

## **Sociological examination of the effects of using social networks on the secret relationships and incompatibility of couples in Saravan in 2015**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Nowadays, using loving words and distinctive and respectful attitudes, people try to establish communication outside the norms of society and the family system in virtual social networks (SNs), which leads to hidden betrayals. Although communications in SNs have positive aspects like the scope of communication, relieving barriers like space and time, and easier accessibility, it exposes human communication to the serious harms of modern life. Thus, the study was conducted to determine the sociological effects of using SNs on marital relations in Saravan in 2015. The method was descriptive-survey. The population was all the couples in Saravan who were 2482 people, 332 of whom were selected using Cochran's formula and simple random sampling method. A researcher-made questionnaire with 29 questions was used for data collection. The collected data was analyzed in SPSS. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between the type and extent of using SNs with increase in couple incompatibility and increasing couples' secret relationships.*

*Keywords: Secret relationships, marital relations, incompatibility of couples, SNs*

### **Introduction**

Using SNs is expanding around the world every day and the use of these networks in all parts of Iran is no exception. SN is like a virtual meeting place for the citizens of the world, a public meeting point where millions of people from more than 155 countries interact, and is a huge organization whose order is somewhat pre-arranged .

One of the most widely used types of social media is SNs. With the emergence of communication technologies, the most prominent of which are the Internet, mobile phones, and so on, the subject of interpersonal communication went beyond face-to-face communication and was extended to the field of communication via the Internet. This new method of communication is characterized by features like user anonymity, lack of non-verbal communication, physical separation, and physical flexibility.

Furthermore, it seems that the space of SNs and their users' way of benefiting from the lack of some technological infrastructure to represent the educational, economic and commercial functions, public, cultural, social services of Internet networks with a more political perspective and as a security problem are seen, understood and introduced in society. Hence, understanding SNs, their environment, coordinates, capacities, potentials and functions and the reasons for the tendency and attitude of young Iranian users to interact, participate and join them can strengthen or limit any of the readings for or against. On the other hand, the role of the family as the smallest social unit can be very important and effective both in its positive aspect - creating a center of peace - and in its negative aspect - creating social harm. It is in this social base that the couple's relationship is formed and strong bonding relationships are established between the couple. What strengthens a marital relationship is the close emotional relationship and intimacy between couples. Intimate relationships satisfy our emotional needs and are the source of most of our severe injuries as well.

Although communications in SNs have positive aspects like the scope of communication, relieving barriers like space and time, and easier accessibility, it exposes human communication to the serious harms of modern life (Ahmadnia, 2013). Thus, many young people are addicted to SNs and sometimes ignore their important roles at home and cause many problems in the family in spite of having the role of spouse in a family. One of the problems of SNs is the unauthorized access to the privacy of different people. The problem can be seen as the main reason for couples' dissatisfaction with their spouse's presence on SNs that leads to less attention to the spouse eventually ending in divorce (Salmabadi et al., 2014).

The results indicate that all dimensions of marital conflict are affected by SNs. In ranking the dimensions of marital conflict based on the high effect of networks, there is decreased cooperation, sex, finances, irritability, relationship with spouse relatives, relationship with their own relatives and the affairs of children, respectively. Chinese experts stated that in 2014, more than three million couples in the country separated, warned that SNs have been an important factor in the separation of Chinese couples (Dejbani, 2015).

To the functionalist, the negative function of media entry into societies is reducing the social and family relationships of individuals emotionally and reduce the interactive relationship between people in society, the prevalence of a culture of violence and so on and thus crises and conflicts between family members. Saravan is one of the cities of Sistan and Baluchestan province, where most people in the virtual world have an active presence and close communication in recent years. Moreover, with the increase in the number of mobile phone users in recent years, membership in SNs has increased and their number is increasing daily. Like many other cities in Iran, Saravan citizens use SNs and the statistics of its use are expanding day by day. Excessive use of these networks has caused a kind of addiction and people spend a lot of time surfing these networks. This (especially among the young couples) can cause couples to protest against each other and eventually create family disputes and cold relations sometimes (including marital relations). Now, given the growth of these networks among the people and their effects on social and family relations and affecting the couples' attitudes towards each other due to the use of SNs, the study tries to answer the following questions:

1. Does the use of SNs increase marital conflicts?
2. Does the use of SNs increase infidelity and secret relationships among couples?

## **Theoretical foundations**

### **SNs and their significance**

SNs are a new generation of databases focused on by the users of global Internet networks these days. Such databases operate based on online organizations, each of which brings a group of Internet users together with specific characteristics. SNs are considered a type of social media making it possible to access a new form of communication and content sharing on the Internet.

The popularity of virtual network interactions will undoubtedly make changes in human communication. As these SNs become more popular among the people, their ability to bring about social and political change seems to be strengthened and demands more attention from the media, government officials and researchers.

Although the Internet has been examined extensively in the scientific coteries of Iran, not much has been done in the field of SNs. In this situation, it is impossible to make policies for this space with a vague and opaque idea (Shahabi 2013).

Changes in the social system caused by the Internet and its effects on family relationships are undeniable. The popularity and use of SNs affect family and marital satisfaction in different ways, some of which are negative and some positive. These digital technology tools and SNs have a great effect on people, including young couples, and its mismanagement can cause tension, distance and many other problems between couples.

Nowadays, given the wide acceptance of Internet users, especially young people and adolescents, SNs has caused challenges in family relationships. It is necessary to study the issues related to these networks to make correct decisions and careful planning by cultural and social officials and parents. SNs can be studied and evaluated from different aspects. Thus, one of the most important aspects of the functioning of SNs is their negative effects on the family. Accordingly, researchers should examine the role of SNs in life, especially the effect of this phenomenon on the lifestyle of married people. This issue can be considered as a link between sociology and communication.

### **The effect of SNs on inefficient beliefs in marital relations**

SNs can cause inefficient beliefs in family relations so that inefficient beliefs are the main expression of social differences, especially marital relationships. What is meant by such beliefs is, in fact, the existence of misconceptions about oneself and the world. According to Ellis (2001), no event can inherently cause mental disorder in humans, as all stimuli and events are meaningful and interpreted in the mind, and accordingly, the compromise of inefficiencies and emotional problems is actually due to the way information, stimuli, and events are interpreted, interpreted, and processed underpinned by inefficient thoughts and beliefs. Marital life is one of the major areas of irrational and inefficient thoughts. Although many marriage experts argue that it is one of the universal foundations and closely affects the lives of human beings, it is not safe from various harms. For instance, studies have shown that many spouses find it difficult to maintain and maintain a friendly and intimate relationship with each other because they expect to benefit from marriage in general and spouse in particular. In other words, their expectations of marital relations have become broader, broader, and in many cases irrational, and even able to create frustration with married life.

In a healthy family, the couple is committed to the principle of the family and there are no fleeting and temporary feelings and the relations are based on human and equal values, and each member has the ability to cultivate their own inner strengths besides controlling their own feelings and desires. Good communication and the ability to communicate effectively is of the important signs of a healthy family (Gelading & Bahari et al., 2007).

However, the creation of SNs has affected this issue. There is a risk of infidelity in most marriages. The existence of infidelity in marriage always causes a strong emotional shock to the parties. Why do people still betray their spouses in spite of all the pain and sorrow? Men and women are easily affected by their emotions and make the worst mistake of their lives (Harley & Chalmers, translated by Hosseini and Aramnia, 2006).

The only solution to marital problems is to speak in the language of affection or the language of theory of choice. In a discussion based on choice theory, each party can recommend what they think will help solve their problem. Such a dialogue is called a lossless dialogue, both sides are considered winners, and neither side intends to put pressure on the other to get more than its fair share (Gllasser; Translated by Khosh Niyyat and Barazandeh, 2010).

Hal ford et al. (2007) examined the relationship between couples. The results showed that effective communication helps maintain and enhance the couple's relationship. Another issue raised in SNs is the weakening of the foundation of the family and the increase in divorce at the community level. Overall, the increasing use of various SNs has led skeptical couples to encourage people to go to their spouse in cyberspace and thus test their spouse's commitment. Most of the young people and teenagers today, and some adults, somehow know that SNs is to share photos, memories and opinions between friends and

acquaintances. From this perspective, this virtual environment is a good environment for finding old friends and renewing relationships.

## **Methods**

The study was descriptive-survey. The population was all couples aged 18-45 years in Saravan, who were 2482 people. The sample size was determined by random sampling method using Cochran's formula of 332 people.

**Data collection method:** In this study, library and field methods were used for data collection.

## **Data collection tools**

The data collection tool was a questionnaire and note taking. After determining the population, sample size as well as the unit of analysis, it is time to determine the method or technique using which the variables are measured. The Likert scale was used to measure constructs. A researcher-made questionnaire was prepared to study the sociological effects of using SNs on marital relations in Saravan in 2015.

**Analysis (interpretation) based on the questionnaire score:** According to this method of analysis, we collected the scores obtained and then judged based on the table below. The following is the score for a questionnaire.

We add the scores from the above 29 phrases together. The minimum possible score will be 29 and the maximum 145.

**Scores 29 and below:** The effect of SNs harms on marital relationships is weak.

**Scores from 29 to 70:** The effect of SNs harms on marital relationships is moderate.

**Scores from 70 to 145:** The effect of SNs harms on marital relationships is high.

**Validity:** Face validity was used to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire.

**Reliability:** Cronbach's alpha method is usually used in survey research to obtain reliability value. The questionnaire was subjected to a preliminary test on one tenth of the sample size and Cronbach's alpha test was performed after coding and extracting the data.

**Table 1: Reliability of internal consistency of the questionnaire**

Internal consistency	Subscale
0.74	Evaluation of marital conflicts
0.79	Evaluation of infidelity and secret relationships
0.78	Measuring the type and extent of use of SNs

## **Data analysis**

Two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics were used to measure the data obtained from this study. In descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage tables) and in inferential statistics, tests appropriate to the data like Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used. In this study, according to the subject of the study, regression was used to predict the effect of SNs on marital relationships and spss22 was used to analyze the data.

## Results

### Descriptive results

**Table 2: Indices**

	Frequency	Percentage
Female	166	50
Male	166	50
Total	332	100
Marital status		
Less than 3 years	64	21.4
Between 3 and 8 years	67	22.6
Between 8 and 13 years	95	26.8
More than 13 years	106	29.2
Total	332	100

According to Table 2, out of 332 subjects, 166 (50%) were males and 166 (50%) were females.

Out of 332 people examined, 64 (21.4%) had a duration of marriage of less than 3 years, 67 (22.6%) between 3 and 8 years, 95 (26.8%) between 8 and 13 years and 106 (29.2%) were over 13 years old.

### Inferential results

**1- There is a significant relationship between the type and extent of SNs use and the increase in marital incompatibility of couples in Saravan.**

H0: There are no significant relationships between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase in marital incompatibility of Saravan couples.

H1: There is a significant relationship between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase in marital incompatibility of Saravan couples.

Inter-regression analysis was used to analyze the first hypothesis.

The correlation matrix between the type and the extent of using SNs and the increase in marital incompatibility was 0.508, indicating a positive and significant relationship between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase in marital incompatibility.

**Table 3: Inter-regression results between the type and the extent of use of SNs and the increase in marital incompatibility**

Analysis of variance And the degree of freedom	t	Beta	Adjusted R- squared	R-squared	Correlation	Increase in marital incompatibility	
57.804 (166.1) ** (01.0> p) **	**7.603	0.508	0.254	0.258	0.508	Type and extent of using SNs	Saravan couples

The results of inter-regression to predict the rate of marital incompatibility in Table 3 indicate that the type and the extent of using SNs 0.254 predicts the rate of marital incompatibility among couples in Saravan. Therefore, the type and extent of using SNs (Beta = 0.508,  $p < 0.01$ ) has a positive and significant relationship with increase in marital incompatibility and predicts the rate of marital incompatibility among couples in Saravan. Beta standard coefficients show that with the increase of a standard deviation unit in the score of type and the use of SNs, the rate of marital incompatibility of Saravan couples increases by 0.508. H1 is confirmed and H0 is rejected in this hypothesis. Although communications in SNs have positive aspects like the scope of communication, relieving barriers like space and time, and easier accessibility, it exposes human communication to the serious harms of modern life.

**2- There is a significant relationship between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase of secret relationships between Saravan couples.**

H0: There are no significant relationships between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase of secret relationships between Saravan couples.

H1: There is a significant relationship between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase of secret relationships between couples in Saravan.

Inter-regression analysis was used to analyze the second hypothesis.

The value of the correlation matrix between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase of couples' secret relationships is 0.363, showing a positive and significant relationship between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase of couples' secret relationships in Saravan.

**Table 4: The results of inter-regression between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase of couples' secret relationships**

Analysis of variance And the degree of freedom	t	Beta	Adjusted R-squared	R-squared	Correlation	Increase in marital incompatibility	
25.152 ** (166.1)	**5.015	0.363	0.126	0.132	0.363	Type and extent of using SNs	Saravan couples

(p<0.01) \*\*

The results of inter-regression to predict the secret relationships between couples in Table 4 show that the type and extent of using SNs (0.126) predicts the secret relationships between couples in Saravan. Thus, the type and extent of using SNs (Beta = 0.363, p <0.01) has a positive and significant relationship with the increase of secret relationships and predicts the secret relationships among couples in Saravan. Beta standard coefficients show that with increase in the standard deviation unit in the type score and the extent of using SNs, the secret relationships between Saravan couples increases by 0.363. H1 is confirmed and H0 is rejected in this hypothesis. The relationships that are formed in SNs are baseless and have no real base. Many people do not say kind words to their spouse, but they treat each other with respect and say kind words to their add lists. People who are very sensitive to their spouse do not want to witness their spouse talking privately with the opposite sex. This is normal and has nothing to do with men and women at all, although women are more sensitive than men are. Many people who are addicted to SNs have shaky family relationships. The effect of SNs on the personality of individuals and on relation to the opposite sex in cyberspace has broken the boundaries, destroyed the relationship between legal illegal people, reducing the commitment of individuals to their families and spouses.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The purpose of the study was the sociological examination of the effects of using SNs on secret relationship and incompatibility of couples in Saravan. The results found a significant relationship between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase in marital incompatibility of couples in Saravan. H1 is confirmed and H0 is rejected in this hypothesis. According to Cultivation Theory, Grebner refer to the simple and pervasive consequences of overuse of media. According to this theory, the media has small, gradual and direct but increasing and important long-term effects on its audience. The significant point in Grebner's study is that the use of the media leads to the inference of a general view of violence in the world. The world looks more unpleasant and filthy in the eyes of high-consumption users. Later on, Grebner added that to popularize and intensify in revising this theory, two concepts acknowledge the fact that collective networks have different consequences for different social groups. To him, normalization occurs when excessive use leads to symmetry of views in groups. Moreover, exacerbation happens when the effect of cultivation is greater in a particular group of the population.

These results are consistent with those of Dusti and Mohagheghi (2015) who showed in their study entitled "The relationship between the uses of SNs on marital conflicts" that these two variables have a significant relationship with each other. In explaining the results of this hypothesis, one can state that God

says in the Holy Quran: And one of the signs of God is that He created for you wives with whom you can rest and put friendship and kindness between you (Surah Rom, verse 21).

When couples are in their private space, they must make decisions about various issues.

Their being in this position creates various demands and opinions that have to be solved. The decisions made by couples determine the quality and strength of the couple's relationship, where sometimes decreases the quality of the relationship and satisfaction decreases because of the unmanaged differences or expectations. Conflict is a necessary product of cohabitation. Conflict happens when two people live together as a couple. Given the nature of couples' interactions, there are times when disagreements are observed or the needs are not met. Thus, spouses feel anger and dissatisfaction towards each other, and each believes that the other is an undesirable and incompatible person who causes him/her resentment and torment. Using loving words and distinctive and respectful attitudes, people try to establish communication outside the norms of society and the family system in SNs, which leads to hidden betrayals. Although communications in SNs have positive aspects like the scope of communication, relieving barriers like space and time, and easier accessibility, it exposes human communication to the serious harms of modern life

Moreover, the results showed a significant relationship between the type and extent of using SNs and the increase in secret relationships between couples in Saravan. H1 is confirmed and H0 is rejected in this hypothesis. According to the theory, the social technology model is a complex relationship between technology and the family, introduced by Jane Lanigan in 2009 showing an effort to organize existing knowledge in the field of family life relationships and technology.

This model is designed based on an ecological approach, two-way conceptualization, family system theory and developmental theory. The social technology model allows for some kind of analysis of family-technology interaction at different levels. These levels are the exosystem (social environment where the individual is not directly involved), macrosystem (cultural values, laws, and so on) and the chronosystem (history). The social technology model interprets the complex interaction of factors affecting some for us, which are the individual characteristics, technological characteristics, family factors, and extra-family effects.

These results are in line with those of Fathi et al. (2013) who showed that the use of SNs causes unfaithfulness of couples that unfaithfulness can cause secret relationships. In explaining the results, one can state that the less the use of virtual SNs, the greater the marital commitment. One can also state that these networks, with their diversity and breadth, make people unaware of their main role in life. The role of the spouse is one of the most important, eternal roles people accept, where they must respect all the obligations, principles and demands of each other. Over time, the use of SNs affects the way people think and interact and changes a person's thoughts. Basically, the relationships formed in SNs are baseless and have no real base. Many people do not say kind words to their spouse, but they treat each other with respect and say kind words to their add lists. People who are very sensitive to their spouse do not want to witness their spouse talking privately with the opposite sex. This is normal and has nothing to do with men and women at all, although women are more sensitive than men are. Many people who are addicted to SNs have shaky family relationships that leads to divorce in some cases. The effect of SNs on the personality of individuals and on relation to the opposite sex in cyberspace has broken the boundaries, destroyed the relationship between legal illegal people, reducing the commitment of individuals to their families and spouses.

Alikhani (2015) argues that the cooling of emotional relationships and dissatisfaction with family life has caused major failures and breakdowns in the lives of adolescents and young people, and these indicate deep problems at the family level. Excessive use of cyberspace in Iran is the cause of divorce and Facebook is one of the reasons for marital disputes and divorce.

Lenhart & Duggan (2014) conducted a study entitled "Couples, Internet and SNs" in the United States for "providing statistics on the role of the Internet and SNs in the lives of couples to assess this issue." The results showed that digital technology tools and SNs have a great effect on people, including young couples, and their thoughtless management can cause tension, distance and many other problems among them.

Andriana Bellou (2013) conducted a study entitled "The effect of Internet expansion on marriage rates: evidence of broadband market" in the United States for "examining the spread of the Internet in society and

its impact on the rate of marriage.” The results showed that the expansion of the Internet and the increase in its bandwidth in various regions have a drastic effect on family formation and increases the marriage rate, especially among the people who are 21-30 years old.

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