

A big risk for a small chance at love: Mobile dating apps and privacy risks

Mobile dating apps are becoming very popular - and can be described as software applications that are downloaded onto a smartphone to satisfy various dating-related needs. The motivations for using these apps have been disputed throughout literature. Some have said that these apps are purely used for sexual seeking activities, officially stated as 'hooking up'. Others have stated that they are looking for love, friendship, entertainment and self-worth validation. Mobile dating apps have the ability to live-track users' locations via their GPS's on their phones as well as store users' personal information. This app functionality has raised substantial privacy concerns.

A research study was conducted by Belinda Cant, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), to determine how mobile dating app motivations and privacy concerns affect users' intention to utilise the app as well as their satisfaction with the app. After establishing the lack of conclusive results in this relatively new field of research, this study brings light to the often "dark" subject. This study fills the theoretical void and contributes to the body of knowledge by providing an understanding of mobile dating app usage in a South African context. It also examines whether users' motivations and privacy concerns affect users' intention to use Mobile dating apps in the future.

The results showed that privacy concerns did not act as a buffer for mobile dating apps but rather as a counterpart. As mobile dating app intention to use increased, so did the concerns. It seems that users are aware that these apps require the disclosure of their personal information, yet the risk is necessary for their motivations to be met. Developers and marketers were encouraged to take note of this for future app development as more in-app features should be aligned to match the initial motivation and to acquire all necessary information along with it. The results also revealed that there is a discrepancy between males and females and their casual sex motivation. This discrepancy was of moderate proportion showing that the genders viewed this with differing levels of importance. Again, marketing strategies can use this to align communication campaigns with this insight. Furthermore, insight revealed that casual sex was the only significant motivation to increase intention to use along with users' satisfaction. Thus, the stigma of these apps being purely for 'hooking up' was supported in this study.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2020 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Belinda Cant under the supervision of [Prof Y Jordaan & Mrs B Frost](#).