

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Don't hate me cause I'm beautiful: Attributions of successes and failures in mobile dating application use

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ABSTRACT

Where do digital citizens attribute their successes and failures in using dating technologies? Using the tenets of attribution theory and its explication in digital spaces, narrations of fifty-two dating application users in the Philippines were sought and investigated. Interviews were able to document the nature and types of attributions of productive and botched online dating experiences among Filipinos. Thematic analyses revealed that successful dating experiences are linked to internal or dispositional attributes such as the person's perceived physical beauty, positive personality attributes, and luck. Unsuccessful dating experiences are linked to situational attributes such as the date's problematic personality and physical flaws. Further, external stable attributions such as poor internet connection and proximity issues also are perceived as causes of faults. Overall, Filipino mobile app daters attribute success and failures in online dating encounters to individual ideals, cultural factors, and technological features. In addition, available technology and the features of digital spaces allow dating app users to reinforce their existing intrinsic and extrinsic dispositional attributions, while at the same time challenge prevailing determinants of attributions in the context of dating practices. The interdependence of human agency and digital environments results in the ever malleable and active formations of digital culture and society.

Key words: mobile, dating, attribution, dating apps, Filipinos, online

Introduction

This article looks into Filipino mobile dating app users and to what they attribute their successes and failures in online interactions. It also examines how these app users characterize the outcomes of such online interactions and relationship. In line with mobile dating apps' professed goal of fostering new relationships—whether casual or intimate—user success is determined by forming and maintaining whatever kind of relationship they wish to create (Sumter & Vandenbosch, 2019). Finally, online daters make sense of their experiences in different mobile dating platforms by explaining these in terms of internal and external factors.

Online dating is an ever-growing facet of contemporary Filipino relationship building, especially now with mobile dating apps—software applications that facilitate meeting new people and dating online. These applications include both newly-created apps and mobile versions of current dating sites (Albury et al., 2017), and are easily installed in smartphones with an internet connection. They keep up with the modern lifestyles and hectic schedules of today's generation (Rivera, 2019; Pastor, 2016), and connect users interested in friendship or romance over the internet (Orchard, 2019). The matching function of dating apps preselects the profiles listed and presented to the user according to the personal details previously inputted—guaranteeing better compatibility.

Mobile Dating: Uses and Concerns

The general rules of mobile dating are most likely similar across different platforms—users are presented with profiles of other users based on one's set preferences - distance, gender, and age, among others. Users can “swipe right” if they are interested in the person or “swipe left” if they do not like the potential match. A match takes place when two users swipe right on each other's profile, which would allow them to message each other and communicate more (Tan, 2016; Welch and Morgan, 2018). Mobile dating apps generate matches through algorithms that rely on users' location, settings, preferences, and other social media accounts (Orchard, 2019).

Another pivotal feature of online dating is proximity-based mobile apps that use one's location to find nearby prospective partners. This geolocate function has gained popularity for fostering social, romantic, and sexual connections between proximate strangers (Yeo & Fung, 2016), and is the latch of two of the most popular dating apps: Tinder and Grindr.

The simplicity, convenience, and accessibility of mobile dating apps and their power to interconnect thousands of users (Rivera, 2019; Tan, 2016) allow them to grow in popularity. They also prompt changes in the perception of mobile dating's cultural and moral acceptability (Roeffen,

2014; Welch and Morgan, 2018, Cooper & Sportolari, 1997). This is not to presume, however, that the stigma on mobile dating and other modern practices in relationships has been entirely abolished. On the contrary, though it has been mitigated over the years, the stigma persists (Salvosa, 2019; Ward, 2017; Welch and Morgan, 2018). Conservative cultures, such as the Philippines, still view online and mobile dating as practices that go against existing moral, religious, and family values and traditions that govern relationships and intimacy (Osorio and Someros, 2016; Labor, 2020; Labor 2021).

Aside from these cultural issues, safety and security issues also surround mobile dating. Users' details, including their location, photos, and links to their other social media profiles, are openly accessible to thousands of other users, posing privacy and security risks (Clark, 2015). Mobile dating apps are not able to filter users who have violent histories or criminal records. Fake accounts that deceive or sometimes even scam people are still not fully monitored and regulated (Finkel et al., 2012). Communication is indirect, i.e., mediated by the app, so it is more susceptible to deception, and daters are not granted the opportunity to evaluate the non-verbal cues behind another party's textual statements (Goffman in Southerton, 2017; Souza e Silva and Frith in Southerton, 2017). Some mobile app users resort to deception by altering and manipulating information about themselves and enhancing their photographs to attract other users (Toma & Hancock, 2010).

Though skepticism still surrounds modern dating practices, the presence and popularity of mobile apps in the dating scene have been instrumental in gradually establishing online dating as a cultural norm (Rivera, 2019). University of the Philippines sociology professor Andoni Evangelista viewed dating apps as a handy and practical way of meeting others as it interconnects thousands of people (in Tan, 2016). The Philippines has 76 million internet and social media users, and their average internet and social media use per day are 10 hours and 2 minutes and 4 hours and 12 minutes, respectively (Hootsuite & We Are Social 2019). The young adult age bracket (18-25 years old) comprises the majority of social media and online dating app users (Flug, 2016), while 17.7% of the 3.1 million online dating app users are 18-24 (Statista, n.d.). Many Filipinos are open to meeting people online (The Nerve in Salvosa, 2018), and more than half of online Filipinos know at least one couple who met through online dating apps. A few daters have purposively used the apps to search for relationships, while most are merely exploring and navigating the apps. Among the Philippines' most popular mobile dating platforms are Tinder, Grindr, Bumble, Her, and OkCupid (Rivera, 2019).

Attributions: Nature and Characteristics

The intricacies of mobile app dating and the yet unpredictable outcomes of online interaction stimulate app users to attempt understanding the situation and events more clearly. As a species capable of reflection and analysis (Weiner, 1992), humans tend to make inferences about the events around them, and this curiosity is studied and explained by the Attribution Theory. The encompassing concept of attribution has influenced and been applied to various phenomena such as “achievement, love, health, friendship, and pathology” and fields of study like “experimental, personality, motivational, clinical, organizational, and educational psychology” (Försterling, 2001, p.4; xi).

In the context of achievement, Weiner et al. (1971) forwarded the idea that ability, effort, the difficulty of the task, and luck are the leading attributional causes people consider when evaluating their academic success or failure. Further studies of Hareli and Hess (2008a, 2008b) revealed that people find it challenging to associate loss with internal, stable, and uncontrollable causes like lack of ability. They also feel similarly when others attribute their success to external factors like help from other people, other controllable causes, or unlikely characteristics of the actor like extra effort or hard work. Meanwhile, according to Hareli and Weiner (2000, 2002), achievers themselves influence their own and others’ perceptions about them. On the one hand, achievers who highly attribute their success to their skills and proficiencies are said to be more arrogant but less admired by others. On the other hand, those who give credit to hard work and the task’s difficulty are seen as more humble and commendable by others.

In terms of emotions, Hareli (2014) stated that pride and self-esteem could be directly related to the locus dimension of causality. People tend to be biased when explaining what caused their emotions, and are not fully aware of their behaviors as they try to make sense of the current situation (Wilson & Dunn, 2004). Observing different indicators like another person’s verbal and nonverbal cues and actions allows one to infer their emotions. Knowledge of other people’s emotions enables someone to predict what could alleviate negative emotions like anger, such as attributing an unpleasant situation to external causes. Not only are people able to infer emotions, but they are also capable of influencing emotions as they get to understand the other person and the situation (Hareli, 2014; Weiner, 1987).

People also use attributional concepts when they try to explain themselves or the situation to other people. For example, when people fail to meet others’ expectations, they tend to make up excuses that are not necessarily truthful in order to appease the other party. These excuses are usually unintentional and not under one’s control (Weiner, et al., 1987).

Studies that looked into romantic relationships discussed that people attempt to minimize causing hurt or insult to a rejected person by giving external reasons. Reasons that do not directly blame the other party for being rejected, like prior appointments, emergencies, different priorities, and so on, are employed to ease negative feelings. These impersonal and uncontrollable grounds also aid in mitigating unfavorable impressions about the rejecter and the relationship itself.

Social media has been an exciting subject for the study of attribution. As a space for self-expression, social networking sites afford a view of how people communicate and relate with others, and allow observers to form impressions about the said users. It was noted that people consult social media to get to know other people by viewing their profiles and posts (Carr & Walther, 2014). What users post and how users post serve as indicators and grounds for other people's perceptions of them (Liu & Kang, 2017). Observers make sense of social media cues and form impressions about users mainly through dispositional attributions (those that focus on a person's internal traits and characteristics) and interpersonal attributions (those that pay attention to the message sender's relationship to the receiver). The privacy of the message and the attractiveness of the message sender are also seen as factors in the formation of social media relationships (Liu & Kang, 2017).

Research Problem and Objectives

This paper answers the question: **What are the characteristics of the attributions of successful and failed mobile dating app experiences among Filipinos?** The study describes the nature of attributions of young adult mobile app users through a thematic analysis of the participants' narratives of successful and unsuccessful dating experiences. It also characterizes how young Filipinos attribute their successful and unsuccessful experiences towards intimacy. Further, it describes how attributions are classified and intertwined with cultural relations in collectivist settings like the Philippines. Finally, it also wants to better understand the role of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in attributions.

This study looks into how young Filipino mobile dating app users apply the concepts of attribution in explaining, understanding, and even predicting the outcomes of their mobile dating ventures and experiences. Various researches have proven the popularity of internet dating among Filipinos (Dela Cruz & Publico, 2005; Dumlao & Mangyao, 2010; Gutierrez and Oca 2012). There is a large pool of published studies about the culture of young adults ages 18-24. This research will contribute to the developing body of knowledge about young people and online dating. It is important

to note that attributional beliefs are shaped by demographics and cultural backgrounds. The study covers findings and analyses examined through the lens of attribution, ICTs, and cultural values. Thus, the modern application and analysis of the attribution theory in a specified age group and cultural context are a valuable aspect of this paper that can serve as a timely and relevant reference for future research.

The findings of this study are a helpful tool in understanding the current situation of dating and relationship formation of Filipinos. The results and analyses in this paper shall provide an understanding of the existing situation of online dating in the Philippines — mobile apps, mobile app users and their profiles, and mobile app interactions. A characterization of Filipino young adults, based on their attitudes, values, and actions, and in the context of mobile dating, can also be derived from the study results. Consequently, we can learn from the explanations about the attitude and behavior of young adult online daters, and we can be a better judge of the current Philippine dating schemes.

Methods and Procedures

This study utilized the case study design. I analyzed real-life experiences and musings of dating app users. Fifty-two (52) informants agreed to be interviewed at least twice for the duration of the study. Purposive sampling was used to look for the participants. They were chosen based on the following inclusion criteria: 1) they should be users of mobile dating apps for at least six months; 2) they are Filipino youth aged 18-30; 3) they have met with a dating partner outside the app.

Participants were asked to talk about their dating app experiences, including successful dates and rejections. They also explained why they thought they were successful and unsuccessful in finding dates, romance, and relationships. The informants also reflected on the value of technology in enabling their dating successes and failures.

Inductive thematic analysis was used to arrive at categories of responses. The researcher took the position of the narrator of narrations to identify recurring themes in the participants' responses. The participants were also asked to comment on the thematic analyses.

Participants were informed about the research and were asked to sign a consent form before becoming research participants. They then signed an informed consent form which indicated confidentiality, voluntary participation, and withdrawal from the study. I also respected the right of the informants to refuse to answer any question at any point in time during the data construction process. Collected data was anonymized, and narratives were treated with utmost confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

I interviewed 52 young adult Filipino mobile dating app users. Their average age was 25. Thirteen of the informants were in a relationship, while 39 were single. Almost all of the informants were either college graduates or enrolled in college. The informants averaged 26 months or at least two years of mobile app use. They spent an average of three hours in the app per day.

The user-informants experienced both successful and unsuccessful dating experiences. In the context of this study, the informants agree that a successful dating experience was evidenced by lengthy chats, offline/face-to-face dates, and, for some, sexual encounters or hookups. Meanwhile, an unsuccessful online engagement may be any of the following experiences: snubbed before or after an app match, blocked by other users in the app, or stood up before an actual date.

I. Perceived reasons for success in mobile dating app use

I found out that mobile dating app users linked their successful dating experiences to internal or dispositional attributions. They banked on their self-declared abilities and skills as sources of their successful mobile dating app encounters. In addition, I observed that they highlighted stable internal attributions such as the possession of physical appeal/looks and personality attributes whenever they would claim that their matches picked them.

A. It's all about me: stable sources of dating success

Mobile dating app users mentioned that their physical looks, personality attributes, and precise communication and social skills were reasons for their success. However, I argue that these became internal and stable attributions because the interviewees claimed that their intrinsic beautiful appearance, positive character, and unquestionable set of skills were the reasons for their dating successes.

Sexy, beautiful me

A majority of the Tinder and Grindr user-informants claimed that their physical appearances made them stand out and were the reasons why they were successful in the dating apps. They felt that their looks were the reason why other users added and talked to them in these dating apps. I have observed that this was a common sentiment among all users across genders. The majority of the informants proclaimed that their natural good looks as manifested in their pictures, made them desirable.

Steady Set of "Me" Characteristics

One's characteristics were also mentioned as a source of inherent and stable attribution among the mobile dating app users. The informants revealed that they were able to get matches because of their declared and presented character, background, and disposition. Personality characteristics that

were mentioned by the Tinder and Grindr users as sources of their successful app encounters were openness, integrity, authenticity, and trustworthiness.

The app users mentioned that their matches liked them a lot because of their openness. They claimed that telling other users about their work and their hobbies and the schools where they graduated from projected a sense of honesty that guided them in attaining dating success. Gay men stated that Tinder and Grindr users pick them because they were open about their personal and professional lives in the apps.

Success by means of social skills

Tinder and Grindr users attributed their dating success to their perceived set of practical social skills. I observed that the positive assessment of the app users' capability to interact and communicate with others made them feel that they were the best choices for dating. The informants felt that their skills to converse, actively listen, negotiate, and be socially perceptive were success factors. It appeared in the informants' presumed capacity to concentrate, understand, and respond to the messages of their potential and actual matches that they considered as grounds of their dating accomplishment. Men, for instance, stated that the conversations with women were not really about them but were because they were conversant. During the interviews, the informants also told me that they were keen on listening to the stories of women because they found them fascinating. They described themselves as active listeners in the dating apps, and that their capacity to hear out and respond to women's stories made them stand out.

B. Lucky Me!

Some informants said that luck brought them to online chat matches and offline meet-ups and dates. Although only a few of them identified such an internal attribution, it is worth mentioning that some respondents in this study claimed that success was entirely a coincidental event. Instead, these user-informants believed that luck manifested via proper timing and proximity.

Some gay Tinder user informants claimed that their success was based on luck, or proper timing particular. It meant that even if they just randomly swiped men to the right, they found men who were willing to meet up with them. Only one female informant mentioned luck. She claimed that she always met her preferences even if she did not consciously choose them. No straight male or lesbian informant said anything about being lucky in the app. It seems that the dating success of these informants were largely attributed to internal and stable reasons.

2. Perceived Reasons for Unsuccessful Experiences in Mobile Dating App Use

Mobile dating app users often assign the causes of their difficulty in conversing and meeting up with their matches to uncontrollable situations or events that are, in turn, based on situational features. On the one hand, the interviews revealed that situational attributions such as a match's personality and physical flaws were perceived as sources of unsuccessful Tinder and Grindr encounters. Therefore, I considered these as external stable attributions. On the other hand, the interviewees mentioned that environmental factors such as bad timing and poor internet connection were temporary factors that made them ineffective in finding matches in the apps. In both instances, I noticed that the blame was not on the user's intrinsic characteristics and personality.

A. It's you, not me

The interviews revealed that user-informants ascribed to the dating partner's personality and flaws their unsuccessful online dating experiences. Most of them stated that they did not proceed to the actual dates because of their match's personality and physical defects. The informants believed that they failed to advance in the dating process because of the problematic attitude of their matches as well as their lack of physical appeal.

Problematic Personality

Most of the informants stated that they were not successful in mobile dating apps because of how their matches revealed themselves during the early stages of the matching process. The same characteristics they thought they possessed were used as a gauge in judging the worthiness of their matches. Such a mindset could mean that because they felt good-looking, they also expected their dates to possess similar features. Tinder and Grindr users also expected their matches to be honest, authentic, and trustworthy, and when the partners did not show these, they did not proceed in the dating process.

Male informants revealed that they did ghost. Ghosting is the practice of abruptly withdrawing from all communication with a dating app match and ending the connection without any explanation. It also involves removing someone from your list of potential dating partners.

Poor communication and social skills

Some app users felt that they did not like to continue conversing with their matches because they thought that the other party did not have the necessary skills to communicate with them. The informants noted that their prospective partners could not sustain a conversation. They also have poor command of the English language, failed at being humorous, and lacked the

depth they wanted. They were removed from their list of potential dates. There were accounts of male users removing female matches from their list of potential dates because they did not know how to sustain a conversation. Some male informants believed that some women lacked conversation skills because they came from “low-end colleges and universities.” Meanwhile, women user-informants claimed to have hidden from ghosts and removed male Tinder users who lacked excellent and proper communication skills. If they matched with ungrammatical men, who were not conversational, and did not have depth, they would ghost and remove them from their match list. There were straight female user-informants who blocked male Tinder users who wanted to talk sex with them. Some of them stated that men who, after short pleasantries, quickly shifted to sexual topics turned them off.

Pitiable set of physical attributes

Some informants mentioned that they attributed dating failures to the physical flaws of their matches. They felt that they were deceived by the match’s initial claim that they were good-looking. After seeing photos other than the primary photo, they found out that the match had edited the primary picture and was, in fact, unattractive. Some men experienced what they called “looks-based deception” among transgender women.

B. It’s not meant to be

I also found the informants used unstable situational attribution when they were unsuccessful in dating online due to bad timing and technological breakdown. Some app users ascribed such lousy timing on proximity and location. Timing for the gay informants was crucial because most of them used the app for hookup. They mentioned that even if they had set their app’s proximity settings to at most two kilometers near their location to find matches, there were times when distance was still an issue. A participant mentioned that even if his matches lived or worked in the same city that he stayed in, he still hesitated because he found it inconvenient to commute. The difference in work schedule was also connected to lousy timing.

The informants also mentioned technological barriers as another hindrance to successful dating experiences. In the context of this study, this typically meant weak data or Internet connection. Erratic Wi-Fi connection made for ineffective dating in the apps, and some mentioned that poor Wi-Fi made it hard for them to establish conversations.

This study revealed that successful dating experiences were attributed to the user-informants’ internal factors. On the one hand, stable internal attributions such as physical appearance, personality, and skills, were considered sources of their success. Meanwhile, internal, unstable attribution such as luck was considered when chance was a factor. On the

other hand, unsuccessful dating experiences were credited to external stable attributions like the match's personality, communication skills, and looks. Timing and technology barriers were stated as unstable external attributes of unsuccessful dating experiences.

I found out that the informants used dispositional attributions when they were successful in the apps. For example, success in Tinder meant that the users could find, chat, meet, and sometimes be in a relationship with a match, while in Grindr a real hookup determined success. User-informants noted that their physical looks, personality attributes or characteristics, and social skills convinced their match to pick, chat with, and ask them out for either a date or a hookup. Such findings match earlier results (Kelly Aune et al., 1996; Spottswood et al., 2013; Vishwanath & La Vail, 2013) that argued that attractiveness would always be perceived as a positive attribution. Similarly, one's set of relational and social skills would be perceived as a source of success in a relationship (Barry & Crant, 2000; O'Brien, 2003).

The user-informants attributed their unsuccessful Tinder and Grindr experiences to either the flaws of their matches or to uncontrollable environmental factors. The informants also blamed their matches' problematic personalities and flawed physical looks. This behavior is consistent with those recorded in previous research on the Filipino youth, where failures are attributed as the fault of others (Del Villar, 2010; Santamaria, 2010).

The user-informants also stated that dating in the app did not materialize because either the timing was terrible or the Internet connection was poor. As mentioned in the results above, bad timing meant that even if there were opportunities to meet, would-be daters were either far from each other or had something else to do. The results indicated that they prioritized things that they felt were more important than their potential dates. Malle (2011) found out that unsuccessful communication experiences were linked to reasons beyond the daters' control, such as scheduling and phasing.

In this study, dating app users attributed their failures, such as the lack of dating matches and actual online dates, to unstable Wi-Fi and Tinder connections. This result was similar to previous findings showing that if tasks in the cyber world become difficult, the problem would be attributed to their environmental nature and not to the person (Cabanlong, 2010). Furthermore, in this study, no in-between attributions were observed. This finding contrasts with the meta-analytic result of Eberly et al. (2011), who mentioned that relational attributions exist when communicators see each other as co-creators of the situation. It seems that in the context of mobile dating apps where the message source has neither fully co-created any relationship with the receiver nor had previous encounters with the potential match, there would be no opportunity to establish a relational

situation. It is, therefore, justified why mobile dating app users have not performed an in-between attribution in their dating experiences.

Attributions of online dating successes and failures were divided between internal and external factors, respectively. Those who found matches, had online dates, and engaged in offline meet-ups mentioned that their dating success was due to stable internal attributes such as physical appeal, personality, and communication skills. Some of them stated that their success was due to luck, an unstable internal attribution. Whenever the users failed to find matches or engage in actual dates, they attributed them to external stable and unstable factors such as the match's problematic personality, poor communication skills, sad looks, lousy timing, and poor Wi-Fi connection.

Tinder and Grindr user-informants attributed their successful and unsuccessful experiences to internal and external factors. Internal factor attribution happened when individuals linked the outcomes of their actions to personal characteristics, while external attribution happened when people deduced that their behaviors were sparked by situational events (Weiner, 1992). In the context of this study, successful Tinder meet-ups happened when two individuals had continuously interacted by chatting and decided to meet in person. Unsuccessful engagement was equated to having been snubbed before or after a match, blocked by other app users, or stood up before an actual date. The narratives also showed that attributions of successes and defeats were related to existing and ongoing presentations and disclosure experiences while interacting with the Tinder and Grindr matches.

Both successes and failures in Tinder dating were also attributed to either the users' stable set of characteristics or the environment's unpredictability. On the one hand, the informants linked their stable attributions to unchanging factors such as their traits and achievements. On the other hand, unstable attributions were linked to temporary factors such as the users' fate, their proximity to their matches, their match's timing, and unforeseen technological malfunctions.

Results from the interviews are consistent with some of the fundamental principles of attribution theory as discussed by various theorists. Across different cultures and backgrounds, people tend to attribute their success to dispositional causes and their failures to situational factors (Weiner, 1987; Weiner, 1992; Fletcher & Ward, 1988). Young adult Filipino daters in the present study credited their personal qualities and luck for their successful online dating encounters. On the other hand, they identified the qualities of the other person and other nuances of the situation as reasons for failed interactions.

It is essential to note that although widely popular, the mobile dating culture is still negotiating its way into becoming a widely accepted intimacy and relationship practice (Osorio & Someros, 2016; Salvosa, 2018). Young Filipino mobile daters are exposed to both modern and traditional dating practices and Western and Eastern influences. Their cultural and personal values may sometimes be in conflict with one another. Taking this into account, it can be said that aside from the more general human tendencies involved in attribution and ICTs, the findings of this study could also reflect values, beliefs, and principles that are characteristic of young adult Filipino mobile daters.

Personal traits, considered by users as factors to their success, can be categorized into 1) physical appearance, 2) personality and background, and 3) social skills. The user-informants believed that these are vital qualities to have in online dating spaces to be marketable and successful in forming and maintaining profitable relationships with other users. They also expressed the importance of social characteristics, skills, and achievements, which could be linked to their putting value on a person's social relations and networks like universities or career backgrounds. As collectivists, Filipinos tend to identify themselves in terms of group membership or social categories, and so their perception of others is also based on such identification (Azevedo, 1997; Labor, 2020).

User-informants indicated that personality and background are also factors in their success. Openness, integrity, authenticity, and trustworthiness are among the personal traits that they exhibited during interactions. Informants mentioned that they openly shared information about their background, such as education and career, to other users, facilitating conversation and communication. The manner of communication is also an important consideration in this case. Sumter and Vandebosch (2019) noted that ease of communication is a facet of online and offline dating. Thus, how someone talks and carries oneself online would determine if other users would feel at ease while talking to them.

Besides these stable external factors, respondents also noted unstable external causes like lousy timing and technological breakdown. For example, even though dating apps have a proximity feature, physical distance is still a barrier. The inconvenience of commuting for a meet-up or conflicting schedules hinders users from meeting in person. In addition, technological barriers like poor Internet connection are a challenge. An unstable Internet connection disrupts communication with other users. Tussyadiah (2014) forwarded the same point, saying that aside from the user's skill in navigating online spaces, external factors like user-friendliness and convenience in using such online platforms affect how these apps are perceived and utilized.

ICTs are also effective in influencing and challenging the way people think, behave, and interact (Salvosa, 2018; Tanner & Tabo, 2018; Valentine, 2006). Attribution is more than just making sense of events and understanding people. By widening the networks of users and bridging the gap between millions of people worldwide, ICTs enable people to form social perceptions about and build relationships with others they will most likely not meet in face-to-face encounters (Finkel et al., 2012). For a collectivist culture, which tends to hold in-group biases and evaluate people based on their social relations (Maio & Augoustinos, 2005; Azevedo, 1997), the capacity to be able to develop more personal interactions is essential. Thus, aside from connecting people, ICTs also facilitate the meeting of cultures.

Finkel et al. (2012) also pointed out that ICTs provide a different platform for romantic exploration while not essentially changing the meaning and nature of the human search for intimacy and relationships. This explains why there are still evident traces of societal conventions in online platform interactions, such as the core elements of traditional dating persisting in online dating. Thus, we can observe similar general attribution theories in online dating and mobile dating app users with only some facets amplified. For example, physical looks are the primary consideration in the initial contact between people in face-to-face settings; a similar transaction is evident in ICT interactions. In addition, users also consider message privacy (post, comment, tag in a post, private message, et cetera) as another point for evaluating intention and possible future relationship formation (Liu & Kang, 2017).

Conclusion

The characteristics of how young adult Filipino mobile app daters attribute success and failures in online encounters reveal that cultural values, individual ideals, and technological features are at work. Another integral element in the study is ICTs and how they afford users various means of communication and interaction. They challenge the existing social script on how people view and approach intimacy. While they do not entirely alter the nature of human attributions, ICTs are a strong determinant of attribution as they provide users a new space for interaction and relationships. Rather than being an independent variable that affects culture, ICTs' relationship with culture and society is one of interdependence. Behavior and phenomena in cyberspace are reflections of human behavior in the given context. The features of ICTs afford people to execute similar actions, only in a different manner or platform. No matter how revolutionary the changes and innovations ICTs offer and bring, respondents still recognized that it is just

a platform for relationship building. Consistent personal and face-to-face interactions are still deemed necessary for relationship success.

Young Filipinos are in a constant process of presenting and performing their public and private selves in different—sometimes conflicting—perspectives and contexts. As the complexities and intricacies of these cultures coexist and correlate in a given setting, people adapt and weigh their preferences and values. Since these binaries are not mutually exclusive, cultures and people can stand between these spectrums. This is evident in how respondents in the study perceived, utilized, and performed in mobile dating apps and how they made sense of their encounters in such platforms. Collectivist cultures like the Philippines are more adaptive to such complex problems, allowing them to differentiate their private and public selves, depending on what roles and responses circumstances call for.

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