Jurnal Sosiologi Andalas

ISSN (Online): 2443-3810 | ISSN (Print): 2088-1134 | Website: http://jsa.fisip.unand.ac.id | Email: jsa@unand.ac.id

Sustaining Family Functions Across Distance: Experience of Couples in a Long-Distance Marriage Due to Temporary Job Transfers

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Submitted: April 24th, 2026	Accepted: October 12th, 2026	Published: October 21st, 2026

Abstract: *Long-distance marriage (LDM) is increasingly common among couples separated by temporary employment transfers, particularly within vertical government institutions, in Indonesia. Although previous studies have examined marital satisfaction, communication, and the challenges of LDM, less attention has been paid to how geographically separated couples maintain family functions. This study examines how couples experiencing LDM due to temporary job transfers sustain these functions despite geographical separation. Guided by Talcott Parsons' AGIL framework, the study employed a qualitative approach, drawing on in-depth interviews with 14 participants, including married couples, family members, and external observers, supplemented by document analysis. The findings show that geographical separation does not prevent families from performing their functions but requires adaptive strategies. Religious and socio-cultural functions are maintained through value transmission and family traditions, while affection, protection, and reproductive functions are sustained through communication, emotional intimacy, parental involvement, and planned reunions. Socialization and education involve collaboration among parents, schools, and relatives, whereas economic functions rely on financial responsibility and household financial management. Environmental development functions vary across families. Communication, mutual trust, digital technology, extended-family support, and financial management are key mechanisms enabling these functions. The study extends LDM research by demonstrating how families adapt their functioning to employment-related geographical separation.*

Keywords**:** Family Functions; Long-Distance Marriage; Temporary Job Transfers

A. INTRODUCTION

Husbands and wives within family life have rights and obligations that are interconnected and mutually beneficial to each other. According to Talcott Parsons in structural functionalist theory, the family is recognized as a social system with interdependent roles. Husbands and wives perform disparate yet reciprocal functions to cultivate tension and secure the stability of the family (G. Ritzer & Goodman, 2004).

Within this scheme, the distribution of roles between husband and wife is not defined by commercial aspects, but also includes intuitive functions, socialization, and the preservation of family affairs. The equity in achieving these rights and obligations constitutes the authority for accomplishing conformity in domestication (Putri, 2020). Commonly, married couples cohabit in the same home to perform these roles and duties ideally (Falah, 2022).

In the context of these roles, married couples live together indoors. They divide the duties for lasting family peace, including economic arrangement, child-rearing, and practical intelligence (Aprilia et al., 2024). Nevertheless, with the improvement of opportunity and adjustment in hierarchy, family roles have become progressively arduous. One of the factors that is enhancing success is long-distance marriage (LDM).

Long-distance marriage refers to a case in which married couples live in disparate districts in case across cities, provinces, or even countries ensuing in limited physical cooperation and decreased depth of direct communication over a crucial course (Subhan, 2022). Tanjung and Ariyadi (2021) discuss how LDM established the continuation of departure and the density of affairs, thoughtful disparity in exchange tension diversely (Tanjung & Ariyadi, 2021).

The circumstances of LDM are broadly altered by many aspects, as well as enrollment, education, and career removal. This case is not only driven by commercial demands but also by qualified necessity, such as publicity and conclusive practices that require human beings to advance. Employments that are principally accessible to LDM consist of military and police staff, pilots, judges, prosecutors, employees of state-owned businesses, as well as civil servants and employees of local government departments under ministries (Subhan, 2022).

In essence, one of the most frequent patterns of LDM is that subordianted by limited deportation, especially among the staff of the perpendicular academy. Provisional removal refers to the reassignment of employees from one performance district to another within a fixed period, commonly ranging from two to five years, in accordance with the Regulation of the National Civil Service Agency of the Republic of Indonesia Number 5 of 2019 (BKN, 2021). This condition requires married couples to live apart, thereby affecting family dynamics.

Vertical institutions are government agencies operating under central ministries or national bodies that carry out governmental functions directly at the regional level. The placement of employees across different regions in Indonesia is a consequence of the operational system of these institutions, as regulated in Government Regulation Number 11 of 2017 concerning Civil Servant Management and Regulation of the National Civil Service Agency Number 5 of 2019 regarding transfer procedures (BKN, 2021).

In the city of Padang, several vertical institutions implement temporary transfer policies for their employees. These institutions are distributed across several districts, particularly in central areas such as Koto Tangah, North Padang, West Padang, East Padang, and South Padang (Junaidy et al., 2024).

Based on available data, South Padang has one of the highest concentrations of vertical government institutions in Padang City. The institutions located in South Padang District include PT Pelabuhan Indonesia II Teluk Bayur, the Class II Teluk Bayur Port Authority and Harbormaster Office (KSOP), the Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) Teluk Bayur, the Customs and Excise Supervision and Service Office (KPPBC), the Class I Padang Health Quarantine Office, the Pertamina Office, the State Logistics Agency (BULOG), the Animal, Fish, and Plant Quarantine Agency, the West Sumatra

Provincial National Narcotics Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Agency, the Teluk Bayur Maritime Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency (BMKG), the South Padang Sector Police, and the South Padang Military District Command (Koramil 03).

Table 1. The Number of Temporary Transfer Employees of Vertical Agencies Undergoing Long-Distance Marriages in South Padang District

No.	Distribution of Vertical Agencies by Subdistrict in Padang City	Number of Individuals
1	Bungus Teluk Kabung	3
2	Padang Selatan	13
3	Padang Barat	12
4	Padang Timur	5
5	Padang Utara	12
6	Kuranji	2
7	Pauh	1
8	Koto Tangah	6
	Total	54

Source: Data processed by the author

The phenomenon of long-distance marriage due to temporary transfers is important to examine, especially in relation to the implementation of family functions. A family has essential functions that cannot be entirely replaced by other parties, including biological, psychological, and social functions (Rahmaini, 2021). These functions are carried out through the roles of each family member to maintain the continuity and balance of family life (Ras et al., 2024). In couples experiencing long-distance marriage, the enjoyment of family affairs endures as a result of substantial segregation. This case can disrupt how these roles are accomplished, as explicit interaction among family members turns into bounded (Agussalim & Sabrina, 2024).

Numerous preceding studies have investigated separate conditions of long-distance marriage. Nugraheni and Pratiwi (2020) establish that in LDM families, socialization and educational parts tend to be required mainly by the parent who lives with the child (Nugraheni & Pratiwi, 2020). Meanwhile, Fakhroni et al. (2024) found several threats in LDM, such as feelings of craving, economic limitations, and communication blockade. Kurniawan et al. (2023) also classified objections as limited physical interaction, hardship in time synchronization, and restraint in non-verbal communication. These findings suggest that long-distance marriage has the potential to create marital strain, emotional distance, parenting difficulties, and challenges in fulfilling family functions. However, contemporary families do not always experience a decline in family functioning. Advances in communication technology, stronger support systems, and adaptive coping strategies have enabled many couples to continue performing their family roles despite geographical separation.

Although previous studies have extensively examined marital satisfaction, communication patterns, and the challenges associated with long-distance marriages, limited attention has been given to family functions among couples experiencing long-distance marriage due to temporary job transfers. In particular, studies focusing on employees of vertical government institutions who are temporarily assigned to different locations remain scarce. Little is known about how religious, socio-cultural,

affection, protection, reproductive, socialization and educational, economic, and environmental development functions are manifested within families living apart due to temporary job transfers. To address this empirical gap, rather than focusing on the general outcomes or consequences of separation, this study examines how these essential family functions are actively sustained and negotiated. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How are family functions carried out among couples experiencing long-distance marriage due to temporary job transfers?
2. What efforts do couples experiencing long-distance marriage undertake to carry out family functions during temporary job transfers?

This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on how the eight family functions are carried out and sustained among couples experiencing long-distance marriage due to temporary job transfers, a context that has received limited scholarly attention.

The results of the study indicate that long-distance marriage couples of temporary mutated employees have been maintaining long-distance relationships ranging from 1 to 12 years. Overall, the implementation of family functions operates adaptively; religious, socio-cultural, as well as socialization and educational functions are executed relatively well through clear role division between husband and wife. However, functions related to affection, protection, and environmental development face constraints due to limited physical interaction and time. To navigate these dynamics, couples employ several primary strategies: leveraging technology for intensive communication, fostering mutual trust, relying on extended family support, and maintaining structured financial management.

B. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine the fulfil of family functions and the efforts of employee couples in maintaining these functions within long-distance marriages. This approach was chosen to enable the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding through the words, written expressions, and actions of the informants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and document analysis to capture the empirical realities in the field.

Informants were selected using a purposive technique, based on criteria established prior to the study. They were categorized into two groups: primary informants and observer informants, according to their roles and involvement in long-distance marriages.

The criteria for primary informants in this study were determined as follows:

1) Long-distance marriage for at least one year.
2) Marriage of at least one year or more.
3) Distance from partner in different provinces.
4) Having children or not having children.
5) Old and young couples.
6) Male agency employees (husbands) and female employees (wives).
7) Frequency of Meetings.

The criteria for observer informants were determined as follows:

1) Coworkers
2) Neighbors
3) Extended Family, which includes children, parents, and other close relatives.

The primary informants consisted of employees undergoing temporary transfers in vertical institutions located in South Padang District. Meanwhile, observer informants included colleagues, neighbors, and members of the extended family, such as children, parents, and other close relatives.

Both primary and secondary data were utilized in this study. Primary data were gathered through repeated, in-depth interviews using researcher-developed guidelines and audio recording devices, establishing rapport to elicit detailed and nuanced perspectives. Secondary data were drawn from academic literature, institutional profiles, meeting minutes, and official reports. The researcher acted as the primary instrument for data collection, integrating both data streams to ensure a comprehensive analysis of family function implementation within long-distance marriages.

Data were analyzed using the qualitative framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To ensure analytical depth and rigor, the analysis was conducted iteratively throughout the research process. The family unit served as the primary unit of analysis. The study was conducted across vertical institutions in the South Padang District, purposively selected as it hosts the highest concentration of vertical institutions in Padang City. Data collection and analysis spanned a five-month period from February to June 2026, following a structured research timeline.

Table 2. Characteristics of Research Informants

Name	Age	Work	*LDM* Marriage	Age/ LDM	Informant
NUH	42	Animal, Fish, and Plant Quarantine Agency of West Sumatra	Padang	14/13	Perpetrator
LA	42	Local Government Civil Servant	Bengkulu		Perpetrator
ME	52	Padang Class I Health Quarantine Office	Padang	22/3	Perpetrator
TI	45	State Civil Apparatus	Jakarta		Perpetrator
LLA	31	Customs and Excise Office	Padang	6/4	Perpetrator
ANL	33	Directorate General of Taxes in Kalimantan	Kalimantan		Perpetrator
IJ	57	Animal, Fish, and Plant Quarantine Agency of West Sumatra	Padang	33/2	Perpetrator
ROS	55	Housewife	Jakarta		Perpetrator
HPL	33	National Narcotics Agency of West Sumatra Province	Padang	2/2	Perpetrator
RIO	36	Private Sector Worker	Jakarta		Perpetrator
BRN	28	Animal, Fish, and Plant Quarantine	Padang	-	Observer

		Agency of West Sumatra Province			
TYA	27	Student	Jakarta	-	Observer
MSH	57	Housewife	Padang	-	Observer
JRH	56	Housewife	Padang	-	Observer

Source: Data processed by the author

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Long Distance Marriage

Long-distance marriage (LDM) refers to a marital relationship in which one partner has work obligations outside the area of residence, resulting in the couple being unable to live together or spend much time together (Qorifah et al., 2023). In such conditions, couples generally only have the opportunity to meet on weekends or at certain times.

Kaufmann (2000) states that the factors causing individuals to engage in long-distance relationships include education and employment (Tanjung & Ariyadi, 2021). Economic needs, career growth opportunities, company assignments, temporary moves, and overseas jobs can mean one spouse has to work far from home for a while. This trend shows how work success and financial security are now tied to moving for jobs. Johnson and Packer note that more job mobility and career demands have made many married couples keep their relationships going even when they live apart (Tanjung & Ariyadi, 2021).

Fakhroni et al. (2024) identify several challenges commonly experienced by couples in long-distance marriages (LDM). These challenges concern emotional intimacy, economic provision, household problem-solving, and communication. First, geographical separation often generates a strong sense of longing between spouses. The absence of regular face-to-face interaction and physical proximity may also contribute to feelings of loneliness, particularly among couples who were accustomed to spending substantial time together before living apart.

Second, geographical separation may create challenges in fulfilling the family's economic needs. (Fakhroni et al., 2024) found that financial support provided by husbands was not always sufficient to meet household expenses. Consequently, some wives sought additional sources of income through part-time employment or other economic activities. This indicates that LDM may require adjustments in the division of economic responsibilities within the household.

Third, physical separation can complicate the resolution of household problems. Couples living together may discuss and respond to problems directly, whereas LDM couples depend largely on mediated communication. Resolving disagreements may therefore require additional time, communication, and negotiation.

Finally, communication itself can become a source of difficulty. Although communication is essential for maintaining marital relationships across geographical distance, the absence of face-to-face interaction may increase the possibility of misunderstanding. Messages conveyed through telephone calls or digital communication may be interpreted differently from what the sender intended, potentially generating tension or conflict between spouses.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that LDM affects several interconnected dimensions of family life, including emotional relationships, economic arrangements, household decision-making, and communication**.** However, Fakhroni

et al. (2024) primarily emphasize the problems and challenges associated with geographical separation. Less attention is given to how couples adapt their family practices to ensure that essential family functions continue to operate despite living apart. This limitation provides an important point of departure for examining not only the difficulties experienced by LDM families but also the strategies through which they maintain family functions under conditions of temporary geographical separation.

2. Family Functions

Supriyono argues that family functions share a common purpose but are manifested in different forms (Ritonga, 2021). These functions are interconnected and cannot be understood in isolation because each contributes to family welfare, stability, and continuity. Family functions encompass the rights and responsibilities that family members are expected to understand and fulfill in maintaining harmonious family life. They include religious, socio-cultural, affection, protection, reproductive, socialization and education, economic, and environmental development functions (Rahmaini, 2021).

The National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) regards the family as the smallest social unit with an important role in character formation, social stability, and the intergenerational transmission of values. Accordingly, BKKBN identifies eight essential family functions that contribute to family well-being and sustainability (Herawati, 2017). These functions provide a useful framework for examining how families organize their responsibilities and relationships, including under conditions in which spouses live apart.

a. Religious Function

The religious function refers to the family's role in transmitting religious beliefs, values, and practices to its members. The family provides the primary setting in which children are introduced to religious teachings, worship, and moral principles. Parents play an important role in guiding children to develop values such as honesty, compassion, sincerity, responsibility, and respect for others. This function therefore concerns not only religious observance but also the development of moral conduct in everyday family and social life.

b. Socio-Cultural Function

The socio-cultural function concerns the family's role in transmitting social norms, customs, traditions, and cultural values across generations. Through everyday family interactions, members learn appropriate ways of communicating, cooperating, respecting others, and fulfilling social responsibilities. The family thus serves as an important institution for maintaining cultural identity and transmitting cultural heritage while enabling its members to adapt to broader social and cultural change.

c. Affection Function

The affection function refers to the family's role in providing love, attention, empathy, emotional attachment, and mutual support. Through affectionate relationships, family members develop a sense of belonging and feel valued, accepted, and emotionally supported. Affection may be expressed verbally, physically, or through everyday acts of care and attention. The fulfillment of this function contributes to emotional security and strengthens relationships among family members.

d. Protection Function

The protection function concerns the family's responsibility to provide physical, psychological, emotional, and social security for its members. The family is

expected to provide a safe environment and protect its members, particularly children, from violence, neglect, harmful influences, and other threats. Parents perform this function through supervision, guidance, assistance, and care, thereby creating a sense of security and trust within the household.

e. Reproductive Function

The reproductive function relates to the family's role in ensuring generational continuity through responsible reproduction. It encompasses not only childbearing but also family planning, reproductive health, and responsible decisions concerning the number and spacing of children. This function also requires families to consider their physical, psychological, social, and economic readiness to have and raise children. Reproduction is therefore understood as part of the broader responsibility to ensure the well-being and quality of future generations.

3. Structural Functionalism Theory of Talcott Parsons

In the structural functionalist perspective, society is understood as a dynamic system composed of interrelated parts that function together. Talcott Parsons's main principle is that human actions are goal-oriented (Ritzer, 2004). These actions occur within certain situations, where some elements are fixed while others are utilized as means to achieve goals.

Introduced by Talcott Parsons, a prominent 20th-century sociologist, the theory emphasizes that diversity within society is organized according to functional roles within the social system, thereby maintaining balance and stability (Ritzer, 2004). According to Parsons, every system must fulfill four functional prerequisites: Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency (AGIL). These functions ensure the sustainability of the social system. Parsons also explains the existence of hierarchical relationships within social systems, where lower levels provide conditions for higher levels, while higher levels regulate lower-level elements. It also assumes that human actions are voluntary, driven by individual intentions while still being guided by values, norms, and ideas within society. Individuals have the freedom to choose means to achieve their goals, but these choices are influenced by environmental conditions and controlled by prevailing social norms (Ritzer, 2004).

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the implementation of family functions among couples experiencing long-distance marriage (LDM) due to temporary job transfers within vertical agencies. Based on in-depth interviews with 14 informants, the findings indicate that family functions are not diminished but instead transformed through adaptive strategies involving communication, technology utilization, and social support systems.

The duration of marriage among informant ranges from 2 to 33 years, while the duration of LDM varies between 2 and 13 years. This variation shows that LDM occurs across different marital phases, from early marriage to long-established relationships.

1. Adaptation Using: Technological and Role Adjustment

This study found that families in long-distance marriages adapt primarily through communication technologies such as video calls, instant messaging, and phone calls, as well as through monitoring devices such as CCTV. As stated by informant ME: "*First, I monitor conditions through family members there and via installed CCTV. I usually check it during office break times, such as around the Dhuhr or Asr prayer*

hours. Through this, I can see the children playing or sometimes fighting over toys. This technology helps alleviate my longing for my wife and children back home" (January 20, 2025). These tools help fathers who are away for work stay involved in family life even when they are not physically present. Through these technologies, fathers kept track of daily activities, offer emotional support, take part in decisions, and regularly communicate with their spouses and children.

2. Goal Attainment: Maintaining Family Stability and Continuity

The study also shows that couples in long-distance marriages focus on keeping their families harmonious, making sure their children are well, staying emotionally close, and keeping their marriages stable even when apart for long periods. Both spouses show strong commitment by communicating regularly, planning visits, supporting each other emotionally, and sharing parenting duties. This is as explained by Nuh: "*Affection within long-distance marriages is actively maintained rather than passively sustained. Informants emphasize that emotional bonding requires deliberate effort, combining consistent digital communication, trust, and physical tokens of appreciation (gifts) to foster intimacy and offset the absence of proximity* (Interview, January 20, 2025).

LDM couples achieve goal attainment through explicit agreements on childcare, finances, household management, and future planning. Unlike co-residential households, long-distance marriages require structured negotiation and deliberate strategies. Ultimately, physical separation does not attenuate family goals; rather, it drives heightened intentionality and organizational discipline to maintain systemic stability. This was stated by LA, the wife:

> "*There are certainly changes. Previously, when we were still living together prior to the long-distance arrangement, we shared the same house and saw each other every day. Now, we simply have to be more creative in expressing affection. Attention is conveyed through instant messaging and video calls, allowing us to converse at any time. This significantly helps us remain connected with my husband and children"* (January 20, 2025).

3. Integration: Strengthening Emotional and Social Cohesion

In long-distance marriages studied, families kept their emotional bonds strong not only between spouses and children but also with extended family and social networks. The study found that frequent communication, openness about feelings, affection, and working together help maintain emotional closeness even when family members are apart. As explained by ANL:

> "*However, there are two living arrangements that must be managed in a long-distance relationship like the one we are currently experiencing. In addition, certain aspects must inevitably be prioritized. We tend to prioritize financial allocations based on immediate needs, whether for daily household expenses or long-term requirements, such as purchasing home essentials and providing for our only child"* (February 9, 2025).

4. Latency: Preservation of Values and Emotional Stability

LDM parents sustain religious values, cultural norms, and family traditions across distance by leveraging physical reunions and digital channels to instill discipline, spirituality, and social responsibility. These ongoing teachings foster emotional stability and family resilience, directly illustrating Parsons' latency (pattern maintenance) dimension within social systems. Crucially, the findings show that

effective value transmission endures despite physical separation, provided consistent parent-child communication and mutual commitment are maintained.

As explained by Nuh:

"From a normative perspective, we emphasize teaching etiquette and local socio-cultural customs before children reach adulthood. Although remote distance limits day-to-day instruction, we instill respect for elders and cultural traditions during home visits and brief phone calls. Crucially, both parents must lead by example – since children emulate behavior rather than words and remain functional in their roles despite my limited contribution due to physical distance" (January 20, 2025).

5. Implementation of Family Functions in LDM Context

Geographic separation in long-distance marriages does not eradicate family roles; rather, it transforms their operational execution. Because spouses reside in different locations, joint responsibilities undergo contextual adaptation based on each household's specific constraints. The findings demonstrate that core family functions remain fully operational, even though their practical implementation diverges from conventional single-household arrangements.

a. Religious Function

Religious practices persist in LDM families through differentiated parental roles: fathers provide remote guidance via digital channels, while mothers supervise daily worship at home. This division proves that spatial separation transforms rather than halts religious socialization into a coordinated, multi-channel effort. In this regard, Nuh explains:

"Religion serves as the fundamental foundation for guiding our behavior and educating our children. Although parenting is conducted remotely due to the distance with me stationed here and my children in Bengkulu – I continue to mentor them in religious practices such as prayer and Quranic recitation. A solid religious foundation ensures that children remain on the right path, and instilling these values is a father's essential duty" (January 20, 2025).

Last, an explanation from Rio:

"We mutually remind each other to perform our worship. Typically, I am the one who more frequently reminds my wife and children to pray and recite the Quran. Every weekend, we also hold video calls to discuss religious matters, such as sharing stories of the prophets that I tell to the children, or teaching them Islamic values that will be essential for their future lives as they grow up" (February 4, 2025).

b. Socio-Cultural Function

Socio-cultural socialization remains unbroken in LDM families through the deliberate transmission of etiquette, respect, responsibility, and local traditions via hybrid interaction modes (direct and remote). Concurrently, continuous engagement with extended relatives, neighbors, and religious groups integrates children into broader social networks, preserving cultural identity and traditional continuity despite parental physical absence. This was explained by LA as a mother who lives with her children:

"Politeness and good etiquette are the primary values taught to children, as these are essential preparations for their adulthood. Through proper etiquette, a child learns how to behave and conduct themselves within society, making it crucial to instill these values early on. For this reason, the mother, who is physically present here, constantly educates them to become good individuals with strong moral character and politeness" (January 20, 2025).

c. Affection Function

Sustaining intimacy is central to LDM dynamics, relying heavily on mediated communication to deliver affection, care, and emotional support. Couples and parent-child dyads utilize video calls, voice notes, instant messaging, and social media to bridge physical absence. Ultimately, high-frequency digital interaction offsets spatial limitations, reinforcing emotional presence and family cohesion across distance. In this regard, Nuh explains: "*Communication and trust are vital for sustaining affection in long-distance relationships. Couples actively nurture their emotional bond through regular conversations, reciprocal gestures like small gifts, and occasional surprises to ensure their connection continues to grow despite physical distance*" (January 20, 2025). LLA explains that: "*Physical distance creates a unique emotional dynamic in long-distance relationships. To overcome this, couples engage in routine nighttime video calls to share daily experiences, exchange personal reminders, and interact playfully with their child to preserve parental intimacy despite geographical separation*" (January 21, 2025).

d. Protection Function

Protection functions operate through a dual-parent mechanism supplemented by extended networks. Mothers manage direct daily supervision, monitoring activities, and responding to immediate needs, while non-resident fathers retain authority in strategic decision-making regarding discipline, education, and safety. Additionally, extended kin (grandparents, relatives) and trusted neighbors form a crucial secondary protection system, mitigating the risks of single-parent physical oversight across distance. In the protective function, Nuh explains:

> "*Due to physical separation, the father remotely instills safety awareness and protective behaviors in his family. This includes educating children on stranger safety, electrical hazards, emergency protocols, and household protection such as assigning the eldest son a protective role toward his mother to ensure self-reliance and security in his absence*" (January 20, 2025).

e. Reproductive Function

For couples who are still in productive age, maintaining intimacy in marriage remains important even under conditions of physical separation. Distance may create limitations, but couples continue making efforts to maintain closeness by planning visits, arranging reunion schedules, and openly discussing each other's emotional as well as personal needs. This shows that reproductive function is not abandoned, but adjusted according to work responsibilities, travel possibilities, and mutual agreement between husband and wife. ME explains:

> "*I return to Jakarta biweekly; whenever I wish to return, I do so, meaning distance is not a hindrance. Once married, there are aspects that must be maintained. Physical intimacy is a fundamental need that must be fulfilled with one's lawful spouse. Returning home every two weeks is my way of ensuring our household remains stable and our mutual love does not fade*" (January 20, 2025).

Furthermore, according to ANL: "*We have been in a long-distance marriage since the beginning, so we have aligned our schedules to maintain closeness during our reunions. These visits serve not only to satisfy marital intimate needs but also to preserve the emotional bond and closeness required in a long-distance marriage*" (February 9, 2025).

f. Socialization and Educational Function

Socialization and educational functions rely on a gendered division of labor complemented by institutional support. Mothers handle proximate, daily supervision guiding school activities and home behavior, while fathers maintain remote educational oversight through digital counseling, progress tracking, and strategic decision-making. External actors, including teachers, schools, extended kin, and community networks, further bolster this framework, ensuring continuous social and cognitive development despite paternal absence. Based on the explanation provided by Nuh:

> "*Despite spatial separation, fathers sustain their educational role through remote mentoring and financial investment in religious schooling to secure long-term moral development. Adopting a "lead by example" paradigm, parents prioritize instilling etiquette and faith positing that internalized religious values safeguard children against deviance when direct physical supervision is constrained*" (January 20, 2025).

g. Economic Function

Economic responsibilities remain an important part of family life in long-distance marriage. In most cases, husbands continue to serve as the main providers for household needs. At the same time, wives are responsible for managing daily expenses and making financial adjustments based on family priorities. In some families, wives also seek additional income to help support household finances. Open communication regarding financial matters appears to be important in maintaining economic stability under these conditions. Regarding the economy, Nuh explained:

> "*Although the husband retains primary financial responsibility as the head of the household, financial management is delegated to the wife, who also provides secondary financial coverage during minor shortfalls. To adapt to changing household dynamics, finances are managed through a three-tiered prioritization system: essential, important, and non-essential expenses*" (January 20, 2025).

Meanwhile, IJ: "*The financial strains of maintaining dual households such as increased food expenditure and noted that working serves as a necessary contingency plan against unexpected life risks, such as the loss of a spouse*" (January 20, 2025).

h. Environmental Development Function

Environmental development functions are sustained through physical household management, neighborly ties, and maximized reunion periods, though constrained by work schedules, finances, and time. Overall, long-distance marriage does not negate family functions. Instead, families evolve dynamic adaptive mechanisms, reconfiguring roles, leveraging digital tools, and utilizing external support to maintain systemic equilibrium across geographical distance.

To maximize limited face-to-face interactions, ME: "*Coordinates schedules with his working wife to engage in shared family activities during his returns, including visits to shopping centers, neighborhood walks, and children's recreation centers*" (January 20, 2025). His wife, TI: "*Adds that these recreational reunions are planned collaboratively through remote phone calls, where the father consults the children's preferences before executing the plans during his biweekly visits*" (January 21, 2025).

Table 3. Family Functions and Their Supporting Adaptive Strategies

Family Functions	Adaptation Strategies
Religious Function	Communication, Use of Technology
Socio-Cultural Function	Communication, Reliance on Extended Family
Affection Function	Communication, Maintaining Trust, Use of Technology
Protection Function	Communication, Maintaining Trust, Reliance on Extended Family
Reproductive Function	Communication, Maintaining Trust, Use of Technology
Socialization and Educational Function	Communication, Use of Technology, Reliance on Extended Family
Economic Function	Financial Management, Communication
Environmental Development Function	Communication, Reliance on Extended Family

Source: Data processed by the author

Among identified adaptive strategies, communication serves as the primary mechanism sustaining all core family functions: religious, socio-cultural, affection, protection, reproduction, socialization/education, economics, and environmental development. Regular communication enables remote coordination of responsibilities, emotional bonding, decision-making, child monitoring, and household management. Complementing this, extended family networks (parents and siblings) provide a crucial social safety net through childcare assistance, emotional support, shared decision-making, and emergency aid, collectively enabling LDM families to maintain structural equilibrium despite physical separation.

6. Synthesis and Theoretical Contribution

Overall, LDM families maintain systemic equilibrium through Talcott Parsons' AGIL framework:

a. Adaptation: Couples adjust to geographic distance via digital communication tools and role redistribution—where the stay-at-home spouse manages daily domestic affairs, while the long-distance partner contributes remotely through financial support, strategic decision-making, and emotional engagement.
b. Goal Attainment: Families remain aligned toward shared objectives—such as economic stability, children's education, and long-term planning—sustained by strong commitment, mutual trust, and structured coordination despite limited face-to-face contact.
c. Integration: Family cohesion is reinforced through continuous emotional support and broader social safety nets, including extended family, neighbors, and community networks that offer practical and emotional assistance.
d. Latency (Pattern Maintenance): Core religious values, moral principles, and discipline are continuously transmitted to children through digital parenting, preserving family identity and continuity despite parental physical absence.

E. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that LDM families sustain all core functions religious, socio-cultural, affection, protection, reproduction, and socialization by adapting through role flexibility, intensive communication, and digital technology. Applying Talcott Parsons' AGIL framework, these families preserve systemic balance via technological adaptation, goal-oriented family alignment, integration through social support networks, and pattern latency through value transmission. Key drivers such as communication intensity, role adaptability, and external safety nets foster high family cohesion and resilience. Ultimately, geographical separation should not be viewed as a structural decline, but as a dynamic condition that drives family adaptation offering valuable theoretical insights into how technology and social networks sustain modern family functions under spatial constraints.

1. Study Limitations

Despite the valuable insights into how long-distance marriage (LDM) families maintain systemic balance and core functions, several limitations should be noted. First, the qualitative approach and specific sample scope may limit the broader statistical generalizability of the findings across different cultural and socio-economic contexts. Second, the study's cross-sectional design captures systemic adaptation at a single point in time, which restricts the observation of how functional imperatives (AGIL) shift dynamically over prolonged periods of geographical separation. Finally, the reliance on self-reported data may carry potential subject biases regarding how couples perceive their internal integration and pattern maintenance.

2. Future Research Directions

Building on these limitations, several areas are recommended for future investigation:

a. Longitudinal Functional Analysis: Future research could employ longitudinal designs to examine how LDM families continuously balance Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Pattern Latency as the duration of separation extends.
b. Comparative Structural Contexts: Comparative studies examining LDM families across diverse socio-economic strata or cultural backgrounds could reveal how structural constraints uniquely impact each of Parsons' four functional imperatives.
c. Institutional and External Support Impact: Further studies could explore the explicit role of external social networks and institutional safety nets in reinforcing the integration and pattern maintenance of separated families.

F. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Maihasni, M.Si and Prof. Dr. Alfan Miko, M.Si for their invaluable guidance, expertise, and supervision throughout this study. I am equally grateful to all informants couples in long-distance marriages, family observers, and relatives whose generosity and insights made this research possible. Special thanks also go to everyone who offered academic and personal support, as well as to those who directly or indirectly encouraged me during this transformative academic journey.

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