

Communication Patterns in Distant Relationship Couples Dating in Maintaining Commitment Through Whatsapp

Priti Hiltania Zebua, Dwi Kartikawati

Prodi Ilmu Komunikasi Fakultas FISIP Universitas Nasional Jakarta, Indonesia

pritzebua@gmail.com, dookartika@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research is to examine how Long-Distance Relationship Communication Patterns in Maintaining Commitments Through Whatsapp Media in dating couples. The development of communication technology is not an obstacle in establishing long-distance relationships. Long Distance Relationship (LDR) is a pair of lovers who are in a relationship separated by distance and time. The people involved in the relationship will continue to feel the push and pull of conflicting desires in all parts of the life of the relationship. Long Distance Relationships (Long Distance Relationship) require an effective communication process in order to maintain harmonious relationships by using a communication tool in the form of a medium, namely WhatsApp. This research is based on the theory of Relational Dialectics and is supported by Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) theory, complemented by the concept of interpersonal communication theory and the foundation of interpersonal communication. The method used was qualitative with a phenomenological approach for 10 informants with criteria determined by the researcher. The results of this study indicate that communication patterns in long-distance relationships carried out by informants consist of separate balanced communication patterns, separate unbalanced communication patterns and balanced communication patterns. Also from this research, the five couples hope that the long-distance relationship that is being forged can progress to a more serious stage, namely marriage, looking for the best solution for each other, and learning to understand each other's partners.

Keywords: Communication Patterns, Long Distance Relations, WhatsApp Media

INTRODUCTION

With the current development of technology, it is undeniable that communication using technology-based communication tools has become an additional part of today's people's lives. Media-mediated communication technology is often referred to as computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Nasrullah, 2022). One can easily access important information about phenomena occurring in other parts of the world without having to go there. Even though it takes hours to reach this place, with just a bunch of computers and the addition of internet-connected cell phones, information can be obtained in seconds. Based on data from the Status of Digital Literacy in Indonesia 2021 report released by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics together with the Katadata Insight Center (KIC), WhatsApp is also the social media platform most frequently used by Indonesians. In detail, as many as 27.6% of respondents said it was very often and 52% often used WhatsApp in a day. Only 16.6% of respondents said they rarely used the platform and 3.8% very rarely (Annur, 2022). The use of the social network Whatsapp with a total traffic of 84%, Instagram 79% and Facebook 79% where 64% of the total users can access the social network for an average of 7-8 hours per day.

In the context of interpersonal communication or interpersonal communication is the key to effective interaction in everyday life with the environment and is a vehicle for expressing and receiving one's thoughts, information, ideas, feelings and emotions in a deep relationship. Other forms of interpersonal communication are not just chats, face-to-face or face-to-face meetings. Interpersonal communication is through various stages, among others: Contact. At this stage, contact is general and impersonal. b. Involvement. Conducive involvement will encourage individuals to establish relationships more intensely. c. Intimacy. Intimacy is initially formed when two or more individuals have a commitment. d. Deterioration. e. Dissolution (Devito, 2011). Communication patterns are an important part of the communication process experienced by the individuals involved in it. The types of communication patterns in interpersonal relationships include (Devito, 2011):

Balanced Communication Pattern (equality pattern). This is a communication pattern obtained from the process of communication between partners that occurs where both have a balance of communication between them. The balance in question is that every individual has the opportunity to express opinions and make decisions. In this case the communication tends to be honest and open. The effect of the communication that occurs is more in the form of conflict debate. The conflict became material for both of them to reflect on.

Separate Balanced Communication Pattern (balance split pattern). This is This is a communication pattern originating from each individual with their respective dominance. Dominant in terms of power to opinion or make decisions. The communication that occurs is so strong because they feel that they have the same power. However, the effect of the dominant communication that occurs is not a threat because both of them have a way of solving it

Separate Unbalanced Communication Pattern (unbalance split pattern). This is a pattern in which one of them is dominant in their communication relationship. Individuals who are more dominant are considered to have more intelligence in maintaining control which is useful in opinionating and making decisions. The effect of communication can be in the form of a conflict whose resolution is left to a more powerful party as a problem analysis.

Monopoly Communication Pattern (monopoly pattern). This pattern is dominating in communication relations. Individuals who are more dominant are considered to have more intelligence in maintaining control which is useful in opinionating and making decisions. It is important to understand the whole pattern because with the inter-personal relations that are established, each partner has the opportunity to express what he wants to convey, then he can make the most appropriate decision and there is a power factor that is unique to each of these patterns.

Thus, certain patterns of communication in interpersonal communication can determine the relationship to be better in the future. In addition, interpersonal communication also uses certain media in communicating. But in the current development, the media of interpersonal communication are also various other forms, which function as channels of interpersonal communication. Whatsapp media is one of the media choices used in conducting interpersonal communication. In the context of long-distance relationships, mediated interpersonal communication media is needed, namely whatsapp when communicating with each other. This is done because of the distance experienced by each pair, so that the use of media in communication is the only way to maintain a relationship that is forged. Nowadays, technology plays a very important role for couples in Long Distance Relationships, as it allows couples to stay in touch without being face to face. So Whatsapp is considered very useful for long-distance dating, especially video calls, voice calls, chats, emoticons play a role in expressing emotions, expressing yourself, building trust, increasing attachment, making and maintaining contacts. According to research from Hartati Lambuan et al (2019) entitled, "Using Whatsapp as a Communication Media for Long-Distance Dating Phenomenology Studies for Students of the FISIP Udayana Communication Studies Study Program", the choice of WhatsApp as a medium of long-distance communication is due to the convenience offered by WhatsApp, such as the size of the application. small size, attractive design, high message sending speed, quality voice calls and video calls, and can still be used to send messages even though there is no internet quota. The Long-Distance Dating Communication Media Offered by whatsapp makes it easy through various features that help in carrying out Long Distance Relationships and also the costs or quotas that are used are also not much compared to other communication media

Someone who wants to be in a Long-Distance Relationship has to be committed to seeing through the relationship. Commitment is the best predictor of a long-term relationship. Commitment by Rusbult cited by (Kantate & Wisnuwardhani, 2012), commitment is an individual's tendency to maintain a relationship and also, they are psychologically bound in the relationship that is forged. Therefore, it can be assumed that individuals who have a high level of commitment have a tendency to be able to maintain a relationship so that the relationship can last a long time and is less likely to run aground in a short time. Commitment makes a person feel more connected to their partner. Such promises can make them demonstrate efforts to maintain a long-term relationship despite facing or going through various problems. However, the success or failure of a commitment depends on the partner. In the context of interpersonal communication, there are several relationships, namely 1) friendship; 2) romantic/love; 3) families; and 4) workplace (Rosmalina, 2018). In this research is a romantic relationship or love between two individuals who are dating. In this romantic relationship, commitment is one of the dimensions in a romantic relationship (Rosmalina, 2018).

RESEARCH METHODS

In this case the researcher used a qualitative method. The approach used in this study is a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is an approach that provides an understanding of meaning based on people's experiences with certain concepts (Prianti, 2011). In a phenomenological approach, researchers are asked to understand the meaning of an event and people in certain events or situations (Hasbiansyah, 2008). This approach emphasizes the focus on individual subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. Data collection techniques by way of in-depth interviews and observation so that the data to be obtained is qualitative data. The informants of this study are several people who are in long-distance relationships in different cities or provinces.

The criteria for informants in this study are: 1. Couples of informants are couples who are currently in a relationship (dating) and are currently dating. having a long-distance relationship. 2. Informant's spouse is a couple where one of the parties lives in a different city

or province or country. 3. Couples of informants are couples who are in a relationship (dating) for more than 1 year undergoing a long-distance relationship. Informant couples use whatsapp social media as the main communication medium for long-distance communication.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Stages of Interpersonal Communication of Informants

There are several stages that are passed by couples in long distance relationships. Looking at the stages of interpersonal communication from Devito, as shown in the image below, it can be explained as follows:

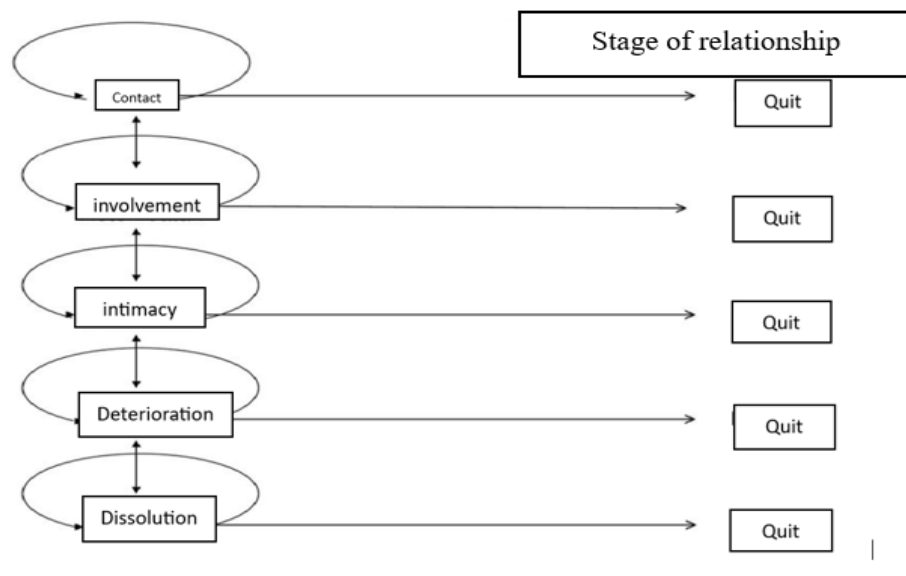


Figure 1. Devito's interpersonal communication stages (Sriwartini; Kartikawati, 2009)

In the findings of this research, the stages of interpersonal communication that existed between the five pairs of informants or as many as 10 people, who had gone through the process or the initial stages of forming a relationship up to the intimacy stage, had differences for each pair, some initially contacted from a meeting. with friends to friends, friends from campus, some through Instagram media, and organizational activities. The involvement started when they exchanged numbers on Whatsapp and exchanged messages in the form of information about each other. As time goes by, an intimacy stage is formed which begins with the growth of a sense of comfort, love and affection, and a sense of belonging, which in the end expresses feelings to each other and establishes a relationship that we usually know, namely dating. As for the background for them to do Long Distance Relationships is due to factors of continuing studies or education and for efforts to get a better job to survive in the future. The existence of these conditions can cause the couple's love relationship to face problems of physical separation, distance, time and place which are often obstacles in life's communication because of the difficulty of achieving long enough communication.

By doing this Long-Distance Relationship, they all take advantage of the WhatsApp media for interpersonal communication. They have the same reasons for choosing whatsapp media, namely as a tool that plays a very important role in establishing a long-distance relationship to make communication very effective and efficient. Whatsapp has advantages that can be used for chatting, audio, video calls, sharing photos or videos, and has privacy and is easy to use. The summary results are listed in the following table:

Table 1. Stages in interpersonal relationships

Informant couple	Contact	Involvement	Intimacy
EV & HL	Initial contact via Instagram	The engagement stage begins when HL replays the IG EV story, moves to WA and meets for worship together after chatting and eating together.	The intimacy stage was when exchanging messages on WhatsApp for several months which created a feeling of comfort and compatibility. From that feeling of comfort, HL finally expressed his feelings and they are dating to this day.
JN & AM	Initial contact through friends	Met several times at a different cafe accidentally which ended up chatting and chatting.	PDKT for about a month, AM expressed his feelings and asked for a more advanced stage from friends, namely dating. So because AM is a very responsible person, JN believes and they end up dating.
AZ & NZ	Initial contact on campus (junior and senior)	request friend on facebook, start chat-chat on messenger. Then move to whatsapp to switch chatan there. They close to each other is 3 months.	During the 3 month approach period they finally agreed to date, at first there was actually no heart to date but from the sarcasm of his friends motivated NZ to have the courage to express his feelings.
AH & AG	First Contact from friend	Follow-follow on IG dan <i>whatsapp</i> and finally close to each other	They feel there is compatibility with each other they finally decided to date.
EL & CT	Initial contact from the PO organization on campus	They joked around, told stories, exchanged ideas and opinions and if there was an outdorr PO activity he always asked them to, and started to build communication and they had met several times.	From their frequent communication and meeting, a sense of comfort grew which made them finally decide to date.

Communication Patterns Are Conducted by Informants Who Are in Long Distance Relationships

Couple I (EZ & HL) uses a separate unbalanced communication pattern, based on the indicators of effective interpersonal communication described above, indicating that Couples I has an ego but one of them succumbs, communicates soberly, one of the pairs is dominant in managing partner. On that side, they know each other more deeply than their parents know, with the aim of taking it to a more serious level. The resulting communication patterns are:

1. Couple I (EZ & HL) uses a separate unbalanced communication pattern, because a separate unbalanced communication pattern is a communication pattern in which one individual dominates the communication relationship. These individuals are considered to be more intelligent in maintaining control, expressing opinions or making decisions. Every conflict that arises is often delegated to those who have more power to analyze problems and make decisions. In this first pair, they have an ego in one of the partners but the other partner gives in, there is dominance that occurs so that it regulates the partner. This couple has been known in depth by their respective parents and has goals for a serious direction in the future.
2. Couples II (JN & AM), has a separate balanced communication pattern, namely in this model, each individual in the pair has their own dominant area. Each had the same strength,

- so neither side seemed stronger or less powerful than the other. In Couples II they understand each other, provide solutions and say sorry, focus on discussing work and studies, get to know each other more deeply involving parents in the relationship, are open and have no secrets to hide so they tend to improve each other and try to understand each other's
3. Couples III (AZ & NZ), have a balanced communication pattern, because this couple has egos but succumb to each other in overcoming conflicts, maintain daily communication, focus on each other's activities, and are committed to self-improvement and giving the best for the goal to a more serious level and maintain communication from time to time.
 4. The fourth couple (AH & AG) has a balanced communication pattern, and tries to increase awareness and tolerance in long-distance relationships in understanding partners who have different communication styles and ethnic and cultural differences (Jakarta and Ambon), have a commitment to be loyal (take care of your heart), and spend more time communicating because this couple believes that time is precious. The fourth couple also tries to make progress for themselves in the future with the aim of living together. The communication pattern that has been implemented by the fifth pair of Long-Distance Relations has challenges and obstacles where the couple has very dominant ethnic and cultural differences, where AH who lives in Jakarta has a style of language or communication that sounds relaxed and slang, while AG who comes from from Ambon has a style of language or communication with high intonation.
 5. Couples V (EL & CT), have overthinking traits where one of them is more mature in dealing with problems and making decisions, doing fun activities such as playing games, and maintaining open communication between partners in all ways to create commitment to trying respond to be the best version of himself. For this reason, this relationship is classified as a separate type of unbalanced communication pattern.

Process of relational dilectic in long distance relationship

The process of relational dialectics occurs which begins with an approach to the relationship between the pair of Long Distance Relationships. As explained by Rawlins (West, Richard, & Turner, 2011) that in a relationship there is tension which will also affect both parties the same as what happened between the Long Distance Relationship partners. In a relationship, it does not only consist of linear parts, but on the contrary, the relationship consists of fluctuations that occur between contradictory desires. Moving forward relationships are described as having certain elements, such as intimacy, self-disclosure, and certainty. Overall, the dialectic in the relationship between the Long Distance Relationship pair shows that their relationship is running harmoniously, this happens because each party understands and has a solution to the conflict that occurs, and provides what suits each other's needs based on the need for mutual affection. so they feel comfortable. In the context of dependency, it can affect stability in a relationship, whereas relational dialectics allows for mutual influence on stability and the process of change in a relationship, which of course is determined by the maturity of both parties from all informants. Thus;

1. The relationship that occurs in this Long Distance Relationship is not linear because everything fluctuates. In this aspect, the five pairs of informants experienced an increase marked by the development of a relationship to a serious commitment stage, especially in long-distance relationships.
2. Relationships have signs of experiencing change. The five informants in the study underwent a transformation as the relationship progressed from not knowing each other to being closer and finally dating
3. Sometimes conflicts occur. The basic fact of life in communication is conflict. The conflicts that occurred in the five couples in this study were due to differences in views,

incompatibilities in limited time and space. But these problems can be resolved because the two partners understand each other and try to adjust to these differences.

4. Resolving conflicts in relationships. The five couples realize that resolving conflicts through communication is very effective, both in finding solutions and making decisions together.

From this research, the five couples hope that the long-distance relationship that is being forged can progress to a more serious stage, namely having the goal of getting married, looking for the best solution for each other, and learning to understand each other's partners..

Conflict as one of the factors that influence interpersonal relationships in LDR

Out of 5 (five) couples admit that conflicts tend to arise in long-distance relationships, one of which is communication that is not smooth. Lack of communication, lack of mutual understanding and sharing of time can lead to a lack of trust in partners, a sense of suspicion (overthinking) and uncertainty in a relationship, which in turn, poor communication makes partners vulnerable to conflict or problems and undermines a commitment itself. Poor communication makes couples vulnerable to conflict.

Efforts to always maintain relationships with effective interpersonal communication

Effective interpersonal communication in long-distance relationships is needed to maintain a relationship and their way of dealing with a conflict or problem that occurs. Communication is effective if it is developed in the direction of conversation, namely between two people who give and convey messages to each other, giving each other balanced feedback. The existence of effective communication means that it will lead to lively interactions because everyone can be active simultaneously. Both exchange messages or information, both are given and received. To have effective communication in maintaining a bond that is being lived, there are several ways that can be used, namely: be nice, communicate, be open, give assurance, share Joint Activities.), be positive (think positively), and focus on improving your self (focus on self-improvement). As an example of the good factor experienced by Couples I (EZ & HL) in undergoing a Long Distance Relationship, based on the results of in-depth interviews, namely, the following is the result of the quote: Fighting like that is like giving space or time for self-introspection. It's finished, let's get ahead of each other, I usually inform you first, then we'll talk carefully first, ask how are you doing. So when his head is cold like that, then talk about the problem again and solve it like that."

In contrast to couple II (JN & AM), Be nice or kindness in undergoing a Long Distance Relationship based on the results of in-depth interviews, namely, the following are the results of the quote: Distance Relationship too, right. Even though he already reported that for example this is again an activity here, here and there, maybe because it's only focused on work, it's only a female name. So, we need news from the man too, right? I'm afraid it's strange, what are all kinds of things, there must be questions, but also long distance relationships, there must be overthinking. So it's like trying to understand his job for a long time, trying to Oh yeah, it's okay, just believe me like that."

In contrast Couples III (AZ & NZ), Be nice or goodness in a Long Distance Relationship is to lower the ego. In contrast to Couples IV (AH & AG), Be nice or kindness in undergoing a Long Distance Relationship establishes mutual understanding for the two of them.

In contrast to Couples V (EL & CT) couple, Be nice or the good they do in a Long Distance Relationship (Long Distance Relationship) always greets and communicates well based on trust. In terms of communication, they try to communicate something that is classified as unimportant but is actually needed to know the partner's feelings so that they can maintain a relationship. On the basis of Openness (Be Open), namely holding discussions and listening to the opinions or stories of partners. Openness (Be Open) experienced by Couples I (EZ & HL),

they try to understand and understand each other and often communicate to be able to accept each other's strengths and weaknesses.

They are also open to each other and have introduced them to their respective parents. Not much different from Couples V (EL & CT), what they do is open is that they are always open to each other in carrying out their long-distance relationship, where they are in different cities, and they both don't know what's going on. done, this is where openness and communication are needed. On the Assurance factor, namely ensuring a bond that is forged is a meaningful thing. Then they also always think positively (Be Positive), that is, they always try to make something fun so that fights can be avoided. Positive thinking (Be Positive) is also done with an action or by Sharing (Share Joint Activities), namely sharing time together in carrying out activities. Then focus on self-improvement (Focus on Improving Yourself), namely doing something that builds yourself better.

Discussion

In an interpersonal relationship can not be separated from various problems, especially with the long-distance relationship that is done by dating couples. At the beginning of the relationship, it starts from the stages of contact, involvement and intimacy. Then for each pair who is in a long-distance relationship, they apply their respective communication patterns, so that in interpersonal communication, they can determine the relationship to be better in the future with this communication pattern. There are separate balanced patterns and unbalanced communication patterns that occur in the pair of informants. In the course of interpersonal relationships that do not turn out to be easy. The principle of relational dialectics theory states that in every relationship various tensions arise because the relationship is not linear. Various attempts were made on dating couples in this research so that the relationship could be maintained properly.

Usually the cause is a lack of communication, a lack of mutual understanding and time sharing can lead to a lack of trust in partners, a sense of suspicion and uncertainty in a relationship. So there are efforts made to maintain interpersonal relationships in these long-distance relationships. This is always based on openness (be opened), there is certainty then the meaningfulness of the relationship (there is firmness), then think positively (be positive), share (Share Joint Activities), and focus on self-improvement (Focus on Improving Yourself). Thus, Interpersonal relationships really need the most appropriate pattern of communication with a strong communication foundation so that in the course of long-distance interpersonal relationships all the dialectics that occur in relationships can be overcome and interpersonal relationships continue to work in harmony.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussion of the research, the conclusions are as follows: that the pattern of communication carried out in pairs of long-distance relationships (Long Distance Relationship) in this research uses more balanced communication patterns that occur in three couples and unbalanced communication patterns separately in two couples. Communication patterns in interpersonal communication can determine the relationship to be better in the future. The choice of WhatsApp media as a medium of communication for long-distance dating couples (Long Distance Relationship) is due to the convenience offered by Whatsapp through the available features that can function to express feelings, communicate intensely between individuals and build trust in these long-distance relationships. The experience of the informants in undergoing a long-distance relationship or long-distance relationship (Long Distance Relationship) is not easy, but they always maintain good relations based on the basis of communication between men and women with strong commitment so that dialectics occurs in their relationships such as resolving conflicts with very strong communication. effective,

both in finding solutions and making decisions together.

REFERENCES

- Annur, Cindy Mutia. (2022). Pengguna WhatsApp Terus Bertambah, Ini Jumlahnya Sekarang. Retrieved from Katadata Media Network website: <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2022/09/07/pengguna-whatsapp-terus-bertambah-ini-jumlahnya-sekarang>
- Devito, Joseph A. (2011). *Komunikasi Antarmanusia*. Tangerang Selatan: Karisma Publishing Group.
- Hasbiansyah, O. (2008). Pendekatan Fenomenologi: Pengantar Praktik Penelitian dalam Ilmu Sosial dan Komunikasi. *Mediator: Jurnal Komunikasi*, 9(1), 163–180. <https://doi.org/10.29313/mediator.v9i1.1146>
- Kantate, Sere Eunice, & Wisnuwardhani, Dian. (2012). Neuroticism Sebagai Moderator Dalam Hubungan Antara Komitmen Dan Motif Berkorban Dalam Hubungan Berpacaran The Moderating Role Of Neuroticism On The Relationship Between Commitment And Motives Of Sacrifice Among Dating Relationship. *Indonesian Psychological Research*, 01(02), 45–56.
- Nasrullah, Rulli. (2022). *Manajemen Komunikasi Digital Perencanaan, Aktivitas, Dan Evaluasi*. Jakarta: Kencana (Prenadamedia Group).
- Prianti, Desi Dwi. (2011). Studi fenomenologi tentang pengalaman komunikasi antar pribadi orang tua-anak terhadap pemahaman anak pada norma-norma perilaku (Kasus pada anak penyandang autisme). *Jurnal Ilmiah Komunikasi Makna*, 2(1), 1–8. Retrieved from <http://jurnal.unissula.ac.id/index.php/makna/article/view/97>
- Rosmalina, Asriyanti. (2018). Peran Komunikasi Interpersonal Dalam Mewujudkan Kesehatan Mental Seseorang. *Prophetic : Professional, Empathy and Islamic Counseling Journal*, 1(01), 49–68. <https://doi.org/10.24235/prophetic.v1i01.3479>
- Sari, P. K., Arofatinajah, S., & Fajarianto, O. (2022). Development of Digital Comic on Thematic Learning to Improve Literature Skills of 5th Grade Students in Elementary School. *JTP-Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 24(1), 38–49.
- Sriwartini, Yuyu; Kartikawati, Dwi. (2009). *Komunikasi Antar Pribadi; Sebuah Pemahaman*. Jakarta: LPPK TRASEJ.
- West, Richard, & Turner, L. H. (2011). *Pengantar Teori Komunikasi, Analisis dan Aplikasi*. Jakarta: Salemba Humanika.