

## **THE USE OF DATING APPS IN MALAYSIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This research is conducted to investigate the use of dating apps nowadays in this uprising era particularly in Malaysia. The method used is by applying quantitative research by answering a short survey consisted of 40 questions. Dating apps is an alternative way for people to communicate and find their love interest nor just to meet new people. This research is conducted to study regarding the effectiveness of dating apps in Malaysia. Based on the results and findings, it indicates that the level of acceptance towards dating apps in Malaysia is low ( $M= 2.27$ ). Same goes to the effectiveness of datings apps in Malaysia which is also low ( $M=2.36$ ) and the level of dating apps usage is also recorded as low ( $M=2.41$ ). So, throughout this study, dating apps is still not effective in Malaysia ( $M=2.35$ ).*

Keywords: dating apps, teenagers, Malaysia

### **INTRODUCTION**

Early 1993 the very first official dating site named Match.com was founded by entrepreneurs Gary Kremen and Peng.T.Ong, and the site was launched two years later which was on 1995 Matthews (2018). The dating site was successful because by the end of 1996, more than 100,000 users had registered for the site. Online dating application is one of the most popular social networking sites that allows individuals, couples and group to contact and search for their personal and romantic partner. Other than pornographic websites, online dating application is another largest paid online business sites (Online Publishers Associations) (DPA). Moreover, it has been reported that more than 50 percent of Malaysian know at least one couple who met through dating application. Besides that, a survey found that online dating platforms like Malaysia social, Malaysian Cupid in Tinder were the favorites in Malaysia, all scoring among the highest for fame and respectability. Approximately six in 10 respondents

have heard of these services. Of the three platforms, Malaysia social has the best reputation among those who have used online dating services, with 37 percent saying it is considered respectable. Given the huge potential for this market, it is important to study the adoption behavior of users, for example the sectors that encourage or discourage the use of online dating websites.

In Malaysia today, Tinder are one of the most popular dating apps since it launched on 2012 because it's very simple to use, as individuals have to just swipe right for "Yes" and swipe left for "No". The matches that individuals get on Tinder are location-based. After that, Badoo dating sites, it is launched in 2006 and has mobile dating apps for Iphone, Android and Blackberry in 2012. Badoo operate in 190 countries and also famous in Malaysia. In 2012, 12% of Badoo members found a serious relationship.

Identified online dating sites as one of the most popular technology driven innovations to initiate romantic relationship. Although many online dating application involve deliberate misrepresentation of the truth. As many of the users do not reveal truthful information about themselves, in example online interaction is an integrated part of modern social life driven by the basic human need to interact. Thus, users still look for a romantic partner, connection or encounter regardless of the misrepresentation. Dating app is simple as they can just "like" or "dislike" other profiles, and a match is made with further contact information when both individuals "like" each other. It's clear that technology has a key part to play in this dating site. People are now not only turning to their devices to work, shop, and play, but also to manage their personal lives and relationships too. Our goal is to examine how frequent Malaysian using dating app and does dating app produces more successful relationship or the opposites, this issue has been studied through a survey.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Online dating app does not seem not very effective in Malaysia. Back in 2018, it has been proven according to Ridzuan (2018), the article states that in between the year 2005 until 2012 that one-third marriage is because of dating apps. In contrast, in the year 2018, the statement has changed as many users only uses dating apps for hookups or to just find friends. This shows that people are not interested in dating through online apps. Furthermore, according to another

article by Smith (2014), it states that one-third of people who used online dating apps have never actually gone out on a date with someone they met on these sites (Tinder, Bumble, Grindr, etc). Meanwhile, two-thirds which consist of 66% of online dating app users have in fact gone out on a date with someone they met through those dating apps. That is a substantial increase from the 43% of online daters who had actually progressed to the date stage when they first asked that question in 2005. But it still means that one-third of the online daters have not yet met up in real life with someone they initially found on the online dating site. This shows that people have less trust using an online dating app. In conclusion, the main problem here is online dating app seems not so effective because of various factors. Such as lack of interest, people using it for fun, hookups, and also there are still trust issues among the society of using the app such as Tinder.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. The Acceptance**

a) Online dating apps are widely accepted and used around the globe. Malaysia on the other hand, still prefer the old method that is the face to face traditional way in finding love. According to Vijaidren (2017) , the generation Y (teenagers) of Malaysia prefers hands on experience rather than online. A mere 7 percent of youth in Malaysia believe that Tinder is the most conducive way to meet someone new, which is below the global average of 12 per cent.

b)According to Adzmi (2016) , Malaysian women went on tinder for fun and to meet new people but it is not an efficient way to start a relationship as three of the ladies interviewed have their own motives and its all for fun and not serious.

c)However, teenagers nowadays, especially those who are involved in the LGBTQ Community find comfort in these dating apps such as Tinder, Grindr and etc. As they might not get support from their real life, they tend to venture on social media and dating apps to find comfort ( Elgersma, 2019).

## 2. The effectiveness

- a) Online dating can be proven to be more effective in other countries such as The United States of America as their level of acceptance towards dating app services are high. Meanwhile, in Malaysia it has been proven that it is less effective as Malaysia is a conservative country that believes using dating app services is frowned upon society. According to a research by Staff (2017), the results have shown that 52% of Malaysians know at least one couple who met online, which is relatively quite high.
- b) However, in the research it has also been discovered that 6 out of 10 millennials are embarrassed to admit meeting their partners through online dating services, making the idea of online dating to not be quite effective as it will create an idea that online dating might be 'bad' because the society sees online dating to be less romantic and dangerous as they have the thinking that meeting someone you haven't met in reality is not real love nor a real relationship.
- c) Furthermore, according to W (2017) in his article 'How has Tinder changed dating and relationships', dating app (most specifically Tinder) has a downside which is focusing more on looks rather than personality. This will cause low self esteem and confidence for people that seem 'unattractive' to believe that dating app is not effective for them as partners in the Tinder app is matched based on pictures and how they portray themselves.

## 3. The usage

- a) The usage of dating app services however has been proven to be widely and frequently used both globally and in Malaysia. According to Paisley (2018), 41% of online singles globally have used online dating apps or sites within the past month during that year. Apps such as Tinder, Match.com are among the most used and popular around the globe.
- b) In addition, it has been discovered by Matthews (2018) that more men uses online dating than women in its article. In studies by GlobalWebIndex and Pew Research Center, researchers stated that 62% of online dating users are men which is a greater number than women globally.

- c) In the contrary, Malaysia also has a large amount of users in online dating services such as Tinder. According to Vijaindren (2017), Tinder specifically dominates the online dating services in the country with the percentage of 63% of people that have heard of this platform or approximately 6 of 10 people that stated they have heard of the social platform in a survey. However, stigma within online dating still exist among the society in Malaysia with 3 of 10 people that stated they would rather meet their future partner online than offline.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The researchers use quantitative method to carry out this research by doing survey. Quantitative methods has been define by Babbie (2010), *The Practice of Social Research*. 12th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage,. as emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon. The researchers have distribute the questionnaire on social media such as Whatapps, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. The main purpose for the researchers carry out this research is to find out do dating apps really works in Malaysia due to the dating apps have update their apps recently. The researchers have decided to conduct this study on survey focused on teenagers at the range of age 18 until 22 years old throughout the nationwide because it is very suitable in gathering an overall opinion of the teenagers around Malaysia. The numbers of respondents that are involved in this research are around 344 people from different regions in Malaysia. They are from Central Region (Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya), Northern Region (Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak), East Coast Region (Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang), Southern Region (Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor), Sabah and Sarawak (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan, 2018).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### a) Demographic

The profile of the respondents is discussed in the terms of six demographic characteristics is sex, age, status, ethnicity, region and place of origin.

**Table 1: Demographic**

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	85	24.8
Female	259	75.2
<b>Age</b>		
18-22	317	92.1
23-27	12	3.5
28-32	2	0.6
33-37	2	0.6
28-42	4	1.2
43 and above	7	2
<b>Status</b>		
Single	273	79.3
In a relationship	51	14.9
Married	14	4.1
Divorced	6	1.7
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Malay	322	93.6
Chinese	7	2
Indian	5	1.5
Bidayuh	2	0.6

Kadazandusun	1	0.3
Others	7	2
<b>Region</b>		
Northern Region (Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak)	50	14.6
East Coast Region (Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang)	87	25.4
Central Region (Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya)	146	42.2
Southern Region (Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor)	50	14.6
Sabah and Sarawak	10	2.9
Cyberjaya	1	0.3
<b>Place of origin</b>		
Urban (City)	239	69.4
Suburban (Outlying city/district)	74	21.6
Rural (Countryside)	31	9

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Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents from Malaysia. Based from finding, most of the respondents who are answered the questionnaire are female (75.2%), aged between 18-22 (92.1%), single in status (79.3%), Malay ethnic (93.6%), the region is Central Region which is Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya (42.4%) and place of origin is urban (69.4%).

**b) Dating apps acknowledgement in Malaysia.**

**Table 2: Dating apps acknowledgement in Malaysia**

Profile	Frequency	Percentage(%)
<b>Which dating apps is the most popular?</b>		
Tinder	138	40.2
Match.com	1	0.3
Badoo	2	0.6
Tagged	2	0.6
Wechat	1	0.3
Omi	1	0.3
Others	6	1.7
I have never used any of the above	193	55.7
<b>Have you experience using dating apps?</b>		
Yes	91	26.5
No	253	73.5
<b>Does the dating apps appeal to you?</b>		
Yes	100	29.2
No	244	70.8
<b>Do you think dating apps is safe?</b>		
Yes	37	10.8
No	307	89.2
<b>Are you confident using dating apps?</b>		
Yes	50	14.6
No	294	85.4

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Table 2 shows the dating apps issues in Malaysia and as a result, most of the respondent have never used any of the above dating apps (55.7%). The respondents also do not have experience using dating apps (73.5%) and 70.8% the dating apps does not appeal to the respondents. Most of the respondents also think that the dating apps is not safe to use (89.2%). Malaysian also do not confident to use dating apps (85.4%).



## c) Acceptance toward dating apps

**Table 2: Acceptance towards dating apps**

Acceptance towards dating apps	Mean
I think nowadays people tend to try venturing into dating apps.	<b>2.73</b>
I believe that dating apps can help you find a partner.	<b>2.47</b>
I think dating apps help the society to be open-minded.	2.44
I believe that people are more accepting towards dating apps as it grows.	2.43
I think dating apps are branching in Malaysia. (Branching: widely spreading)	2.33
I think dating apps can improve the traditional dating method within our society.	2.18
I think dating apps are useful ( Tinder, Match.com, Badoo, Tagged, etc ).	2.16
I think Malaysian uses dating apps in seek of serious relationship.	2.15
I think using dating apps is a great idea.	2.11
I believe that dating apps are much more safer to use nowadays.	1.69
Overall	2.27

The data analysis in the table 2 described that most of the respondents' accept that nowadays people tend to try venturing into dating apps ( $M=2.73$ ). This statement has been supported by Iqbal (2018) that there are around 50 million users of dating apps worldwide. This data has been appears to suggest that dating apps have already become part of our daily life. As dating apps became an alternative tool for people seeking a new kind of relationship, understanding the behavior of the users could enrich the understanding of why people choose to use or not use dating apps. The respondents' do not accept that dating apps will help them to find a partner ( $M=2.47$ ). According to Vijaidren (2017), people who use dating apps for date are easily reject matches for superficial reasons. Sometimes, those expectations are purely superficial and do not necessarily contribute to compatibility. The overall mean of the acceptance towards dating apps is ( $M=2.27$ ). This has been supported by Meikeng (2017) that Only 7% of Malaysian youths believe that Tinder is the most conducive way of meeting someone new as compared to the global average of 12% and this is has shown that Malaysian do not accept to use dating apps.

## d) Effectiveness of dating apps

Table 3:Effectiveness of dating apps

Effectiveness of dating apps	Mean
I think using dating apps can help me improve my communication with people.	2.69
I believe dating apps can also help my friends in finding a partner.	2.67
I think dating apps can help me feel less lonely and improve my mood by talking to people in the app.	2.64
Dating apps are for those who seek romance.	2.59
Dating apps like Tinder can give me new experience.	2.58
Dating apps can help me improve my social skill.	2.55
I strongly believe that by using dating apps can make me happy.	2.11
Dating apps helps me find someone i desire.	2.02
Dating apps is an effective way to find a long-term relationship.	1.90
Traditional dating method is not effective compared to online dating apps	1.88
Overall	2.36

The data analysis in the table 3 described that most of the respondents' strongly agree that using of dating apps most effectiveness can improve their communication with people (M=2.69). This has been supported by Stieg (2017) that she says that online daters who are using dating apps may be more committed to communicate when they are trying to keep in touch with a partner, but not everyone is great at it. There's something to be said about their communication skills if they can manage an online relationship. Someone who's not as well versed in ways to communicate on their phone might have a hard time keeping those elements of the relationship together. The respondents' also believe that dating apps will help their friends in finding a partner (M=2.67). According to Fetters (2018), Tinder one of dating apps has indeed helped people meet other people when it has expanded the reach of singles' social networks, facilitating interactions between people who might never have crossed paths otherwise. The overall mean of the effectiveness of dating apps is (M=2.36).As stated by Meikeng (2017), some of people say love is blind but young Malaysians would rather have their eyes wide open when choosing a new online friend and the Truth About Youth (TAY) survey shows, with 53% admitting they do not trust the people they find online.

## e) The usage of dating apps

**Table 4: The usage of dating apps**

Usage of dating apps	Mean
I think teenagers are influenced to try dating apps.	2.94
I think dating apps is a trend in Malaysia now	2.75
I think there is quite a number of dating apps in Malaysia.	2.71
I think dating apps is a quicker route to find friends.	2.68
I think Malaysians have actually used dating apps at least once in their lifetime.	2.50
I think dating apps are easy to use and convenient.	2.44
I would strongly suggest people who are looking for partners to use dating apps.	2.12
Dating apps is the perfect place where people can be happy.	2.05
I would suggest my friends to use dating apps. ( Tinder , Badoo , Match.com , Tagged, etc ).	1.97
I am interested in using dating apps in the near future.	1.89
Overall	2.41

The data analysis in the table 4 described that most of the respondents' strongly agree that teenagers are influenced to try dating apps (M=2.94). The statement by Elgersma (2019) which is some of dating apps set up the requirements that when teens at age 13 and older try to log in to Badoo via Facebook, they can, but the Hot or Not app doesn't allow it. However, Hot or Not is also an app within Facebook, so teens under 18 can access it there. Teens can set the age preference of potential matches anywhere from 18 to 80, and most matches during testing were about 50 miles away. The respondents also think the dating apps has become a trend in Malaysia nowadays (M=2.75). According to Staff (2017), 52% of Malaysians know at least one couple who met online. The research done by Staff (2017) reveals the scale of the phenomenon in Malaysia. As many as three in ten (29%) Malaysian have used internet and online dating apps. This rises to a third among millennials. Yet six in ten millennials also say they would be embarrassed to admit that they had met their partner through online dating/apps. A fifth (18%) of baby boomers say the same. However, 45% of all respondents say they would not think of a couple that met online any differently. The overall mean of the usage of dating apps is (M=2.41). As stated by Gitlin (, nearly a quarter of people have used or are currently using

online dating services. For young and middle aged adults (18-44 years old), this number increases to a third.

## CONCLUSION

**Table 5: Discription of the dating apps in Malaysia**

Construct	N	Mean
Level of acceptance toward dating apps	344	<b>2.27</b>
Effectiveness of dating apps	344	2.36
Usage of dating apps	344	2.41
Overall		2.35

Table 5 showed the mean score for the level of acceptance towards dating apps ( $M=2.27$ ) and it is considered as low. The dating apps in Malaysia is not effective ( $M=2.36$ ) and it is considered as also low. The usage of dating apps in Malaysia also considered as low ( $M=2.41$ ). The overall mean conducted by the researchers carry out in this survey ( $M=2.35$ ) is also considered as low. This has been proved by Ridzuan and et al (2018) that the acceptance of dating apps is low also in their research that the mean is 2.15 and it is opposite with the research conducted by Cacioppo and et al (2014) that the usage of dating apps in East has been popular and become a trend. There a lot of Malaysian have interests in finding their partner without using Internet and prefer to use traditional method. They also do not ready and believe to use online dating apps for meet meet and find their love. Malaysian do not accept dating apps because refer to Adzmi (2016) , Malaysian women went on tinder only for fun and to meet new people .For the effectiveness of this dating apps, it is not effective in Malaysia because the respondents are prefer to find partner using traditional method.

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