ABSTRACT

Due to busy modern lifestyles, the emotional distance between people has widened. Some people are unable to broaden their social circles or meet new people of the opposite sex because of their environment or work, so they seek non-traditional methods to meet new people. One of these methods is the use of the Internet. Match making on online dating sites and getting involved in dating service have become quite popular these days. The study is conducted with online questionnaires; out of those distributed, 302 valid samples were returned. The main research method was putting the samples through stepwise linear regression analysis. By focusing on the reasons people participate in blind dating through the Internet, this study examines theories on the relatedness needs, personality characteristics, sensation-seeking motivation, and self-disclosure of those involved; and develop a framework for research to understand what type of people use dating service as a means of meeting others. Results from the study show that interpersonal needs and self-disclosure play a role in why one would want to participate in blind dating. Furthermore, there is a definite connection between the characteristics of one's personality and the desire to participate in blind dating. The sensation seeking people are therefore more likely than others to participate in blind dating.

Keywords: Dating Service, Personality Characteristics, Relatedness Needs, Self-Disclosure, Sensation-Seeking Motivation

INTRODUCTION

The IT computer industry, following the emergence and development of the Internet, has soared at a fast pace since the 1990s. According to a survey by the Internet World Stats, a U.S. market research agency, the global Internet user population exceeded 1.666 billion as of June 2009, and the lifestyles have changed. Dating from the traditional ways of meeting through friends or match making has developed into online dating through the Internet. The current online dating development can be divided into two types: the first type is meeting virtual friends only on the Internet. The second type is meeting friends through the Internet and meeting them
in person as well. This type of Internet dating is known as participate in blind dating through the Internet.

A blind date is meeting someone that is not known, or knows little about that person, through various media (such as the Internet, friends, relatives, and so on). One can ask another person out. This type of dating is known as “blind dating.”

According to a demographic census conducted in 2009 by the Ministry of the Interior in Taiwan, there are currently about 6.72 million unmarried office workers in Taiwan. In addition, the 1111 Job Bank in Taiwan has conducted a “status and willingness to make friends” questionnaire survey that targets single office workers in order to find out channels from which unmarried office workers people in the country meet friends of the opposite sex and their willingness to make friends. As for whether or not the office workers are currently seeing someone, 32.9% said yes and 67.05% said no; as for whether or not the office workers who are single and available show willingness to meet friends of the opposite sex, as high as 94.07% said yes, and only 5.93% said no; as for whether or not the office workers who are single but unavailable have the willingness to meet new friends of the opposite sex, 75.86% said yes and 24.14% said no, indicating that regardless of whether or not these people have boyfriends or girlfriends, the single office workers are much interested in meeting friends of the opposite sex. As for the channels from which the single office workers meet or make friends of the opposite sex, as high as 80.11% meet friends at work, 51.70% meet friends through relatives, and 38.35% meet friends on websites.

In recent years, the Internet dating platforms have conducted face to face friend-making activities such as Speed Dating, Love Bus, Dating service, etc., in order to help those who wish to have interpersonal relationships in real life and find their ideal partners.

Speed Dating is comprised of an equal number of men and women who are divided into the “men” and “women” groups (e.g. placing two men and two women in each group). These men and women first get to know each other in given time, then, the men and women switch groups to meet the others. If the men and women find someone of their choice, they will ask the person out; Love Bus is comprised of an equal number of men and women who take trips together. The men and women are divided into groups for the group members to get to know more about one another. If they find someone they like, they can ask the person out; Dating service is comprised of a group of single men and women who ask one another out for tea through a dating service friend-making platform. The single men and women can decide for themselves where and how they would have a blind date arranged (e.g. afternoon tea or a movie).

Most people that make friends through general online friend-making platforms share a common experience. The online profile of someone whom they would like to meet is often completely different from what the person is actually like in person. Hancock et al. (2007) pointed out that by perfecting one’s online profile such as look, education level, and job, one can get more people to browse one’s profile. In Europe and the United States, dating service platforms allow people to quickly and effectively find like-minded friends or potential marriage partners, so, these platforms are quite popular for people who are on the look out for partners in life.

In summary, this study aims to determine the degree of acceptance of blind dating in Taiwan and probe into the types of people (i.e. personality traits) that are more likely to participate in blind dating. The research purposes are as follows:

1. Whether or not interpersonal needs will affect the willingness to participate in blind dating;
2. What types of people (i.e. personality traits) are more likely to participate in blind dating;
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