

Social Penetration in Digital Spaces: Developing Interpersonal Relationships Through the Bumble Dating App

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90300175>

Received: 06 February 2025; Accepted: 10 February 2025; Published: 05 April 2025

ABSTRACT

This study examines the process of social penetration in developing interpersonal relationships in the digital space through the online dating app Bumble. A qualitative method with a phenomenological approach was used to understand the experiences and perceptions of Bumble users. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. The results show that Bumble usage patterns vary, influenced by factors such as age, occupation, and user objectives. Social penetration in Bumble occurs through stages of orientation, affective exchange, and stable exchange, with differing dynamics at each stage. Self-disclosure and the development of intimacy occur gradually, influenced by trust and comfort. In conclusion, this study provides insights into the factors influencing the development of interpersonal relationships on Bumble.

Keywords: Bumble, Social Penetration, Interpersonal Relationships, Digital Space, Online Dating App

BACKGROUND

In the digital era, Generation Z and Millennials dominate the use of digital platforms for various activities, including communication. According to data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2024, the number of internet users in Indonesia has reached 221,563,479 individuals, or 79.5% of the total population (APJII, n.d.)). The majority of active users come from Generation Z (34.40%) and Millennials (30.62%). Social media and instant messaging applications serve as the primary platforms for them to communicate, exchange information, and build interpersonal relationships (DIGITAL 2024: INDONESIA, n.d.)

One of the emerging digital phenomena is the use of online dating applications. A survey by (Populix, 2024) revealed that 63% of respondents use dating apps, with 52% of them belonging to the Millennial generation and 44% to Generation Z. This phenomenon is relatively new and has undergone a shift in usage objectives. As many as 56% of users utilize dating apps to find conversation partners, 48% out of curiosity, and 46% for entertainment rather than solely seeking romantic partners.

Bumble, as one of the most popular dating apps, has shown that 25% of its users successfully meet in person with someone they connected with through the platform. According to Forbes, Bumble has facilitated over 700 million matches and has led to 5,000 marriages and engagements (Sola, 2017) However, a survey by (Shane Co, 2024) indicates that Tinder has the highest success rate (29.6%), followed by (Bumble, n.d.) (12.9%) and Hinge (5%).

Despite the popularity of dating apps, their usage trends are declining. The "Annual Singles Dating Survey" by Lunch Actually (2024) reported that only 12% of respondents still use dating apps, marking a decrease compared to previous years. Several factors contribute to this decline, including: (1) the paradox of choice, where an abundance of options makes decision-making difficult; (2) dating fatigue, caused by the pressure to present one's best self and negative experiences such as encountering fake profiles; (3) the increasing trust in traditional matchmaking services due to stricter profile verification; and (4) the inadequacy of dating apps in

facilitating long-term relationships (Nuraini, 2024); (Carley Prendergast, n.d.)

As dating app usage declines, casual relationships are becoming increasingly popular. These relationships offer flexibility without long-term commitment while still adhering to certain rules and boundaries (Fournier, n.d.) Casual relationships provide individuals with the freedom to interact, yet they also pose potential negative consequences, such as ambiguity in relationship status and challenges in forming serious relationships in the future.

In the context of interpersonal relationships, the Social Penetration Theory explains that relationships develop through a gradual process of self-disclosure. An ideal relationship maintains a balance between openness and privacy protection (Griffin, 2012) However, dating apps often hinder this process due to a lack of trust, rapid communication, and the phenomenon of ghosting.

This study selects Bumble as the research object for several reasons. First, Bumble's popularity among Millennials and Generation Z. The Populix (2024) survey ranks Bumble as the third most-used dating app after Tinder and Tantan. Second, Bumble's unique feature that allows women to initiate conversations aims to create a safer and more equal environment for digital interactions (Bivens & Hoque, 2018) Third, Bumble has the potential to foster more genuine and meaningful relationships compared to other dating apps (Yashari, 2015)

Based on the discussion above, this study formulates the main research question: How does the process of social penetration contribute to the development of interpersonal relationships in digital spaces through the Bumble application? The objective of this research is to assess the role of social penetration in the development of interpersonal relationships via Bumble.

Theory

The postpositivist paradigm acknowledges that reality exists independently of the researcher; however, the understanding of this reality can never be entirely objective. This is due to the influence of values, beliefs, and the researcher's subjective experiences in interpreting the phenomenon under study (Sugiyono, n.d.). This paradigm asserts that scientific knowledge cannot be produced with absolute objectivity, as it is always shaped by the researcher's perspective. Some key characteristics of postpositivism include recognizing the existence of an incompletely comprehensible reality, the use of interpretation and construction in forming scientific knowledge, and sensitivity to prevailing social values (Mirza Ronda, 2018). In practice, this paradigm demands that researchers remain open to various perspectives and be willing to revise research findings based on the evidence collected.

In this study, the postpositivist approach allows for a deeper exploration of Bumble users' experiences in developing interpersonal relationships through social penetration in digital spaces. This approach is relevant because it emphasizes the importance of context and interpretation in understanding complex social phenomena in the digital era. Consequently, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals interact and establish relationships within the dynamic online environment.

The social penetration theory, introduced by Altman and Taylor, conceptualizes human personality as a series of layers resembling an onion. The outermost layers reflect a public identity accessible to anyone, while the deepest layers represent more private aspects that are less readily shared. Social interaction enables individuals to gradually reveal layers of their personality, depending on the level of trust and intimacy established in a relationship. General information, such as age, occupation, and hobbies, is typically shared during the early stages of interaction, whereas more personal information, such as values and life experiences, is disclosed only to those deemed highly trustworthy (Griffin, 2012)).

Self-disclosure is a key factor in the development of social relationships. Individuals tend to disclose information when the perceived benefits outweigh the risks. However, this process is not always linear, as individuals may withdraw from relationships under certain conditions—a phenomenon known as depenetration. This theory also considers the comparison level (CL) and comparison level for alternatives

(CLalt) in assessing relationship satisfaction and stability. CL refers to the standard individuals use to evaluate their relationships based on past experiences, while CLalt considers the potential benefits of alternative relationships as a basis for maintaining or ending a current relationship (Griffin, 2012). Thus, the theory highlights the importance of balancing benefits and risks in every social interaction.

In the digital era, the concept of digital space is essential for understanding technology-mediated social interactions. Digital space is a virtual environment that enables communication without physical constraints, characterized by virtuality, interactivity, connectivity, dynamic content, and accessibility. Brown and (Brown, 2000) emphasize that digital space is not merely a medium for exchanging information but also a platform where information is produced, modified, and collectively interpreted. (Rainie, 2012)) further explain that digital space functions as a new social system that transforms how individuals build and maintain relationships. Meanwhile, Meyrowitz (1985) argues that the boundary between public and private spaces has become increasingly blurred due to digital media developments, allowing individuals to manage their identities more flexibly.

The concept of digital space is closely related to mass communication theory, as proposed by (McQuail's, 2010) particularly in the context of new media. New media encompass various digital technologies that enable interactive and personalized communication. Key characteristics of new media include digitalization, media convergence, interactivity, audience fragmentation, and decentralized communication. Interactivity is the most prominent aspect, allowing audiences not only to receive messages but also to provide feedback and create their own content. Additionally, new media facilitate symmetrical communication, where individuals can act as both message senders and receivers—unlike the one-way communication pattern in traditional media. McQuail also highlights the phenomenon of anonymity in digital communication, which allows individuals to conceal or modify their identities, creating new dynamics in social interactions within digital spaces.

One relevant application in the context of digital space and social penetration is Bumble, a digital dating platform that offers a unique approach to online relationship-building. Unlike other dating apps, Bumble grants greater control to female users by requiring them to initiate conversations after a "match" occurs. This approach aims to create a safer and more comfortable environment while reducing the likelihood of unwanted messages. This innovation also aligns with the concept of female empowerment in the digital world, positioning Bumble as a "feminist dating application" (BFF & BIZZ, 2025). In addition to its dating mode, Bumble offers features such as Bumble Bizz for professional networking and Bumble BFF for making friends, demonstrating its flexibility in meeting users' diverse social needs. Thus, Bumble is not merely a dating app but also a social platform that reflects the evolving dynamics of relationships in the digital age.

Overall, this study highlights how the postpositivist paradigm, social penetration theory, and the concept of digital space contribute to understanding social interactions in online dating applications. The evolution of new media and digital technologies has reshaped communication patterns and interpersonal relationships, enabling individuals to establish connections beyond physical and geographical limitations. Through a postpositivist approach, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of social penetration in digital spaces, particularly in the context of Bumble as a medium for interpersonal interaction in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a phenomenological approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of Bumble users in the process of social penetration to establish interpersonal relationships. This approach enables researchers to explore the meaning and experiences of users comprehensively within the digital context.

A qualitative research method is utilized, as it allows for the collection of rich and in-depth data regarding Bumble users' experiences and perceptions. Through this method, researchers can examine users' experiences in detail and understand the underlying contexts that shape them.

The research subjects in this study consist of Bumble users who have been using the application for at least three months and have undergone the social penetration process in forming interpersonal relationships. The study examines both successful and unsuccessful experiences in this process.

The data collection techniques employed in this study include in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. In-depth interviews are conducted with Bumble users who meet the research criteria to explore their experiences and perceptions in the social penetration process. Questionnaires serve as an initial instrument for screening participants and collecting preliminary data. The use of random sampling in distributing questionnaires allows researchers to minimize direct contact with respondents, ensuring that the data obtained remain objective and free from value-based interventions. Additionally, document analysis is conducted on user profiles and conversations within the Bumble application to understand how interpersonal relationships are established on the platform.

The data sources in this study include Bumble users who have been using the application for at least three months and have experienced social penetration, user profiles containing information about their identities, interests, and preferences, as well as in-app conversations that illustrate the dynamics of user interactions in forming interpersonal relationships.

To ensure data validity, this study employs source triangulation and theoretical triangulation. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing data obtained from various informants to enhance the credibility of the research findings ((Alfansyur et al., 2020)). Meanwhile, theoretical triangulation involves comparing the interpretative concepts generated by the researcher with various theories or perspectives that share similar theoretical structures. This approach helps researchers gain broader insights and provides a stronger theoretical foundation for explaining the studied phenomenon ((Sapto, n.d.))

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, questionnaires were used as an initial instrument to screen participants and collect preliminary data. As a result, six participants were selected, all of whom had used the Bumble application for at least three months and had undergone the process of social penetration in building interpersonal relationships through the platform.

The first participant, FTH, is a 20-year-old university student who has been using Bumble since 2020. The second participant, KRN, is a 24-year-old woman working at a digital agency in Tangerang who started using the application in 2021. The third participant, IZ, is a 26-year-old male graphic designer who began using Bumble in July 2024. Meanwhile, DTA, the fourth participant, is a 30-year-old woman working in the creative industry who has been using the application since 2022. The fifth participant, JEY, is a 34-year-old male entrepreneur who started using Bumble in 2022. Lastly, MK, a 43-year-old male architect, has been using Bumble since 2016.

Each participant exhibited different usage patterns and objectives when using Bumble. FTH, for instance, spends approximately five to six hours per day interacting on the application when engaged in an intense conversation, whereas the frequency decreases to three to four times a week when there is no active interaction. On average, FTH matches with four to five other users per day. Her primary purpose for using Bumble is to seek casual relationships, influenced by her social circle.

KRN demonstrates a similar usage pattern, with three to ten matches per day and an average daily usage duration of around six hours. Initially, she used the application to seek a long-term relationship, but her purpose later shifted toward casual relationships. In contrast, IZ was drawn to Bumble due to its superior user interface and user experience compared to other dating applications. IZ uses Bumble similarly to a messaging app, routinely opening it to reply to messages or monitor potential matches, with his main objective being to seek casual relationships.

DTA uses Bumble for an average of two hours per day, three days a week. She is particularly interested in the

app's concept, which allows women to initiate conversations first. Her goal is to meet new people and explore the possibilities of both casual and committed relationships. Meanwhile, JEY uses the application almost daily to communicate with other users or monitor new matches, primarily seeking casual relationships. Lastly, MK, the final participant, uses Bumble to seek both casual relationships and intimate, commitment-free relationships. He spends between two and six hours per day engaging with matched users.

Based on the collected data, the participants' usage patterns of Bumble vary, influenced by factors such as age, profession, and individual objectives for using the application. This variation indicates that social penetration in the digital context has its own dynamics, depending on users' experiences and expectations regarding online dating applications.

Stages of Social Penetration

The orientation stage in the social penetration process within dating applications such as Bumble represents a crucial initial phase in establishing interpersonal relationships. At this stage, individuals exchange basic information and strive to create a positive first impression. In-depth interviews with six participants revealed that communication strategies during the orientation stage vary significantly depending on individual preferences and objectives.

Some participants prefer to initiate conversations with simple greetings or general questions about residence and occupation as a way to find common ground and build deeper conversations. Others choose lighter topics, such as interests in music, movies, or specific hobbies, to create a more relaxed communication atmosphere. Additionally, communication strategies are influenced by the need to maintain privacy, with some participants opting to use pseudonyms or limit the personal information shared during the initial interaction.

At this stage, first impressions play a significant role in determining the direction of subsequent conversations. Participants generally attempt to build a positive image through light compliments, humor, or identifying commonalities with their conversation partners. This approach aligns with social psychology theories that emphasize the substantial impact of first impressions on the development of relationships. Furthermore, participants tend to avoid sensitive or overly personal topics at the initial stage to maintain communication comfort and prevent potential incompatibility.

The orientation stage functions as an initial filter in assessing whether an interaction is worth progressing to the next stage. Participants use various indicators, such as shared interests and communication styles, to determine whether they wish to continue the conversation or end it. Differences in communication patterns are also observed in the varying levels of openness among individuals—some participants are more cautious in sharing personal information, while others are more open and direct in expressing their objectives and expectations for using the application.

As comfort and trust increase, individuals enter the exploratory affective exchange stage, where communication becomes more personal and emotional. At this stage, some participants begin to provide more specific compliments and demonstrate increased attention by maintaining communication frequency and following up after meetings. Conversations at this stage often evolve from merely exchanging basic information to deeper discussions about daily activities, personal experiences, and even certain emotions.

Interview findings also indicate that communication patterns at this stage are influenced by individual preferences in expressing emotions and openness in sharing personal stories. Some participants feel more comfortable sharing daily experiences rather than discussing deeper emotions, while others use humor and compliments to build stronger connections. Additionally, participants employ various strategies in responding to emotionally charged conversations, such as offering empathetic responses or redirecting the topic when they feel uncomfortable.

Most participants also begin expanding their conversations to broader discussions, such as social phenomena, political issues, or trends in social media. Interactions through additional features, such as voice calls or voice messages, also become part of this stage for participants who feel more comfortable communicating verbally

rather than through text.

The affective exchange stage is a critical phase in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, where individuals start sharing deeper thoughts, emotions, and intimate secrets. At this stage, trust and vulnerability gradually develop, creating an environment that supports open self-expression. Based on in-depth interviews with six participants, this study identifies various patterns and approaches employed in navigating this stage. Each participant exhibits different tendencies in sharing personal information, where openness is often influenced by the level of comfort and the intended nature of the relationship.

The first participant, FTH, revealed that she is more open in casual relationships that have lasted long enough to establish comfort. In such relationships, she tends to share lighthearted stories, such as funny experiences, without delving into deeper topics. FTH also emphasized that she does not feel the need to verify further information once intense communication has been established. However, she avoids discussions about past relationships or romantic history, preferring instead to talk about specific events from the past.

The second participant, KRN, exhibits a more cautious approach in sharing personal information. She prefers to discuss general issues or work-related topics initially and only shares personal information after ensuring the potential for a meaningful relationship. KRN also uses social media to verify the information received from conversation partners but tends to avoid overly personal or sensitive topics.

The third participant, IZ, considers relationship objectives as a determining factor in the pace of feeling comfortable sharing information. In casual relationships, IZ engages in more relaxed conversations and does not overthink the content of discussions. Conversely, in serious relationships, he is more cautious and ensures that communication is built on deeper engagement. Trust is established through direct communication and physical meetings.

The fourth participant, DTA, stated that she begins sharing personal information after several meetings and frequently verifies details through platforms such as Instagram or LinkedIn to ensure her conversation partner's honesty. DTA also revealed that she is more open only when the conversation partner exhibits clear emotional interest.

The fifth participant, JEY, is more open in sharing information within casual relationships but more cautious in serious relationships. In this regard, he uses social media for information verification and demonstrates subtle attentiveness through inquiries about daily activities. However, JEY tends to withhold negative emotions and only shares moments of happiness spontaneously.

The findings from these interviews support the concept of the affective exchange stage in social penetration theory, illustrating that as interpersonal relationships develop, individuals become increasingly open in sharing personal information, emotions, and deeper experiences.

Overall, these findings indicate that openness, trust, and communication intensity are the primary factors in the affective exchange stage. As relationships develop, individuals become more comfortable sharing more personal topics, such as emotions and past experiences. Verification processes, whether direct or through social media, also play a crucial role in building and maintaining trust. However, variations exist in how individuals experience this stage, influenced by relationship goals, past experiences, personality traits, and the media used. In more serious relationships, individuals tend to be more cautious in sharing personal information, whereas in casual relationships, information sharing occurs more spontaneously and informally.

In the context of online interactions, such as dating applications, understanding the affective exchange stage has significant implications. First, trust-building is a fundamental element in virtual relationships, given the limited physical interaction. Second, flexibility in communication is essential to accommodate the rhythm and preferences of each individual in sharing information. Third, although social media platforms like Bumble can facilitate initial connections, direct interaction remains necessary to establish deeper intimacy. Therefore, despite variations in its application, the affective exchange stage remains relevant in developing interpersonal relationships both online and offline.

During the stable exchange stage in interpersonal relationship theory, individuals develop a deeper understanding of each other, establish consistent interaction patterns, and hold realistic expectations regarding the continuation of the relationship. This stage is characterized by commitment, intimacy, interdependence, and stability. Based on in-depth interviews with six participants using the Bumble dating application, this study uncovers various dynamics within the relationships formed. Although most participants were in the early stages of a relationship or engaged in casual relationships, they categorized their relationships based on duration, communication intensity, comfort, and emotional closeness.

The first participant, FTH, initially sought casual relationships but often struggled to find more serious connections. In an effort to build closeness, FTH initiated conversations with lighthearted stories about personal life, continuing communication through other platforms such as Line or Instagram after face-to-face meetings. Despite lasting nearly three months, the relationship remained casual without progressing into a more serious commitment. The second participant, KRN, felt more comfortable communicating after meeting in person. At the beginning of interactions, she avoided serious discussions, and conversations often transitioned to other platforms after the initial meeting. Although communication became more superficial, the relationship remained relaxed.

The third participant, IZ, who had previously experienced ghosting, exercised more caution in forming expectations. He was more open after in-person meetings but continued to avoid deep or serious conversations in the early stages of the relationship. The fourth participant, DTA, demonstrated flexibility in seeking relationships, depending on the context and the objectives of both parties. She categorized relationships based on duration and level of intimacy, distinguishing between platonic relationships and those involving physical closeness. The fifth participant, JEY, divided relationships into two main categories: those centered on sexual fulfillment and those based on deep conversations. Meanwhile, the sixth participant, MK, classified relationships according to specific needs, such as religious, interpersonal, or shared interests.

Based on the analysis, most participants categorized their relationships according to specific aspects such as duration, communication intensity, comfort, and emotional closeness. While there was a tendency to remain open to the possibility of a more serious relationship in the future, most relationships remained casual, with low expectations regarding depth and long-term commitment. This study suggests that online dating applications like Bumble facilitate the initial stages of relationships; however, the relationships formed tend to be pragmatic and flexible, focusing on comfort and personal needs without clear long-term expectations.

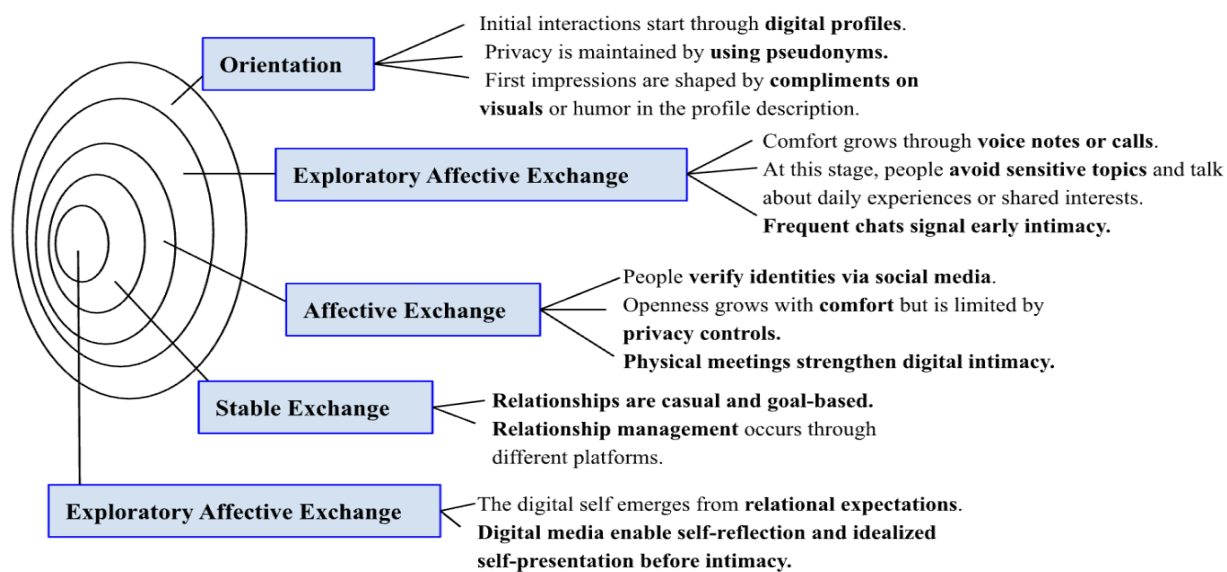
The concept of the core self refers to the fundamental elements that shape an individual's identity, including beliefs, values, and attitudes that form the essence of one's self-perception. In the context of social penetration theory, the core self is gradually revealed as interpersonal relationships develop, with trust and intimacy playing crucial roles. This study explores how the core self is disclosed in the experiences of Bumble users through in-depth interviews with six participants.

The key findings from these interviews indicate that communication on Bumble is often hindered by difficulties in maintaining contact and concerns about rejection, which affect trust and openness in relationships. Bumble serves as a platform to initiate communication, where most participants reported not feeling entirely comfortable sharing personal information in the early stages of interaction. Trust is more easily established with individuals known in real life, while relationships formed on Bumble often remain limited to light conversations, with interaction intensity dependent on conversational compatibility. However, as communication becomes more intense and relationships progress, intimacy can develop, particularly after face-to-face meetings.

Several participants revealed that although they started conversations on Bumble with the hope of finding a connection, most relationships did not last long or were limited to initial meetings before communication ceased. Nevertheless, some participants experienced deeper relationships that emerged after multiple meetings and more intense communication. This process of self-disclosure occurs gradually and is influenced by the level of comfort and trust built between both parties.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the use of dating applications such as Bumble influences the disclosure of core self-concept in interpersonal relationships. These applications provide individuals with a space to explore their identities before meeting in person, while face-to-face interactions remain a crucial factor in building intimacy. Trust and the quality of communication within these relationships serve as key factors that enable individuals to share more personal aspects of their core self-concept. Furthermore, the process of self-disclosure is not static but continuously evolves alongside life experiences and social interactions.

Thus, dating applications like Bumble not only function as tools for initiating relationships but also offer a profound social context for understanding how the core self-concept is formed and expressed. The combination of online and offline interactions enriches interpersonal relationship experiences, facilitates more comprehensive self-disclosure, and supports the development of a dynamic core self-concept.



The onion model diagram in the digital space based on the research findings.

Self-disclosure in the social penetration theory proposed by Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor can be differentiated into two dimensions: depth and breadth. Depth refers to the level of intimacy in self-disclosure, ranging from very general information to highly personal details. Meanwhile, breadth relates to the number of life aspects disclosed, from one or two areas to nearly all aspects of an individual's life. The self-disclosure process can be described through four categories based on depth and breadth: low depth and low breadth, high depth and low breadth, low depth and high breadth, and high depth and high breadth. Intimate relationships are characterized by deep and broad self-disclosure, where individuals share personal information covering various aspects of their lives.

Based on data collected from six informants, there are variations in the depth and breadth of self-disclosure at each stage of interaction. In the early stages of interaction, both men and women tend to disclose safe and light topics, such as hobbies, work, and shared interests. More personal and sensitive topics, such as family issues or traumatic experiences, are typically avoided in the initial communication. Over time, as comfort and trust increase, self-disclosure becomes deeper and broader, covering more aspects of personal life, including life views, values, and emotional experiences. However, some sensitive topics continue to be avoided, particularly at the early stages of the relationship.

The self-disclosure process in the Bumble application indicates a gradual development of intimacy. This intimacy grows alongside the comfort and trust established between the two individuals. Direct meetings play a crucial role in accelerating deeper self-disclosure, as face-to-face interactions allow for more effective nonverbal communication. The type of relationship sought by users also influences the self-disclosure pattern;

in casual relationships, individuals tend to be more open and quick in sharing personal information, whereas in more serious relationships, they tend to be more selective and cautious.

There are differences in self-disclosure approaches between men and women. Women tend to be more cautious and often wait for men to initiate communication or show interest. They are also more expressive in expressing their feelings. In contrast, men tend to maintain a certain distance and are often less open about their feelings at the early stages of interaction. Furthermore, the purpose of using the application also affects the self-disclosure pattern. Men are more focused on achieving an ultimate goal, such as a direct meeting or a long-term relationship, while women pay more attention to the gradual process of building emotional connections.

The frequency of interaction among Bumble users shows significant variation. Based on interviews with six informants, factors such as interest level, comfort, and shared interests influence the frequency and intensity of communication. Some users are more responsive in replying to messages, while others are slower or inconsistent in their responses. The duration of conversations also varies, depending on the level of comfort and the depth of the topics discussed. Additionally, there are specific interaction patterns based on the preferences of each informant. For instance, some users prefer text messaging, while others are more comfortable using voice notes or making phone calls. Communication patterns may also change as comfort levels in interaction increase.

The speed of penetration, or the process of opening up by sharing personal information, also varies among individuals. Several factors influence this speed, including the intensity of communication, the frequency of face-to-face meetings, and the presence of shared interests and values between the two individuals. Users who feel more comfortable and secure in communicating are more likely to open up quickly and share personal information. Past experiences also play a role in determining how fast an individual feels ready to share more about themselves. Overall, the dynamics of self-disclosure in digital spaces, particularly in dating applications like Bumble, are influenced by a combination of psychological, social, and technological aspects that interact with each other.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the use of the Bumble application varies depending on users' age, occupation, and objectives, which in turn affect the dynamics of social penetration in the digital space. The process of social penetration begins with the orientation stage, where individuals exchange basic information and aim to create a positive impression. Next, the affective exchange stage is characterized by more personal and emotional communication, before progressing to the stable exchange stage, which is typically casual. Self-disclosure and intimacy development occur gradually, influenced by trust and comfort between individuals. Overall, this study provides insights into the factors that influence the development of interpersonal relationships on Bumble.

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