digital self-regulation is the intentional process whereby an individual plan, monitor, and control their use of digital technologies (Zehra, 2026). The concept of digital self-regulation has attracted growing research interest in the wake of pervasive access and use of digital technology and its ramifications on relationships (Eren & Takım, 2026). Anom and Rassanjani (2026) explored the practice of social media self-regulation Indonesia and Malaysia. Thematic analysis demonstrated that digital self-regulation was essential for managing effective social interactions, including marital relationships. This means that digital self-regulation has the potential to determine the quality of marital communication. However, the utilization of qualitative methodology effectively meant that the relationship between digital self-regulation and marital communication could not be quantified. The present study addressed this methodological gap.

Utilizing a quantitative methodology, Bennett et al. (2025) investigated social media use in relation to autonomous versus non-autonomous regulation and its implications on various life outcomes. The study was conducted through an online survey of 521 social media users. The results clarified distinct aspects of autonomy in social media use. The findings suggested that autonomous regulation can be associated with better experience and well-being, though not necessarily less time online. The research thus introduced the concept of autonomous and non-autonomous regulation, whereby autonomous regulation is self-directed management of social media use while non-autonomous regulation is social media use driven by social pressures or even guilt. The research did not explore the linkage between digital self-regulation to marital communication, thus presenting a conceptual gap.

In Turkey, Ökten (2026) examined the relationship between digital self-regulation and family cohesion, focusing on how family bonds shape digital behavior beyond individual control. The study applied cross-sectional design, with data gathered from 406 respondents via online survey. The data was analysed using structural equation modeling. Results showed that family cohesion showed stronger relationships with emotional outcomes than direct regulation of digital behaviors. Stress emerged as a significant mechanism of mediating between family cohesion and digital self-regulation, suggesting that stress influences digital engagement. The study thus demonstrated that the relationship between digital self-regulation and relationship outcomes is complex. However, the study did not analyze the influence of digital self-regulation on marital communication, thus creating a conceptual gap.

A study by Hrbackova et al. (2025) sought to clarify how self-regulation of digital media use are related to excessive internet use and impulsive digital media use as well as time spent on digital media. Results showed that higher levels of self-control as well as a greater sense of control was associated with lower internet use and impulsive digital media use and screen time. The findings showed that increased levels of self-control as well as a greater sense of control predict higher levels of self-regulation in digital media contexts. The results signify the importance of strengthening self-control, especially for at-risk users. It offers a perspective on the role of self-regulatory mechanisms in managing digital behavior. The research was however conducted among the youth rather than among married individuals, hence opening a contextual gap.

Constructive Online Use

Constructive online use refers to the intentional positive use of digital media characterized by activities such as maintaining communication during periods of

separation by distance, making personal updates, and sharing content that promote emotional closeness (Adegbite & Shaibu, 2025). Empirical evidence suggest that constructive online use has the potential to enhance marital communication (Yang, 2025). Maihasni et al. (2025) examined social cohesion within the family and the potential threats posed by social media use in the digital era. The research was conducted in Padang City using a qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participatory observation, with families as the unit of analysis. The findings reveal that social media negatively affects familial relationships, as reflected in altered communication patterns, reduced empathy and concern, stronger privacy boundaries, and the emergence of mutual suspicion. The study recommended constructive online use to enhance marital communication.

In Africa, Oulhi (2024) explored the impact of social media on marital outcomes in Algerian society. Data was gathered from 89 married individuals who are social media users. Questionnaires were used as the primary tool for data collection. The findings revealed that social media had a significant influence on marital outcomes. Among the key recommendations of the study were encouraging the productive use of social media. This recommendation implies that productive online use can promote effective marital communication. However, the research was not conducted in Kenya, thus presenting a contextual gap. The present study extended research on constructive online use among married individuals within the Kenyan context.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework describes the theory that explains the research problem (Salawu et al., 2023). The theoretical framework demonstrated understanding of the theory and relevant aspects of the topic or the problem under consideration. The

study used the Rational Choice Theory to explain the independent variable, as well as the Communication Theory of Relational Dialectics (RDT) to explain the dependent variable.

Rational Choice Theory

The Rational Choice Theory, also referred to as the Choice Theory or Rational Action Theory, is a theory for understanding and often modelling social and economic as well as individual behavior (Steinmetz & Pratt, 2024). It is also central to modern political science, as well as other disciplines such as Sociology and Philosophy. Pinto-Bustamante et al. (2023) recorded that "the Rational Choice Theory was early popularized by a 1992 Nobel Memorial Prize Laureate in Economics Science, Gary Becker, who was one of the first to apply Rational Actor Models more widely." According to Bezar et al. (2021), the essence of Rational Choice Theory is premised upon, "when faced with several courses of action, individuals usually do what they believe is likely to have the best overall outcome. The 'rationality' as defined by the Rational Choice Theory adopts a more specific and narrower definition, which simply means that "an individual act as if balancing costs against benefits to arrive at an action that maximizes personal advantage. The Rational Choice Theory was initially connected to political and economic disciplines, but it has evolved to the extent of being used by social scientists to understand human behavior.

The Rational Choice Theory argues that individuals evaluate their choice of actions by each option's ability to produce advantage, pleasure, and happiness (Bezar et al., 2021). In the context of this research, the Rational Choice Theory argues that partners in a marital relationship weigh the potential benefits and consequences associated with social media use and then make a rational choice based on this evaluation. This meant that if a marital partner using digital technology / social media

perceived the costs to be too high and to be too risky to the well-being of their marital relationship, or the payoff to be too small to the well-being of their marital relationship, he/she would choose not to engage in social media use.

Critiques of the Rational Choice Theory, however, point out that the assumption that actors make rational choices is not realistic. According to Young and Seedall (2024), it neglects the systemic or relational context in which decisions are made. The theory is also said to not account for the cultural context, even though people's decisions are shaped not just by individual cost-benefit calculations but also by shared meanings, historical context, and embedded social roles (Herfeld, 2022). Researchers have also highlighted that fact the theory does not account for the power relations, and systemic constraints that also shape human behavior (Krstić, 2022). In the case of married individuals, relationship dynamics are influenced not only by individual choices but also by interdependent patterns, communication flows, social norms, and family or cultural systems. In the context of this study, married individuals' choice of digital technology platforms to use and the driving motivation to use digital technology may be subject to factors such as dynamic changes in technology and prevailing social pressure, as well as cultural norms.

However, despite the discussed weakness of the theory, Wibisono and Rohman (2024) describe the Rational Choice Model as the most robust framework for understanding all human behavior. Additionally, Young and Seedall (2024) also assert that the model is the "most rigorous and the most general theory of social action that has been advanced in this century." Consequently, the theory would be the best to explain married individual's s' behavior about the use of digital technology and marital communication. Indeed, the theory has been used by Zhao et al. (2021) in the

relationship between social media networking use and marital well-being among married individuals in Nakuru County, Kenya.

This study identifies with the Rational Choice Theory framework to investigate married individual's s' behavior in terms of the choice of digital technology to be used, patterns of use, motives behind the use of digital technology, and strategies chosen by married individuals to deal with the negative influence of using digital technology as well choice of suitable interventions on how digital technology can be used to improve on communication among married individuals. The theory was therefore used to inform how the use of digital technology by a partner in a marital relationship undermines or enhances the well-being of the marital relationship. This theory was also used to inform the kinds of intervention strategies that minimize the negative influence of using digital technology, as well as interventions to enhance the use of digital technology to improve marital communication. In the present study, partners in a marital relationship were seen in the context of the buyer and the seller. For instance, one or both partners would choose to engage in digital technology use depending on access, patterns of use, and the motive behind the use of digital technology, which may improve social interaction by improving communication. However, in some cases a partner or both partners would seek to engage in digital technology use, which may compromise communication at the expense of marital wellbeing. Despite its usefulness, Rational Choice Theory does not fully explain marital communication because it mainly focuses on how individuals make decisions by weighing costs and benefits. It tends to overlook the emotional, relational, and interactional realities that shape how couples communicate in everyday life, especially in the context of digital technology. This limitation made it necessary to include the Communication Theory of Relational

Dialectics, which better explains how partners continuously deal with and negotiate relationship tensions through communication, offering a broader and more realistic understanding of marital communication beyond individual decision-making.

Communication Theory of Relational Dialectics

The Communication Theory of Relational Dialectics (RDT), attributed to Montgomery in 1988 and further improved in 1996, proposes that marital relationships are informed by dialectical needs, which must be addressed through communication (Guest & Denes, 2023). The theorist proposed that relationships are constantly evolving, and therefore, the marital dyads are always trying to make sense of what is happening (Scharp & Thomas, 2021). The theory proposes that relationships are shaped by contradictory needs, which could be the tension between openness and closeness, between certainty and uncertainty, and between separation and attachment, that must be managed through appropriate communication *(*Suter et al., 2024). Scharp and Thomas (2021) argued that relationship conflict is inevitable, and for relationships to be sustained, there must be continuous negotiation through dialogue, thus reducing tension and enhancing marital satisfaction.

Although the theory has been used to describe communication as a tool that mediates the tension between married individuals, notable criticisms have been recorded. For one, the theory has been described as descriptive rather than predictive (Suter et al., 2024). It emphasizes that marital relationships are always full of tension and married individuals are always in a negotiation mood, rather than using communication as a determinant for all other marital dynamics. The theory has also been criticized for underexploring cultural differences, as the individualistic culture of marital relationships, where the theory was developed, is structurally different from the collectivist culture of marriage (Wolfe et al., 2022). Again, the theory's focus on

negotiation between married individuals themselves leaves little room for external interventions, making application in counseling contexts more challenging (Mikkola et al., 2025).

The theory is highly relevant in explaining communication in the context of digital communication. This is because social media introduces new tensions, such as connection vs. privacy and openness vs. closedness in social media and texting behaviors (Pashtun, 2023). Choosing any of the alternatives has the potential of either reinforcing or destroying marital relationships. Even if negotiation has been criticized as limiting the option for married individuals to create harmony, the understanding is that not all marital tension needs external intervention. Moreover, in the event the tension is escalated to external intervention, it will require the individuals to trade in for an amicable solution to be found. Consequently, the study considered it a robust framework for understanding how married individuals manage intimacy, communication disturbances, and relationship satisfaction in contexts influenced by digital media, making it an appropriate lens for exploring media-related relational dynamics.

The theory is also preferred as it accounts for the fact that in any relationship, there are multiple dialectical tensions. In this context, the study assumed that digital technology of the married individuals' activity will disrupt the normal marital relationship dynamics (Scharp & Thomas, 2021). Consequently, understanding the role these dialectical tensions play in relationships provides a wholesome picture of relationship dynamics. The dialectical tension includes autonomy vs connection, certainty vs uncertainty / predictability vs novelty, connectedness vs separateness / inclusion vs seclusion and external vs internal dialect (Suter et al., 2024). The theory also acknowledges that relationships are dynamic, meaning the relationship tensions

shift across developmental stages (Tsiotsou, 2021). This means the way younger married individuals will be affected by digital technology may be different from older couples. The theory also acknowledges that individuals take proactive steps to negotiate tensions, thus shaping the interaction and meaning of the relationship (Baxter et al., 2021). The theory is also preferred as it accounts for contradiction and fluidity in human relationships (Tsiotsou, 2021).

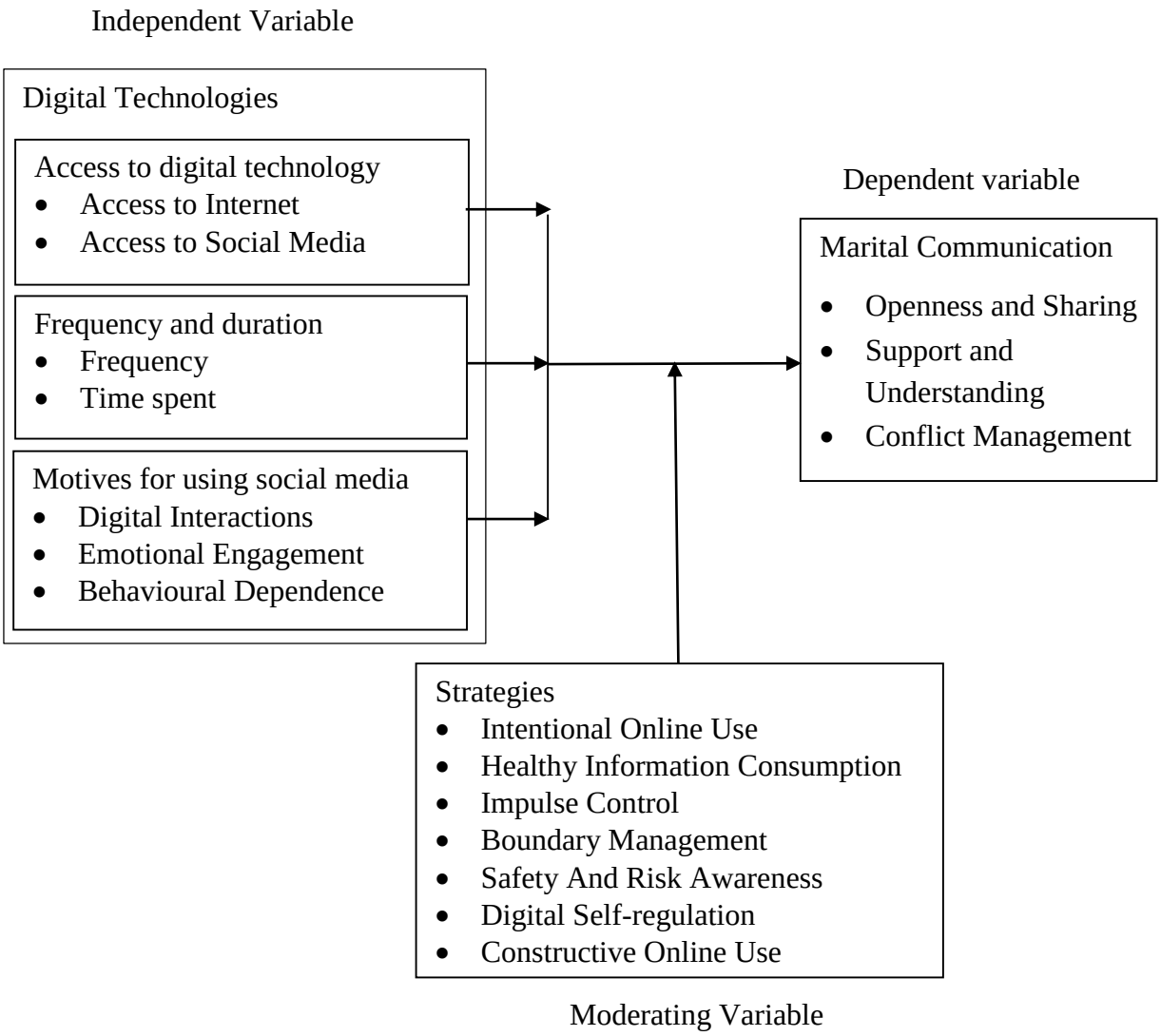
The Communication Theory of Relational Dialectics was included to address the gaps left by Rational Choice Theory in explaining how communication works within marriage. While Rational Choice Theory helps explain why individuals choose to use or avoid digital technologies based on expected gains and losses, it does not capture what happens within the relationship after those choices are made. Relational Dialectics Theory fills this gap by explaining how couples constantly manage opposing needs such as closeness and independence, and openness and privacy, especially in digitally influenced communication. Together, the two theories offer a more complete and practical explanation of how decision-making and communication processes interact in shaping marital relationships.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a graphic representation of the interrelationship of variables describing a phenomenon within a system of process (Salawu et al., 2023). Jeffries et al. (2022) terms the conceptual framework as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from appropriate fields of enquiry and used to frame subsequent presentation. According to Mbanaso et al. (2023), a conceptual framework is a hypothetical model identifying the model under study and the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



The figure shows that digital technology is the independent variable comprising of access to digital technology, patterns of digital technology use, motivation for digital technology use, and regulation of digital technology use. Firstly, access to digital technology, which includes the internet, devices such as laptops, smartphones, and desktops, as well as digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, may influence the way married individuals communicate using digital

technology. Secondly, use of digital technology, including frequency and time spent, may influence marital communication. Thirdly, the motivation for digital technology, such as entertainment, information seeking, and interaction, may influence the clarity of information passed, and language appropriateness and active listening during communication among married individuals. The moderating variable is intervention strategies for married individuals to avoid negative influence of using digital technology through seeking counselling, attending awareness programs, and sharing best practices, such as exiting social media platforms, as well as seeking help may perhaps improve communication among married individuals. The dependent variable is marital communication, as demonstrated through active listening, clarity of information, and use of appropriate content.

Literature Synthesis and Research Gaps

The reviewed studies consistently highlight the widespread use of digital technology and social media platforms across diverse populations, though they vary in context, focus, depth of analysis, and results. Notably, Obeng et al. (2023) report that social media enhances communication among married individuals, whereas Wathigo (2019) observes a negative correlation between social media use and marital communication, highlighting a point of divergence. These contradictions suggest that the relationship between digital technology use and communication among married individuals is complex and potentially influenced by cultural or contextual factors. A key synthesis across reviewed studies is that access and usage of digital platforms are high, but the implications for marital communication vary. The major research gaps identified include the lack of inferential analysis in most studies (Obeng et al., 2023), insufficient focus on marital communication, such as active listening and clarity (Abu et al., 2021), and limited exploration within religious populations (Wathigo, 2019).

This study sought to address these gaps by examining the communication among married individuals within a church setting using inferential statistical techniques.

Further review of extant literature points to an escalating global and regional trend in digital technology use, especially social media, with time spent ranging from under 30 minutes to over 6 hours daily across various populations (SMIlab, 2018). Emerging research in Africa and Asia (Kolan et al., 2023; Mpepo, 2017; Nyambura, 2020; Shaikh, 2018) narrows attention to married individuals and reveals mixed outcomes – some associating increased social media use with relationship strain, mistrust, and weakened communication, while others suggest improved connectivity and interpersonal bonding. Despite the growing body of literature, several research gaps persist: most studies use descriptive designs, limiting causal or correlational inferences; many lacks contextual depth on married individuals' digital habits; and conflicting findings on whether digital engagement harms or enhances communication highlight the need for more robust, mixed-method studies. Therefore, this study filled these gaps by using both qualitative and quantitative methods, including correlation analysis, to comprehensively examine how digital technology usage patterns relate to communication among married individuals.

The reviewed literature points to an escalating global and regional trend in digital technology use, especially social media, with time spent ranging from under 30 minutes to over 6 hours daily across various populations (SMIlab, 2018). Emerging research in Africa and Asia (Kolan et al., 2023; Mpepo, 2017; Nyambura, 2020) narrows attention to married individuals and reveals mixed outcomes; with some associating increased social media use with relationship strain, mistrust, and weakened communication, while others suggest improved connectivity and interpersonal bonding.

From the literature review, it can be surmised that there is growing recognition of regulating digital technology use as a vital strategy for enhancing communication among married individuals. Scholars such as Nguyen (2021), Morris (2020), and Campbell (2022) underscore that setting digital boundaries improves face-to-face engagement, emotional intimacy, and active listening, which are essential for healthy marital communication. Campbell's (2022) U.S.-based qualitative study offered deep insights into how married individuals negotiate implicit and explicit rules around technology use to maintain relational harmony. However, the study presented conceptual and methodological gaps by not measuring communication directly and relying solely on qualitative data. Mwangi (2022) filled this gap by focusing on married individuals in Nairobi, revealing that excessive or secretive digital use led to misunderstandings and strained intimacy, prompting the recommendation for married individuals -level regulation. However, while Mwangi's study confirmed the importance of time regulation; it did not quantitatively establish the relationship between such regulation and marital communication.

The broad sphere of literature shows that digital technology use is largely driven by emotional gratification and psychological motives such as positive feedback, fear of missing out, and mood regulation (Marengo et al., 2021). However, most studies focus on individual psychological outcomes such as well-being, stress, and addiction rather than relational dynamics within marriage (Zhu et al., 2021). Although a few studies explore digital communication within relationships, they do not sufficiently examine how emotional engagement and behavioral dependence on digital technology influence marital communication (Williams, 2024).

The literature on strategies for promoting constructive digital technology use in strengthening communication among married individuals is vast. Most of the

studies indicate that purposeful digital engagement and healthy information filtering can enhance marital connection, commitment, and communication quality (Kagwiria, 2022; Nasir & Ishak, 2025; Nkurunziza & Munganyinka, 2024). Similarly, emotional regulation, impulse control, and constructive online participation have been shown to foster empathy, trust, and relationship stability in digital interactions (Azkiya, 2024; Jabali et al., 2024; Mehmood et al., 2025). However, many studies focused on specific populations such as dating individuals, women, or families (Aviram, 2024; Chigozi & Chikwendu, 2024; Nguyen, 2023). Consequently, contextual, and conceptual gaps remain with respect to how constructive digital technology practices directly influence marital communication among married individuals.

Table 1

Summary of the Research Gaps

Study by	Focus of the Study	Methodology	Findings	Literature Gaps	How Gaps were Filled
Abu et al. (2021)	Influence of social media on interpersonal relationships among married individuals in Bangladesh.	A descriptive research design was used in the study, and data were collected using open and closed-ended semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.	The study found that 88% of the married individuals felt jealous when their respective partners were in contact with someone of the opposite gender on social media, which led to conflicts between them	The study focused on how access to social media affected the way they relate	This study focused on marital communication with regard to active listening, appropriateness of the content, and clarity of information.

Study by	Focus of the Study	Methodology	Findings	Literature Gaps	How Gaps were Filled
Chadha et al. (2025)	The impact of social media addiction on self-esteem and life satisfaction among married individuals	Descriptive research design was used, with data gathered from 385 married individuals.	Digital technology may be used as an escape from marital unhappiness, but this is more hurtful and increases social media use.	The study introduced life satisfaction as the dependent variable, thus opening a conceptual gap.	The current study sought to bridge the gap by treating marital communication as a dependent variable.
Campbell (2022)	Rules for mediated romance: A digital exploration of how couples negotiate expectations	Qualitative research design was used. In-depth interviews with 20 participants were conducted.	The study revealed how married individuals develop and manage norms such as response times, device usage boundaries, and social media engagement to maintain relational harmony.	The study adopted a purely qualitative approach without triangulating data through quantitative methods.	The present study used mixed methods research design to enhance comprehensive investigation of the subject of study.
Gomes et al. (2021)	The impact of technology usage on love and intimacy satisfaction among Portuguese adults.	Descriptive research design was used. The study was conducted in Portugal with 384 married individuals.	The findings also showed that digital communication played a dual role; it increased communication between married individuals when the objective was to strengthen relationships. However, the findings also showed that it becomes harmful when it leads to distraction, withdrawal, or excessive time online.	The study focused on the role of digital technology on the psychological well-being of married women	The present study investigated access to digital technology/ social media platforms and marital communication.

Study by	Focus of the Study	Methodology	Findings	Literature Gaps	How Gaps were Filled
Oluchukwu (2021)	The use of social media in resolving marital conflict	Cross-sectional research deign was used.	The findings showed that married individuals with longer marital tenure survive social media conflict, as they have developed stronger boundaries and communication norms.	The study was conceptualized to investigate the role of social media as a conflict resolution tool.	The present study focused on examining the influence of access to digital technologies on marital communicati on among married individuals.
Otieno (2025)	The impact of technology on interpersonal relationships.	The research adopted literature review methodology.	When individuals are not intentional in social media use, it exacerbates feelings of insecurity and jealousy, which leads to dysfunctional relationships.	The study relied on extant literature, thus opening a methodological gap.	The current study sought to bridge the gap by using convergent parallel mixed methods design and relying on primary data.
Wathigo (2019)	Digital technology and marriage: Implications for communicati on and stability.	The study utilized a correlational research design, with 220 respondents selected through purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling methods from a target population of 7,694 married people.	A correlation analysis indicated there was a negative correlation between the use of social media during marital conversations and communication in marital relationships.	The study focused on married individuals from the general population.	The current study focused on a religious setup that has not received adequate attention.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, literature related to the study has been reviewed as it relates to access to digital technology, access to digital technology, patterns of digital technology use, motivation of digital technology use, and intervention strategies, with a focus on marital communication among married individuals. The theoretical framework and conceptual framework are also discussed. Lastly, a synthesis of the literature review has been provided and research gaps highlighted. In the next chapter, a detailed discussion of the methodology used is presented.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology that was used to achieve the objectives of the research. The chapter commences with a discussion of the research philosophy. The research design, target population, sampling procedures and sample size, data collection instruments, and pilot test are presented. Additionally, reliability and validity of data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques, as well as ethical considerations are discussed and the chapter ends with a summary.

Research Philosophy

The study was guided by a pragmatic philosophy that arose among philosophers who argued that it is not possible to establish and access truth about the real world merely by using a single scientific method, as advanced in the positivist paradigm, nor is it possible to determine the social reality as constructed as per the interpretivist paradigm (Garcés-Velástegui, 2024). In the perspectives of De Waal (2021), and Liu et al. (2024), a mono-paradigmatic orientation of research is not good enough. Rather, what is needed is a worldview that would provide methods of research that are seen to be most appropriate for studying the phenomenon at hand. So, pragmatists look for research approaches that are more practical and pluralistic, approaches that allow a combination of methods that, in conjunction, shed light on the actual behavior of participants, the beliefs that stand behind those behaviors, and the consequences that are likely to follow from different behaviors.

Pragmatism supports the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods to get an in-depth understanding of the research problem and its solution (Liu et al.,

2024). It was suitable for this study because it facilitates the quantification of effect sizes in the interaction between digital technologies, interventions, and marital communication among married individuals, as well as provides in-depth insights into the nuances behind the effect sizes. The pragmatic research paradigm places high regard for the reality of and influence of the inner world of human experience in action through the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Garcés-Velástegui, 2024).

Research Design

According to Khoa et al. (2023), a research design provides procedures for data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting in research studies. Mbanaso et al. (2023) refer to research design as the researcher's plan of action, which provides the researcher with a framework of operation that directs the inquiry process. A research design provides the means to obtain answers through examining specific testable research questions of interest (Dewi, 2021). The choice of the research design is guided by the research objective(s), the number of resources and time available, and the philosophical foundations (Taherdoost, 2021). The research design used was a convergent parallel mixed methods design, which involves data collection from multiple sources, use of different respondents, as well as use of various methods of data analysis in a single study at the same time (Mbanaso et al., 2023). This research design was used because it allows for the concurrent gathering and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, enabling the researcher to gain a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Shahab et al., 2021). While quantitative data provided measurable trends and patterns in how digital technologies affect communication among married individuals, qualitative data offered deeper insights

into the lived experiences, perceptions, and contextual nuances behind those patterns (Klingshirn et al., 2022).

Location of the Study

Embakasi Central Sub-County is one of seventeen sub-counties in Nairobi County, Kenya, with an area of 14.30 km^2 (5.5 sq mi). Embakasi Central includes five electoral wards, each having one of the House of Power Churches. The wards include; Kayole North, Kayole Central, Kayole South, Komarock, and Matopeni. It has a population of 312,000 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistis, 2019). Embakasi Central Sub-County was chosen because it has a high number of House of Power Churches, which provides direct access to the study's target group of married individuals within a faith-based setting. The area is also highly urban and densely populated, with widespread use of digital technologies, making it an appropriate context for studying how these tools influence marital communication. In addition, its diverse socio-economic composition allows for a richer understanding of different experiences and patterns of technology use among married couples. The close proximity of the churches also made data collection more practical and feasible.

Target Population

In research, the target population is about an entire group of objects, individuals, or events that share similar characteristics and form the focus of the study. It is the representation of the complete set of elements that the researcher aims to study and draw conclusions from (Taherdoost, 2021). Defining the population is a very critical step in research design as it delimits the boundaries and scope of the study's findings as well. In this study, 800 married individuals from five churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, along with five pastors, were targeted (House of

Power Churches, 2024). The inclusion criteria were individuals who had been married for at least one year to ensure adequate experience in marital communication, and must be conversant with the use of digital technologies. Pastors serving in these churches were also included as key informants due to their pastoral oversight and insight into marital issues within the congregation. All unmarried church members, as well as those who had been married for less than a year, and members who were separated or divorced, were excluded from the study. The population distribution is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Population Distribution

Name of the Church	Target population	Percent
Emmanuel's Church	181	23%
Emmaus Church	172	22%
Grace Church	154	19%
Faith Church	149	18%
Ebenezer Church	144	18%
Total	800	100%

(House of Power Churches, 2024).

Sample Size

This is the selection of individual observations intended to yield some knowledge about a population of concern, especially for statistical inference (Mbanaso et al., 2023). In this study, the sample size was computed using Krecjie and Morgan's (1970) formula thus:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

Where:

S = required sample size

X^2 = table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at 95% confidence level = 3.841

N = population size = 800

P = population proportion = 0.50 (assumed for maximum sample size)

d = degree of accuracy (margin of error) = 0.05

Therefore:

$$S = \frac{(3.841)(800)(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2(800-1) + (3.841)(0.5)(0.5)}$$

$$S \approx 260$$

The sample size of 260 comprised members who were registered in the church and not only being attendees of the church. This was distributed across the churches as presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Sample Size Distribution

Name of the Church	Target population	Sample size	Percent
Emmanuels Church	181	60	23%
Emmaus Church	172	57	22%
Grace Church	154	49	19%
Faith Church	149	47	18%
Ebenezer Church	144	47	18%
Total	800	260	100%

(House of Power Churches, 2024).

Sampling Method

The study used purposive sampling technique to select the participating churches. Purposive sampling technique was preferred as it enables the researcher to use selection criteria that optimize resources (Tajik et al., 2025). Specifically, criterion sampling was applied. This is whereby participants are chosen because they meet specific predetermined criteria (namely, married individuals who are registered members and have used digital technologies for at least one year). The churches selected in the study must have operated for at least 5 years to reduce the chances of including churches that do not have regular members. The five-year operational period was also to allow the pastors to have sufficient experience in handling marital problems related to digital technology and marital communication. Again, the choice was to ensure the churches had at least 50 married individuals who could participate in the study. The other criterion was that the selected churches were accessible in terms of transportation, security, and scheduling.

The stratified sampling method was used to ensure representation of the sample across different churches. It is a probability sampling technique in which the population is divided into distinct subgroups or strata that share similar characteristics, and a sample is then drawn from each stratum proportionally (Nguyen et al., 2021). In this study, the use of stratified random sampling is justified because the population of married church members was distributed across five churches, each serving as a natural stratum. By stratifying the population based on church membership and selecting a proportionate number of respondents from each church, the researcher ensured that all churches were equitably represented in the sample. This method improves the precision of the results by reducing the sampling error and enhancing the generalizability of findings across the selected churches (Khoa et al.,

2023). Within each stratum, purposive sampling was used to select respondents who met the eligibility criteria, namely; married individuals with access to digital technology (Tajik et al., 2025). The same technique was applied to select pastors as key informant interviewees (KII). Each church was represented by the pastor in charge. Accordingly, the total KII sample was 5 pastors.

The stratified sampling technique involves assigning ratios that each church controls in the entire population as shown in Table 3 above. As shown in the table, Emmanuel's church had a population of 181 members, thus controlling 23% of the population; a sample of 60 members was assigned. Similarly, Emmaus had 172 members and controlled 22%. Grace Church had a population of 154 members and controlled 19%, and was allocated a sample of 49 members. Faith Church had a population of 149 members, controlled 18%, and was assigned a sample of 47 members, while Ebenezer had a population of 144 members, controlling 18%, and was similarly assigned a sample of 47 members.

Within each church, the study was guided by a simple random sampling technique. To implement this, the researcher used the lottery method. This is where the researcher prepared small pieces of paper equal to the total number of married individuals in each church. A number of these papers equivalent to the desired sample size were labeled "Yes," while the remaining were labeled "No." All papers were folded, placed in a basket, and thoroughly mixed. Married individuals were then invited to pick one paper each. The members who selected yes were allowed to participate in the study.

Additionally, 3 FGDs were formed, each FGD comprised 6 participating married individuals to provide additional depth to the quantitative aspects of the study. A total of 6 participants fell within the recommended range of five to twelve

individuals for a single focus group discussion (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021). The study used a simple random sampling method to select the 3 churches where the 3 FGDs were conducted. From 3 selected churches, the researcher used a simple random sampling technique, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. The lottery method was then used to select the participating members.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instrument is defined as how information is obtained from the selected subjects of investigation (Khoa et al., 2023). The study largely relied on primary data collected using questionnaires, interview guides, and focus group discussions.

Questionnaire

A closed-ended questionnaire designed by the researcher was used to collect data from married individuals. A questionnaire is preferred because data can be collected from a large number of respondents within the limits of time (Khoa et al., 2023). A questionnaire is also suitable because impersonal formats and standardized formats of a questionnaire have uniformity and help in getting data objectively. The biodata section (section A), which was self-developed, sought to clarify the background information and has 5 items. The samples of questions in this section included the age of the participants, the level of education, and the number of years the participants had been married. Section B, the Social Media Use Scale (SMUS), which was validated by Tuck and Thompson (2024), was adopted. The inventory was preferred, as it helps in accounting for access to digital technology and the Social Media Use Scale. Again, the questions such as “I have internet access in my house,”

“I have access to Instagram,” and “I have subscribed to various digital channels,” which appear in the first part of the inventory, directly accounted for digital technology. This section evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 means "Never" and 5 means "Always". The second section, which has 20 items, accounted for social media usage, with the sample of questions organized into 5 thematic areas, including frequency of use, duration of use, emotional engagement, social interaction, behavioral dependence, and cognitive preoccupation. “I use social media as soon as I wake up,” “I feel anxious or stressed when I cannot access my social media accounts,” and “I find it difficult to reduce my social media use.” The questions in the second section were evaluated using a 5-point scale, where 1 is “never” and 5 is “very often”, further addressing the study’s independent variable.

The study adopted the Digital Health Literacy Instrument (DHLI) in section C to address the moderating variables. The DHLI was validated by Van Der Vaart and Drossaert (2017) as raising questions pertinent to the recommendations for encouraging responsible media use. The inventory has 22 items evaluating Intentional & Purposeful Online Use (Planning + Awareness), Healthy Information Consumption (Critical Thinking + Relevance), and digital self-regulation and Impulse Control. Emotional regulation during online use, constructive online participation and communication, boundary management, and safety, privacy, and risk awareness. The samples of the inventory include “I am better able to stay focused on my purpose when using social media,” “I can express my thoughts respectfully, even during disagreements,” and “I now think carefully before sharing personal or sensitive information online.” The questions were evaluated with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”.

The study adopted the Married Individuals Communication Scale (CCS) in Section D, attributed to Conrad et al. (2018), to take care of the dependent variable. The inventory was preferred as it has questions that address communication among married individuals. It has 16 items, organized around four aspects, including Openness & Sharing, Support & Understanding, Conflict Handling & Effectiveness, and General Communication. The samples of questions in this section include "I feel free to express my thoughts and opinions to my partner," "We handle disagreements constructively without hurting each other," and "Communication between us is clear and straightforward." The questions were answered using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". In each section, the data was aggregated by generating composite mean scores.

Key Informant Interview Guide

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 5 pastors of respective churches. The respondents were assumed to have adequate and relevant information regarding the study variables. Semi-structured interviews containing items in line with study objectives were used to seek facts, as well as feelings and opinions of respondents. The interviews are preferred because they provide the researcher with an opportunity to clarify issues, elaborate on the items, and corroborate responses from questionnaires (Salawu et al., 2023).

Focus Group Discussion Guide

A focus group discussion guide, as a qualitative technique for data collection, targets a group of individuals with certain characteristics to focus on a given topic to share and exchange views (Khoa et al., 2023). The FGDs were carried out with 6 married individuals as suggested by Bergen and Labonte (2020) who suggested that at

least 6 participants are an adequate sample for FGD. The FGD was preferred because it facilitated the discussion and exploration of viewpoints, experiences, and perspectives of participants, which are coded in themes and subthemes, contributing to reinforcing the qualitative aspects of mixed methods approaches (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021).

Data Collection Procedure

At the very beginning, the study sought ethical clearance from the Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee (ISERC), a body that regulates fieldwork from Pan Africa Christian University (PAC). After obtaining ethical clearance, the researcher applied for research permission from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). After obtaining the NACOSTI permit, the researcher wrote a letter to the pastors of the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, requesting them to allow the study to be undertaken in their churches. The letters, together with the copies of PAC's introduction letters and the NACOSTI permit, were self-delivered to the churches. During the visit, the researcher also discussed with them the dates when the study would take place. Thereafter, the researcher trained the research assistants.

On the day of data collection, the researcher took the participants through a consent form. Taherdoost (2021) posits that consent to participate in research is not an automatically straightforward matter. The consent form gave the participants the opportunity to consent or decline to participate in the study. The consent form has the purpose of the study, the rationale for participating in the study, the obligation of the researcher, and the potential benefits that may accrue from the study. In addition, the rationale for their being sampled was explained. The questionnaires were presented to

the participants who consented to participate in the study by signing. The questionnaires were administered and collected on the same day. An appropriate time was arranged for the interview with the pastors and members of the focus group discussion. The questionnaires required not more than 30 minutes time commitment of participants. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw their participation and/or their data any time before or during the period of data collection. However, they were informed that this right lapsed once the data collection phase was closed.

Pilot Testing

A pilot study is a mini version of a full-scale study, which is important in the evaluation of feasibility, time, cost, adverse events, as well as statistical variability (Khoa et al., 2023). A pilot study is ordinarily done within a population that bears similar characteristics to the main study population. A pilot study was carried out in the House of Power Church in Donholm, Embakasi East, Nairobi County, Kenya. In the pilot study, 26 and five married individuals of the church were conveniently sampled for administration of questionnaires and focus group discussion, respectively. The sample of 26 married individuals represented 10 percent of the total sample, which is within the range 1-10% recommended in (Khoa et al., 2023). The pilot data was analyzed to identify and correct any issues with the research instruments, such as ambiguous questions, inconsistent responses, or low reliability scores. The researcher used the feedback to refine wording, improve clarity, and adjust the format and structure to improve its validity and reliability.

Instrument Validity

Validity is the ability of an instrument to be able to measure what it is supposed to measure (Khoa et al., 2023). Mills and Gay (2016) explain that validity is

the quality of a data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure. It addresses the concern of whether one is measuring suitable indicators of the concept, and the accuracy of the results to the extent of what is supposed to be measured. Face validity was determined by presenting the instrument to the researchers' supervisors as experts for scrutiny and advice. Shahab et al. (2021) point out that it is necessary to have experts examine the instrument items and judge their suitability. Content validity, which involves assurance that items comprising the measuring instrument are representative of the field that they intend to serve, was ascertained by setting items about the objectives.

Instrument Reliability

Reliability is the consistency of the instrument to produce consistent results after repeated trials (Khoa et al., 2023). Concern for reliability in this study was important because, without reliability, there can be no valid outcomes (Shahab et al., 2021). Reliable instruments yield consistent results to the extent that independent administrators yield related results, which are influenced by random error (Taherdoost, 2021). Khoa et al. (2023) point out that a random error is the deviation from the correct measurement because of the factors that have not been controlled effectively by a researcher. The reliability of the research instrument is said to decrease as the random error increases.

The researcher used validated instruments for the study. The Social Media Use Scale, which was used to collect data on the independent variable, was validated by Tuck and Thompson (2024) in the USA using a student sample of 487 to generate the items. The test results yielded a Cronbach alpha test result exceeding .78 across all dimensions, which meets the minimum Cronbach alpha scores threshold of .7

recommended by Kennedy (2022). The Digital Health Literacy Instrument, which was validated by Van Der Vaart and Drossaert (2017), was used to measure the outcomes that are achieved through interventions. The instrument was validated in the Netherlands using a sample of 200 individuals, and subscales with a Cronbach alpha range of .70-.89 were obtained, thus showing that the instrument met the threshold recommended by Kennedy (2022). The Couple's Communication Scale was tested by Conrad et al. (2018) in a hospital setup among 136 patients with advanced cancer and their partners. The test revealed internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91, which is considered by Kennedy (2022) as meeting the minimum threshold for a study to proceed.

Reflecting on the test result, the Social Media Use was validated using students, the Digital Health Literacy Instrument was validated using individuals who were not necessarily married, and the Couple's Communication Scale was tested among advanced cancer patients and their partners. It can therefore, be surmised that further testing was conducted to bridge the contextual gap. Consequently, an internal consistency test using Cronbach's formula was applied to test reliability based on 10 piloted questionnaires. The internal consistency was computed using SPSS version 31. When correlation is high, as from 0.7 and above, means that such items have a strong correlation (Kennedy, 2022). Table 4 presents the reliability statistics.

Table 4

Reliability Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Access to Digital Technologies	.942	10
Frequency and Duration of Use	.887	7
Motives for Digital Technology Use	.626	13
Strategies for Promoting Constructive Use	.935	22
Couple Communication	.966	16

Based on the criterion of α=.70 and above as an indicator of acceptable internal consistency, four of the five constructs demonstrated satisfactory reliability. Specifically, Access to Digital Technologies showed excellent reliability (α = .942), Frequency and Duration of Use demonstrated good reliability (α = .887), Strategies for Promoting Constructive Use exhibited excellent internal consistency (α = .935), and Couple Communication also showed excellent reliability (α = .966). However, Motives for Digital Technology Use yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .626 (13 items), which falls below the .70 threshold, suggesting comparatively lower internal consistency. However, an examination of the Cronbach alpha if item deleted (Appendix VX) showed that deletion of the item "I rely on social media for support" would improve the reliability coefficient to 0.784. Therefore, the item was deleted.

As pertains the qualitative instrument, attention turns to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirm-ability (Armour & Williams, 2022). Credibility is the degree to which the interview results correctly represent the true

position of the respondents (Yanti et al., 2025). In this study, credibility was ensured through engagement with married individuals to gain an in-depth insight into how digital technologies influence marital communication. Triangulation was employed by using both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (Coleman, 2022). Additionally, reflexivity was maintained to reduce personal bias during data gathering and interpretation.

Transferability pertains to the extent to which findings can be transferred to similar contexts (Abidin et al., 2024). In this research, transferability was ensured by undertaking thick descriptions of the research setting, respondents, and processes (Megheirkouni & Moir, 2023). By clearly describing the characteristics of the married individuals and the nature of digital technology use, the research facilitates judgment of the applicability of the findings to similar settings and population (William, 2024). In this study, the similar setting and population in question was married individuals in church.

Dependability is the consistency of the research findings over time (William, 2024). To ensure dependability, the study maintained an audit trail documenting all stages of the research process, including the design of qualitative data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and analysis decisions. First, the instruments were pilot-tested among a small group of married individuals in a similar context to refine questions for clarity and relevance to the study objectives (Kumar et al., 2025). Subsequently, debriefing was conducted to ensure that the examination of access, frequency, motives, and strategies of digital technology use was logical, traceable, and well-documented.

Confirm-ability is the extent to which the findings are shaped by the respondents rather than the interests and biases of the researcher (Armour &

Williams, 2022). In this study, confirm-ability was ensured through systematic documentation of all data collection and analysis procedures (Yanti et al., 2025). The researcher kept detailed records of interview transcripts, field notes, and coding decisions that reflect how conclusions about the influence of digital technologies on marital communication were derived at. Triangulation of data sources and methods further supported objectivity (Abidin et al., 2024).

Data Analysis Plan

This was a mixed methods study; consequently, the researcher undertook both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Once the raw data was collected, the research instruments were edited to confirm that all questionnaires had been answered and properly recorded. The data analysis plan begun with diagnostic tests and quantitative data analysis, followed by qualitative data analysis and integration as discussed in this section.

Diagnostic Tests

Before undertaking quantitative data analysis, various diagnostic tests were carried out. These are tests that evaluate whether the assumptions underlying a specific data analysis technique are met (Mishra et al., 2020). The tests help identify problems such as non-linearity, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, or autocorrelation that could distort the results or lead to incorrect conclusions (Farrar & Glauber, 2020). Violation of assumptions led to the use of non-parametric statistics.

Linearity Test. The linearity test checks the assumption that a straight-line relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables. This is critical because both Pearson correlation and regression models are designed to measure or predict linear associations (Razali & Wah, 2020). To test for linearity, scatterplots

between the respective variables were examined using visual means. Assumption of linearity is met when a straight-line pattern is observed in the scatterplot (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2020).

Normality Test. This tests the assumption that the distribution of the scores for each variable is normal. Testing for normality involved using the Shapiro-Wilk test and histograms. If the variables deviate significantly from a normal distribution, this assumption is violated (Mishra et al., 2020).

Homoscedasticity Test. This refers to the assumption that the variance of errors is constant across all levels of the independent variable. This is necessary for achieving unbiased estimation of standard errors and test statistics in regression (Studenmund, 2020). It was assessed through residual plots, whereby, if the spread of residuals is equal across predicted values, the assumption holds; otherwise, it is violated. (Farrar & Glauber, 2020).

Multicollinearity Test. This test checks the presence of high intercorrelations among independent variables. High intercorrelation is problematic as it inflates standard errors, making it difficult to determine the unique influence of predictors (Studenmund, 2020). This was tested using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with values above 10 signaling a violation of assumption (Akinwande et al., 2020).

Outlier Test. Outliers are data points that significantly vary from the rest of the dataset and can cause disproportional influence on the output of correlation and regression analyses (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2020). In correlation, outliers artificially inflate or deflate the strength and direction of the relationship, while in regression, they skew the slope and intercept, leading to potentially erroneous conclusions (Dibekulu, 2020). In this study, outliers were detected visually using boxplots.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis involved both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were computed using SPSS version 31, the measures of central tendency, including the mean, the standard deviation, and the percentages, thus helping in understanding the general trend in the data. Since diagnostic tests revealed that assumptions of regression analysis were not met, data transformation was performed on the composite scores and inferential analysis was performed using Chi-square technique. The findings of quantitative analysis were displayed in tables and figures to enhance visualization.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews and FDGs were analyzed using thematic analysis by applying the procedure for thematic analysis as proposed by Naeem et al. (2023). The first stage in Naeem et al. (2023) thematic analysis involves immersing oneself in the data to gain a deep understanding of its content. For this study, data was gathered through focus group discussions with married individuals from House of Power Churches. Audio recordings from these discussions were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and preserve original meaning (Bazeley, 2021). The researcher read and re-read the transcripts to become familiar with the data, making notes on initial ideas or potential patterns. This step is critical as it lays the foundation for generating authentic insights by helping the researcher internalize the participants' language, tone, and lived experiences related to digital technology use and communication in marriage.

Once familiar with the data, the researcher began systematically generating initial codes. Coding involves highlighting significant features of the data that relate

to the research objectives, such as patterns of digital technology use, perceived communication changes, or challenges of screen time in marriage. Codes were generated across the entire dataset using NVivo 15. These codes were then reviewed for similarities and grouped to form broader patterns (Bouncken et al., 2021). The groups were reviewed, defined, and themes presented. This was done to ensure they accurately represent the coded data and align with the overall dataset. Sub-themes were developed to capture nuances. The researcher then defined and named each theme clearly, articulating what it captures and how it relates to the overall research question (Dibekulu, 2020).

Finally, the themes were reported in a structured narrative, supported by direct quotations from participants to illustrate meaning and credibility (Naeem et al., 2023). The final thematic map became the lens through which the lived experiences of married individuals were interpreted in relation to the influence of digital technologies and proposed interventions. After independent analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, the results were compared, merged, and interpreted together to identify points of convergence, divergence, or complementarity. This integration process is what enhanced the understanding of the research problem by providing a complete and more corroborated picture, where statistical trends from quantitative data are enriched with detailed insights from qualitative findings, leading to robust conclusions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2020).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are institutional protocols as well as individual decisions that comply with both moral and legal requirements of research involving human subjects (Khoa et al., 2023). Educational researchers especially need to be

very sensitive to ethical principles owing to their research topic, face-to-face data collection, and reciprocity with participants. The entire dissertation respects intellectual ownership and acknowledges all sources of information in the text and the reference list. At the very beginning, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of Postgraduate Studies of PAC University and an authorization letter and research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation. The letter of authority was produced upon arrival at the institutions to carry out the study.

To protect the rights of the participants, a letter of information providing details of the study and the appropriate consent letter was distributed to potential participants, and an explanation was given for their being considered as sample respondents. The consent letter clarified the rights of the participants not to give information that they consider confidential or private. The respondents were also assured that no identifying information about them was to be revealed in written or other communication. Information provided was only used for the stated purpose, and the information was not passed to a third party. Again, the respondents were informed of their right to participate or withdraw at any stage of the research without fear or embarrassment. Following the clarification, participants were given the option to discontinue participation in the process for whatever reason.

In return, the researcher committed not to coerce the participants into giving information to the extent that they feel they may divulge information. Respondents were also not forced to give any specific information of concern or interest to the researcher, nor were they given incentives to participate in the study. The researcher also assured respondents that their identity will not be revealed. Moreover, codes were used in writing up the dissertation instead of names. The raw data collected was filed

for easy reference. Once the data had been analyzed, computer printouts were filed, while soft copies were stored in storage devices such as CDs and removable disks, whose access largely was restricted to the researcher.

In order to ensure privacy and confidentiality of the participants, they were informed not to disclose their identity anywhere on the questionnaires. Anonymity of interview and FGD participants was ensured by using pseudonyms to disguise their identities. Access to data was strictly limited to the researcher who stored the data securely in a locked cabinet, while electronic data files were assigned passwords to prevent unauthorized access. Physical data would be destroyed and electronic data erased within two years after completion of the study. Aggregated data were reported in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Neither the names of the participants nor that of their respective churches would be disclosed in the final report. Where quotes were mentioned, they were not identifiable since pseudonyms were used. Consent for use of quotations was sought prior to the commencement of interviews.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has articulated the research philosophy and research design. It has described the location of the study and the target population. It has further provided and justified the sample size, and sampling method. The chapter has also explained the data collection instruments and data collection procedure. Similarly, the pilot testing, instrument validity and reliability has been explained. The chapter has included the data analysis plan and outlined the ethical considerations. The next chapter presents the results and discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study. The chapter is organized into six sections. The first section analyzes the response rate and demographic characteristics of the respondents. This is followed by diagnostic tests of the quantitative data. The rest of the chapter is divided into four sections in line with the specific objectives which were: to examine the influence of access to digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals in the Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya; to examine the influence of the frequency and duration of digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County; to determine the influence of motives for digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya; and to examine strategies for promoting constructive use of digital technologies to strengthen communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics

In this section, a descriptive analysis of the response rate, along with demographic data such as age of respondents, gender distribution, level of education, and years in marriage, and usage of digital technology for communication.

Response Rate

Table 5 presents the response rate for the study.

Table 5

Response Rate

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Responded	257	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%
Non-respondents	3	1.0%	1.0%	100.0%
Total	260	100.0%	100.0%	

Out of the 260 individuals targeted to participate, 257 returned completed responses, representing a response rate of 99%, while 3 individuals did not respond, accounting for 1% of the sample. The realized response rate exceeds the threshold of an excellent response rate as recommended by Holtom et al. (2022) who observed that studies involving individual level analysis involve response rates above 70%. This high response rate was considered adequate for undertaking data analysis because it enhanced the reliability and generalizability of the research results.

Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents by age bracket based on percentages only.

Table 6

Distribution of Respondents by Age Bracket

Year bracket	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-29	85	33.1%	33.1%	33.1%
30-39	73	28.4%	28.4%	61.5%
49-49	48	18.7%	18.7%	80.2%
50-59	32	12.5%	12.5%	92.6%
60 years +	19	7.4%	7.4%	100.0%
Total	257	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 6 shows that most of the respondents were aged 20–29 years (33.1%), followed by those aged 30–39 years (28.4%). Participants aged 40–49 years accounted for 18.7%, while those aged 50–59 years represented 12.5%. Respondents aged 60 years and above comprised 7.4% of the sample. The results suggest that together, married individuals below the age of 40 years accounted for majority (61.5%) of the respondents. This is consistent with the national population trend in Kenya as documented by Mwaila and Yousif (2022) which suggests that people below the age of 35 years are the majority. This means that most of the respondents may have been at a life stage characterized by major life responsibilities like juggling careers and parenting responsibilities that may shape the nature and outcome of marital communication.

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 7 presents the distribution of respondents by gender.

Table 7

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	134	52.1%	52.1%	52.1%
Female	123	47.9%	47.9%	100.0%
Total	257	100.0%	100.0%	

The findings in Table 7 indicate that 52.1% of the respondents were male, while 47.9% were female, reflecting a relatively balanced gender representation in the study. This distribution is comparable to a study on married individuals in Nairobi

County, Kenya, undertaken by Wanjiku (2025) where 50% of the respondents were male and 50% were female. This means that both the male and the female gender voices were adequately captured. As such, the results are assumed to project a balanced view on the subject of digital technology use and marital communication.

Educational Level of Respondents

Table 8 presents the educational level of respondents.

Table 8

Educational Level of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No formal education	14	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Primary education	6	2.3%	2.3%	7.8%
Secondary education	77	30.0%	30.0%	37.7%
Tertiary	160	62.3%	62.3%	100.0%
Total	257	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 8 shows that the majority of respondents had attained tertiary education (62.3%), followed by those with secondary education (30.0%). A smaller proportion reported no formal education (5.4%), while 2.3% had completed primary education. These findings indicate that most participants had relatively high levels of educational attainment. This finding agrees with a similar study in Nairobi County by Theuri (2021) whereby respondents who attained tertiary level of education were the majority, accounting for over three-quarters of the participants. Such relatively high levels of literacy and education signal high levels of knowledge and awareness that

potentially enabled married individuals to recognize and appreciate both the positive and negative influence of digital technology use on marital communication.

Respondents Number of Years in Marriage

Table 9 presents the distribution of respondents by number of years in marriage.

Table 9

Number of Years in Marriage

Years in marriage	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
10 and below	125	48.6%	48.6%	48.6%
11-20	73	28.4%	28.4%	77.0%
21-30	40	15.6%	15.6%	92.6%
31-40	19	7.4%	7.4%	100.0%
Total	257	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 9 shows that 48.6% of the respondents had been married for 10 years and below (48.6%), followed by those married for 11–20 years (28.4%). Participants who had been married for 21–30 years accounted for 15.6%, while 7.4% had been married for 31–40 years. These results suggest more than half (51.4%) of the respondents had been married for more than a decade, implying that most of the respondents had relatively longer marital durations. This is in line with the findings of a study on the influence of mobile use on the level of marital satisfaction among couples in Embu and Kirinyaga counties by Kagwiria (2022) which also established that up to 54% of the respondents. The finding means that majority of the respondents had been in their marriage long enough to provide adequate insights and perspectives into the influence of digital technology use on their marital communication.

Use of Digital Technology

Respondents were asked whether they used digital technology for marital communication. Table 10 presents the distribution of respondents by use of digital technology for communication.

Table 10

Distribution of Respondents by Use of Digital Technology

Do you use digital technology for marital communication?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	9	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%
Yes	248	96.5%	96.5%	100.0%
Total	257	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 10 shows that the 96.5% of respondents reported using digital technology for communication, while only 3.5% indicated that they did not use digital technology. This signals a very high level of digital technology use among married individuals. This is in keeping with Internet World Stats (2021) which documented an internet penetration of 84% and the study by Kharono et al. (2021) which reported mobile phone penetration rate and social media use at 98%. The finding suggests that digital technology use was part and parcel of the typical communication life of married couple. The implication of this high social media use is that there is a pronounced use of digital technology which potentially shapes the marital communication of couples in the Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

The Influence of Access to Digital Technologies on Marital Communication

The first objective of the study was to examine the influence of access to digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals in the Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. This section presents descriptive analysis of the data as well as inferential tests for statistical significance.

Descriptive Analysis of Access to Digital Technologies

Table 11 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for respondents' access to digital technologies on a 5-point scale where 1=never 2= rarely, 3=frequently 4=very frequently 5=always.

Table 11

Mean and Standard Deviation of Access to Digital Technologies

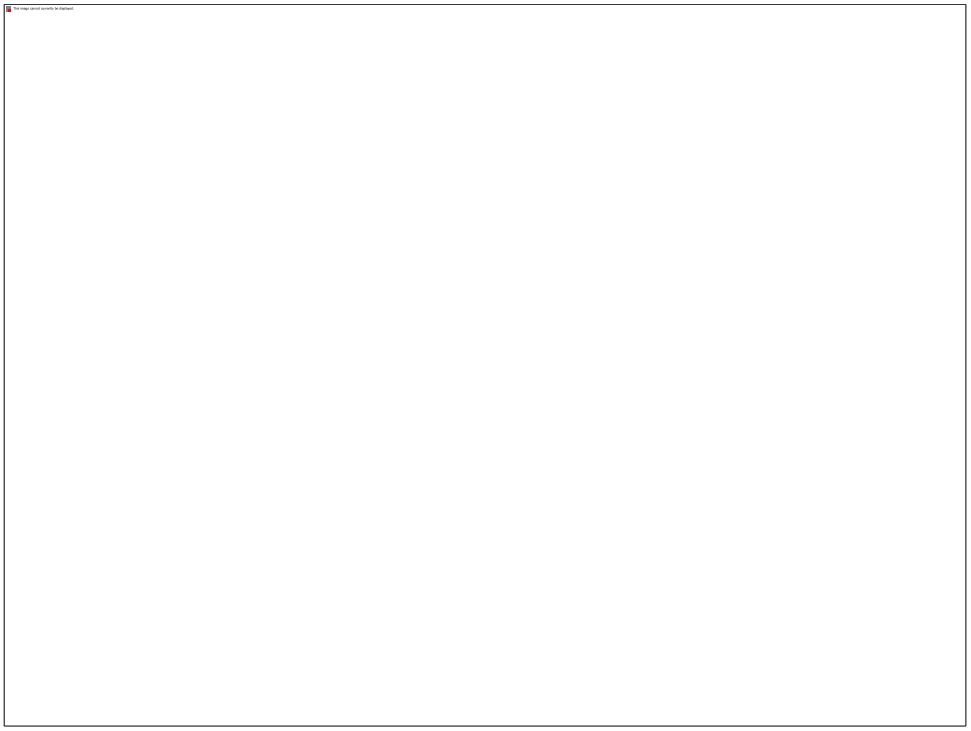
Access to digital technologies items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have access to WhatsApp	4.20	0.976
I have internet access on my mobile phone	3.97	1.105
I have access to YouTube	3.97	1.153
I have access to Facebook	3.93	1.169
I have internet access in my workplace	3.88	1.375
I have access to TikTok	3.85	1.275
I have internet access in my house	3.73	1.423
I have access to Instagram	3.72	1.379
I have subscribed to various digital channels	3.52	1.508
I have internet access on my personal computer	3.51	1.541

Table 11 shows that respondents reported relatively high levels of access to digital technologies, with the highest frequency of access reported for WhatsApp (M = 4.20, SD = 0.98), followed by internet access on mobile phones (M = 3.97, SD = 1.11) and access to YouTube (M = 3.97, SD = 1.15). Access to Facebook (M = 3.93, SD = 1.17), internet at the workplace (M = 3.88, SD = 1.38), and TikTok (M = 3.85, SD = 1.28) also obtained relatively high means. Slightly lower but still frequent access was reported for internet at home (M = 3.73, SD = 1.42), Instagram (M = 3.72, SD = 1.38), subscription to various digital channels (M = 3.52, SD = 1.51), and internet access on personal computers (M = 3.51, SD = 1.54). The results suggest most of the digital technologies were readily accessible to the respondents. The established trends in the present study are consistent with the research in Ghana by Obeng et al. (2023) which examined social media practices among married individuals and found that married individuals had wide access to digital technology, with 90% of respondents agreeing to use Facebook, WhatsApp, while 30% used Instagram. This means that WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook were among the most popular digital technology platforms among married individuals.

A histogram was used to assess the overall rating of access to digital technology as shown in Figures 2. Visualization of the histograms indicates that the distribution of the datasets was negatively skewed. This indicates that the level of access to digital technology among married individuals was very high. This finding agrees with Didiugwu et al.'s (2021) study in Nigeria which found that the majority of married individuals use Facebook and WhatsApp as a means of communication. It can be inferred that married individuals had ubiquitous access to various digital technologies, which can shape the practice of marital communication among couples.

Figure 2

Histogram for Access to Digital Technologies



The distribution of the respondents by overall level of access to digital technologies is presented in Figure 13.

Figure 3

Overall level of Access to Digital Technologies

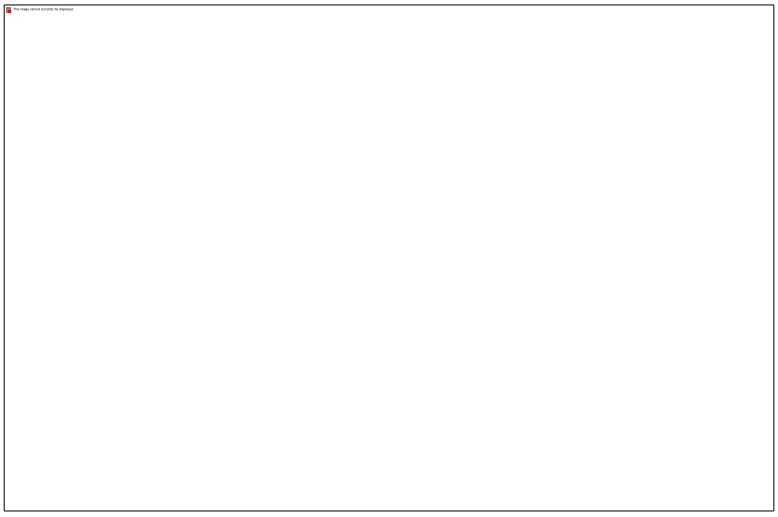


Figure 3 shows that majority (66.1%) had high access to digital technologies while 18.3% had moderate access and only 15.6% had low access. The numbers may be explained by the fact that the research was undertaken within an urban context, where the presence of technological infrastructure is relatively more widespread. The finding agrees with the study in Bangladesh by Abu et al. (2021) which reported that over 65%of the participants in their study had access to both a range of digital technologies. The results are also in line with the findings of the study in Ghana by Obeng et al (2023) which examined social media practices among married individuals within a residential area and found that married individuals had wide access to digital technology. This consistency in research results across multiple studies implies that widespread access to digital technology among married individuals is nowadays a universal phenomenon and not necessarily geographically restricted.

The trends observed in the quantitative data exhibiting widespread access to various forms of digital technology were corroborated by findings of Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interview participants. Both categories of participants were asked to describe access to digital technology and social media among married individuals. An overarching theme of dependence on digital technology among the respondents emerged from the verbatim views. Table 12 presents demonstrate the link between interview responses, codes, sub-themes and theme.

Table 12

Thematic Analysis of Access to Digital Technologies

Verbatim responses	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
FGD Participant #1: Very accessible- almost everyone has a phone- convenient.	Very accessible	High accessibility	Digital Technology Dependence
FGD Participant #2: Easily accessible in a scale of 8-10, an 8. Most married people have access to social media.	Easily accessible		
FGD Participant #3: We frequently use digital devices & social media.	Frequently use		
KII#1: It is highly accessible since we use it on a daily basis.	Highly accessible		
KII#2: Most of the couples have access to digital tech & social They use social media on a daily basis for different purposes.	Use on a daily basis		
KII#3: They frequently use the social media and technology.	Frequently use		
KII#4: In my emotion, many marriages are affected negatively by misuse of social media. Although at the moment it helps but I think it is doing more harm.	Misuse		
FGD Participant #4: It has led to individuals/ married individuals doing personal research on improving their marriage.	Personal research	Constructive use	
KII#5: It sometimes helps even to get marital advice that is posted on the platforms. Many people have the access to the information.	Get marital advice		

As shown in Table 12, thematic analysis revealed the tendency of digital technology dependency among married people. The findings indicate that digital technologies and social media are perceived as highly accessible and frequently used. Some respondents however observed constructive use, particularly the role of digital platforms in supporting personal research aimed at improving marital relationships. The results suggest that access to digital technology is integrated into everyday life as reflected in the verbatim expressions thus:

> "Easily accessible on a scale of 8-10, an 8. Most married people have access to social media" (FGD Participant #2).
>
> "We frequently use digital devices and social media" (FGD Participant #3).
>
> "It has led to individuals/ married individuals doing personal research on improving their marriage" (FGD Participant #4).
>
> "Most of the couples have access to digital tech and the social media they use on a daily basis for different purposes" (KII#2).
>
> "It sometimes helps even to get marital advice that is posted on the platforms. Many people have the access to the information" (KII#5).

The corroboration of the quantitative results that is apparent in the qualitative data aligns with the key theme across reviewed studies (Kolan et al., 2023; Nyambura, 2020; Obeng et al., 2023;) that access and usage of digital platforms are

high. The implication is that digital technology is a reality of today's marriage and family life. This amplifies the concern expressed by Zhou et al. (2023) regarding ubiquitous communication gadgets and the observation by Yu and Hang (2024) who noted that marital life takes place alongside several other prominent family changes, including the deinstitutionalization, individualization, and notably deterioration of communication.

Descriptive Analysis of Marital Communication

This sub-section presents descriptive analysis of the three dimensions of marital communication namely: openness and sharing, support and understanding, and conflict management.

Openness and Sharing. Table 13 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for the openness and sharing items on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 13

Mean and Standard Deviation of Openness and Sharing Items

Items	Mean	Std. Dev
I feel comfortable sharing my feelings with my partner.	1.84	1.151
I can talk to my partner about important personal issues.	1.73	1.020
I feel free to express my thoughts and opinions to my partner.	1.77	1.042
I can openly discuss my hopes and dreams with my partner.	1.69	.950
Our conversations are open and honest.	1.68	.988

Table 13 shows that for the item assessing comfort in sharing feelings with one's partner, respondents reported a low level of agreement (M = 1.84, SD = 1.15),

indicating limited emotional openness in the relationship. This is in contrast to the argument by Nkurunziza and Munganyinka (2024) who observed that communication among married individuals is the avenue to share thoughts, emotions, and feelings in the experiences of daily living. This means that openness and sharing between spouses which is essential in a marital union, is diminished.

On the item measuring the ability to talk about important personal issues, participants reported low agreement (M = 1.73, SD = 1.02), suggesting difficulty discussing significant personal matters with their partners. This signals reduced intimacy between married individuals, a trend that is observed as growing in the contemporary world. The finding agrees with Ehoro and Badey (2021) who highlighted that marital communication is becoming more complicated by the lack of communication depth, reinforcing the notion of increased cases of communication breakdown and lack of emotional intimacy among married individuals. This is further reflected in results regarding freedom to express thoughts and opinions whereby, most of the respondents indicated low agreement (M = 1.77, SD = 1.04), implying restricted self-expression within the relationship. These results contradict the depiction of marital communication by Apostu (2021) as being characterized by active listening where married individuals pay attention to each other and communicate their thoughts and feelings clearly. This may be explained by the fact that married individuals are spending more time using digital technology which diverts their attention from each other, and thus undermining their openness and sharing.

In relation to openly discussing hopes and dreams, participants reported low agreement (M = 1.69, SD = 0.95), suggesting limited openness about personal aspirations. This finding affirms the Communication Theory of Relational Dialectics

which according to Suter et al. (2024), proposes that relationships are shaped by contradictory needs, which could be the tension between openness and closeness, between certainty and uncertainty, and between separation and attachment. The contradiction may be explained by the fact that the attention of married individuals is diverted by social media and digital technology use, leading to a sense of limited openness and sharing about personal aspirations. Similarly, regarding openness and honesty in conversations, respondents indicated low agreement (M = 1.68, SD = 0.99), implying limited transparency in communication. This is consistent with the observation by Baggs (2025), who noted that the presence of digital technologies may reduce meaningful face-to-face interactions and foster misinterpretations that weaken marital intimacy.

Support and Understanding. Table 14 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for the support and understanding items on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 14

Mean and Standard Deviation of Support and Understanding Items

Items	Mean	Std. Dev
My partner listens carefully when I talk about important issues.	1.80	1.083
I feel my partner understands me when we communicate.	1.73	.929
I feel supported by my partner when I share my feelings.	1.82	.981
We feel connected and understood through our conversations.	1.61	.951
Communication between us is clear and straightforward.	1.61	.890
Our communication strengthens our relationship.	1.51	.936

Table 14 shows that concerning perceptions of attentive listening by a partner during important discussions, respondents indicated low agreement (M = 1.80, SD = 1.08), reflecting perceived shortcomings in active listening. This finding is contrary to Morris (2020) who argued that the creation of space for meaningful conversations and active listening is key to a healthy relationship. This reflects poor marital communication as further revealed in the perception of being understood during communication whereby, respondents reported low agreement (M = 1.73, SD = 0.93), pointing to gaps in mutual understanding. Also, with respect to discussing sensitive topics without becoming upset, respondents indicated low agreement (M = 1.82, SD = 1.00), suggesting challenges in handling delicate issues calmly. It can be surmised from this finding that attention span of married individuals declines with use of digital technology, potentially reducing their support and understanding of each other as a couple.

Concerning clarity and straightforwardness in communication, participants reported low agreement (M = 1.61, SD = 0.89), pointing to perceived lack of clarity. This is in line with the assertion by Akanle et al. (2021) that persistent engagement with digital devices disrupts effective spousal communication and contributes to relational conflict. It is thus inferred in this study, that marital communication is a casualty of the advent of digital technology. Similarly, on feeling connected and understood through conversations, respondents indicated low agreement (M = 1.61, SD = 0.95), suggesting weak relational connection fostered through communication. Regarding whether communication strengthens the relationship, participants reported very low agreement (M = 1.51, SD = 0.94), indicating that communication may not be perceived as enhancing relationship quality. The finding is in keeping with Kagwiria (2022) and Mwangi (2021) who documented that while digital technologies can

enhance connectivity, they also contribute to weakened relational bonds and risks such as digital infidelity within Kenyan families.

Conflict Management. Table 15 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for the support and understanding items on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 15

Mean and Standard Deviation of Conflict Management Items

Items	Mean	Std. Dev
We can discuss sensitive topics without getting upset.	1.82	.999
We resolve misunderstandings respectfully.	1.81	1.021
Our conversations usually lead to understanding rather than arguments.	1.73	.981
We handle disagreements constructively without hurting each other.	1.70	.976
We can calmly discuss disagreements without raising our voices.	1.83	1.049

The item “We can discuss sensitive topics without getting upset” recorded a mean score of 1.82 (SD = 0.999), indicating that respondents generally disagreed with the statement, suggesting difficulty in maintaining emotional control during sensitive discussions. This finding is in contrast to the Rational Choice Theory, which according to Bezar et al. (2021) posits that people make choices that maximize relational benefits. The finding suggests that emotional reactions may override rational choice, and thereby inhibit conflict management. The finding implies that married individuals may lack the emotional regulation and communication skills necessary to manage conflicts in their marriage.

The item “We resolve misunderstandings respectfully” yielded a mean of 1.81 (SD = 1.021), reflecting a similar trend of disagreement among respondents, which points to challenges in handling misunderstandings with mutual respect. This suggests that misunderstandings among married couples may escalate due to ineffective communication patterns, signaling poor conflict management. The finding is consistent with Mascheroni and Zaffaroni (2025) who observed that communication breakdowns are exacerbated when digital interactions replace cues required for respectful conflict resolution.

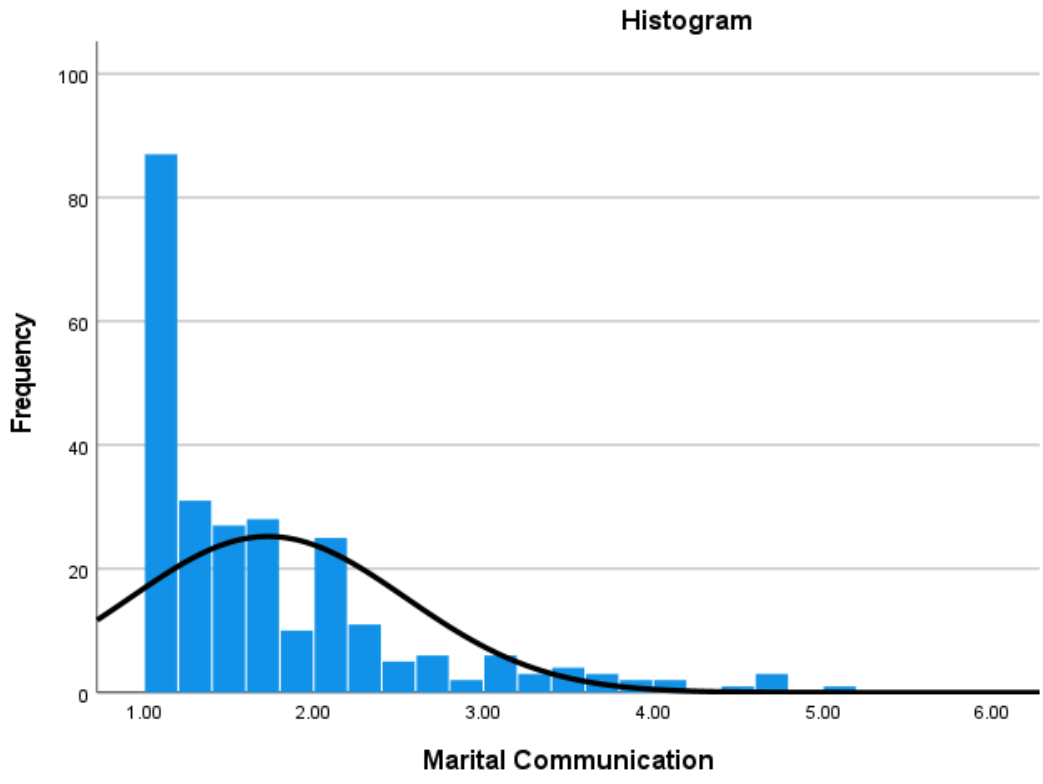
For the statement “Our conversations usually lead to understanding rather than arguments,” the mean score was 1.73 (SD = 0.981), further indicating that most respondents perceived their conversations as more argumentative than constructive. This finding disagrees with the Communication Theory of Relational Dialectics which, as discussed by Scharp and Thomas (2021), suggest that individuals pursue at dialogue that helps transform conflict into understanding. This points to a breakdown in the communicative processes required for negotiating relational tensions and achieving mutual understanding. The finding implies that communication among married individuals may be characterized by defensiveness or misinterpretation, undermining conflict management within the marriage.

The item “We handle disagreements constructively without hurting each other” had a mean of 1.70 (SD = 0.976), the lowest among the items, suggesting a pronounced difficulty in managing conflict in the marriage. This finding concurs with the results of the study by Mwangi (2021) which indicated that technological intrusion has occasioned increased conflict in marriages. This underscores the importance of conflict management through maintenance of constructive interpersonal exchanges within marital relationships.

On the ability to calmly discuss disagreements without raising voices, participants reported low agreement (M = 1.83, SD = 1.05), suggesting challenges in maintaining composure during conflicts. This agrees with Akanle et al. (2021) and Hepfler (2021), who observed that the ubiquity of smartphones and online communication platforms has coincided with communication strain within marriages. It can be inferred from the findings that there has been a correspondent deterioration in marital communication with the advent of digital technology as reflected in the low level of support and understanding between couples. A visual illustration of respondents' rating of their marital communication is presented in a histogram as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Histogram for Marital Communication



As shown in Figure 4, the distribution of respondents' rating of marital communication was positively skewed, indicating that majority of the respondents rated marital communication very low on a 5-point scale. This agrees with a study by Njiru and Odundo (2024) who identified communication as a problem issue in most marital unions. This indicates that marital communication among most married individuals was generally low, suggesting potential influence from contextual factors such as digital technology use, which would require further analysis to confirm.

Distribution of Respondents by Overall Marital Communication Score

Figure 5 presents the distribution of respondents by overall marital communication score.

Figure 5

Distribution of Respondents by Overall Marital Communication

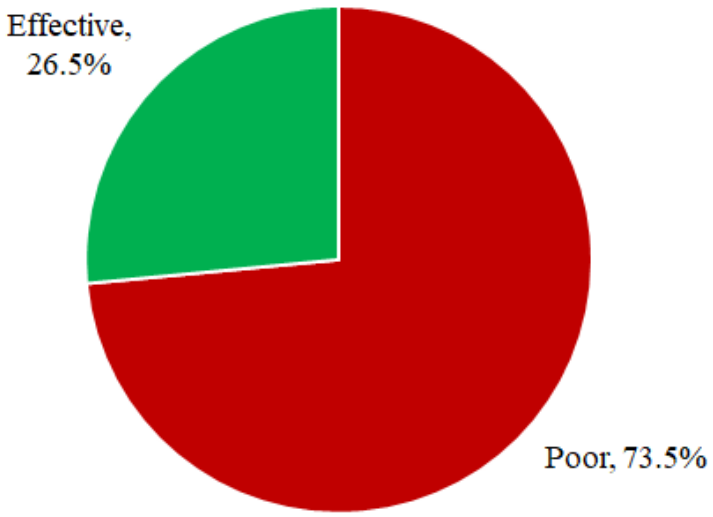


Figure 5 reveals that 73.5% recorded poor marital communication while 26.5% of the respondents had effective marital communication. This means that most of the respondents experienced marital communication challenges. This finding affirms the results of a previous study by Mwangi (2021) who examined the influence

of social media on marital relationship among young married individuals in Kilimani Division in Nairobi County and found that married individuals exhibited ineffective communication as precious time is spent on social media instead of interaction between spouses, critical to marital stability. It can be inferred from this finding that digital technology access is a risk factor for marital communication. This negative relationship between access to digital technology and marital communication can be visualized using a scatter diagram as shown in Figure 6.

Relationship between Access to Digital Technologies and Marital Communication

Figure 6

Access to Digital Technologies and Marital Communication Scatterplot

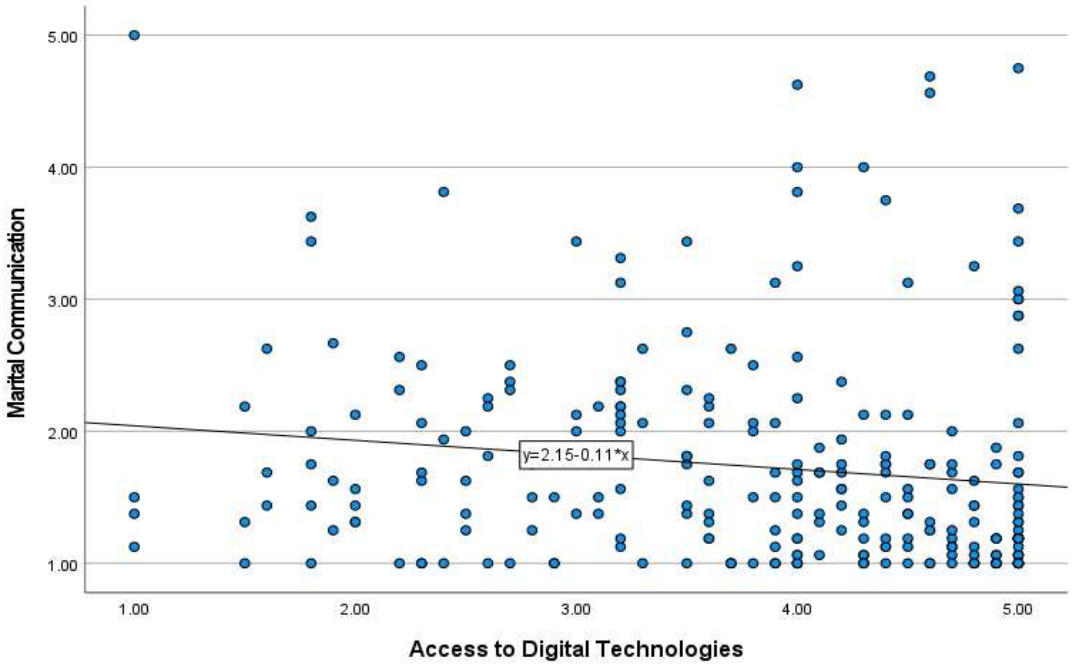


Figure 6 shows that marital communication decreased with increased access to digital technologies. However, a visual inspection of the scatterplot reveals that the relationship between access to digital technologies and marital communication was weak as indicated by the gentle slope of the line of best fit. Further, the figure reveals that the data points were scattered away from the line of best fit, further affirming the

weak correlation. This means that whereas there was an inverse relationship, implying that access to digital technologies negatively influenced marital communication, the influence relationship was minimal.

Table 16 presents the cross tabulation of marital communication (poor vs. effective) across levels of access to digital technologies.

Table 16

Access to Digital Technologies * Marital Communication Crosstabulation

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

Table 16 shows that poor marital communication was most prevalent among respondents with high access to digital technologies, where 80.0% reported poor communication compared to 20.0% who reported effective communication. Among those with low access, 70.0% reported poor communication and 30.0% reported effective communication. The most balanced distribution was observed among participants with moderate access to digital technologies, where 53.2% reported poor communication and 46.8% reported effective communication. These findings are in line with Abu et al. (2021) whose study established that widespread access to social media among married individuals was associated with poor marital communication

characterized by jealousy and conflicts arising from online interactions. These findings suggest that higher levels of access to digital technologies were associated with a greater proportion of poor marital communication as compared to moderate access. The statistical significance of this association was further tested using Chi-square test as shown in Table 17.

Table 17

Chi-Square Tests

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

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

The results of regression analysis indicate a statistically significant association between access to digital technologies and marital communication, χ^2 (2) = 13.905, $p<.05$, suggesting that marital communication differs across levels of digital access. The finding agrees with the Rational Choice Theory's assertion that individuals make decisions based on perceived costs and benefits of available options (Bezar et al., 2021; Steinmetz & Pratt, 2024). In this case, differing levels of digital access potentially shape partners' choices regarding communication behaviors, thereby affecting communication quality. Similarly, the finding supports the Relational Dialectics perspective that communication patterns in relationships are dynamic and influenced by contextual factors such as technology, which can introduce relational tensions requiring negotiation (Scharp & Thomas, 2021; Suter et al., 2024). Thus, the observed differences in marital communication across levels of digital access are

consistent with the theoretical propositions that relational outcomes are shaped by individual choices and evolving communicative dynamics. This finding is supported by the likelihood ratio test (χ^2 (2) = 13.022, $p < .01$) and the linear-by-linear association (χ^2 (1) = 5.454, $p < .05$), indicating a significant linear trend. The results suggest that access to digital technologies significantly influenced marital communication. The finding concurs with Wathigo (2019) whose correlational analysis revealed a negative relationship between social media networking use and marital well-being, particularly in relation to communication during marital conversations. The established association is line with Abu et al. (2021) and Wathigo (2019), who highlighted relational strain associated with higher engagement in digital platforms. These results suggest that increased access to digital technologies change communication dynamics between spouses, which potentially affect the quality and effectiveness of marital communication processes.

The quantitative findings however disagree with Obeng et al. (2023), who reported that social media improved communication and support among married individuals in Ghana. While Obeng et al. (2023) found predominantly positive outcomes of digital access on marital relationships, the present findings indicate that high access corresponds with poorer communication outcomes. This discrepancy may be attributed to methodological differences, as Obeng et al. (2023) relied primarily on descriptive statistics without establishing inferential relationships, whereas, the present study employed chi-square analysis to demonstrate statistically significant associations. The difference in research results imply that the influence of digital technologies on marital communication is subject to behavioral factors rather than access alone.

Furthermore, the findings extend beyond general access patterns reported by Jan and Petra (2020) and Wamuyu (2019), which focused on prevalence and usage trends in the general population rather than examining relational outcomes among married individuals. Therefore, while the results concur with literature emphasizing the negative relational implications of increased digital access, they challenge studies that portray social media use as predominantly beneficial to marital communication. It means that access to digital technologies should not be understood simply as an availability factor but as a relational device that can reshape interaction patterns within marriage. The findings were corroborated with thematic analysis of FGD data. Participants were asked to explain how has access to digital technology and social media among married individuals affected communication among married individuals. The output is summarized in Table 18.

Table 18

Thematic Analysis of Access to Digital Technology in Relation to Marital Communication

Interview Transcripts	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
FGD Participant #1: social media has negatively affected our communication by drawing away attention needed. We really use it for business.	Drawing away attention	Poor communication	Negative effect
FGD Participant #2: It has affected marriage in such a way that the married couple have no time for each other.	Taken more time		
FGD Participant #3: Affected negatively. No verbal communication. Expected fights (negative) can bring distraction.	No verbal communication		

Interview Transcripts	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
FGD Participant #4: Brings insight. ChatGPT has replaced open discussions; chance to express how you feel. Being able to access a partner when not in the same place. It's a distraction- everyone is on their phone scrolling.	Replaced open discussion It's a distraction		
KII#1: Especially when learning from it in negative way and not learning in the right way.	Learning from it in a negative way		
KII#2: Many couples (married people) are glued to their gadgets and hence reducing the interpersonal communication.	Reducing the interpersonal communication		
KII#3: There is no effective communication. Creates boredom between the couple. Creates fight between the couples because there is less communication.	Creates boredom between couples Creates fights		
KII#4: Social media has really contributed to boredoms in relationships as a partner spends much time connecting with the outside world.	Boredom in relationship		
KII#5: It has led to poor communication among couples which results to conflict since they are unable to express how they feel especially when hurt	Poor communication Conflicts		
FGD Participant #3: Connectivity and information sharing (positive).	Connectivity	Positive	Bonding

The analysis in Table 18 reveals that access to digital technology had a negative effect on couples, with poor marital communication as the most dominant theme. This finding agrees with Zhou et al. (2023), who established that excessive or poorly managed social media use gradually undermines marital closeness. Participants noted that social media often draws attention away from partners, reduces verbal interaction, and consumes time that could be spent together. Nevertheless, one participant highlighted positive aspects, such as enhanced connectivity and

information sharing that allow couples to communicate when physically apart, contributing to bonding despite potential distractions. The findings suggest that access to digital technology mainly presents challenges although it has some opportunities for marital communication. The following are some of the verbatim views:

> "Social media has negatively affected our communication by drawing away attention needed; we really use it for business" (FGD Participant #1).
>
> "Affected negatively. No verbal communication. Expected fights (negative) can bring distraction." (FGD Participant #3).
>
> "Many couples (married people) are glued to their gadgets and hence reducing the interpersonal communication" (KII#2).
>
> "There is no effective communication. Creates boredom between the couple. Creates fights between the couples because there is less communication" (KII#3).

The qualitative findings are in alignment with Zhou et al. (2023) who found that time spent online reduces cooperation and intimacy within marriage. The results also agree with Chadha et al. (2025) who reported that social media addiction lowers marital communication and negatively impacts relational quality. Similarly, the finding concurs with Sultana and Bukhari (2024) and Kolan et al. (2023) who observed that frequent online engagement heightens jealousy, mistrust, and suspicion, thereby straining communication and marital stability. The participants' verbatim accounts describing distraction, boredom, and increased conflict further agree with

Shaikh (2018), who noted that excessive time spent on social networking sites contributes to tension and reduced quality time between spouses.

The Influence of Frequency and Duration of Digital Technologies on Marital Communication

The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of the frequency and duration of digital technology on marital communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. A descriptive analysis of the frequency and duration of use of digital technologies is first presented, followed by cross-tabulation and chi-square test of association.

Descriptive Analysis of Frequency and Duration of Use of Digital Technologies

Table 19 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for respondents' frequency and duration of use of digital technologies on a 5-point scale where 1=never 2= rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, and 5= very often.

Table 19

Mean and Standard Deviation scores for Frequency and Duration of Use of Digital Technologies

Frequency and Duration of Use Items	Mean	Std. Dev
I use social media right before going to bed.	3.63	1.250
I check my social media accounts multiple times a day.	3.60	1.221
I spend more than 2 hours on social media daily.	3.51	1.263
I spend a lot of time on social media every day.	3.42	1.241
I often lose track of time while using social media.	3.40	1.290
I use social media even when I have other important tasks.	3.16	1.388
I use social media as soon as I wake up.	3.09	1.406

The results in Table 19 indicate relatively frequent use of social media across the items. The finding that respondents frequently used social media, particularly right before bed (M = 3.63, SD = 1.25) and multiple times a day (M = 3.60, SD = 1.22), agrees with Warwas et al. (2021), who observed that young adults in Europe were heavy users of digital sources, including social media, with frequent engagement shaping attention and cognitive focus. Additionally, participants reported losing track of time while using social media (M = 3.40, SD = 1.29), which aligns with Warwas et al. (2021) in indicating that frequent use may inadvertently interfere with responsibilities and interpersonal interactions, a concern that the current study links specifically to marital communication. The findings support the view that engagement with digital media influences attention and behaviour which in turn can reshape interaction patterns within marital relationships.

The findings that participants spend more than two hours daily on social media (M = 3.51, SD = 1.26) agrees with Shaikh (2018) who reported that married individuals in Pakistan often engaged with social media for several hours daily, sometimes at the expense of relational interactions. It also aligns with Kolan et al. (2023), who found that married individuals in Northern Ghana spent substantial time on social networking sites, contributing to distraction, suspicion, and tension in marriages. These patterns reflect concerns raised by Morris (2020) who highlighted that extended social media use reduces emotional presence, active listening, and face-to-face engagement. It can be inferred from these results that excessive engagement with digital technology platforms can displace time and attention that would otherwise be devoted to direct interpersonal interaction.

The general finding that participants spend a lot of time on social media daily (M= 3.42, SD = 1.24) aligns with agrees with Campbell (2022) who reported that time

spent online must be managed intentionally to prevent relational neglect. In the present study, prolonged daily use was associated with marital communication challenges, confirming prior research by Vaterlaus et al. (2020) that highlights the importance of regulating time spent on digital technologies to maintain active listening, engagement, and marital satisfaction. These findings reinforce the view that digital technology use functions as a competing factor on married individual's cognitive resources within intimate relationships. The finding that participants often lose track of time while using social media (M = 3.40, SD = 1.29) agrees with Shaikh (2018)who emphasized that losing awareness of time during online engagement reduces shared time with partners and may lead to relational tension. The current study confirmed that time mismanagement due to digital engagement directly affects marital communication, demonstrating the need for intentional regulation of usage patterns.

The finding that participants sometimes used social media despite having other important tasks (M = 3.16, SD = 1.39) agrees with Nguyen (2021) who observed that when attention is divided, couples are less able to engage in meaningful conversations, reducing emotional intimacy. This indicates that prioritizing digital activity over responsibilities may indirectly hinder marital communication, reinforcing the importance of conscious time management and mutual agreements around device use. Thus, digital access introduces competing demands on minds and hearts, which can disrupt relational processes.

The finding that participants reported using social media as soon as they wake up (M = 3.09, SD = 1.41) agrees with Shaikh (2018) and Kolan et al. (2023), who documented that early morning engagement is common among married individuals and can preempt relational interactions at the start of the day. In light of the

discussion, it can be inferred that habitual timing of digital technology use can influence daily interaction patterns within marriage. In turn, this can affect communication quality.

Overall Frequency and Duration of Use of Digital Technologies

The distribution of scores by respondents' overall rating of frequency and duration of use of digital technology is presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Histogram for Frequency and Duration of Use of Digital Technologies

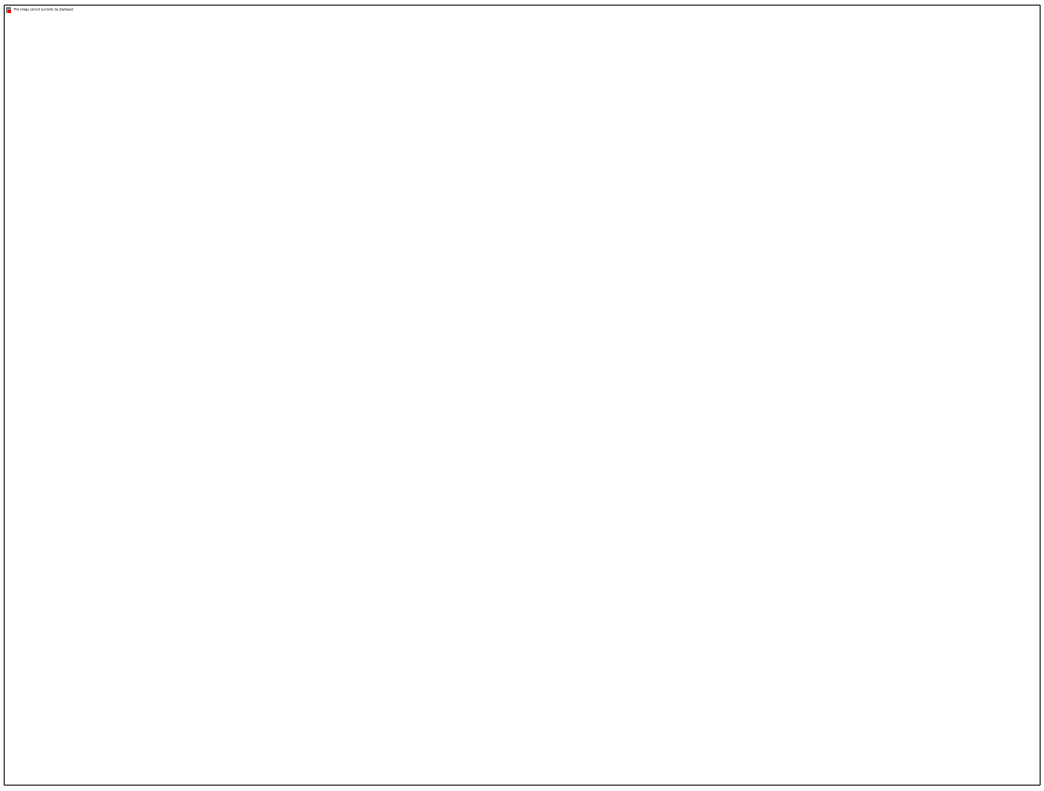
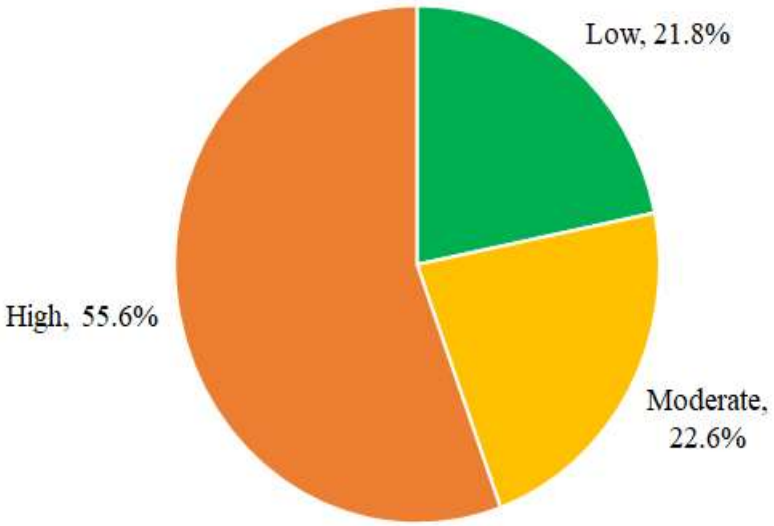


Figure 7 shows that on a 5-point scale, the majority of the respondents rated overall frequency and duration of use of digital technologies at 4 on a 5-point scale. This finding underscores the pervasive integration of digital technologies into daily life, suggesting that high levels of engagement is inevitably competing with time and attention available for marital communication.

Figure 8 shows how respondents were distributed in terms of overall rate and duration of usage of digital technology among married individuals.

Figure 8

Distribution of Respondents by Frequency/Duration of Use of Digital Technologies



The results suggest that majority of the respondents were high users (55.6%), while moderate users were 22.6% and lastly, low users at 21.8%. This finding compares with Kolan et al. (2023) who found that married individuals in Northern Ghana spent significant amounts of time on social networking sites weekly, often leading to distraction, jealousy, and reduced relational interaction. Arness and Ollis (2023) highlighted that high-frequency and long-duration engagement, especially when driven by emotional or psychological motives, can impair focus and reduce quality relational presence. These findings reinforce the argument that intensity of digital technology use is a critical factor in making sense of marital communication among couples.

From the FGD responses, the theme of irresponsible use emanated in the nature of digital technology and social media use among married individuals. Table 20 shows the link between, codes, sub-themes and themes.

Table 20

Thematic Analysis of Nature of Digital Technology Use among Married Individuals

Verbatim responses	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
FGD Participant #1: People use it throughout even subconsciously. Wrong timing- when talking, having meals, affects concentration and connection. People need to understand when to be online. Brings conflict, takes from my time with children.	Wrong timing Brings conflict Takes from my time with children	High frequency and duration of use	Irresponsible use
FGD Participant #2: Often happens various times of the day.	Often happens		
FGD Participant #3: Use digital technology has in a way effected marriages negatively since many couples spend excessive time on social media.	excessive time on social media		
FGD Participant #4: We frequently use it making use of our absolute time.	Frequently use it		
KII#1: It occupies most of our time. It is frequently used thus causing us not to be productive.	Frequently used		
KII#2: Most couples access SM & DT most frequently during the day and thus spending long hours while not necessarily doing something constructive.	Spending long hours		
KII#3: Most married individuals are spending most of their time in social media compared to the time they spend with their partners.	Spending most of their time		
KII#4: It is consuming notable time and its becoming addictive.	Consuming notable time		

The analysis in Table 20 revealed that digital technology is often used excessively and at inappropriate times, such as during conversations or meals, which can affect concentration, reduce connection with partners, and take one's time away from children. This affirms the perspective of Campbell (2022) who emphasized that unregulated and poorly timed use of digital devices disrupts relational presence and reduces meaningful engagement between partners. Similarly, Nguyen (2021) and Morris (2020) noted that digital distractions during critical interaction periods, such as mealtimes or joint activities, can reduce emotional intimacy and active listening, weakening marital communication. These patterns were categorized under the sub-theme of high frequency and duration of use, contributing to the broader theme of irresponsible use. The findings suggest that frequent and poorly timed use of digital technology among married individuals negatively influence relationships and family interactions. This was evident in the following verbatim expressions:

> "People use it throughout even subconsciously. Wrong timing-when talking, having meals, affects concentration and connection. People need to understand when to be online" (FGD Participant #1).
>
> "Use of digital technology has in a way effected marriages negatively since many couples spend excessive time on social media" (FGD Participant #3).
>
> "Most couples access social media and digital technology most frequently during the day and thus spending long hours while not necessarily doing something constructive" (KII#2).

> "Most married individuals are spending most of their time in social media compared to the time they spend with their partners" (KII#3).

The respondents' reports that excessive digital engagement takes time away from children and daily responsibilities also align with Arness and Ollis (2023), who highlighted that high-frequency, motive-driven social media use impairs attentional control and focus on family interactions. Shaikh (2018) and Kolan et al. (2023) further support this finding, showing that married individuals' frequent online activity often intrudes on shared family time and relational quality. The findings affirm that technology use is capable of disrupting marital communication processes when it intrudes into key relational moments of marital partners.

Relationship between Frequency and Duration of Use of Digital Technologies and Marital Communication

A scatterplot was used to depict the relationship between frequency and duration of use of digital technologies and marital communication. Figure 9 presents the output. Figure 9 shows that marital communication slightly decreased with increased frequency and duration of digital technology use. This suggests that greater engagement with digital technologies gradually reallocate time and attention away from direct interaction between married individuals.

Figure 9

Frequency/ Duration of Use and Marital Communication Scatterplot

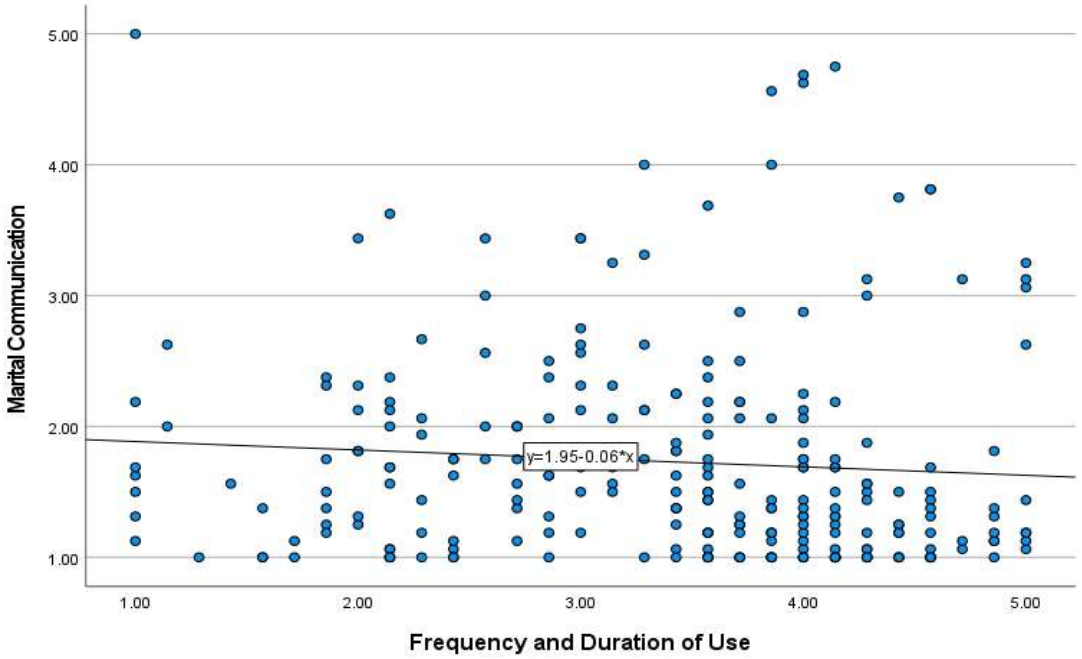


Table 21 presents a cross-tabulation analysis of the relationship between and duration of use of digital technologies and marital communication.

Table 21

Frequency and Duration of Use of Digital Technologies * Marital Communication Crosstabulation

			Frequency and Duration of Use of Digital Technologies			
			Low	Moderate	High	Total
Marital Communication	Poor	Count	42	35	112	189
		% within count	75.0%	60.3%	78.3%	73.5%
	Effective	Count	14	23	31	68
		% within count	25.0%	39.7%	21.7%	26.5%
Total		Count	56	58	143	257
		% within count	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 21 shows that respondents with high frequency and duration of digital technology use reported the highest proportion of poor marital communication (78.3%) compared to those with low use (75.0%) and moderate use (60.3%). Conversely, effective marital communication was least prevalent among high users (21.7%), compared to low users (25.0%) and was highest among moderate users (39.7%). This comparison indicates that high digital technology use was associated with a greater proportion of poor marital communication relative to both moderate and low use, whereas moderate use was linked to comparatively better communication outcomes. The finding aligns with Mwangi (2022) who observed that excessive or secretive social media use among married adults in Nairobi County, Kenya, contributed to misunderstandings and diminished relationship satisfaction.

Similarly, Shaikh (2018) found that high engagement with social media reduced opportunities for quality interactions between spouses, leading to relational strain. The results imply that moderate engagement with digital technology allows for balanced integration of technology without significantly displacing relational interaction. The higher prevalence of poor marital communication among respondents with high frequency and duration of digital technology use suggests that excessive engagement may lead to outcomes that undermine relational quality, aligns with the Relational Dialectics perspective (Scharp & Thomas, 2021; Suter et al., 2024), which posits that relationships are shaped by ongoing tensions, such as connection versus autonomy, where excessive digital engagement may intensify relational strain and reduce effective communication, while moderate use allows for better negotiation of these tensions. Thus, the variation in communication outcomes across usage levels

supports both theories' explanations of how behavioral choices and relational dynamics interact to influence marital communication.

Table 22 presents the chi-square test examining the association between frequency and duration of digital technology use and marital communication.

Table 22

Chi-Square Tests between Frequency and Duration of Use of Digital Technologies and Marital Communication

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.932[a]	2	.031
Likelihood Ratio	6.583	2	.037
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.094	1	.296
N of Valid Cases	257		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.82.

The results revealed a statistically significant association, $\chi^2(2) = 6.93$, $p < .05$. The likelihood ratio was also significant, $\chi^2(2) = 6.58$, $p < .05$. The findings indicate a significant adverse relationship between frequency and duration of digital technology use and marital communication, which is in agreement with Shaikh (2018) and Kolan et al. (2023) who observed that higher engagement with digital platforms was linked to decreased quality of interactions. The finding suggests that intensity of technology use is a key factor influencing communication dynamics among married individuals, and excessive engagement undermine the effectiveness of marital communication. The statistically significant association suggests that variations in digital technology use are meaningfully related to differences in marital communication.

The foregoing finding aligns with the Rational Choice Theory, which posits that individuals' behavioral choices – such as how often they engage with digital technologies, are guided by perceived benefits and costs, ultimately shaping relational outcomes (Bezar et al., 2021; Steinmetz & Pratt, 2024). At the same time, the finding supports the Relational Dialectics perspective by demonstrating that communication within marital relationships is influenced by contextual factors, including technology use, which can introduce or intensify relational tensions that must be managed through ongoing interaction (Scharp & Thomas, 2021; Suter et al., 2024). Thus, the significant association reinforces both theories' emphasis on the interplay between individual choices and evolving communication dynamics in shaping marital relationships.

The quantitative results were corroborated by FGD interview where majority of the participants did not appraise the influence on marital communication favorably although some of the participants also highlighted its positive influence as shown in Table 23.

Table 23

Thematic Analysis of Influence of Digital Technology Use on Marital Communication

Interview Transcripts	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
FGD Participant #1: When much time and no attention is used by my partner, I feel misplaced ending up to disagreements and non-productivity.	Disagreements	Poor marital communication	Adverse effect
FGD Participant #2: Too much use of it can negatively affect the attention and affection of married individuals.	Negatively affect the attention		
FGD Participant #4: The less people communicate, distance grows, emotional connection is affected….	Distance grows		

Interview Transcripts	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
Helps when there is a physical distance but causes conflict when couples are together.			
KII#1: When it is not well used at the right time and also when there's no openness to both.	When it is not well used		
KII#2: Valuable time of interaction is being spent on other things	Valuable time of interaction is being spent on other things		
KII#3: Draws away attention and reduces communication amongst the couple.	Reduces communication		
KII#4: Partner spends more time with the outside audience than family.	Partner spends more time with the outside audience		
KII#5: It slows down communication since everyone is on their phones. You may not be able to know what your partner is thinking or feeling about the relationship.	Slows down communication		
FGD Participant #3: Can enhance communication by enabling real time updates.	Enhance communication	Effective marital communication	Positive effect
FGD Participant #4: Helps connect long distance couples thus keeping relationships alive	Connect long distance couples		

The findings in Table 23 reveal both adverse and positive effects. Under the sub-theme of poor marital communication, participants described how excessive digital technology use contributes to disagreements, reduced attention and affection, and growing emotional distance, forming the broader theme of adverse effects. Conversely, under the sub-theme of effective marital communication, participants acknowledged that digital technology can enhance communication by enabling real-time updates and supporting long-distance relationships, contributing to the theme of

positive effects. In sum, the analysis suggests that the influence of digital technology on marital communication is dual in nature, depending on the context and extent of use. This was evident in the various verbatim comments from the FGDs and KIIs as shown below:

> "When much time and no attention is used by my partner, I feel misplaced ending up to disagreements and non-productivity" (FGD Participant #1).
>
> "The less people communicate, distance grows, emotional connection is affected…. Helps when there is a physical distance but causes conflict when couples are together" (FGD Participant #4).
>
> "Valuable time of interaction is being spent on other things" (KII#2).
>
> "It slows down communication since everyone is one their phones. You may not be able to know what your partner is thinking or feeling about the relationship" (KII#5).

The results of the qualitative insights agree with Zhou et al. (2023) who observed that well-utilized social media can enhance connectivity and support emotional closeness, particularly in long-distance scenarios, but excessive or poorly managed use gradually undermines relational intimacy. The results align with Gomes et al. (2021) report that digital communication can strengthen relationships when used intentionally but becomes harmful when it leads to distraction, withdrawal, or excessive time online. The present findings also align with Chadha et al. (2025), who found out that social media addiction can lower marital communication, yet strategic use of technology can facilitate updates and connectivity between partners.

Participants' reports that excessive use reduces attention, affection, and emotional connection while supporting communication during physical separation highlight the contextual and conditional nature of digital technology's impact. It can be surmised from the thematic analysis that technology-mediated communication may either strengthen or weaken marital interaction, depending on whether it complements or replaces face-to-face engagement.

The Influence of Motives for Use of Digital Technologies on Marital Communication

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of motives for digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. This section presents descriptive analysis of the various motives of digital technology use and inferential test of its association with marital communication. It also analyzes and discusses the insights from FGDs and KIIs and how they compare and contrasts with the results of the quantitative analysis.

Descriptive Analysis of Motives for Use of Digital Technologies

Respondents were asked to rate statements related to motives for digital technology use on a 5-point scale where 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, and 5=very often. This sub-section of the chapter presents descriptive analysis of emotional engagement motives, interaction motives, and behavioral dependence on digital technologies.

Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Engagement Motives. Table 24 presents the mean and standard deviation scores.

Table 24

Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Engagement Motives

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel happy when I receive likes, comments, or messages on social media.	3.52	1.293
I feel anxious or stressed when I cannot access my social media accounts.	3.58	1.306
I feel upset when people ignore my posts on social media.	3.39	1.445
Emotional engagement composite score	3.50	1.348

Respondents' frequent happiness from receiving likes, comments, or messages (M = 3.52, SD = 1.29) and preoccupation with social media while offline (M = 3.44, SD = 1.38) supports Owens et al. (2025), who noted that feedback mechanisms in digital platforms reinforce engagement and can create emotional attachment to online interactions. The results also align with Konlan et al. (2023) who found that married individuals often use social media for social validation, which can divert attention from spousal interaction. It is also consistent with Mwangi (2021) who observed that social media reinforcement can inadvertently reduce the quality and quantity of communication between spouses. The finding implies that emotional rewards derived from social media may compete with relational attention and investment within marriage, thereby shaping patterns of communication and interpersonal engagement between spouses.

The finding that respondents experience anxiety or stress when unable to access accounts (M = 3.58, SD = 1.31), aligns with Zhu et al. (2021) observed that adults, especially the elderly, use social media to relieve boredom, enhance subjective

well-being, and reduce feelings of loneliness. The present findings reinforce the notion that emotional dependence on social media can emerge from habitual or reinforcement-driven use, consistent with Mwangi (2021), who reported that young married adults often substitute social media engagement for interpersonal interaction, which may undermine marital communication. These findings suggest that emotional reliance on digital platforms can alter relational priorities by redirecting emotional regulation and social fulfillment toward mediated interactions through digital technology use rather than direct communication with the spouse.

The findings that respondents experienced difficulty reducing social media use (M = 3.39, SD = 1.29) and felt pressure to post updates (M = 3.26, SD = 1.60) resonate with Zhu et al. (2021) and Obeng et al. (2023), who identified habitual posting and the compulsive nature of engagement as factors contributing to potential distraction and relational strain. Mwangi (2021) similarly found that habitual or excessive social media use can interfere with quality time between spouses, demonstrating the importance of regulating digital engagement to maintain marital communication. The finding implies that compulsive engagement with digital platforms can divert attention and time away from interaction with one's spouse, thereby affecting communication and relational engagement within marriage.

Descriptive Statistics for Social Interaction Motives Descriptive Statistics. The mean and standard deviation scores for items measuring social interaction motives are presented in Table 25.

Table 25

Descriptive Statistics for Social Interaction Motives Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev
I use social media to keep in touch with friends and family.	2.14	1.191
I rely on social media for support.	2.74	2.859
I prefer interacting on social media rather than face-to-face.	3.42	1.404
Social interaction motive composite score	2.77	1.818

The comparatively low mean scores for relying on social media for support (M = 2.74, SD = 2.86) or to keep in touch with friends and family (M = 2.14, SD = 1.19) indicate that participants do not primarily use digital technology for maintaining close personal relationships. This finding agrees with Konlan et al. (2023) and Mwangi (2021) who found that social media among married adults is often oriented toward entertainment, information seeking, or social validation rather than direct support or relational maintenance. The study also aligns with the research by Obeng et al. (2023) who highlight that while social media provides opportunities for information sharing, overreliance can interfere with quality interactions between spouses. The finding implies that when digital technology use is not oriented toward relational maintenance, it may offer limited contribution to strengthening marital communication.

Respondents occasional use of social media for information (M = 2.74, SD = 2.86) aligns with Mberia (2024), who note that digital platforms are convenient tools for updates and knowledge acquisition. However, the present findings suggest that, for married individuals, information-seeking motives are secondary to entertainment,

and excessive focus on digital information acquisition may inadvertently reduce time for marital communication. It can be deduced from the finding that when digital technology is primarily entertainment-driven, it may compete with the personal resources necessary for effective marital communication.

The moderate to frequent preference for social media interaction over face-to-face communication (M = 3.42, SD = 1.40) and sensitivity to ignored posts (M = 3.39, SD = 1.45) aligns with Owens et al. (2025) who reported that digital platforms may serve as substitutes for direct communication and can exacerbate relational tension. The present study extends these observations by showing that some married individuals may lean toward online interaction, potentially compromising active listening, clarity, and appropriateness in marital communication. The finding implies that reliance on technology-mediated communication may modify relational dynamics by reducing direct attention, emotional presence, and marital communication exchanges.

Descriptive Statistics for Behavioral Dependence Composite Score. The mean and standard deviation of items measuring behavioral dependence is presented in Table 26.

Table 26

Descriptive Statistics for Behavioral Dependence Composite Score

	Mean	Std. Dev
I frequently check social media even when I have other tasks to do.	3.23	1.381
I find it difficult to reduce my social media use.	3.39	1.286
I feel a strong urge to check social media when I am bored.	3.69	1.279
Behavioral dependence composite score	3.44	1.315

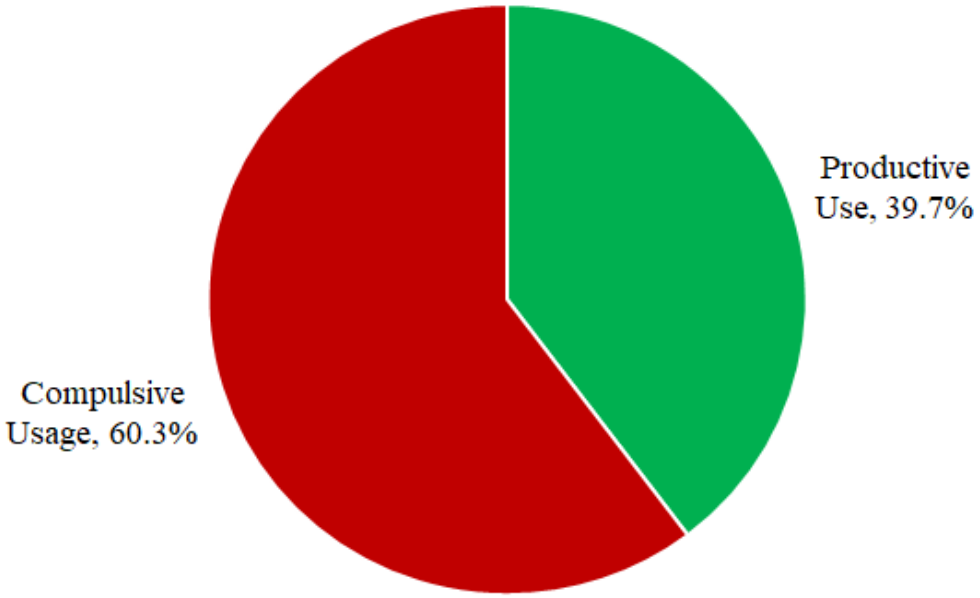
Table 26 shows that a moderately high mean score was obtained for the statement “I frequently check social media even when I have other tasks to do” (M = 3.23, SD = 1.38), as well as for “I find it difficult to reduce my social media use” (M = 3.39, SD = 1.29) and “I feel a strong urge to check social media when I am bored” (M = 3.69, SD = 1.28). The behavioral dependence composite score also indicated a moderately high level of behavioral dependence on social media (M = 3.44, SD = 1.32). Together, the results suggest that respondents were somehow inclined toward compulsive social media use, which can potentially interfere with their attention, time management, and marital interactions. This finding aligns with Mwangi (2021), showing that prioritization of social media can reduce the time and attention available for spousal communication, thereby weakening relational quality.

Distribution of Respondents by Motives for Use of Digital Technologies. A composite score of motives for use of digital technologies was generated and respondents categorized into either compulsive users or productive users. Figure 10 presents the distribution. The results show that the majority of respondents (60.3%) engaged in compulsive use of digital technologies, whereas, a smaller proportion (39.7%) were engaged in productive use. This finding is in line with Zhu et al. (2021) who observed that most adults often use digital technologies to relieve boredom or for emotional reinforcement, which can manifest as compulsive use that detracts from other responsibilities. The finding also agrees with Obeng et al. (2023) who found that married individuals may excessively engage with social media, prioritizing entertainment or validation over relationship-oriented communication, potentially reducing time spent interacting with spouses. The findings of the study also affirm the empirical evidence from the study by Mwangi (2021) showing that habitual or

compulsive social media engagement among married adults can inhibit effective spousal communication and relational intimacy. These findings suggest that compulsive engagement with digital technologies can displace attention and emotional investment from relational interactions. It means that habitual use of digital technology is a risk factor for marital communication.

Figure 10

Distribution of Respondents by Motives for Use of Digital Technologies



Qualitative analysis of FGD data revealed both constructive use and destructive use themes. This is displayed in Table 27 which shows the link between verbatim responses, codes, sub-themes and theme.

Table 27

Thematic Analysis of Motives for Use of Digital Technologies

Verbatim responses	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
FGD Participant #1: Business marketing, seeking validation, to pass time and entertainment.	Marketing Validation Entertainment	Information and entertainment	Constructive use
FGD Participant #2: Fun/entertainment, information seeking, studying, connecting with peers.	Entertainment Information Connecting with peers		
FGD Participant #3: Some use it to do research about marriage. Some use it to flirt with people of opposite sex. Some use it to ease themselves after having misunderstandings.	Research Flirt Ease self		
FGD Participant #4: For entertainment, passing time and boredom, learn current trends, get latest news, for adverts and marketing.	Entertainment Learn News Marketing		
KII#1: Curiosity and entertainment. Networking with friends. Relaxation.	Curiosity Entertainment Networking	Social connection	Destructive use
KII#2: Ministration & conducting online church meetings. Relay news and upcoming church events. For interaction with viewers, members and friends.	Meetings Relay news Interaction		
KII#3: Couples use social media to show off their lives. To make money. To build social network	Show off Make money Network		
KII#4: For fun. For social relevancy. For information gathering (news). Sometimes used to compare.	Fun Social relevancy Compare		
KII#5: Many use it for learning, marketing, business and even posting spiritual messages.	Learning Business Messages		

The findings in Table 27 reveal that motives for digital technology use among married individuals encompassed both constructive and destructive dimensions. Under the sub-themes of information and entertainment and social connection, participants identified motives such as marketing, information seeking, studying, connecting with peers, research about marriage, learning current trends, and accessing news, which were categorized under the broader theme of constructive use. This aligns with findings by Obeng et al. (2023) who noted that married individuals use social media to acquire information, maintain social connections, and stay updated on current trends. The finding also agrees with the research by Mwangi (2021) which found that social media can support relational functioning by enabling long-distance communication and facilitating shared knowledge, particularly when used intentionally. The findings lead to the understanding that the motives behind digital technology use play a critical role in determining its influence on marital communication.

However, participants also highlighted motives such as seeking validation, flirting and using digital platforms to ease oneself after misunderstandings, which were categorized under the theme of destructive use. This finding is in accord with the results of the study by Owens et al. (2025), who reported that social media can create opportunities for illicit relationships and emotional dependence, contributing to marital tension and communication breakdown. The analysis suggests that while digital technologies serve productive purposes, they also present risks when used for inappropriate relational motives. This was reflected in the following verbatim views:

> "Business marketing, seeking validation, infidelity and secrecy, to pass time and entertainment" (FGD Participant #1).

"Fun/entertainment, information seeking, studying, connecting with peers" (FGD Participant #2).

"Some use it to do research about marriage. Some use it to flirt with people of opposite sex. Some use it to ease themselves after having misunderstandings" (FGD Participant #3).

"Couples use social media to show off their lives. To make money. To build social network" (KII#3).

"For fun. For social relevancy. For information gathering (news). Sometimes used to compare (KII#4).

Table 28 presents the crosstabulation between motives for digital technology use and marital communication.

Table 28

Motives for Digital Technology Use Marital Communication Crosstabulation

			Motives for Digital Technology Use		
			Productive Use	Compulsive Usage	Total
Marital Communication	Poor	Count	69	120	189
		% within count	67.6%	77.4%	73.5%
	Effective	Count	33	35	68
		% within count	32.4%	22.6%	26.5%
Total		Count	102	155	257
		% within count	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 28 shows that respondents with compulsive motives for digital technology use reported a higher proportion of poor marital communication (77.4%) compared to those with productive motives (67.6%). Conversely, effective marital communication was more common among respondents with productive motives (32.4%) than among those with compulsive motives (22.6%). This comparison indicates that compulsive digital technology use was associated with a greater prevalence of poor marital communication, whereas, productive use was linked to relatively better communication outcomes. The findings are in line with Zhu et al. (2021) and Obeng et al. (2023) who noted that compulsive or maladaptive use of social media such as seeking validation, flirting, or secretive interactions can distract from meaningful spousal interaction, reduce attentiveness, and exacerbate misunderstandings. The results suggest that underlying motives for digital technology use significantly influence marital communication among couples.

Table 29 presents the chi-square tests examining the association between motives for digital technology use and marital communication.

Table 29

Chi-Square Tests of Motives for Digital Technology Use and Marital Communication

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.019[a]	1	.082		
Continuity Correction	2.538	1	.111		
Likelihood Ratio	2.984	1	.084		
Fisher's Exact Test				.085	.056
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.007	1	.083		
N of Valid Cases	257				

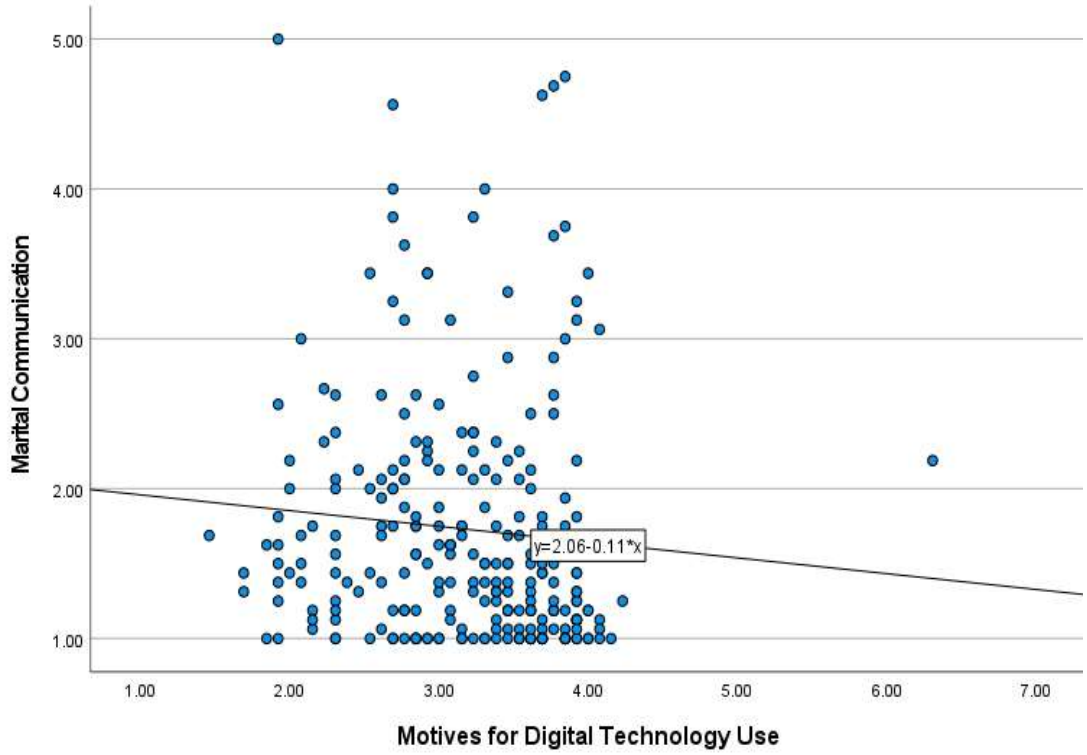
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The min expected count is 26.99.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The Pearson chi-square test indicated no statistically significant association, χ^2 (1) = 3.02, p>.05. These results suggest that, although poor marital communication was more common among respondents with compulsive motives, the association between motives for digital technology use and marital communication was not statistically significant. This contrasts with prior literature (Owens et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2021) that suggests compulsive or maladaptive motives for digital technology use can negatively influence marital communication. This finding implies that the relationship between motives for digital technology use and marital communication may be more complex and influenced by contextual factors. Among these can be frequency of use, individual self-regulation, or negotiation between marital partners.

The finding suggests that motives alone may not fully influence marital communication, signaling the need for conceptual frameworks that take into consideration other behavioral and relational dynamics. This perspective is confirmed through a visual inspection of the scatterplot between motives for digital technology use and marital communication as shown in Figure 11. The scatterplot of motives of digital technology use and marital communication does not depict a linear pattern, suggesting that there was a remote link between motives for digital technology use and marital communication. The finding affirms the viewpoint from the study by Jabali et al. (2024) that other factors such as usage intensity, relational dynamics, or self-regulation may be the underlying factors that shape the pattern and marital communication.

Figure 11

Motives for Digital Technology Use and Marital Communication Scatterplot



FGD participants were asked to explain how motives of social media influence marital communication among marred individuals. Thematic analysis of responses the results are presented in Table 30. The dominant theme that emerged was negative influence, particularly in relation to conflict and relational strain. Participants reported that using social media to pass time reduced productivity and triggered disagreement, reflecting increased conflict within the relationship. This finding aligns with the Rational Choice Theory which, according to Bezar et al. (2021) and Pinto-Bustamante et al. (2023), posits that individuals make decisions by weighing costs and benefits to make the most of personal advantage. In this context, married individuals who use social media excessively or for maladaptive motives may perceive short-term benefits, such as entertainment or social validation, but at the cost of relational

wellbeing. The finding underscores the importance of integrating relational decision-making processes into marital communication.

Table 30

Thematic Analysis of How Motives of Social Media Use Influence Marital Communication

Verbatim responses	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
FGD Participant #1: Passing time in social media mostly affects our productivity making us disagree.	Making us disagree	Conflict	Negative influence
FGD Participant #2: Brings about lack of trust (unfaithfulness). Division among couples. Brings about peer pressure from online couples.	Lack of trust Division Peer pressure		
FGD Participant #4: Business-financial stability. Couples on social media portray perfection in marriage causing resentment among couples. People seeking validation online tend to find themselves in infidelity.	Resentment Infidelity		
KII#1: Significantly shape communication dynamics in marriages, acting as a tool for overtaking intimacy and a source of conflict.	Source of conflict		
KII#2: Causes unnecessary competition. Sometimes posting wrong information.	Unnecessary competition		
KII#4 It may open doors of mistrust due to connecting with different people.	Open doors of mistrust		
FGD Participant #3: Comparison (comparing their life to others). Positive people can learn how to work on their marriage. Loneliness.	Comparison Loneliness	Loneliness	
KII#1: It creates distance	Distance		

Other responses highlighted lack of trust, unfaithfulness, division, peer pressure from idealized online couples, resentment, comparison, and loneliness as key factors undermining marital communication. These codes clustered around sub-themes such as conflict and loneliness, suggesting that validation seeking, comparison, and exposure to social media portrayals of marriage contribute to dissatisfaction and relational tension. These insights challenge the Rational Choice Theory which assumes that people can accurately evaluate the costs and benefits of their choices, overlooking the tendency for digital technology use to produce unintended relational consequences that users may not anticipate. This corroborates the critiques by Young and Seedall (2024) and Herfeld (2022) who faulted the theory for being too simplistic. Although one respondent noted a potential positive aspect – learning from positive online examples – the overall pattern of responses indicates that motives for social media use are largely perceived as contributing to distrust, emotional distance, and reduced communication quality within marriage. The following are an extract of the verbatim remarks:

> "Passing time in social media mostly affects our productivity making us disagree" (FGD Participant #1).
>
> "Brings about lack of trust (unfaithfulness). Division among couples. Brings about peer pressure from online couples" (FGD Participant #2).
>
> "Business- financial stability. Couples on social media portray perfection in marriage causing resentment among couples. People seeking validation online tend to find themselves in infidelity" (FGD Participant #4).

> "Significantly shape communication dynamics in marriages, acting as a tool for overtaking intimacy and a source of conflict (KII#1).
>
> "It may open doors of mistrust due to connecting with different people" (KII#4).

The foregoing qualitative insights also align with the Communication Theory of Relational Dialectics (RDT), which according to Guest and Denes (2023) and Scharp and Thomas (2021), asserts that marital relationships are inherently characterized by contradictory tensions, such connection versus autonomy, which require negotiation through communication. Digital technology brings in an additional relational pressure, including comparison versus acceptance. The respondents' experiences of conflict, mistrust, and reduced communication reflect these tensions. Despite the predominance of these negative effects, the thematic analysis brought out potential positive outcomes, such as learning from constructive online examples or using social media for information sharing. This duality affirms both theories, implying that the influence of digital technology is context-dependent. That is, the perceived benefits and relational motives behind social media engagement determine whether marital communication is enhanced or undermined.

Strategies for Promoting Constructive Use of Digital Technologies

The fourth objective of the study was to examine strategies for promoting constructive use of digital technologies to strengthen communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. This section analyzes respondents' attitude towards and practice of strategies such as intentional and purposeful online use, healthy information consumption, digital self-regulation and impulse control, emotional

regulation during online use, constructive online participation, boundary management, and safety and privacy risk awareness.

Intentional Online Use

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with purposeful online use items on a 5-point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Table 31 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for items measuring intentional and purposeful online use on a five-point scale.

Table 31

Mean and Standard Deviation of Intentional Online Use Items

Items	Mean	Std. Dev
Before going online, I can clearly define what I want to accomplish.	3.93	1.303
I am better able to stay focused on my purpose when using social media.	3.72	1.401
I can easily recognize when I am going off-track and bring myself back to my goals.	3.84	1.343

The results in Table 31 indicate respondents reported that they could clearly define what they wanted to accomplish before going online (M = 3.93, SD = 1.30), suggesting a relatively high level of goal clarity. They also indicated that they were able to stay focused on their purpose while using social media (M = 3.72, SD = 1.40), reflecting frequent goal-directed behavior. Additionally, respondents reported that they could recognize when they were going off-track and redirect themselves to their goals (M = 3.84, SD = 1.34), indicating a moderate to high level of self-regulation during online activities. Collectively, the findings suggest that participants demonstrated moderately high intentional and purposeful online use. These results

agree with Kılıçarslan and Parmaksız (2023) who observed that responsible and goal-directed digital engagement enhances marital quality and communication. Unlike Baggs (2025), whose study highlighted potential misuse of online platforms in dating contexts, the present study shows that married individuals can leverage intentional online use for constructive relational outcomes. These results imply intentional online behavior can positively influence marital communication by enabling focus, self-monitoring, and goal-oriented interactions.

Healthy Information Consumption

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with various health information consumption practices on a 5-point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Table 32 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for items assessing healthy information consumption on a five-point scale.

Table 32

Mean and Standard Deviation of Healthy Information Consumption Items

Items	Mean	Std. Dev
I can determine whether social media content is relevant or beneficial to me.	4.03	1.177
I can identify which online information is trustworthy	4.01	1.262
I can confidently reject online information that seems misleading or harmful.	3.98	1.194
I now select online content that supports my emotional and mental well-being.	3.97	1.121

Table 32 shows that respondents indicated that they could identify trustworthy online information (M = 4.01, SD = 1.26) and determine whether social media content was relevant or beneficial to them (M = 4.03, SD = 1.18), suggesting a high level of discernment. They also reported confidence in rejecting misleading or harmful information (M = 3.98, SD = 1.19) and selecting content that supports their emotional

and mental well-being (M = 3.97, SD = 1.12). The findings suggest that married individuals should possess strong critical evaluation skills and intentional selection of online content that promotes effective communication. The results are in line with Mwarari et al. (2025), who observed that filtering and evaluating online content reduces misunderstandings and supports emotional stability, thereby enhancing marital communication. That majority of the respondents can determine whether social media content is relevant or beneficial to them and can identify which online information is trustworthy signals robust evaluation skills, implying that such sensitization programs may be effective in nurturing informed digital technology users. The results suggest that critical evaluation and intentionally curating content serve as mechanisms through which digital technology can positively influence marital communication and relational quality.

Digital Self-Regulation and Impulse Control

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with items assessing digital self-regulation and impulse control on a 5-point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Table 33 presents the mean and standard deviation scores.

Table 33

Mean and Standard Deviation of Digital Self-Regulation and Impulse Control

Items	Mean	Std. Dev
I can stop myself from checking my phone or apps unnecessarily.	4.05	2.702
I can manage how much time I spend on social media more effectively.	3.97	1.200
I can shift my attention back to offline tasks without difficulty.	3.91	1.258

The results indicate that most of the respondents could stop themselves from checking their phones or apps unnecessarily (M = 4.05, SD = 2.70). They also reported that they could manage the amount of time spent on social media more effectively (M = 3.97, SD = 1.20) and shift their attention back to offline tasks without difficulty (M = 3.91, SD = 1.26), reflecting relatively strong impulse control and attentional regulation. Together, the findings suggest that married individuals can attain high levels of digital self-regulation. The findings align with past research by Obi and Ezennwanne (2023), and Nwanekwu and Uba (2024), who observed that effective impulse control and management of digital engagement promote clearer, more empathetic communication and enhance marital quality. These results front self-regulation as a critical mechanism in marital communication, suggesting that couples' ability to control impulses and redirect attention can mitigate social media distractions and foster more effective, attentive, and emotionally supportive interactions.

Emotional Regulation during Online Use

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements on emotional regulation on a 5-point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Table 34 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for items assessing emotional regulation during online use on a five-point scale.

Table 34

Mean and Standard Deviation of Emotional Regulation during Online Use

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can manage my emotions when encountering upsetting or proactive content online.	4.05	1.194
I can pause and reflect before responding emotionally on social media.	3.99	1.139
I feel more emotionally stable while engaging with digital content.	3.91	1.308

The results in Table 34 indicate that respondents indicated that they could manage their emotions when encountering upsetting or provocative content online (M = 4.05, SD = 1.19), suggesting strong emotional regulation. They also reported that they could pause and reflect before responding emotionally on social media (M = 3.99, SD = 1.14), reflecting deliberate emotional restraint. Additionally, respondents indicated that they felt more emotionally stable while engaging with digital content (M = 3.91, SD = 1.31), suggesting relatively consistent emotional balance during online interactions. On aggregate, the findings point to moderate to high levels of emotional regulation in digital contexts. These findings align with studies by Jabali et al. (2024) and Mbula et al. (2025) which noted that emotional regulation protects marital communication by reducing impulsive responses, mitigating suspicion, and maintaining relational stability in digital contexts. It means the ability to monitor and control online emotional responses enhances communication quality, emotional closeness, and relational resilience among married individuals.

Constructive Online Participation

Table 35 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for items measuring constructive online participation on a five-point scale.

Table 35

Mean and Standard Deviation of Constructive Online Participation Items

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
I feel more confident participating in online discussions in a healthy way.	4.03	1.231
I can communicate online without escalating conflict.	3.96	1.235
I can express my thoughts respectfully, even during disagreements.	3.90	1.232

Table 35 shows that most of the respondents felt confident participating in online discussions in a healthy manner (M = 4.03, SD = 1.23), suggesting positive self-perceptions of their online engagement. Most of the respondents also reported that they could communicate online without escalating conflict (M = 3.96, SD = 1.24) and express their thoughts respectfully, even during disagreements (M = 3.90, SD = 1.23), reflecting moderately high levels of respectful and non-confrontational communication. Collectively, the findings imply that married individuals can engage constructively and responsibly in online interactions. The results are consistent with empirical findings by Azkiya (2024) who observed that constructive online participation fosters transparency, trust, and marital satisfaction, while reducing conflict in digital spaces. The findings imply that constructive online participation can strengthen marital communication, promote relational harmony, and serve as a complementary avenue for enhancing emotional connection and collaboration between spouses.

Boundary Management

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements assessing boundary management practices on a 5-point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Table 36 presents the mean and standard deviation scores.

Table 36

Mean and Standard Deviation of Boundary Management

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
I can set personal boundaries for when and how I use social media.	3.98	1.242
I can stop using my device when it starts interfering with important tasks (e.g., sleep, school, work, relationships).	4.03	1.116
I now maintain a healthier balance between online and offline activities	4.01	1.180

As shown in Table 36, majority of the respondents indicated that they could set personal boundaries regarding when and how they use social media (M = 3.98, SD = 1.24), reflecting a relatively strong sense of perceived control over their online habits. Most of the respondents also reported that they could stop using their devices when usage begins to interfere with important tasks such as sleep, school, work, or relationships (M = 4.03, SD = 1.12), suggesting perceived effective self-regulation. Additionally, most of the respondents believed that they maintained a healthier balance between online and offline activities (M = 4.01, SD = 1.18), pointing to a generally positive self-perception of integration of digital technology into daily life. The results suggest that in principle, married individuals can attain high levels of boundary management. The findings agree with Nasir and Ishak (2025), who observed that effective boundary setting enhances control over digital engagement and supports healthy communication and relational functioning. The results suggest that the ability to regulate access, establish limits, and balance online and offline interactions promotes relational stability, attentiveness, and emotional well-being within marriage.

Safety, Privacy and Risk Awareness

Respondents were asked to rate their level of safety, privacy, and risk awareness on a 5-point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Table 37 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for items.

Table 37

Mean and Standard Deviation of Safety, Privacy and Risk Awareness Items

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
I now think carefully before sharing personal or sensitive information online.	4.12	1.323
Know how to protect my personal information on social media.	4.11	1.235
I can adjust privacy settings to control who sees my online posts.	4.05	1.230

Table 37 shows that most of the respondents indicated that they think carefully before sharing personal or sensitive information online (M = 4.12, SD = 1.32), suggesting a high level of perception of caution. Majority also reported knowing how to protect their personal information on social media (M = 4.11, SD = 1.24) and being able to adjust privacy settings to control who can see their posts (M = 4.05, SD = 1.23), reflecting perceived strong awareness and practical knowledge of online safety measures. The results suggest that respondents demonstrated relatively high levels of perceived safety, privacy management, and risk awareness in their digital engagement. The high safety consciousness observed among respondents implies that informed evaluation of risks plays a significant role in shaping online behavior. The findings align with Akter et al. (2024) and Dorazahi et al. (2025), whose studies highlighted the likely tensions between privacy controls and relational transparency. These results suggest that perceived safety and risk awareness functioned as key mechanisms in marital communication, enabling couples to navigate online interactions responsibly while maintaining trust, transparency, and relational integrity.

Table 38 below ranks the strategies for promoting constructive use of digital technologies by their composite mean scores from the highest to the lowest.

Table 38

Ranking of Strategies by Mean Composite Scores

Strategy	Composite Mean Score
Boundary Management	4.09
Safety, Privacy and Risk Awareness	4.09
Healthy Information Consumption	4.00
Digital Self-Regulation and Impulse Control	3.98
Emotional Regulation during Online Use	3.98
Constructive Online Participation	3.96
Intentional and Purposeful Online Use	3.83

Table 38 shows that the highest-rated strategies were boundary management (M = 4.09) and safety, privacy, and risk awareness (M = 4.09), suggesting strong endorsement of setting limits and safeguarding online engagement within marriage. These high ratings signal that married individuals can consciously set limits and safeguard their digital technology use to protect marital communication, reflecting the rational evaluation process described by Pinto-Bustamante et al. (2023). Healthy information consumption also received a high rating (M = 4.00), suggesting that married individuals can deliberately select trustworthy and relevant content to safeguard their marital quality in line with the Rational Choice Theory. These findings suggest that deliberate decision-making and self-regulation are essential

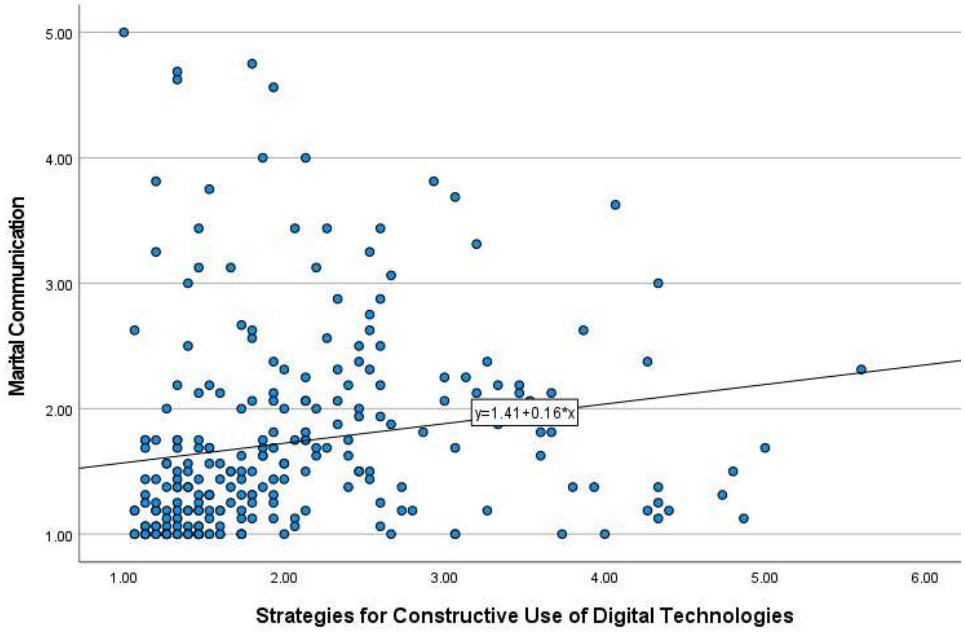
mechanisms in marital communication, implying that intentional boundary setting, risk awareness, and selective information consumption collectively enhance relational stability, communication quality, and overall marital well-being.

Moderately high ratings were obtained with respect to digital self-regulation and impulse control (M = 3.98) and emotional regulation during Online Use (M = 3.98). Constructive Online Participation was similarly rated positively (M = 3.96). These behaviors are consistent with Pashtun (2023) who notes that digital technology use brings with its new relational strains requiring active negotiation. Intentional and Purposeful Online Use also recorded the moderately high composite mean (M = 3.83), indicating relatively high agreement. These statistics suggest that married individuals can use emotional control and respectful participation to sustain communication and relational stability. These findings imply that couples' ability to exercise impulse control, regulate emotions, and participate constructively online can mitigate relational strain and enhance marital communication quality.

A visual depiction of the relationship between strategies for constructive use and marital communication is shown in Figure 12. The figure shows that marital communication quality increased with increased strategies for constructive use of digital technologies. This finding agrees with Nkurunziza and Munganyinka (2024) who observed that strategies such as intentional, purposeful, and constructive digital engagement enhance marital communication and relational quality. This suggests that constructive use of digital technologies functions as a mechanism that promotes effective communication, indicating that deliberate and regulated online behaviors can strengthen relational stability and emotional connection within marriage.

Figure 12

Strategies and Marital Communication Scatterplot



The quantitative results were corroborated by thematic analysis of FGD and KII findings on interventions that can be made to enhance the use of digital technology and social media among married individuals to ensure marital communication. The single overarching theme emergent from the qualitative data is self-regulation. Table 39 demonstrates the link between verbatim responses, codes, sub-themes and the theme. The overarching theme that emerged was self-regulation, emphasizing intentional and balanced technology use. Participants highlighted strategies such as limiting screen time, creating schedules, practicing self-discipline, and agreeing on appropriate times for technology use. These codes were clustered under sub-themes of awareness creation and balance, reflecting the need for conscious and purposeful engagement with digital platforms. These results align well with propositions from studies such as those by Alanazi (2015) which advocate for preserving family time to reduce the negative impact of social media on marriages.

Table 39

Thematic Analysis of Interventions for Marital Communication

Verbatim responses	Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
FGD Participant #1: Limiting screen time, creating a schedule, going into it with a purpose, replace with another activity that you do so as a couple.	Limiting screen time Creating a schedule		
FGD Participant #2: Self-discipline/ disclosure. Clear communication. Creating awareness.	Self-discipline Clear communication Creating awareness		
FDG Participant #3: Spending quality time with each other away from the gadgets. Looking for other things apart from the gadgets to bond together. Looking for other couples to talk instead of spending more time online on research.	Quality time with each other Bond together		
FGD Participant #4: Create awareness to appropriately use digital tech e.g., for learning. Use technology at our agreed times. Use alternative ways to take away boredom/ passing time like engaging in a creative team-building activity.	Create awareness Creative team-building activity	Awareness creation Balance	Self-regulation
KII#1: Setting time to use digital technology. Trainings about use of digital technology.	Setting time Training		
KII#2: Schedule realistic times for social media. Create awareness of social media usage with family first attention. Share the most necessary information.	Schedule realistic times Create awareness		
KII#3: People need to be taught the dangers and advantages of social media. People should balance the use of social media.	People need to be taught Balance use		
KII#4: Set rules to govern the time frequency use of social media. Openly discussing within themselves the effects and accept transformation.	Set rules		

Table 39 further shows that respondents emphasized the importance of clear communication, disclosure, and spending quality time together away from gadgets, including engaging in bonding and creative team-building activities. The findings suggest that deliberate regulation of digital technology use, coupled with strengthened marital communication and shared offline activities, can enhance marital communication among married individuals. These recommendations are consistent with the interventions reported by Wathigo (2019), highlighting the role of structured couple quality time, family harmony efforts, and education on healthy technology use in improving marital interactions. The following are some of the verbatim suggestions:

> "Limiting screen time, creating a schedule, going into it with a purpose, replace with another activity that you do so as a couple" (FGD Participant #1).
>
> "Spending quality time with each other away from the gadgets. Looking for other things apart from the gadgets to bond together. Looking for other couples to talk instead of spending more time online on research" (FGD Participant #3).
>
> "Create awareness to appropriately use digital tech e.g., for learning. Use technology at our agreed times. Use alternative ways to take away boredom/ passing time like engaging in a creative team-building activity" (FGD Participant #4).
>
> "Schedule realistic times for social media. Create awareness of social media usage with family first attention. Share the most necessary information" (KII#2).

> "Set rules to govern the time frequency use social media. Openly discussing within themselves the effects and accept transformation" (KII#4).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the analysis and discussion of the data. The chapter commenced by presenting descriptive analysis of respondents' demographic characteristics. This was followed by diagnostic tests to assess the suitability of the data for specific statistical treatments. Mean and standard deviation scores as well as percentage frequencies have been used to summarize the distribution of the data while chi-square tests revealed the association of the study variables. Thematic analysis has been used to analyze qualitative data. The findings have been presented in figures and tables. The results have been discussed in light of past studies and theoretical literature. The next chapter presents the conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of digital technologies on communication among married individuals in selected Houses of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The research proceeded to achieve this purpose by pursuing four specific objectives. This final chapter commences by summarizing the key findings of the study for each objective. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the study. Subsequently, conclusions are drawn, and finally, recommendations are made, including suggestions for future studies.

Summary of Findings

The Influence of Access to Digital Technologies on Marital Communication

The first objective of the study was to examine the influence of access to digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals in the Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Descriptive analysis revealed that majority of the respondents (66.1%) had high access to digital technologies while 18.3% had moderate access and only 15.6% had low access. Thematic analysis revealed the theme of digital technology dependence, and 73.5% recorded poor marital communication while only 26.5% of the respondents had effective marital communication. Cross-tabulation analysis showed that poor marital communication was most prevalent among participants with high access to digital technologies, where 80.0% reported poor communication compared to 20.0% who reported effective communication. Among those with low access, 70.0% reported poor communication and 30.0% reported effective

communication. The most balanced distribution was observed among participants with moderate access to digital technologies, where 53.2% reported poor communication and 46.8% reported effective communication. These findings suggest that higher levels of access to digital technologies were associated with a greater proportion of poor marital communication as compared to moderate access. The results of chi-square test revealed a statistically significant association between access to digital technologies and marital communication, χ^2 (2) = 13.905, p<.05, suggesting marital communication differs across levels of digital access. The findings were corroborated with thematic analysis of FGD data which revealed that access to digital technology had a negative effect on couples, with poor marital communication as the most dominant theme.

The Influence of Frequency and Duration of Digital Technologies on Marital Communication

The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of the frequency and duration of digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Descriptive analysis showed that the frequency and duration of use of digital technology was high for 55.6% of the respondents, moderate for 22.6% of the respondents, and low for only 21.8% of the respondents. From the FGD and KII responses, the theme of irresponsible use emanated in the nature of digital technology and social media use among married individuals. Digital technology is often used excessively and at inappropriate times, such as during conversations or meals, which can affect concentration, reduce connection with partners, and take time away from children. Cross-tabulation analysis showed that

respondents with high frequency and duration of digital technology use reported the highest proportion of poor marital communication (78.3%) compared to those with low use (75.0%) and moderate use (60.3%). Conversely, effective marital communication was least prevalent among high users (21.7%), compared to low users (25.0%) and was highest among moderate users (39.7%). Inferential analysis showed a statistically significant association, $\chi^2(2) = 6.93$, $p < .05$, signaling a significant adverse relationship between frequency and duration of digital technology use and marital communication. The quantitative results were corroborated by FGD interview where majority of the participants did not appraise the effect on marital communication favorably although some of the participants also highlighted its positive effect. Under the sub-theme of poor marital communication, participants described how excessive digital technology use contributes to disagreements, reduced attention and affection, and growing emotional distance, forming the broader theme of adverse effects. Conversely, under the sub-theme of effective marital communication, participants acknowledged that digital technology can enhance communication by enabling real-time updates and supporting long-distance relationships, contributing to the theme of positive effects.

The Influence of Motives for Use of Digital Technologies on Marital Communication

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of motives for digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Majority of respondents (60.3%) engaged in compulsive use of digital technologies, whereas a smaller proportion (39.7%) were engaged in productive use. Cross-tabulation analysis showed that respondents with compulsive motives for

digital technology use reported a higher proportion of poor marital communication (77.4%) compared to those with productive motives (67.6%). Conversely, effective marital communication was more common among respondents with productive motives (32.4%) than among those with compulsive motives (22.6%). This comparison indicates that compulsive digital technology use was associated with a greater prevalence of poor marital communication, whereas productive use was linked to relatively better communication outcomes. However, the Pearson chi-square test indicated no statistically significant association, χ^2 (1) = 3.02, p>.05. These results suggest that, although poor marital communication was more common among respondents with compulsive motives, the association between motives for digital technology use and marital communication was not statistically significant.

Qualitative analysis of FGD and KII data revealed both constructive use and destructive use themes. Under the sub-themes of information and entertainment and social connection, participants identified motives such as marketing, information seeking, studying, connecting with peers, research about marriage, learning current trends, and accessing news, which were categorized under the broader theme of constructive use. However, participants also highlighted motives such as seeking validation, flirting, infidelity, secrecy, and using digital platforms to ease oneself after misunderstandings, which were categorized under the theme of destructive use. The dominant theme that emerged was negative influence, particularly in relation to conflict and relational strain. Participants reported that using social media to pass time reduced productivity and triggered disagreement, reflecting increased conflict within the relationship. Other responses highlighted lack of trust, unfaithfulness, division, peer pressure from idealized online couples, resentment, comparison, and loneliness as key factors undermining marital communication.

Strategies for Promoting Constructive Use of Digital Technologies

The fourth objective of the study was to examine strategies for promoting constructive use of digital technologies to strengthen communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Descriptive analysis showed that the highest-rated strategies were Boundary Management (M = 4.09) and Safety, Privacy, and Risk Awareness (M = 4.09), suggesting strong endorsement of setting limits and safeguarding online engagement within marriage. Healthy Information Consumption also received a high rating (M = 4.00). The overarching theme that emerged from qualitative data analysis was self-regulation, emphasizing intentional and balanced technology use. Participants highlighted strategies such as limiting screen time, creating schedules, practicing self-discipline, and agreeing on appropriate times for technology use. These codes were clustered under sub-themes of awareness creation and balance, reflecting the need for conscious and purposeful engagement with digital platforms. Additionally, respondents emphasized the importance of clear communication, disclosure, and spending quality time together away from gadgets, including engaging in bonding and creative team-building activities. The findings suggest that deliberate regulation of digital technology use, coupled with strengthened marital communication and shared offline activities, can enhance marital communication among married individuals.

Implications

The findings of this study have practical implications in real-life contexts such as counseling, church-based programs, and community initiatives. The association between high access, frequent use, and poor marital communication (80% among

high-access users versus 53.2% among moderate users; 78.3% among high-frequency users) suggests that couples should be guided toward developing balanced and intentional patterns of digital technology use. In line with Wibisono and Rohman (2024), appreciating that digital dependence is associated with communication breakdowns allows practitioners to design interventions that directly address technology-related relational strain. Counsellors and church-based marriage programs can incorporate digital literacy and relationship management sessions that emphasize boundary-setting, reduced screen time during shared moments, and intentional communication practices. Additionally, drawing from Guest and Denes (2023), practitioners can assess usage patterns and guide couples toward self-regulation strategies such as planned online engagement, critical evaluation of digital content, and minimizing compulsive use. These approaches can help reduce conflict, enhance emotional presence, and improve marital communication.

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

and motives, the study advances a more nuanced theoretical understanding of how digital behavior shapes marital communication.

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

From a professional perspective, the findings highlight the importance of incorporating digital technology use into assessment and intervention processes. In line with Guest and Denes (2023), practitioners should evaluate patterns of use – particularly frequency and duration – when addressing marital communication challenges. The findings also show that compulsive motives are associated with conflict, lack of trust, and relational strain, supporting assertions by Bezar et al. (2021) and Herfeld (2022) that underlying motivations influence behavioral outcomes. Therefore, professionals should consider not only the extent of technology use but also the motives behind it when interpreting relational difficulties.

Conclusions

In light of the findings and the foregoing implications, conclusions have been drawn for each objective as follows:

Influence of Access to Digital Technologies on Marital Communication

The first objective of the study was to examine the influence of access to digital technologies on marital communication among married individuals in the Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The findings of the study led to the conclusion that high access to digital technologies is linked to elevated communication problems among married individuals. Couples with higher access were more likely to experience poor marital communication, suggesting that the availability of digital tools potentially contribute to distraction, dependency, or over-reliance on virtual interaction at the expense of face-to-face engagement. Moderate access to digital technologies by married individuals appears to strike a more balanced outcome, implying that controlled use of digital technologies can prevent relational strain. Thus, the mere access without guided usage frameworks can inadvertently exacerbate communication challenges, signaling the need for married individuals to establish boundaries and intentional patterns of digital technology use to protect the quality of their marital relationships.

Influence of Frequency and Duration of Digital Technologies on Marital Communication

The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of the frequency and duration of digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The evidence of this study leads to the

conclusion that frequent and prolonged duration of digital technology use is detrimental to marital communication. The insights revealed that overuse can reduce attentiveness, increase emotional distance, and provoke disagreements. As such, time management and mindful engagement with digital tools are critical for sustaining relational quality. However, when digital technology is used intentionally and at appropriate times, it can support positive interactions, real-time connection, and relationship maintenance. This calls for couples to focus on regulating both the timing and duration of digital technology use to enhance communication and minimize relational strain.

Influence of Motives for Use of Digital Technologies on Marital Communication

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of motives for digital technology use on marital communication among married individuals in selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. It was concluded that the purpose behind engagement does shape marital communication, although its implications are minimal compared to access and/or frequency and duration of use. Compulsive and entertainment-driven motives tended to exacerbate relational strain, conflict, and distrust, whereas, productive motives were more likely to support effective communication. This underscores the salience of intentionality in digital technology use. That is, when technology is used for learning, information-sharing, or mutual growth, it can complement marital communication, but when used compulsively or as a form of avoidance or escape, it can trigger relational tension. Thus, the awareness of married individuals of their motives for using digital technology, and the conscious regulation of technology use is key to mitigating adverse effects on marital communication.

Strategies for Promoting Constructive Use of Digital Technologies

The fourth objective of the study was to examine strategies for promoting constructive use of digital technologies to strengthen communication among married individuals in the selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study concluded that promoting constructive use of digital technologies among married individuals requires intentional self-regulation, clear boundaries, and responsible online engagement. The high ratings for boundary management, safety and privacy awareness, and healthy information consumption indicate that couples recognize the importance of balancing technology use with marital responsibilities. Practices such as limiting screen time, establishing agreed-upon technology-use schedules, exercising self-discipline, and fostering open communication can help reduce technology-related disruptions in relationships. Moreover, prioritizing quality offline interactions, bonding activities, and shared experiences strengthens marital communication and intimacy.

Recommendations

Recommendations were drawn from the findings as follows:

i) People in marital relationships should intentionally regulate their access, frequency, and motives for digital technology use in order to safeguard marital communication. Given that high access and high frequency of use were associated with the greatest proportion of poor communication, couples should establish mutually agreed boundaries such as device-free times during meals, conversations, and before bedtime to foster face-to-face interaction. Since moderate use was linked to relatively better marital communication, the married individuals should aim to balance digital technology use rather than

completely ridding it off marital life. Furthermore, because compulsive motives were linked to higher levels of poor communication and themes of conflict, secrecy, and comparison, married individuals should discipline themselves to limit digital technology use for the purpose of learning, information sharing, and relationship enrichment. Being intentional in disciplining one-self and being transparent in online interactions can strengthen trust, emotional intimacy, and overall marital quality.

ii) Marriage and family therapists should integrate digital technology assessment into their routine couple therapy. The therapists should evaluate clients' digital technology use habits, screen-time patterns, and motives for use as part of relational assessments. Interventions should include psycho-education on creating healthy digital boundaries, conflict resolution strategies relevant to technology-related disagreements, and structured communication exercises that encourage presence and attentiveness. Given that moderate and constructive use showed relatively better communication outcomes, therapists can guide couples toward balanced digital technology use rather than total restriction, helping them reframe digital technology as a supportive tool instead of a source of marital conflict.

iii) Christian counsellors and members of the clergy should address digital stewardship within the broader framework of biblical principles of self-control, faithfulness, and intentional love in marriage. The findings showed that compulsive and destructive motives such as secrecy, validation seeking, and online comparison were linked to conflict, mistrust, and relational strain. Thus, counsellors can guide couples in examining the spiritual and moral dimensions of their digital technology use behaviour, underscoring

accountability, transparency, and mutual respect. Since moderate and constructive use was associated with relatively better communication, Christian counsellors and the clergy can encourage couples to use digital platforms for constructive purposes such as devotionals and marriage teachings. Further, integrating digital technology use discussions into premarital counselling can pre-emptively address emerging communication challenges within Christian homes.

iv) Heads of church-based marriage enrichment programs should incorporate structured training on responsible and balanced digital technology use as part of their curriculum. The relevant departments should design workshops that educate couples on managing screen time, identifying unhealthy digital technology use habits, and fostering intentional face-to-face interaction. For instance, programs can include couple dialogue sessions, testimonies, and practical exercises on creating digital technology use agreements at home. Given that constructive motives such as learning and relationship research were identified as positive themes, churches can also recommend vetted digital resources that promote marital growth while discouraging harmful online behaviours such as secrecy and comparison.

v) Policymakers should take cognisance of digital well-being as a marital stability issue and integrate family-centred digital literacy initiatives into community and educational programs. Since the study found statistically significant associations between high access and high frequency of digital technology use and poor marital communication, public awareness campaigns should promote responsible digital technology use within households. For instance, policies could support community-based digital literacy programs

that emphasize healthy screen-time management and awareness of the social and emotional influence of compulsive digital technology use. The government should collaborate with faith-based organization and family welfare institutions to develop guidelines and training materials that promote balanced and constructive digital technology presence.

Areas for Further Research

The following areas for further research are proposed:

i) A key conceptual limitation of the study lies in its focus on three dimensions of digital technology use – access, frequency and duration, and motives – while other potentially salient variables such as personality traits, attachment styles, and pre existing psychological conditions were not examined. This study acknowledges that marital communication is multifaceted and may be shaped by a dynamic interaction of psychological, relational, and environmental factors over and above digital technology use. Therefore, future research should adopt more integrative conceptual frameworks that incorporate mediating and moderating variables to better fathom the mechanisms through which digital technology use affects marital communication.

ii) The present study was carried out within selected House of Power Churches, implying that the research sample was characterised by a relatively similar faith orientation and church-based social environment. This homogeneity of the target population may have implications on digital technology use behaviours and perceptions of marital communication, especially where Christian values shape relational norms and expectations. For this reason, a

future study could replicate the research in other contexts including non-faith-based communities and other denominations, to ascertain whether similar findings exist.

iii) Methodologically, the study relied exclusively on self-reported data which may have been subject to social desirability bias. It is possible that some of the respondents underreported negative digital technology use behaviours such as compulsiveness, secrecy, or conflict arising from prolonged digital media use. Thus, future research could strengthen the data collection process by incorporating additional methods such as digital screen-time tracking or observational studies of couple interactions in order to enhance validity of the findings.

iv) In terms of geographical scope, the present study was limited to a predominantly urban context – which is Nairobi County, which reflects higher digital penetration rates compared to rural areas. As such, the findings may not be generalizable to other regions of Kenya. Therefore, future research should be extended to rural counties.

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APPENDIX I: RESPONDENT'S INFORMED CONSENT

Title: Influence of Digital Technologies on Communication among Married individuals in Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Researcher: Margaret Wanjiku Kamau

Dear Participant,

My name is Margaret Wanjiku Kamau, a student from Pan African Christian University, pursuing a PhD study in Marriage and Family Therapy and I would like to invite you to participate in this study aimed at understanding the influence of digital technologies on communication among married individuals Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important that you understand the nature of this study, its goals, potential risks, and benefits.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of digital technologies on communication among married individuals in selected house of power churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Your Participation: Your participation in this study involves answering a series of questions through a questionnaire. It is expected to take approximately 45 minutes to complete. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Risks and Benefits: Participating in this study does not pose any significant risks to you. However, discussing personal experiences related to communication may bring up sensitive or uncomfortable emotions. The potential benefit of this study is the

opportunity to reflect on your own experiences, gain insights into your relationship, and contribute to a better understanding of the influence of digital technologies on communication among married individuals in Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Confidentiality: Your responses will be kept confidential. All information collected will be anonymized, and no identifiable information will be shared with anyone. Your privacy is of utmost importance, and we will take all necessary steps to protect it.

Consent: I hereby request your voluntary participation in this study. By continuing with the questionnaire administration, you are indicating your consent to participate. You are free to withdraw from the study at any point without any obligation.

Contact Information: If you have any questions, concerns, or wish to receive a summary of the study's findings, please feel free to contact me at 0721475304.

By signing below or proceeding with the questionnaire, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided in this form and consent to participate in the study.

Participant's Code: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Date: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Participant's Signature: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Thank you for considering participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Margaret Wanjiku Kamau, Pan African Christian University

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

Background Information

Please complete each section as instructed.

Kindly give honest and accurate responses to the items in the questionnaire by placing a tick in the chosen cell or providing answers in the given spaces. Any information that you give pertaining to yourself or your school will be treated with utmost confidence and will not be divulged to anyone else. Please DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME OR THE NAME OF YOUR CHURCH ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: BIO DATA

1. Age in years

   20- 29 [ ]

   30- 39 [ ]

   40-49 [ ]

   50-59 [ ]

   Above 60 [ ]

2. Gender

   Male [ ] Female [ ]

3 Educational level [ ]

   No formal education [ ]

   Primary education [ ]

   Secondary education [ ]

   Tertiary [ ]

4 No of years in Marriage

1- 10

11- 20

21- 30

31-40

5 Do you use digital technology for communication?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

. The following are statements about access to digital technology

For each item, rate your response on a scale from 1 to 5, where:

1. Never 2. Rarely, 3. Frequently 4. Very frequently 5. Always

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Access to digital Technologies					
a)	I have internet access in my house					
b)	I have internet access on my mobile phone					
c)	I have internet access on my personal computer					
d)	I have internet access in my workplace					
e)	I have access to WhatsApp					
f)	I have access to YouTube					
g)	I have access to Instagram					
h)	I have access to TikTok					
i)	I have access to Facebook					
j)	I have subscribed to various digital channels					

1 = Never | 2 = Rarely | 3 = Sometimes | 4 = Often | 5 = Very Often

	Frequency and Duration of Use of Digital Technologies	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I check my social media accounts multiple times a day.					
2.	I spend a lot of time on social media every day.					
3.	I use social media as soon as I wake up.					
4.	I use social media right before going to bed.					
5.	I often lose track of time while using social media.					
6.	I spend more than 2 hours on social media daily.					
7.	I use social media even when I have other important tasks.					
	Motives for Digital Technology Use					
	Emotional engagement					
8.	I feel happy when I receive likes, comments, or messages on social media.					
9.	I feel anxious or stressed when I cannot access my social media accounts.					
10.	I feel upset when people ignore my posts on social media.					
11.	I feel a strong need to post updates regularly.					
	Social interaction					
12.	I use social media to keep in touch with friends and family.					
13.	I often communicate with people I would not meet in real life through social media.					
14.	I rely on social media for social support.					
15.	I prefer interacting on social media rather than face-to-face.					

	Behavioral Dependence					
1(	I frequently check social media even when I have other tasks to do.					
1'	I find it difficult to reduce my social media use.					
1{	I feel a strong urge to check social media when I am bored.					

SECTION C: STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

10) The following are statements relate to strategies that can be used to improve communication using digital technology / social media

For each item, rate your response on a scale from 1 to 5, where:

5 - Strongly Disagree 4 - Disagree 3 - Neither Agree nor Disagree 2 - Agree 1 - Strongly Agree

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Intentional and Purposeful Online Use					
1.	Before going online, I can clearly define what I want to accomplish.					
2.	I am better able to stay focused on my purpose when using social media.					
3.	I can easily recognize when I am going off-track and bring myself back to my goals.					
	Healthy Information Consumption					
4.	I can identify which online information is trustworthy.					
5.	I can confidently reject online information that seems misleading or harmful.					
6.	I can determine whether social media content is relevant or beneficial to me					
7.	I now select online content that supports my emotional and mental well-being.					
	Impulse Control					
8.	I can manage how much time I spend on social media more effectively.					
9.	I can stop myself from checking my phone or apps unnecessarily.					

		1	2	3	4	5
10.	I can shift my attention back to offline tasks without difficulty.					
	Emotional Regulation during Online Use					
11.	I can manage my emotions when encountering upsetting or provocative content online					
12.	I can pause and reflect before responding emotionally on social media.					
13.	I feel more emotionally stable while engaging with digital content.					
	Constructive Online Participation					
14.	I can communicate online without escalating conflict					
15.	I can express my thoughts respectfully, even during disagreements.					
16.	I feel more confident participating in online discussions in a healthy way.					
	Boundary Management					
17.	I can set personal boundaries for when and how I use social media.					
18.	I can stop using my device when it starts interfering with important tasks (e.g., sleep, school, work, relationships).					
19.	I now maintain a healthier balance between online and offline activities.					
	Safety, Privacy & Risk Awareness					
20.	Know how to protect my personal information on social media.					
21.	I can adjust privacy settings to control who sees my online posts.					
22.	I now think carefully before sharing personal or sensitive information online.					

SECTION D: MARITAL COMMUNICATION

Conrad et al. (2018).

11 The following statements are about the use of digital technology and communication among couples. For each item, rate your response on a scale from 1 to 5, where:

1 – **Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4-Agree 5 - Strongly Agree**

		1	2	3	4	5
	Openness & Sharing					
1.	I feel comfortable sharing my feelings with my partner.					
2.	I can talk to my partner about important personal issues.					
3.	I feel free to express my thoughts and opinions to my partner.					
4.	I can openly discuss my hopes and dreams with my partner.					
	Support & understanding					
5.	My partner listens carefully when I talk about important issues.					
6.	I feel my partner understands me when we communicate.					
7.	We can discuss sensitive topics without getting upset.					
8.	I feel supported by my partner when I share my feelings.					

	Conflict Management					
9.	We resolve misunderstandings respectfully.					
10.	Our conversations usually lead to understanding rather than arguments.					
11.	We handle disagreements constructively without hurting each other.					
12.	We can calmly discuss disagreements without raising our voices.					
	General Communication					
13.	Our conversations are open and honest.					
14.	Communication between us is clear and straightforward.					
15.	We feel connected and understood through our conversations.					
16.	Our communication strengthens our relationship.					

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE PASTORS

1. i)How would you describe access to digital technology /social media among married individuals -

   ii) How has access to digital technology /social media among married individuals affected of communication among married individuals -

2. i) How would you describe the nature of digital technology and social media use among married individuals in terms of time, timing, and frequency? -

---

ii) How does the nature of digital technology and social media use among married individuals – in terms of time, timing, and frequency – influence of communication among married individuals? ---

3 i) From your experience and interaction with married individuals, what are some of the motives of using digital technology/social media? ---

ii) How do the motives for using social media influence communication among married individuals? ---

4. What interventions can be made to enhance the use of digital technology and social media among married individuals to ensure communication? - - - - - - - - - - -

- -

APPENDIX IV: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. i)How would you describe access to digital technology /social media among married individuals? -

   ii) How has access to digital technology /social media among married individuals affected of communication among married individuals? -

2. i) How would you describe the nature of digital technology and social media use among married individuals in terms of time, timing, and frequency? -

   ii) How would the nature of digital technology and social media use among married individuals – in terms of time, timing, and frequency – influence of communication among married individuals? -

4 i) From your experience and interaction with married individuals, what are some of the motives of using digital technology/social media? - - - - - - - - - - -

- -

- -

- -

- -

- -

ii) How do the motives of social media influence marital communication among married individuals? -

- -

- -

- -

- -

- -

5. What interventions can be made to enhance the use of digital technology and social media among married individuals to ensure marital communication? - - - - - - - - - - - -

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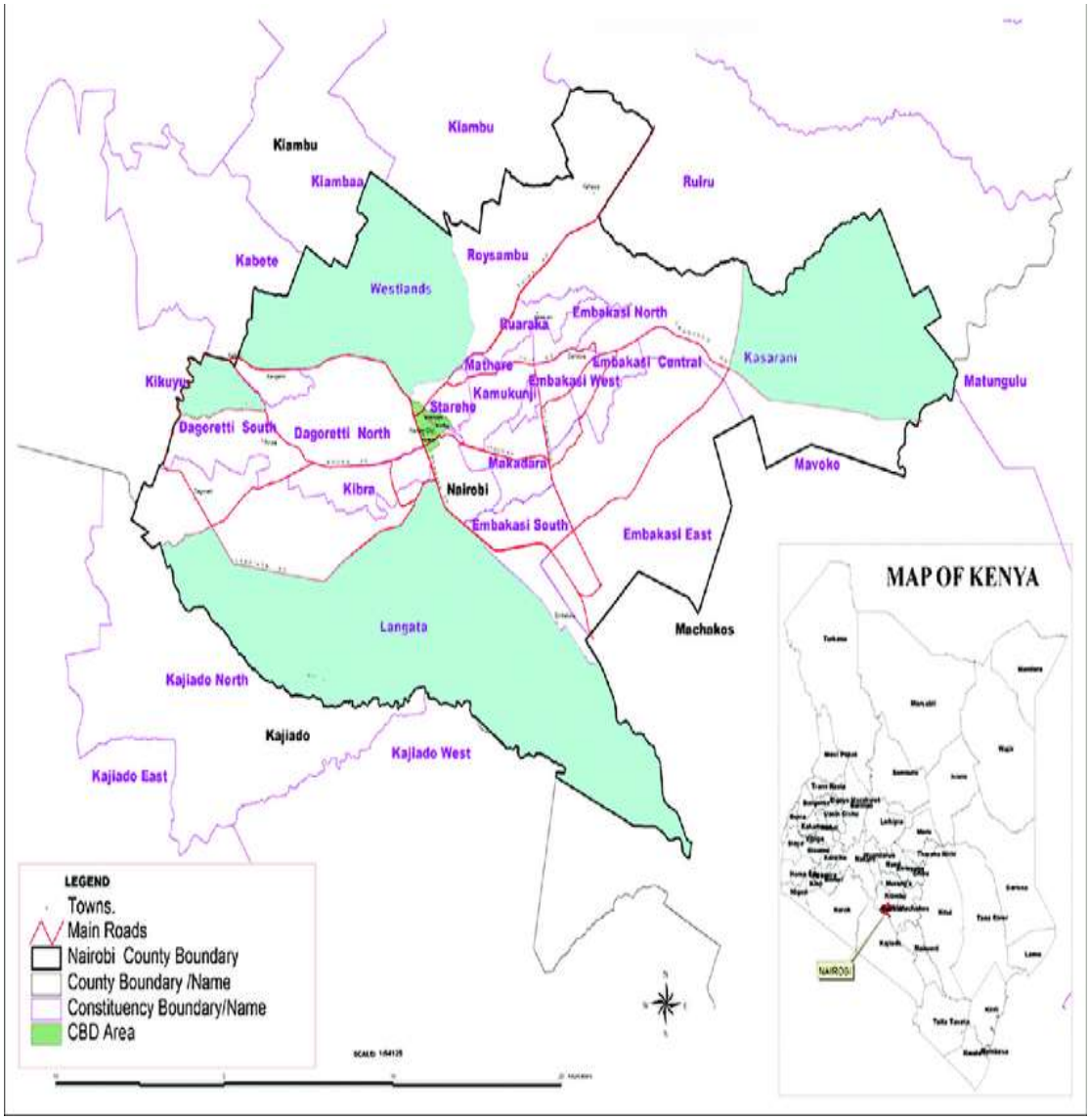
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APPENDIX V: MAP OF NAIROBI COUNTY, NAIROBI



APPENDIX VI: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Thika Road Campus | Valley Road Campus
P.O. Box 56875-00200 | +254 730955000 | +254 730955501/2
enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke | www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

REF: PAC/ISERC/113/01/26 Date: 21/01/2026

TO:Kamau, Margaret Wanjiku (PMFT/19729/0/21)

PAC UNIVERSITY

Dear Madam,

RE: INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ON MARITAL COMMUNICATION AMONG MARRIED INDIVIDUALS IN SELECTED HOUSE OF POWER CHURCHES IN EMBAKASI CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY, NAIROBI COUNTY

This is to inform you that PAC_ *ISERC* has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is PAC/ISERC/96/07/25. The approval period is 21st January 2026 – 21st January 2026.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

i. Only approved documents including (informed consent and study instruments,) will be used
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by *PAC_ISERC*.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to *PAC_ ISERC* within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or the welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *PAC_ISERC* within 72 hours
v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to *PAC_ ISERC*.

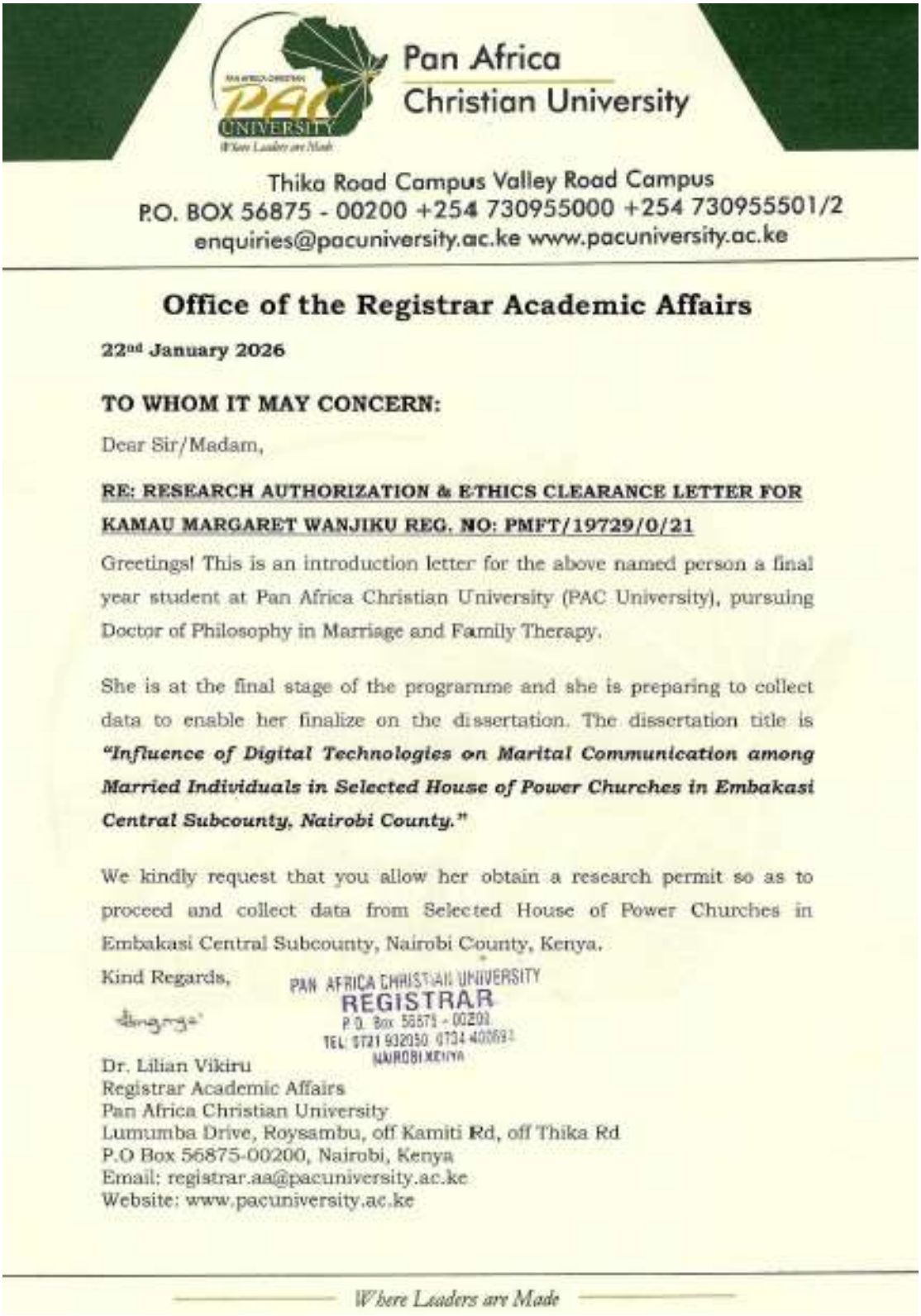
Before commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Jane Kinuthia

Chair, ISERC

APPENDIX VII: PAC UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION



Pan Africa Christian University

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P.O. BOX 56875 - 00200 +254 730955000 +254 730955501/2
enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

Office of the Registrar Academic Affairs

22nd January 2026

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION & ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER FOR KAMAU MARGARET WANJIKU REG. NO: PMFT/19729/0/21

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing Doctor of Philosophy in Marriage and Family Therapy.

She is at the final stage of the programme and she is preparing to collect data to enable her finalize on the dissertation. The dissertation title is ***"Influence of Digital Technologies on Marital Communication among Married Individuals in Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Subcounty, Nairobi County."***

We kindly request that you allow her obtain a research permit so as to proceed and collect data from Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Subcounty, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Kind Regards,

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
REGISTRAR
P.O. Box 56875 - 00200
TEL: 0721 932050 0734 400691
NAIROBI KENYA

Dr. Lilian Vikiru
Registrar Academic Affairs
Pan Africa Christian University
Lumumba Drive, Roysambu, off Kamiti Rd, off Thika Rd
P.O Box 56875-00200, Nairobi, Kenya
Email: registrar.aa@pacuniversity.ac.ke
Website: www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

Where Leaders are Made

APPENDIX VIII: NACOSTI PERMIT

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 786721

Date of Issue: 07/February/2026

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Miss. MARGARET WANJIKU KAMAU of Pan Africa Christian University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ON MARITAL COMMUNICATION AMONG MARRIED INDIVIDUALS IN SELECTED HOUSE OF POWER CHURCHES IN EMBAKASI CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY, NAIROBI COUNTY for the period ending : 07/February/2027.

License No: NACOSTI/P/26/4183854

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Applicant Identification Number

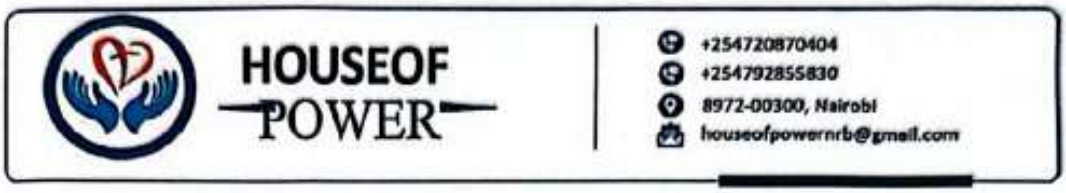
Ag. Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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See overleaf for conditions

APPENDIX VIX: HOUSE OF POWER RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION



REF: AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN HOUSE OF POWER CHURCH BRANCHES

This letter is to formally confirm that House of Power Church Head Office has reviewed and approved a request by Ms. Margaret Wanjiku Kamau, a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) student in Marriage and Family Therapy at Pan Africa Christian University, to conduct an academic research study within selected House of Power Church branches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County.

The approved study is titled:

"Influence of Digital Technologies on Marital Communication Among Married Individuals in Selected House of Power Churches in Embakasi Central Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya."

The study is being undertaken strictly for academic purposes in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. The researcher is authorized to collect data from married church members and pastors using questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Participation in the study shall be voluntary ,Informed consent shall be obtained from all participants,Confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of respondents shall be strictly maintained.The research shall adhere to ethical standards. The study shall be conducted in a manner that does not disrupt church services or programs.We therefore request pastors and church leaders of the selected House of Power Church branches to extend the necessary cooperation and support to facilitate the successful conduct of this study.

This authorization is issued upon request for official research approval and regulatory compliance.

Yours faithfully,

Name: Mary Wangui Ngugi

General Secretary

For House of Power Church Head Office

Signature _____