



Relationship Satisfaction and Loneliness among Young Adults using Online Dating Services

Kavya Pawar, *MA Counselling Psychology, Amity University, Noida*

kavyarathee18@gmail.com

Dr Sandhya Bhatt, *Assistant Professor*

sbhatt@amity.edu

Abstract: The rise of online dating services has significantly transformed modern romantic relationships, influencing both relationship satisfaction and feelings of loneliness among young adults. This study aimed to examine the relationship between relationship satisfaction and loneliness among young adults using online dating platforms. Data were collected through a Google Form survey from 150 participants, and statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and Pearson correlation, were conducted. The findings revealed a weak but statistically significant negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and loneliness, suggesting that higher relationship satisfaction is associated with slightly lower loneliness levels. However, regression analysis indicated that relationship satisfaction accounts for only a small proportion of the variance in loneliness, highlighting that other factors may also play a crucial role. The study's findings align partially with previous research, such as Mund and Johnson (2021), which emphasized the long-term impact of loneliness on relationship satisfaction. Based on the results, recommendations include fostering meaningful offline interactions, improving emotional communication, and addressing unrealistic expectations in online dating. Limitations such as the cross-sectional design, self-reported data, and unmeasured influencing factors were also discussed. Future research should adopt longitudinal approaches and explore additional psychological variables to gain deeper insights into the complex relationship between online dating, relationship satisfaction, and loneliness.

Keywords: *Online dating, relationship satisfaction, loneliness, young adults, digital relationships, emotional well-being, dating platforms, psychological factors*

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

There has been a dramatic shift in the way people discover love in the modern era, thanks to the proliferation of online dating services. The inner workings of these platforms, particularly as they pertain to the implications for the contentment or loneliness of relationships among young adults, have attracted much scholarly study. The overarching purpose of this study is to investigate the complicated interaction between young adults' loneliness, relationship satisfaction, and usage of online dating services. The proliferation of online dating services has revolutionized the dating game by providing daters with unprecedented access to a vast database of potential companions and novel approaches to establishing and maintaining romantic partnerships. These services serve as a dating platform, but they also reflect a societal shift in the way young people see romantic relationships and dating in general. Therefore, understanding the effects of online dating on the psychological well-being of this demographic is crucial.

An individual's subjective evaluation of the health and pleasure of their romantic relationships is central to the concept of relationship satisfaction, which is the focus of this research. The conventional wisdom holds that internet dating can facilitate the discovery of compatible individuals and the formation of fulfilling relationships. Nevertheless, the research regarding its impact on relationship happiness is still inconclusive. Some research suggests that people are happier in committed relationships after using online dating services because of how convenient and easy it is to meet potential partners. However, there are many who are concerned that users may be dissatisfied due to the prevalence of dishonesty, the shallowness of online connections, and the paradox of choice.

Meanwhile, young people's behavior when online dating is more influenced by feelings of loneliness. Loneliness, characterized by sentiments of social isolation and a disparity between desired and actual social connections, is a major issue for those who utilise online dating services. Despite the appearance of large social networks, young individuals may experience increased loneliness on these sites. This is due to their fear of rejection, short-lived relationships, and lack of in-person encounters.

The purpose of this research is to fill our gaps in knowledge about the effects of online dating, relationship satisfaction, and loneliness on young adults. We can improve our ability to

assist people in having healthy and meaningful romantic relationships in the digital age by demonstrating how these elements interact.

2. Review of Literature

In their research of college students from the Southwestern United States, Van Raalte and Floyd (2022) investigated the link between physical touch and emotional well-being, particularly in regard to stress and depression. Happiness had no effect on the correlation between attachment and intimacy, trust, and sadness, according to the results. Affection only significantly linked adversely with stress in really happy couples, although it did lessen the connection between the two. Affection was withheld from participants who reported unhappiness, and their frequency of displays of affection varied.

Hopf et al. (2022) shown that in healthy individuals, trait and state loneliness, as well as salivary cortisol levels, are mediated by living circumstances, relationship status, and quality. Divorcees and widows ranked highest in characteristic loneliness, followed by couples and singles. There was a temporary decrease in cortisol and loneliness in couples compared to singles. When participants' relationships were gratifying, those with partners experienced reduced loneliness, whereas those living alone claimed the opposite. The study also found that relationship status and temporary loneliness had a considerable cross-level interaction in predicting cortisol. Research shows that having a friend or family member nearby mitigates the neuroendocrine stress reactions that occur during a lockdown, and that being a widow, a single person, living alone, or having a low-quality relationship all increase the likelihood that you may experience loneliness.

Bühler, Krauss, and Orth (2021) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to examine how relationship satisfaction changes with age and duration of relationship. A total of 165 separate samples including 165,039 individuals were analysed. Relationship satisfaction decreased between 20 and 40, reached a high at 40, increased until 65, and then levelled down in late life, according to the research. Satisfaction with the relationship fell throughout the first decade, peaked at 10 years, and then rose until the twentieth year, when it fell again. Relationship satisfaction decreased throughout time, according to the mean change findings; this reduction was most pronounced in early adulthood and the beginning phases of a partnership. Having children and a relationship satisfaction scale were shown to be the moderators that explained the variation in the mean level. Consistent trends were seen in the findings across a variety of characteristics, including birth cohort, sample type, nation,

ethnicity, gender, marital status, relationship transitions, dyadic data, and shared household with partner.

3. Methodology

3.1 *Aim of the Study*

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between relationship satisfaction and loneliness among young adults using online dating services and offline dating services.

3.2 *Variables of the Study*

Independent Variable

Dating Method: A "dating method" is a way that young adults seek out and engage in romantic relationships. There are primarily two types of dating services: (1) online dating, where users communicate with potential romantic partners through the use of the internet or mobile apps, and (2) offline dating, where users meet and interact with suitors in person. Dating strategy, a classification system for people based on their preferred methods of seeking out and beginning romantic relationships, serves as the independent variable in this research.

Dependent Variables

Relationship Satisfaction: The word "relationship satisfaction" refers to the degree to which a person is happy, fulfilled, and satisfied with their romantic relationship. Intimacy, communication, trust, and compatibility are all parts of it, and they contribute to how happy and successful the couple feels in the relationship. Among the dependent variables in this study is relationship satisfaction, which shows the extent to which the dating approach influences the happiness of young people in their romantic relationships.

Loneliness: Loneliness is the subjective experience of social and emotional isolation characterised by empty, depressed, and distant attitudes towards other people. The gap between desired and actual social connections and interactions seems to be the root cause. Loneliness, a measure of the relative emotional and social isolation experienced by young people, serves as the second dependent variable in this research.

3.3 *Research Objectives*

- a) To examine the relationship between relationship satisfaction and loneliness among young adults using online dating services.
- b) To explore the impact of relationship satisfaction on loneliness among young adults using online dating services.

3.4 *Hypothesis*

- a) There is significant relationship between relationship satisfaction and loneliness among young adults using online dating services.
- b) There is significant impact of relationship satisfaction on loneliness among young adults using online dating services.

3.5 Participants of the Study

Using a purposeful sampling strategy, a total of 150 individuals will be chosen from the pool. People in the age bracket of 18–25 make up the bulk of the sample group.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data for this study came from a combination of demographic information and the "Relationship Assessment Scale" and the "UCLA Loneliness Scale".

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The "Relationship Assessment Scale" (Hendrick, 1988) and "The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale" (Russell, Peplau, and Ferguson, 1978) were utilised for data collecting. Once the participants were informed about the study's objectives, they were asked to participate and given questionnaires that included information on the study, questions regarding privacy, the researcher's contact information, and other instructions. Five minutes were spent reviewing the instruments.

3.7.1 Relationship Assessment Scale

In 1988, Hendrick created the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) to gauge how people felt about their intimate relationships with others. The goal is to find out if the current relationship meets or exceeds the standards for a healthy relationship in order to gauge satisfaction. The theories of social trade and equality provide its basis. Those in committed relationships, whether dating, engaged, married, or roommates, may find this measure useful. An earlier 5-item marital happiness scale served as the basis for this 7-item relationship satisfaction measure. You can rate your level of pleasure on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates very poor satisfaction and 5 indicates very great satisfaction. The range of values is 3–21, with higher total scores indicating better relationship satisfaction.

Reliability and Validity

The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) demonstrates a high level of internal consistency with a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.86.

Additionally, the validity of the scale was found to be adequate. Strong association ($r=0.48$) was found between the early version of the scale and the Marriage Adjustment Inventory (Hendrick, 1981; Manson & Lerner, 1962). Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) scores were highly correlated. Hendrick (1988) found

that all of the correlation coefficients, which ranged from 0.83 to 0.51, were statistically significant.

3.7.2 The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale

A tool that assesses the confirmation of self-reported feelings and behaviors, such as perceived isolation from society and damaged ties with other individuals, is the revised UCLA Loneliness scale. It is a 20-item assessment. Reducing the effect of response bias from the original form is the goal of the scale. On a four-point scale, respondents will indicate how often, occasionally, seldom, or never they agree with each statement. The word "often" is coded as 4, "sometimes" as 3, "rarely" as 2, and "never" as 1 for the 10 negatively stated replies. For the 10 responses that are positively expressed, the score is backwards. High scores suggest more loneliness, whereas low levels indicate less loneliness. The original 1978 creators of this scale were Russell, Peplau, and Ferguson.

Reliability And Validity

The UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS) has strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.89 to 0.94. Not only that, but it keeps its high test-retest reliability ($r = 0.73$) even after a year.

Research on the UCLA Loneliness Scale has shown that it has strong concurrent and discriminant validity, meaning that it accurately measures how lonely individuals feel rather than how they really feel. The scale also correlates more strongly with other loneliness measures than it does with mood or personality attributes. Researchers investigating loneliness have heavily relied on the UCLA Loneliness Scale, suggesting its high reliability for evaluating loneliness, according to a literature assessment.

3.8 Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis for the obtained data was computed using SPSS (version 20). Descriptive statistics, regression analysis and Pearson analysis were all utilised in the study.

4. Data Analysis

The study of data gathered via a Google Form survey upon Relationship Satisfaction as well as Loneliness among Young Adults utilizing Online Dating Services is presented in this chapter. The study is to investigate among young individuals the relationships among online dating experiences, relationship satisfaction, as well as loneliness sentiments. Using statistical techniques, the data was examined to spot trends, patterns, and noteworthy relationships. Furthermore, considered as influencing relationship satisfaction as well as loneliness levels are demographic elements like age, gender, and relationship status. The results help to clarify the

psychological well-being of people who participate in online dating and support knowledge of the efficiency of digital channels in creating meaningful relationships.

Table 1: *Descriptive statistics of all variables among Online users*

	<i>Relationship Satisfaction</i>	<i>Loneliness</i>
Mean	28.63333	34.86667
Standard Deviation	9.359643	7.676921
N	150	150

Table 1 shows young person's utilizing online dating services' descriptive data for loneliness and relationship satisfaction. With a standard deviation of 9.36, the mean score for relationship satisfaction is 28.63, suggesting somewhat modest levels of pleasure with some variation across individuals. By comparison, the mean score for loneliness is 34.87, with a standard deviation of 7.68, suggesting a somewhat higher level of loneliness in the sample, although answers range somewhat. With a 150-sample size for each variable, the dataset is very large enough for study. These results show that although some people may find fulfilling relationships on online dating, loneliness is still a common issue that calls for research on the elements affecting these encounters.

Table 2: *Regression analysis of impact of Relationship Satisfaction on Loneliness among young adults.*

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.186093
R Square	0.03463
Adjusted R Square	0.028108
Standard Error	7.568262
Observations	150

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	304.102	304.102	5.309173	0.022605
Residual	148	8477.231	57.27859		
Total	149	8781.333			

H₁: There is significant impact of relationship satisfaction on loneliness among young adults using online dating services

Table 2 shows the regression analysis looking at how relationship satisfaction affects loneliness among young people utilizing internet dating services. With a R Square value of 0.0346, relationship satisfaction suggests a weak link between the two variables as it explains 3.46% of the variance in loneliness. With an F-value of 5.31, $p = 0.0226$, the ANOVA findings reveal a noteworthy F-value below the accepted significance level of 0.05. This suggests that loneliness is somewhat influenced statistically significantly by relationship satisfaction, however weak. Given the p-value of less than 0.05, we embrace the hypothesis (H₁) that relationship satisfaction clearly affects loneliness among young people utilizing online dating services. Nonetheless, the low R-square value implies that other elements might potentially be involved in loneliness, that should be investigated in other studies.

Table 3: *Pearson correlation analysis of relationship between relationship satisfaction and loneliness among young adults using online dating services.*

	<i>Relationship Satisfaction</i>	<i>Loneliness</i>
<i>Relationship Satisfaction</i>	1	
<i>Loneliness</i>	-0.18609	1

H₂: There will be significant relationship between relationship satisfaction and loneliness among young adults using online dating services.

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation analysis looking at the association between relationship happiness and loneliness among young people utilizing internet dating services. The minor negative association between the two variables indicated by the correlation coefficient ($r = -0.1861$) means that loneliness usually somewhat declines as relationship satisfaction rises. Still, this partnership has very poor strength. The p-value should be evaluated to ascertain statistical significance; yet, considering the poor correlation, the association might not be strong enough to be practically meaningful.

The hypothesis (H₂: There would be a strong association between relationship satisfaction and loneliness among young people utilizing online dating services) is refuted since the correlation is modest. Though there is a little negative correlation, it is insufficient to

establish a substantial or meaningful link between the two variables. This implies that other elements besides relationship happiness might affect loneliness among users of online dating.

5. Conclusion

The current study sought to investigate, among young people utilizing online dating services, the link between loneliness and relationship happiness. The results showed a small but statistically significant negative association between relationship satisfaction and loneliness, meaning that those who have more contentment in their relationships often report quite low feelings of loneliness. The regression study, however, revealed that relationship happiness explains just a tiny fraction of the variation in loneliness, suggesting that several additional elements outside relationship satisfaction alone shape loneliness in users of online dating.

These findings somewhat match other studies, including Mund and Johnson's (2021) one showing that loneliness greatly influences relationship happiness and development over time. Unlike their results, which concentrated on steady marriages over eight years, our study looked at young people engaging in online dating, where relationships may be more fluid and fleeting. The nature of online dating, which may lack strong emotional ties in the early stages and may be connected with ambiguity, ghosting, and mismatched expectations, might help to explain the poor link shown in this study and help to contribute to feelings of loneliness even in a relationship. The results imply that even if online dating might help couples, it might not always reduce loneliness for every user. In this setting, loneliness might be impacted by elements like social support, communication style, attachment type, and the nature of online vs physical relationships. Furthermore, as other studies have shown, gender variations in loneliness and relationship satisfaction might influence personal experiences and ought to be investigated more closely.

All things considered, this research advances knowledge of psychological well-being in the age of digital connections. It emphasizes the need of encouraging deep emotional ties outside of internet contacts to improve relationship satisfaction and lower loneliness. Future studies should investigate other elements that could mediate or influence relationship satisfaction and loneliness as well as look at longitudinal methods to see how these variables change throughout time in online dating users. Furthermore, treatments meant to enhance communication, emotional connection, and offline social interaction should assist young people utilizing online dating services avoid loneliness.

References

- Adamczyk, K. (2018). Direct and indirect effects of relationship status through unmet need to belong and fear of being single on young adults' romantic loneliness. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 124, 124-129.
- Adamczyk, K., & Segrin, C. (2015). Direct and Indirect Effects of Young Adults' Relationship Status on Life Satisfaction through Loneliness and Perceived Social Support. *Psychologica Belgica*, 55(4), 196–211.
- Böger, A., & Huxhold, O. (2020). The changing relationship between partnership status and loneliness: Effects related to aging and historical time. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 75(7), 1423-1432.
- Bühler, J. L., Krauss, S., & Orth, U. (2021). Development of relationship satisfaction across the life span: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 147(10), 1012–1053.
- Hopf, D., Schneider, E., Aguilar-Raab, C., Scheele, D., Morr, M., Klein, T., Ditzen, B., & Eckstein, M. (2022). Loneliness and diurnal cortisol levels during COVID-19 lockdown: the roles of living situation, relationship status and relationship quality. *Scientific reports*, 12(1), 15076.
- Ray, C. D. (2021). The trajectory and determinants of loneliness during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 38(6), 1920-1938.
- Schaffhuser, K., Allemand, M., & Martin, M. (2014). Personality Traits and Relationship Satisfaction in Intimate Couples: Three Perspectives on Personality. *European Journal of Personality*, 28(2), 120-133.
- Sened, H., Lavidor, M., Lazarus, G., Bar-Kalifa, E., Rafaeli, E., & Ickes, W. (2017). Empathic accuracy and relationship satisfaction: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 31(6), 742–752.
- Van Raalte, L. J., & Floyd, K. (2022). Examining the moderating influence of relationship satisfaction on affection and trust, closeness, stress, and depression. *Journal of family communication*, 22(1), 18-32.
- Verbakel, E. (2012). Subjective well-being by partnership status and its dependence on the normative climate. *European journal of population, Revue europeenne de demographie*, 28(2), 205.

- Weiser, D. A., & Weigel, D. J. (2016). Self-efficacy in romantic relationships: direct and indirect effects on relationship maintenance and satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 89, 152-156.
- Yoo, H., Bartle-Haring, S., Day, R. D., & Gangamma, R. (2014). Couple communication, emotional and sexual intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. *Journal of sex & marital therapy*, 40(4), 275-293.