

Research Paper

## The Effect of Intensity of Using Online Dating Platforms on Loneliness and Social Connectedness Among High-Intensity Users, Low-Intensity Users and Non-Users

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### ABSTRACT

Online dating platforms have taken over as most of the young adult's main source of dating and relationships but its effect on emotional well-being and intensity of usage of dating apps the psychological impact they have on them is still unclear. This study looks at how the intensity of using online dating platforms influence the loneliness and social connectedness among individuals. An Ex-Post Facto study design was used with 200 participants which were divided into three groups: high intensity users (67), low intensity users (66) and non-users who had previously used dating apps (67) which comprised of standardized self-report measures, such as The UCLA Loneliness Scale, The Social Connectedness Scale and The Online Dating Intensity Scale (ODI) to gather data. For the data analysis, descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA was used in Excel. And the findings showed that there were not statistically significant differences in loneliness and social connectedness across the three groups, suggesting that the intensity of using online dating platforms have no significant impact on these variables. However high intensity users of online dating platforms have shown slightly higher levels of loneliness and lower levels of social connectedness, despite there not being any statistically significant difference between the groups. The findings give useful information for future research into the psychological and social effects of online dating platforms and highlights the complexities of the relationship between online dating platforms and psychological factors like loneliness and social connectedness.

**Keywords:** Online Dating, Usage intensity, Loneliness, Social Connectedness, ANOVA

How people start and maintain romantic relationships has been completely changed by the digital revolution. Online dating platforms, from the first websites to the current smartphone applications, have become powerful tools in the pursuit of intimacy over the past 20 years. By utilising algorithms, self-reported user data, and computer-mediated communication, these platforms give users unprecedented access to a large pool of potential partners (Finkel et al., 2012). Despite the fact that these services promise to get around social and geographic limitations, new research indicates that the quality of the connections that result may not always satisfy users' emotional needs.

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### ***Online Dating Platforms***

Online dating platforms have been built to make the partner selection process a bit easier for the people. People who use these platforms create their profiles, they get into digital swiping and browsing and start conversations through direct messaging and chat functions. Early researches marked these services for expanding the pool of potential partners and their diversity. Finkel et al. (2012) demonstrated in his research that how online dating has been widely transformed by making individuals gain a chance to start relationships with people that they are less likely to meet in person.

However, in the recent researches this view has been reviewed. According to the studies published in 2024, the use of online dating platforms by millennials is influenced by factors such as trust, performance expectancy, and social influence (Jamaludin et al., 2024). Yet the features in these platforms like swiping endlessly and comparing different profiles might result in decision fatigue and superficial evaluations (Binder et al., 2024). A paradox may arise due to this online behaviour of users. Users might feel a sense of empowerment by the number of options but the result-driven interactions with individuals online might not bring strong emotional and social connections to them and this might not always lead to long term satisfactions.

### ***Loneliness***

A subjective, upsetting emotional state is developed within individuals, known as loneliness, when they feel that there might be a disconnection between the social connection they desire and the one they are experiencing. Loneliness is viewed as a biological drive, similar to hunger, which drives us to seek social connections (*Cacioppo and Patrik, 2008*). Chronic loneliness is now a major public health concern, as it can lead to physical issues like cardiovascular diseases as well as mental health issues like anxiety and depression which is also ultimately leading to higher death rates.

Recent discoveries have expanded our knowledge of loneliness. For example, in a report of *The Times, February 2025*, it was stated that young adults are reporting higher levels of loneliness as compared to people of older ages in spite of the extensive use of social media and other digital platforms. This indicated that digital platforms may be successful in increasing that number of social connections a person has but in might not necessarily increase the innate need of deep meaningful and emotional connections among individuals. Instead the users might feel more lonely as a result of the fast-pace and surface level nature of digital communication, which makes it quite difficult to change online connections into genuine emotional support.

### ***Social Connectedness***

Social connectedness is a kind of sense of belongingness that we feel through the deep personal and meaningful relationships and connections we have with people in our lives. According to studies of *Lee and Robin 1995*, social connectedness tells a lot about an individual's psychological well-being. It not only encourages resilience and adaptive coping among individuals but also reduces the negative effects of stress. This view has been supported by various studies, which have shown that to create a sense of belongingness in-person contacts and long-lasting human relationships are essential. In a recent study it was found that face to face interactions showed higher levels of pleasure and emotional depth as compared to the online ones. (*Langlais et. al. 2024*).

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Even though Online dating platforms are getting more and more popular day by day very little studies have examined how different levels of online involvement effect the loneliness and social connectedness of individuals. This research is focused on giving a comprehensive picture of young adults digital dating habits and the emotional and psychological consequences it has on them by using a cross-sectional survey that includes the UCLA Loneliness scale, the Social Connectedness scale and the Online Dating Intensity scale (ODI) questionnaire. This study is important new researches indicate that online dating may lead to more social connections among individuals but it does not always result in meaningful, long lasting relationships.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The variables inspected in this study are the online dating platforms usage intensity, loneliness and social connectedness. The three sections that make up the literature review are:

- Section A: Review of literature and studies on online dating usage intensity among users of online dating platforms.
- Section B: Review of literature and studies on Loneliness among users of online dating platforms.
- Section C: Review of literature and studies on Social Connectedness among users of online dating platforms.

#### ***Section A: Online Dating Platforms' usage intensity***

According to Tyson et al. (2016), usage intensity is not only the frequency or duration of engagement on online dating platforms, but it also includes the levels of emotional and cognitive investment of individuals who are using online dating platforms. This study, which is often referenced in research of swiping behavior, measures and gives a complete picture of how users interact with online dating platforms like Tinder. In a similar study, Tyson et al. (2016) and Abramova et al. (2016) found out that women are usually pickier than men and men tend to swipe right indiscriminately just to maximize their connections and possibilities of matches. This study showed the role of gender in influencing mating rates and social connections and communication by gathering data from major dating hotspot areas.

The way algorithmic recommendation systems create ongoing feedback loops was examined by Hu and Rui (2023). According to their online survey it was revealed that this system can cause compulsive use by giving users constant, reinforcing cues that encourages them to use the apps more. Ellison et al. (2006) studied how users of online dating platforms curate and create their profiles and according to their mixed-method studies it was seen that these users often control, edit and manipulate the information that they are disclosing about themselves on the dating platforms so that there is a higher possibility of them to get a match which thereby reinforces long-term engagement with the app.

Chan (2017) explored how culture influenced the online dating behavior and how it varies by culture of individuals who are using these platforms. His research was inclined towards the non-western countries, like Japan, which revealed that local social norms and communication patterns result in different engagement styles as compared to the western countries, highlighting the influence of culture on usage intensity.

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Valkenburg and Peter (2007) examined about 367 Dutch Internet users between the ages of 18 and 60 who were not married. Two hypotheses were explored in their study, these were, the rich-get-richer hypothesis, which says that people with amazing social skills are more active online and the other was the social compensating hypothesis which contends that people with high dating anxiety use online dating to compensate for face-to-face social shortcomings. According to the results it was seen that the rich get richer paradigm was supported by showing that users between the age of 30 and 50 were most active and that greater engagement in online dating was linked to lower dating anxiety.

The average time spent per day on dating apps has gone down from 100 minutes to 51 minutes, a core group of highly involved users showed significant engagement, according to recent studies by Schüll(2025). This says that while the devoted daters continue to actively participate in using these platforms, there are chances that a phenomenon of “dating fatigue” might exist among other users.

Bonilla-Zorita et al. (2023) found in his studies that high psychological and emotional involvement in online dating might lead to increased relationship satisfaction accompanied with the risk of burnouts when expectations of individuals are not met.

The role of presenting oneself has been a matter of research. Ellison, Heino and Gibbs (2006) tried to find out how individuals craft their profiles on online dating platforms. According to their findings users can strategically increase their chances of getting compatible matches by managing how they present themselves on online dating platforms. This behavior is further supported by the Social Information Processing (SIP) Theory, which states that individuals modify their communication style online to make up the absence of non-verbal cues.

Few studies have been looking at a broader social impact of engaging in online dating which are beyond behavioral and technological considerations. Miah’s systematic review (2024) summarizes that online dating may be able to decrease the feeling of loneliness by offering immediate social connections, but lack of real and meaningful connection turns this benefit into a fleeting one.

Zhang et al. (2010) analyzed the user behavior on online dating platforms which focused on how algorithm driven recommendations on those platforms may increase engagement and enhance the formation of a match. According to their study, personalized suggestions on dating platforms reduce the cost of search and impact decision making which has a chance of increasing the social connections along with increasing the chances of romantic success.

According to Nowland et al. (2018), a balance between digital and in person communication is necessary because it was seen in his research that passive or excessive use of these platforms might worsen the feelings of loneliness instead of increasing it and helping with social connectedness among individuals who have been using these online dating platforms.

### ***Section B: Loneliness***

Loneliness is a type of distress which arises from perceived imbalance between the actual level of social connection a person gets and the level of social connection a person desires. The foundation of this definition was laid by Cacioppo et al. (2002), by saying that lack of proper nonverbal communication in online settings might lead to shallow interactions,

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making it hard for users to form real emotional connections. According to their research the depth which is necessary to form deep connections is lacking in online interactions of individuals even though they are frequent.

Miah (2024) researched on many studies on online dating and loneliness in a review “Swiping Right and Feeling Left Out”, which showed that online dating platforms can provide quick but temporary buffer from the feeling of loneliness. According to Miah, these buffering effects are usually transient because the lift in the emotion is not long-lasting and will not result in emotional fulfillment.

Nowland et al. (2018) suggested that people who keep using online dating platforms excessively tend to replace genuine meaningful relationships with online interactions show more signs of loneliness. This study suggests that without active interaction, reciprocal connection the quality of communication gradually decreases which might result in users feeling lonely most of the time even though they are online excessively on these dating platforms.

Studies by Ishaq et al. (2018) and Rinaldi et al. (2024), highlight how personal vulnerabilities like dating anxiety and fear of getting rejected are important indications of loneliness among individuals who often consider online dating. According to their study it was revealed that these individual variations have equal impact on both the sexes, showing users who are more anxious or worried feel more alone while interaction with people online. According to Teppers et al. (2014) and Bonsaken et al. (2021), there is a requitted relationship between online dating and loneliness of individuals. According to their research people who feel lonelier are usually the ones who get prone to use online dating services as a kind of coping strategy for the loneliness that they have been feeling.

Miah (2024) also stated that external factors such as the pandemic COVID-19, have in a way forced a lot of people to rely on online dating services as their main mode of connection with other individuals. This change in circumstances after the pandemic has brought attention to how insufficient the online communication is at giving people strong and emotional social support that face-to-face communication provides, which has made the feelings of loneliness worse.

In a study published in *The Journal of Computer Education* (2010), the researchers examined the relationship between problematic internet usage and loneliness among young adults. They found out that increased use of internet is significantly linked to increased loneliness among young adults which is likely because a lot of reliance of these young adults on online communication with people limits the chances of meaningful and face to face interactions and connections. Moreover, the study says that this loneliness might be the reason and cause of excessive internet usage.

Morahan-Martin (1999) presented two opposing theories that examined the interplay between internet use and loneliness. Excessive use of internet can make the feeling of loneliness worse by replacing pure, in person connections with online ones. Individuals who are already lonely are drawn towards online community and connections available on these platforms. The research says that, depending on the situation and the quality of connections digital engagement can both increase and decrease loneliness. Therefore, this research adds important knowledge of the advantages and risks of use of internet use by lonely people.

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Wiseman, Mayseless and Sharabany (2006) tried to find out the role that attachment styles, personality traits and styles of parenting play in the feelings of loneliness in first year students of university. Measures like the Parental Bonding Instrument and the UCLA Loneliness Scale were used in this study in which about 146 students at college were involved. In the results avoidant attachment styles along with increased levels of self-criticism were linked with high feelings of loneliness and high levels of secure attachment styles and parental care were linked with less amount of loneliness felt by these students. The study also highlighted the role that attachment and personality vulnerabilities play in defining loneliness during the adjustment to the life of university.

Korzhdina et al. (2022) carried out an integrative review to determine the reason behind the feelings of loneliness among young adults and teenagers. There were four main themes that came out from their analysis of literature that was published between 2010 and 2020, which were, loneliness that was a result of different forms of suffering which includes mental and physical distress, personal obstacles like personality traits that are maladaptive and ineffective coping mechanisms, life events which are adverse like loss and bullying and the difficulties of transitions in life and unstable family ties. According to their synthesis a phenomenon which is complex and influenced by both negative life experiences and personal vulnerabilities is involuntary loneliness.

### ***Section C: Social Connectedness***

According to Toma (2022), online interactions when successfully turn into offline, face to face meetings, there is a great chance of increased social connectedness. This research showed that when online connections are turned into in-person communications and meet ups more meaningful and long-lasting connections can be formed, proving that decreasing the gap between online and offline interactions is essential for creating durable relationships. According to Boonchutima et al. (2016), cultural contexts effect the experience of social connectedness that individuals feel on online dating platforms to great levels. This study stated that the satisfaction level of users with online interactions differs based on their cultural backgrounds. According to this study, these experiences are formed by elements like regional social norms and communication techniques.

Grieve et al. (2013) tried to find out the differences between traditional, face to face connections and the social connections which were formed online through Facebook. In the study comments of 344 Facebook users were analyzed. It was discovered by the authors that the connectivity which is Facebook driven is a different construct from in-person social connectedness. According to another study in this research, in which about 274 Facebook users were sampled, it was seen that higher levels of Facebook connectivity was linked to lower levels of anxiety and depression along with higher levels of life satisfaction. These findings imply that digital platforms like Facebook might work as an alternative social medium which can promote favorable psychological effects on individuals.

Lee, Draper and Lee (2001) examined the association between the psychological discomfort and social connectedness along with the role of problematic interpersonal behavior in this relationship. Two different samples from college were used, the authors updated and validated the social connectedness scale. They found out that dysfunctional interpersonal behavior moderated the connection between psychological discomfort and decreased social connectivity. These results tried to bring up the significance of social connections and

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interpersonal behavior in counselling interventions because they show that people who feel less socially connected to others often act in ways that can worsen their suffering.

Yoon and Lee (2010) explored how Korean immigrants' subjective well-being is affected by the importance that is placed on social connectedness. They did a study on 204 people who were immigrants, and it was seen that people who give high importance to ethnic connectivity felt more positive as their social relationship grew, but there was not seen a discernible correlation for those you did not feel positive. This implied that an individual's value of social connectedness posits a major impact in improving well-being.

Khan et al. (2024) investigated the different forms in which the young adults' online social connection mediates the link between the growth of online relationships and addiction to the smartphone. The surveys were filled out by participants on online social connection, smartphone addiction and online relationship initiation using purposive sampling and a correlation design. In the results it was seen that increasing online relationships building was firmly correlated with increased levels of smartphone addiction, and that digital social connectedness acted as a partly mediating factor in this association. This study states that the best way to improve young adults' well-being and decrease the negative impact of imprudent use of smartphone is to manage usage of smartphones by them and build stronger online social ties.

During the COVID-19 shutdown, Marinucci et al. (2021) carried out a longitudinal study to explore if virtual social networks effectively replace face to face interactions in preventing psychological distress. It was found that offline social connections consistently encouraged wellbeing in adults, which were a sample of about 1113 adults, across three levels of isolation severity. On the other hand, it was seen that online social connections offered meaningful protection only under the most severe cases of isolation specially when face to face interactions were at very low levels. And as the isolation measurements relaxed, the positive effects of online contacts and connections decreased. This suggested that online relationships might be good at providing short term comfort during the periods of higher isolation, but they cannot come at par or as an alternative to face-to-face interactions.

Harris and Aboujaoude (2016) created The Online Relationship Intimation Scale (ORIS), to assess how people start online relations, romantic partnerships, and sexual interactions. The nine item ORIS showed strong psychometric qualities ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ) and unidirectionality which was based on data from about 713 adults between the age of 18 and 71. High scores on the ORIS suggested the association of lower life satisfaction greater propensity and greater financial strain to engage in harmful sexual behavior or infidelity. The study also indicates that as compared to women males are more prone to start a relationship online. This measure offered a great instrument for evaluating online behaviours and the psychological ramifications.

Nguyen et al. (2022) tried to explore the effects that various digital communication techniques have on social connectivity in cases where face to face interactions among individuals is very limited for example, in the early stages of Covid-19 pandemic. This study conducted a survey on 2,925 American people, found out that generally online communication is connected to a decreased level of social connectivity when staying at home. There was specifically seen a negative correlation between connectivity and communication methods, like text messages, social media, online gaming, with a decreased

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social presence. Higher level social connectivity platforms like audio and video calls, on the other hand, did not show this adverse correlation. These findings highlighted the importance of social presence in online communication for preserving social ties, which shows that most of the digital communications cannot make up for in person connections.

Tsang et al. (2024) presented a fresh viewpoint on social connection, through the application of the optimum foraging theory to human relationships. In this study it was stated that individuals are more likely to pursue new connections when they see those connections as less expensive and more fulfilling, while also measuring the need to strengthen the current ties. This paradigm created a novel hypothesis regarding the forms in which these dynamics impact general health and well-being of individuals along with synthesizing the established person and situation level determinants of social decision making.

### ***Rational for the Study***

The rational for this study stems from the significant social change which is brought by digital technologies. Online dating platforms have transformed how people sustain build and sustain those relationships since the last ten years as a prevailing social communication and connectivity tool. Even though these online dating platforms provide more chances for people to communicate with others and build one's social network, there are worries quality of these interactions.

According to recent studies, online dating platforms may be helpful in providing people connections with others, but they can also make people feel lonely and isolated if the interactions that they are making on these are platforms are not profound or in-depth and are not fulfilling offline emotional connections (Turkle, 2011; Finkel et al., 2012)

Furthermore, as digital communication becomes the major mode of engagement, the impact on mental health is being closely examined. Social connectedness—the sense of being close to people and having supportive relationships—is critical for psychological well-being. However, an overreliance on online interactions may occasionally displace more significant face-to-face contacts, potentially leading to a loss in real-life social bonds (Nowland, Necka, & Cacioppo, 2018). Loneliness is a major issue, as persons who rely solely on digital communication often feel isolated, even when "connected" online (Błachnio, Przepiórka, & Pantic, 2016).

Moreover, little research has been done on the oddity of the feelings of loneliness despite being connected to people online through these dating platforms. This study aims to lay out an empirical support for debates about online socialization by inspecting social connectedness and loneliness. This in turn would be beneficial for further research, development of apps and mental health treatments.

## **METHOD OF STUDY**

### ***Purpose***

The main purpose of this study is to explore how the intensity of using online dating apps affect levels of loneliness and social connectedness which are the two crucial psychological and social dimensions. Online platforms have significantly changed how people communicate with each other in today's world where the digitalized social environment keeps on increasing. The purpose of this study is to determine whether using dating apps

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increases real social connections or conversely, if it makes people feel more lonely or isolated.

### *Research Objectives*

To evaluate the effect of the intensity of using online dating platforms on Loneliness and Social Connectedness among high intensity users, low intensity users and non-users of online dating platforms.

### *Hypotheses*

**H1:** There is a significant difference in **loneliness** among high-intensity online dating app users, low-intensity users, and users who are not using it currently.

**H2:** There is a significant difference in **social connectedness** among high-intensity online dating app users, low-intensity users, and users who are not using it currently.

### *Research Design*

An Ex-Post Facto research approach is used in this study to explore how people who are actively using dating apps with high intensity, low intensity and those who are not using it currently differ in terms of social connectedness and loneliness. Data was gathered using a quantitative survey-based method to make sure that important variables are measured objectively.

### *Variables*

#### **Independent Variables**

- **Online dating platform usage intensity:** The independent variable here is Online dating platform usage intensity which is the way we try to look at how often people engage themselves in using online dating platforms and at what level do they get involved with them emotionally. The data collected from this variable will be used to explore how the intensity of using these apps affect the feelings of loneliness and social connectedness among individuals.

#### **Dependent Variables**

- **Loneliness:** The first dependent variable is Loneliness here means the feelings of being alone or isolated despite being in the presence of others. The emotional sense of lacking emotional and genuine social bonding is encapsulated in it. By measuring loneliness, we can determine whether using online dating platforms cause people to feel more isolated which will show the drawbacks of online social connections and communication when they fail to yield positive and fulfilling relationships.
- **Social Connectedness:** The second dependent variable is social connectedness whose key components are feeling close to people and a part of a community. It means the level of belongingness and support that people get from the people they are connected to. By exploring social connectedness, we can determine whether using online dating platforms helps with the development of real, emotional relationships. This would highlight the advantages of online social connections on psychological well-being of individuals.

### *Tools*

- **Online Dating Intensity Scale (ODIS) by Bloom and Taylor (2019):** A 10 item self-report tool called the ODIS was developed to identify how intensely people use

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online dating platforms. Both the emotional investment and the frequency of using online dating platforms and interacting through it are measured by this scale. A Likert-type scale is used to assess the items which enable the participants express how engaged they are with these online dating platforms. With a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, the scale has demonstrated strong reliability and high internal consistency. Its construct validity has been confirmed by validity tests like exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, on different types of samples. This scale is perfect for this study as it has the ability to capture both the behavioral and emotional aspect of using online dating platforms.

- **The UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) by Daniel Russel (1996):** The UCLA Loneliness Scale is a well-known instrument that measures a person's subjective feelings of loneliness and isolation. It is a 20-item scale and on a 4-point Likert scale respondents assess each item, the higher the loneliness experienced by individuals the higher the total number of scores. This scale has great psychometric qualities with an internal consistency ranging from 0.89 to 0.94 across a range of demographics. The test-retest reliability was reported to be 0.73. It is one of the most reliable tools in psychological research on social isolation as a lot of research has demonstrated its validity in distinguishing between different levels of loneliness.
- **The Social Connectedness Scale-Revised version (SCS-R) by Lee and Robins (1998):** The Social Connectedness Scale is a self-report questionnaire that explores how much people feel connected to one another in their social environment. Since its development by Lee and Robins in 1995, it has found extensive application in both research and clinical settings. It is a 20-item scale that explores many aspects of social connectivity, such as belongingness, closeness, support and satisfaction using a 6-point Likert scale. Excellent reliability is demonstrated by the SCS-R which has the Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 and internal consistency  $\alpha > 0.92$ . Convergent and discriminant validation studies have validated its validity, demonstrating that the scale explores social connectedness accurately across a range of social and cultural contexts.

### *Sample*

For this study 200 participants were taken as a sample to enable significant subgroup comparisons between high intensity, low intensity and non-users of online dating platforms while offering sufficient power for statistical studies. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling were both used for gathering data. Adults who are at least eighteen years old till thirty-five years of age who are using online dating platforms currently or are not using it currently but have used it in the past were asked to fill the questionnaire for this research.

### *Procedure*

The researchers carefully reviewed the instructions, and it was made sure that the participants understood the goal of the study. People from 18 years of age to 35 years of age were given an online google questionnaire form which comprised of the three scales used in the study i.e. the Online Dating Intensity Scale (ODIS), The UCLA Loneliness Scale (version 3) and the Social Connectedness Scale Revised version (SCS-R). It took the participants 7-10 minutes to complete the form, and they effectively answered it.

Before providing the questionnaire to the respondents it was made sure that the titles of each scale were removed to prevent response bias. For data collection a sample of 200 participants was used. This study was carried out by providing the google form of the

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questionnaire to the respondents. If the participants had any queries the researchers were on hand to answer to those questions.

Following data collection SPSS was used to analyze the responses. The association between the use of online dating platforms, loneliness and social connectedness was explored using descriptive statistics, and ANOVA.

**RESULTS**

The study intended to investigate the influence of online dating platform usage intensity on loneliness and social connectedness in individuals. And for that three different groups have been considered: high intensity users (Group 1), low intensity users (Group 2) and non-current users (Group 3).

*Table 1: One-Way ANOVA for Loneliness*

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	576.55	2	288.27	1.255	0.287	3.041
Within Groups	45471.04	198	229.65			
Total	46047.59	200				

Table 1 shows the one-way ANOVA findings for loneliness. The results reflect that there is no statistically significant difference in loneliness scores between the three groups, as the resulting p-value of 0.287 exceeds the significance level of 0.05. The f-ratio of 1.255 points out that the variance in loneliness scores between groups is not statistically significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted illustrating that online dating app usage intensity has no significant effect on loneliness.

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Loneliness*

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Variance	Minimum	Maximum	Count
High-Intensity Users (Group 1)	61.91	14.47	209.44	27	91	67
Low-Intensity Users (Group 2)	60.68	16.74	280.46	28	111	67
Non-Current Users (Group 3)	64.73	14.10	199.04	32	90	67

Table 2 shows the descriptive data for loneliness in the three groups. The mean score shows that the non-current users (M=64.73, SD=14.10) had slightly higher loneliness levels than high-intensity users (M = 61.91, SD = 14.47) and low-intensity users (M = 60.68, SD = 16.74). This indicates that the all the three groups i.e. the high intensity, the low intensity and the non-current users of online dating platforms have a moderately high degree of loneliness, where the group which is of the non-current users having the highest degree of loneliness compared to the other two groups. Yet, the ANOVA results revealed that these differences were not statistically significant.

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**Table 3: One-Way ANOVA for Social Connectedness**

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
<b>Between Groups</b>	366.29	2	183.15	0.800	0.450	3.041
<b>Within Groups</b>	45313.94	198	228.86			
<b>Total</b>	45680.23	200				

Table 3 summarizes the ANOVA results for social connectedness. The results show no statistically significant difference in social connectedness scores between the three groups, since the p-value of 0.4506 is greater than the significance level of 0.05. The f-ratio of 0.800 points out that the variance in social connectedness scores between groups is not statistically significant. Showing that the frequency with which people use online dating apps has no bearing on their social connectedness

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Social Connectedness**

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Variance	Minimum	Maximum	Count
<b>High-Intensity Users (Group 1)</b>	61.91	14.47	209.44	27	91	67
<b>Low-Intensity Users (Group 2)</b>	61.20	16.47	271.50	28	111	67
<b>Non-Current Users (Group 3)</b>	64.35	14.33	205.62	32	90	67

Table 4 shows descriptive statistics regarding social connectivity in the three categories. The mean scores show that non-current users ( $M = 64.35$ ,  $SD = 14.33$ ) had slightly better social connection scores than high-intensity users ( $M = 61.91$ ,  $SD = 14.47$ ) and low-intensity users ( $M = 61.20$ ,  $SD = 16.47$ ). The mean raw scores for Group 1 (high-intensity users of online dating apps), Group 2 (low-intensity users), and Group 3 (non-users) were 61.91, 61.20, and 64.35, respectively, according to the study of social connectedness scores across the three groups. The mean scores per item were determined to be 3.10 for Group 1, 3.06 for Group 2, and 3.22 for Group 3 after dividing these raw scores by the total number of questions on the Social Connectedness Scale-Revised (20 items). Participants in all three groups reported poor levels of social connectedness, as evidenced by the fact that all three mean scores are below the 3.5 criterion. However, like the findings on loneliness, these differences were not statistically significant.

## **DISCUSSION**

The present research studied the relationship between the intensity of online dating platform usage and social connectedness among individuals. The sample consisted of 201 participants divided equally into three groups: high-intensity users ( $n = 67$ ), low-intensity users ( $n = 67$ ), and non-current users ( $n = 67$ ). Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA was used to analyse the results which revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in loneliness and social connectedness scores between the three groups.

The results showed that the degree of loneliness among individuals is not significantly impacted by the intensity of using online dating platforms. The ANOVA results ( $p = 0.287$ ) showed that although non-current users reported somewhat higher loneliness scores ( $M =$

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64.73, SD = 14.10) than high-intensity (M = 61.91, SD = 14.47) and low-intensity users (M = 60.68, SD = 16.74), these differences were not statistically significant. This result is in alignment with earlier studies which suggest that even though online dating platforms give people chances for social contact, not all users might feel less loneliness because of using online dating platforms. For instance, according to studies, although some people might use these platforms to build meaningful relationships, others may at times feel let down or rejected, which in turn could increase the feelings of loneliness (Nowland, Necka, & Cacioppo).

Similarly, the findings reveal that social connectedness is not significantly influenced by the amount of intensity through which individuals are using online dating platforms. Compared to high-intensity users (M = 61.91, SD = 14.47) and low-intensity users (M = 61.20, SD = 16.47), non-current users showed slightly higher social connectedness scores (M = 64.35, SD = 14.33), but these differences were not statistically significant which was revealed by the results of ANOVA ( $p = 0.45$ ). Previous research suggests that although online dating platforms can help with contacts and interaction, but it may not always end in having deeper sense of connection and belonging (Heino, Ellison, & Gibbs, 2010). Moreover, people who stop using dating apps might do that after finding a meaningful relationship or because they no longer feel the need for online contacts, which be the result for their comparatively higher connectedness.

There were no statistically significant differences seen between the groups which shows that it is possible for loneliness and social connection to get influenced by variables other than the intensity of using dating apps. Individual personality qualities, relationship quality, and offline social support networks, for example, might be a much more important factor in determining these results. Moreover, there may be significant differences in the quality of interactions on dating apps; some users may find real emotional connections, while others may only have brief or disappointing encounters on these platforms.

Although high-intensity users may use online dating sites more frequently, the quality of their interactions may not always result in deep emotional connection, which reduces the positive effects on loneliness and social connectedness. Different motivations (such as seeking validation, friendship, or casual relationships) may lead individuals into using these online dating platforms, and these reasons may show different effects on their emotional results. After reaching desired relationship outcomes, non-current users might have stopped using the app, which would have led to slightly better social connectedness and slightly higher (but not statistically significant) loneliness scores.

These results align with the findings of Nowland et al. (2018), which stated that while online platforms can offer chances for connection but they might not always reduce the feelings of loneliness, especially for those people who usually find it difficult for them to build strong and long-lasting relationships and connections. Heino (2010) highlighted that although dating platforms can improve initial contact but it may not have a significant impact on an individual's sense of social belonging over time.

The psychological impact of using an online dating platforms may differ depending on the experiences and expectations of the individuals. High intensity users may experience self-contradictory impact in which using online dating platforms more frequently may increase their expectations which leads to emotions of disappointment and dissatisfaction when

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meaningful relationships are not made. Non-current users, on the other hand, might have stopped using the dating apps after achieving their desired connections or because they were disappointed with the site, which could explain their slightly higher scores of social connectedness. This aligns with the studies of Chan (2014), which stated that prolonged usage of online dating platforms may result in emotional exhaustion, decreasing the perception of satisfaction overtime. Future research could look at these emotional and psychological dynamics to understand more about how prolonged engagement with online dating platforms affects long-term impact on emotions.

### **CONCLUSION**

According to this research's findings, an individual's feelings of loneliness and social connectedness are not significantly impacted by the frequency or intensity of using online dating platforms. The non-current users of online dating platforms showed slightly higher levels of loneliness and slightly higher levels of social connectedness as compared to the high intensity users and low intensity users of online dating platforms. But these differences were not statistically significant. This indicates that the emotional well-being of an individual might not be influenced by the intensity of using these online dating platforms alone. Instead, the quality of interactions they are having and how much offline social connection and support is there for them might also be influencing these psychological factors. Furthermore, these findings highlight the importance of further research with more deeper elements like user benefits, the quality of digital connections and the impact of offline connections on emotional outcomes. Longitudinal studies may offer important new perspectives on the long-term effects of intensity of using dating apps. Also, the relationship between the use of online dating platforms and its effects on social connectedness and loneliness may become clearer if one takes into account individual factors such personality traits, attachment styles, and emotional maturity.

### *Limitations*

Despite the insights provided by this research, there are a few limitations that should be taken into consideration. Firstly, the sample size of 201 individuals might limit the findings' ability to generalize to a larger number of populations. Secondly, the use of self-reported questionnaires might raise the likelihood of social desirability bias and errors in the responses of those questionnaires.

While the study looked at the influence of online dating platform's usage intensity on factors like loneliness and social connectedness. Future research could investigate few more traits to better understand the ways in which frequency of using online dating platforms can influence loneliness and social connectedness like considering individual differences such as attachment styles, personality traits, and offline social support might provide deeper insights for this topic.

### *Suggestions*

- Further studies could benefit from a larger and more diverse size of sample which would improve the reliability of the results.
- Taking a qualitative approach into consideration for future research such as interviews and focus groups, may provide a more nuanced insight of the participants' experiences.

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- Further research could look into the relationship between online dating platform use and offline support systems in order to better understand the factors that could affect the user's emotional well-being.
- Future research could look emotional and psychological dynamics to understand more about how prolonged engagement with online dating platforms affects long-term impact on emotions like personality traits and attachment styles.

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***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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