

# A Qualitative Exploration of Emotional Coping in Long-Distance Romantic Relationships Among Young Adults

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**Abstract:** Long-distance romantic relationships are becoming more common among young adults due to education, work opportunities, and personal responsibilities that often require couples to live in different places. Maintaining such relationships can be emotionally challenging because partners are separated physically and depend mostly on communication and emotional understanding. The present study explores the emotional experiences of young adults involved in long-distance romantic relationships and examines the different ways they manage their emotions while maintaining relationship satisfaction. A qualitative research method was used for this study. Information was collected through semi-structured interviews with five participants between the ages of 18 and 25 who were currently involved in long-distance relationships. The findings showed that participants frequently experienced emotions such as loneliness, insecurity, emotional stress, overthinking, and missing their partners. However, the participants also used several healthy coping strategies to manage these feelings. These strategies included honest communication, emotional reassurance, journaling, self-reflection, spending time on hobbies, and focusing on academics or personal growth. The study concludes that emotional regulation plays an important role in maintaining healthy long-distance relationships. Trust, emotional maturity, supportive communication, and emotional understanding were found to help individuals maintain emotional balance and relationship stability despite physical distance.

**Keywords:** Emotional Regulation, Long-Distance Relationships, Young Adults, Romantic Relationships, Emotional Coping, Communication, Relationship Satisfaction, Emotional Well-Being.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Romantic relationships often become an important source of emotional comfort, support, care, and companionship in an individual's life. For many young adults, romantic relationships also contribute to emotional security, personal growth, and a sense of belonging. However, maintaining a romantic relationship can become difficult when couples are separated by distance.

When couples are separated by distance, maintaining emotional closeness becomes more challenging because partners are unable to meet regularly. As a result, individuals in long-distance romantic relationships depend more on emotional connection, trust, and communication rather than physical presence. Unlike couples who meet regularly, partners in long-distance relationships mostly communicate through phone calls, video calls, texting, and social media. Because of this, communication and emotional understanding become extremely important.

In recent years, long-distance relationships have become increasingly common among young adults due to higher education, career goals, family situations, and migration. While these relationships can strengthen emotional bonding and trust, they may also create emotional challenges such as loneliness, insecurity, stress, emotional dependence, and overthinking.

During young adulthood, individuals are also experiencing emotional development, identity formation, and relationship exploration. Therefore, understanding how young adults manage their emotions in long-distance relationships is important.

Emotional regulation refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in a healthy way. It helps individuals cope with stress, control emotional reactions, and maintain emotional stability during difficult situations. In romantic relationships, emotional regulation contributes to healthy communication, conflict management, and emotional closeness.

The present study aims to understand the emotional experiences of young adults involved in long-distance relationships and identify the emotional coping strategies they use to maintain relationship satisfaction.

## II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Emotion regulation is considered an important concept in psychology because it influences emotional well-being, behavior, and interpersonal relationships. According to Gross (1998), emotional regulation involves the processes through which individuals influence how they experience and express emotions.

In romantic relationships, emotional regulation helps individuals manage misunderstandings, emotional stress, conflicts, and communication difficulties. In long-distance relationships, emotional regulation becomes even more important because partners have limited physical interaction and depend heavily on emotional communication.

Previous research has suggested that couples in long-distance relationships often experience both positive and negative emotional outcomes. Some studies indicate that long-distance couples may develop stronger emotional intimacy due to regular emotional conversations and increased appreciation for communication.

➤ *At the Same Time, Long-Distance Relationships May Also Create Emotional Difficulties Such as:*

- Loneliness
- Emotional insecurity
- Lack of physical reassurance
- Overthinking
- Communication misunderstandings
- Emotional stress

Research conducted by Stafford (2005) found that couples who maintain open communication and emotional

➤ *Participant Demographics*

Table 1 Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Relationship Duration	Mode of Communication
Participant 1	20	1 year	Calls and texting
Participant 2	22	2 years	Video calls
Participant 3	21	1.5 years	Video calls and chats
Participant 4	19	8 months	Calls and texting
Participant 5	23	3 years	Calls, chats, and journaling

➤ *Sampling Technique*

- Convenience sampling was used because participants were selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate in the study.
- Inclusion Criteria
- Individuals currently involved in a romantic relationship for at least six months.
- Individuals currently in a long-distance relationship.

honesty are more likely to sustain stronger emotional connections despite physical separation.

The current study focuses specifically on emotional regulation among young adults involved in long-distance romantic relationships and explores how emotional coping strategies influence relationship satisfaction.

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

- To explore the emotional experiences of young adults in long-distance romantic relationships.
- To identify common emotional challenges faced by participants.
- To understand the emotional coping strategies used by individuals.
- To examine the role of emotional regulation in relationship satisfaction.
- To understand how communication contributes to emotional stability.

➤ *Hypothesis*

Young adults who are able to regulate their emotions effectively are more likely to experience healthier and more stable long-distance romantic relationships than individuals who struggle with emotional control.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➤ *Research Design*

The present study followed a qualitative research design to gain a deeper understanding of emotional experiences and emotional regulation in long-distance romantic relationships.

➤ *Participants*

Five participants between the ages of 18 and 25 who were currently involved in long-distance romantic relationships participated in the study.

- Participants willing to provide informed consent.

➤ *Procedure*

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study before the interviews were conducted. Consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured that their responses would remain confidential.

The interviews were conducted through online platforms such as phone calls and video calls. Each interview lasted approximately twenty minutes. With participant permission, the responses were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

Participants were encouraged to speak honestly and comfortably about their emotional experiences, relationship difficulties, and coping methods. They were also informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

#### IV. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data for the study. Open-ended questions were asked so that participants could freely describe their experiences.

##### ➤ *Some of the Interview Questions Included:*

- How do you feel about being in a long-distance relationship?
- What emotional difficulties do you experience most often?
- How do you manage feelings such as loneliness or insecurity?
- How frequently do you communicate with your partner?
- What helps you feel emotionally connected to your partner?

#### V. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

##### ➤ *Participant 1*

The participant stated that feelings of loneliness were common during periods of reduced communication. However, regular conversations with the partner helped maintain emotional closeness. The participant managed emotional stress by listening to music and focusing on studies.

##### ➤ *Participant 2*

The participant explained that insecurity was experienced during the early stages of the relationship. Over time, trust and reassurance from the partner improved emotional stability.

##### ➤ *Participant 3*

The participant highlighted the importance of honesty, openness, and regular video calls. Emotional expression and meaningful conversations strengthened the emotional bond within the relationship.

##### ➤ *Participant 4*

The participant reported experiencing overthinking and mood changes due to physical separation. Open communication with the partner helped reduce emotional stress.

##### ➤ *Participant 5*

The participant believed that distance helped improve emotional understanding and appreciation within the relationship. Journaling and self-reflection were used as emotional coping strategies.

#### VI. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The analysis of participant responses revealed both emotional difficulties and positive emotional experiences associated with long-distance romantic relationships.

##### ➤ *Common Emotional Challenges*

- Loneliness
- Missing the partner
- Emotional insecurity
- Overthinking
- Emotional stress
- Lack of physical closeness

##### ➤ *Positive Emotional Experiences*

- Strong emotional bonding
- Better communication skills
- Increased trust
- Emotional maturity
- Improved emotional understanding

##### ➤ *Emotional Regulation Strategies Used by Participants*

Participants used several coping strategies to manage emotional stress and maintain emotional stability, including:

- Honest communication
- Emotional reassurance
- Positive thinking
- Engaging in hobbies and academic activities
- Emotional expression
- Journaling and self-reflection

Participants who practiced healthy emotional coping strategies appeared more emotionally stable and satisfied within their relationships.

#### VII. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study clearly suggest that emotional regulation plays a meaningful role in maintaining healthy long-distance romantic relationships among young adults. Even though participants experienced emotional struggles due to physical separation, many of them were able to maintain emotional stability through healthy coping methods and supportive communication. Most participants reported emotional challenges such as loneliness, insecurity, overthinking, and emotional stress caused by physical separation.

Despite these difficulties, participants adopted healthy coping strategies that helped them maintain emotional balance and relationship stability. Communication emerged

as one of the most important factors influencing relationship satisfaction.

Participants explained that regular conversations, emotional reassurance, honesty, and openness reduced misunderstandings and strengthened emotional intimacy. These findings support previous research suggesting that communication quality is highly important in long-distance relationships.

The study also highlighted the role of emotional maturity and self-awareness in managing relationship stress. Individuals who demonstrated better emotional control appeared more capable of handling emotional difficulties caused by distance.

Additionally, coping strategies such as journaling, hobbies, self-reflection, and focusing on personal growth helped participants manage negative emotions more effectively.

Although the study was conducted with a small sample size, it provides meaningful insight into the emotional experiences and coping behaviors of young adults involved in long-distance romantic relationships.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

Long-distance romantic relationships require trust, patience, emotional understanding, and effective communication in order to remain emotionally satisfying and stable. The present study explored the emotional experiences of young adults involved in long-distance relationships and examined the emotional coping strategies they used to manage relationship-related stress.

The findings suggest that emotional regulation plays a major role in helping individuals manage loneliness, insecurity, emotional stress, and communication difficulties associated with physical separation. Emotional expression, reassurance, self-reflection, and healthy communication positively contributed to relationship satisfaction and emotional stability.

Overall, the study concludes that individuals who are able to manage their emotions effectively and maintain supportive communication with their partners are more likely to sustain healthy and fulfilling long-distance romantic relationships.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The sample size was limited.
- The research was conducted within a short duration.
- Participant responses were subjective.
- The study relied only on qualitative analysis.
- The findings cannot be generalized to all populations.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Conduct studies using larger sample sizes.

- Include both qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Explore cultural influences on long-distance relationships.
- Study gender differences in emotional regulation.
- Examine the impact of technology and social media on emotional connection.

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Informed consent was obtained from all participants.
- Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.
- Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Emotional information shared by participants was handled respectfully and responsibly.

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