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Come on Baby, Light My Fire: A study on Dutch Millennial Usage of Dating Applications and Morals

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Come on Baby, Light My Fire: A study on Dutch Millennial Usage of Dating Applications and Morals
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ISP SUMMARY SHEET

STUDENT NAME: Hannah Stokes

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ISP TITLE: Come on Baby, Light My Fire: A study on Dutch Millennial Usage of Dating Applications and Morals

ISP Title for official transcript (maximum 50 characters): A study on Dutch Millennial Usage of Dating Applications

ISP ABSTRACT: This is an explorative study of Dutch Millennials and their usage of mobile dating applications in better understanding the connections between youth culture, technology, and intimate relationships. This research also explores common behaviors and beliefs of a specific age group using generational theory. Five qualitative interviews with Dutch Millennials born between 1983 and 1997. The data from the interviews was analyzed using a generational theory framework, but also in relation to common understanding of the Millennial generation's characteristics and behaviors. Participants spoke about their identities as Millennials, their relationship with technology and social media, as well as their experiences dating in the 21st century. With the introduction of IT technology early on in their lives, Millennials have come to be defined by their use of tech devices, but strive to find a balance offline. I found that while Dutch Millennials are using mobile dating applications, like Tinder, they are also still using more traditional methods of meeting possible partners in person. This research is important for anyone studying or interested in the rise of online dating, the Millennial generation, or youth culture.

Key Words: Millennial, generational theory, mobile dating application, social media

IDEAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH: Expand on this research by increasing the participant number, different identities and sexualities, and look at the use of dating applications in non-western cultures.

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COMMENTS: Tobias is an absolutely incredible advisor. If you need someone who can keep you on track and set good deadlines, he is the advisor for you. Very personable and knowledgable about the research process.

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Abstract

        This is an explorative study of Dutch Millennials and their usage of mobile dating applications in better understanding the connections between youth culture, technology, and intimate relationships. This research also explores common behaviors and beliefs of a specific age group using generational theory. Five qualitative interviews with Dutch Millennials born between 1983 and 1997. The data from the interviews was analyzed using a generational theory framework, but also in relation to common understanding of the Millennial generation's characteristics and behaviors. Participants spoke about their identities as Millennials, their relationship with technology and social media, as well as their experiences dating in the 21st century. With the introduction of IT technology early on in their lives, Millennials have come to be defined by their use of tech devices, but strive to find a balance offline. I found that while Dutch Millennials are using mobile dating applications, like Tinder, they are also still using more traditional methods of meeting possible partners in person. This research is important for anyone studying or interested in the rise of online dating, the Millennial generation, or youth culture.

Key Words: Millennial, generational theory, mobile dating application, social media

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Introduction

In the pursuit of finding partners, the dating game is constantly changing. With the rise in technology, there's no surprise that dating has also moved online along with other personal services. Our lives in the Western world are flooded with social media and connections made online, a trend that developers have taken advantage of. In 1995, Match.com was launched after CEOs Gary Kremen and Peng Tsin Ong noticed an opportunity to create a business platform that connected singles online (Poladian, 2015). And while this was not the first online dating site, it set a standard for future platforms (Lee, 2016). Since then, online dating services have exploded, with around 5,000 sites worldwide (Tracy, 2012). If online sites made dating more convenient than trying your luck at the local bar, things really took off in 2007 when the first mobile dating applications were introduced (Divito, 2007). With the growth of smartphone use combined with online dating trends, sites moved to apps that made it possible to find a date with just a swipe of your finger.

Hypothesis

In conducting this research I set out with the question: how does the rise in use of mobile dating applications reflect and influence Dutch Millennials' thinking about personal relationships? I hypothesize that Dutch Millennials' usage of mobile dating applications demonstrates a questioning of social institutions, that while different from behaviors of older generations, is not necessarily a complete redefinition of intimate relationships, but rather a more inclusive alternative. I have chosen to look at urban Millennials, the generation born between the early 1990s and 2000s, because they represent the majority of dating application users

(GlobalWebIndex, 2015). Millennials are often defined by their coming-of-age with technology thusly they represent the generation of the brink of changes in social behavior. While technology is important to their lives, millennials' mindsets are an important factor in the equation. Psychologist Jean Twenge (2007) argued that they are seen as very civically-minded and tolerant, yet also entitled and narcissistic. Millennials have also been noted for their deviant attitudes towards intimate relationships and sex, engaging in hookup culture, open relationships, and "an impulsive dating culture" (Morris, 2014).

Research Goal

This study aims to understand the motivations for using mobile dating applications and what kinds of relationships are produced. When discussing relationships, I don't just mean person-to-person relationships, but also the relationship with the self and body while using these applications. I look at these relationships within the urban Dutch Millennial context and thus strive to understand the intersection between a specific generation, technology, and dating culture. The platform of these applications alone, specifically Tinder, are based mainly on visuals and location, thus affecting the way possible matches are read. Additionally, these applications present a rapid-fire way of sorting through these possible matches, which begs the questions, if you move so quickly through these people, what are looking for from them? There is a taboo around online dating, and add in the ease of mobile dating applications, and the stigma is created that people are only looking for casual hook-up (Sales, 2015). This stigma comes not only from critics of the Millennial generation, but from within as well.

Research Question

This research paper will use a theory of millennials, the role that technology plays in constructing this group identity, existing commentary on mobile dating applications, and an analysis of interviews conducted with Dutch millennials (see Table of Contents). I interviewed five Dutch Millennials to gain insight into the way that using Tinder influenced their relationships, to other people and themselves,.

This research is important because there are many misunderstandings about the millennial generation. In understanding a generation it is critical to question stereotypes that have been established in order to allow Millennials to respond to some of the articles that have been written about their age group. Additionally, it is important to conduct this research now as we are on the cusp of social change and it is more valuable to understand thinking as it is happening rather than in retrospect.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

In reviewing the current literature I use historians William Strauss and Neil Howe's theory of generations as a guide. Strauss and Howe define a generation through their shared age location in history, common beliefs and behaviors, and perceived membership (1991). Before breaking down this theory, I address criticisms of the current research on Millennials as narrowly focused on western Millennials. However, my research is situated in a western society and much of the literature does apply to my research group. Using Strauss and Howe's framework, I explore these three areas in relation to global Millennial behaviors, then a specific analysis of Dutch Millennial identity and behaviors. Lastly, I move into looking specifically at dating habits and mobile dating applications.

Criticisms of Current Literature

In researching Millennials I initially was only looking at it from a western point of view, myself being a westerner and my research group being located in the west. Yet in order to give a full view of an entire generations, I must acknowledge that it is impossible address the experiences and behaviors of about 2 billion people worldwide (Lampert et al., 2014). Motivaction, a Netherlands-based research company conducted a global survey of millennials in twenty countries in 2014 that aimed to challenge generational stereotypes with a western bias. One of the biggest conclusions from this research found that:

> Compared to older generations millennials are: more cosmopolitan, consumption oriented, competitive, networking, self-oriented, open minded, flexible, culturally active, imaginative, but also worried about the future. Several, but certainly not all of the stereotypes described in Western reflections on the millennial generation are present in global data (Lampert et al., 2014).

Much of the research done on Millennials is coming from marketing agencies and companies that criticize their work ethic, but again these studies are mainly focusing on westerners (Marikar, 2013). The Motivaction survey suggests that this research overgeneralizes and omissive (Lampert et al., 2014). It is important to understand Millennials in a global sense because in comparison to older generations, they consider themselves to be global citizens, with 37% reporting versus 32% from Generation X and 28% from Baby Boomers (Lampert et al., 2014). Part of this identification comes from the fact that the world is more connected than it was before with an increase of online and technological connection. I included this section to recognize that the categorization for Millennials is not universal. Context is important, and my research is focused narrowly within a western society. That is not to say that this study could not be replicated in other areas of the world, in fact it would be beneficial in deconstructing the

global Millennial. But for the purposes of this research I will be speaking of western Millennials and Dutch Millennials in particular and by no means do I expect these results to be representative of all people born between 1990 and 2000, internationally.

Millennial Age Location in History

The age location in history is particularly important in shaping beliefs and behaviors as members are shaped by key historical events and social trends they encounter in the same phases of their lives (Strauss and Howe, 1991). When looking at the Millennial generation in general, major events and social trends in their lifetime include the rise in computers and the internet, 9/11 and other terrorist efforts, the "Great Recession" or market crash in 2008, and busy planned lives (AEI, 2012). I will look specifically at the events that had the biggest impact on Dutch Millennials in the next section. Of these events and trends, the rise in internet technology has played the most significant role in shaping the world in which Millennials are living. Marc Prensky first referred to Millennials as "digital natives" as they "represent the first generations to grow up with this new technology" (2001). Prensky cites the rise in technology as the "singularity" that sets Millennials apart from older generations as technology has caused them to "think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (2001). Information is readily accessible, connections are made much quicker and can span across the globe. Social media is being used on a daily basis to connect friends, businesses, and revolutions. This change in processing means, "going faster, less step-by step, more in parallel, with more random access" (Prensky, 2001). It's clear that technology has had quite the influence on the mind of the Millennial and as digital natives, they just get *it*, whereas older generations have to adapt to using media in their daily lives (Prensky, 2001). For Millennials, everything is *mediated*, a notion presented by Ilana Gershon, that refers to "real-life" information being processed

through some kind of technology or media platform (2010). This mediation of information thus influences the way information is processed and the speed at which it is consumed. I will use the research on the relationship Millennials have to technology and the internet as a main basis for analyzing their motivations in using mobile dating applications. Additionally, this provides insight

Millennial Behaviors and Beliefs

Moving away from technology, I dove into exploring other shared Millennial behaviors and beliefs. Strauss and Howe (1991) speak of two different types of eras and the age locations of childhood and young adulthood that result in four archetypes of generations that repeat themselves in cycles of Crises and Awakenings . They identify the Millennial generation as a "hero" generation having been born after an awakening living through an unraveling leading towards a crisis that will define the next generation (Strauss & Howe, 1994). Hero generations grow up as protected children of post-awakening parents with an emphasis on community and optimism during a crisis. Strauss and Howe identify that Millennials were born after the consciousness raising, civil rights awakening of the 1960s which many of their parents participated in. Their unraveling in the 1990s included culture wars between more conservative political or religious views as opposed to emerging liberal views and rising tensions in the Middle East. Strauss and Howe published their book, Millennials Rising, in 2000 before the the Millennials' crisis began. Using their theory, this unravelling led towards the crisis presented by increased global terrorism and the economic crisis, or Great Recession, in the 2000s.

Critics of the Millennial generation, most notably Jean Twenge (2006), attribute them with positive traits of confidence and tolerance, but also identifies them with a sense of entitlement and narcissism, nicknaming them "Generation Me". These same critics cite surveys

that show that millennials are less likely to be politically involved and lack a willingness to

"develop a meaningful philosophy of life" (Healy, 2012). Pew Research Center (2014) found

that Millennials are "detached from institutions and networked with friends" with upbeat and

optimistic views of their futures. When looking at key events affecting behaviors, the Great

Recession has greatly influenced the economic prospects of Millennials who show large rates of

youth unemployment. Faced with difficult economic circumstances following the market crash in

2008, Millennials switch jobs quite frequently, but this is also influenced by changes in

technology and social media with the pace at which Millennials are used to moving (Safian,

2012). Finally, Millennials are also referred to as the Peter Pan generation as they are more likely

to delay rites of passage and define being an "adult" based on personal abilities rather than

traditional rites (Shaputis, 2004; Lusk, 2007). In conclusion, looking at these behaviors among

Millennials, the pace at which they live is much faster and things seem less concrete. Their world

has been shaken by major world events that question the security of nations and economics.

Combine this with theories of postmodernism and Millennials are taught to question everything

and see that stability is hard to find. The Millennials are not the only generation who have

questioned the institutions and systems they are living with, and they won't be the last. But this

criticism is an important part of the Millennial behaviors.

Living with this instability is reflected in the way that Millennials critique and question

what they are being told by society. According to a 2013 YouGov survey in the United

Kingdom, Millennials are more likely to be open-minded about controversial topics, like

LGBTQ rights and legalizing marijuana, than generations before them. But then again, the 1960s

and 70s were a time of free love, so is this just a cyclical pattern in history. Another survey by

Pew Research Center (2008) found that they are more supportive of progressive politics and are

less religious than previous generations . Something that adds to this critique of established

institutions, is the fact that that most Millennials choose not to identify with their generational

label (Smith, 2015). In this same survey, it was shown that Millennials are more likely to identify

themselves using more negative terms than positive, but also consider themselves idealistic as

well as cynical . Perhaps this hesitation to identify as a Millennial comes from the fact that the

most negative terms are applied to it.

Dutch Millennial Context

The previous sections have focused on western Millennials in general, but as this study is

focused on Dutch Millennials, the specific context of their upbringing is crucial. Looking at the

age history location of Dutch Millennials, national identity can not be forgotten. In 1992, the

Netherlands signed the Treaty of Maastricht which was later expanded into the European Union.

The Netherlands were one of the founding members and put an emphasis on the internal market

and free borders for travel, employment, and residency ("The Netherlands and the European

Union", n.d.). This breaking down of national borders perhaps adds to the way that Millennials

think about challenging existing social barriers. To add to challenging existing institutions, the

Dutch have a history of forward-thinking policies since the 1960s. Their social programs and

secularization following a rapid depillarization reflected a move towards progressive thinking.

Part of this progression included increasing rights regarding sexuality. In 1993, one of the early

birth years for Millennials, the Dutch parliament enacted the Equal Rights Act which bans

housing and employment discrimination based on sexual orientation (Euronews, 2013). Then, in

2001, the Netherlands became the first country to legalize same-sex marriage, after previously

recognizing domestic partnerships (Euronews, 2013). Additionally, Amsterdam is quite famous

for its Red Light District which is home to window prostitution, strip clubs, and live sex shows.

While prostitution has been somewhat legal in the Netherlands since the 19th century, it wasn't until 2000 that it was recognized as legal profession under municipal regulations (Simons, 2008). Growing up with a view of open sexuality, Dutch Millennials are more exposed to different kinds of relationships that are more accepted in their culture (Rutgers, 2015). This is reflected in the comprehensive sex education that is required by Dutch law to be taught in public schools (Walia, 2015). Starting from a young age, about kindergarten, children are taught about sexual health and intercourse. One part of this that stands out is the mention that sex does not always have to be for procreation, but can also be for pleasure. This important addition shows children that sex is normal and intimacy is good. Looking at the Dutch attitude towards sex, while it not shared by everyone, there is an openness to it that ties in the larger Millennial context of tolerance and open-mindedness.

Millennials, Dating, and Mobile Applications

In discussing Millennial behavior then we must also discuss their dating habits, and thus, dating applications. This brings back the role technology plays in the Millennial's everyday life. Building off the work of Strauss and Howe, researchers Junco and Mastrodicasa conducted a survey that found that 97% of the students they surveyed owned computers and 94% owned a mobile phone (2007). They also found that 76% of these students used some kind of instant messaging and of these users, 92% reported that they multi-task while instant messaging (Junco and Mastrodicasa, 2007). Looking at this data in conjunction with the way that Millennials process data quicker, it seems that mobile dating applications found their target user. Moving away from marriage-based websites like Match.com or E-Harmony.com, smartphone applications like Tinder and Grindr promote a more casual, rapid-fire approach to online dating. Like other social media sites and apps, Tinder and Grindr rely on the user moving quickly

through pictures making snap judgements on the proposed match. A user is allowed to click on a picture and a short description of the match will come up. Matches are able to chat with one another if they have both "liked" each other, and the relationship -- in whatever form this takes -- continues from here. A 2014 New York Times article explored this platform, "on average, people log into the app 11 times a day. Women spend as much as 8.5 minutes swiping left and right during a single session; men spend 7.2 minutes. All of this can add up to 90 minutes each day" (Bilton, 2014). It may seem like a lot of time, but considering the app can be accessed with the touch a finger while the user sits on the toilet or is waiting for a friend, mobile dating becomes a time filler.

Mobile dating applications seem to reduce the effort of going out to find a date and fit the speed at which Millennials are conducting their lives. When mobile dating applications were launched in 2007, one user commented, "It's simple and it's immediate" describing his meetups as casual (Divito, 2007). In the VRPO episode Tinder Love which aired in the Netherlands in 2016, one Tinder employee described the application as "similar to real life, just better". He expands upon the increased choice in possible partners that Tinder gives its users as well as the sense of control, knowing that you are only talking to people who have also expressed interest in you (VRPO, 2016). Founder and CEO, Sean Rad expanded on this notion in a 2014 interview, "I mean, if I see somebody walking down the street, all I really have is their body language, their look. But on Tinder, I have a photo that they choose to really tell me about themselves. And that's, I think, a first impression but a little better" (Jarvis and Abraham, 2014). Because matches are made mainly off of pictures and short descriptions, critics argue that the lack of personal information is why the app is associated with hook-ups rather than "meaningful relationships" (Jarvis and Abraham, 2014). But this is where we must question what a "meaningful

relationship" really is and whether or not Millennial are actual looking for that kind of relationship. Founder Sean Rad also commented in his Yahoo interview saying, "People are on Tinder to have fun and swipe through interesting content. What that match results in is really up to the user. Some people might want a short-term relationship, some people might want a long-term relationship … All we're doing is making a connection between two people that we think should know each other" (Jarvis and Abraham, 2014). Rad added, "It's about sort of breaking down the social barriers that we've developed over time that prevent us from meeting somebody new...We're building an experience that sort of breaks down the social norm and social barriers that we have to making a new friendship. And that's very powerful" (Jarvis and Abraham, 2014). And perhaps Millennials are also breaking down social barriers, recognizing that there is one prescribed way of having a relationship.

In looking at the rising popularity of dating applications, the platform and the target age group play a large role. A New York Times article suggested that, "it isn't what Tinder is doing correctly, but rather what earlier dating sites have done wrong" by claiming to use algorithms that could calculate true live based off of long questionnaires (Bilton, 2014). In contrast, Tinder does not preconceive matches or filter possible ones, but rather places the power in the hand of the user by presenting them with a wide range of, most likely, strangers within a certain geographic distance. Much of the time, these possible matches are people whom the user would not normally come in contact with in their daily life (Hamedy, 2013). As of 2014, about 1.2 million people in the Netherlands were using Tinder, equating to 7% of the country's population (Graanoogst). While other applications like, Happn, have been introduced in the Netherlands, their number of users do not exceed the amount of people using Tinder (Happn in the Netherlands, 2016). I decided to focus mainly on Tinder in my interviews as this is still the most

widely used platform for mobile dating applications. From the 2016 VRPO "Tinder Love" episode, the Tinder employee concludes, "The reality is, Tinder is connecting people on a rate that was never before possible". No longer restricted by an immediate friend group or local bar, Tinder and other mobile dating applications clearly widen the pool of possible partners. OkCupid founder Sam Yagan focused on this notion of increased choice in "Tinder Love" arguing that in the past, you dated or married the best possible match out of the small sample of people you knew, but with dating applications and sites, you have a better chance of finding the right person. He posits, "Perhaps the relationships that have formed will be more concrete because they've had more competition" (VRPO, 2016). What I take away from this is the blending of technological aides and personal agency. Applications and sites increase your dating sampling size, but who actually talks or meets up is still decided by the user.

Wrap-Up

Looking at the current literature on Millennials and their mobile dating application usage, I am left with more questions heading into my research. There is a clear connection between the pace that Millennials live and think that matches the ease and convenience of mobile dating applications that are right at their fingertips. By using Strauss and Howe's generational theory (1991), the context becomes clearer in understanding the world in which Millennials are growing up in. After looking at survey results by Junco and Mastrodicasa (2007) regarding technology use, it is clear that Millennials are processing information at a quicker rate. Combine this with open-minded views of social issues, and application developers were presented with a perfect target group for mobile dating opportunities. What previous literature has said regarding Millennials and their dating culture is that it's different from the past, and demonizes it for

"ruining love" (Newscult, 2015). And while yes, dating applications have changed the game, perchance this is just different, not different *and* worse, but just a new take on an age old act.

Positionality and Assumptions

Before continuing, I find it important to address where I stand as a researcher in this study. I consider myself a Millennial, having been born in 1995, as well as a user of mobile dating applications. These identities are part of my motivations for conducting this research, but I acknowledge that there is an inherent bias in being a member of the group that I am studying. On one hand, I think this study has a special role in the current literature coming from a millennial author. Additionally, in my interviews I will be able to relate to my participants on a similar level, and perhaps it will be easier opening up to me about sex and intimacy because there is not the age power dynamic that comes from adults questioning personal aspects of life. But on the other hand, I have my own personal experiences as a part of this generation using Tinder and feel fairly strongly about it. I, personally, am a big fan of these applications, but I understand that not everyone is, and that not everyone has had good experiences while using them. I kept this in mind while conducting interviews and used my personal experiences as a way of building a report with interview participants.

I initially became interested in this topic watching my own friends use these applications. Having just moved to Amsterdam from the United States, I wondered if the same conversations I was having at home with my friends was happening among a similar age group here as well. As I mentioned before, I consider myself a part of a similar group to the one I am studying. I started preliminary research by talking to my own friends about their habits on Tinder, hoping to find a

model that I could work with when conducting future interviews. On one hand, this gave me an

idea of what kinds of answers to expect, but on the other, these were American students who

may have a different experiences. Before beginning my actual research, I also needed to

interrogate my own positionality in the situation. My age could work as an advantage in terms of

relating to my interview participants, but it could also be a limitation if the interviewee did not

take me seriously or professionally. With my positionality in mind, I set out to find participants

and create a interview guide (See Appendix 1) that would allow them to speak freely about their

experiences.

Methodology

In total I conducted semi-structured interviews with 5 participants. Four of the interviewees were between 18-30 years old, and the fifth was 32. Each interview lasted from around one to two hours and took place in cafes or their private homes. I wanted my participants to be comfortable in a space that was either neutral, like a cafe, or their own to help reduce some of the power dynamics between the interviewer and interviewee. Each participant signed an informed written consent form informing them that the interview would be used only for academic research and that the interviews would be recorded on a voice recorder.

In conducting my research on Millennials and their use of mobile dating applications, I wanted to allow my participants to really speak for themselves and it is for this reason that I chose to use qualitative interviews. Much of the literature I came across in the beginning stages of research rarely included the first-person voices of Millennials, but more survey results narrowing a generation down to numbers and figures. If you are to study a group of people, I believe that it is necessary to have their authentic voices present in the research, otherwise the information provided may be misinterpreted. In my results and analysis I discuss general themes that were present across each of my interviews, interspersed with direct quotes from participants that either best explain the topic or add a different perspective. I must also critique what the authentic voice really means. Each of the opinions expressed by my interviewees are entirely their own based off of their personal experiences and life histories and are in no way meant to be universal examples or views. And as with any qualitative research, the researcher and the reader must understand that interviewees may leave information out or may not answer completely truthfully. In order to avoid this, building a strong report with interview participants is necessary.

Finding Participants

When looking for interview participants, I narrowed my search to Dutch citizens between the ages of 18-30 who use, or have used, mobile dating applications. However, I do have one participant who is 32, who offers great insight into the rise in technology as well as adding her experiences. I felt comfortable including her as part of my participant pool because she was born within the Millennial generational lines in the early 1980s and experienced many of the same influences that younger Millennials did. There is one participant who has not used a dating application before, but studies computer science. I decided to include this participant because he offered a different perspective to reasons why Millennials may not be choosing to use mobile dating applications, but could also add a more in-depth view of the technological side of the conversation. At the beginning of results is a more complete description of each participant. They were offered the opportunity to use a pseudonym, those who accepted with be denoted with an (*).

I initially thought that finding participants would be fairly easy, but I was presented with a couple of challenges. The first challenge was the fact that I was not professionally connected to a Dutch university. Had I been, reaching Dutch students might have been easier with the possibility of being connected to departments, professors, clubs, or student networks. I began my search by reaching out to professors I did know at the University of Amsterdam and the University of Leiden. One professor passed my search for participants along by posting it on his facebook wall, to no avail. I then e-mailed about twenty student organizations in Amsterdam and was contacted by one interview participant. I also posted a call for participants in a University of Amsterdam cafe, with no takers. Through one of my earlier interviewees, I was invited to a student union social event where I was introduced to two additional participants. Being an

outside researcher always presents a challenge when trying to connect to the field, but by

continuing to search in different places, I increased the possibility of finding participants.

Interview Topics

See Appendix 1 for Complete Interview Guide

Questions began with general "get to know you questions" in order to build an

understanding of the interviewee's background and mine as well before moving on to other

research questions. I wanted to touch on three main areas: Millennial identity, technology, and

dating applications. Within each of the categories, some topics that emerged included:

1. Millennial Identity
   a. Meaning
   b. Traits
   c. Labeling
   d. Technology and social media
2. Technology
   a. Benefits
   b. Uses
   c. Changes
   d. Age
   e. Information
3. Dating/Applications
   a. Types
   b. Motivations
   c. Online Personas
   d. Visuals
   e. The future of dating

In conducting a practice interview, I had planned to begin with questions about

technology, move on to Millennial identity, followed by questions about dating applications. But

I found that this led to a lot of backtracking in the conversations so I decided to rethink the order.

The interview guide I use began with Millennial identity, moved on to technology, and

concluded with mobile dating applications. This order allowed for a more natural progression of

conversation which flowed more smoothly. Because I chose a semi-structured interview style

this allowed the participants to introduce new ideas that were not strictly stated on the interview

guide.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the interviews with my participants, I coded them based on common

themes. Where my interview guide was semi-structured in terms of the order in which I

discussed the main areas of Millennial identity, technology, and dating applications, there were

smaller common themes that were presented. While reviewing my interviews I created a

horizontal data analysis spreadsheet to compare, or contrast, what each participant said about the

subjects. In my results I introduce each participant with their age, location, and current status

regarding Tinder. The themes of the interviews are structured by the overarching topics with

subtopics that came up during the interviews. Due to time constraints, I was not able to confirm

my analysis with my participants, but they will be receiving a copy of this research.

Results

Participant Descriptions

Joao

Joao is a twenty-five year old master's student studying in Amsterdam. He grew up in a village of about 50,00 people outside of Amsterdam and moved into the city to start his studies in 2009. Joao currently holds a master's degree in social history and is getting a second degree in education. He used Tinder previously, but is currently in a relationship and no longer has the application downloaded. His short Tinder biography described him as a lover of noodle soup.

Fransisca*

Fransisca is a twenty-two year old sociology student in Amsterdam. She grew up in a village nearby Amsterdam and moved into the city when it was time to start university. Her home town was slightly more conservative, and her family came from a Catholic background. Once she moved to the city, religion did not play as big of a role in her life as it had before. Fransisca currently has Tinder and Happn downloaded on her phone, but mostly goes on dates with people from Tinder.

Sarah

Sarah is a thirty-two year old living in Amsterdam. She was raised in a town north of Amsterdam but moved into the city with her mother after her parents' divorce. She has worked as a filmmaker and enjoys travelling. Sarah has Tinder and Happn downloaded on her phone and is currently talking to a man she met on Tinder.

Anna*

Anna is a twenty-one year old marketing student living in Amsterdam. She grew up on a farm south of Amsterdam and commuted to school for the first two years until she decided to rent an apartment in the city for her third year. Anna is interested in graphic design and branding

and recently joined an arts student union. While she has Tinder downloaded on her phone, she

has never met up with someone in person from their online conversations.

Ferdinand

Ferdinand is a nineteen year old computer science student finishing his first year at

university in Amsterdam. He grew up an hour south of Amsterdam and still lives with his mother

and his sister. Ferdinand is the only participant who does not have a dating application

downloaded on his phone, but offered an interesting outsider view to exploring new kinds of

dating in college as well as reasons he does not use it, yet.

Millennial Identity

Using theories of generations, most notably from Strauss and Howe (1991) there are

cyclical patterns within history of how different age groups behave based on the environment in

which they grew up. For Millennials, they grow up in a time of unrest, but are typically raised by

post-awakening parents influencing their critical views of the society they are living in (In my

interviews, I began by asking whether or not my participants had ever heard the term

"Millennial" before, which all of them had. They were then asked to describe what they thought

a Millennial was. Most of the respondents talked about growing up in the 90s and 2000s,

referencing devices like the Nintendo 64 or Walkman, pop culture references to *Totally Spies* or

the Spice Girls, and an emphasis on technology. Anna immediately said, "we have phone is

glued in our hands, always near us,it's like we can't live without our phones" (personal

communication, 2016). This image was described more by Ferdinand who commented,

> The picture that comes to mind is the white girl holding her
> Starbucks taking selfies, face glued to the phone. Not being able to

separate from social media like Twitter and Facebook (personal communication, 2016).

And while technology plays a key role in crafting a Millennial identity, the participants also stressed the pace at which their lives move.

The pressure to be involved with multiple different activities and interests was present across many of the the interviews. Anna expanded on this notion of being busy,

> We have to study, we have to work, we have to do sports, we have to be social. There's a lot of information to be taking in, and I think society asks a lot of us. I don't have a job right now while I'm studying and my friends will ask me, 'Why are you not working?' But there is so much that has to be done (personal communication, 2017).

In discussing what kinds of activities my participants were interested in, many of them not only named their studies, but also hobbies and different social clubs or activities they were involved with. They spoke about balancing their work with their social lives and where technology came into play in helping schedule and keep track of all their responsibilities. Perhaps with an increase in technology, the expectation becomes that more can be done in a short amount of time and thus there is a pressure to always be doing something or else you are perceived as lazy. But on the other hand, there is so much that needs to be done that technology continues to develop to keep up with the ever quickening lives of its users.

After discussing their perceptions of Millennials, I asked each if they considered themselves Millennials. Keeping in mind that of the past three generations, Millennials are the least likely to identify with their generation designation (Smith, 2015). Joao responded,

> I consider myself a Millennial only in a historic time context. I don't want to put myself in a box in terms of how I'm supposed to

behave simply by what's expected of people my age (personal communication, 2016).

When discussing Millennial identity, some participants like Fransisca talked about the negative connotations that come with their use of social media. She said,

> To me, I think about taking a lot of selfies and sharing them in sites like Facebook. People will spend hours taking photos of themselves just to get the perfect one. There's this constant need to post these pictures and share what you're doing all the time. I don't really do that, but that's what people think about when they think of Millennials (personal communication, 2016).

Looking back at the current critiques of the Millennial generation, like from Jean Twenge (2006), they are equated with shallow and self-absorbed tendencies, often considered lazy with short attention spans. Most of the respondents said something similar to Joao in regards to the fact that they consider themselves Millennials only in regards to the time in which they were born. The negative connotations that come from critics of the generation act as a deterrent for Millennials to feel comfortable identifying as part of their generation. Then again, Millennials are still the new kids on the block. As with younger generations, they tend to receive criticism from older generations for testing the limits of established societal norms. But not only are Millennials an introduction to a new generation, they come with the advancement in online technology which fundamentally changes the way things are done. The intersection of a youth culture and emerging technology perhaps is not threatening, but harder to get used to for older generations and their harsh criticism creates a sense of shame among the generation that embodies this newness.

<u>**Technology and Social Media**</u>

The relationship between Millennials and technology is quite interesting. Considering the fact

that their generation is so defined by the information age and the rapid development of the

internet, mobile devices, and social media, the Millennials I spoke to stressed the importance of

finding a balance. All of the interviewees spoke of their childhoods as having access to

technology, like a computer, but this was a limited access. Time spent on the computer was

restricted to about half an hour a day, then they were told to go play outside. Anna commented,

> The younger generation is born with a phones in their hands, where
> we were introduced to them. There was a time we didn't have
> them. And even when we did, we knew that there were other things
> to do besides go online (personal communication, 2016).

For Anna, it seems that a large difference between her generation and the one right behind, is the

age at which online or mobile technology was introduced. This sentiment was echoed by

Ferdinand who, while he studies computer science, had his time limited on computers growing

up. His comment also addresses why he does not feel like he fully fits the Millennial stereotypes,

> My mother taught me how to cope with [overuse of computers]. I
> got a cell phone at a fairly later age, when I was first starting high
> school...I admit that sometimes I can get preoccupied with social
> media, but I really only use Facebook or Snapchat. But then again,
> I don't feel that constant need to share and update everyone with
> what I am always doing (personal communication, 2016).

Each participant was either given their own cell phone or computer between the ages of twelve

through sixteen, but commented that kids are seemingly getting their mobile devices much

younger. Even with Ferdinand, who is the youngest participant at 19 years old, found that kids

born only a couple years after him seemed to have a different relationship with technology

because they are given it when they are young children.

The limited access to computers growing up allowed many Millennials to restrict their presence on social media as well. As Ferdinand said above, he only has Facebook and Snapchat and his use of these platforms comes in waves. Of the five people I interviewed, three of them only had Facebook accounts, and Anna had Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat accounts. Joao commented that, "I have so little time, I can't be constantly checking and posting" (personal communication, 2016) which also references back to the busy daily lives of millennials. A few people, like Fransisca, recognized that their use of social media had changed over time. She was about fifteen when she first made an account and said that back then,

> Facebook was where all the popular people were talking to each other and so you got it, too, to look popular. I would post pictures of me and my friends at parties. You really try to show people that you are popular and out doing things. Now, my close friends and I don't really care what other people are doing all the time" (personal communication, 2016).

Over time, the novelty of constantly sharing pictures and stories on social media wore off and these platforms became a way of communicating with friends rather than showing off.

In discussing the positive aspects of social media, the idea of connection stood out. Joao first brought this up in our conversation about his limited use of Facebook. He said that he really only used social media to keep in touch with friends he knew and in regards to the kinds of relationships you create he commented,

> Social media is convenient, you can keep in touch with people easily, but you have to be careful. It could become a shallow contact with people not really staying in touch or caring about having a conversation of what you're doing in life but just saying, 'Oh, I saw that on Facebook…' (personal communication, 2016).

Fransisca and Sarah both touched upon this point explaining that they both use Facebook mainly

as a way of connecting with friends who are not as close or live outside the Netherlands. Sarah

continued,

> When you are younger downloading the new application is exciting and you want to see everything your friends are doing, but when you get older your family becomes more important and you stay in touch with your friends directly through things like WhatsApp (personal communication, 2016).

Social media and technology have provided platforms that allow their users to not just link

together, but stay connected across the globe. This connection is not just to other people, but

increasing the mobility of individuals within social and physical space. Anna pointed out,

> The world got smaller because we can skype and talk to everybody. I can talk to people from Australia while in the Netherlands. We are much more mobile because we have google maps. My dad always told me that he never really travelled anywhere because he couldn't find his way. But I can go up to Groningen and just use Google maps to get around (personal communication, 2016).

What Anna recognizes is how the social media network and rise in technology has brought more

people and cultures together through the sharing of information. The number of different modes

of communication have greatly increased as well as the time it takes to communicate has

decreased.

Before looking at mobile dating applications, it is important to understand the

relationship Millennials have with their lives and technology. Dutch Millennials define much of

their identity through their use of technology, but have conflicting views about how technology

has affected them. On one hand, the constant use of social media has given Millennials a bad

name, labeling them as lazy and self-absorbed. These labels then add to the reluctance this age

group has to align themselves with stereotypical "Millennial" characteristics. I continue using

the term Millennial as a way of expressing the age history location of the age group born

between 1980 and 2000. Dutch Millennials have embraced technology, but as a way of

communicating and staying in contact with their friends. They talk about the use of technology

and social media with an emphasis on moderation. This stems back to their upbringings where

there was a limit on how much time could be spent on the computer. And while IT technology

like computers and mobile phones were present in their childhoods, they did not really start using

it until their teens. Ferdinand elaborated on the introduction of technology in his life saying,

> I will be proud to tell my children that I was there to see the first
> iPod Touch introduced, that was really the first touch screen
> device. It opened up so much in terms of where technology will go
> (personal communication, 2016).

The idea of watching an evolution of technology came up in all the interviews while talking

about mobile phones. Participants joked that their first phone was a "Nokia brick" or some kind

of flip phone in comparison to smartphones that they didn't get until their late teens or early

twenties. This distinction is important when looking at mobile dating applications that are only

available on smartphones. As I move forward in discussing mobile dating applications, I take the

themes of moderation and connection from Millennials' relationship with technology.

Mobile Dating Applications

As a reminder, four of the five interview participants have used Tinder and other mobile dating applications, while Ferdinand has not yet. I will discuss the results of my conversations with those who have downloaded them first, followed by the experiences Ferdinand has had not using the applications. An important fact to note here is that none of the participants who had Tinder downloaded strictly used mobile dating applications, but were using them to supplement in-person dating.

Motivations and Benefits

All of the participants who have downloaded Tinder referenced that their primary motivation for doing so was curiosity. They each had heard about Tinder being used by friends or other peers and they decided to give it a try, not necessarily taking creating a profile seriously. For Joao, he was in a long-term relationship which had recently become open, giving him the freedom to date other people as well as his girlfriend. He reminisced,

> I was drunk one night with a couple of my friends and I had heard
> about [Tinder]. We decided it would be funny to make a profile.
> We just sat there swiping left and right. I felt the freedom to do
> that. It was a safe thing (personal communication, 2016).

I will return to this idea of safety later on. Both Sarah and Fransisca had just gotten out of serious long-term relationships and downloaded Tinder as a way of meeting new people. For Anna, it was again the curiosity of the application and thought that she could get connected with interesting people. In all of these cases, participants were either just looking to explore what kind of people they could meet on Tinder, but had not yet determined what kind of relationship they were looking for.

Safety came up in a couple of discussions regarding physical safety as well as emotional

safety. Joao mentioned safety in his motivations for downloading Tinder, firstly he had the

freedom within his previous relationship to explore other options, but it also differed from going

out and meeting someone in a bar. He elaborated on this point talking about his attempts at

talking to women in person,

> You don't see when they say no. There have been plenty of times
> when I go up to a girl and have a good conversation with her or ask
> for her number and they tell me, like, 'No, you're too short' or
> something like that. With Tinder you don't have to see when they
> swipe left or no because they only show you the people who are
> actually interested in you (personal communication, 2016).

Others discussed the safety of being a little bolder behind a screen than they would be in real life

meeting someone for the first time. Joao also talked a little bit about his brother who met his

current girlfriend on Tinder. He said that his brother was very shy and had a hard time talking to

girls in person, but with Tinder he was able to get over that initial anxiety.

The ease of the application was also a huge draw for the participants. The layout is quite

simple and it does not require long logged in sessions in order to make a match. All of the

interviewees talked about using Tinder as a time-filler. They would open while on the train,

using the toilet, in between commercial breaks, or at any other random point during the day.

When I asked how often they went on, no one could really pinpoint the amount they used it, but

they explained this by saying that they sometimes use it mindlessly and will go on for a couple

minutes, and then move on with their day. Fransisca talked a lot about how you don't have to get

out of bed to date with these applications commenting, "I'm in my sweatpants watching TV, but

I can pretend I look good because all they see are my profile pictures" (personal communication,

2016). Joao also discussed how it was a cheaper way of dating because he didn't have to spend money buying girls drinks or dinner until he really knew that they wanted to go out with him. Looking back at the busy lives of Millennials, it makes sense that an easy way of dating would be popular. While it's fun to get dressed up and go out, there are some nights where school or work will take priority, but you could log on to Tinder for two minutes in that same time and look for a possible romantic partner. This ease fits a hectic Millennial lifestyle, but also increases the chances that they will find a date even while they are balancing the rest of their responsibilities and interests.

The biggest point that was brought up in each interview was the fact that Tinder introduces its user to people outside their own social circle. For all of the interviewees, their main goal in chatting with people on Tinder was to have good conversations. They addressed the stigma of Tinder being used purely for casual sex, which we will return to, but expressed that they simply wanted to meet new people. Each participant moved to Amsterdam for university as talked about joining different interest groups or student organizations in order to meet people initially. But when it came to dating, their options seemed limited by the people they knew. What Tinder did for them, as Joao mentioned, "introduced [him] to people outside his usual social circle" (personal communication, 2016). Fransisca also addressed this point in terms of what she was looking for in a match on Tinder,

When I got out of my relationship I was looking for new perspectives. A lot of my friends were in relationships and I wanted to have new conversations with people. I've met up with a couple people from Tinder, and even if it doesn't go anywhere, I have met someone new and have learned something different about the world" (personal communication, 2016).

The ease of the application in conjunction with its wide selection of possible partners increases

the chances of finding a date. Fransisca continued,

> In an hour I can see one hundred people and talk with twelve of
> them at the same time. Of those twelve, there are maybe two who
> I'm really interested in. It's easier, it's fast, you know that we're
> both here to meet people when you're in a bar you have to
> awkwardly ask, when you're on tinder it's the rule that you want to
> talk with someone, you just know" (personal communication,
> 2016).

Mobile dating applications are attractive to busy Millennials because they can be used at any

time during the day, but they also increase the size of the dating pool from which they can

choose from.

The Stigma

When talking about motivations for downloading Tinder, I was surprised that none of the

participants said they were looking for casual sex. I pressed them on this, wondering if they were

aware of the current taboo surrounding Tinder: that it is strictly for casual hookups. They all

addressed that they were aware of the stigma , but personally they were all looking for something

a little more serious. Anna, who has never met up with anyone she's talked to on Tinder told the

story,

> One time I was talking to this guy and I asked him what he was
> looking for on Tinder and he said 'Not just sex.' So then he asked
> me what I was looking for, so I was looking for something more
> long-term. He just responded, 'You know, Tinder isn't where you
> go for relationships, right?" (personal communication, 2016).

The female participants spoke of how often they received messages that just asked them to have sex or hook-up. Some men that they were talking to would have conversations with them for about a week and then say that they were going out of town for a while in order to rush meeting up. Sarah said that when this happened to her, she would tell them "No" and then they would stop talking to her. Yet while the taboo is that Tinder is simply for hook-ups, each participant I talked to was looking for something more than that. While this is a small sample size, it does demonstrate the fact that Tinder is not strictly for sex.

However, Joao did bring up another point that relates to all online dating. He currently is dating someone he did not meet on Tinder and during the interview he said,

> You know, I'm kind of bragging right now about the fact that I met her in a bar and not online. But what does that say? You know, I think the stigma is dying down but it still looks like 'Oh, you're not good enough to date in real life. But then again, what is 'real'? (personal communication, 2016).

This idea of real-life versus a fake life online links to a kind of control that a user can have over their profile and persona. While mobile and online dating are safer for emotional reasons, the screen can also be used as a way of hiding true intentions or shrouding the authentic self in a layer of mystery.

Visuals and Crafting Online Personas

A debate that is often brought up in regards to social media is the idea of expressing an "authentic" self. Interviewees referenced this while discussing their Facebook profiles and deciding which pictures to use and which ones to omit in order to craft a certain image of

themselves to the public audience. For instance, Anna loves to ride horses, but has never posted

anything about it on Facebook for fear of ridicule. She explained,

> I don't want people to put me in a box based off of what I am
> posting online. They make judgements based off of one photo. So
> you really have to think about what pictures say about you
> (personal communication, 2016).

So when discussing Tinder, which is a highly visual platform, the question of portraying a

specific version of the self came up in regards to dating.

Joao mentioned that one night he asked a couple of his female friends to help "curate" his

Tinder profile. They chose a wide variety of photos so that he could express different sides of his

personality. The other interviewees agreed that they had done something similar with their

profiles and that they preferred possible matches to have a variety in their photos. Users can

choose up to five photos and write a short description of themselves. Participants agreed that

they didn't always read the short descriptions, but placed more emphasis on the photos whilst

swiping. Fransisca compared it to meeting someone in a bar,

> If you are out dancing and you see someone you like, you notice
> their appearance first. If they're with friends you can watch them
> for a little and see how they interact with them, or see how they act
> while dancing. It gives you a little feel for their personality. A
> good variety of photos will do the same thing. And they act as
> conversation starters" (personal communication, 2016).

This also raises the question of controlling what you say about yourself. Perhaps this isn't really

the authentic you? Fransisca also commented on this, "In every group I'm a different person, but

that is still a real part of myself" (personal communication, 2016). She referenced how in her art

student association she was a little more relaxed, while in her international relations union, she

was more reserved. These are all part of an authentic identity, but which part she chooses to express depends on the situation.

Dutch Millennial Ideas of Relationships

We have discussed how Dutch Millennials are using mobile dating applications themselves, yet how does this reflect their ideas of relationships. The interviewees addressed that that they recognized there was a stigma of casual hookups that happened through Tinder, but they themselves were looking for something more serious. For Fransisca, Anna, and Sarah this has to do with what the were told about relationships growing up. Fransisca had been in a long-term relationship which her family expected to end in marriage. She said, "they thought of it as an achievement when you find someone, like that's a life goal" (personal communication, 2016). But for her personally, she cared about finding the right person, not just someone to marry. Both Anna and Sarah expressed, however, that marriage is not as important in the Netherlands as it is in other countries, like the United States. Sarah has about five friends who have children, but only one of those couples is married. She explained that marriage in the Netherlands is more for financial reasons.

In the interviews, there was a difference between the way monogamy was discussed and the way marriage was. In Sarah's personal view of monogamy she said,

> People change a lot through their life, and maybe we're not meant
> to stay with the same person because we are changing at a different
> pace (personal communication, 2016).

Anna questioned something similar,

> People are not made to be with one person, so maybe it is not in
> our instinct to be in one person. Speaking for myself, I like it when

> I have just one person because it feels nice to always have that person to talk to. It feels safe. For other people, they want to have a relationship with three people, who am I to tell someone else that that is not ok. So the question, what is a healthy relationship is hard, because it's different for everybody. but technology gave us a an easier way to have casual relationships, but is that bad? I don't know (personal communication, 2016).

This viewpoint on monogamous relationships, as I discussed with Anna and Sarah, may reflect the high rate of divorce of the Millennials' parents. They have seen what heretofore is supposed to be the most stable relationship not work out, so perchance they understand that there are many ways of having healthy relationships.

Ferdinand perhaps expressed the Millennial mindset regarding relationships best while describing his own experiences with dating. As a first year at university, Ferdinand has begun to see new sides of himself emerge as he is faced with new experiences. He spoke about trying cigarettes and weed for the first time, shrugging he justified himself, "I hadn't tried it yet so I figured I would just see if I liked it" (personal communication, 2016). When it came to dating, Ferdinand had been in a committed relationship in high school, but came into university single. At the beginning of the year, he had more confidence to go up and talk to girls at parties or in bars, but after some bad experiences, his confidence dropped. Slowly over time he has been building himself back up. When I asked him why he hadn't downloaded a dating application yet, he said he was open to it to give it a try. He said of trying different techniques,

> By dating different people, having relationships, my opinion is constantly changing. I am not doing the same thing I was at the beginning of the year. I love to meet people in person, I quite frankly didn't have the need for online dating. But Tinder would seem like a fun way to meet people. Check back in with me in two months and I may have a different story for you" (personal communication, 2016).

Ferdinand expressed how with each date he goes on, he learns something new about dating, relationships, and himself. To him, and to many, dating is a process of figuring out what works and what doesn't.

Millennials are young, they are still figuring out what they want and how they are going to get it. Ferdinand's stories of testing out new drugs or experiences greatly exemplifies a theme within emerging youth cultures of experimentation. While most of the participants are looking for more committed relationships, they understand that that does not work for everyone. Ferdinand ended by emphasizing that at a young age, you just have to keep an open mind to things. Tinder may have a stigma around what kinds of relationships stem from it, but as Anna said, "people will always find a way, they will always find a way to have casual sex" because it is nothing new. But the introduction of technology has opened up access and mobility within romantic or intimate relationships.

The Future of Dating

While this was not an initial question I had thought to ask in my interviews, the concept of the future of Tinder and dating emerged. All of the participants expressed that they do not think that Tinder will continue to dominate the mobile dating world. They all use it as a supplement to in-person dating. Each said that while Tinder may cease to continue, in-person dating will continue to be the method of choice. Joao hypothesized that this is because young people are starting to pull back from social media altogether because there is so much "fakery" that people are longing for the past. Fransisca agrees that there will be some sort of counter movement against technology and people will return to using more tried and true methods. She

does not deny that the connections made online can be real, but they are strengthened when you move off of talking online and meet in person. Sarah warns that Tinder has affected the way people behave when they go out now. She says they are not "fully on" because they know that if they do not meet anyone in the bar, they can just open their phones. Tinder has introduced a new method of dating, but its long term effects have yet to be seen as the technology is so new.

For Anna and Ferdinand, the possibilities of technology and dating are still expanding. Anna commented that technology is moving so quickly that people will get bored of Tinder and look for the next new phenomenon. She questioned, "Maybe it will be something like virtual reality dating" (personal communication, 2016)? Ferdinand, who is interested in virtual reality and artificial intelligence said he really does not know what the future looks like. He said that if thirty years ago he would have told someone that dating is happening online or in places like Tinder, they would have thought it was science fiction. He is excited to see where it goes, but technology is moving so quickly, that it's really anyone's guess what happens.

Conclusion

I set out to better understand how mobile dating application reflect and influence Dutch Millennials' views of personal relationships, and what I found was not just romantic relationships, but the relationship to technology and their generational identity. This current social phenomenon of using mobile dating applications has garnered the stigma of promoting casual sexual hookups rather than producing long-term committed relationships. But through my research, I found that there is more than just the surface level use to these applications and that

they represent a way of better understanding the younger generations that are coming of age today.

Having grown up and being introduced to technology at a young age, Millennials are used to using online or mobile platforms to assist them in their daily lives. Whether it be in making navigation easier through interactive maps, staying connected and communicating with more people from around the world, or introducing them to possible new romantic partners. Much of the Millennial identity is rooted in their use of technology, but also their busy, planned, and packed lives. For them, technology has made it possible to juggle multiple aspects of their lives, but they also are still critical about relying too much on technology. There is an understanding that technology can only do so much and that in-person communication remains important.

In terms of dating and the use of mobile dating applications, it all depends on what the specific user is looking for. Dating still requires a human interaction in order to be successful. The application is there introducing the user to their possible matches, the way a friend could introduce them to someone they think would be a good fit. In either case, it's up to the people involved to steer the relationship wherever it goes. Technology here widens the pool of possible partners and thus, possible chances of finding someone you could involved with and an increase in possible kinds of relationships. Millennials are still young and in a time of their life meant for exploration of what they really want. They understand that there is more than one way to have a relationship, but it depends on what kind of person they are. Technology has not completely erased in-person dating nor has it destroyed what it means to be in a relationship. Mobile dating applications, at their core, are a tool for meeting new people, but it's the human aspect that determines the kind of relationship that stems out of their use.

In looking ahead to further research, I would like to see this study done with a larger

sample size, explore different kinds of relationships and sexualities, and see how results differ in

different countries. My results come from conversations had with only five students, and while

their experiences were varied, they by no means are meant to represent all Millennials or all

users of mobile dating applications. This current study was also narrowly focused on Tinder and

interviewed individuals who identified as heterosexual or mostly heterosexual. Moving forward

it would be interesting to see how the use of different applications changes the kind of

relationship that stems from its use, or how the use of the application itself changes based on

different interests, sexualities, and identities. Finally, this study was done within a European

context, but these applications exist all over the world. A cross-cultural analysis of how the

applications are view and used differently could really add to an understanding of the current

generation on a global scale.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guide

1. Basics/Introduction
    1. Name/Age/ Where from
    2. What would you like your pseudonym to be in the paper, if any?
    3. Ask about hobbies, interests, ect.
2. Millennials
    1. Do you consider yourself to be a millennial?
        1. What does that mean to you?
    2. What specific characteristics of the "millennial lifestyle" apply to you?
    3. What do you think is the biggest defining characteristic of a millennial?
        1. Do you agree with this?
    4. What is the biggest misconception about millennials?
    5. What sets millennials apart from other generations?

6. How do you see technology play out in your generation?
    1. Could you live without it?
3. Technology
    1. What kind of role does technology play in your life?
        1. What was it like growing up in the age of technology and the internet?
    2. What are the benefits to technology and social media in your own life?
    3. Are you present on social media? Which sites/applications?
    4. Which ones are your favorite to use and why?
    5. Who do you talk to on each site? Do you use them differently?
    6. Do you use online dating applications? Which ones?
        1. Are you on other sites as well?
4. Dating and Applications
    1. What were your motivations for downloading these apps?
    2. Is what you're looking for different on each site?
    3. What are the stereotypes around each site?
        1. Have you found these to be true?
    4. Can you find what you're looking for?
    5. Does your online behavior mirror your real personality or does it change?
    6. Have you ever met up with someone from a dating app? What was it like?
    7. What do you think a relationship is?
    8. How important are labels?
    9. Is there more room for exploration on dating apps?
    10. How are dating apps viewed by your circle of friends, your peers, your family, society?
        1. Do you agree with these?
    11. Why do you think dating apps are so popular?
    12. What were you told about sex and relationships growing up?
        1. How has this affected your personal views? Behaviors?