Modern love lines: An inquiry on experiences and generational views on online dating and relationships

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Abstract

With the use of technology, dating has already modernized; as looking for a potential partner has now become fast and easy through the emergence of different dating apps and sites. The study aimed to determine the generational views and experiences of six generation Y and eight-generation Z in online dating and relationships or a total of fourteen participants. The study is a qualitative research and with the use of one-on-one dialogic semi-structured online interviews as a mode of data collection. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis and were validated using investigator triangulation. For the results, there were no differentiating themes in generational experiences and insights. In contrast, there were evident comparisons in the views of generation Y and generation Z on online dating and relationships. In conclusion, the diverse experiences in online dating and relationships of the participants from different generations propelled intersecting generational perspectives and insights into love and intimacy.

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Introduction

People's lifestyles are changing, and this has an impact as to how they dwell. Dating is one aspect of people's lives that has been profoundly impacted. Contrasting traditional dating to burgeoning modern dating is a prominent issue right now. People nowadays can use the internet to expand their social circle or find connections worldwide, including people of other ethnicities. According to studies, nearly one-third of newly formed romantic partnerships begin with internet dating (Smith & Duggan, 2020). Hence, the desire for a feeling of belonging probably motivates human beings to behave in a manner that ends in better high-satisfactory relationships (Pillow et al., 2015).

One of the gray areas in literature is the lack of evidence on generational views on online dating. Additionally, previous studies show the views of different generations regarding online dating and relationships, however, it is noticed that the comparison of the generational views among Millennials and Generation Z is limited. Moreover, studies on views on online dating and relationships from older generations are also limited. With this, researchers aim to study more the views of different generations on online dating and relationships. This study aimed to determine how Filipinos of various generations feel about online dating and relationships.

This study oath to find out the experiences, views, and insights of Filipino online daters, with these variables, four different theories were used as a benchmark and guide in the completion of the study. The Theory of desirability in which states that a person tends to present themselves based on the desirability of the people ad environment they are in order to create a desirable self-presentation (Holden & Passey, 2009). This theory helps to bring out the connection of desirability to the engagement and experience of users in online dating and relationships. Attachment theory is also used as attachment is defined as the lasting psychological connectedness between human beings. Also, attachment is a strong emotional tie formed between another individual and it is a byproduct of biological evolution (Bowbly, 1969). The theory opens up more on the side of the developing relationships especially online also it is essentially related to the topic of online dating and relationships because it helps to understand more why people choose to engage in online dating. The Triangular Theory of love by Sternberg (1986) was also used to explain the type of relationship couples do form as they go with online dating and relationships for the theory shows the different components as well as types of love formed depending on what components it has. Lastly,

Relationship Development Theories which show the different phases of how relationships go through were also presented as different theories it explains the progress and formation of a romantic relationship. The Filter Theory by Kerckhoff and Daviz (1962) shows that dating couples tend to do some filtering in selecting the desired partner. Wheel Theory of Love by Ira Reiss (1980) wherein a process of communication was done and is needed to establish the relationship.

Stimulus-Value-Role Theory as proposed by Bernard Murstein (1976) which states that couples will progress through various stages before finally starting a real romantic relationship. Lastly, the Social Penetration Theory in which couples will go through self-disclosure where both will be sharing their personal information including insights and even negative experiences as a way of opening up to know more about each other.

Methodology

This research, which is qualitative in nature, examines the significance of individual experiences and establishes the prospect of change through greater awareness and intentional action (Taylor & Francis, 2013). Additionally, phenomenology research methodology was employed to help the researchers better understand the participants' individual perspectives on online dating and relationships.

Participants of the study was selected through purposive sampling. There are total of 14 participants as Morse (2000) suggested that for phenomenological studies, the number of participants acceptable for data gathering using the said type of research approach is at least 6 to 10 individuals. This number will ensure the richness of the data that will be gathered and the number of participants is divided equally according to each cohort with the following inclusion criteria: a) 6-10 Generation Y (aged 25-40; born 1981-1996) and Generation Z (aged 18-24; born 1997-2012); b) who has experienced or currently using online dating app for at least 1 month; and c) had or has a romantic partner or intimate connection with someone they met from online dating applications.

Researchers used one-on-one dialogic semi-structured online interviews as this type of interview will elicit participants' freedom of speech and expression and will involve devising the topic area. The interview was done after securing the consent and preferred schedule of the participants. Researchers used interview guide which entails one (1) opening

question focusing on their experience on online dating and relationships, three (3) main questions focusing on the views, perspectives, or stances of the participants on online dating and relationship in relations to their experiences, and two (2) ending questions focused on the participant's personal insights from their own experiences regarding online dating and relationships. Furthermore, the guide questions were presented to three (3) subject matter experts in the fields of psychology, counseling and research to ensure that the questions provided accurate and are able to collect quality interview data. The interview questions were also translated to Filipino by a Filipino teacher. A pilot interview was conducted to ensure the smooth flow, responsiveness to the guide questions, and comprehensiveness to draw needed data.

The interview was conducted through Google Meet and digital screen recorders and audio recorders was utilized to record the whole interview session. Participants were given a consent form prior to the interview as it serves as the proper agreement of the participants to join the study. All recorded interviews were translated through verbatim and intelligent transcription.

Collected data were analyzed through the use of thematic analysis, a strategy that is used in qualitative research that helps to identify the pattern in each participant's answers to be able to come up with the themes with the help of using a thematic map. Moreover, to ensure and establish the validity of the study's findings and analysis, particularly with the themes and subthemes, an investigator triangulation was conducted; and for this study four (4) experts were invited who are from fields of Psychology and Research. Whereas, the ethical considerations of this research is guided by the Section 10 of the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology Resolution No. 11 series of 2017.

Results and Discussion

There are three (3) major areas of discussion in this study. These are experiences, views, and insights on online dating and relationships of generations Y and Z.

Intergenerational Experiences in Online Dating and Relationships

Participants revealed that utilizing online dating had both benefits and drawbacks, but overcoming these obstacles helped them find their ideal partner in the end. The results of this study support Quesnel's (2010) hypothesis that a user's experience with online dating and relationships hinges on their motivations for participation, their level of involvement in the

community, and the value the community offers to its members. Overall, it anchors the thought or abstraction that despite the fact that online dating is a free service participants expressed satisfaction with the community. The findings also imply that both generations being studied share the same experiences in their online dating and relationships encounters.

Exploratory Matchmaking

The experience that online dating apps are easy to use and are commendable which allows users to interact with other users without too much to bear in mind. Also, aside from fact that online dating apps are convenient and usually for entertainment purposes, some participants a shared that their engagement in online dating and relationships are due to their own curiosity. The findings from this study showed that the participants' experiences mentioned that online dating is a good tool for meeting people and widening networks. Without too much to worry about in the engagement makes their experiences more accessible and pleasing to engage. Likewise, findings also imply that online dating was convenient and the participants' engagement in online dating and relationships was to ease their boredom and was due to curiosity.

Presence of Relationship Challenges and Crossroads

Challenges and uncertainty in a relationship can really affect the communication pattern, assurance of the relationship, and openness to each other and as this is the most crucial aspect of a relationship, it really does affect the relationship growth (Dansie, 2012). The findings and earlier academic explorations strengthen the idea that regardless of the platform used in forming the relationship, there are still challenges that partners will go through. As a result, the findings demonstrate that online dating and relationships are susceptible to dilemmas that put both people actively involved to the test.

Views on Online Dating and Relationships

Considering that the two (2) generations being studied share remarkably similar experiences with online dating and relationships, sharing common views is expected. Nevertheless, there are still disparities in how they view online dating and relationships.

The difference in each generation's characteristics and upbringing explains a lot towards how they view online dating and relationships. As it is stated by Fraley (2018), the same motivational system which gives rise to the deep emotional link between parents and their children is also responsible for their connection that emerges amongst adults in

emotionally intimate relationships. Also a study conducted by Merz et al (2008) states that a child's relationship with their parents affects their ability to form a romantic relationship. These studies regarding attachment of children's relationship towards their parents can further explain the differences in the views on online dating and relationships of the participants of the study.

Generation Y's View on Online Dating and Relationship

In terms of online dating, participants of the study who were from Generation Y shared how online dating apps and sites are good platforms to meet other people and form romantic relationships. The negative side of online dating was also shown but participants still seem to be optimistic about the use of online dating and that is because according to Luenendonk (2019), Generation Y's who are known to be the generation that is very familiar with technology, were open to changes and try new things as they are brave enough to exp

Generation Z's Views on Online Dating and Relationships

Generation Z's the generation that is known for documenting their daily lives and sharing them through different social media platforms (Chen et al., 2021). Generation Z's frequent use of technology is also because they use it as a way to escape from their problems as well as to seek belongingness to people on online platforms. As for online dating and relationships, participants of the study show that even though it is overwhelming, there are still a lot of good things that online dating and relationships give.

Conclusion

Living in an era where technology basically runs everything has come. With that, people became more acquainted with online dating and got more involved in online relationships. It is concluded that the diverse experiences in online dating and relationships propelled intersecting generational perspectives and insights into love and intimacy.

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