

A thousand miles: a
qualitative research
study on successful
long distance relati...



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Stafford, Daly, and Reske (1987) say that approximately one third of premarital relationships in universities may be long-distance in nature. In recent years, long-distanced relationships (LDRs) have become increasingly frequent, particularly in young adults (Arditti & Kauffman, 2004). Having to move for work for men and women's educational and occupational reasons has created a need for many romantically involved couples to be separated in distance (Johnston & Packer, 1987).

If a lot of people, particularly the young adults are now involving themselves in this kind of relationship today, then to study this phenomenon is practically relevant in today's evolving society. The study of premarital long-distance relationships can provide a comprehensive research for relationship counseling (Stephen, 1987). This is to serve as a source in future studies for further research on the experiences and various factors for successful romantic relationships, particularly long distance. The research would provide potential LDR relationships an impact for later marital satisfactions and stability. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of individuals in successful long-distance relationships and help present and future couples in maintaining this kind of relationship.

Review of Related Literature

Based in existent literature, according to Skinner (2005), a partner in an extreme LDR was perceived as less likely to remain in the relationship, less faithful, as putting less effort, and as having a lower overall quality of relationship.). Stafford (1990) explains that, long-distance couples have more restricted communication and are more idealized than their geographically close counterparts. The only way a long-distance relationship can amount to

<https://assignbuster.com/a-thousand-miles-a-qualitative-research-study-on-successful-long-distance-relationships/>

anything is for it to become a short-distance relationship (Pistole, 2012).

Firmin&Lorenzen (2010) specifically found themes of loneliness in LDRs.

Loneliness that occurs after seeing the boyfriend and that loneliness tends to decrease when students are busy and when doing activities with friends.

Loneliness seemed to be a feeling that LDRs are often experiencing. Coping strategies include calling to talk and having other friends as their support-base developed a highly perceived value. There have been lots of meanings connected to the relationship and separation of the individuals. Maintenance strategies, and commitment processes have been developed to stabilize such relationships. The importance of technology in staying connected has been emphasized (Arditti& Kauffman, 2004). In addition, communication is an important mechanism for maintaining attachment related proximity (Marvin & Britner, 2008). Schwebel (1992) also explains that the greater effort made by the dating partners to maintain the relationship, the longer the relationship stability.

In recent studies, long distance couples who had stayed together and long distance couples who had broken up over the nine-week duration of the study were compared on their relationship maintaining efforts, such as the number of times the couples saw each other and number of times the couples phoned each other over a week. Most of the related literature mentioned showed a significant pattern of negative implications on LDRs. Overall; results suggested that a person's commitment to the relationship, as enhanced by their maintenance efforts, promoted the endurance of long distance relationships (Skinner, 2005).

Experiences of individuals in a successful long distance relationship

Conceptual Framework

Coping strategies Maintenance strategies

After an extensive discussion and some consultations, it was decided upon that the research topic would be the experiences of individuals in a successful long distance relationship. Experiences itself is a very broad and general research. To further explain and understand the phenomena, two sub problems were conceptualized. According to past studies, LDRs have been in a more challenging state of relationship which required different strategies to develop. First is how do individuals in this relationship maintain this kind of relationship? Secondly, how do individuals in a successful long distance relationship cope up with the absence of their partners?

Statement of the problem

While a lot of issues regarding short-distance relationships are of interest, there is a little in-depth research available on the experiences of couples who are not geographically close to each other. The researchers chose to study the experiences of individuals in a successful long distance relationship. In connection with this, this research also aims to explore on how couples in successful LDRs maintain the relationship and how do these individuals cope up with the absence of their partners. Definition of Terms

A relationship can be called as a long distance relationship if the couple lives in two different households and that they have a hard time seeing each other and return home within the day (Jimenez, 2012). Dellman-Jenkins, Bernard-

<https://assignbuster.com/a-thousand-miles-a-qualitative-research-study-on-successful-long-distance-relationships/>

Paolucci, and Rushing (1994) defined long distance relationship as the kind of relationship where the couples could not see each other whenever they want to. Most people that are engaged in a long distance relationship are those in their educational years or those that are only starting with their career that have not yet establish a family of their own (Schneider, Limmer & Ruckdeschel, 2002/2003).

Stafford (2005) proposed a definition of long distance relationship that states that a relationship is long distance when the couples have limited ways of communication because of geographic parameters but still want to maintain closeness. Commitment is defined as the tendency of a person to carry on in the relationship (Rusbult, 1983; Van Lange et al., 1997). It is a person's attachment to his/her partner and aims to continue the relationship (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001).

Commitment serves as one factor in maintain a relationship and even to improve the relationship (Rusbult, Arriaga, & Agnew, 2001). Attachment is defined as the tendency of a person to maintain close distance with their partner who provides them protection and security (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Coping is defined as the different ways a person handles the absence if his or her partner. For couples, one way of coping is to think of their relationship in a bigger picture and to think that the relationship will help shape their own personalities (Firmin, Firmin, and Lorenzen, n. d.). Scope and Delimitations

Method Research Design The researchers used phenomenology because they wanted to know the experiences of individuals in long distance

relationships and the things that these individuals have in common regarding this phenomenon. Sampling and Sampling Design

The participants were college students within Metro Manila who were currently in successful long distance relationships. They are considered successful if they are still together, satisfied, and contented with the relationship. Purposive sampling was used in this study because the researchers looked for certain individuals who were qualified to be interviewed. The criteria that the participants needed to meet to be qualified are as follows:

1. Aged 16 to 21
2. In a relationship for at least six (6) months
3. Partners lived separately from each other
4. Partners had difficulty visiting each other and getting back home to their own residence in one (1) day. i. e. One partner lives in a province while the other lives in a city and getting to the place where the partner resided would take 4 hours. The researchers looked for these individuals by asking their acquaintances if they knew people in long distance relationships. If they did, the researchers would ask them to ask these people if it would be okay to be interviewed for the study.

Instruments

The group used interview schedules that included warm-up questions, main questions, probe questions, and cool-down questions. The interview schedule for the FGD also included the same type of questions except that they were fewer and included different protocols the participants had to follow. A relationship satisfaction scale was also used to validate the participants' answers. Data-gathering Procedures

As mentioned earlier, the researchers asked their acquaintances if they knew individuals in long distance relationships and asked them to inform these individuals of the study and the researchers' need to interview such people. If the individuals agreed or were okay with being interviewed, the researchers asked to meet with them during the times where both parties were available. The interviews were conducted in quiet and comfortable places where the interviewers and interviewees would have no problem hearing each other or felt any discomfort.

The individuals were informed that the interviews would be recorded before they started. The researchers also made sure that the person interviewing the participants did not have a close relationship with them to avoid biases. The same procedures also apply to the focused group discussion (FGD) except that the interviewers had protocols that needed to be followed by the interviewees to extract more data from the group. Fewer questions were asked and the flow of the interview was planned. To validate the responses of the participants, the researchers also asked them to answer a relationship satisfaction scale. Method of Data Analysis

For the data analysis, the researchers transcribed each interview they had conducted, including the FGD. From the transcript, each researcher coded the data into different themes. The researchers then looked for the same and similar data they have coded from what they coded individually and this resulted in the data they had for the group coding. They also searched for recurring themes and created a thematic map. The themes found from the thematic map were put into theme tables and were given definitions by the group. The definitions created by the researchers were based on the <https://assignbuster.com/a-thousand-miles-a-qualitative-research-study-on-successful-long-distance-relationships/>

exemplar quotes per theme and on how the researchers interpreted the data. Methodological Limitations

The limitations encountered by the group mostly concerned time and the participants. Time was limited for both interviewers and interviewees because of their busy schedules. Looking for participants was slightly difficult because most of the people the acquaintances knew were either in relationships on the verge of breaking up or were parents whom the interviewees could not interview because their free time did not match. Some interviewees were also shy and some didn't talk much. Results

Based on the results, individuals who are in a successful long-distance relationship mostly maintain a constant communication. They also need to meet up as much as they can, even if it is hard, they should sacrifice their time and show their willingness to be with their loved one. In their meetings, they do things that make it more special and sweeter, they make the most out of the time they spend together. Although they often feel feelings of loneliness, fear of losing the partner and longing for physical contact, they try to understand each other's situation and accept the challenges they experience to avoid conflicts which involves a lot of compromise.