

# Gender and Shift of Sexual Openness Values on the Use of Online Dating Platform

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## ABSTRACT

The existence of social construction on societal culture guides that still embrace patriarchal values, sex and sexualities perpetually attached to gender roles. Such as men who are considered to have full rights to express sexualities and more actively engage in sex-related activities. Meanwhile, a woman is constructed otherwise, which is the gender that passively expresses her sexualities. Thus emerges stigmatization to a sexually-expressive woman for being unsuitable to the roles set by the expectation of society. Furthermore, sex activities and sexualities seem to be identical to sacred values. Along with massive technological development, this stigmatization starts to fade from perceptual changes pushed by mainstream media influences. One of them is brought by the wide use of dating apps as a common dating medium to bring together couples for various intentions, for instance, an open relationship that accentuates sexual need fulfillment. This has become the reason for initial gender roles and values. Methods implemented in this research is qualitative-phenomenology to study values shift caused by media influences on social life. The result of this research deepens the phenomenon of values shift that shows gender openness on expressing their sexualities contrary to gender-related stigmatizations.

**Keywords:** *Dating Apps, Gender, Sexuality, Values shift.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the perspective of the society that still firmly holds eastern cultural values, which relates to the deeply rooted patriarchal system, matters in regard to sexual behaviors and sexual activities tend to intersect with gender roles. Gender roles in eastern culture seem to be identical with differentiated behaviors toward specific sex identities [1]. This resulted in undebatable dividing values on how men and women should behave in society. Therefore, this creates a gap that can be analyzed in various aspects of life, determining the power to intervene and intervene.

Associated with sexual behaviors and openness of sexuality, individuals control whether a specific gender should actualize a particular gender role so it can be considered proper under societal norms. Under patriarchal culture stood a thesis to see men or women in general or in individual. Men are viewed as part of society that is superior for their superiority towards any social behaviors and power in the community itself. Contrarily, women's position is hierarchically considered a second-class society that is inferior and right under the men as

the center of culture [2]. The impact of patriarchal existence causes limited freedom for a woman to express their sexuality and silencing them on their sexual behaviors. Gender values relate to sexuality therefore seen as an unjust value [3]. Given the situation above, the freedom of expressing sexualities and all actualizations of it tends to be given to men as normality.

As time changes and the ability of a human to inquire is continuously enhanced, various technologies also exist as a perfect tool to push changes constructively. It includes the intervention toward an interpersonal relationship in regards to romanticism. A concrete example of it is shown through the invention of dating apps, namely websites and mobile apps used by all walks of life to meet their partners effectively.

Along with technological development, there is a significant impact on cultural exchanges, marked by globalization that blurs countries' borders and includes a discussion of values that relate to lifestyle commands and specific societal culture [4]. The exchange of deals throughout the world, especially on sexuality and sexual behaviors, is

majored by western views that seek freedom as a fundamental right of a human being. Therefore, human space becomes a base for freedom of choice pushed by the sexual revolution in 1960s that judges stagnant and conventional sexuality rooted in patriarchal values [5]. Since then, ethical values of sexuality and sexual activities no longer rely on a specific gender. This could impact the spread of values that is not determined by regional borders.

According to the narratives above, this research hypothesizes the use of dating apps, which was originated from western values, could present a shift of values on sexual openness in society. Therefore this research aims to, (1) Identify change of values on sexual exposure regarding the use of dating apps; (2) Identify types of sexual activities under the use of dating apps; and (3) Identify the reason dating apps usage is linked to the changes in individual views on sexual activities

**2. METHODS**

This research was carried out under a qualitative approach using phenomenological studies that seek to reveal social reality based on

individual experiences through their behaviors [6]. Data collection was done through observation and in-depth interviews with five informants who are active users of one particular dating app mainly used to fulfill sexual needs in a non-romantic relationship. Those informants were selected through purposive sampling with unique criteria of men and women between 18 to 25 years, the active user of dating apps, as well as have been or are currently involved in a sexual relationship. Another important, but not enforced, is the knowledge of sex dating apps. And casual sex or non-romantic sexual relationships.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The result of this research was processed through a field study that includes meeting in order to observe and interview through a blended method (online and offline) caused by a barrier set under covid-19 protocols. This process was done in an effort to analyze the understanding of gender and shift of sexual openness values out of dating apps usage. Five selected informants were adjusted to all set of criteria. Brief information on informants is explained in the table below

**Table. 1** List and Brief Description of Research Informants

Research Informants	Description
R.In-1	A woman aged 21 years old, has a full-time job and currently studying in one of a private college in Bandung. She’s already using <i>Tinder</i> and <i>Bumble</i> dating apps before the pandemic.
R.In-2	Women aged 24 years old, a worker and has already used dating apps prior to the pandemic.
R.In-3	Women aged 18 years old and currently a senior high school student. A new user of <i>Tinder</i> , <i>Bumble</i> , and <i>OkCupid</i> dating apps.
R.In-4	A man aged 22 years old and currently a private college student, a new user of <i>Tinder</i> -dating apps.
R.In-5	A man aged 22 years old and currently a public college student, a new user of <i>Tinder</i> -dating apps.

**3.1 Understanding of Sexuality and Gender Values**

Under the process of inquiring research informants of gender understanding relates to sexuality and sexual activities, each informant brought a similar opinion. The informants indicate that their knowledge toward gender values is based on the social construct that exists in society. Man holds more power regarding sexuality and expresses it as it is natural in eastern culture. Their social environment conceives that the sexual behaviors of men tend to be considered as a nature and normality of humans. Differently, sexual behaviors and sexuality expressed openly by women would instead be scrutinized as something unusual. This results negative stigmatization on women who openly expresses their sexuality.

Research Informants (R.In) 1; 2; and 3 conveyed that women would been given a stigma as ‘naughty’ and ‘bad’ if they openly expresses things related to sexuality or sexual behaviors, therefore women are socially pressed to be passive when they have a voice on sexuality, seeing that men are more decent to express it. R.In 4 and 5, under their perspective as men, conveyed that they initially seek women should be passive on expressing their sexuality considering negative judgment they will receive when they actively saying their sexual behavior. There is also a thought that women would likely to be given prejudice for their open sexual behavior, which in eastern culture would be an adverse judgment.

The information given by both represented gender signals the existing stigmatization contrary to the current behaviors of informants seeking

sexual behaviors and activities regarded as standard. With the given information, it is practically proven that there is a gap between men and female for their gender role in the society.

### ***3.2 The Use of Mobile Dating Apps and The Shift of Sexual Openness Values***

Under current circumstances, the use of dating apps has been viewed as the main alternative in making two consensual partners as efficient. Parties met based on dating apps communication have a purpose to either become a romantic long-term partners or arrange a rendezvous for a non-romantic relationship for sexual needs.

Informants in this research believed that by using mobile dating apps, there has been a shift in how they view sexual activities or being open about their sexual activities. Even without further discussion on changes of sexual values, these informants revealed that they use dating apps indeed intended for specific purposes. Two primary goals are; 1) searching for romantic and long-term partners, and 2) aimed to find non-romantic and temporary partners which is consenting for sexual need fulfillment. Still, all five informants stated that their main goal is to find sexual partners by using dating apps. These findings are foreseeable regarding stigmatization toward dating apps users, which is the user would somehow use the application as a medium to find an unattached partner to fulfill their sexual needs. Being open on their sexual activities or consenting to show themselves on a platform explicitly informed other users to get sexual partners. This phenomenon justifies the hypothesis that sexual openness can be pushed by a dating apps platform consisting of many users. Therefore, each user seeking a sexual partner needs to publish themselves and that they are open to being reached out or even explicitly in search of sexual partner. As this happens, it can be understood that there is no longer a gap both for men and women to be open that they are sexually active. They are available for sexual relationship based on both parties consent. Neither men nor women experiences a discrimination of any kind in using the dating apps to pursue their reasons. Patriarchal values that seek only man can be considered acceptable to express their sexuality are not referred to in dating apps.

The use of dating apps allows the freedom to express sexuality and make it known of user sexual activeness without being stigmatized. Users seek dating apps as a medium that give them space to find sex partners without any barrier set under apps system, making it bias to still differentiating whether one gender is benefited or has more access and recognition than the other.

Based on the analysis of in-depth interview with informants, their first sexual experience occurred after finding sexual partners from dating apps. Their sexual activities even have their terms and trend among teenagers and adults: staycation, Netflix n' chill, one night stand, et cetera. This has shifted a perspective initially acknowledged that women are more closed than men in expressing their sexual activeness or that man should be a factor in any sexual relations. With the use of dating apps, gap based on gender is not applied, therefore certain men and women who are sexually active pushed by the use of dating apps in searching for sexual partners are now actualizing their sexuality and sexual behaviors not in regard nor feel bothered by stigmatization and deep rooted values in the society

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The deep-rooted values within the society that rules what men and women supposedly behave starts to fade, especially by younger generation. Women are no longer under man in terms of sexual matters and freedom of expression. This is caused by the assimilation of cultures, perceptions, and views brought from the west through technology. One of those is mobile or web application to bring daters together. The unsurprising phenomenon that these dating apps would create sexual relationships between partners in the west also became a phenomenon here in Indonesia. This phenomenon followed by changes of thought seeking equality between men and women on sexual freedom they thought they should have.

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