

Tinder-Ly Yours: An Exploratory Study of Malaysian Indian Youths Online Dating Through The Culture

LISHALINI CHANDRASEKARAN

SHARON WILSON

SWAGATA ROY

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

ABSTRACT

The pandemic has shifted the way we meet new people and thus, changed the concept of going on a date. With the sporadic and growing rates of Covid-19 cases, it may be difficult to find a relationship and maintain one while exercising social-distance. As we adjusted to this temporary reality, the dating sphere continued reinvent ways to connect people. "Today", more Indian Malaysian youths have increased their presence on dating apps in search of love and intimacy despite their "traditional" Indian courtship practices. The main thrust of this study is to examine why the smartphone application 'Tinder' is increasingly popular among Malaysian Indian youth and to investigate why and how the youth use Tinder during this pandemic. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) holds major assumptions that individuals are active, rational, and objective, to the extent of being almost goal-oriented in their choices. This study conducted 30 in-depth, semi-structured interviews via convenience and snowball sampling found that online dating behaviour has the potential to help scholars have deeper understanding of how the Tinder mobile application integrated with existing religions and cultures gives insights into the nature of technological change as well as adaptation in society. This is by providing new insights into existing interpersonal communication theories focusing on relationship formation.

Keywords: *Courtships, Cultural studies, Indian, Tinder, Youth.*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has rapidly changed the way people build relationships and also communicate. As people were unable to physically meet and get to know each other, the conventional dating approach had a greater shift to online dating applications. According to Stoicescu (2019) online dating apps have become immensely popular and have gained significant attention from the media over the past few years as their ease of access has encouraged over 90% of single youths to try online dating applications, whereas 84% of them were hoping to find themselves a relationship. Tinder is now one of the main dating applications that have been explicitly designed for smartphone applications (Harrison et al., 2022). Tinder takes the relationship-building aspect of communication to the next level by focusing on interacting with various people. Tinder has added some new features, especially during this pandemic time for finding love, whether fleeting or life-long, "Tinder" unveiled new features such as playful 'Hot Takes': multiple-choice questions to see whether users' 'flirty banter' is in sync. With dating possibilities emerging on our smartphones, potential exchanges have increased tenfold (Stoicescu, 2019).

Tinder is now viewed as one of the most well-known dating applications for iOS and Android with a rate of 49.9% active users daily with a rate of 10 million active users (Statista, 2022). It is initially a Tinder dating app, and it has always been known as a hook-up app (David & Cambre, 2016). There is a whopping number of Tinder users who confess to having met

their spouse and their long-term partner online. Through this, the acquisition of meaningful romantic relationships will potentially be accomplished. In Malaysia, especially if the individuals are from a large urban area, the Tinder application would be the choice if they're looking for a casual date with an expected range of 1.2 million individuals who have installed this free application (Statista, 2022). However, new research reveals that 29% of Malaysians (three in 10) have participated in internet and online dating apps, of which 33% of them are millennials (Adam et al., 2020). However, The Star Online (2022) found that only seven percent of Malaysian youths believe that Tinder is a very conducive way to meet new people, almost half of the global average of 12%. The Malaysian society has shown an increasing acceptance for couples who meet through online dating apps, with 45% of all respondents saying they would not think of a couple that met online any differently (Adam et al., 2020).

Despite the fact that Tinder is also known for casual sex encounters, Tinder has become the top dating site for marriage, according to a recent report on the wedding knot (Free Malaysia Today, 2021). It has also been a leading source of relationships and marriages as there has been a tremendous increase in interracial relationships (Free Malaysia Today, 2021), despite the fact that men and women have their own preferences and when it comes to choosing their mating partners (Dinh et al., 2021). The purpose of this study aims to first explore the self-presentation tactics of users by analysing their motives for joining Tinder, and then to use the Users and Gratification (U&G) theory to analyse the self-presentation of Tinder users through their Tinder profiles.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As above mentioned in the earlier section, the goal of this paper is to first understand the self-presentation techniques of users by identifying their motivations for downloading Tinder and try to discuss the self-presentation of Tinder users using their profiles uploaded to the Tinder application using the users and gratification (U&G) Theory. The U&G revolves around the idea that an individual would look for media to meet their needs and that this can lead to ultimate gratification. Therefore, U&G was applied in this study in order to have a detailed picture of how and why the Malaysian Indian youths are actually using "Tinder" to have a better understanding of the latent effects of technology and would be an appropriate structure to clarify how and why Tinder is used by Malaysian Indian youths.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivations to Use Tinder

According to David and Cambre's (2016) study, today's youth were more likely to use Tinder to find a long committed relationship or companionship, and Harrison et al. (2022) stated that love motivation was stronger than casual sex motivation (David & Cambre, 2016; Harrison et al., 2022). Thus, having a long-term committed relationship turns out to be common as the youths grow older. As the youth's needs may change when they grow older, their motivations for using a dating application as Tinder may likewise change. The users' needs, such as having a committed long-term or a short-term relationship, will also grow stronger from time to time during their emerging adulthood according to their needs. Therefore, Tinder should not be viewed solely as a fun hookup app, but should be viewed as a new way for emerging adolescents to initiate long-term committed romantic relationships.

Mateizer & Avram (2022) stated that most online dating sites are used within the age range of 25-34 years old (Mateizer & Avram, 2022). Today's youths are using Tinder to fulfill their specific needs and desires (Sobieraj & Humphreys, 2021). The needs of sexual pleasure

among emerging adulthood is more likely the motivation to use the dating application Tinder. Jonsson (2021) stated the motivations for using online dating applications depend on the situation (Jonsson, 2021).

Van De Wiele et al. (2014) found six U&G reasons users participate in online dating in their study, namely: social inclusion, sex, friendship, also termed socialising, entertainment, romance, and geographically accessible searches, which allow users to meet people as close to their vicinity as possible. The users will focus on establishing committed long-term relationships and a characteristic of social relationships. The users look at this dating application as an aid to fulfilling their desired needs of finding companionship (Mateizer & Avram, 2022).

Mühleisen (2016) stated that self-consciousness about their appearance is one of the reasons for the users to move to online dating sites where it allows them to present their personality more comfortably and let them decide when they want to disclose their personal information to their potential partners (Mühleisen, 2016). Some introverts use this platform to communicate with others so that they do not feel high anxiety while communicating, unlike in person (Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017). They move into online dating sites in terms of looking for companionship, love, and also a committed long-term relationship.

Besides that, they have the right whether to meet them in person, and it is totally fine if they do not get along rather than waiting for their parents to decide whether it is a good match or not for them (Mühleisen, 2016). Besides, online dating is a huge plus when it comes to privacy, and the users are just seeing if there is potential there. Therefore, Malaysian Indian youths would want their potential partners to be perfect before introducing them to their family, and they want it to be 100% right. Therefore, online dating sites do not involve their family before a particular individual is willing to introduce them to the family (Young & Roberts, 2021).

Malaysian Indian Culture

Indian culture is diverse and marked by a strong social hierarchy. There are various diversity of Indian ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. Ethnicity amongst the Indians is seen as a breakdown of races such as Malayalee, Telugu, Brahmin, etc. From a young age, Indian children are taught their roles and place in society. Above all, Malaysian Indian youths still stick to the traditional Indian culture despite rapid Westernisation. According to Merrill and Liang (2019), adolescents engage with or consume television, information, and interactive media for nearly a whole "work day" (seven hours), which is everywhere, including bedrooms. As such, their exposure to other cultures is prevalent (Merrill & Liang, 2019). Arranged marriages are the norm in Indian culture and their marriages are planned by their parents. Indian tradition places a strong emphasis on marriage due to the family's role and their culture as one of the elemental units in the building blocks of society. Indians emphasise arranged marriage as they perceive their religion as a continuous tradition from one generation to the next generation. However, these have been eye-opening to the current generation, where the youth are not really open to the idea of arranged marriages either. They tend to look for their life partner through online dating applications without getting both their families involved Díaz Sánchez (2016).

As such, many Indian youths are adapting to this Westernised culture where they feel online dating sites would be able to help them initiate contact with their potential romantic partners, and this helps them to get to know their partner even better beyond the initial stages

of a relationship before they even meet (Mühleisen, 2016). According to Current Population Estimates, Malaysia (2019-2020), there are 6.8% - 6.9% of Indians respectively in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). The structure of the Indian families in Malaysia has its own base of lifestyles on traditional values, beliefs, and expectations. Therefore, they usually maintain a relative collectivist orientation where they emphasise arranged marriage. As the 'second generation' consists of individuals who are born or brought up in Malaysia, they are adapting to the western cultures where new issues such as online dating, individualism, and love marriage are emerging as a critical concern within the Malaysian Indian communities. Therefore, Malaysian Indian families are more against online dating, premarital sex, and they are discouraging youth's independence, especially with regard to love marriage (Kurien, 2016). However, with their Indian values and cultures, they have been moving along with their westernised culture and slowly into the 'popularity of Tinder'.

Preferences of Online Dating

When it comes to online dating preferences and racial hierarchies, it may be strongly influenced by various social and cultural factors such as the media, family and friends, and racism. Past research has provided empirical evidence for the existence of evolutionary-driven differences between male and female behaviours and perceptions in the offline context. Malaysian Indian youths' preferences for romantic partners who resemble them in a variety of ways, including their ethnic background, is one of the most reliable dating patterns in humans (Brown et al., 2021). Su and Hu (2019) discovered that, while men and women have similar preferences for partner selection, the preferences are not always symmetrical. People's preferences for mate selection are likely to differ, such as education level, age, race, physical appearance, income, and hobbies (Su & Hu, 2019). In reality, men place closer attention on partners' youthfulness, fitness, and physical attractiveness than women do, whereas women place closer attention on partners' ambition, social status, financial wealth, and commitment of partners, all of which are qualities of good providers (Su & Hu, 2019).

Racial boundaries and hierarchies are shown to still prevail among individuals seeking a partner via online dating, both in terms of stated preferences (Brown et al., 2021). According to Qian & Lichter (2018), however, the preferences of individuals for members of their own community represent perceptions of cultural compatibility and the benefits of matching a partner of similar values (e.g., mutual behavioural confirmation, the certainty of having common interests and lifestyles). The cultural capital of individuals is highly dependent upon their own ethnicity (Qian & Lichter, 2018).

Studies of heterosexuals' online dating preferences tend to highlight norms and behaviours that are reflective of a racial hierarchy (Peck et al., 2021), while Tsunokai et al. (2009) found that people who preferred dating within the same racial umbrella were 2.3 times more likely to state a preference to date other races (out-group) were significantly less willing to date. According to Cheng (2022) and Ranzini et al. (2022), people tend to impart more positive traits (such as physical attractiveness) even to members of their own race (Cheng, 2022; Ranzini et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, an increasingly positive perception towards interracial romantic relationships increases the number of people who actually marry someone outside their ethnic group has been highlighted in the last two decades (Esteve et al., 2022). This trend coincides with the spread of online dating and the increase in the popularity of the Tinder application and raises questions about the role this dating application plays in the rise of interracial relationships (Thomas, 2019).

Users and Gratification (U&G) Theory

Thongmak (2021) stated that the Uses and Gratification (U&G) theory is about where an individual communicates or uses media to gratify their needs or wants through their communication motives. Motives were expressed as general dispositions that influence people's actions taken to fulfill a need or want and listed interpersonal utility, pass time, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment as five internet motive statements (Thongmak, 2021). Focusing on Tinder, Timmermans and De Caluwéb (2017) identified a comprehensive list of 13 motivations among users on this online dating app based on UGT. Apart from using the app for hookups, Tinder users use it to search for romance and to socialise. Tinder is not only used for extrinsic purposes, but also for intrinsic needs, including curiosity, self-validation, reducing boredom, and also improving one's individual social skills.

Tinder users use it as a search for romance and a key to socialising and some use it to recover from break-ups and meet new people with a similar sexual orientation (Timmermans & De Caluwéb, 2017). Therefore, based on U&G perspective, online dating apps such as Tinder facilitates motivations such as casual sexual behaviours. Sexual motivations that lead the users to use Tinder and the gratification of finding a sexual encounter will eventually encourage the users to continually use the online dating app. U&G, which has its roots in communication, expels the idea that individuals seek out media that fulfill their needs and lead to ultimate gratification. In this study, U&G theory has specific relevance to social media, especially in Tinder application.

METHODOLOGY

A deductive, theoretical thematic analysis was driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area studied and is more explicitly analyst-informed (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This manner of thematic analysis provides a more detailed analysis of some data areas (Braun & Clarke, 2022). In this study, the researcher administers a deductive approach based on prior studies in this area and sought to use that as a guide to further explain U&G theory in application to online dating usage.

Thematic analysis functions as a base method for qualitative analysis that is a foundational skill that will be crucial in the implementation of many other forms of qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Therefore, in this study, the researcher utilised the full extent of the qualitative research through the application of thematic analysis to the profiles of participants, examining how they present themselves in written form. The following (Figure 1) is the research paradigm for the study.

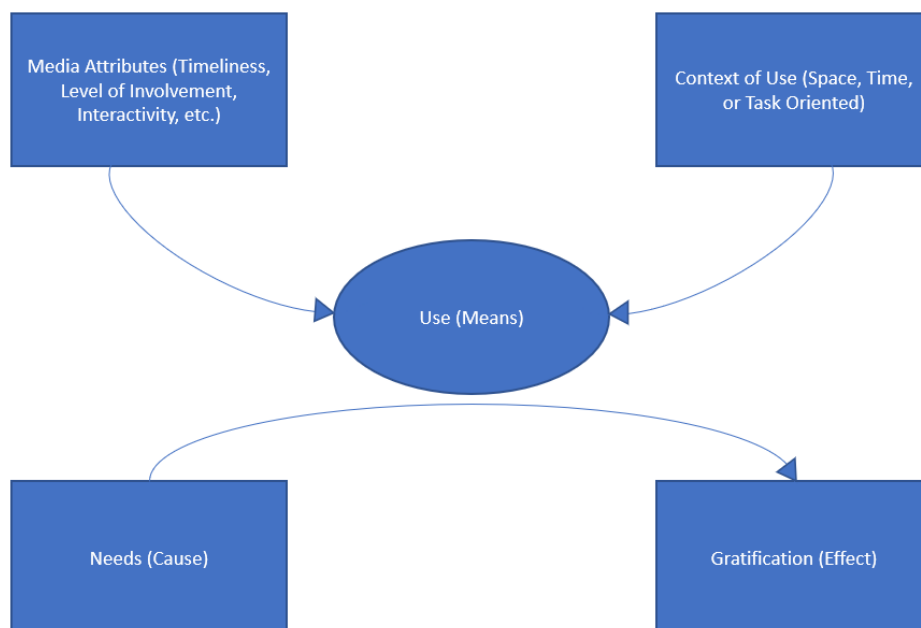


Figure 1: Research Paradigm

This study consists of in-depth semi-structured interviews with (19) Indian male participants and (11) Indian female participants. They were within the age of 20 years old to 35 years old as this proved to be the largest age group utilising online dating apps in Malaysia (Statistica, 2017). As shown in Statistica (2017), this age group were triangulated to understand the experiences and desires of youth as they navigate their behavioural relationships through the online dating application Tinder. Furthermore, the respondents are carefully informed that the interview was completely anonymous, voluntary and their answers are private and confidential. The participants were referred to using codes (P1 – P30). The researcher desired to be able to undertake the interview procedure using data gathered from observation. To ensure that the participants felt comfortable and did not feel judged by the researcher, the researcher had revealed prior to each interview that she too is an active user of Tinder.

Besides that, the researcher obtained consent from each interviewee to participate in this study. Essential information concerning the participants such as age, gender, location, and relationship status will be revealed according to Table 1. According to Kothari (2004), interview methods could be used through personal interviews and, if possible, through telephone interviews. Due to the nature of the research and the current Covid-19 pandemic situation, the interviews were focused on participants' comfort with online communication. Therefore, the interviews were conducted via online video communication channels such as Zooms and Microsoft Teams. Several questions in this guide were adapted from Lopes & Vogel (2017), and Couch (2006). The researcher had obtained the authors' permission to use this interview guide to be adapted for this study in Malaysia. Interview questions were also checked by the scholars of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman by a qualitative researcher.

Although the researcher sought out 11 participants through snowball sampling and 19 participants via convenience sampling, it was quite difficult to obtain female participants compared to male participants due to a certain level of caution displayed by the female participants when it comes to online dating activities as they try to keep it as confidential as they could, inclusive of this interview process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were collected from 30 Malaysian Indians within the Klang Valley region of Malaysia, with 19 Indian male participants and 11 Indian female participants within the age of 20 years old to 35 years old.

Table A: Demographics of participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Race	Status	Place of Origin	Education	Duration
P1	23	M	Indian - Malayalam	Single	KL	Degree	2 years
P2	26	M	Indian - Tamil	Attached	KL	Degree	2 years
P3	29	M	Indian - Telugu	Attached	KL	Degree	1 year
P4	20	M	Indian - Hindi	Single	Selangor	Diploma	1 year
P5	25	M	Indian - Malayalam	Single	Johor Bahru	Masters	3 years
P6	20	M	Indian - Tamil	Single	Perak	Degree	5 months
P7	21	M	Indian - Telugu	Attached	Batu Pahat	Degree	1 year
P8	22	M	Indian - Kannada	Single	Kedah	Degree	3 years
P9	33	M	Indian - Urdu	Married	Penang	Masters	5 years
P10	29	M	Indian - Marathi	Attached	Selangor	Degree	2 and half years
P11	35	M	Indian - Malayalam	Married	Penang	Degree	3 years
P12	28	M	Indian - Malayalam	Single	KL	Degree	4 years
P13	24	M	Indian - Telugu	Single	Johor Bahru	Degree	8 months
P14	21	M	Indian - Bengali	Single	KL	Diploma	1 year
P15	24	M	Indian - Telugu	Single	KL	Degree	1 year
P16	23	M	Indian - Tamil	Attached	Selangor	Degree	2 years
P17	25	M	Indian - Tamil	Single	KL	Degree	3 years
P18	26	M	Indian - Kannada	Single	KL	Degree	1 year
P19	23	M	Indian - Marathi	Single	KL	Degree	7 months
P20	25	F	Indian - Malayalam	Single	KL	Degree	6 years

P21	24	F	Indian - Tamil	Single	Selangor	Degree + ACCA	4 years
P22	29	F	Indian - Malayalam	Married	Penang	Masters	3 years
P23	25	F	Indian - Telugu	Attached	KL	Degree	4 years
P24	20	F	Indian - Urdu	Single	KL	Foundation	9 months
P25	24	F	Indian - Hindi	Single	KL	Degree	1 year
P26	26	F	Indian - Kannada	Single	KL	Degree	2 years
P27	23	F	Indian - Hindi	Single	KL	Degree	2 years
P28	28	F	Indian - Tamil	Attached	Johor Bahru	Degree	7 years
P29	21	F	Indian - Malayalam	Single	KL	Degree	6 months
P30	20	F	Indian - Marathi	Single	Selangor	Foundation	2 years

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What role does online dating play in the lives of Malaysian Indian youths? (motivation themes for online dating usage)

RQ1 results showed the role online dating (Tinder) played in the lives of Malaysian Indian youths and their motives to go online or have access to partners and control of the process of courtship.

Table B: Example of quotes from participants concerning the roles for online dating usage

The initial role for online dating usage	Frequency	%	Excerpt
To meet new people	6	20%	Online dating websites were very useful because there were natural social circles that I could tap into as I wanted to make more friends - (T25).
Friends Influence	3	10%	One of the reasons is, I've never really dated before and also, just want to see the hype of it, what Tinder is all about - (E25).
To find potential romantic partners	8	26.67%	I don't have a lot of connections to other Indians and I have been single for too long. It's definitely not easy for me to find someone. So I decided to try Tinder - (Z26).
Difficulty in meeting their life partners	7	23.33%	I got engaged in an online matchmaking website by my family and I was unable to initiate contact with him beyond a certain initial stage as it involves both families and I was a little anxious about my personality as I was not able to present my colourful personality freely - (W25).

Recover from the previous Break-Up	3	10%	It was after a break-up, the motive was to have some casual dating to forget the hard pain of my break up, as a rebound - (Q25).
Entertainment/ Have Fun	3	10%	I got onto this app because of the hype plus I have never been in a relationship. So, it was more towards an experimental thing and here I am today - (M24).
Total	30	100%	

The majority of the interviewees in this study felt unhappiness because they were unable to find compatible love partners offline through the 'organic methods.' Most of them were in their twenties or thirties, and they were strongly encouraged to utilise Tinder instead of matrimonial services. One of the participants indicated that she used Tinder primarily because of the influence of her friends. "I get thrilled whenever my friends mention it, and I wondered what it would be like, so I hopped onto the app," said one participant (n=1) (D20). The benefit of growing access to online dating is especially noticeable among young people, since using Tinder or being in a relationship has become so popular that this incentive has become even more popular for users to search for future romantic partners.

However, the participants' (n=10) initial motives evolved during the course of using online dating apps, with some users indicating that they originally wanted to meet people or have fun, and eventually desired a romantic relationship. Participants (n=3) reported that their first intention was to meet some women/men and see if they were interested in casual dating and how far they could go with them. The objective is to meet more folks and see where things go from there. "I am not going to date you," said participant (D), "I just wanted to meet new people." However, things did not always go as planned. "Something clicked, and we started dating" (L28). In terms of feeling gratified for using the app, 24 participants said that they had discovered what they were seeking for, ranging from friendships to love relationships, based on their motivations for using the app. "My first purpose on Tinder was just to meet friends; if it leads to a relationship, that's a plus for me," one participant (n=1) commented (H22). Some of them had broadened their social circle and made good acquaintances, while others found their partner on Tinder and then went into a serious relationship, and some even married.

Some individuals use Tinder to get over a break-up or as a rebound to get rid of the pain. "The motive was to have some casual dating to forget the hard agony of my breakup, as a rebound," one participant (n=1) stated (Q25). This participant reasoned that simply meeting different girls would be beneficial, even if he does not end up in a relationship or even hooking up. His major goal was to get rid of the last shred of hope he had left. This demonstrates that some people only use the Tinder app to attain their goal.

The majority of participants (n=24) indicated that Tinder is the new way to settle down for marriage because it does not involve their families and allows them to better understand their partner before moving on to the next step. Participants (n=6) believe that Tinder may not be the best platform for marriage because some of them are on Tinder for different reasons and may not be searching for a serious relationship. Some of my participants' first motivation was merely for entertainment (n=3), whilst others stated that they first wanted to meet people or have fun, and later wanted hookups.

When the researcher asked these participants if they are open to marrying women who share their beliefs, the majority of them answered that they are willing to accept with an open mind because this does not define who they are. "Well, I went into this app with an open mind," said one participant (n=1). At the end of the day, it's their choice, and they're willing to make it. Girls being upfront about it is really interesting, especially in today's times, and there's nothing to be judgmental about. I know it's completely hypocritical to act in such a way where guys have the right to live their lives as they want but women don't. I don't think my wife will be able to preserve her virginity. Finally, I love her for who she is" (L28). This demonstrates that some of them, particularly in contemporary Indian society, have larger mindsets and viewpoints.

However, there are some people who demand a woman they are hoping to marry to preserve her virginity until she marries because it belongs only to the husband. This demonstrates how, as a result of patriarchal cultural institutions and the importance of the hymen, women's virginity has been stereotyped. Religious duties were also discovered to impact the participants' opinions on virginity. For example, one participant (n=1) said, "I wouldn't accept that because I'm not used to it." It is something that is continuously condemned for, especially in our Indian society, and I can't bear that humiliation for the rest of my life, and I believe my parents would not tolerate it" (J29). This demonstrates that it is something that everyone in an Indian community is obsessed with, and it is something that every woman should have because culture has conditioned us to believe that it is synonymous with purity, integrity, a proper upbringing, and a very perplexing thing to have if you're a man. Women's virginity is valuable to society, while a man's virginity is not; in fact, it is better for a man's social status if he is not a virgin. This study discovered, however, that some people have a decent viewpoint since they do not see a woman as an item or a locked property to which they must have exclusive and first-time access. Today, there are men who accept their partner with a past and live happily together.

Research Question 2: To What Extent Does "Race" and "Preferences" Play A Role in Online Dating Among Malaysian Indian Youths?

RQ2, several themes emerged that demonstrated the preferences they had or looked for while swiping profiles in this Tinder app.

Table C: Example of quotes from participants concerning their preferences in swiping

Swiping Preferences	Frequency	%	Excerpt
Only Photos	13	43.33%	In my law of attraction, appearance comes first. They may not need to look extravagant but definitely appealing to my eyes. Therefore, photos would be the first course of encounters, followed by bio to confirm whether this profile is fake or to prevent being cat-fished - (M24).
Photos, Bio & Interests	17	56.67%	I will go through their photos and see if we have any common interests to initiate some conversation. Without any photos or even a bio, I would definitely swipe left on the person. I don't want to end up catfishing. For me, I look at pictures and what you write on the profile, yeah, both are equally as important - (K35).
Total	30	100%	

Open to the different ethnic backgrounds (All races)	13	43.33%	In my search for profiles, I am open to individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds because race is just an identity. It all depends on their attitude and behaviour - (A123).
Within the same ethnic background (Hinduism)	9	30%	I would rather go for someone who is of the same ethnicity not because I'm a racist but simply because it's way easier to understand each other - (C121).
Racial preferences	8	26.67%	I would definitely think twice if I'm dating a girl from a different ethnic background (Malay) due to Malaysia's law where we have to convert and has to practice all the Islam teachings. I can't let go of my religion because that's the way I was brought up and I believe in my teachings. Besides that, I wouldn't mind making friends regardless of any race - (P23).
Total	30	100%	

While the study on their preferences is being conducted, each user on an online dating app has their own preferences while looking for a life companion. In this example, the participants have their own Tinder profile with the standard information on their age, gender, and most would put their work description as well as a phrase about themselves. For example, a participant (n=1) noted, "I have uploaded around 4 images in my profile and my profile is a verified account so that any imposter does not have the same identity as myself." I didn't express much of my interest, although I did mention my current employment" (C29). Aside from that, the most eye-catching aspects of these accounts are usually the images and the bio that they have utilised to reflect a person's personality. This has demonstrated that an excellent profile photo will attract a person's attention and lead to that user thoroughly reviewing the rest of your profile.

Furthermore, because some of us were born smart comic geniuses, certain participants pay attention to the user's bio as well as their interests, and it grabs the users' attention and makes a man or woman more likely to swipe right. This is because users can message someone based on their bio or the interests they have mentioned and proceed from there. "I would absolutely search for their bio as it provides me a peek of that particular individual and to see if we have any shared interests to commence some conversation," said one participant (n=1) (I33). Although the majority of participants placed a greater weight on the photographs and bios themselves, several people commented that they would be cautious to swipe right on an empty profile with no bios.

Aside from that, when it comes to finding a life mate, men and women have diverse tastes, with some paying more attention to appearance, others open to dating people from different ethnic origins, while still others prefer dating people from the same ethnic background. Some of the participants were also extremely picky in their search for a marriage partner, and they have their own preferences to some extent. This study discovered that participants (n=8) exclude Malays because they have their own racial preferences and do not indicate a willingness when selecting their romantic partners due to Malaysian law, which requires them to convert and practise Islam teachings; however, participants (n=13) exclude dating regardless of ethnicity. "In my search for profiles, I am open to folks from varied ethnic

origins because race is only an identifier," one participant (n=1) noted. Everything is dependent on their attitude and behaviour" (A123).

This is because they believe that dating has nothing to do with race or religion as long as both parties are prepared to be open-minded and respect the culture of the other. "I support the concept of interracial dating," said one participant (n=1). As our society and the world prepare for the arrival of Generation Z, I believe mindsets and perspectives should be extended. Different cultures and customs broaden exposure to and comprehension of several core values" (O24). Race should not be an impediment in this circumstance. However, as a cosmopolitan nation, there are some participants (n=8) who have a racial preference when it comes to dating someone. For example, one participant (n=1) commented, "I would definitely think twice if I were dating a Malay girl because of Malaysian law, which requires us to convert." In this instance, I might have some preferences, but I would still date a Chinese or Indian female. Aside from that, I wouldn't mind making friends of any race" (P23).

Aside from that, Malay and Islamic culture are both patriarchal in nature. When an Indian man marries a Malay lady, she is expected to convert him to Islam and he is required to follow all of Islam's precepts. Some of the participants claimed that these are the only reasons they are hesitant to date a Malay man or woman. Meanwhile, one person (n=1) stated, "It makes no difference to me." I am open to dating people of many races, including Chinese, Punjabi, Indian, Malay, and others. I wouldn't mind if we liked each other; race is only what we believe" (K35). This demonstrates that love knows no language, and people simply need to be more open-minded and accept themselves as they are. Aside from explicit racial preferences, few participants (n=9) stated that they would only swipe on someone of their ethnic origin. They would like to date someone of their own ethnicity not because they are racist, but simply because it is easier for them to understand each other.

Within the Malaysian Indian youths' experience, this study highlights the variations in individual understandings and practices of their culture, religion, mate selection among their Indian courtship, and also the online dating application they used. The individuals who were interviewed for this study reflect various frustrations between their religious ideals and their actual practices within their courtship between online dating (Jha & Adelman, 2009).

Despite the fact that online dating is becoming more popular among Malaysian Indian youths, some Indian parents and society still do not believe in the "trial and error" approach to love because it is not a common practice among the Indian community. Some may not be as savvy in the dating practices as those cultures where dating is not encouraged. However, through the data collection, the researcher found that the majority of the respondents are broadly conceptualised into Western society, rarely exist in traditional cultural practices, and are more open to this new era of online dating and choose to meet, date, and marry. One thing is certain: society is profoundly rooted in tradition, and choosing a marriage partner is still regarded as one of the most important life decisions ever made among Malaysian Indian youths.

This contributes to the willingness of the majority of the participants to explore meeting partners through online dating apps as well as dating outside one's race and religion as most of the participants are willing to date from different ethnic backgrounds. Besides that, the interview data collected further mirror a scope of perspectives and understanding of Indian courtship and also online dating. Thus, the effects of online dating technology among courtship are an important factor to be considered.

Most academic articles focus on the long-term, success of online dating. Tinder motivation self-report, and disclosure. These studies have uncovered vital details about self-disclosure and communicator motivation such as self-disclosure and what users seek from online dating apps, and the satisfaction of using the app, limited research has been found. Malaysia is at the starting point of online dating research, besides that, there is not much research on online dating in Malaysia. Most studies only revolve around online love crime, victimisation, and online dating frauds. Therefore, it shows no prior studies on factors that influence or impacts the users, Malaysian Indian youths of online dating.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study affirmed that Malaysian Indian youths use online dating application, Tinder, with specific relational, intrapersonal, and entertainment goals with the application of U&G theory. The goals were meaningfully related to several individual difference variables. This study represents a partial range of voices among Malaysian Indian youths who have chosen to use an online dating application, Tinder, in order to find their potential partner and also for courtship practices, and the majority of the participants are willing to date different ethnic backgrounds. The paper's qualitative design provides a rich and vibrant understanding of this area of study. There's an increasing inclination of Malaysian Indian youths to experience online dating. However, what we have to understand here is that the way love works in the Indian Community is quite different compared to other religions, as online dating is still being seen as a stereotype among the culture. However, today many Malaysian Indian youths are being more like-minded with the same intention of divulging into online dating applications.

As an Indian woman researcher, the researcher faced a certain stereotype for the topic that the researcher decided to do. Moreover, the researcher also had encountered unpleasant experiences where a few of them approached casual sex as a reward for helping the researcher with her research, and when she denied it, she was ghosted. This causes the researcher to move on, looking for new informants. There was also a certain lack of complete information disclosure that was observed, and the informants were really cautious and did not want to disclose when the researcher interviewed male and female participants concerning sexual references, their motivations, and the preferences they had while using Tinder application and their cultural impacts on Tinder.

Since this study only used 30 participants for the interview, generalising the results to fit the entire population in the area of interest is a challenge, hence is the largest limitation of this study. As this research was conducted on a compatible sample size of both male and female participants who use online dating apps, it would be beneficial for additional studies to explore different gender perspectives (including the LGBT community) on online dating apps while exploring participants thoughts concerning online dating and the perceptions of people around them, as well as behavioural aspects of online dating, in how they actually use the app in an end-to-end manner, it does not examine the affective processes involved. Future research could consider the analysis of findings based on the race among the Indian participants such as Indian-Malayalee, Indian-Telugu, Indian-Punjabi, rather than generalising them.

BIODATA

Lishalini Chandrasekaran, is a postgraduate student at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia. In the year 2020, Lishalini Chandrasekaran graduated from Universiti tunku Abdul Rahman with a Bachelor of Corporate Communication (Honors) degree. She is currently employed in the Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur Hotel in the capacity of Marketing Communication Executive. Her current research interests encompass a variety of subjects, including communication, cultural studies, and the media. Her excitement at the rapid development of technology in the field of communication is the source of her interest in the aforementioned subjects. Her unwavering dedication to learning new things and following her passion have brought her to the top of her field in both academia and industry. Email: lishalinic@yahoo.com

Dr. Sharon Jacqueline Wilson, is an assistant professor at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia. Dr Sharon Wilson holds a Ph.D. in Communication from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and received her BA in Translation and Interpretation and a Master's in Communication from Universiti Sains Malaysia. She has been a Scholar of the Study of the United States Institutes' Journalism and Media Program (SUSI) at Ohio University and a Fellow of the Summer Institute for Asia Fellows in News Literacy Program in Hong Kong. In 2020 she received the first place in the ICD teaching competition. Her research focuses on media, crime and society and woman and identity. Currently, she chairs the Center for Media and Communication Research (CMCR) at University Tunku Abdul Rahman. Email: sharon@utar.edu.my

Dr. Swagata Sinha Roy, is an assistant professor at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia. Dr Swagata Sinha Roy is with the Department of Modern Languages, Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), Malaysia. Dr Swagata Sinha Roy holds a Bachelor's degree in English (Hons) from Delhi University, receiving her subsequent degrees (Master's (English), M.Phil (African Literature) and PhD(Malaysian Literature) from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, Her research interests include literatures of the diaspora, movie adaptations of literary works and cultural studies, adapted fairy tales, legends, myths and book club circles. Email: swagata@utar.edu.my

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