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Psychological Impact Of Modern Dating Dynamics On Gen Z

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Abstract

This case study examines the impact of modern dating trends like, benching, situationship, breadcrumbing on the Gen Z and how it can lead to self image, low confidence and other problems and how much is it really bothering them.

Introduction

Introduction With Gen Z navigating a digital and socially fluid dating environment, the landscape of romantic relationships has changed. Situationships, benching, and breadcrumbing are examples of ambiguous relational patterns that characterise modern romantic interactions. These patterns defy conventional wisdom and have intricate psychological ramifications. The purpose of this study is to investigate how psychological factors, such as perceived stress, attachment anxiety, and relationship satisfaction, relate to these ambiguous dating experiences. Additionally, the study looks at how individual differences and attachment styles affect how Gen Zs react and navigate unclear dating situations. Gen Z's changing views on exclusivity and long-term partnerships are reflected in the rise of situationships, benching, and breadcrumbing. Romantic uncertainty is negatively correlated with overall well-being, and increased perceived stress in such relational settings may contribute to negative mental health outcomes. These ambiguous dating behaviours have a significant impact on relationship satisfaction, as people struggle with emotional investment in relationships that lack stability and commitment. Gaining knowledge about the psychological foundations of these dating trends will help us better understand how Gen Z's romantic experiences are changing. By encouraging healthier relationship dynamics and improved mental health outcomes for young adults, this study will aid in the creation of therapeutic interventions and relationship education initiatives.

Research Evidence

- Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth et al., 1978): Expectations and behaviours in romantic relationships are influenced by attachment styles, which include secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganised. Non-committal relationships are associated with insecure attachment styles.
- Stress and Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984): Relationships that aren't committed cause emotional ambiguity, which raises the perception of stress.
- Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959): People use perceived costs and benefits to gauge how satisfied they are with a relationship. Perceived benefits and relational costs clash as a result of ambiguous relational patterns, which affects overall satisfaction.
- Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984): People use a range of adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms to deal with the stress, uncertainty, and possible emotional consequences of ambiguous dating.
- Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954): People assess their own relationships by contrasting them with those of others, frequently drawing irrational expectations from romantic relationship ideals on social media.

- The Big Five Personality Model (McCrae & Costa, 1997): Individuals' approaches and reactions to relational ambiguity are influenced by their personality traits.
- Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000): The detrimental psychological effects of relational uncertainty can be lessened by promoting intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and self-competence.
- Cognitive Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987): People suffer from emotional distress and a decline in wellbeing when their expectations of a romantic relationship do not match reality.

Hypotheses and Research Question

Research Questions:

How do Gen Zers' perceptions of stress, attachment anxiety, and relationship satisfaction relate to ambiguous dating experiences (situationships, benching, and breadcrumbing)?

What effects do personality traits and attachment styles have on participation in and reactions to ambiguous dating dynamics?

What coping strategies do people use when negotiating unclear romantic relationships, and how do these strategies impact mental health?

How do societal and cultural factors affect ambiguous dating dynamics?

Hypotheses:

H1: People in situationships will perceive more stress than people in defined relationships.

H2: Compared to people in defined relationships, those who are benched will report less relationship satisfaction.

H3: There will be a positive correlation between attachment anxiety and breadcrumbing.

H4: Perceived stress will have a negative correlation with relationship satisfaction and a positive correlation with attachment anxiety.

H5: People who have anxious attachment styles are more likely to date in situations that are unclear or to stay in such relationships.

H6: In unclear dating circumstances, a higher emotional intelligence will be linked to a better capacity for emotion regulation and a decreased vulnerability to romantic manipulation.

Approach, Method and Measures

Approach

Participants:

Members of Generation Z (those between the ages of 18 and 25) who have dealt with ambiguous dating situations. To guarantee adequate statistical power, the sample size should be between 200 and 300 participants. Hiring via social media, academic institutions, and internet platforms.

Method:

Participants will answer standardised questionnaires in an online survey.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed, and informed consent will be acquired.

It will take about 20 to 30 minutes to finish the survey.

Measures:

Stress levels are determined using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).

To gauge attachment anxiety, use the Experiences in Close Relationships-Short Form (ECR-S) Anxiety Subscale.

To gauge relationship satisfaction, use the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS).

To evaluate personality traits, use the Big Five Inventory (BFI).

Scale of Emotional Intelligence (if applicable)

A demographic survey to collect data on cultural background, age, gender, sexual orientation, and relationship status..

Data Analysis

SPSS will be used to perform statistical analyses.

Regression, correlation, ANOVA, t-tests, and descriptive statistics will all be used.

To investigate how the variables interact, mediation and moderation analyses will be employed.

If qualitative data is gathered, thematic analysis can be applied to gain a better understanding of people's lived experiences in ambiguous dating situations.

Anticipated Results and Consequences

It is anticipated that this study will demonstrate how Gen Z's psychological health is negatively impacted by ambiguous dating experiences.

It will offer a thorough grasp of how personality traits, coping strategies, and social media impact these dynamics.

