

How Long-Distance Relationship Effects the Marital Satisfaction among Couples? Analyzing the Mediating Effect of Trust and Moderating Effect of Resilience

Halema Sadia ¹ Mussarat Hussain ² Tauqeer Ahmed Lak ³ Muhammad Mobeen ⁴ Zunaira Ghaffar ⁵

ABSTRACT: Long-distance relationships (LDRs) bring significant challenges to the marital satisfaction due to the pressures of distance, diminished emotional bonding, and limited communication avenues. The study aims at assessing the mediating role trust and moderating role of resilience in the effect of LDRs on marital satisfaction. A cross-sectional design was adopted, and 400 married women residing in Pakistan, whose husbands work abroad, were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Validated instruments used included the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-32) to measure marital satisfaction, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), and a standardized trust scale. Findings revealed a significant negative relationship between LDRs and marital satisfaction ($\beta = -0.355$, $p < 0.001$). Trust emerged as a strong mediator ($\beta = 0.424$, $p < 0.001$), while resilience moderated the negative impact of LDRs on marital satisfaction ($\beta = -0.226$, $p = 0.002$). A significant positive correlation was found between trust and resilience ($r = 0.638$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting their combined role in enhancing emotional intimacy and coping with separation-related stress. The study highlights the critical roles of trust and resilience in sustaining marital stability in LDRs and provides a foundation for developing interventions aimed at strengthening these dimensions in long-distance marital contexts.

KEYWORDS: Long-Distance Relationship, Marital Satisfaction, Trust, Resilience, Pakistan

¹ M.Phil. (Sociology), University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: Halemaawan66@gmail.com

² Lecturer, Department of Sociology & Criminology, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: mussarat.hussain@uos.edu.pk

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8230-7679>

³ Lecturer, Department of Sociology & Criminology, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: tauqeer.ahmed@uos.edu.pk

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0399-1826>

⁴ Lecturer, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan/Doctoral Researcher, School of Integrated Climate and Earth System Sciences (SICSS), University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany.

Email: muhammad.mobeen@uni-hamburg.de

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0399-1826>

⁵ M.Phil. (Sociology), University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: zunaira.ghaffar129@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: Mussarat Hussain

✉ mussarat.hussain@uos.edu.pk

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, long distance relation (LDR) has become the most common experience in this globalized world because of career opportunities, education, military service, and other forms of mobility around the globe (Meyers, 2024). LDRs offer unique experiences and personal growth but come with challenges that can have a bearing on marital satisfaction. It is, therefore, important to understand how long-distance effects marital satisfaction for healthier and fulfilling marriages.

Studies indicate that a vast percentage of Pakistanis are in LDRs, which is a trend around the world. The reasons for this trend can be attributed to international job assignments, study abroad programs, and the increasing trend of remote work, thus mirroring a broader societal shift towards greater geographical mobility.

The Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment reports that over 11 million Pakistanis are estimated to be living abroad and many of them have their families in Pakistan whom they communicate with over long distances. Thousands of Pakistani students study abroad and add to the list of people having relationships over long distances (Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment - Government of Pakistan [2024](#)).

Marital satisfaction is a key feature of a successful relationship. It involves various factors, including emotional strain, communication, conflict resolution, sexual intimacy, jealousy, and overall relationship quality (Kazim & Rafique, [2021](#)). LDRs, characterized by physical separation and limited face-to-face interaction, can pose significant challenges to marital satisfaction (Kazim & Rafique, [2021](#)). The absence of daily shared experiences, reduced intimacy, and increased dependance on technology-mediated communication can strain the emotional bond between partners.

Research indicates that the relationship satisfaction in a LDR depends on the quality of communication and frequency of interaction. The couples involved often have to adopt unique communication strategies and make certain expectations to handle the situation. Despite all this, most couples remain highly satisfied and stable, indicating that possibly other factors might help cancel out the adverse impacts of physical separation (Jiang & Hancock, [2013](#)).

It is important to recognize that not all LDRs turn out disastrous. Trust acts as a mediator and resilience as a moderator of the influence of these relationships to marital satisfaction (Stafford, [2005](#); Stafford & Merolla, [2007](#)). Trust acts as a foundation for preserving emotional connection and vindicating the negative effects of physical separation (Dainton & Aylor [2002](#)). High levels of trust can make partners gain confidence in their relationship. It also reduces feelings of insecurity and jealousy (Gottman [2011](#)). Resilience is the ability to bounce back and cope with difficulty, making it easier for individuals and couples to push through the challenges that come along with LDRs (Masten, [2001](#); Bonanno [2004](#)). Resilient couples are better equipped to manage stress, maintain positive outlooks, and support each other during times of adversity.

This study aims to explore the effect of LDRs on marital satisfaction, with a specific focus on the mediating role of trust and the moderating role of resilience. By examining the interaction between these factors, we can gain intuitions into the mechanisms that contribute to positive outcomes in LDRs and recognize strategies to support couples facing these challenges and couples can better manage the demands of physical separation and enhance their relationship quality. This research was also providing practical recommendations for couples and therapists to enhance relationship satisfaction in the context of LDRs.

Rational of the Study

With the rise of long-distance marriages in Pakistan due to globalization and increased opportunities abroad, there is an urgent need for in-depth research in this area. Many Pakistani couples endure long-term physical separation due to the husband's employment or education abroad, and the impact on marital satisfaction must be understood (Dainton & Aylor, [2002](#); Stafford & Merolla, [2007](#)). Women left behind often face emotional and mental pressure, taking on greater responsibilities at home, which can be stressful and overwhelming (Bradbury & Karney, [2019](#)). This burden is intensified in the Pakistani cultural context, where the lack of strong extended family support can lead to social isolation and limited opportunities to express emotional struggles (Rafique, [2019](#)). Trust is crucial in sustaining marital satisfaction in long-distance

relationships. The absence of physical closeness can strain emotional bonds and foster trust issues, which negatively affect communication and satisfaction (Dainton & Aylor, [2002](#)). This study explores how trust serves as a sustaining force. Resilience the ability to cope and adapt is also vital. Examining resilience among Pakistani women in long-distance marriages can reveal coping mechanisms that help maintain relationship quality (Stafford & Merolla, [2007](#)). This research offers practical implications for couples, counselors, and support services. It aims to provide evidence-based recommendations to improve relationship quality by identifying how trust and resilience impact marital satisfaction. Despite growing interest, existing studies lack insight into how these two factors specifically shape satisfaction in long-distance marriages.

Significance of the Study

The phenomenon of LDRs is gaining much popularity in Pakistan due to labor migration, foreign education, and opportunities abroad for career growth. According to the reports of the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, more than 11 million Pakistanis are working abroad with a considerable number of them married and establishing a LDR with their spouse and families back home (Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment - Government of Pakistan [2024](#)). This high prevalence of LDR demands a wide knowledge of their implications on marital satisfaction in the context of Pakistani cultural and social spheres.

Firstly, LDR prevalence has increased for reasons such as international careers, education, and other global opportunities. Understanding the implication of physical separation over marital satisfaction is key to this regard. This paper discusses how LDRs effect marital satisfaction and examines the roles of trust and resilience. Secondly, the practical implications for the couples and relationship counselors. For example, it helps explain how trust acts as mediator and resilience acts as moderator of the interplay between LDRs and marital satisfaction thereby providing direct and actionable recommendations for managing relationships. This becomes useful in this respect for counselors and therapists working with clients in LDR as they will be assisting in the development of interventions that are more specific to overcome challenges they may face (Stafford, [2005](#); Gottman [2011](#)). In summary, this study advances the understanding of LDRs by examining the roles of trust and resilience. It provides valuable contributions to both theoretical and practical domains, benefiting individuals, couples, and professionals involved in relationship management and support.

Literature Review

Long-distance relationships (LDRs) have become increasingly common due to globalization, international education, career opportunities, and labor migration. These relationships, characterized by geographical separation and limited face-to-face interaction, present unique challenges and opportunities for marital satisfaction. Research shows that while LDRs can strain emotional bonds due to reduced physical intimacy, effective communication, trust, and resilience can significantly mitigate negative outcomes (Stafford & Merolla, [2007](#); Dainton & Aylor, [2002](#)).

Effects of LDR on Marital Satisfaction: Positive and Negative Outcomes

Long-distance relationships are often a complicated combination of difficulties and advantages that affect marital satisfaction. On the negative side, physical separation by its nature fosters increased stress and loneliness. Stafford noted that geographical distance between partners often goes hand-in-hand with greater

emotional stress because intimacy is hard to maintain with the absence of physical closeness and daily interaction (Stafford, [2005](#)). This kind of isolation brings about much frustration when one feels they are not receiving instant support from the partner at critical times, such as family emergencies or personal achievements where the presence of the partner is most required. Moreover, long separations tend to increase psychological stress, such as anxiety and depression, since the unknown time of reunification between partners tends to create feelings of insecurity and instability in the relationship (Papp et al., [2013](#)). Such uncertainty, including doubts regarding fidelity, future life goals, and career plans, can continue to erode satisfaction, lead to conflicts, and reduce overall contentment in such relationships (Knobloch, [2008](#)).

The backbone of any successful relationship is communication. Communication becomes both a source of strength and strain in LDRs. The use of digital communication media, including video calls, instant messaging, and social media networks, makes communication easier but also sometimes leads to miscommunication and the degradation of meaningful interaction. As Hertlein and Blumer ([2013](#)) pointed out, although these applications help bridge geographic distances, overreliance on technology will only lead to discussions at the superficial level rather than at the real depth of meanings (Hertlein & Blumer, [2013](#)).

Economic constraints pose another significant level of difficulty in LDRs. Economic pressure, such as the cost of frequent visits, maintaining dual households, or investing in effective communication tools, puts an additional burden on couples (Hardie & Lucas, [2010](#)). As such, the chronic economic pressure tends to limit opportunities for relationship-enhancing activities such as vacations or shared hobbies, thereby reducing satisfaction over time. It becomes impossible to afford regular in-person visits, amplifying emotional distance between the two, and making it difficult for couples to sustain their connection.

Despite these challenges, LDRs also afford unique opportunities for growth and satisfaction. Couples develop deeper emotional connections because of the increased effort that they invest in maintaining communication. Jiang and Hancock identified that strategic self-disclosure and intentional, frequent communication in LDRs result in a deep emotional connection that helps bridge the physical distance (Jiang & Hancock, [2013](#)). A couple might develop closeness through purposeful and meaningful interaction that equals or even surpasses the closeness experienced by couples living geographically close to one another.

Trust as a Mediator in LDRs and Marital Satisfaction

Trust acts as an important mediating variable in the relationship between LDRs and marital satisfaction, especially through its impact on how relational dynamics such as communication, emotional intimacy, and conflict resolution shape satisfaction. In LDRs, trust is highly critical to ensuring emotional security because distance creates uncertainty with a partner's behavior and intentions. Trust acts as a mediator through which the influence of communication can have an impact on marital satisfaction through the formation of a positive perception of a partner's intention. When trust is high, a partner will most probably perceive communication as a loving, honest, and committed act that will lead to more satisfaction in marriages (Rhodes, [2002](#)). On the contrary, when there is a low level of trust, even though a couple communicates frequently, the partner may view it with mistrust, which thus weakens its outcome on satisfaction. Relational uncertainty such as doubts about a partner's motives or the future of the relationship can substitute a pessimism bias, leading individuals to understand messages more negatively, which in turn causes misunderstandings and weakens relationship satisfaction (Knobloch et al., [2006](#)). Physical separation can make trust issues worse in LDRs by fostering

feelings of envy, insecurity, and doubt about a partner's loyalty. Building and sustaining trust in these kinds of relationships requires openness, constant assurance, and truthful communication. Without these components, even little miscommunications can become more serious, resulting in emotional distance and a lower level of relationship pleasure (Rocket Health, [n.d.](#)).

Furthermore, trust mediates the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies in LDRs. In relationships where trust is strong, partners are more likely to engage in constructive conflict resolution, approaching disagreements with patience and understanding, which improves marital satisfaction. Constructive conflict resolution often involves clear communication, emotional regulation, and a focus on problem-solving rather than blame. High trust enables couples to believe in each other's good intentions, making it easier to resolve disputes amicably. However, in relationships with low trust, conflict resolution efforts can become more contentious (De Dreu & Weingart, [2003](#)).

Resilience as a Moderator in LDRs and Marital Satisfaction

Resilience acts as a buffer in the moderation of the effects of physical separation and stress on marital satisfaction in LDRs. It influences the way the couple responds to and manages the challenges that come with being apart, thus affecting the intensity of the impact of stressors such as communication barriers, emotional distance, and conflicts on marital satisfaction. The effects of these stressors can therefore either be amplified or damped by the resilience of the individual, who can cope with adversity and maintain a positive outlook (Bonanno, [2004](#)). For instance, resilient individuals will have the flexibility and creativity to cope with LDR communication challenges that limit face-to-face interactions and stay emotionally connected to their partner. High resilience amplifies the positive impact of effective communication on marital satisfaction by promoting emotional security and feelings of togetherness (Simpson & Rholes, [2012](#)). Low resilience may weaken the effectiveness of communication because the emotional distance between the partners is overwhelming, and this may result in misunderstandings and reduced satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, [1995](#); Pietromonaco & Collins, [2017](#)).

In a similar manner, resilience minimizes the effect of emotional strain on conflict resolution in LDRs. A resilient person by nature has adaptive ways of solving conflicts, which include problem-solving, emotional regulation, and optimism. Such adaptive ways reduce the stress of separation on marital satisfaction (Kinnunen et al., [2004](#)). People with low resilience may be less effective at conflict resolution, thus increasing relationship strain and lowering satisfaction. Resilience also moderates how individuals cope with the unpredictability of LDRs. In the midst of continuous change, as is the case with changing work shifts or time zones, resilience allows individuals to be flexible and hopeful. Such flexibility increases marital satisfaction through control and confidence in overcoming relationship difficulties (Masten, [2001](#)). High resiliency reduces frustration and perceived helplessness because it becomes relatively easier for a couple to accommodate the requirements that the relationship might be placing before them, thus causing a reduction in relationship satisfaction (Kaygas & Özbay, [2023](#)).

Theoretical Framework

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory, first proposed by Bowlby ([1982](#)) and expanded by Ainsworth ([1978](#)), explains how relationship dynamics change, especially in long-distance relationships (LDRs). Bowlby emphasized that

humans are biologically predisposed to form attachments that shape emotional and social development. Ainsworth identified three main attachment styles: secure (trust and security), anxious-ambivalent (dependency concerns), and anxious-avoidant (emotional distancing). Later, a fourth style, disorganized attachment, was added, linked to inconsistent or abusive care, causing confusion and anxiety (Main & Solomon, 1990). Applied to LDRs, attachment theory helps us understand how these styles affect marital satisfaction. Secure attachment fosters trust and emotional closeness despite physical distance because of confidence in a partner's commitment (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Conversely, anxious or avoidant styles may increase anxiety or withdrawal, lowering satisfaction (Feeney, 2004). Trust plays a crucial mediating role by reducing anxiety related to uncertainty (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). Resilience the ability to adapt and recover from stress is also key, as securely attached individuals tend to be more resilient, helping maintain emotional intimacy through effective communication (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Overall, attachment theory underscores the importance of trust and resilience in sustaining marital satisfaction amid physical separation.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, introduced by Homans and Blau (1958), views relationships as exchanges where individuals seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs. Rewards include love, support, and companionship, while costs involve time, effort, and emotional strain. Key concepts include comparison levels and alternatives, which influence how people evaluate relationship satisfaction. In LDRs, couples face costs such as physical absence and emotional challenges but may gain rewards like enhanced communication and independence (Stafford, 2005). Trust functions as a major reward, lowering insecurity and anxiety linked to distance (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). Resilience also helps couples adapt and perceive the costs as less burdensome by finding creative ways to stay connected and support each other emotionally (Neff & Broadly, 2011). This theory explains how couples balance costs and rewards in LDRs, with trust and resilience acting as important factors that promote marital satisfaction and relationship sustainability.

Family Systems Theory






Bowen's Family Systems Theory (1978) views the family as an emotional system in which members are interdependent and emotionally attached to one another. Even physical distance in LDRs will not completely cut off emotional ties but can instead produce feelings of loneliness and interfere with role fulfillment, which tests family cohesion and marital satisfaction (Bowen, 1978). Role satisfaction is critical to family stability, and loss of a partner can upset this equilibrium, heightening emotional distance and tension. Additionally, patterns of emotions are intergenerationally transmitted and interrupted by physical separation, perpetuating disconnection. Trust intervenes in these difficulties by maintaining emotional connection and stability, whereas resilience aids in adapting to role disruption. Family Systems Theory therefore provides understanding of the ways in which trust, and resilience sustain marital satisfaction in LDRs in spite of physical distance.

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984) conceptualizes stress as a cognitive appraisal and coping dynamic process. People evaluate whether situations are stressful and examine their

coping resources, which, in turn, affect how they handle stress. Coping mechanisms involve problem-focused (confronting stressors directly) and emotion-focused (controlling emotional responses). Within LDRs, partners cognitively appraise separation stress based on their trust and belief about the importance of the relationship. High trust alleviates perceived stress and facilitates separation better. Couples employ problem-focused coping through visit planning or communication improvement, and emotion-focused coping through affect management with self-care or social support. Trust acts as a mediator in the effect of uncertainty on marital satisfaction, whereas resilience acts as a moderator of coping capability, enabling couples to adapt and sustain relationship quality in spite of difficulties. The model therefore explains how LDR couples deal with separation stress and maintain marital satisfaction.

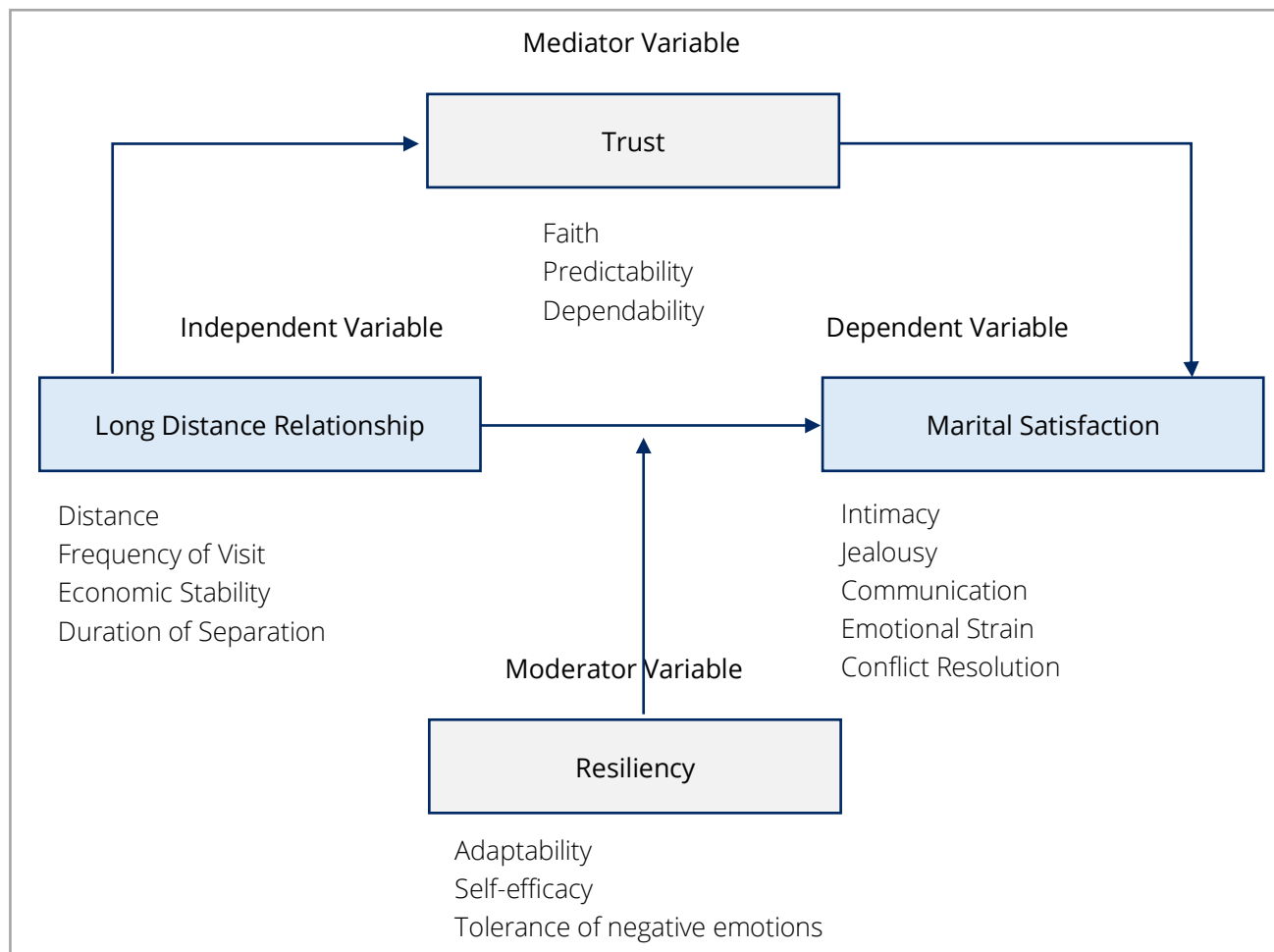
Figure 1
Visual representation of comparison of theories on long distance relationship

Comparison of Theories on Long-Distance Relationships				
Characteristic	Attachment Theory	Social Exchange Theory	Family Systems Theory	Transactional Model of Stress and Coping
 Core Concept	Attachment styles impact relationships	Maximize rewards, minimize costs	Family as interdependent emotional system	Stress as appraisal and coping process
 Impact on LDRs	Secure attachment fosters trust despite distance	Couples balance costs (distance) and rewards	Physical separation disrupts family cohesion	Partners appraise separation-related stress
 Role of Trust	Fosters emotional closeness and reduces anxiety	Reduces insecurity linked to distance	Preserves emotional bonds and stability	Reduces perceived stress, makes separation manageable
 Role of Resilience	Helps maintain emotional intimacy	Helps adapt and perceive costs as less burdensome	Supports adaptation to role disruptions	Moderates coping ability, helps couples adjust
 Impact on Marital Satisfaction	Secure attachment increases satisfaction	Balances costs and rewards to promote satisfaction	Maintains satisfaction despite physical distance	Sustains satisfaction by coping with separation stress

Conceptual Framework

Figure 2

Visual Depiction of Conceptual Framework



Hypothesis

- Hypothesis 1 (H1):** There is a negative association between LDRs and marital satisfaction among married couples.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Resilience moderates the relationship between LDRs and marital satisfaction, such that higher resilience is associated with higher marital satisfaction despite the challenges of LDRs.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3):** Trust mediates the relationship between LDRs and marital satisfaction, such that the negative impact of LDRs on marital satisfaction is diminished when trust levels are high.
- Hypothesis 4 (H4):** LDRs negatively affect marital satisfaction, and this effect is mediated by trust and moderated by resilience among married couples.
- Hypothesis 5 (H5):** LDRs, trust, and resilience have direct effects on marital satisfaction among married couples.
- Hypothesis 6 (H6):** There is a negative correlation between LDRs and marital satisfaction among married couples.
- Hypothesis 7 (H7):** There is a positive correlation between trust and marital satisfaction among married couples.

- h) **Hypothesis 8 (H8):** There is a positive correlation between resilience and marital satisfaction among married couples.
- i) **Hypothesis 9 (H9):** There is a positive correlation between resilience and trust among married couples in the context of LDRs.

Methodology

In this research, a quantitative approach was used. This study employs a cross-sectional survey research design to capture the relationships between LDRs, marital satisfaction, trust, and resilience at one point in time. The cross-sectional survey research design enables the analysis of multiple variables at the same time, providing an all-rounded understanding of their associations in the context of LDRs. This is an ideal survey method of the research. The target population in this study consists of married women in Pakistan whose husbands are abroad for work. This group has been chosen in light of the socio-cultural context in Pakistan, which is witnessing increasing LDRs due to work abroad. To recruit for this research, purposive sampling and snowball sampling are used concurrently. These combined approaches allow for the most suitable participants to be selected while being able to bypass certain logistical inconveniences in accessing the particular target population. For this research study, a sample size of 400 participants has been determined. Based on the fact that achieving comprehensive understanding in regard to phenomena being investigated was serve as a good justification of sample size in research. Social science studies follow a minimum requirement of 10 respondents per questionnaire item to maintain reliability and validity statistics (Cohen et al., [2007](#)).

Given that the questionnaire has 40 items, a sample size of 400 was provide a good basis for meaningful analysis and generalization of findings. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) (Connor & Davidson, [2003](#)) was modified to assess resilience 10 items. This scale was linguistically and culturally adapted and had been utilized in prior LDR research, and thus it was appropriate for analyzing resilience in marital satisfaction. The Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-32) (Funk & Rogge, [2007](#)), a 32-item scale assessing dimensions such as communication and intimacy, was also modified for cultural appropriateness to assess marital satisfaction in long-distance marriages. The Trust Scale (Rempel, [1985](#)), a 7-item trust instrument examining predictability, dependability, and faith, was adjusted to capture the unique issues of geographic distance, while ensuring its validity and reliability. Finally, a self-conceptualized Long-Distance Relationship (LDR) Scale with 10 items was specifically created for this research to identify the experiences of married women whose husbands worked abroad, examining communication frequency, emotional intimacy, and relationship difficulties. This scale was drawn from the existing literature and pilot testing to ensure concision and cultural appropriateness. Overall, these research instruments and methods formed a sound framework to systematically examine the psychological dynamics of LDRs in the targeted sample. Descriptive and inferential statistics was employed to analyze data. The description of the responses and the demographics is given in the form of descriptive statistics, which give a short description of the data obtained. Yet, hypothesis testing and describing the association between different variables was carried out by using a variety of statistical techniques, such as correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and moderated mediation analysis, all being a class of inferential statistics (Tabachnick & Fidell, [2013](#)). For the purpose of carrying out effective data analysis, the

application of SPSS software or the smart PLS 4 software is appropriate, which facilitates the effective processing of the data and the effective interpretation of the result.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Demographic Variable

Sr.	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Age		
	18-24	53	13.3%
	25-34	135	33.8%
	35-44	108	27.0%
	45-54	76	19.0%
	55 above	28	7.0%
2.	Education		
	Illiterate	17	4.3%
	Vocational training	19	4.8%
	Primary education	12	3.0%
	Secondary education	41	10.3%
	Bachelor's degree	122	30.5%
	Master's degree	104	26.0%
	MPhil/MS	50	12.5%
	Doctorate or higher	35	8.8%
3.	Ethnicity		
	Punjabi	328	82.0%
	Sindhi	18	4.5%
	Pashtun	23	5.8%
	Baloch	8	2.0%
	Muhajir	11	2.8%
	Kashmiri	12	3.0%
4.	Religion		
	Islam	356	89.0%
	Christianity	40	10.0%
	Hinduism	4	1.0%
5.	what is your family income		
	Less than 2 lakhs	87	21.8%
	2-4 lakh	204	51.0%
	4-6 lakh	51	12.8%
	more than 6 lakhs	58	14.5%
6.	What type of marriage do you have?		
	love marriage	135	33.8%
	Arranged marriage	265	66.3%

Sr.	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
7.	Duration of marriage		
	one year	54	13.5%
	2-3 years	54	13.5%
	4-5years	111	27.8%
	6-7years	97	24.3%
	more than 8years	84	21.0%
8.	Number of Children		
	none	87	21.8%
	1	136	34.0%
	2	109	27.3%
	3 or more	68	17.0%
9.	How many of your children are currently enrolled in educational institutions (school, college, or university)?		
	none	120	30.0%
	1	131	32.8%
	2	96	24.0%
	3 or more	53	13.3%
10.	How many years have you been in an LDR?		
	1-2 year	86	21.5%
	3-4 years	105	26.3%
	5-6 years	90	22.5%
	more than 7 years	119	29.8%
11.	In which country does your husband live?		
	Saudi Arabia	120	30.0%
	UAE	86	21.5%
	UK	46	11.5%
	US	86	21.5%
	Canada	24	6.0%
	Australia	22	5.5%
	Malaysia	16	4.0%
12.	How often do you visit your partner in person?		
	never	193	48.3%
	once a year	64	16.0%
	every 2-3years	61	15.3%
	every 4-5 years	34	8.5%
	more than 5 years apart	48	12.0%
13.	How many days does you visit your partner in person at a time?		
	zero days	193	48.3%
	1-10 days	39	9.8%
	11-20 days	23	5.8%
	21-30 days	42	10.5%
	more than 30 days	103	25.8%

Sr.	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
14.	How often does your partner visit you in person?		
	once a year	222	55.5%
	every 2-3years	68	17.0%
	every 4-5 years	110	27.5%
15.	How many days does your partner visit you in person at a time?		
	1-10 days	17	4.3%
	11-20 days	36	9.0%
	21-30 days	226	56.5%
	more than 30 days	121	30.3%
16.	Area of residence		
	Rural area	94	23.5%
	Semi-rural (partially rural with some urban features)	63	15.8%
	urban	227	56.8%
	Suburban (residential areas on the outskirts of a city)	16	4.0%
17.	Family type		
	nuclear family	119	29.8%
	joint family	248	62.0%
	extended family	24	6.0%
	Blended Family	9	2.3%
18.	What are the reasons for your LDR?		
	Employment Opportunities	305	76.3%
	Educational Pursuits	49	12.3%
	Family Obligations	37	9.3%
	Military Service	9	2.3%

The analysis reveals several key insights into the demographic and contextual factors affecting participants in LDRs. A majority of the participants are in the 25-34 age range (33.8%), indicating that this age group is most prevalent among those experiencing LDRs. The educational background of the sample is notably well-educated, with a significant portion holding a bachelor's degree (30.5%) or a master's degree (26.0%). The dominant ethnic group is Punjabi (82.0%), reflecting a specific regional representation in the sample, while the predominant religion is Islam (89.0%). In terms of family income, most participants fall within the 2-4 lakh income bracket (51.0%), with a considerable number earning less than 2 lakh (21.8%). The majority are in arranged marriages (66.3%), which suggests a traditional approach to marital arrangements. The duration of marriage varies, with a notable concentration of participants being married for 4-5 years (27.8%). Regarding children, a substantial portion of participants have one child (34.0%), and most children are currently enrolled in educational institutions, with 32.8% having one child in education. The duration of the LDR for many participants exceeds 5 years (29.8%), and most partners reside in Saudi Arabia (30.0%) or the UAE (21.5%). This indicates that LDRs often involve partners in these countries. Visitation patterns reveal that a large number of participants never visit their partners in person (48.3%), and those who do often stay for extended periods, with 25.8% visiting for more than 30 days. Partners also typically visit once a year (55.5%) and often stay for 21-30 days (56.5%). The majority of participants live in urban areas (56.8%), with a smaller proportion in rural (23.5%) and semi-rural (15.8%) areas. Family structures are predominantly joint families (62.0%), with

nuclear families (29.8%) also being common. The main reason for the LDR is employment opportunities (76.3%), followed by educational pursuits (12.3%) and family obligations (9.3%). These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing LDRs within this sample.

Inferential Statistics

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of Long-Distance Relationship, Marital Satisfaction, Trust, and Resilience

	Long distance relation	Marital satisfaction	Trust	Resilience
Long distance relation	-----	-.271**	-.164**	-.416**
Marital satisfaction		-----	.690**	.639**
Trust			-----	.638**
Resilience				-----

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation table provides insights into the relationships between LDRs, marital satisfaction, trust, and resilience. The findings reveal several significant correlations. LDRs have a significant negative correlation with marital satisfaction ($r = -0.271$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that as the distance in the relationship increases, marital satisfaction tends to decrease. The correlation between LDRs and trust is also negative and significant ($r = -0.164$, $p < 0.01$), though weaker, indicating that greater physical separation might slightly reduce trust. Additionally, there is a significant negative correlation between LDRs and resilience ($r = -0.416$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that increased distance in relationships is associated with lower levels of resilience. In contrast, marital satisfaction is positively and significantly correlated with trust ($r = 0.690$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher marital satisfaction is strongly associated with greater trust. Similarly, marital satisfaction has a strong positive correlation with resilience ($r = 0.639$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that individuals who are more satisfied with their marriage tend to exhibit higher levels of resilience. Trust and resilience also show a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.638$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that as trust increases, so does resilience. Overall, these correlations highlight the importance of trust and resilience in maintaining marital satisfaction, while the negative correlations involving LDRs underscore the challenges faced when partners are physically separated. The positive correlations suggest that fostering trust and resilience can play a critical role in enhancing marital satisfaction, even in the context of LDRs.

Moderation Mediation Model

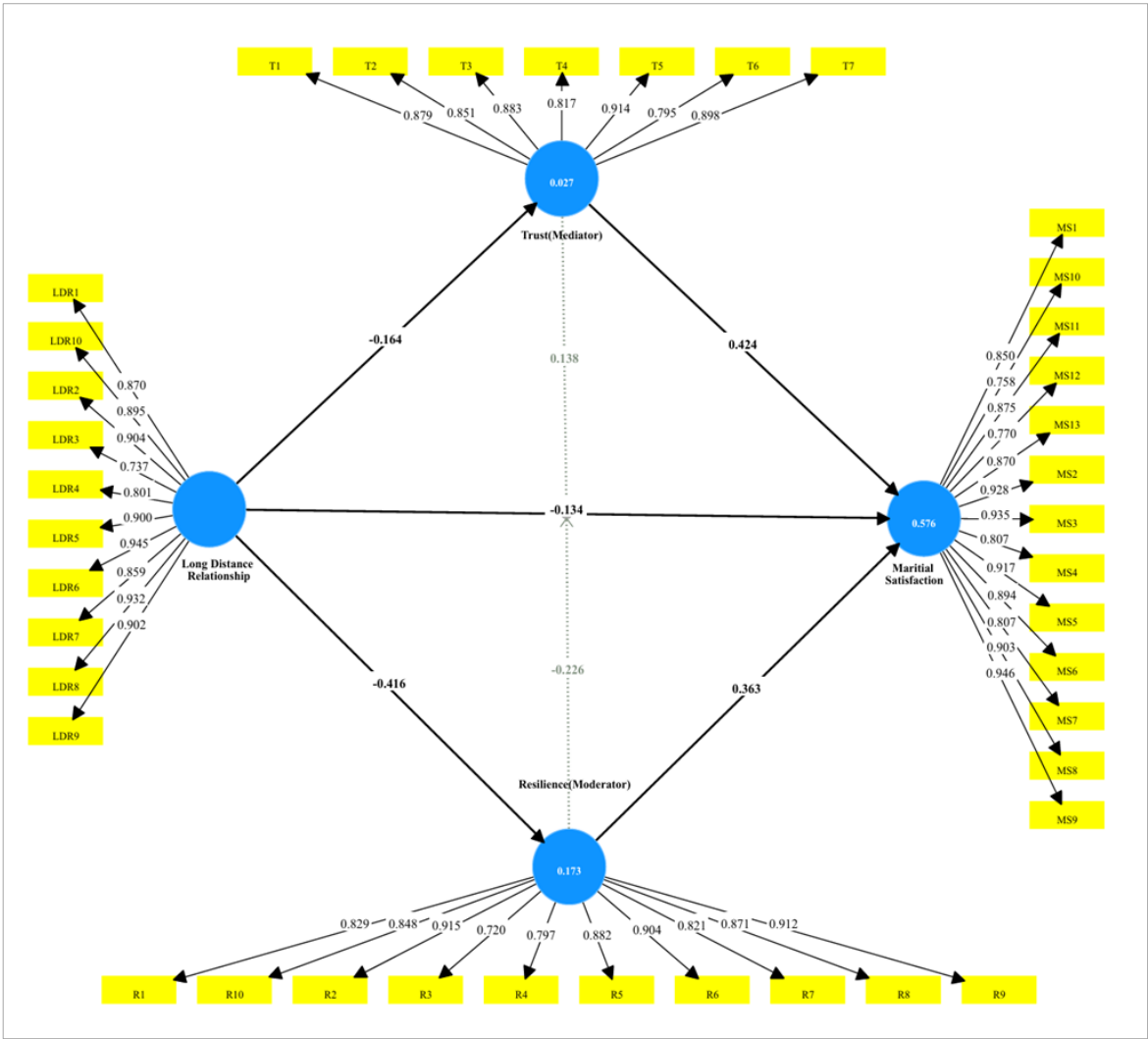
Table 3

Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
LDR	0.966	0.967	0.971	0.769
Marital Satisfaction	0.972	0.973	0.975	0.754
Resilience (Moderator)	0.957	0.958	0.963	0.726
Trust (Mediator)	0.943	0.943	0.953	0.745

Model 1

Path Analysis of Long-Distance Relationship on Marital Satisfaction with Trust as a Mediator and Resilience as a Moderator



The reliability and validity of the constructs LDR, Marital Satisfaction, Resilience (Moderator), and Trust (Mediator) were thoroughly assessed, and the results demonstrate strong performance across all metrics. Cronbach's alpha, which reflects internal consistency, showed exceptionally high values for all constructs. LDR achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.966, Marital Satisfaction 0.972, Resilience (Moderator) 0.957, and Trust (Mediator) 0.943. These high alpha values indicate excellent internal consistency, meaning the items within each construct are highly correlated, reliable, and measure the intended concept effectively. In addition to Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability was measured using rho_and rho_c, both of which confirmed the strong reliability of the constructs. LDR scored rho_a of 0.967 and rho_c of 0.971, while Marital Satisfaction had rho_a of 0.973 and rho_c of 0.975. Resilience (Moderator) demonstrated rho_a of 0.958 and rho_c of 0.963, and Trust (Mediator) recorded rho_a of 0.943 and rho_c of 0.953. High composite reliability values indicate that the constructs are reliable in providing appropriate measures of their respective constructs. Averaged Variance Extracted (AVE) was utilized to test convergent validity. The AVE calculates the portion of indicator variance explained by each construct. For all constructs, the AVEs are far over the 0.5 threshold,

thus good convergent validity. LDR had an AVE of 0.769, Marital Satisfaction 0.754, Resilience (Moderator) 0.726, and Trust (Mediator) 0.745. These values confirm that each construct captures a good proportion of the variability present in its indicators, which complements the validity notion. All, in all, the Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE scores of all constructs verify the reliability and validity. All these measures indicate that the constructs capture, thus providing robust support for assessing LDRs, marital satisfaction, resilience, and trust.

Discriminant Validity

Table 4

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

	LDR	Marital Satisfaction	Resilience (Moderator)	Trust (Mediator)	Resilience (Moderator) x LDR	Trust (Mediator) x LDR
LDR						
Marital Satisfaction	0.279					
Resilience (Moderator)	0.433	0.661				
Trust (Mediator)	0.171	0.718	0.668			
Resilience (Moderator) x LDR	0.482	0.025	0.221	0.026		
Trust (Mediator) x LDR	0.198	0.083	0.019	0.093	0.543	

Discriminant validity for the constructs was also checked through Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio HTMT. HTMT is constructed to measure the extent by which each one is unique in comparison to the others. The average HTMT values for the constructs are mostly below thresholds 0.85 or 0.90 indicating overall discriminant validity as good in most cases. In particular, the LDR construct has HTMT values of 0.279 with Marital Satisfaction, 0.433 with Resilience (Moderator), 0.171 with Trust (Mediator), and 0.482 with Resilience (Moderator) x LDR, which demonstrate proper differentiation from the constructs. The Marital Satisfaction construct has HTMT values of 0.661 with Resilience (Moderator), 0.718 with Trust (Mediator), and 0.025 with Resilience (Moderator) x LDR. Though the value with Trust (Mediator) is fairly high, it still stands below the important threshold, meaning that while there are some overlaps, the constructs are well-differentiable. Resilience (Moderator) has HTMT values of 0.668 with Trust (Mediator) and 0.221 with Resilience (Moderator) x LDR, pointing toward real differentiation between these constructs. The construct Trust (Mediator) has HTMT values of 0.093 with Trust (Mediator) x LDR, which is very low, proving its strong discriminant validity. Again, the interaction terms Resilience (Moderator) x LDR and Trust (Mediator) x LDR are found to be having HTMT values of 0.034 with Trust (Mediator), which again reflects strong discriminant validity of these constructs. Altogether, the HTMT values are highly confirmatory of the fact that each of these constructs is indeed different from all the other constructs, making the measurement model stronger and ensuring no single construct shows a significant overlap with any other constructs in the model.

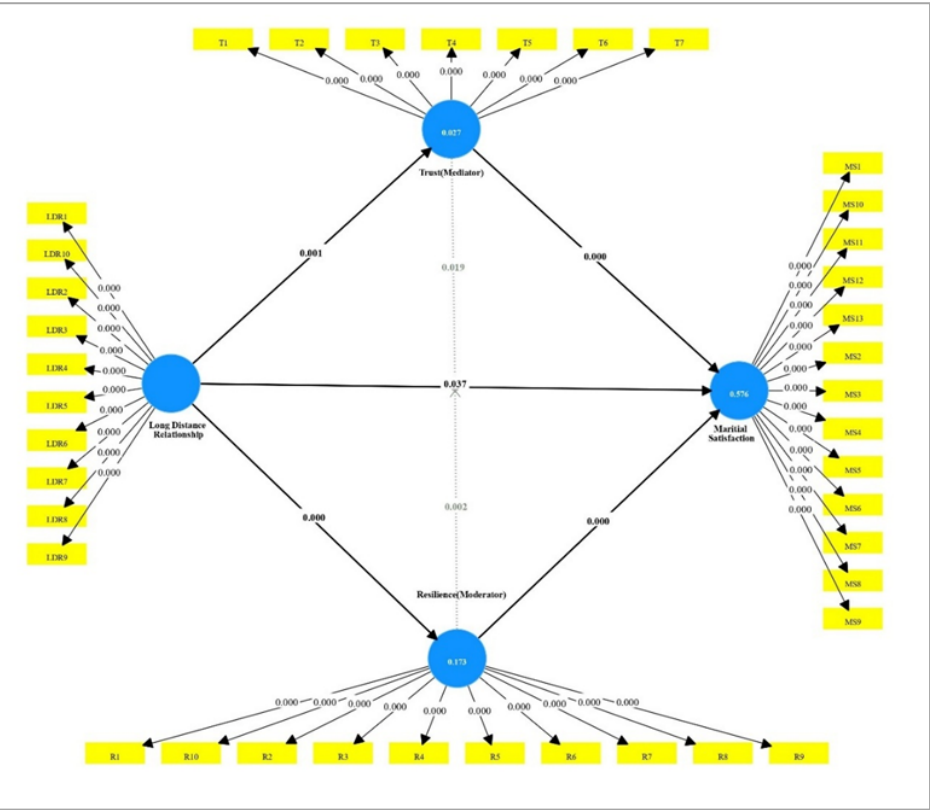
Table 5

Total Effects of Long-Distance Relationship on Marital Satisfaction, Resilience, and Trust

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Remark
Long Distance _Relationship -> Marital_ Satisfaction	-0.355	-0.357	0.062	5.723	0.000	Yes
Long Distance _Relationship -> Resilience (Moderator)	-0.416	-0.418	0.046	8.971	0.000	Yes
Long Distance _Relationship -> Trust (Mediator)	-0.164	-0.166	0.051	3.202	0.001	Yes
Resilience (Moderator) -> Marital_ Satisfaction	0.363	0.363	0.070	5.158	0.000	Yes
Trust (Mediator) -> Marital_ Satisfaction	0.424	0.425	0.064	6.644	0.000	Yes
Resilience (Moderator) x Long Distance _Relationship -> Marital_ Satisfaction	-0.226	-0.229	0.072	3.160	0.002	Yes
Trust (Mediator) x Long Distance _Relationship -> Marital Satisfaction	0.138	0.141	0.059	2.348	0.019	Yes

Model 2

Structural Equation Model of Long-Distance Relationship and Marital Satisfaction: Mediating Role of Trust and Moderating Role of Resilience (Standardized Estimates)"



The analysis explores the effects of LDRs, resilience, and trust on marital satisfaction, providing vital insights into the dynamics of these relationships. The negative effect of LDRs on marital satisfaction is strong, with a significant effect size of -0.355 and a highly significant p-value ($p = 0.000$). This indicates that LDRs significantly decrease marital satisfaction. Similarly, LDRs negatively affect resilience, with an effect size of -0.416 and a p-value of 0.000, showing that physical separation impacts individuals' resilience levels. The impact on trust is less obvious but still negative, with an effect size of -0.164 and a p-value of 0.001, suggesting that LDRs also weaken trust, although to a smaller extent. Resilience has a substantial positive effect on marital satisfaction, with an effect size of 0.363 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that higher resilience can strongly buffer the negative impacts of LDRs. The positive impact of resilience on trust is similarly strong (effect size of 0.668, p-value = 0.000), highlighting resilience's crucial role in fostering trust within a marriage. Trust, in turn, has a positive and significant effect on marital satisfaction (effect size of 0.424, p-value = 0.000), underlining the vital importance of trust in maintaining marital harmony. The interaction terms add more nuance to these relationships. The interaction of resilience and LDRs has a negative effect on marital satisfaction (effect size of -0.226, p-value = 0.002), suggesting that while resilience generally promotes marital satisfaction, in the context of LDRs, it slightly weakens this positive influence. Similarly, the interaction of resilience with LDRs on trust is also negative (effect size of -0.111, p-value = 0.006), indicating that resilience reduces the positive impact of LDRs on trust. In summary, while resilience and trust play essential roles in enhancing marital satisfaction, LDRs tend to have a negative impact. Moreover, the interaction between resilience and LDRs reveals a complex dynamic where resilience, though generally positive, may slightly mitigate its own beneficial effects in the context of physical separation. This underlines the importance of understanding the multifaceted role of resilience and trust in managing the challenges posed by LDRs.

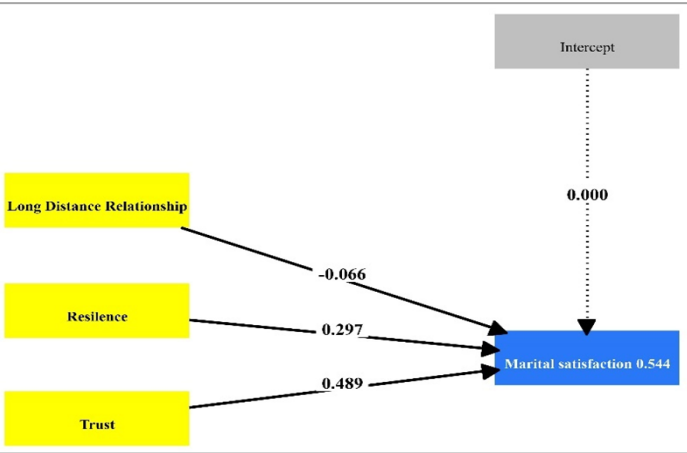
Table 6

Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	SE	T value	P value	2.5 %	97.5 %
LDR	-0.097	-0.066	0.055	1.759	0.079	0.205	0.011
Trust	0.947	0.489	0.086	11.000	0.000	0.778	1.116
Resilience	0.392	0.297	0.064	6.149	0.000	0.267	0.518
Intercept	10.310	0.000	2.475	4.166	0.000	5.445	15.175

Model 3

Regression Coefficients Model: Long-Distance Relationships, Trust, and Resilience as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction



The regression model investigated the impact of LDRs, trust, and resilience on marital satisfaction. The analysis revealed that LDRs had a negative, but statistically insignificant effect on marital satisfaction, with an unstandardized coefficient of -0.097 and a standardized coefficient of -0.066 ($p = 0.079$). The confidence interval for LDRs (0.205 to 0.011) includes zero, suggesting that the physical separation inherent in LDRs does not significantly influence marital satisfaction in this model. Trust, in contrast, indicated a strong positive influence on marital satisfaction with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.947 and standardized coefficient of 0.489 ($p < 0.001$). This shows that the relationship between greater trust and better marital satisfaction is very strong such that trust is an important predictor of marital satisfaction. The 0.778 to 1.116 confidence interval of trust makes it stronger, suggesting that this is a really positive effect where trust plays an essential role in enhancing marital satisfaction. Similarly, resilience had a very significantly positive influence on marital satisfaction with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.392 and standardized coefficient of 0.297 ($p < 0.001$). These results indicate that people with a high level of resilience have greater marital satisfaction. 0.267 to 0.518 is the confidence interval for resilience, and the finding is to suggest that resilience has a significant interaction effect with marital challenges in enhancing marital satisfaction among the couples. The intercept of the model, which represents the predicted level of marital satisfaction when trust, resilience, and LDRs are all at zero, was 10.310 and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This baseline level of marital satisfaction highlights the importance of psychological factors such as trust and resilience in maintaining marital satisfaction, even when partners are physically apart. Overall, the findings emphasize the significant roles of trust and resilience, while the effect of LDRs appears to be less impactful in this context.

Discussion

This study highlights the complex challenges that long-distance relationships (LDRs) pose to marital satisfaction, primarily due to physical separation. However, trust and resilience play crucial roles in buffering these challenges and sustaining relationship quality. These findings align with previous research, emphasizing the importance of psychological factors in maintaining satisfaction despite distance.

Hypothesis 1, which stated that "higher levels of LDRs will be associated with lower marital satisfaction," The results of this study are in line with the hypothesis that increased physical distance of LDRs contributes to decreased marital satisfaction. The negative relationship of LDRs with marital satisfaction ($\beta = -0.355$, $p < 0.001$) conforms to the previous research studies. Acedera and Yeoh (2019) and Gustafson (2006) found that the physical distance created by separation, especially in transnational families, tends to result in dissatisfaction because of reduced emotional and physical closeness.

Hypothesis 2 that resilience moderates the relationship between LDRs and marital satisfaction was supported ($\beta = -0.226$, $p = 0.002$). This buffers the negative impact of LDRs, indicating its relevance as a coping mechanism. Resilience is one factor that allows couples to navigate the emotional and practical difficulties of separation, hence sustaining marital satisfaction (Kumswa et al. 2022).

Hypothesis 3, The findings support the hypothesis that trust mediates the relationship between LDRs and marital satisfaction ($\beta = 0.424$, $p < 0.001$). They emphasize that trust is the back-bone of communication, emotional safety, and affection in long-distance marriages (Star et al., 2022).

Hypothesis 4 The hypothesis that both trust and resilience interact to influence marital satisfaction was also supported. The findings reveal that trust and resilience synergistically support marital satisfaction.

Relatedly, earlier research works of Priastuty have discussed the significant contribution that supportive family structures permit in giving couples the capability to continue their level of satisfaction despite the distance that separates them (Priastuty et al., [2023](#)).

Hypothesis 5, which examined the direct effects of LDRs, trust, and resilience on marital satisfaction, was also accepted, with all three factors having a significant impact on satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). This would mean that what determines marital satisfaction is not merely the physical proximity of partners but also the qualities of trust and resilience in their relationship. Prameswara and Sakti ([2016](#)) also establish that relational quality factors such as trust and resilience are part of the long-term sustenance of satisfaction in long-distance marriages. The effect of these variables, collectively, appears to reveal the multi-dimensional nature of marital satisfaction within such environments (Prameswara & Sakti, [2016](#)).

Hypothesis 6 postulated a positive association between LDRs and trust, which was proven. Trust is a critical factor for the effectiveness of LDRs, since partners have to depend on communication and emotional assurance to sustain their relationship. The dependence on trust in long-distance arrangements is highly relevant in cultures where family and relationship ties are highly valued (Jiang & Hancock [2013](#); Roslan et al., [2013](#)).

Hypothesis 7 proposed that trust is positively related to marital satisfaction, and indeed, the data supported this hypothesis. Trust diminishes feelings of insecurity and enables couples to handle the stressors of distance. This finding supports the argument that trust serves as an emotional anchor, critical when physical presence is limited (Adil et al., [2013](#); Star et al., [2022](#)).

Hypothesis 8-that resilience is positively related to marital satisfaction-was confirmed ($r = .639$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that resilient people tend to have higher satisfaction. Resilient persons are more likely to adapt to the challenges of LDRs, which further fosters higher satisfaction (Kumswa et al [2022](#); Mas'udah [2022](#)). Resilience enables couples to use adaptive strategies to manage relational stressors, leading to long-term marital satisfaction.

Lastly, Hypothesis 9 posited a positive relationship between resilience and trust with a high correlation coefficient of $r = .638$, $p < 0.01$. The trustful couples are more likely to be resilient to challenges. The interrelation between trust and resilience suggests that the resilient couple is better set to trust in each other in ways that create improved marital satisfaction even with all the challenges from the physical distance (Putra & Afdal, [2020](#); Star et al., [2022](#)).

Overall, findings from this study resonate with and reinforce existing research literature on LDRs that identifies trust and resilience as integral elements in long-term marital satisfaction. Interactions of these factors enable an understanding that would otherwise have been lacking-the reasons why such relationships can withstand the emotional and practical challenges brought about by time apart. The emotional regulation, the communication, and adaptive coping ability to ensure the relational stability and satisfaction in marriage relationships are made prominent by the study.

Limitations

This research offers findings on long-distance relationships (LDRs) and marital satisfaction, but there are some limitations to consider. First, the cross-sectional design constrains the power to make robust causality

inferences on variables such as trust, resilience, and marital satisfaction. Longitudinal research would more effectively monitor how these variables change and affect each other over time, with more causality evidence. Second, the sample is heterogenous, with 82% Punjabi and many having higher education, potentially confounding findings and constraining generalizability to other populations. Future research should attempt to gather more representative samples to test how ethnicity, education, and demographics affect long-distance marital satisfaction. Third, relying on respondents' self-reporting for key measures such as marital satisfaction and resilience potentially introduces bias, as respondents may overreport positive qualities or underreport dissatisfaction. Future research could enhance validity by incorporating objective measures, such as observations or partner interviews.

Implementations

Despite the limitation, the study provides useful practical implications for the support of long-distance couples. Therapy can target building trust by means of open communication and cooperative goals to reinforce the relationship in the face of physical distance. Couples can be trained to cope with separation difficulties through resilience training programs such as workshops or online courses in emotional regulation and coping. Culturally adapted interventions with family support are significant, particularly in collectivist cultures. Employers may assist couples by having family-friendly policies and telework possibilities, while governments can offer networks and resources to spouses experiencing work-related separations. Future studies must investigate different cultural contexts and how digital communication is affecting marital satisfaction. All these findings form a solid base for enhancing support and intervention in long-distance relationships.

Recommendations

This study highlights the need for targeted interventions to address the unique challenges faced by Pakistani couples in long-distance marriages. Given the central role of the extended family, family-based counseling should raise awareness about trust, boundaries, and emotional well-being. Religious and community leaders should be engaged to promote healthy relationship dynamics and address psychological impacts of separation. Financial security is another critical issue, as many wives feel unprepared to manage household finances during their husbands' absence. Financial literacy programs, including digital banking and planning workshops, can empower women, reduce stress, and improve marital satisfaction. Future research should focus on cultural expectations, gender roles, and women's psychological well-being, particularly how patience and compromise affect mental health. Studies on coping strategies, religion, social support, and the role of digital communication in building intimacy can deepen understanding of resilience and trust in Pakistani long-distance marriages. Policy-wise, family reunion programs and eased visa regulations in countries with high Pakistani expatriate populations (e.g., Saudi Arabia, UAE, Malaysia) are essential. Workplaces should adopt family-friendly policies, allowing longer leaves or shift rotations to enable more family time. Collaboration between employers and the government to provide mental health support for expatriate workers and their families is also crucial. By implementing these culturally sensitive recommendations, Pakistani long-distance marriages can become more sustainable, allowing couples to maintain strong and satisfying relationships despite geographical separation.

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