Online Dating: The Reasons Behind the Pursuit of a Partner on Internet

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Abstract:

One of the popular tools of twenty first century is with no doubt online dating apps. Researchers investigated and still investigating the possible reasons why people search for a partner, friend, friendzone, or other things on web. To have fun, enjoy conversation with a like-minded individual, sexual intercourse and marriage are one of those reasons why people go behind the screens to search for partner. While there are many more reasons underneath there are many risks pertaining online dating as well. Deceptive or fake self-presentation, online dating romance scam and cyber-crime are some of those risks. On the other hand, there are many people who find their partner on online dating apps and live happily with them. That is why, it is important to understand what people are looking for on the apps which are the reasons and intentions behind online dating apps. As a popular saying states apps do not have intentions, but people do have intentions and it drives them to get what they want, get frustrated or end up quitting the app as they think it is not possible to find the right match. But what is right match and why are people so crazy about finding a partner online? This literature review investigated the possible reasons behind the pursuit of a partner on internet. Research in this area warns using online dating apps with precaution to avoid possible harm against ourselves and our environment.

Keywords: apps; dating; match; romance; partner
1. Introduction

Romantic relationships can start anywhere. When Cupid’s arrow strikes, you might be at church or at school, playing chess or softball, flirting with a friend of a friend at a party or minding your own business on the train. Sometimes, however, Cupid goes on vacation, or takes a long nap, or kicks back for a marathon of lifetime original movies. Instead of waiting for the capricious arrow get back to work, people are increasingly signing up to online-dating sites to assert some control over their romantic lives.

For millennia cultures have invented practices to fulfil the evolutionary imperatives of mating and reproduction. In the Western world today, individuals are largely relied upon identifying romantic partners on their own, a process that can consume significant time, effort, and emotional energy. The ability to search for dates online offers singles a small amount of control over a seemingly random process and gives them access to hundreds, potentially thousands, of suitable mates.

The extraordinary opportunity to pursue romance beyond one’s social circles and neighbourhood has developed into a billion-dollar industry. Most online-dating sites operate in this way: users create profiles describing themselves and then search a Web site for possible romantic partners according to various criteria—within a town or city, for example, or perhaps by educational levels, age range or religion. Some sites attempt to play the role of matchmaker and use quick algorithms to suggest pairings between users, whereas other services give their customers free control. Our best estimate is that online dating will launch 20 to 25 percent of new romantic relationships this year. Two decades ago, almost no couples met online, whereas now it is the second most common way to find a partner, trailing slightly behind connecting through friends. Rather than dabbing on perfume or cologne and preparing for a night on the town, singles can peruse potential partners while drinking their morning cup of coffee, during meetings at work or when lying in bed for 10 minutes before nodding off. In short, online services have fundamentally changed the dating prospect.

1. 1. Development of Technology

For as long as humans have recognized the urge to form romantic relationships, they have also recognized that finding an appropriate partner can be difficult, and that sometimes it is useful to get some assistance. From the Jewish shadchan immortalized in the musical Fiddler on the Roof, to the khastegari customs of Iran, to arranged marriages still prevalent in parts of Southeast Asia, there is a tradition-millennia old- of romantic relationships arising not only from chance encounters between two individuals but also from the deliberate intervention of third parties (Coontz, 2005). In the modern age, the desire to find a romantic partner is prevalent, as does the sense that doing so can be difficult. But the resources available for meeting these challenges have changed, and many of these changes can be traced to the invention, spread, and now presence of the Internet. According to the recent data, 30% of the 7 billion people on our planet now have access to the Internet (InternetWorldStats.com, 2011)
This number is due to increase as 10 years passed from these statistics. Every domain of contemporary life, from commerce and politics to culture, is now touched by the Internet in some way or another.

2. Body of Paper

2.1. Online Dating Phenomenon

Why is online dating so popular? To attract customers, online dating sites typically emphasize two aspects of the services they offer. First, they emphasize that their services are exclusive to dating through the Internet; that is, the sites are offering a service that can’t be copied in any other way. The homepage of PlentyOfFish, for example, claims that membership on the site gets you access to “145 million monthly visitors” and that “you are not going to find any other site that has more singles looking to meet new people” (PlentyOfFish.com, 2011). Secondly, online dating sites emphasize that forming relationships using their services is better than dating offline. The OkCupid website, for example, offers a straightforward claim, “We use math to get you dates” (OkCupid.com, 2011). By referring to millions of users, science, and math, online dating sites suggest that meeting romantic partners online is not only special, but also better than, searching for partners in traditional ways.

2.2. Motivation 1: Easier Communication

The psychosocial motivation reflecting the ease of communicating online was relatively low in the current sample. This finding aligns with literature on the rich-get-richer perspective on online dating; People who are already quite social and outgoing engage in online dating more frequently (Valkenburg and Peter, 2007). In line with this perspective, we also reported that Tinder users who use the app because they feel more comfortable communicating online than offline, were less likely to meet their Tinder matches offline. Finally, men more often mentioned the ease of communication as a reason to use Tinder than women. Earlier research also showed that men consider online communication as an simpler way to meet new people and potential partners than women (Haferkamp et al., 2012).

2.3. Motivation 2: Self-Worth Validation

The second psychosocial motivation was Self-Worth Validation, which reflected emerging adults’ need to feel better about themselves by using social media. More specifically, they used Tinder to receive positive feedback on their physical appearance and interests. In contrast to many other online dating platforms, you only interact with a match on Tinder if you both indicated that you like the appearance and the interests of a person. This match may be regarded as a validation of one’s self-worth among users. The idea that online communication can relieve feeling lonely and unwanted has been demonstrated in earlier studies. For instance, having many opposite sex friends on the internet was related
to feeling less lonely in one’s friendships more generally (Ando and Sakamoto, 2008). However, more research is needed to establish whether using Tinder satisfies this need for validation by online matches, and for which emerging adults this motivation is particularly strong. Although it is often suggested that validation by others, particularly a validation of one’s physical appearance, is more important for women than men (Crocker et al., 2003), no gender difference was found in the studies.

2.4. Gender Differences in Motivations to Use Tinder

Recently the motivations to use Tinder have been under scientific scrutiny, and research confirmed hooking-up as one of the motivations among Tinder users (Carpenter & McEwan, 2016; Gatter & Hodkinson, 2016). To thoroughly investigate the motivations to use Tinder, Sumter, Vandenbosch, and Ligtenberg (2017) developed a measure that specified six primary motivations: casual sex, love, ease of communication, self-worth validation, thrill of excitement, and trendiness. The study has also reported gender differences in motivation to use Tinder, where male users showed a higher motivation for casual sex than female users.

2.5. Thrill of Excitement and Trendiness Theories

The last two psychosocial motivations, Thrill of Excitement and Trendiness, are related to entertainment needs and are in line with previous studies concerning social networking. These studies also found that entertainment reasons drive social media use (Harridge-March et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2014). For instance, people high in sensation seeking are more likely to use the internet to find someone to have sexual intercourse with (Baumgartner et al., 2012). Similarly, in the current study using Tinder for the thrill of excitement related to more risky offline consequences, namely one-night stands with Tinder matches. Regarding the gender, men showed a higher motivation for the Thrill of Excitement than women. This finding corresponds to earlier research that showed that men are more open to thrill and adventure than women (Butkovic and Bratko, 2003; Rahmani and Lavasani, 2012). Although Trendiness was a main motivation, this motivation was not significantly related to gender, age nor offline behaviours. This result may potentially reflect that those who use Tinder because it is cool might merely be interested in exploring the app and less interested in its functionality. It is expected that this motivation will become less strong over time when Tinder becomes an established form of online dating.

2.6. Self-Disclosure and Intimacy

In their study of newsgroups, McKenna et al. (2002) found that those who better expressed their “true self” (their inner feelings) were more likely to have formed close online relationships. Linking “true self” and self-disclosure, McKenna et al. (2002) observed that self-disclosure led to an increase in intimacy and that only after liking and trust were established could an online relationship be formed. McKenna et al.(2002)
predicted that with more self-disclosure, online relationships would develop faster and be more stable than offline relationships. In their field study, in fact, they found that most of the online relationships were still intact two years later in the same proportions that others had found for offline relationships. In addition, they found in a laboratory study that students liked each other more when meeting the first time online versus face-to-face and that assessment remained stable even after meeting live.

2.7. Risks of Online Dating, Online Dating Romance Scam:

This section focuses on one form of mass-marketing fraud, the Online Dating Romance Scam. In some ways, it is like advance fraud scams; however, the portrayed end goal for the victim is typically that they will be in a committed relationship rather than simply in receipt of large sums of money. Like the Nigerian email scam, it existed as postal mail prior to the Internet (and this form still exists). The postal mail form typically aimed at men who purchased adult magazines with personal ads. The men would write to someone they believed to be a woman, who placed attractive photographs with themselves as either naked or very scantily clad (these were of course bogus photographs), with the intention to meet the woman. The criminal would develop a relationship with the victim often sending more photographs and then proceeded to fraud them for money.

The Internet Crime Complaint Center (2012) found that, in the United States, The Online Dating Romance Scam was one of the top five Internet scams reported in 2011, with over 5600 complaints. On average, each victim reported a loss of $8900. Action Fraud (www.actionfraud.org.uk), in the United Kingdom, identified 592 victims; of these, 203 individuals lost over £5000. to Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), financial loses can range between £50 and £240,000. These figures, however, are grave underestimates of the prevalence of the crime. Whitty and Buchanan (2012) estimated from a nationally represented survey that almost 230,000 people may have been conned by romance fraudsters in Great Britain alone (and these are the people who are aware that they have been scammed out of money). Whitty and Buchanan (2012) also argued that it is most likely the shame and upset experienced by the victims that prevent them from reporting the crime.

To prevent mass-marketing fraud it is essential to understand the framework of each scam. Given the newness of this crime, there is currently no existing publication that outlines, in detail, the anatomy of this scam. Rege (2009) and Whitty and Buchanan (2012) provide a sketch of the crime, but not a complete account. Rege (2009), for instance, drew from websites to devise a basic review of the scam. The scammer, she claims, contacts the victim, and then establishes a strong bond with their victim, which can last from 6 to 8 months. Next, she states that the scammer requests money from victims by creating a story of a tragic or desperate circumstance such as theft of personal documents during travel, unexpected hospital funds or request to pay money for travel expenses to meet the victim.
2.8. Risks of Online Dating, Cyber-Crime:

Another type of cybercrime done by the cybercriminals in online dating site which included pornography content is “Sextortion”. Sextortion is a serious crime that occurs when a perpetrator threatens to reveal intimate images of you online unless you give in to their demands. These demands are typically for money, further intimate images, or sexual favours. Perpetrators commonly target their victims through dating apps, social media, webcams, or adult pornography sites. Typically, the perpetrator has or pretends to have some nudity images or videos of the victim. They threaten to publish them online or share them with friends, family members, or colleagues if the victim doesn’t provide more material, engage in sexual acts, or hand over money (Kari, P., 2019). To understand cybercrime and pornography that happened in the online dating site, the researcher has performed the analysis on an online dating site found in California and this website claimed to have 10 million active members, 8 million female users, and 2 million male users, the users spread out in 139 countries, including Indonesia (Briandana, Oktavianingtyas & Marta, 2020). Results of the study will not be reviewed throughout but the danger of cyber-crime is obvious.

3. Conclusion

Online dating is established on the increasing use of mobile technologies in everyday life. At the same time, the mobility of people appears to be a significant force behind their choices to try online dating. While two of the participants in Barraket, Henry-Waring’s (2006) research identified personal traits – specifically, shyness and a predilection for the written word – as a reason for trying online dating, all participants identified multiple social factors that informed their decision to use these services. These included:

- Moving interstate and overseas for work and needing to find ways to build new social networks.
- A sense of isolation experienced because of single parenthood.
- Long and irregular work hours limiting possibilities for more traditional face to face introductions.
- Moving out of long-term relationships and having limited access to social networks that included available prospective partners.

3.1 Mindful Way Through Online Dating:

- Online dating, a billion-dollar industry, offers singles an unparalleled opportunity to meet and arrange dates with people outside their own social circles.
- Often these services encourage users to rely on decision-making styles that are not well suited to the development of successful relationships.
Awareness of the obstacles in this psychological terrain can help online daters make the most of these services while being careful about the dangers of online dating.

References


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