



“Dry Texting As A Predictor Of Relationship Security Among Adults”

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Abstract:

The present study aims to understand that how ‘Dry Texting’ might affect the way young adults feel about the stability and safety of their romantic relationships. With the increasing usage of digital communication in romantic relationships, simple patterns such as short or distant replies can strongly influence perceptions about emotional closeness and security. A correlation research design was used and data were collected from young adults using a self-developed Dry Texting Behaviour Scale (DTBS) and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). The DTBS was developed to assess perceived disengagement and minimal responsiveness in text based communication. Reliability analysis showed excellent internal consistency for both measures, the DTBS ($\alpha = .93$) and the RAS ($\alpha = .91$). Descriptive Statistics were calculated, and the skewness and kurtosis values suggested that the data were approximately normally distributed. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between dry texting and relationship security. Results revealed a strong negative correlation between DTBS and RAS scores ($r = -.76$), indicating that higher levels of dry texting were associated with lower levels of relationship security among young adults. The findings indicate that the quality of digital communication plays a major role in how secure partners feel in their relationships. This study draws attention to the psychological impact of texting styles and other online interaction patterns, underscoring how responsive, warm, and emotionally engaging messages help support and maintain healthy romantic relationships.

1. Introduction:

1.1 Context of Study

Communication promotes sharing feelings and experiencing intimacy among individuals, it is considered as a core component of healthy romantic relationship. Strong communication promotes relationship satisfaction and stability, whereas communication breakdowns often contribute to conflict and dissatisfaction (Reis et al., 2004). These dynamics are now being realized via mobile text messaging rather than face to face as more people are switching towards digital communication.

For young adults texting is one of the primary modes of everyday relational communication. Text messages are now used not only for coordination but also for expressing emotions, reassurance, and maintaining closeness (Holtzman et al., 2021). Research shows that the frequency, tone, and responsiveness of text communication influence perceived partner support, relationship quality, and emotional connection (Luo, 2014; Patel et al., 2022). High-engagement texting such as timely responses, expressive language, and emotionally rich messages predicts higher satisfaction, especially in long-distance or emotionally demanding relationships (Holtzman et al., 2021).

However, not all text communication is interpreted positively. Studies on messaging behaviour suggest that message quality including emojis, elaboration, and emotional cues affects how responsive and caring a partner appears (Coyle & Carmichael, 2019). Distant unclear messages shows disinterest, withdrawal and avoidance in relationship. Perceived partner responsiveness has been strongly associated with relationship security, trust, and emotional well-being (Reis et al., 2004).

One new behavior is DRY TEXTING – sending short messages like “ok” “hmm” or even just one word answers. Although the phenomenon has trended on social media and everyday conversations, very little empirical research is available to explore this behavior. Preliminary qualitative findings suggest that dry texting might reflect lower emotional availability or reduced engagement. As a result, recipients often report feeling uncertain or insecure about the state of the relationship. As digital communication is a source of assurance for young adults the minimal responses negatively influence the feelings of commitment and stability in relationships.

1.2 Problem Statement

Relationship security means that individuals feel confident in their partner's love, responsiveness, and availability develops through repeated patterns of supportive communication (Morey et al., 2013). Since texting provides opportunities to show care with minimal effort, inconsistent responses leads to threatened security in a relationship. Despite this theoretical relevance dry texting has not been linked with valid relationship security measurement in quantitative research.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Given this gap the present study aims to examine whether dry texting behavior shows lower relationship security among adults. By using a self-developed Dry Texting Behaviour Scale alongside an established Relationship Assessment Scale, this research investigates how texting patterns shape emotional assurance in modern romantic relationships.

1.4 Research Question & Hypothesis

Research Question:

Is dry texting associated with lower relationship security among young adults?

Hypothesis:

Higher levels of dry texting predict lower levels of relationship security among young adults.

2. Literature Review :

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded on established theories on how couples communicate and how attachment shapes romantic behavior. Attachment theory explains that how individuals attachment styles – secure, anxious or avoidant influence how they interact with their partners. Securely attached individuals usually communicate in an open, responsive way that supports trust and emotional closeness. Whereas, anxiously attached individuals often crave frequent reassurance and may feel upset, sad or insecure when they receive short or minimal replies, while avoidant individuals tend to keep emotional distance , which can appear as low effort or dry texting in digital conversations.

Social Exchange Theory focuses on how people weigh rewards against costs in their relationships. Engaging, responsive texting acts as a reward that boosts connection, while dry texting or low-effort replies feel like a cost that can erode satisfaction and emotional security.

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Theory explains how digital exchanges lack the non-verbal signals of in-person talks, making them feel different. In texting, factors like message depth, quick replies, and emotional warmth stand out as signs of care, so brief or plain responses can come across negatively and shake feelings of security in the relationship.

2.2 Dry Texting in Digital Communication Research

Dry texting is characterized by short, low-effort, or one-word responses such as “ok,” “hmm,” or single-word replies. These messages often lack elaboration, emotional tone, or timely responses. Research indicates that the quality of text communication which includes responsiveness, expressing emotions, and use of emojis, affects how partners perceives emotional support and engagement (Coyle & Carmichael, 2019; Holtzman et al., 2021).

Dry texting or minimal messaging can reduce emotional closeness, heighten uncertainty and spark conflicts or dissatisfaction in relationships. In long-distance relationships, frequent and expressive texting links to higher satisfaction, while low-effort messaging may lead to feelings of neglect or insecurity (Pollmann et al., 2021; Holtzman et al., 2021). Preliminary evidence suggests that persistent dry texting may signal lower emotional availability, reducing the perceptions of commitment and relational security(Reis et al., 2004).

2.3 Relationship Security and Predictors

Relationship security describes how confident people feel about their partner's responsiveness, availability, and commitment to the relationship. Core signs include trust, steady support, and a sense of emotional backing. Frequent, meaningful, and warm communication builds that trust and reassurance, while detached messages can chip away at those feelings (Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; Roberts & David, 2016).

2.4 Empirical Studies Review

Empirical studies show that texting habits play a major role in relationship satisfaction and how supported partners feel. Studies consistently find that responsive, expressive, and prompt texting leads to higher satisfaction, stronger emotional bonds, and greater trust (Holtzman et al., 2021; Pollmann et al., 2021). Low-effort texting and "phubbing"—when partners prioritize their phones over each other—tend to fuel more conflict, drop satisfaction levels, and create emotional insecurity (Roberts & David, 2016).

Despite this growing research, few studies have directly examined dry texting as a predictor of relationship security. Most research focuses on general texting frequency, digital affection, or emoji use. This leaves a gap in understanding how minimal or disengaged messaging patterns affect emotional bonds, trust, and overall satisfaction in romantic relationships. The present study addresses this gap by quantitatively exploring how dry texting predicts relationship security among young adults.

3. Methodology

a. Research Design

The present study adopted a quantitative, correlational research design. This design was chosen to examine the relationship between dry texting behaviour and relationship security among young adults. A correlational approach is appropriate as it allows the researcher to assess the direction and strength of association between variables without manipulating them. Additionally, the study aimed to explore whether dry texting could act as a predictor of relationship security.

b. Population and Sampling

The population for the study comprised young adults aged 18 years and above who were currently involved in a romantic relationship. A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants due to accessibility and time constraints.

The final sample consisted of 100 participants. Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted on 33 participants drawn from the same population. The pilot sample was later included in the main study sample, as no major modifications were required after the pilot analysis.

c. Instruments / Measures

• Dry Texting Behavior Scale

The Dry Texting Behavior Scale (DTBS) is a self-developed 11-item questionnaire that measures how often individuals engage in low-effort or unresponsive texting behaviors in romantic relationships (e.g., short replies such as 'ok' or 'hmm'). Items are rated on a 5-point multiple choice questions: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always. Higher scores indicate more frequent dry texting behavior. In the pilot study, the DTBS demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$).

As the items were found to be clear and no major modifications were required, the same version of the scale was retained for the main study, and the pilot data were included in the final sample.

In the main study, the DTBS showed excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .93$.

Relationship Assessment Scale

Relationship security was measured using the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), a standardized and well-established measure used to assess satisfaction and security in romantic relationships. The scale consists of 7 items. In the present study, the RAS showed high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .91$.

d. Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using an online survey method. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Participants were instructed to respond honestly, and no identifying information was collected. Ethical guidelines regarding voluntary participation and the right to withdraw were strictly followed.

e. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using spreadsheet-based statistical tools.

- Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were calculated for both variables.
- Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency.
- Normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis values.
- Pearson's correlation was computed to examine the relationship between dry texting and relationship security.
- Correlation results were used to interpret the predictive role of dry texting in relation to relationship security.

4. Results

a. Descriptive Statistics

The final sample consisted of 100 young adults aged 18 years and above, all of whom were currently involved in a romantic relationship. Descriptive statistics were computed for the study variables, namely dry texting behavior and relationship security.

For the Dry Texting Behaviour Scale (DTBS), the mean score was 33.44 with a standard deviation of 11.92, indicating moderate variability in dry texting behavior among participants. For the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), the mean score was 23.72 with a standard deviation of 8.21, reflecting individual differences in perceived relationship security.

Normality of the data was assessed using skewness and kurtosis values. DTBS scores showed a skewness of -0.05 and kurtosis of -0.97 , while RAS scores showed a skewness of -0.28 and kurtosis of -1.03 , indicating that the data were approximately normally distributed.

b. Inferential Statistics

To examine the relationship between dry texting behavior and relationship security, Pearson's product-moment correlation was conducted. The analysis revealed a strong negative correlation between DTBS and RAS scores ($r = -.76$, $p < .001$). This indicates that higher levels of dry texting were associated with lower levels of relationship security among young adults.

The strength and direction of the correlation suggest that dry texting behavior is significantly related to perceptions of relationship security.

5. Discussion

a. Interpretation of Findings

The present study examined whether dry texting could predict relationship security among young adults. The findings revealed a strong negative relationship between dry texting behavior and relationship security. This indicates that higher levels of dry texting were associated with lower perceptions of emotional security, trust and assurance within romantic relationships. Thus, the study hypothesis was supported.

These findings are consistent with existing literature emphasizing the role of communication quality in relationship satisfaction and emotional well-being. Previous research shows that perceived partner responsiveness, emotional engagement, and timely communication in digital interactions are associated with greater relationship security and satisfaction (Reis et al., 2004; Holtzman et al., 2021). Dry texting, characterized by minimal responses and low emotional investment, may signal disengagement or avoidance, leading partners to experience uncertainty and insecurity. The results also align with attachment-based explanations, suggesting that dry texting may reflect avoidant communication tendencies or trigger anxiety in partners who seek reassurance.

b. Implications

The findings of this study have important practical implications. For romantic partners, the results highlight the importance of responsive digital communication. Being mindful of texting patterns and providing clear, supportive responses may help with the feelings of security and emotional closeness.

For mental health practitioners and relationship counselors, the study suggests that texting behaviors can serve as meaningful indicators of relational health. Incorporating discussions about digital communication patterns, including dry texting, into counseling and couples therapy may help identify underlying attachment concerns and improve communication strategies in modern relationships.

c. Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. First, the use of self-report measures may be subject to response biases, such as social desirability or subjective interpretation of texting behaviors. Second, the sample was obtained using convenience sampling, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study focused on young adults, and results may not apply to individuals in different age groups or relationship contexts.

d. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs to examine how dry texting and relationship security influence each other over time. Studies involving cross-cultural samples would help determine whether perceptions of dry texting vary across cultural contexts. Further research could also explore differences in texting behaviors **across** attachment styles, as well as investigate other moderating variables such as relationship duration, communication preferences, and personality traits.

6. Conclusion

The present study examined dry texting as a predictor of relationship security among young adults. The findings revealed a strong negative association between dry texting behavior and relationship security, indicating that higher levels of dry texting are linked to lower perceptions of emotional assurance, trust, and relational stability. These results highlight the significance of everyday digital communication patterns in shaping emotional experiences within romantic relationships.

The study emphasizes that the quality of digital communication. Texting behaviors characterized by emotional responsiveness, elaboration, and engagement appear to bring more reassurance and closeness, whereas minimal and low-effort responses may be interpreted as disinterest or withdrawal, leading to feelings of insecurity in individuals.

7. References

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