Social Interaction among Tinder users on Sexual Dating during Movement Control Order

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Abstract

Staying on a social basis does not mean people must cancel their social plans. Instead, a person itself needs to adjust them a bit. Tinder is one of the online interaction platforms that has provided an alternative and effective way for social interaction among society members. Tinder has a minimum of 10 million active users and is a widely used mobile dating application that enables users to date online, especially during the Movement Control Order (MCO). Unfortunately, the pandemic has also snatched away the connections that feed passion, contentment, belonging and all other variations of physical love. This research explores the social interaction among Tinder users on sexual courting during the MCO. Since this is exploratory research, therefore a qualitative research paradigm is used in this research. The data was obtained by using purposive sampling through an in-depth interview. Most users were involved in sexual courting on Tinder during MCO since they are alone, and it is the only way for them to find someone to talk to fill the loneliness. In terms of social interaction style, male Tinder users are more likely to seek relationships and sexual relationships through sexual courting. However, female users tend to be reserved and involved in sexual courting. The research findings can serve as a guideline for society members, especially young adults, to prevent them from falling into the sexual trap.

Keywords: *Social Interaction; Tinder; Mobile Dating Application; Sexual Courting; Young Adults; Movement Control Order*

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Interaksi Sosial Antara Pengguna Aplikasi Tinder Terhadap Temujanji Seksual semasa Perintah Kawalan Gerakan

Abstrak

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneroka interaksi sosial pengguna Tinder semasa Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP). Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data diperoleh melalui temu bual mendalam dengan pengguna aktif Tinder semasa PKP. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa banyak pengguna, yang merasakan kesunyian semasa PKP, terlibat dalam pergaulan seks sebagai cara untuk mengatasi kesunyian. Pengguna lelaki cenderung mencari hubungan dan hubungan seksual, sementara pengguna perempuan lebih berhati-hati dalam pergaulan seks dan lebih tertumpu kepada pembangunan hubungan sosial. Implikasi kajian ini adalah bahawa terdapat perbezaan dalam gaya interaksi antara pengguna lelaki dan perempuan di Tinder semasa PKP. Hasil kajian ini boleh menjadi panduan untuk masyarakat, terutamanya golongan muda, dalam menggunakan aplikasi seperti Tinder dengan lebih bijak dan bertanggungjawab, dan untuk menghindari risiko pergaulan seksual yang tidak diingini semasa PKP.

Kata Kunci: *Interaksi sosial; Tinder; aplikasi janji temu mudah alih; bercinta-cintaan; dewasa; Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan*

Introduction

Match.com is the first and largest online dating service, established around 1995, and over 27 million people worldwide were still using this online dating site by 2012 (Sarah, 2018). After the evolution of technology, online mobile dating applications have become more popular than online dating websites because they are more convenient and user-friendly McCain & Campbell, (2018). The best example of an online dating application is Tinder. Tinder is the first online dating application launched in the application store (Ioanna, 2015). Tinder is a picture-based dating application with many supporters among other online dating applications. Furthermore, people often use online dating applications to expand their social network, find a romantic partner or even for casual sex relationships (Edmond, 2016). Therefore, Tinder has become a trend among other social applications.

Technological improvement has brought up a new trend where people seek casual sex via online dating applications. According to Katherine (2017), men are more willing to have casual sex through online or mobile dating applications. In contrast, women are more likely to use them for relationships, such as finding partners, friends, etc. Casual sex is becoming typical because it can be about having no strings attached to the fun. Men choose to maximise their mating opportunities they would engage in hookups with many different partners, with whom they share a wide array of relationships, even without commitment (Shukusky, 2013), especially during the pandemic when they stay apart from their partner and are under lockdown which urges them to find someone to fulfil their loneliness.

Flirting is considered one of the human interactions that may involve seeking dating partners and can also be the initial part of the courtship (Wade & Slemp, 2015). Shana (2016) argued that flirtation could be defined in two ways: to maintain or enhance the level of an existing intimate relationship or to deliver a message of interest or attraction. In flirting, the sender tends to signal and convey their interest and desirability to their intended receiver to initiate and establish a relationship (Robert, 2014). Although there are various intentions through flirting, men tend to convey sex desirability, and women are more likely to seek a relationship (Shana, 2016).

Hence, the critical problem that beckons further exploration is the in-depth investigation of the underlying factors, motivations, and behavioural patterns driving the utilisation of online dating applications. Specifically, this study aims to spotlight the profound impact of gender and evolving technology on modern dating preferences. This investigation will provide invaluable insights into the societal implications of these trends, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between technology, romance, and gender roles in the digital age.

This study explores the social interaction among Tinder users on sexual courting during the MCO. According to Shaw (2020), Tinder users made 3 billion swipes worldwide on Sunday, 29 March, the most online application recorded daily. Furthermore, according to Jayatilaka (2020), daily conversations among Tinder users rose by 12% between mid-February and the end of May in Malaysia. Therefore, it can be explained that this pandemic forces many people to stay indoors; thus, single youths are turning to date applications during the pandemic, not just to find love but for some human connection (Katie, Paul & Francis, 2020). Due to that, the objective of this study is to explore the social interaction among Tinder users on sexual courting during the Movement Control Order.

People have used the Internet extensively during the MCO because many have started working from home (Anis, 2020). Since then, due to loneliness, many people have also used that opportunity to engage in online dating applications to meet new friends. It has been reported that more than half of Malaysians make friends via online websites and have a relationship during the MCO (Athira Nortajuddin, 2020). Moreover, many dating applications are available on the Internet, such as WeChat, Grindr, Paktor, OkCupid, and many more (Corpuz, 2020). Besides, users use those online applications for interaction and 'hookups (Kath, 2017). During the MCO, Tinder has recently become a trend among adults (Shaw, 2020). There are two categories of Tinder users ranging from 13 to 18 years old and from 19 years old onwards. These age ranges restrict teenagers below 18 only from accessing the teenage dating pool, segregating them away from the potential sexual content of the adult age group (Martin, 2016).

Tinder has emerged as a secure and famous platform for online daters, offering a less risky alternative to in-person courtship (Caro, 2014). Online daters on Tinder are more inclined to initiate and nurture romantic relationships with like-minded individuals who express mutual interest and respond to romantic overtures. Tinder significantly transformed people's social lives during the Movement Control Order (MCO). The COVID-19 pandemic had previously imposed severe constraints on human interactions, prompting many individuals to rely on social media as their primary mode of communication (The Star, 2020). Moreover, maintaining physical distance has become the 'new normal,' necessitating societal adaptation. While some relationships managed to weather the crisis, others anticipated the pandemic driving a permanent wedge between couples and families. Given the substantial surge in social interactions among Tinder users and its elevation to one of the most popular dating apps, it becomes imperative to investigate the primary motivations driving its usage. Equally crucial is exploring the various social interactions among Tinder users.

Literature Review

In the first phase, the study focuses on communication across Tinder users. Socialisation is inescapable in daily human life as it helps us create engagement with others, further establishes a relationship, and shapes who we are (Hossain & Ali, 2014). Social interaction is recognised when one's behaviours or actions are reorganised and influence the other, by which people will observe the other individual's behaviour and act in response after thinking (Chan et al., 2011). Schutt and Goldfinger (2011) proposed to segment social interaction into three interconnected processes: motivational, interactional, and structuring. Through this analysis, they conceptualised the first process as energising or motivating individuals when encountering each other. Besides, the interactional process leads others' attention to gestures or movements used in communicating while interpreting others' and their interaction signals

(Zahirul, 2018). Finally, the structuring process allows people to reorganise and repeat the interactions across time and space (Shoeb et al., 2014).

Furthermore, social interaction comprises verbal and non-verbal communication (Wade & Slemp, 2015). Users on Tinder use verbal communication to communicate while on the application. However, they also use non-verbal communication, stickers, or emojis while chatting. Everyone carries different intentions or purposes in using Tinder, resulting in different communication contexts. One will react or respond according to the reply of the senders, and the way of chatting holds the result. Because of cognitive uncertainty, everyone holds uncertainty about others' beliefs and attitudes during their early interaction (Businesstopia, 2018). Once Tinder users can get to know their chatting partners for extended periods, they tend to disclose themselves within their conversations. People would disclose their details or personal matters to others if they trusted them (Tang & Wang, 2012). Usually, this will occur as one of the communication strategies is to practice the question-asking method (Nalawade, 2016). In addition, people would answer according to the question raised by their chatting partner. This process possesses a person's depth about different sides of one's life and touches on details of the mentioned sides (Mohan, 2016).

During the process, the formation of the relationship will start to occur. The relationship's progress depends on the willingness and trustworthiness of a person has on the other person (Mohan, 2016). If one feels insecure telling or disclosing more about themselves, they will choose not to reveal too much of themselves. The topic would also remain superficial because self-disclosure may risk the person and make the person vulnerable to the other person(Alison & Jalil, 2011), especially during the MCO. After all, the uncertainty about someone's background is very high. Whether they are from a risk area, that person may have a high risk of being infected. However, the extent to which a person chooses to disclose would be through assessing the cost and reward (Cherry, 2018). They will form certain relationships throughout the conversion process, from friendship partners to sexual relationships (Kanjendra, 2016). The social exchange process results differ according to the types of relationships formed. Besides, the deeper the relationship, the more in-depth the personal part might be told. In the fundamental way of understanding, the behaviour or decision made by a human is usually driven by the cost and reward. After making the decision, the cost involves the consequences: exchange for social status, recognition, and many more (Moss, 2018).

According to Flug (2016), online or mobile dating apps have provided young adults a platform to seek their desired relationships, especially to pursue intimacy and proximity. Online dating could be like offline dating, which can ease the development and enhance intimacy between individuals by self-disclosure. The exchange of personal information can help better understand each other, thus eliminating uncertainty and ambiguity (Espana, 2013). Besides pursuing a romantic relationship, young adults may engage in Tinder only to occupy their free time (Arbel, 2016). However, there is always an opposing side to online dating. According to Wong and Yazdanifard (2015), deception might happen in the virtual world as individuals can choose to disclose the wrong self to others by easily monitoring personal information and details. Therefore, young adults should be the ones responsible for themselves to avoid online risks.

In 2013, 1 out of 10 people were engaging in online dating sites in America (Flug, 2016). The massive use of the Internet, social media and modern technologies has superseded the traditional ways individuals form relationships nowadays (Beauchamp et al., 2017). Cyberdating has shifted the primitive way of dating (Balbi, 2017). According to Bryant & Sheldon (2017), online dating websites and mobile dating applications create cyber dating that provides an easy and effective way of seeking partners and matches according to your criteria and requirements. It also can be seen that, during the MCO, since the situation is forcing many people to stay indoors, they turn to date applications during the pandemic to find love and for some human connection (Jayatilaka, 2020).

'To communicate is to be human' has reflected the importance of interacting to exchange information (McIntosh, 2018). Social interaction refers to how people react and act with each

other. For example, a person may ask questions to provide the needed information (Daniels, 2016). As well, an individual will acquire a specific role during social interaction. For instance, a dialogue will include a speaking person and a person who is listening (Heylen, 2009). Besides, social interaction can be shaped whenever dyad groups or social groups communicate face-to-face or online (Boundless Sociology, 2018).

Furthermore, couple interaction formed under social interactions predicts how a couple interacts with one another in a different situation (Pieter, 2014). Therefore, couple interaction contributes to different interaction behaviours associated with relationship satisfaction (Ruffieux, 2014). People perceive their relationship satisfaction by evaluating the couple's interaction behaviour. For example, if couples argue, interaction strength can be restated and recounted in therapy (Justin, 2017). In short, a joyous couple of interactions is needed to enhance relationship satisfaction (Laliker, 2014). Hence, social technology is beneficial because it enables people to stay connected with their loved ones who are further away. Therefore, many people rely on technology for social interaction rather than in-person interactions. Besides, social technology has changed humans, becoming vested in how they are portrayed online. For example, people often only put flattering pictures and stories on social media (Jessica, 2016). These show that people are becoming isolated due to less face-to-face and superficial online interactions. Also, when the MCO happened, it changed the way of social interaction among people.

Methodology

It is a significant phenomenology study exploring the social interaction among Tinder users on sexual courting during the Movement Control Order. Phenomenology is a qualitative study method used to understand how people experience a specific phenomenon. It is conducted primarily on personal interpretation and human consciousness. Phenomenology allows the researcher to develop the perspectives, perceptions and understanding of people who have experienced certain phenomena (Alase, 2017). According to Zahirul (2018), phenomenology studies are suitable for psychological and social phenomena studies. Sexuality-related phenomena are psychological experiences that are tremendously varied. For instance, people would engage in sexual behaviour with different intentions.

In order to find out the social interaction among Tinder users on sexual courting, phenomenology studies are appropriate for this study to show the intentions of using Tinder. Therefore, non-probability sampling has been used for this study. Nevertheless, the type of sample employed in this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to the researcher's tendency to seek out participants' elements to meet the narrow and specific information (Reddy & Ramasamy, 2016). The requirements for this study are 1) Tinder users, 2) Young adults aged between 18 to 35 years old, 3) Regardless of gender and ethnicity, and 4. Malaysian, 5) Agree to be the participant. In order to select the informants, researchers:

1. **Start with an Initial Informant:** Identify someone who knows about the topic. For instance, this research is studying Tinder users. Hence, the researchers found someone who uses Tinder.
2. **Interview the Initial Informant:** Talk to the initial informant and gather information about their experiences or knowledge related to this research.
3. **Ask for Referrals:** At the end of the interview, researchers ask the initial informant if they know others who might have valuable insights. Request contact information or introductions to these potential informants.
4. **Contact Referred Informants:** Contact the people the initial informant suggested. Interview them and ask for more referrals if they are willing.
5. **Repeat the Process:** Keep interviewing new informants and asking for referrals. This process continues until researchers have gathered enough information or reached a point where new informants no longer provide significant insights.
6. **Data Analysis:** Analyse the information collected from all the informants to find common themes and patterns related to the research topic.

This process helps researchers build a network of informants who can provide valuable information and insights, especially when studying groups that are hard to reach through traditional methods.

In addition, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview among the participants to collect the data. The reason for choosing an in-depth interview is to extract more detailed information, gain a deeper understanding and have a better rapport with participants (Jamshed, 2014). For this study, the researchers have selected a semi-structured qualitative interview as the primary data collection. In the semi-structured interview, the researcher will develop a set of interview protocols as the instrument of this study and guide participants (Reddy & Ramasamy, 2016). During the pandemic of COVID-19, a face-to-face interview is not allowed. Therefore, the interview session was conducted via Google Meet and took 30-45 minutes. The researcher stopped the interview at the 10th participant of the Tinder users as it reached the saturation point. The saturation point is when extra data cannot develop new themes for the study (Saunders et al., 2017).

In order to measure the accuracy of this study, a validation process was made. Validity in the study is the extent to which the data is appropriate, justifiable, and relevant (Cypress, 2017). Firstly, the researcher used descriptive validity to achieve high accuracy. Then, the transcribed notes were sent back to the participants for consensus. Therefore, Maxwell (1992) viewed descriptive validation as the researcher's and interviewees' agreement. Next is interpretive validity, in which the researcher reflects the researcher's ability to report interviewees' meaning, behaviour, or emotions in the response. However, the interpretation process is based on the researcher's point of view and reflects the participants' true feelings, such as anger, sadness or romance (Thomson, 2011). For example, if the interviewees increased the pitch or tone to express their answers, the researcher could interfere with the informant's emotional experience. Afterwards, the transcription outcome will also be reported to participants for agreement. If the participants are unsatisfied with the interpretation, the study must remark and re-interpret until consensus is achieved. Lastly is the theoretical validity, where the study forms a theory in the studied phenomenon and evaluates it with the researcher's own theorised perception. Thus, to validate this, the obtained response, such as concepts and patterns, must be fitted into the pre-determined theory in the phenomenon to create a constructed idea for the theory (Hannes, Lockwood, & Pearson, 2010). Afterwards, the researcher can produce aligned data supporting the pre-determined theory.

Findings And Discussions

Five themes would influence the social interaction styles among Tinder users during MCO. Media roles include gratification, relationship, courting, engagement, and interpersonal communication. When the audience started using Tinder, they shaped their opinions towards the application because each of them would gratify their needs based on what they wanted. For instance, the general aim of users using Tinder is to look for relationship attachments. It could be friendship, sexual relationships and many others because they feel lonely during the MCO and need someone to talk to and make them feel sane.

Courting is one of the relationships that Tinder users use to look around. They were seeking someone who matched their needs or requirements. After engaging with other Tinder users, different interaction styles can be seen throughout the conversation, and it would evolve when the bond gets stronger (Henry-Waring & Barraket, 2008). However, it takes time for the stage to progress as there will be different cognitive and behavioural uncertainties. The intimacy of a relationship is also affected by the same factors. If an individual manages to interact with the other Tinder user openly and full-heartedly, it signifies that they are in a close-knit relationship. Therefore, Tinder users carry different intentions while on Tinder, practising various interaction styles to seek their intended outcomes. However, there is a new finding from this study. The researchers found a difference in attachment between both genders.

Media Roles

Based on the findings, the researcher found out that there is a moderate difference in terms of attachment, which involved the media roles. This study has proven that media roles are essential in exposing new things. It can stimulate social interaction among male and female Tinder users. Therefore, this can be seen in this study, where Tinder users must use Facebook and YouTube advertisements to know Tinder through media entertainment, such as product placement and social media. Thus, it is unsurprising that there is an increasing number of Tinder users during MCO. Hence, this can be related to the Uncertainty Reduction Theory. When there is uncertainty within an individual, they will not try to disclose their personal information. Cognitive uncertainty will occur because the users hold uncertainty over other Tinder users during the early interaction. The use of media entertainment contributes to the reduction of uncertainty of an individual, and it helps by providing an immersive experience to the users through different ways of communication. Users' uncertainties will gradually reduce with integration of verbal, non-verbal and visual communication.

However, most females knew about this application through word of mouth. Usually, the information comes from their friends; therefore, females strongly rely on their friends to convey information. Hence, females are more likely to get inaccurate information for conforming to whatever their friends tell them. Because they would trust their friends, and their friends may filter certain information they perceive as less important, which could result in inaccurate information (Stampler, 2014). Most male users attached to Tinder for a more extended period, on average, have used Tinder for at least six months, while female users have used it for less than three months and have also started to use Tinder during the MCO because they were curious about that application. However, the progress and relationship types do not align with the Tinder application's duration. Because female users have a higher opportunity to get matched while male users get a lesser match, it has resulted from the first impression one would have towards the other users because females are more appealing to males, and male users would swipe right a female user if he finds the person is good looking. At the same time, female users will investigate the particulars of other users before matching up. It is known for filtering the users who remain only the best-suited matches. Thus, male and female Tinder users have different durations of using the Tinder application, and they got to know and attached to it through different channels.

Gratification

Based on the findings, Tinder users from both genders perceive Tinder differently, especially in the online dating application field. Tinder is not recognised as the best social dating application from both male and female perspectives. Males would perceive the Tinder application as a hookup application, which has shown that people have different perceptions towards Tinder, which is not in line with its nature. Additionally, female users did not acknowledge Tinder as the best social dating application because it contains many fake profiles. The system does not monitor or filter these fake profiles when they are created.

Moreover, users of both genders would recommend using other applications to gratify their needs because they think better applications are widely used for friend-making. However, current Tinder users are less likely to promote or introduce their friends to it because it has been abused by people constantly seeking a sexual relationship or hookup (Ligtenberg, Sumter, & Vandenbosch, 2016). Thus, it gives a sense of insecurity, especially in female users, as they are commonly found to be the victims of any crime that has occurred online. Under those circumstances, it is proven by real-life events that people will abuse online dating applications to conduct crimes or any actions to fulfil their desires. Therefore, users must be more conscious to avoid falling into any trap that the other users set up.

Moreover, Tinder users would recommend that those looking for friends use other applications because there is a lot of fake information and identities on Tinder. However, female users will only reveal limited personal information to avoid over-exposing their identity to secure themselves. Only superficial information will be revealed online, but they are willing to disclose more about themselves once they have identified the identity of their matched partner on Tinder. For instance, they would ask for their profiles on other social media, and

female users will verify every piece of information to ensure that what they have been told is identical to those on other social media.

Relationship

Male users who are experienced using the Tinder application will fulfil their desires and wants in various relationships, including friendship, sexual relationships or any relationship that could further progress. They will not hesitate to build relationships if given a chance. However, female Tinder users seemed to have less experience using Tinder to fulfil their needs. Most females learned about the Tinder application through their friends' recommendations. The researcher found that females are more into friendship and will proceed to the relationship via Tinder application, especially during MCO, because they also need someone to talk to, and the communication would be more often with someone they felt comfortable with in the process to build up the relationship. Most female users started to use the Tinder application to expand their social networking and build friendships. The intention of making new friends will not stop even if they have a stable relationship. However, only a minority of females use the Tinder application intentionally for sexual relationships. This minority group of females is more open-minded and thinks Tinder is an excellent platform to search for a sexual relationship.

Furthermore, the relationship is one of the primary keys that influence the interaction style of Tinder users (Saylor, 2016). The researcher found out that the relationship status of the Tinder users will significantly influence their behaviours on Tinder. The researcher found that all males will stop using the Tinder application after they find their relationship partner. In this case, it showed that males would show respect to their relationship partners by stopping using a dating application to avoid troubles or misunderstandings that may occur within their relationship. All males perceived security as one of the essential elements to strengthen the relationship. Therefore, they will stop using the dating application to show their loyalty to their partner. However, when their statuses return to single, they will use the dating application again to look for any possibilities based on their intentions.

The researcher also found a moderate difference between males and females regarding the openness to discussing sexual topics with their Tinder friends. The depth of conversation will go deeper along with the relationship stage. In this case, the intimacy between two users is essential for females, especially when it touches on sexual topics. If there is a certain degree of intimacy, they are likelier to discuss the sexual topic (Sevi, Aral & Eskenazi, 2017). Most female users will feel uncomfortable discussing a sexual topic with someone they are not familiar with. Also, the researcher found that female Tinder users feel offended and not respected if their Tinder friends talk about a sexual topic at the beginning of the conversation. They are most likely to unmatch those Tinder friends who initiated sexual topics at the starting point of the conversation. Most female users think sexual topics should only arise after both sides exchange contact numbers.

Meanwhile, male Tinder users are willing to initiate or continue a sexual topic with their friends. They feel it is fun and not offensive to talk about sexual topics with their Tinder friends if they are interested in that person. However, both males and females are similar in the depth of discussion on sexual topics. On that matter, it depends on the intimacy with the other person. They are more willing to disclose their personal sexual life if the level of intimacy with the person is clique. The level of intimacy, in this sense, represents the process that possesses the breadth and depth of a person.

Courting

Courting is typical to be seen, especially when it is on social media. About courting, flirting plays a role in how a relationship occurs. One must start flirting with the other partner, and a relationship may occur if the partner agrees or does not resist flirting. The finding shows that most genders have experienced flirting when they are on Tinder. Most importantly, they perceive flirting to be expected on every social media, especially among those who want to look for a relationship. Flirting is considered inevitable from their perspectives because it is fundamental to any courtship that would occur online. However, males are known to be the

party that will take the initiative to flirt with other users because females are less likely to do so unless they are interested in any users they are meeting online. Moreover, flirting online has given room for the imagination of Tinder users, as they will get excited by texts in the virtual world. If one were to initiate and express their love or sexual interests to their friends, they would be perceived differently, while the use of social media has changed or reduced the awkwardness, triggering users to be more daring in expressing their feelings.

Before developing feelings or relationships, all their behaviours reflect on their purposes for using Tinder. Their initial aim in Tinder is to widen their social circle using mobile devices. Technology has eased users to meet up and form relationships with people across the globe (McIntosh, 2018). The formation of relationships is built upon their intentions of using Tinder. After all, most users will not disclose their true intentions by keeping them to themselves. On the contrary, users will disclose their intentions under certain circumstances when they have met their ideal partner or when the relationship has progressed to a certain extent, whereby both are highly intimate. Therefore, tinder users engaging with their chatting partner will significantly impact the evolution of their relationship.

Engagement

Engagement is based on how the relationship progresses on Tinder. Male and female Tinder users agreed that the conversation's interaction style would determine the relationship's stages. They perceive an engaging interaction style as a preference for deciding whether to keep in touch with their matched friends or stop chatting with them. They will not continue the conversation if they find the person dull and shy. Therefore, a sense of humour is essential for Tinder users to start any relationship. They will even ignore the person's message at the beginning of the conversation if the way they initiated it is expected.

The sustainability of a relationship is believed to fall on the way of social interaction during the conversation (McIntosh, 2018). In this study, female users are found to be passive during the conversation, and they would prefer their matched friends to initiate the conversation first and be active in replying to their messages. Therefore, they think their matched friends should be the ones playing the role of initiating the topic. Nonetheless, males will initiate the topic in general, but they also expect their chatting partner to respond excitedly and interactively. It will only motivate them to continue engaging with other users and further progress their relationship. Based on this study, male users are more likely to find a topic based on the biography and hobbies of the person. It means male users will read about a Tinder friend's biography once they feel interested in that person.

Male users seemed to take a shorter observation period before asking their matched friends for a meetup. It shows that males are casual in terms of building relationships. However, female users tend to be more careful about this subject. They think that it is necessary to have a duration to understand the person before going for a meetup. They will not meet up with someone they are unfamiliar with because of the feeling of discomfort. They will take a few weeks to know about the Tinder friend. It shows that female users are more cautious in building a relationship. They will not quickly meet up with Tinder friends unless they trust the person. Also, the purpose of meeting up with their Tinder friends is to evaluate whether the person they are chatting with is consistent as portrayed online because people can easily fake their personality or information online.

Uncertainty

Tinder served as a platform for people to initiate interpersonal communication. Uncertainty can be established once the Tinder users interact and match up. It was perceived as a stage where most Tinder users would hold uncertainty because none had experienced anything about Tinder in advance. Furthermore, Tinder users would hold back to avoid revealing too much personal information about themselves because they are unfamiliar with the dating application. This level of uncertainty will rise during the swiping process if the other Tinder users do not use their self-portraits.

A study by Ligtenberg, Sumter and Vandenbosch (2016) also proved that people carry different aims while using Tinder. Correspondingly, they are carrying different intentions on Tinder. It is significant when female users hide certain information when asked to explain what they want on Tinder, such as types of relationships. Based on the findings, they would not indicate their intentions on Tinder. Conversely, male users would be exposed that they are not only seeking friendship and relationships on Tinder. They do not resist developing other forms of relationship besides their intentions of friendship and relationship.

Likewise, the feeling of insecurity will be the prominent sense when the users have uncertainty due to their unfamiliarity with the Tinder application. Tinder requires one to swipe to select who they want to match with. In this way, Tinder users will look at the profile of a potential match partner to reduce the feeling of insecurity. They will get to know the tip of the iceberg of another user. Even though the information is fake, it helps to soothe the feeling of insecurity and uncertainty. It is also supported by the study conducted by Espana (2013), stating that Tinder users may reject or avoid talking about the sexual topic with their matched partner because they might not reach the level of intimacy or do not feel uncomfortable talking about this topic. Moreover, they tend to resist receiving nude photos from other Tinder users.

About uncertainty, the more the users care, the more the matters they would be concerned about. Hence, self-centred is justifiable when someone is concerned with their interest. Based on the findings, most females show their femininity towards other Tinder users by portraying a sense of caring. It is obvious that after knowing their matched friends on Tinder are in a relationship, they would stop chatting with their partner to avoid causing trouble. Conversely, male users are less likely to bother with related matters of matched partners. They will proceed with the conversation with matched partners if they are not affected. Male users prioritised their matters by continuing the conversation to fulfil their intentions on Tinder. Male users would ignore others to chat with their matched partners that are a partner of someone.

Conclusion

The study reveals five prominent themes that influence the social interaction styles among Tinder users during the Movement Control Order (MCO): Media Roles, Gratification, Relationship, Courting, and Engagement. These themes have unveiled interesting dynamics in how users approach online dating, form relationships, and navigate the uncertainties in this digital realm. This study implies that the role of media in shaping perceptions and reducing uncertainty is evident.

As users get introduced to Tinder through various media, their uncertainties decrease, and they become more comfortable with the platform. Gender differences are notable in how they acquire information, with females relying heavily on word-of-mouth. In addition, the perceptions of Tinder differ between genders, with males often viewing it as a hookup platform and females expressing concerns about fake profiles. Users are cautious about recommending Tinder to their friends, given concerns about the safety and intentions of other users. Males use Tinder for diverse relationships, including friendship, sexual relationships, and more. Female users, on the other hand, predominantly seek friendship and use Tinder to expand their social networks. The level of intimacy influences the progression of relationships and discussions on sexual topics. Flirting plays a central role in the early stages of building relationships on Tinder. Males often initiate flirting, while females engage more when interested in a match. Flirting is seen as an essential component of online courtship. The interaction style during conversations significantly impacts the relationship's progression. Males are more casual in initiating meetups, while females prefer understanding their matches before agreeing to meet in person.

This information provides valuable insights into the dynamics of online dating and social interaction among Tinder users during the MCO. Understanding these nuances can help dating platforms like Tinder improve user experiences, enhance safety measures, and reduce user misunderstandings. It also sheds light on the impact of media in shaping perceptions of online dating, with potential implications for digital literacy and safety education. Ultimately,

this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge about online dating and its impact on modern social interactions, potentially leading to safer and more fulfilling online dating experiences.

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