

Digitally Performed Sensual Selves: Young Adults' Sexual Scripts in Mobile Dating Apps

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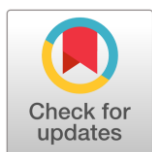
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Abstract: Symbolically constructing and communicating sexual scripts among the youth when they engage with one another in mobile dating apps have not been thoroughly understood. Using an interpretivist case study design and by interviewing 50 young adult informants, this paper wants to identify how young adults present and perform their presented selves during mobile dating practices. The inductive thematic analysis of the informants' musings and narrations revealed that three types of sexual scripts are communicated during the mobile dating encounter. The "clean and non-green" sexual script was utilized if there was no intent to be sexual. The "green-yet-hidden" script was used if the user had the intent to be sexual but did not want to be perceived as an initiator of the sexual discussion. The "open and seen" script was chosen when a user is blunt in communicating sexual intents. In conclusion, even if the agency to perform the scripts resided on the users, their appropriation of the dating technology provided the stage for such selves to be functional in the realm of the app.

Keywords: Mobile Communication, Mobile Phone, Sexual Script, Computer Mediated Communication, Online Community.

Introduction

The use of mobile phones for dating purposes has been part of the expansion and maintenance of social life in cosmopolitan societies (Aricat, Karnowski & Chib, 2015). In the metropolis, where the penetration rate for mobile telephony is high, social ties have been more intertwined with everyday romantic and sexual life that resulted to hyperpersonal social relationships. Some have labeled the redefined notion of mediated relationships – fast and goal-driven- as a positive effect of mobility. Praises on the value of mobile phone

use also include the concept of bounded cosmopolitanism where individuals have a co-equal contribution to engage in learning, cultural hybridity, and open participation (Chib & Aricat, 2016; Paragas & Lin, 2016).

There are those who have cautioned mobile application users of the negative consequences of the cosmopolitan use of mobile telephony, particularly in the use of mobile dating apps. The use of dating apps' location data system is a privacy risk as chat data, user profile, shared pictures, e-mail

addresses, epoch value (time), and location can be retrieved by just about anyone who has knowledge on data base storage. This shows that privacy can be compromised in a cosmopolitan setting where the need to belong is as quick as clicking an app's agreement button for community participation.

Mobile dating apps have also been criticized for its effects on dating and human relationship formation. In 2015, Vanity Fair published that mobile app users in the US have been hit by the hook up app Tinder, which encourages immediate intimacy without the need to self-present and self-disclose using traditional dating practices and norms (Sales, 2015). Stadtmiller (2015) explained this behavior by claiming that the brand of "in-your-face communication" that is happening in the millennial's communication style has hyped flirtation to the point that millennials can easily get a hook up by simply assessing proximity between them and their co-communicators and swiping their way to sexual contact, thus creating an "unlimited access to sex partners." Huffington Post (Dating's Dead, 2016) also wrote that dating apps have allowed millennials to engage in early sexual intercourse minus the commitment. The problem becomes more convoluted because these online and mediated platforms are perceived to encourage offline and face-to-face sexual promiscuity. Where there is a rise in Internet and smartphone acquisition, uncertainties arise in the way online users make sense of themselves, their notion of their significant "others" and their sexual relationships in portals that are seemingly designed for casual sexual encounters. After all, the disclosures of sensitive information in online platforms could put users in online risky situations such as theft, harassment, and scams (Al-Saggaf, 2017).

Not everyone, however, feels that technological innovations have adverse effects to human interactions. In cosmopolitan

communities, for instance, where human communication has been shaped by technological innovations such as the rise of new media, mediation has paved the way for other ways of building and maintaining relationships. Paragas and Lin acknowledged this as "a shift that has since resulted into a re-understanding of the nature of the audience" that allows technological innovations as part but not determinant of actions and interactions. Further, online platforms serve as venues in managing one's presented self, allowing users to attain successful relationships where virtual self-disclosure becomes a tool for one to negotiate with others to attain success (Walther, 1996). Individuals have also learned to adapt to the peculiarities of technology (Wood & Smith, 2005). There is also a better sense of empowerment because of the high level of relational identities formed in mediated dyadic encounters (Joinson, Reips, Buchanan, & Schofield, 2010).

Early studies about courtship and dating traditions in the Philippines explore meanings attached and practices related to dating. Dating is described as "a system whereby adolescents may enjoy themselves in heterosexual relationships while learning about their strengths, weaknesses and coping strategies in social situations and their preferences for qualities in a mate" (Manaster, as cited in Naui, 1994, p. 15). Courtship, was considered as a form of expressing one's love to another, usually from a man to a woman. Such expression could be motivated by something as serious as one's desire to marry the object of affection or may simply be to gain a close friend or have someone to talk with about one's problems.

Generally, early studies showed a preference for kindness, good-naturedness, and other positive personality values in dating partners (Carballo et al., 1983; Naui, 1994). Dating activities included talking, going to parties and parks, and going to movie houses, although the latter is only done by steady

couples with the expectation of being sexually intimate. Both peers and family members were seen to be important influences on the dating choices and activities of Filipinos, though this influence is stronger during adolescence than adulthood.

More recent studies showed the continuing influence of peers on dating and courtship in the Philippines. Peer groups are the main avenues for socialization and meeting potential partners (Ujano-Batangan, 2012), even with the availability of online channels (Osorio & Someros, 2016). Dating activities such as going out, a preferred term for rural adolescents, and even the potential partner is integrated within the group. Thus, only couples with increased levels of intimacy and closeness go out on their own, who may prefer to use the term “dating” (Ujano-Batangan, 2012, p. 174) to signify commitment.

Peers have been found to exercise influence even on sexual matters, particularly sexual initiation in adolescents. Relationships begin with crushes, progress to courtship, develop into romantic relationships, enter dating, and eventually end up in sex (Upadhyay, 2006). Some adolescents have been found to experience sexual coercion (Serquina-Ramiro, 2005), notably females who are threatened by their male partners. It is important to note that, when it comes to sex, females experience stricter rules and face harsher societal expectations compared to males.

Despite the prevailing practices, researchers note changes in tradition. Torres (2002) mentioned un-chaperoned dates, telephone calls between lovers, and online activities such as emailing and chatting. Osorio and Someros (2016) asserted that dating scripts are changing, and “technology made it easier for the individuals to meet potential partners. Despite the accessibility that the online platforms provide, accounts in this study showed that most of young adult Filipinos still utilize offline meeting channels”

(p. 84). Recommendations from peers and family happen even in online platforms. Available technologies, such as mobile phones, serve to enhance the existing dating experience in terms of increased frequency of communication (Quirante, 2006), intimacy expression (Ellwood-Clayton, 2006), and access to dating partners, especially for the sexual minority (Castañeda, 2015).

Literature on online sexual interactions covers the initiation, development, and rejection of short and long-term relationships. On the one hand, there is less fear of rejection in dating initiations online compared to offline (Rosenfield & Thomas, 2012), which attracts users seeking potential partners (Kreager et al., 2014). On the other hand, daters who aim to reject partners consider not only their relationship with the partner but also the type of media available to them, giving them access to online dating services that are not usually available offline (Tong & Walther, 2011).

The initiation and anticipation of face-to-face interaction presents benefits in the relationship development in that “individuals with long-term goals of establishing F-t-F relationships engage in higher levels of self-disclosure in that they are more honest, disclose more personal information, and make more conscious and intentional disclosures to others online” (Gibbs et al., 2006, p. 169). Similar positive benefits have been found in actual face-to-face meetings with online partners (Ramirez et al., 2015; Ramirez & Wang, 2008), but only if the meeting happens not long after initiation (Finkel et al., 2012; Whitty, 2008).

Timing in modality switching, or the transition from online to offline communication, plays an important role in the development of relationships in terms of social information processing and uncertainty reduction (Ramirez & Wang, 2008). Online sexual encounters have also been conceptualized as a marketplace, in which users shop for potential partners out of a

shopping list of desirable qualities (Heino, et al., 2010; Whitty, 2008).

Using the online format, individuals who “go out” with mobile dating app users have used technology to initiate and interact with others, so they can establish an identity that is pleasing and pleasant. These researches inform the present study that the use of technology has indeed paved the way for casual sexual activities to be initiated in the online world. The millennials know that technology can “cut the chase” as it provides a venue for short cuts in introducing oneself to a potential mate, presenting oneself as an interesting partner, and disclosing intents for casual sexual encounters.

Research Problem and Objectives

In this research, I wanted to answer the question: What is the nature of the co-created symbolic sexual scripts that users of mobile dating apps use during their interactions?

Specifically, I looked into and analyzed the narratives of Tinder users in order for me to describe the co-created sexual scripts during mobile dating app use. I also wanted to discuss the types of sexual disclosures that are embedded in the conversations. Finally, I categorized the sexual intents that are rooted in the disclosed information through the affordances that were available in the communication platforms.

Study Frameworks

In order for me to make sense of the narratives of the Tinder users, I tried to interrelate the concepts of symbolic interactionism, sexual script theory, and social media platform affordances. On the one hand, symbolic interactionism looks at repeated interactions in the micro-level in human encounters (Carter and Fuller, 2015). The theory claims that individuals have the agency and autonomy to create an integral social

world using language and significant social symbols. Repeated meaningful interactions make society. On the other hand, sexual script theory (see Gagnon and Simon, 1973; also see Gagnon, 1990) asserts that actors in a given interaction, acting as agents, who have intrapsychic maps, use patterned behaviors to provide directions on how they would perform certain tasks in a specific culture (Wiederman, 2005). The scripts, therefore, are informed by the functions of the situations, co-communicated with other members of the community, and, in turn, reflect the structure of the society where the script is formed. These scripts guide and motivate the users on how they would interact with other individuals in the social situation. At best, there are complementary scripts among individuals. At worst, anxiety, tension, and conflict increase during the interaction because there are no shared understandings among the participants.

Materials and Methods

In this research, profiling was used in order to analyze narrative accounts of making or doing in a specific technology. This form of profiling is a study of performance in technology (Jansen & Vellema, 2011). I described the material and social circumstances of mobile dating app use and practice. I further analyzed the articulations of mobile dating app users as actors and their technology use as performance.

There were 50 Tinder users who were interviewed for this study. An unstructured interview guide was used not only to identify the ideas but also to have an in-depth analysis of the why's and how's of the concepts under investigation (McLeod, 2014). Before the formal interview, the researcher read the content of the informed consent form to the informant. Inductive thematic analysis was used to see how select users were able to construct and enunciate the narratives and

discourses of technographic mindsets. The transcripts were examined using open and context coding. The derived codes served as the initial categorization. Open coding was used to allow the themes to emerge from the data. The coded themes were matched with the existing conceptual constructs of the study. The initial context codes were arranged in consequential matrices using a dendrogram (Drout & Smith, 2012) to know the most significant content and the significant statements mentioned by the informants. Moreover, the significant statements were also used in identifying categories of codes and valuable themes (Aronson, 1994). Time series analysis was conducted to constantly check the value of the data (Yin, 2003). Participants were informed about the research and were asked to sign a consent form before becoming research participants. The researcher has always respected the right of the informants to refuse to answer any question at any given point in time during the data construction process.

Results

Among the 50 informants, 20 identified as straight males and females, 20 identified as gays and 10 identified as lesbians. The average age of all the informants is 25. Literature shows that older millennials are found to be more active in dating apps more than their younger equals (McWilliams & Barrett, 2014; Stephure et al., 2009; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007; Whitty & Buchanan, 2009). Thirteen of the informants are in a relationship while 39 are single. This supports literature mentioning that single app users have more tendencies than those who are in a relationship (Sautter, et al., 2010). Almost all of the informants are either graduates or are enrolled in college. The informants have an average of 26 months or at least two years of mobile app use. They spend an average of three hours in the app per day.

Narratives of the user-informants revealed that sexual scripts were products of negotiations between two users. The sexual script was also in tune with the nature of the disclosure of information between the users. Sexual scripts, in the context of this study, were the means that were employed in revealing the intents to their dating partners. The informants revealed that disclosing their non-sexual and sexual intents in mobile dating applications followed one of these three scripts: "clean and non-green," "green-yet-hidden," and "open and seen." I arranged these sexual scripts from the non-sexual to the most sexual to reflect that there were levels to the manner of performing the self-presentations and sexual self-disclosures.

Clean and non-green

The 'clean and green' sexual script was used by the mobile dating app user who wanted to find matches for romantic dates and long-term relationships. Using this script meant that the informants did not sexually converse with their match. They used the traditional communication process in dating. This included proper introductions with a match, updating them with daily information, and even waiting for the right time to meet up.

Eight out of the ten lesbian user-informants' narratives revealed that they used this form of sexual script. They refused to discuss sex and focused on building rapport while they were in the dating app. Purple, a twenty-one year old college student, said that she still believed that there should be courting if she wanted to look for a partner. *"I am really traditional. I do not like to talk about sex directly because I use the app in getting to know other persons,"* she said. Lia, a twenty-three year old research analyst, felt that during the times that she wandered in the dating apps to look for possible partners, she refrained from making sexual messages or comments. *"If I feel that the match is really a potential partner, I*

wouldn't risk the opportunity. I will go with the very 'heteronormative' process of courting the lady," she jokingly stated. The informants did not also directly tell their sexual urges and were, in fact, into sweet talk.

The lesbian informants also mentioned that they invested emotions easily. Rajah, a thirty-year old continuous improvement trainer and analyst, mentioned that even if someone she met in Tinder had hurt her, she still had hopes that a good dating partner would be around. Anya, a twenty-five year old technical support employee, also said that she was careful in finding a good match because she did not want to repeat the dating process all over again. *"It is hard to date around because one needs to do things in a cycle. I like to invest time to those who matter,"* she stated.

Two female informants mentioned that they waited for their matches to invite them for meet ups. Louise, a twenty-two year old freelance writer, perhaps best represented those who found no qualms in disclosing that she asked those who she really liked to go out for dinner. She said that, despite being a liberated woman, she would still follow imposed Philippine traditions. *"I can ask the right questions but I will not initiate. It is hard for a girl to start the dating process but I make exemptions to those who I think is worth the risk,"* she mentioned. She further revealed that if the male matches failed to ask her to go out, then she would not hesitate to ask the males out herself. *"I have no qualms if I really like the guy,"* she furthered.

There were only two male app users who used this script. Cy said that, *"There should be a lengthy time talk to each other because it is awkward to disclose feelings in the shortest possible time."* Ivan, a twenty-five year old corporate communication officer, stated that he spent a hefty amount of time in "courting" his Tinder date. He mentioned that he had the guts to invite the match to meet and go out on a date after weeks of online communication. *I spend a lengthy and*

continuous amount of time. It is hard to say 'I like you' without any basis. I do this to women who are worth my time," he shared.

Green-yet-hidden

The "green-yet-hidden" script was used by the users who wanted to establish an on and offline sexual encounter with another user yet did not want it to be obvious during the conversations. Eight straight women used the "green-yet-hidden" script as they practiced being demure in opening up about their sexual desires to engage in casual sex. They paced for intimacy and focused first on establishing an emotional connection with their match before talking about sex. Most of them work for corporate offices in various financial districts in Metro Manila.

Selina, a twenty-one year old media planner, Scarlet, a twenty-four year old marketing officer, and Marsha, a twenty-two year old project monitoring and evaluation support staff, used codes such as "asking for coffee" as a way to point out that they wanted to sexually meet up with their matches. *"I already knew of the sexual code implied in the 'let's get some coffee' statement. I think that there is an agreement among Tinder users that if a girl asks for coffee, she wants to do something sexual,"* Selina explained. Scarlet was timid in hinting about her sexual desires. *"I am asked if I want to dine out and I would say that I want to drink coffee instead. The guy usually asks if I want it hot or cold then I will tell him that I want it hot because I will make him hot,"* she revealed. Marsha mentioned that she never initiated sexual conversations but if she was into that kind of a conversation, she would begin by complimenting the males and by sweet-talking them. She also used the "coffee" code in enticing the male to meet up. *"I would tell the guy to bring me coffee in my condo and that's it. I would say that I am alone in my house and I could use some hot coffee right now,"* she mentioned.

Louie, the freelance writer, and Mon, a twenty year old student and part time model, said that they made use of the “twenty questions” game as a way to start the sexual conversation. Louise said that she asked her match to answer 20 questions that could only be answered by a yes or a no. She explained: *“I just ask twenty questions. I ask a question then you answer. You ask me a question then I answer. I am usually kind in the beginning so I start with a non-sexual topic but I do have transition questions. If he bites the transition question like: ‘what do you like me to do to you?’ then I will be asking more sexual questions like what have they done and what haven’t they done. Do they want to try this type of sex? Do you want me to blow you? How many people have you hooked up with? Have you had threesomes? Of course, they’re going to ask me back and the kink gets better.”*

Mon also learned the game from a male friend. She mentioned that because she had the intent of inviting women to have sex with her and her boyfriend, she used context cues inside the questions. Similar to what Louise did, Mon also started with basic questions and ended with the quirkiest of all the questions. She stated: *“There are times when I use the 20 questions game. It was fun. The last question would always be ‘want come over?’ It’s a fun game... or like your place or mine? I went to his place cause I’m bored and after that the experience itself is below average and then he asked me if I want to have sex with his friend after that.”*

These narratives revealed that women consider pacing for intimacy as a form of sexual scripting when they engaged with their matches in Tinder. Some of them sexually initiated using small talk, compliments, and sweet words. There were those who directly asked for sexual meet ups. They also placed their matches as the objects of their desire because they knew that such would put them in a dating context. A majority of them were still traditional, as they wanted to be invited

rather than inviting their match for an offline or F-t-F meet up that led to either a sexual experience or a romantic relationship. The narratives further revealed that most women informants also paced for intimacy. This meant that they wanted to feel if the chats would really lead to something else or would remain to be a Tinder encounter. They also felt that they were the ones who maneuvered the conversations.

There were three gay informants who mentioned that they used codes in dealing with their match. Ariana, a twenty-one year old English tutor, stated that there is no clear stage in the conversation when a user can already ask about sex. She claimed that it depends on the agenda and the timing of the interaction. *“Tinder has a culture already,”* she said. After getting to know each other, trust will have to be built. One of the ways to establish that is by asking for the Facebook account. JCR, a twenty-nine year old media manager from one of the media networks in Manila, mentioned that he needed to validate if the person is real. *“If I checked all the photos, especially those that were tagged, then I can meet them already,”* he claimed. Only after a couple of chats and banter that arrangements are made and logistics are considered. College Boy, a twenty-one year old graduating university student in Manila, said that once there is already a bond between the daters and if ever they agree to a meet up, both will have to agree on an actual date. *“If we agree on what to do including the sexual positions and if we like each other’s body types, then we could meet,”* he shared. Kel, a twenty-four year old brand manager, mentioned that once arrangements are indeed made, then a meet up would happen. *“It is not necessarily sex on the first meeting. It depends on our agreements. If the person is kind of ‘game,’ then we have sex or on our next meeting. If the person is bad at conversations, then it’s the end of the line,”* he disclosed. There are Tinder users who use the meet up to gauge if the match is worthy of being invited to their place. Mr. R, a twenty-

seven year old communications manager, said that he learned his lessons well when it comes to directly inviting matches to his house. He shared: *"There was a time when I invited the guy in my condominium unit. I was shocked because he was different in his pictures. He sent a very filtered photo. I could have sent him away but I was ashamed to do it so I ended up entertaining him."*

During the meet up, sexual banter will ensue. Marko, 24 and a social media marketer, said that there are gay men who are straightforward and there are also those who wait for cues. *"I give cues. I tell the guy: 'maybe we can watch a film in my place?' because I have a lot of Torrent downloads and my place's sound system is so good,"* he stated.

Austin, 21 and a university student, said that mobile dating app disclosures do not lead to deepening of the relationship, as the aim of both daters is to only have sex after a short conversation. He mentioned that he did not even spend so much time in the app. *"I open it with the usual 'hi and hello' then if the guy asks 'where are you located?' then I would know that the match wants to have sex,"* he mentioned. Boy Palos also shared that if he and his match are in the same location, then the next part of the conversation would be about the time and place of the meet up. He said: *"I ask where he wants to eat and sets the expectations. If he wants to meet, I tell him that I get off from work around this time. If he agrees to the time, I tell him that we meet in this mall or go on a movie date or dine in or go to a coffee shop)."*

No straight male and lesbian informant used this type of sexual script.

Open and Seen

Most straight and gay male user-informants mentioned that they were open about their sexual intentions and would like to be straight-to-the-point in probing if their matches wanted to hook up. This meant that they either directly asked or planned out a

scheme to let their match agree to their intent to engage in casual sex. Eight straight men revealed that they planned out the process of introducing sexual topics to their matches. Rani, 27 and an auditor of a finance firm, Rille, 28 and a market research analyst, and Ash, a twenty-one year old administrative officer, were perhaps the most straightforward among the male informants in terms of asking for sex. Rani said that he sexually initiated the conversation especially if he was horny. *"I send a message: DTF (down to fuck) so that there is clarity that I am here to have fun,"* he mentioned. He also stated that he led the conversations because he knew that his match would not have the audacity to disclose sexual information. Rille also asked women to send sexually explicit pictures and was involved in a lot of sexual chats. *"I talk to them. I ask about blowjobs or if she wants it dog style,"* he shared. Ash also asked women to send pictures of their vagina in exchange of pictures of his dick. *"I am not shy to ask it because most of the people who have these apps are okay with these topics. As long as there is no pictures that has my face on it, I am okay with it,"* he furthered.

Ash also said that he asked about the sexual experiences of his matches by joking about it in the middle of the conversation. He explained: *"I would ask if she has a sexual experience. If she says that she has, then I will share a story about my friend who had the opportunity of doing video sex with a girl. Then, I will pretend that I will tell her that I wouldn't know what to do because I am shy to engage in anything sexual. If she tells me that she does not also like doing video sex, then I will ask her if she is into sending her pictures. Then, if she agrees, I will ask her if we can swipe nude pictures."*

All straight male user-informants also revealed that they consciously led the chats towards sex. They stated that they were straightforward in disclosing their sexual intents to women. Ash said that he asked his match about her past sexual practices because

it was satisfying to hear a woman's sexual narratives. He also said that he was put in a sexual mood when he heard women's ways of seeking and getting pleasure. *"I ask her about the things she does. It does make me horny. There are times when we even get to the point of sending nude pictures and doing video sex,"* he mentioned. Rille also was keen on asking his female match about her sexual practices. He said: *"I immediately ask about what she has done in the past. They would say that they liked giving blowjobs. They would tell me that they like doing it dog style. I do not have an experience with sex. I have not engaged in sex so I experienced being culturally shocked because these women were really aggressive. It boosted my curiosity. I got horny)."*

These narratives show that straight men plan their sexual conversations by both using direct and indirect scripts, which allowed them to lead the sexual conversations. Men also seemed to lead the play by directly asking about sex, hinting about their desires to do hook ups, and leading the play towards the actual sexual acts in offline settings.

Fifteen gay informants in this study used direct sexual scripts as evidenced by their straightforwardness in all of their Grindr and some of their Tinder conversations. The narratives revealed that they directly asked for hook ups. Nico, a twenty-one year old property specialist, said that once he opened the app, he would find the most good looking one near his location and send a message. *"I directly ask. 'Where are you?' and if the person responds, I reply: 'willing to meet here' so that he would know that I have the time to do quick fun,"* he stated.

The gay user-informants also disclosed their sexual needs to their match. Kurt, a twenty-three year old media planner, said that he told the person his preferred sexual position. *"I quickly tell them that I am bottom and if he is top and wants to meet, then I am free,"* he revealed. He also mentioned that Grindr users appropriated chat icons and

emojicons to reveal one's sexual position. *"In Grindr, when you indicate an 'arrow up' sign after your name, it means that the user is top. If you put the 'arrow down' sign, then you're bottom. You get to receive the dick,"* he explained.

They also negotiated their roles in the sexual encounters. MC, a twenty-one year old online English teacher, said Grindr users figured out how to decode the messages of their matches in the quickest way. *"Some are quick. The chat would always be: T or B? If he liked what you posted, then you'll be asked 'got a place here' then a GPS location will be sent,"* he mentioned. JJ, a twenty-six year old government employee, also said that if two tops got a match and if they agreed to meet, then they could still engage in sexual acts. *"Everyone is horny in Grindr, if both are top, then they would do oral sex, BJ. It is sad if both the communicators are bottoms, most likely move on to the next user,"* he shared.

Gay men's sexual scripts in Grindr were transactional. The researcher observed that they were direct to the point as seen on the way they asked if their match was available for a hook up. They also kept their conversations short in the app because they were more interested in the meet ups. Inside their conversations, they used sexual language that was direct to the point. They told their match that they wanted to have sex right after their chat. They offered their own homes or asked the partner if they could check in a nearby hotel. The researcher also noticed that they negotiated their sexual roles easily before meeting up for casual sex.

Only two straight women user-informants were up-front in telling male matches about their sexual desires. Aya, a twenty-one year old advocacy and communication officer, and MJ, a twenty-three year old researcher, stated that they did not find it hard to invite people to have sex. They both mentioned that Tinder was a platform that allowed them to be expressive without

being punished for it. Based on their experiences, they were not treated differently if they directly asked for sexual meet ups. Aya, for one, said that she had no qualms in asking men to go to her house to have sex. She noted: *"I know what I want and I think that eight out of 10 males in Tinder, malibog (full of lust). So I do not have any issues about me asking them to come over and do it. There are times when I ask multiple males to go to my house for orgy. I do not find it problematic because there is consent among us."*

MJ also said that she did not have any reason to feel guilty if she wants to do it with a guy. She revealed: *"App users like me have to accept the fact that in the west, Tinder is really used for hook ups. I only do exchanges with Caucasians so I know that these men want women who could challenge their ego so I ask. There are times when I directly ask: DTF or 'down to fuck' or NSA 'no strings attached' and foreigners like Asian women who are assertive."*

A few of the lesbian user-informants revealed that they out rightly asked their matches to go out for sex. Alex, a twenty-six year old master's student, said that she asked the match directly if she wanted to go out with them. *"I become flirty first. I tell her that I want to go out with her. I go straight to the point because I know that she knows that I am pertaining to sex when I ask her about going somewhere with me,"* she said. She mentioned that she had to be direct because she did not want to spend too much time with those who wanted romantic relationships. *"I do not like to be romantic in Tinder so why should I waste my time,"* she continued. Carrot Cake, a twenty-nine years old research consultant, said that during the times that she really wanted to engage in hook ups, she revealed her intent in her posts. *"I really post a message that I want to meet with other people for sexual purposes. I do not hide this because there is no other way in looking for partners but by posting about it. I think that it is clear among us users of these apps,"* she said. She mentioned that she would

type a message and blast it out to potential matches in the dating apps. *"I post 'female aged 30 here wanting to meet women with almost the same age, willing to meet up near your location, pm me',"* she stated.

Discussion

The findings revealed that there were three types of interpersonal sexual scripts that were performed by the user-informants. These scripts were used to state, reinforce, guide, and actualize the intentions of the users during the online dating process. These scripts were not exclusive to any gender but the researchers found that majority of the informants of a given gender group had similar narratives that led to these categories.

Sexual script formation and use in mobile dating apps revealed traditional and hypersexual dating practices among Filipino millennials. Men used direct means of forwarding their hook up intents while women used both direct and negotiated means in communicating their short-term sexual intentions. This finding supported literature that stated how women negotiate their sexual behaviors (Beres, 2010; Bertens et al., 2008; Burkett, 2010). On the one hand, in this study, men, either declaring themselves as straight or gay, whose masculine gender roles dictate assertiveness (Wiederman, 2005), have shown straightforward attempts to look for and ask about hook ups. On the other hand, females, either straight or gay, who are generally keen in showing behavioral restraint and personal control (Lippa 2001, Wiederman, 2010), used scripts that were relatively subtle and reluctant.

It also has revealed that even if millennial men still were open to inviting women to hook ups (Adebayo & Olonisakin, 2014; Amaro, 1995; Givaudan et al., 2005), Filipina millennials were also emphatic about their sexual expressions. This showed involvement in the negotiation of their desires

(Otto-Salaj et al., 2010; Otto-Salaj et al., 2008; Powell, 2010). Filipino millennial gay men and lesbians also used scripts that matched their intents. Whether they were up for hook ups or for long-term relationships, they showed cues that allowed them to decide on their sexual behaviors (Armstrong, England, & Fogarty, 2012; Walker, 2014). I noticed that there were still secrecy issues among lesbians in terms of revealing their insights and practices and this reflected previous findings on this matter (Gorman, 2003; Grov et al., 2013; Walker, 2014) but the researcher was also glad that he perceived a sense of gusto in stating the narratives of their sexual experiences. Results of this study on gay men's sexual scripts revealed a consistency with literature which claimed that they were open to sexual negotiations in online platforms especially with their prospective partners (Lewnard & Berrang-Ford, 2014; Wilkerson et al., 2012) and even sexual positions (Rice & Ross, 2014). The researcher noticed, however, that it was not part of any informant's script to ask or provide sero-status as it was thought that disclosing this information went against the sexual script of dating.

There were individuals who used the dating app as spaces for foreplay based on the sexual scripts. Most straight women, straight men, and gay men did their sexual foreplays in the apps by using direct or indirect language. The lesbian informants were the least sexual because most of them had the intention to find romantic dates in the dating app. The app was used for lurking and cruising just to check if there were potential romantic and dating partners. Straight women's reference to coffee and to the "twenty questions game" served as *pampainit*¹, to the match. The use of such codes during the conversation was a strategic, yet subtle, way for the user to sexually arouse the male match. Straight males used direct

¹ In this context, this Filipino slang connotes that two mobile app users are using their chat boxes to sexually talk to each other in order for the two of them to be horny or in the mood for sex.

language like DTF and NSA and sent "dick pics" to denote that they were ready and willing to sexually-satisfy their matches. Interestingly, some of the male users were only being sexual in the app without the intent of meeting up or doing the sexual act. It seemed that there was already a derived pleasure in the exchange of sexual banter and pictures of their private parts. Their notion of sexual encounter remained in its online form.

Gay men's use of direct sexual scripts clearly reflected their purpose to look for sex. Directly asking the match's sexual position, mentioning their own sexual preferences, asking about the availability of a place for sex, posting provocative pictures, and sending nude photos were exercised in order to mention to the would-be matches that they were willing, able, and available for sex.

In the straight women, straight men, and gay men groups, there seems to be a notion that the use of the app for sex was a conscious choice. The verbalization of their desires was part of their declarative knowledge in finding dates and engaging in hook ups. This means that the language use, as well as the use of photos and other means to self-present, was part of the users' strategic and conscious decisions to be sexual. The unwritten rules that governed the sexual nature of the app were manifested in the use of the codes and scripts. There were users, especially from the lesbian group, however, who resisted the rules because they had another agenda in using the app.

The study did not only show the ways that the user-informants' communicated their intents in the dating apps but also pointed out the traditional and offline process that they follow in doing online dating. Men were more inclined in planning and leading the way to the meet ups. They were also direct in their intents. They also claimed that they were active in seeking sex. Women paced for intimacy and would only hint at sexual engagements. They also sexually initiated by

using small and sweet talks. Lesbians concealed their intents to engage in sexual engagements and would subtly reveal their sexual escapades. Gay men were straightforward in telling their sexual intents. They directly asked for and responded to sexual invitations. They knew when to make the conversations about sex and about emotional attachment.

The dating process has also been modified by the app. In the past, Filipinos utilized the *panrereto* (networking) system or the recommendation from peers and family in order to find dates (Quirante, 2006) in both off and online platforms. This has changed in the mobile dating app platform where users are expected to have an individualized approach to his or her dating experiences. The mobile dating apps no longer needed peers and family members to serve as influencers in the dating initiation processes of young Filipino millennials. Their initiation, development, progress, and intents were highly individualized to the extent they no longer needed their peers and loved ones in their dating experiences. This contradicts previous literatures that mentioned that in the Philippines, the family remains to be an important force in the dating practices of adolescents (Torres, 2002; Osorio & Someros, 2016).

Mobile app *pagliligawan* (dating) no longer required the users to visit their potential partner's home and the act of *panunuyo* (courtship) was no longer done in the presence of the potential partner. Unlike before when males were tasked to initiate the courtship (Osorio & Someros, 2016; Reyes, 2014; Torres, 2002), mobile app dating could be started by anyone who found another user an attractive and/or ideal match. Mobility indeed changed the way individuals met their potential partners. Online platforms such as Tinder and Grindr were used as springboards for offline encounters. Intimacy expressions

have become hyper too as access to quick meet ups were facilitated by the dating apps.

Sexual scripts were created and used during the mobile dating process. The users revealed their intents by means of three scripts: "clean and non-green," "green-yet-hidden," and "open and seen." The "clean and non-green" script was used if there was no intent to be sexual from the user. Most lesbian informants used a non-sexual script because they were looking for women for long-term relationships. They were traditional and followed the norms of face-to-face interactions in engaging with their match. The "green-yet-hidden" script was used if the user had the intent to be sexual but did not want to be the initiator of any sexual discussion in the app. Most straight women used the middle sexual script that allowed them to be indirectly sexual. The "open and seen" script was used when users were outright in communicating their sexual intents. Most straight and gay men used the "open and seen" sexual script that enabled them to be direct in talking and negotiating sexual encounters.

Individuals act on the meanings of the mobile apps for them. This means that the mobile dating app users send messages, build profiles, and create scripts that construct their sensual intents in the platform. Also, sexual interactions occur within the socio-sensual and cultural contexts in which the users and situations happen. The mobile dating app users had an understanding as to what language and cues were to be used in order to denote non-sexual and sexual conversations. When users want the conversations to be sexually laden, then they use language to create that sexual meaning. Furthermore, meanings that are co-created by the users constitute the interactions that play on the rules of dating and sexual innuendos of the offline world. This means that the governing interactions in the mobile dating app is informed by the societal norms of dating, courtship, and hookups. Meanings are

continuously created and recreated through the interpretive process of sexual script formation and use during the social interaction.

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