


## Chapter 26

# Exploring Motivations, Impact, and Coping Mechanisms of Post-Dating on Female Dating App Users

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Online dating apps are a popular platform for forming new connections. Generally, a virtual acquaintance intensifies between the users, eventually converting it into an offline relationship. Despite the anonymity of users being a prime motivation to initiate a conversation, it does pose challenges, including mental health issues and sexual abuse. There are increasing reports of privacy violations, extortions, cyberstalking, and sexual assaults connected with dating apps. While people in a relationship decide to set boundaries to avoid each other, both users go through an uncomfortable phase. Unless both parties mutually share the responsibility, the relationship issues are not sorted out without going through an abusive phase. One person's separation anxiety might become a physical manifestation, including virtual and physical assaults. The current study relies on focus group discussions to understand post-dating app manifestations and its impact on female dating app users. The study involves respondents mostly exposed to online dating.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Dating is part of urban culture, and it expanded with technological intervention. The app-based dating matches made the process of finding easier. There are both positive and negative aspects of dating apps, and incidentally, it is the female gender which is more vulnerable to exploitation. Abundant literature points to the significant impact of dating apps on young adults, predominantly female users. Most dating apps are used out of boredom, peer pressure, seeking causal relationships, and loneliness. Once users get matched, they would develop their casual acquaintances into severe relationships without even considering the post-dating repercussions. The current study focuses on understanding the impact of a person's post-dating experiences and attempts to discover the coping mechanisms of exploitation. The study focuses on understanding the abuses and the mental trauma female dating app users (FDAU) go through in the entire process. The repercussions of such actions and understanding the motive and effects are necessary. At the same time, we study the online dating phenomenon and its lasting impact when one faces abuse through such a platform.

### **Dating App Experiences**

Many dating apps exist, but Tinder is one of the most well-known, with more than 10.5 million users globally (Anon, n.d.-b). For many, it is a convenient way to connect and find potential partners. However, the rise of dating apps has also brought various issues related to safety, privacy, and cultural norms to light. Numerous studies have shown sexting as a standard practice between individuals in romantic relationships and exchanging private pictures. Such a digital footprint has challenges and could lead to risky cyber behaviour. There are hazards associated with dating apps, including problematic relationships and becoming the object of antisocial behaviour, such as sexual harassment or abuse (Castro & Barrada, 2020a). Vulnerable groups, such as women and sexual minorities, are particularly concerned about the perils associated with dating apps (Castro & Barrada, 2020a; Ilakkuvan et al., 2019).

Most of the time, location-based dating applications let users establish individual profiles. For instance, members of Tinder upload images and a brief biography (or "bio") about themselves. By using parameters like GPS location, age, and gender, users may browse through the profiles of others. Users can then swipe left or right to discard or like a profile. Once two users have liked each other's profiles, they are considered a match and can begin messaging on the app (Kaakinen et al., 2018).

The potential dysfunctions that Internet usage might suggest in a person's life are highlighted by problematic Internet use (Caplan, 2002). The chance of displaying poor self-regulation increases with a preference for online social connection and mood control through the Internet, which has several detrimental effects on the person's life (Gámez-Guadix et al., 2013). The prevalence rates reported by epidemiological research (Jennings et al., 2023) show this condition's clinical and societal significance, which worsens as people age (Panova & Carbonell, 2018). Although other studies (Cebollero-Salinas et al., 2022) find no differences, more problematic Internet use has been seen in females (Panova & Carbonell, 2018).

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