

Dating and hookup culture in the 21st century



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Introduction

Millenials have created a new age of dating. There has been a large preference on just hooking up with a person than actually being with the same person constantly. With this new age, people aren't trying to date long term but for the moment or don't even add a title to a relationship at all. But, this isn't always a bad thing. Dating for the moment gives you an opportunity for the person to get to know themselves as well as what they like and don't like in relationships. On the other hand, dating for the moment can cause the person to lack motivation to one day settle down and get married, like their parents were raised to do. Not every millenial is built for this new form of dating because some actually want to be in serious relationships and eventually get married.

This mix of longing for serious and non serious relationships, it makes it very hard for many to actually get into a relationship or get to the point of being a " boyfriend" or " girlfriend". The structure of families are changing and there is an increase in single parent homes. One cause of this could be the way millenials are handling relationships and creating families they may not have expected to create. U. S. children living with an unmarried parent has more than doubled since 1968, jumping from 13% to 32% in 2017 and is only going to increase with the nonchalant behavior of millennials. The change in how serious people take dating has changed the functionality and dynamic of a traditional family.

Literature Review

Solving Millenial Marriage Evolution

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A study was made about the change in which millennials see relationships and marriage. Marital perks and sacrifices have changed for many millennials in America, influencing their economic and family decisions, while also creating a domino effect in society's standards. This phenomenon has worked to divide the fortunate and the unfortunate in new ways, known as the marriage income inequality gap (Akers & Kohm, 2018). Millennials are now becoming more picky in who they are willing to make a family with rather just based of human interaction and connection solely.

The Millennial sense of entitlement has decreased the wanting of marriage for any other reason other than personal happiness, which has in return decreased the number of couples committing to marriage despite their age and available resources. The need for a good financial stability is a good expectation that many should have when looking for a husband/wife. Even though someone can always grow into a secure financially stable lifestyle, many millennials are looking for that to have already be there in order to have a successful and long lasting relationship.

The effects that millennials have implemented have trickled into affecting other forms of life. New marriage norms developing in American society are particularly being reflected in the evolution in social trends producing highly educated and wealthy women who are marrying and having children much later in life. Which is far from what millennial parents and grandparents were raised to believe as something that was even possible. Millennial women are no longer settling for just being a housewife and marrying for the first man that comes their way. Predictably, the effects of these associations are

impacting the future of family stability in current and future generations (Akers, K. E., & Kohm, L. M., 2018).

Rules of dating game have changed; Searching for love in the millennial age complicated by hookup culture, texting

This article tells a story of how the world of love has now changed and got more complicated. Jessica Massa and Rebecca Wiegand, has a blunt message, “ Praying for that prince with a dozen roses and a dinner reservation for Friday night? Forget it. Clinging to your mother’s rules about waiting for his email or phone call? So last century”(Swarns, 2012).

Nowadays, young men and women often hang out together in groups, leaving some of them uncertain about where friendship ends and relationships begin. A series of hookups may or may not lead to a relationship, which can mean a longer period of uncertainty for women who are increasingly delaying marriage (Swarns, 2012). Some have argued that the hookup culture makes women more susceptible to depression, feelings of low self-esteem and sexually transmitted diseases. Hookup culture can also start to form a lot of confused feelings due to lack of full communication on what type of relationship it actually was. But others have embraced the shift, arguing that it allows women the freedom to enjoy their sexuality without getting locked into serious relationships or marriage, which might impede their efforts to further their careers or education. The hookup culture has many pro’s and con’s depending on the individual and what they want. For some, not getting locked into a relationship or marriage can be just what they wanted and to others, it can be very alarming because they may see a

relationship with a person and it never get to that point because they do not see it as something that should be titled or restricted.

Issues

The achievement of intimacy in a romantic relationship is considered to be one of the critical developmental tasks marking one's entry into adulthood. Instead, it is treated as something that should happen in and out of a relationship. Many people see sex as the only form of intimacy in a relationship and at times may base a whole relationship off of it instead of actual chemistry. Failure to establish and sustain a committed intimate relationship during this time is thought to hinder human development but have serious negative implications for well-being across the life span (Rauer, A. J., Pettit, G. S., Lansford, J. E., Bates, J. E., & Dodge, K. A., 2013). People who fail to build a meaningful relationship tend to build a long list of temporary partners and have no drive to be committed to anyone.

On the other hand, adolescents that begin with fairly short-term, shallow romantic connections primarily occurring in peer groups that develop into multiple shorter relationships are defined more by emotional intimacy (Rauer, A. J., Pettit, G. S., Lansford, J. E., Bates, J. E., & Dodge, K. A., 2013). This allows them to grow into their emotions to eventually get into a committed relationship. Also, for them to go at their own pace and not be in a rush to find someone by a certain age. Millennials with this mindset will have a harder time trying to find the right partner due to the lack of importance of being in a relationship by their peers. Especially, since the recent rise in popularity of dating/hookup websites and applications and the

rapid increase of texting and cell phone use; digital technologies are transforming intimate, romantic, sexual, and dating relationships.

Technology

Some researchers agree that the recent increase of the Internet and “smart” technologies has changed the ways in which many people form relationships and find romantic and sexual partners. Although some research regards these changes as positive, others see the dangers in these changes. For instance, some researchers suggest that the risk of intimate partner abuse among young people increases for those who seek partners through online dating applications (Dalessandro, 2018). Others argue, more broadly, that relationships forged online are less desirable than relationships that require face-to-face interaction due to the alleged weakening of interpersonal bonds that can be caused by relationships moving online (Dalessandro, 2018). There is a possibility that you may not have the same connection you have with someone online then you do in person. This will potentially lead to the effort and interest will start to dissipating and you will no longer look at that person like a potential partner.

Family

Millennials are coming of age in a time of social, economic, and cultural transition, but the expectations for how they can and should live their individual lives are also increasingly unclear (Dalessandro, 2018). With the times, changing how people interact is changing with it. People are meeting others in more ways than ever before, sometimes even simultaneously. A lot more things that were once not accepted in their parent’s time is now being

openly accepted. For example, dating outside of their race or religion, opening up the number of perspective partners for people to interact with. But, just because millennials are open to these type of things does not always mean that this accepted by their families. Family is a big thing to many individuals, so if you can not be accepted by the family then it puts a strain on the relationship or may even end it completely.

The Dangers of Hooking Up and Unplanned Pregnancies

The lack of seriousness and commitment in relationships have shown to not only affect women but, children as well. There has been many unplanned pregnancies that have come out of just a casual hookup. The lack of emotional attachment and recklessness has left many females to care for kids that they may not have planned for. Now, people are participating in casual sex with no responsibilities attached, but in the future, they will bring those experiences and understandings into their marriages and future families.

Since sex is quite intimate, there are opportunities for feelings to get misconstrued. Human relationships, both platonic and romantic, are complicated, and sometimes hooking up with someone can even further complicate the situation. Whether it is further down the line or right after it happens it is always a possibility that your partner may not be on the same page with you emotionally. Caity Mae speaks on her experience with just casual sex and how it has affected her. " The first time I had a one-night stand, it felt so strange. I wanted more, I felt like I was entitled to a connection, even though I knew I wasn't. I was hurt that the man in question

didn't call me and ask for some commitment, even though I knew that I didn't want a boyfriend. I was asking for someone to care about me, even when I didn't care about them and knew I had no right to ask that of them" (Mae, 2018), many women just like Caity use hooking up as a way to search for a long term partner because it is easier to be intimate with them in that setting than the traditional way of dating.

Later on after countless encounters like that, women start to build this barrier and mentality that they have to learn to protect themselves against expectations, learn how to be both brutally honest and carefully guarded. Women will soon become tired and frustrated with the same cycle of protecting themselves from others but still longing more from people who aren't willing to give it to them.

Implications

A feminist would say that from what we have seen on college campuses, hookup culture is not always fair the woman. Both males and females try to make themselves look attractive for their potential mates on a day to day basis. For women this means putting on makeup, doing their hair, and wearing clothes they believe to make themselves look and feel more attractive. This whole process can become very expensive depending on how much effort a female is willing to put in to impress men. This can even go as far as risky surgeries to fit the mold of what men say they are attracted to. For men they might put on their nicer clothes and cologne and shave , if that's what they think is attractive. Immediately, there is more work for a female to be noticed by a male and this is not even guaranteeing her a partner or even a hookup. It is very unlikely that a female would be more

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aggressively pursue a male to hook up then vice versa. Usually, a female is approached by a guy and then lets him guide the relationship if both are interested in hooking up. In this situation, the female is in very little control in how the relationship is formed. She technically has only two options, she can either deny hooking up and move on to the next person or take a leap of faith and agree to hooking up in hopes that it will one day grow into more.

In the new world of dating, women should have more of a say in whether or not they want a relationship to progress and it to be a topic of discussion so some are not just left in the dark or lost in what would come next after a hookup. Due to this lack of communication, many women are “ghosted” by men and left with feelings and questions left unresolved. Ghosting is having someone that you believe cares about you, whether it be a friend or someone you are dating, disappear from contact without any explanation at all. Despite how common ghosting is, the emotional effects can be devastating, and particularly damaging to those who already have fragile self-esteem (Vilhauer, 2015). People who ghost others are primarily focused on avoiding their own emotional security and are not thinking about how it makes the other person feel or may affect them. The lack of mutual social connections for people who meet online also means there are fewer social consequences of dropping out of another’s life.

The more and more that people get use to just dropping out of people’s lives whenever they choose can have a lot of adverse affects on how women view relationships and also how serious men take them. With all of these new forms of communication, relationships have gotten much more complicated. Women now have to compete a lot more for a male’s attention and once

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they get it, they still have to compete to maintain that same attention from the same male.

Solutions/Conclusions

The proportion of married adults younger than age 65 declined by 10 percent or higher between 1990 and 2016, with the strongest declines among those ages 18 to 34 (from 44% in 1990 to 26% in 2016). Even though new marriages are increasing, they are still outnumbered by the declining marriage rates overall. More individuals are delaying marriage or foregoing marriage altogether (Duncan, 2018). This reflects a devalue of marriage, and as a result, being less invested in what is needed to maintain and strengthen a marriage to make it last. A result of these cultural changes is a less family-oriented, more individualistic approach to relationships, marriage, and family life has made young adults become less likely to associate parenthood with marriage. This lack of investment is the main thing that drives people to just have casual hook ups or date with no progression. People fail to realize that having the lack of investment in a marriage affects not only the family structure but also the child's wellbeing. The whole point of having a family is for there to be a husband, wife, and children living under the same roof together. The husband's job is to provide security and finance the family. While the mom's role is to take care of the children and maintain the home. Now, if one part of this structure is taken away then the whole dynamic of the family changes and one person is now responsible for everything or partially responsible with external help.

A way to help combat these issues is to remind people the reason why people started to get married in the first place. When compared to singles or
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divorced individuals, married people are better off emotionally, physically, economically, and sexually. These benefits are present even after accounting for race, income, and health status prior to marriage. As noted, marriage among young adults has been declining, yet when they do marry, they experience immediate reductions in depressive symptoms and higher life satisfaction, which holds true for many marriages. Marriage is actually helping young adults combat loneliness and social rejection. Once, you have found a person to love you, some insecurities can start to reverse and eventually disappear. Hence, as marriage in general means a better life, participation in marriage enhancement can make things even better (Duncan, 2018). Even though many may see marriage as a way of restricting someone of their freedoms, it may also give someone the security that being single or casual hook ups couldn't fulfill. While emerging adulthood, it is a great time to promote the benefits of marriage. Evidence suggests that attitude-forming exercises influence beliefs about intimate relationships, such as marriage and mate selection, are already taking shape well before formative coupling time. Offering relationship education when young people begin to form relational values and plans, such as during the adolescent years, may be an appropriate time to emphasize the characteristics of individuals that are associated with relationship literacy and marital satisfaction (Duncan, 2018).

There are a lot of people who do not really understand what it means to be married and may only see it from a one sided point of view. Also, there are many people that are emotionally broken from the repeating cycle that dating and hookups have caused. There should be more education on how to

actually be in and maintain a relationship so that it can start to get millennials to see what they may be doing wrong and that is why they are getting the results that they are getting. Dating and hookups has caused this trend of falling out of love or never letting themselves love in general. Once, they learn that it is ok to fall back in love, there will be an increase in relationships progressing further than just sex and hopefully into a marriage. This may take time but, there is no rush when finding love. This new found love and marriage will eventually lead to a decrease in divorce among young adults.

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