

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING DATING THROUGH AGENCIES
FOR MATE SELECTION IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA.

BY
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DECLARATION

I declare that the work contained in this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university/ institution for consideration of any certification. This thesis has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other sources including the internet, these are specifically accredited and references cited in line with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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This thesis has been submitted with approval of the faculty supervisors;

Signature_____

Dr. Rahab Nyaga

Date: _____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my late husband Michael Murungu Macharia and to my children, Irene, Maurice, Bancy and Martin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the Almighty God for opening doors in every aspect for me to study in this field of my passion, Marriage and Family Therapy, and for raising a standard for me that despite the challenge of serious long term illness and home going of my husband, made it possible for me to complete it.

I want to most sincerely recognize Pan Africa Christian(PAC) University for giving me an opportunity to further my studies in this field of Marriage and Family Therapy, the field of my passion. I would want to express my heartfelt warmth and appreciation to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Margaret Muthwii and the entire university administration for holding my hand, thereby making me experience a deep sense of belonging which encouraged me to carry on and not give up after I lost my husband during the course of this study.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the environmental factors influencing dating through agencies for mate selection in Nairobi County, Kenya. Specifically, to assess the sufficiency of dating agencies in Kenya, explore factors influencing young adults' use of dating agencies for mate selection, and to document young adults' views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection. The study was guided by the Rapid Social Change theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design; a sample size of three dating agencies was selected from a pool of nine. Simple random sampling technique was applied to select the three agencies. data tools were mailed out to all the participating clients in the three agencies where 81 clients responded over a three-week period. Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaire tools and key informant interviews. The administrators of the three agencies participated as key informants for data triangulation and validation. It was established that dating agencies were operational in Nairobi and were accessible by way of email, telephone, internet or even physically visiting the offices. However, the awareness within the larger population of the existence of dating services was quite low. The pool of those enrolled for the service was quite small and largely comprised of women seeking husbands. Only a small proportion of the respondents were successful at securing a mate through the agencies. A substantial proportion of users still hoped for a better match than the one already profiled for them. The most critical environmental factors that resulted to the use of dating through agencies were: the amount of money, commitment and time spent on night outs in search of a mate, difficulties in naturally finding someone with similar interests, and unprecedented relationship break ups that left casualties with very little time for finding other potential mates on short notice. There was a lot of stigma associated with dating agencies and indifference on the fact that people using dating agencies were desperate. Recommendations were that awareness creation be increased and that more men be encouraged to register. Further research was suggested on non environmental factors influencing the use of dating agencies for mate selection and on the views of non-users of dating agencies regarding mate selection through dating agencies.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ICT	Information Communication Technology
KICC	Kenyatta International Conference Centre
KPDS	Kenya Population Data Sheet
PAC	Pan Africa Christian
RSCT	Rapid Social Change Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TV	Television

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This research study explored the environmental factors influencing dating through agencies for mate selection in Nairobi County, Kenya. Chapter one addresses issues related to the topic to justify the gap leading to the study. More specifically, it addresses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. It also outlines justification of the study, Scope of the study, limitations, and delimitations and assumptions of the study.

Background to the Study

Dating is the initiation of romantic relationships (Burton, Halpern-Felsher, Rankin, Rehm, & Humphreys, 2010). A dating agency is a curious institution providing an activity that is separate from selecting a mate, yet offering valuable experience by providing a pool of alternatives which would lead to mate selection. Mate selection and finding a long-term partner is therefore the culmination of a process of dating (Banker, Kaestle & Allen, 2010).

The breakdown of the traditional society has triggered the inception of organised outfits with the intent of assisting the young adult on mate selection. These outfits that build a structured profile database of those seeking a mate with the intent of providing a pool of alternatives is what this study refers to as dating agencies. World over, relationship help is a booming business these days (Hollander, 2011). Theories of life-span development describe mate selection and finding a long-term partner as central to young adulthood (Banker et al., 2010)

In Kenya, a young adult is defined as one aged between 18-34 years and constitute 30% of the Kenyan population (Government of Kenya, 2010). It is in the young

adulthood that one develops autonomy from the 'family-of-origin', and then establishes different levels of friendship with others outside the family of origin (Nyaga, 2011). Some of those friendships develop into a deeper intimacy that is romantic and may culminate in mate selection (Nyaga, 2011; and Yahya & Boag, 2014).

Researches on human societies around the world suggest a deep evolutionary history of mate selection practices that stem back to early modern humans. These practices vary considerably from culture to culture, ranging from strict prescriptions of arranged marriage partners by parents and kin, to unregulated individual mate selection (Walker, Hill, Flinn & Ellsworth, 2011). Society is constantly changing, which translates into continuing change in social networks responsible for mate selection. Penn (2011) says that modernization has involved an expansion of individualism and autonomy, and diminished the traditional communal societies.

In the 18th Century America, arranged marriages by parents slowly gave way to individual mate selection (Kenslea, 2006). According to Jason, Reichler & Rucker (2001), in the twentieth Century America, the most important setting where young adults began relating was in school. Other settings were working places, social functions, and through friends. Now, dating agencies online make it possible to access a hugely larger network of prospective partners who would not have been reached in former periods (Conhaim, 2004). The mate selection pattern change from selected partners by parents to autonomous choice has been documented in Peru since the nineteenth century and in Plymouth (Demos, 2002). According to Farrer & Gavin (2009), the Japanese traditionally preferred mediated forms of dating as a way of reducing the uncertainties and anxieties associated with meeting complete strangers.

Now, they are turning to other forms of organised “marriage hunting”, *konkatsu*, which include online dating.

In Africa, traditional methods of mate selection, which largely constituted of parents’ choices, have slowly given way to autonomy of choice for the young adult. This is because the traditional African family of the 20th century, which was based in the village, where elders made decisions in mate selection, has diminished. From one ethnic group in the African continent to the other, the young adult’s autonomy of mate selection has replaced the traditional methods (Kinoti, 2012; Masango, 2006; & Ndun’gu & Mwaura, 2005). Examples include the Shona ethnic group of Zimbabwe, traditional Togolese societies, and Mauritian adolescents (Rambaree, 2008). According to Hazan & Campa, (2013) one’s social network provides the ‘pool of alternatives’ in mate selection. This network is shaped by various institutionally organised arrangements (Kalmijn & Flap, 2001) as society evolves.

While the institution of dating in traditional cultures globally was heavily regulated by parents and close kin, individualism, which leads to autonomy of mate selection, dominates the contemporary society (Walker, Hill, Flinn, & Ellsworth, 2011). According to Jaffe (2002), the type of mate selection at work in a given species will affect the evolution of social behaviour. This study assumes that it is this autonomy of mate choice, requiring a pool of alternatives, which has led to the initiation of dating agencies.

When the traditional sources of guidance are weakened and discredited, as they have been for some time, the resultant confusion and uncertainty pushes one to seek the help of experts, credentialed or self-styled (Hollander, 2011).

Statement of the Problem.

While the developmental task of mate selection is expected to be resolved during young adulthood, dating chances and consequently mate selection have become tough because the traditional methods are no longer working (Weru, 2000). Many young people who are well educated are unable to find spouses as they lack time for socialising in the fast paced society which is characterised by rapidly changing socio-economic structures (Ondego, 2003). Tired of waiting for the right person to come along as the tradition has been, men and women in Nairobi are looking for other ways of meeting the right spouse (Weru, 2000).

This fact was demonstrated by an audience turnout in the city when a foreign based bible preacher organised a conference on 4th September, 2013 whose purpose was to assist singles to find mates (Gisesa, 2013). A plenary hall with a sitting capacity in excess of 5,000 was filled to capacity long before the speaker arrived, and police had to be deployed to control the crowds of singles, mainly women, who turned up to be helped on how to find a mate in good time (Gisesa, 2013). This fact, stirred up the need to examine the environmental factors influencing dating through agencies for mate selection in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to establish the influence of dating agencies on mate selection in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives: -

- i. To explore the sufficiency of dating agencies for mate selection in Nairobi county

- ii. To find out the environmental factors influencing young adults' use of dating agencies for mate selection.
- iii. To document young adults' views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection.

Research Questions

- i. Are dating agencies sufficient for mate selection in Nairobi County, Kenya?
- ii. What are the environmental factors influencing young adults' use of dating agencies for mate selection in Kenya?
- iii. What are the views of young adults on dating through agencies for mate selection?

Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on a number of assumptions. Firstly, that dating agencies were available in Nairobi County, Kenya, and there were a sizeable number of young adults seeking assistance in mate selection from dating agencies. Secondly, that the respondents would give correct, open and honest information regarding their dating experiences. Thirdly, that the young adults seeking help from dating agencies in Nairobi County were exposed to similar circumstances regarding mate selection, even if each individual could only report from their personal point of view.

Justification of the Study

This study was driven by the need to address the gap created by diminished traditional dating methods, through exposing the views of young adults on dating through agencies as a means of mate selection.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would enlighten the dating, marriage and family therapists on agent based dating pertaining mate selection in Kenya. It would also

enlighten the dating agency practitioners on how to niche the market depending on the needs identified by the study population. The study would also provide insights to policy makers on the need (if any) for regulation of the agency based dating industry.

Scope of the Study

The focus of this study was on young adults located within Nairobi County, Kenya, who have registered with any dating agencies.

Limitations of the Study

Dating is a highly private matter of the heart hence a challenge to access the young adults who use dating agencies. It was also challenging to find young adults willing to honestly report on their views and experiences about dating agencies.

Delimitations of the Study

The researcher worked with the administrators of existing dating agencies in Nairobi County in order to access the young adults enlisted in their services. The study adopted anonymous questionnaire tools for data collection where the respondents were not required to provide personal information that would positively identify them.

Chapter Summary

The chapter has presented the basis of the study which includes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions and significance of the study. It also explained the scope, the assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study. The review of literature is presented in Chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents review of literature related to the environmental factors influencing dating through agencies for mate selection. The section specifically presents literature on the sufficiency of dating agencies for the young adults, factors influencing young adults to date through agencies, and the documented views of young adults regarding dating through agencies for mate selection. It also outlines the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

Sufficiency of Dating Agencies to Young Adults

Sufficiency refers to the availability, adequacy and accessibility barriers faced by young adults in admission to dating agencies. On mate selection, the picture is largely one of increasing diversity while addressing the need (Weston & Qu, 2014). There are numerous dating agencies all over the world, some online and others offering face-to-face interactions. Mobile phones can be used to facilitate face to face interactions (Shrum, Wesley, Mbatia, Palackal, Dzorgbo, Duque, & Ynalvez, 2010). The primary business of dating agencies is to initiate dating.

A 21st century report by Stampler (2014), on current dating initiators in the contemporary American society, indicates that access to pool of dating alternatives has changed. It is now built into a device they carry and can check up to some 150 times a day; that is the Smartphone. Online dating sites like eHarmony and Match.com, initiated in America, are designed to narrow down an endless stream of potential matches to ‘that one right fit’, the presumed goal being the user’s exit from the game. Stampler (2014) reports findings by Pew Research Centre in America, that

1 in 10 Americans has used a dating site or app, and that these online sites are available all over the globe where there is internet

Farrer & Gavin (2009) report Japan as an early internet adopter and mobile platforms such as cell phones are widely accessible. This has made online dating more popular above other forms of dating, with the advantage that one does not have to meet the other until they are more secure. In Japan, traditional dating institutions, where parents selected mates for their young adults, account for less than one-tenth of mate selection, meaning the more than 90 percent of young adults have to turn to their own ways, including dating agencies, to find a mate. Online dating is also popular and easily accessible to young adults in Turkey (Hatice & Melek, 2010).

Rambaree (2008) states that though Mauritius is considered to be a conservative society that treats issues of romance and dating for the young person as a taboo, the government has an ambitious programme to turn the Island into a cyber-Island. This campaign has attracted the young people to new technologies, mainly mobile phones and computers. This gives them liberal access to the internet, where they are finding it easy to connect and date online, making the moral conservation idea a paradox.

In Kenya, Print, audio, and visual media is laden with advertisements of agencies where men and women can be helped to find a mate. There are numerous dating agencies in Nairobi, and “they come in such fancy names like ‘Hearts of Gold’, ‘Top Introductions’ ‘Bourgue Precious Communications’, ‘World Date’, ‘Family Life’ to name just but a few” (Ondego, 2003,). Online dating sites are also easily available to all. From the privacy of their beds, adults who own smart phones are able to access

online dating agencies. Recent studies show that there has been a significant rise in use of cell phones in Kenya (Shrum et. al., 2010).

Factors Influencing Young Adults to Date Through Agencies

Documented researches have mentioned a number of factors that influence young adults' use of dating agencies for mate selection.

Changing Social Culture and Behaviour

Human mate selection behaviour is predominantly informed by the social culture of a people (Greary et.al. 2004). However, culture is dynamic and keeps changing. Communities are always under the influence of immigration, emigration and external cultures. These factors bring about changes especially in the fundamental culture. Kashima, Bain, Haslam, Peters, Laham, Whelan, Bastian, Loughnan, Kaufmann and Fernando, (2009) and Waithaka, (2010) posit that as a society becomes more industrialized, it undergoes a natural course of social change, in which a communal society marked by communal relationships becomes a qualitatively different, agentic society where market-based exchange relationships prevail.

Africa has 54 countries (United Nations, 2001) comprising of over 3,000 different ethnic groups and with these different ethnic groups, different ways of mate selection (Moulton, 2016). In the traditional African society, mate selection was so important that an old African proverb says that 'a man without a wife is like a vase without flowers' (Shahadah, 2011). In general, the African traditional methods of mate selection are largely characteristic of parents and older relatives selecting mates for their own folk. Traditional African societies lived in the African village and an old proverb in Africa says that 'it takes the whole village to raise a child' (Masango, 2006). Raising a child entailed seeing the child through the traditional rites of

passage, where mate selection was one of the most celebrated rite of passage, embraced as a social affair that would combine two lives, two families and even two communities. With the prevailing global rapid social change, the African village has rapidly dwindled and with it, a breakdown of the traditional customs governing mate-selection (Meekers, 2011).

Among the Shona of Zimbabwe, young people frequently want to be allowed to choose their own partner (Shahadah, 2011). Togolese parents nowadays allow their young adults to choose their own mates unlike in the traditional societies where parents selected mates for their children while in the Nigerian Moslem minorities, arranged marriages still exist. However, the individualism of the Western culture is dominant in the contemporary Nigerian Society (Sam, 2009). Lack of family involvement in the union is a valid indicator of deviance from the traditional norms. In Niger, the Wodabee ethnic group had this custom where parents pre-arranged that their children marry their cousins (Shahadah, 2011).

In Ghana, the traditional mate selection method involved the would be groom's family accompanying the groom to his desired bride's family to ask for the bride's hand in marriage, a rite known as 'koo, koo, ko', derived from the Ghanaian tradition of knocking on the entrance of a house before entering as a visitor. The girl's family would then ask the desiring groom's family for time so that they would investigate what type of family they come from (Masango (2006). The issues they investigated included whether that family had any chronic illnesses or disabilities running in their lineage, if the family had a good reputation that there was no known thief, prostitute or murderer, if the groom had illegitimate children or another marriage elsewhere, and if the groom was of good character and well matched their

daughter (Meekers, 2011). According to Shahadah (2011), while in many African cultures, these issues were very crucial in traditional mate selection, they are of lesser significance today because young Ghanaian adults select their mates and go on to have white weddings without involving their parents.

In South Africa, research studies show that mate selection patterns have slowly moved from arranged marriages by parents to young people now at liberty to select their own mates (Gevers, Jewkes & Mathews, 2013). Traditional methods of mate selection were as diverse as the various ethnic cultures. The Himba of Namibia would kidnap a girl and bring her into the family house, and if the family accepted her, she would be anointed with butterfat from cows to show she was accepted. Today, this trend has slowly given way to individual, mutual mate selection (Shahadah, 2011).

In Kenya, mate selection is largely up to the young adult (Oheneba-Sakyi & Takyi, 2005), though for some ethnic groups like the Maasai, parents still select mates for their daughters, and some are married off to much older men for hefty bride price (Shahadah, 2011). As urbanisation continues to escalate in Kenya, the young person is being confronted by the challenge of mate selection. There is not much documented scholarly evidence on the issue of mate selection in the modernized Kenyan society. The researcher only found documented reports in the mass media, therefore decided to make a scholarly contribution to this fairly forgotten domain in the family life cycle, that of mate selection. The action would hopefully trigger more researches in the field.

Industrialization

Kashima and Foddy (2002) explain that during the traditional societies set up, people lived in a close-knit community, producing goods and services for their own consumption. The arrangement has however evolved into a modern one where families live in urbanized environment and engage in exchange relationships with others. Even in trading of goods and services, modern monetary systems prevail. This research was based on the assumption that while it would look absurd for a young adult in the traditional society to pay for a mate selection service, it is not unusual for a youth in the industrialized society, who is unable to find a date for one reason or the other to consider paying for the help of a dating agency.

Advanced Technology

Stampler (2014) refers to the phenomenon of advanced technology in mate selection process as “old game, new rules”. She explains that smart phone apps have turned dating into an addictive pastime, like love is just a swipe away. Most young adults carry their smart phones with them all the time, they can check on suitable mates as often as they wish. The app creators have developed addictive interfaces designed to keep their user base constantly plugged in. Profiles are simple to set up and just as easy to dismiss. Toma (2014), an online dating expert at the University of Wisconsin says of this phenomenon: “It’s like playing slots at a slot machine. Sometimes you get a reward and sometimes you do not”. The anonymity and convenience surrounding online dating makes it an easy choice for the young adult (Young, Cooper, Griffiths-Shelley, O'Mara, & Buchanan, 2000).

Horrigan and Rainie (2006) and Victory and Cooper (2002) define Internet dating as the use of websites that provide a database of potential partners—typically in close geographical proximity—that one can browse and contact, generally for a fee.

Sautter, Tippet and Morgan (2010) posit that these Internet dating services facilitate connections that may eventually lead to face-to-face contact and in-person relationships. As the Internet becomes an increasingly important agent for everyday activities such as shopping, finding information about new products and places, and a myriad of other tasks, it is logical that individuals may turn to the Internet to search for a partner. Sautter et.al (2010) posits that internet dating is a common mate selection strategy among the highly selective subpopulation of single Internet users, and may continue to grow through social networks.

According to recent data from InternetWorldStats.com (2011), some 30% of the 7 billion individuals on the universe now have access to the Internet. Sautter et.al (2011) say that due to the increasing population of singles, decreasing social networks and increasing technological knowledge, more internet users are turning to online dating for mate selection. They also report that continuing social change is making internet dating more acceptable.

Adoption of Western Ideologies

Globally, mate selection can be grouped in two systems: the ‘Love system’, where an individual chooses own partner on the basis of love, and the ‘arranged marriage’ system, where parents, rather than prospective spouses themselves, choose marital partners for their children. The Love system, where the young adult has the autonomy of choice of a mate is a product of the Western ideology (Penn & Lambert, 2009).

In traditional societies, it was relatively easy to locate the sources of widely held beliefs and values: it was the family, the community and religion which inculcated and transmitted them.

In contemporary, modern societies, the influence of the family, community and church has greatly diminished and it must compete with others more difficult to identify (Hollander, 2011)

Western sociologists argue that modernization has involved an expansion of individualism and autonomy (Penn, 2011). Prior to the late Victorian age, mate selection was under parental and communal controls (Hurren & King, 2015). However, with cultural changes of the modern world, Bauman (2003) and Evans (2003) argue that relationships which are premised on notions of mutuality and individuality have come to typify the "late modern world."

Extensive exposure to popular Western media, which frequently includes narratives of romantic love, has shaped ideals about both non-marital and marital partnerships. America has always exhibited "youth-driven" patterns of dating. Eligible males and females took the initiative to get to know each other, and the mate selection was made by them, even if that decision was to some degree contingent on parental approval (Hurren & King, 2015). 20th century findings among social psychologists in America, on both idealised as well as actual settings where young adults' romantic relationships were initiated, were consistent with work places, friend networks, school, parties and bars. The population of study included those aged 15-37years. These settings accounted for 77% of the actual settings where mate selection relationships began. Of the relationships that led to mate selection, School setting accounted for 25%, work for 20%, friends for 14%, both bars and parties for 9% each (Jason et al., 2001).

In Turkey, two types of mate selection coexist: family-of-origin initiated mate selection, and individual mate selection. Turkish data indicates that individual mate

selection is higher than family of origin mate selection among young adults, due to influence of Western culture through the media. As part of the campaign towards Westernization and secularization, both the Turkish state and the intelligentsia have advocated on marriage practices based on individual freedoms (Hortaçsu, 2007).

Traditionally, Japanese preferred mediated forms of dating as a way to reduce the uncertainties associated with meeting complete strangers. Young adults in college preferred peer mediated blind dating, *gokon*, and face-to face introductions (Farrer & Gavin, 2009).

Research findings point to a western culture, mainly in United States and Europe, which leans more on individualism, such that the young adult selects their own mate. However, as a result of international migration to Western Europe, the two mate selection systems now co-exist in countries such as Britain, France and Germany (Castles & Miller, 2003). The East is mainly still conservative with traditional methods of mate selection, where arranged marriages prevail. Some cultures in India, Russia, Siberia, Alaska, and the Australian Aborigines are still leaning mainly on arranged marriages (Penn, 2011).

Ethnographic studies in Africa point to the influence of parents and often members of the extended kin group, rather than the individual, in the selection of a mate. A good example is Somalia where Muslim mate selection procedures prevailed. These were characterised by pre-arranged selections and dowry payments, sometimes even before a girl is born, and should the man die before that union, his next of kin may marry the girl by making a further small payment (Moulton, 2016).

Contemporary society is moving far and further away from the traditional African family. One aspect where change is easily observable is in the area of

interpersonal relations (Ndung'u et. al., 2005). Due to the crisis of social change caused by modernisation, the African family has experienced disintegration of cultural norms and a dispersion of family members. This directly affects the cultural traditions of mate selection, thereby triggering an ongoing debate on the process of dating for mate selection in Africa (Oheneba-Sakyi and Takyi, 2005).

As a response to young adults' quest for romantic dating with mate selection as the ultimate goal, dating agencies have emerged in Kenya (Ondego, 2000). On mate selection, the picture is largely one of increasing diversity (Weston & Qu, 2014). It is highly influenced by the social culture within which an individual is located. The mass media prepares materials in such a way to capture the audience, so they focus on the needs of the contemporary society. It is no wonder then that mate selection discussions dominate the mass media including TV and radio talk shows. A few examples include The Oprah Winfrey show in USA, while local examples include Pastors Allan and Cathy Kiuna NTV's talk show, Pastors Jane and Julius Kameme FM's radio talk show, Dr. Chris Hart's K24's TV talk show, Philip Kitoto's Daily Nation relationships column and Saturday Nation Newspaper's Lonely Hearts' page.

Young Adults' Views Regarding Dating Through Agencies

Hollander (2011) reports that at the present time, there are no models to follow and that the process of finding a life partner is often chaotic and unintelligible. There are no common standards or codes of behaviour. However, according to Farrer and Gavin (2009), there is some stigma attached to online dating and those who choose this method remain very secretive about it.

The Internet is believed to have altered our understanding of dating/romantic relationships (Ben Ze'ev 2004). The internet is however not a culturally neutral

medium and cultural values are reflected in online communication styles. In this technologically driven world, whether in the conservative or the liberal world, the secrecy of cyberspace makes it an easy option for search of a mate to the adolescent and the young adult (Rambaree, 2008). Through the Internet people can interact over greater distances in a shorter period of time and at less expense than in the past (Ben Ze'ev 2004; Lawson & Leck 2006).

Theoretical Framework

Bryman and Bell (2007) defines a theory as a set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining or predicting the phenomena. The antecedent of this study is the rapid social change; hence the study will be guided by the rapid social change theory.

Rapid Social Change Theory (RSCT).

The 'Rapid Social Change' theory is used to explain the way society changes by use of certain generally accepted indicators and interaction of systems. Ndung'u and Mwaura (2005) explain that the 'Rapid Social Change theory' is a sociological explanation which is used to examine how societies change, usually from simple to complex, from orderly to disorderly, from structured to unstructured, and from religious to secular, among other changes. It is an accepted reality that all societies have experienced change. This change affects both the individual and the society as a collective entity.

The diagram below shows how culture, values, attitudes and behaviour are related in a cyclic manner, such that change in one variable affects all the others.

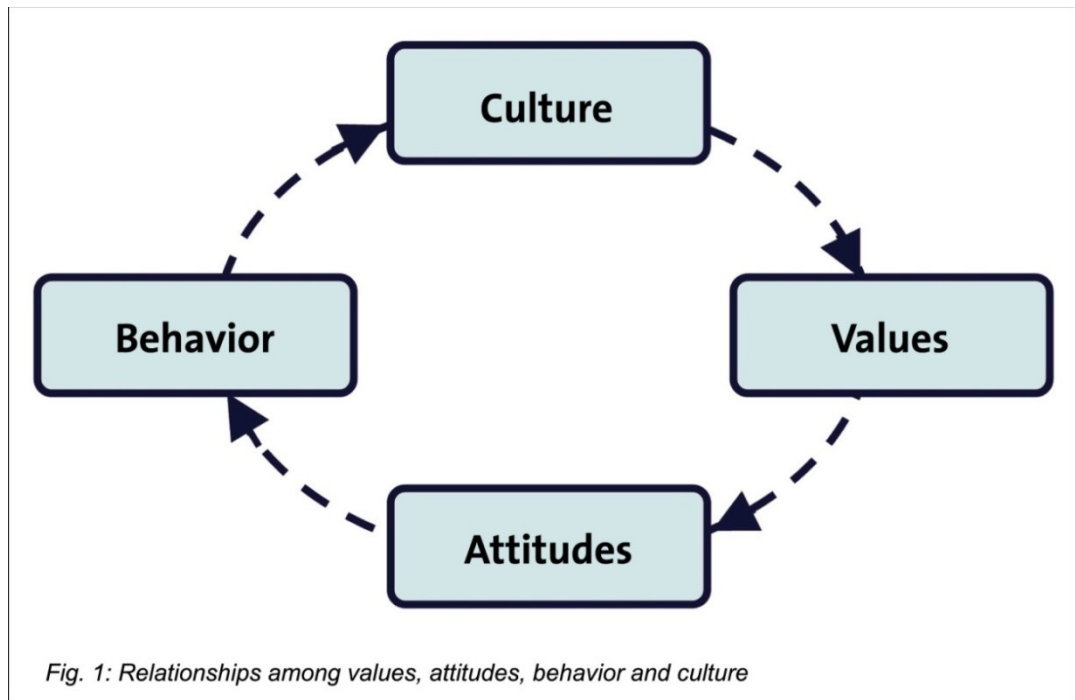


Figure 2.1 *Inter-relationship between behavior, values attitudes and culture (Alder, 2002).*

Ndung'u and Mwaura (2005) explain that the substance of Rapid Social Change theory hinges on the belief that the dynamism of society tends to move faster than some people can cope with; resulting in some often becoming disenchanted and in a way feeling “lost”. They all of a sudden discover that they are disoriented in a number of major social aspects. This explanation claims that because they do not want to be left behind, such people find comfort in joining a social movement. It also assumes that various types of social movements are poised to respond to various needs which arise with the pace of changing society.

In this study, the research applies this theory to look into how the developmental task of mate selection, which is a key developmental task in young adulthood stage of the family life cycle, is changing within the framework of the contemporary society. The Kenyan society has, and continues to experience social

change, leading to diminished traditional checks and balances for accomplishing developmental tasks in the family life cycle, part of which includes mate selection. The diminishing African village has in turn given way to urbanisation with a strong western influence, leading to individual interaction with many social systems. The study looks at the social change and dynamics that accompany the adoption of dating agencies concerning mate selection.

Conceptual Framework

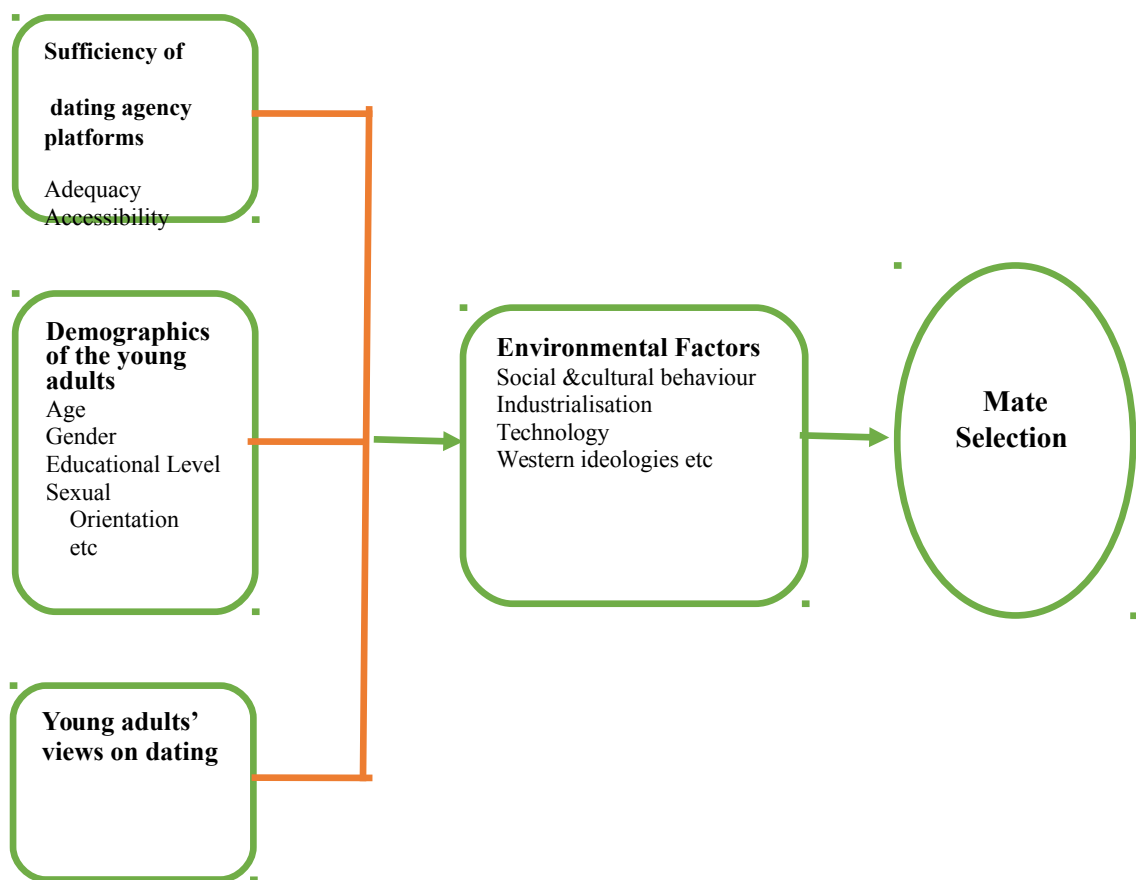


Figure 2. 2 *Conceptual Framework*

Figure 2.2 illustrates the interrelationships between the variables of the study.

Independent Variables

The young adulthood brings with it the need and the urge for mate identification and selection. Mate selection is guided by the demographics of the

candidates who search for mates with the desired demographic profile from a pool of all the possible mates within his/her environment. Additionally, the accessibility options available for mate selection determine the approaches the young adults apply for their mate selection processes. The views of the young adults with regard to mates and the selection process is also an independent variable in this model. The views incorporate the values, tastes and preferences of the respective youths in the dating process.

Intervening Variable

The contemporary day to day environment provides a level playing field for young adults to profile their potential mates within their reach in the society. However, situations arise where bottlenecks arise within the environment requiring the need for intervention. Traditionally the intervention could take the form of arranged marriages. However, with modernization, this role has been taken up by dating agencies which offer a service consisting of profiled individuals, who are equally searching for a mate. There are environmental factors that influence the process of profiling and matching the potential mates. The environmental factors include social and cultural behaviour of the potential mates, Industrialization and occupation of the potential mates, the prevailing communication technologies and the foreign ideologies infiltrating the potential mate's culture and behaviour.

Dependent variable

Regardless of the choices and views the young adults adopt, they must complete the process of dating by selecting a mate. According to Figure 2.2, the end result of the dating process is mate selection. Hence 'mate selection' is the dependent variable. The study seeks to document the experiences of the young adults who

solicit the services of a professional dating agency in order to accomplish the task of mate selection.

Research Gaps

Reviewed literature suggests that little research has been done on the sufficiency of dating agencies for mate selection in Kenya. Additionally, little research is available on the access and adequacy of dating agencies, even on any existing challenges faced by the young adults in their dating experience. Whereas Ondego (2003) reports that there are numerous dating agencies in Nairobi, their efficacy and adequacy in meeting the needs of the population they serve has not been interrogated.

As Oheneba-Sakyi and Takyi, (2005) report, mate selection in Kenya is generally up to the young adult and that there is not much documented scholarly evidence on the issue of mate selection in the modernized Kenyan society. In the absence of literature regarding the Kenyan situation, it is difficult to ascertain the nature of challenges faced, and coping strategies available and the general dating experience within the population. This study therefore focuses on the influence of dating agencies on mate selection in Nairobi, Kenya, with a view of making a scholarly evaluation of the Kenyan experience.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed literature on the sufficiency of dating agencies for young adults, factors influencing young adults to date through dating agencies which include the changing social culture regarding mate selection behaviour, industrialization, advanced technology and adoption of western ideologies. It also

included review on documented young adults' views on dating through agencies, the theory applied to this study, and the conceptual framework of the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher describes the procedure that was followed in conducting the study. The chapter covers research design, research location, study population, sampling technique and sample size, research instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection and data analysis, logistical and ethical consideration.

Study Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design to assess the perceptions of young adults' regarding dating agencies for mate selection. The choice of the descriptive design was based on the fact that the researcher was interested in the state of affairs as existing in the field without manipulation of any of the variables. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008), this design is ideal for investigating social issues. Besides, it is the best method available to social scientists who are interested in collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population which is too large to observe directly.

Study Location

The study was carried out in the Nairobi County, Kenya. The county hosts the capital city of Kenya and is home to 1.53 million females and 1.60 million males, of which 30% constitutes of young adults (KPDS,2011). Being an Industrialised, technologically advanced city with a population drawn from diverse cultural backgrounds, it is a perfect setting concerning rapid social change.

Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define a population as a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common observable characteristics. Target population is that population to which a researcher wants to generalize the result of a study. (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). The target population for this study included all the youth aged between 18 and 35yrs living or working within Nairobi County

Study Population

The population for this study included all the youth aged between 18 and 35yrs living or working within the county of Nairobi, who were actively using dating agencies for mate selection. There is no central bureau from where dating agencies in the county are registered or licensed. However, the agencies advertise over the local newspapers particularly over the weekend. Information was therefore collated from the newspapers for a retrospective period of two months prior to the study with a view of ascertaining the number of active dating agencies as at the time of the study. The newspapers included, Nation, East African Standard, People's Daily, The Star, and The Nairobiian. From these newspapers, it was established that there were nine active dating agencies within the city as at the time of the study.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

McNabb (2008) defines the sample size as a segment of the population being investigated for a study. He further refers sampling method to the process of selecting representative samples from the entire population. The Primary objectives of administering sampling techniques in research studies are often associated with time and cost as well as generalization of a sample to the study population (Bryman &

Bell, 2007). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), 10-30% of the populations form a sufficient sample size. As such, a sample size of 30% was employed which is the maximum of the threshold that the two authors recommend. This translated to three dating agencies.

The sampling strategies combined both random and purposive strategies. The selection of the agencies was purposive because the population was intentionally selected solely for the purpose of the research study (Kasomo, 2006), besides being controlled for those that had used dating agencies for mate selection for a period of not less than one year. The three agencies operated databases of mate seeking applicants for matching. As such all these applicants were considered for the study as so research instruments were mailed out to them.

Kasomo (2006) reasons that 10% of the accessible population is sufficient for descriptive studies (p. 28). As such the participation of at least 10% of the accessible population would be considered sufficient for the study.

Research Instrument

Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaire tools to collect data from dating agency clients seeking mates through the three dating agencies. Kombo and Tromp (2006) define a questionnaire as a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample. It can reach a large number of subjects who are able to read and write independently. It is also preferred because it allows for anonymity of respondents and uniformity of questions thus allowing comparability. The questionnaire tool used had both closed and open ended questions. The tool was divided into four sections. The first section elicited responses on the demography of the respondents, while the second section was on the sufficiency of the dating agencies with particular regard to their availability, accessibility and adequacy in Kenya. The third sought factors influencing young adults' use of dating agencies for

mate selection, while the fourth sought views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection.

Validity of Research Instrument

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represents the phenomenon under study. Content validity was used to validate the content employed in the instrument. The expertise of the supervisors, who are experts in the Department of Psychology at the Pan Africa Christian University, was sought, and revision of the tools made accordingly.

Pilot Testing

Piloting of the tools was conducted from a sub sample of 20 participants of the eligible respondents who were not part of the final sample.

Reliability of Research Instrument

Reliability of the research instrument is critical for decreasing errors that might arise from measurement problems in the research study. Reliability refers to the accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure (Kasomo 2006). The aim of the pilot study was to help establish the reliability of the questionnaire. Kasomo (2006) further observes that a reliable instrument should produce the expected results when used more than once to collect data from two samples drawn from the same population. To test the reliability of the tool, Cronbach's alpha was used. Cronbach's alpha is used by researchers as a test of internal reliability. The coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. In social sciences, acceptable reliability estimates range between 0.7 and 0.8 (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Table 3. 1 *Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha Co-efficient	No of Items
0.721	41

The tool had 41 close ended items which generated a Cronbach's Alpha Co-efficient of 0.78 as shown in Table 3.1. George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rules of the thumb: $\alpha > .9$ – Excellent, $\alpha > .8$ – Good, $\alpha > .7$ – Acceptable, $\alpha > .6$ – Questionable, $\alpha > .5$ – Poor and $\alpha < .5$ – Unacceptable. The responses from the sample generated an alpha of 0.721 which was found to be “acceptable” which was a reasonable goal for the instrument.

Data Collection

Data collection refers to gathering specific information aimed at providing some facts (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The researcher began by obtaining authorization from the Department of Counselling and Family Therapy at Pan Africa Christian University. Thereafter, the researcher obtained a research permit from the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation headquarters in Nairobi. Once authorisation was granted, the researcher paid a courtesy call to the administrators in charge of the dating agencies that were selected for the study. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the modalities of the intended study including the purpose of the study, its significance, the population of respondents, sample size, the data tool and the contact logistics.

With the assistance of the agency’s administrator, the researcher oversaw the distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents by way of email. An accompanying note was mailed alongside the tools to all the respondents explaining the purpose of the study, and the fact that participation was voluntary. The respondents were also assured that the questionnaires were anonymous and that the

responses would be treated confidentially and exclusively for the purpose of the study. The researcher allowed for three weeks for the responses to be mailed back.

Data Analysis

After data collection, there was a cross-examination to ascertain the return rate. The completeness of the returned questionnaires collected was also ascertained to establish the extent of the usefulness in answering the research questions. All data was then entered into the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The assistance of a statistician was sought at this juncture to navigate through the software that was used to generate the frequencies, percentages and statistics that were used to discuss and present the findings.

Ethical Consideration

Research ethics and respect for the rights of respondents were adhered to throughout the study, and thereafter. Participation in the study was on voluntary basis and with no inconveniences to the respondents. The respondents were furnished with all the appropriate information regarding the study for them to participate willingly and without any manner of coercion or intimidation. The questionnaires had an accompanying consent note, which provided sufficient information about the study, through which they were notified of the purpose of the study, choose to volunteer or not, and their right to refuse to answer any questions they found inappropriate for them to answer. They were also assured of confidentiality, and were given opportunity to seek clarification before participation.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology that was adopted for the study particularly with regard to the research design, the population, sampling technique, data and data methods, data analysis techniques, logistical and ethical considerations. The study findings are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and findings of the study on the environmental factors influencing dating through agencies for mate selection in Nairobi County, Kenya. The first section covers the demographic information of the respondents while the second section explores the adequacy and accessibility of dating agencies for mate selection in Kenya. The third section is on the environmental factors influencing the use of dating agencies for mate selection while the last section is on respondents' views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection

Response Rate

Questionnaire tools were distributed to all the registered clients in the sampled dating agencies by way of email with instructions to return as soon as the respondents were through. A three-week grace period was allowed within which the respondents were to revert. Reminder emails were sent out on a weekly interval. By the end of the third week, 81 were returned duly filled. Subsequent week yielded no return at all.

Demographic Information

This section provides the background information with regard to the respondents' gender, age, education, occupation, income, sexual orientation and experiences with dating agencies. The purpose of this information was to establish the background information of the respondents and their ability to provide their experiences on dating, dating agencies and mate selection.

The study sought to find out the gender of the respondents. The purpose of this information was to find out whether those seeking dating agency services were either

male or female. To determine the distribution, the respondents were asked to indicate their gender. Their responses were as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1 Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	18	22.2%
Female	60	74.1%
Non response	3	3.7%
Total	81	100%

Findings in table 4.1 show that the proportion of the male respondents was 22.2% while that of women was 74.1%. The finding suggests that there were more women seeking dating agency services in the region than male. The respondents were then asked to state their age and their distribution was as summarized in Table 4.2

Table 4. 2 Distribution of respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percent
21-25	6	7.4%
26- 30	12	14.8%
31-35	30	37.0%
36 and above	30	37.0%
Non response	3	3.7%
Total	81	100.0%

Findings on age show that 37% of the respondents were between 31 and 35 years of age with a further 37% being 36 years and above. This finding implies that most of the people seeking dating agency services in the study area were at least 30 years of age.

Information was sought on the respondents' level of education. The purpose of this information was to determine if certain level of education sought the dating services over others. The distribution of the respondents by education level was therefore as shown in Table 4.3

Table 4. 3 Distribution of respondents by education level

Education level	Frequency	Percent
Doctorate	3	3.7%
Master's Degree	12	14.8%
Post Graduate Diploma	9	11.1%
Bachelor's Degree	51	63.0%
Post-Secondary Diploma	3	3.7%
Non response	3	3.7%
Total	81	100.0%

Findings on education show that the majority (63%) of the respondents were degree holders, while 11.1% and 14.8% held post graduate diploma and master's degrees respectively. In addition, 3.7% held doctorate education with a similar proportion holding post-secondary diplomas. This finding implies that the educated people within the study area had embraced agency dating.

The respondents were then required to state their occupation type and the results were as summarised in Table 4.4

Table 4. 4 Distribution of respondents by occupation type

Occupation type	Frequency	Percent
Salaried Employee	30	37.0%
Self-Employed – (Office Work)	27	33.3%
Own Business	9	11.1%
Unemployed	12	14.8%
Non response	3	3.7%
Total	81	100.0%

Table 4.4 shows that the 37% of the respondents were salaried employees while 33.3% were self-employed. A further 11.1% were in business while 14.8% were unemployed. When the respondents were asked to state their occupation, they included; Engineering, banking, business, building contractors, fashion arts and designers, hair stylists, lawyers, journalists, nurses, social workers and teachers. This finding implies that those seeking dating agency services in Nairobi were of varied occupation and employ. However, those in employment were more likely to seek the services than those in business and those unemployed.

Information was then sought on the income levels of the respondents. The purpose of this information was to find out if people in certain levels of income sought the dating services over others. The distribution of the respondents by income was therefore as summarized in Table 4.5

Table 4. 5 Distribution of respondents by income level

Income in Kenya shillings	Frequency	Percent
20,001 – 40,000	6	7.4%
40,001 – 60,000	33	40.7%
60,001 – 80,000	9	11.1%
80,001 – 100,000	15	18.5%
More than 100,000	6	7.4%
Non response	12	14.8%
Total	81	100.0%

Findings in Table 4.5 show that 7.4% of the respondents earned between Ksh. 20,001 and 40,000 while 40.7% earned between 40,001 and 60,000. Furthermore, 18.5% earned between 80,001 and 100,000 while 7.4% earned more than 100,000. This finding implied that dating services were sought by people of varied income groups. A greater proportion of those seeking the services would be in the income bracket more than 40,000 but less than 60,000.

When the respondents were asked to state their sexual orientation, all of them indicated that they were straight implying that they were seeking heterosexual relationships. Key informant interviews with administrators of three of the dating agencies in Nairobi confirmed that the majority of the clients in their respective agencies sought heterosexual relationships. The proportion of those who sought homosexual relationship was less than 2% of the entire client base and they only came calling far in between.

Information was then sought on the duration the respondents had used dating services and the results were as shown in Table 4.6

Table 4. 6 Duration of stay with the dating agency

Duration	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	9	11.1%
Between 1 and 3years	57	70.4%
More than 3 years	15	18.5%
Total	81	100.0%

Table 4.6 shows that 70.4% of the respondents had been in the service for between one and three years while 18.5% had stayed for more than 3 years. Another 11.1% had just joined the service and had less than one year in the service. This finding implies that depending on the nature of the services sought from the agencies, one can be enlisted for the services for longer than 3 years. This finding implied that while mate selection was expected to take a shorter time with the dating agencies, there were clients who took much longer time as a result of lack of a decent match while the others kept on waiting for a better match to show up.

Information was then sought on the reasons that made the respondents enroll for the dating services. The results were as summarized in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 Distribution of the respondents by the services sought

Service sought from dating agencies	Frequency	Percent
A companion for normal friendship	3	3.7%
A boy/girlfriend for a short season	12	14.8%
Someone to support me financially	12	14.8%
A marriage partner	48	59.3%
Non response	6	7.4%
Total	81	100.0%

Findings in Table 4.7 show that the respondents sought varied services with 3.7% seeking companionship, 14.8% seeking short term relationships while another 14.8% sought financial support. however, (59.3%) of the respondents who were the majority sought marriage partners. This information was collaborated by the key informants who reported that between 10 and 20% of their clients sought casual heterosexual sex and they were mainly male. A similar proportion was interested in

financial support. The greatest proportion of the clients sought marital partners. Of those seeking marital partners, 80% sought first time partners while 20% sought remarriage.

Sufficiency of Dating Agencies

The first objective of the study was to determine the sufficiency of dating agencies for mate selection in Kenya, with specific regard to their adequacy and accessibility. To achieve this, experiences were sought from the respondents on the availability, access and adequacy of the service they received from the dating agencies.

Firstly, they were to report on whether they were aware of any dating agencies in Nairobi and if so, they were to list the agencies they knew of. With regard to the awareness, all the respondents stated that they knew of the dating agencies and the list was as summarized in Figure 4.1.

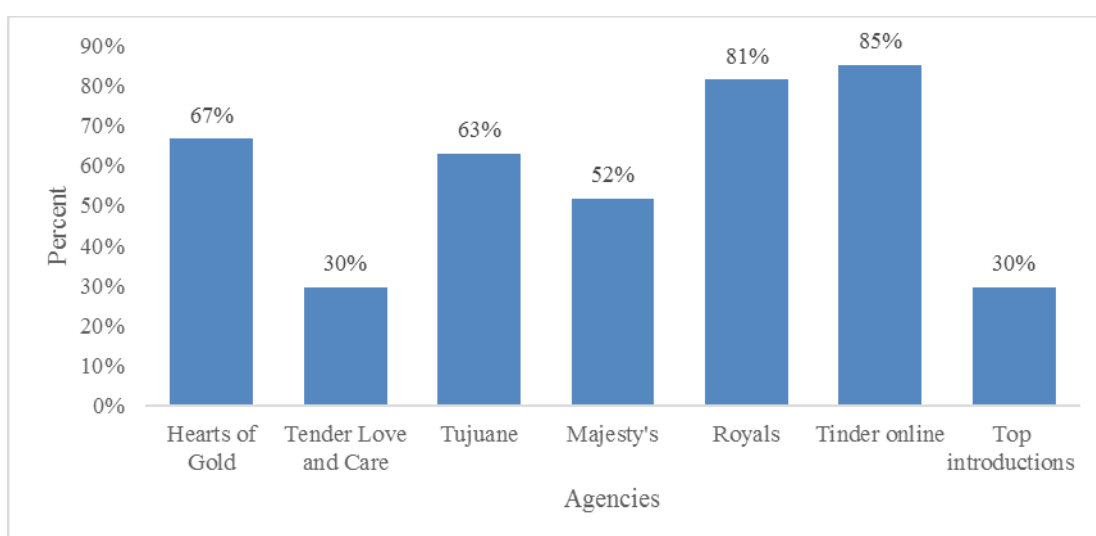


Figure 4. 1 *Dating agencies operating in Nairobi*

Findings in Figure 4.1 show that the dating agencies in Nairobi reported by the respondents included Tender Love and Care, Tujuane, Majesty's, Royals, Tinder Online, Hearts of Gold, and Top Introductions. Interviews with the key informants revealed that the seven agencies reported by the respondents were the most established given the fact that most of agencies were set up in the 1980s. As such they have evolved with the times and technology from when dating was via letters to the current online platforms. The informants further reported that there have been a number of agencies that failed to keep up with the changing times and technology. In the 1980s dating agencies would conduct interviews with the clients, then proceed to manually analyze the data and matching up couples and thereafter arrange for an initial face to face contact of the matched couples. These systems have been modified by technology where the matching is done by a computer software and the initial communication by way of email.

The dating agencies that never made this transition have eventually closed down in the course of time. At the moment, the largest agency in terms of database enrolment is Tinder Online. This is owing to the fact the agency is purely an open online platform open to people of all walks of life and for a variety of reasons ranging from casual online crushes to flirting, and to intimate relationships. The site is very popular with young people.

The informants further revealed that in as much as the online platforms were mushrooming every day, there is a segment of clientele that is very particular to those agencies that started a bit earlier owing to the fact that the online platforms were too open yet the clients were specifically interested in potential spouses. The perception is that they have more serious clientele in their database when compared to the open

platforms. When the respondents were asked about their accessibility, the results were as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4. 8 Accessibility of the dating agencies in Nairobi

Accessibility	Frequency	Percent
Yes they are Accessibility	69	85.2
Not sure	12	14.8
Total	81	100.0

According to the findings in Table 4.8, 85.2% of the respondents reported that the dating agencies were accessible while 14.8% reported that they were not sure. This finding implies that in as much as the agencies existed, there were some challenges with regard to their accessibility. Those who reported that the agencies were accessible explained that one is able to sign up easily by way of email, telephone, internet or even physically visiting the offices. Furthermore, the services were usually advertised in the print and social media. The agencies also had a back office support system where clients who enrolled online would open a chat, make a phone call, or make a physical visit, to follow up on service requested.

The respondents who were not sure explained that the awareness within the larger population of the existence of dating services was quite low. Eventually, the pool of those enrolled for the service is quite small and is largely comprised of women seeking husbands. When the respondents were asked to state the mode of access to the dating agencies, the responses were as shown in Table 4.9

Table 4. 9 Mode of access to the dating agencies in Nairobi

Mode of access	Frequency	Percent
Physical visit to their offices	6	7.4%
Telephone	6	7.4%
Internet application	9	11.1%
Email	69	85.2%
Total	81	100.0%

Findings in Table 4.9 show that to 85.2% of the respondents, email was the preferred mode of access while to 11.1%, internet application was. Another 7.4% of the respondents reported the mode as telephone with a further 7.4% reporting physical visits. This finding implied that the dating agencies had multiple modes of access. The key informants reported that the most preferred method by most of their clients was the online platform. As such emails and internet applications were main modes adopted. On the other hand, some of the clients required guidance and counselling and as such, they had to make telephone calls and book appointments to make physical visits to the offices.

Information was sought on the number of the agencies the respondents had registered with and the results were as shown in Table 4.10

Table 4. 10 Respondents' enrolment with dating agencies

No of Agencies	Frequency	Percent
One	21	25.9%
Two	39	48.1%
Four	12	14.8%
Five	3	3.7%
More Than Five	6	7.4%
Total	81	100.0%

Findings in Table 4.10 show that only 25.9% of the respondents had registered with one agency. The rest had engaged several agencies with 48.1% engaged with two agencies while 14.8% enrolled with three. A small proportion of respondents had enrolled with five and more agencies where 3.7 had enrolled with five while 7.4% had enrolled with more than five. This finding implies that a greater proportion of the dating agency clients were not satisfied with the services of a single agency. This could be attributed to the fact that there were more women than men in the databases

of each of these agencies and the only way women could increase the chances of finding potential mates was to engage several agencies simultaneously.

Information was therefore sought from the respondents regarding the number of potential mates they met through the dating agencies and the results were as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4. 11 Number of potential mates respondents met through the dating agencies

No of mates	Frequency	Percent
None	39	48.1%
1 partner	12	14.8%
2 partner	12	14.8%
3 partner	15	18.5%
7 partner	3	3.7%
8 partner	3	3.7%
Total	81	100.0%

Findings in table 4.11 show that 48.1% of the respondents had not secured any potential mates suggesting that only about half of the agency users had been successful at getting potential matches where 14.8% had met 1 partner with another 14.8% having met two potential mates. Additionally, 18.5% had met three while 3.7% had met 7 and 8 partners respectively. This finding confirms that the dating agency databases in the study area were skewed and could only provide potential matches to just about half of the service seekers.

The respondents were further required to state whether they had been successful at finally selecting a mate. The results were as shown in Table 4.12

Table 4. 12 Respondents success status with the dating agencies in Nairobi

Respondents' status of success with dating agencies	Frequency	Percent
Have been able to select the mate of choice	12	14.8%
Have not been able to select a mate of choice	33	40.7%
Not sure	36	44.4%
Total	81	100.0%

Findings in Table 4.12 show that only 14.8% of the respondents had been successful at securing a mate through the dating agencies implying that only a small proportion of the dating services succeed and feel settled with the mate they secure through the dating agencies. Findings further show that 44.4% of the respondents were not sure implying that they had secured some potential mates but were still hesitant and engulfed with the hope that a better match could still show up. Findings also show that 40.7% of the respondents had yet to succeed implying that they either were yet to get any matches or that they had disqualified the matches they had received in the process.

Table 4. 13 Adequacy of dating agencies in Nairobi in meeting clients' needs

Response	Frequency	Percent
Adequately meet the needs for mate selection	7	25.9
Do not adequately meet the needs for mate selection	2	7.4
Not sure	20	74.1
Total	27	100.0

Findings show that the dating agencies adequately meet the needs to only 25.9% of the respondents. This implied that the agencies were delivering viable potential matches and the ultimate desired matches to some extent.

Table 4.13 further shows that to 7.4% of the respondents, the agencies had either failed to deliver viable potential matches or had delivered none at all. This could be attributed to the fact that some of the clients were either impatient or had

elaborate checklists for potential matches that required longer durations of time to secure matches.

The table further shows that 74.1% were not sure whether the agencies adequately met client needs in the selection of a mate. This could be attributed to the fact that whereas the majority had met some matches through the agencies, the respondents kept on holding to the hope that a better match would keep showing up every time the dating agency came calling. As such the majority were still not fully decided.

The findings in Table 4.13 imply that in as much as the dating agencies in Nairobi were accessible, they fell short of satisfying the needs of their clientele to a certain extent. Some earlier findings in this study were that there were more women in the agency databases than men, an imbalance that would lead to a substantial proportion of the women missing out on mates or having to wait for long durations of time before potential matches could be traced. Furthermore, most of the women sought lifetime partners as opposed to a significant proportion of men that sought casual dating. The mismatching dating needs aggravates the imbalances in mate selection even the more.

Environmental Factors Influencing the Use of Dating Agencies for Mate Selection

The second objective of the study was to determine the environmental factors influencing young adults' use of dating agencies for mate selection. To achieve this, statements on environmental factors regarding dating and mate selection were posed

to the respondents who were required to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with those statements.

The statements were set on a 4 point Likert scale where “strongly disagree” was coded as 1, “disagree” was coded as 2, “agree” was coded as 3 and “strongly agree” was coded as 4. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. As such means, frequencies and proportions were generated as summarized in Table 4.14.

Table 4. 14 *Environmental factors influencing the use of dating agencies*

Statements on Environmental factors influencing the use of dating agencies	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am so busy with work that there is simply no time to go out and meet people for dates	15.4	73.1	11.5	-
I am so busy with other responsibilities in life that there is simply no time to go out and meet people for dates	11.5	34.6	53.8	-
I believe I don't have what it takes to go out there and meet different people for dates	11.5	53.8	30.8	3.8
It is difficult for me to naturally find someone with similar interest like me so the dating agency can sort out the profiles on my behalf.	46.2	53.8	-	-
someone I had hoped for wasted my time now I find that time is not on my side and I need a dating agency to find potential matches for me	69.2	7.7	23.1	-
I lost my spouse/mate through divorce/ separation and now I find that time is not on my side and I need a dating agency to find potential matches for me	3.8	15.4	76.9	3.8
I lost my spouse/ mate through death and now I find that time is not on my side and I need a dating agency to find potential matches for me	-	57.7	38.5	3.8
I have been out there in bars and coffee shops dating and barely found anyone interesting	23.1	3.8	65.4	7.7
It is very expensive to spend money on night outs in search of a lover	76.9	19.2	-	3.8
Meeting people to date after college ends has been very difficult for me because people are busy	19.2	26.9	50	3.8

For me dating agency is an easy place to find easy sex	-	92.3	3.8	3.8
For me, people on a dating agency are looking for potential partners and they won't mind if I hit on them or contact them	57.7	34.6	3.8	3.8

According to Table 4.14, the respondents stated that being so busy with work to an extent that there was no time to go out and meet people for dates was a key environmental factor that made people seek the services of a dating agency. This was confirmed by 73.1% of the respondents who agreed, and a further 15.4% who strongly agreed. Only 11.5% disagreed. However, the respondents had mixed feelings on the fact that people sought the services of dating agencies because they were so busy with other responsibilities in life that there was simply no time to go out and meet people for dates. This was confirmed by 34.6% of the respondents who agreed, 11.5% who strongly agreed and 53.8% who disagreed. In light of the fact that most respondents were above 30 years and had a university degree, this agrees with the findings of Sautter, Tippet, & Morgan (2010), that seeking agency help for mate selection, can partly be attributed to increasing geographic mobility as individuals travel to college and afterwards move to meet job demands of a global economy.

With regard to self-esteem, 53.8% of the respondents agreed and 11.5% strongly agreed that people sought the services of dating agencies because they don't have what it takes to go out there and meet different people for dates, however 30.8% of the respondents disagreed while 3.8% strongly disagreed. These findings agree with Strubel and Petrie (2017) who carried out a research with 1,300 college students and found that those who used dating apps to look for a mate had lower self-esteem than those who did not. Marateck (2018), explains that looking for a partner through an app is driven by a lower self-image, such that one hopes to skip the stresses of that

initial body assessment and anticipates meeting a ready partner, but since this individual may still be let down many times by that potential partner who is open to meeting so many other likely mates through the same process, that repeated process of being let down acts like a vicious cycle to enhance a poorer self-image.

All the respondents were unanimous (53.8% agreed, 46.2% strongly agreed) that people sought dating services because it was difficult for them to naturally find someone with similar interest like them and therefore they expected the dating agency to sort out the profiles on their behalf before they could physically meet the potential mates. This is in agreement with the findings of Kalmijin and Flap (2001) that institutionalised arrangements delimit the pool from which people can choose then consequently, individual preferences guide their choices from that pool they face. Since each registered member in an agency has given their profile, the preference of an individual will guide their pick from that pool and this makes mate selection much easier.

Table 4.14 also shows that 7.7 agreed and 69.2 strongly agreed that people seek dating agencies because the potential mates they had hoped for wasted their time and that the dating window was closing up on them necessitating the need for a dating agency to profile potential matches. Nevertheless, 23.1% of the respondents disagreed. This could be attributed to the fact that college educated men are spoilt for choice since more women than men are graduating from college, and a man may flirt with many such women for a duration of time, but when it comes to settling down in marriage, he chooses only one of them leaving the others in the cold. Looking at our earlier findings from Table 4.1 above, regarding gender 74.1% of women are searching against 22.2% men. This means there are way more women than men

searching for mates through the agencies. Birger (2015) points out that for a number of years, there are way more women than men graduating from colleges and taking up good jobs. These few men may be flirting with many women at a time but at the point of mate selection, they have to choose only one. This leaves the jilted women feeling like all decent men are taken; and a phenomenon Birger (2015) calls ‘the man deficit’ arises. This phenomenon, he explains, poses a demographic time bomb for heterosexual marriage minded women who feel ‘time barred’, yet they are not willing to date men of lower status than they. This reality may be a contributing factor to the reason many women may remain registered in the agencies for more than three years as stipulated by the results from table 4.6 above.

With regard to separation and divorce, 15.4% agreed and 3.8% strongly agreed that the loss of a spouse/mate through divorce/ separation led people to dating agencies to find potential matches for them. However, 76.9% of the respondents disagreed and a further 3.8% strongly disagreed. We would therefore say that 80.7% of respondents do not think that divorce and separation influence individuals to seek dating agency services. This study posits therefore, that divorce and separation do not influence individuals to seek help of dating agencies for remarriage mate selection. Divorce and separation are products of unpleasant experiences in the relationship. Amato and Pevitti (2003) explain that divorced people always see their partner as the reason for the break-up thus they always have faith in themselves, that they can make it in another relationship. This implies that other factors, rather than the divorce or separation itself would lead such individuals to seek the help of dating agencies. A significant proportion of separated partners have infidelity as an underlying cause. As such a sizeable proportion of the victims of separation and divorce already have mates with whom they were living in adulterous relationships. However, the non-

adulterous partners in a separation find themselves caught unawares and may in turn result to dating agencies for mate selection.

Findings show that 57.7% of the respondents agreed that many people losing spouses or mates through death find that they don't have the aura and stamina for convectional dating and therefore result to dating agencies for potential matches. On the other hand, 38.5% of the respondents disagreed and a further 3.8% strongly disagreed. These findings imply that bereavement is a factor that influences one to seek the help of a dating agency to find a mate. It is in agreement with the findings of Davidson (2002) that availability, feasibility, and desirability are the new intervening conditions affecting likelihood of re-partnering after bereavement. At the same time, Davidson further explains that most bereavements would happen in later life where feasibility of mate selection is minimal. Dating agencies would therefore make it easier for the bereaved desiring to remarry.

Findings further show that 3.8% agreed and 23.1 strongly agreed that it was possible that one had been out there in bars and coffee shops dating and barely found anyone interesting for mate selection. However, 65.4% disagreed and a further 7.7 strongly disagreed. On a similar note, 19.2 of the respondents agreed and a further 76.9% strongly agreed that It was very expensive to spend money on night outs in search of a lover and therefore dating agencies offered an easier and cheaper option. Only 3.8% of the respondents disagreed. This agrees with the findings of Farrer and Gavin (2009) that dating agencies is a means of managing the social costs of interactions.

Findings also show mixed reaction with regard to the fact that after the college years, it becomes very difficult to meet people willing to date because they are busy.

Whereas 26.9% of the respondents agreed and 19.2% strongly agreed, 50% disagreed while 3.8% strongly disagreed. The anomaly in these findings imply that social interactions are relative. According to the findings of Hollander (2011), while it is axiomatic that none of us are completely autonomous, it is not easy to establish precisely how social and cultural forces operate shaping our attitudes and behaviour.

There was an overwhelming opinion that in dating agencies, people are looking for potential partners and therefore they won't mind if one hit on them. This was confirmed by 34.6% of the respondents who agreed and a further 57.7% who strongly agreed. Only 3.8% disagreed and another 3.8% strongly disagreed. As such, to 92.3% of the respondents, a dating agency was an easy place to find easy sex. Only 3.8 % of the respondents disagreed and another 3.8% strongly disagreed. This implies that sex and dating are closely interrelated. A dating agency is an agency that has romance as its underlying drive and romantic relationships are the way to consensual sex. For those who would be interested in easy sex, they would easily find it in a dating agency. As per the findings of Toma (2014), dating for mate selection through an agency is like playing slots at a slot machine. Sometimes you get a reward and sometimes you do not.

Ranking of the Environmental Factors Influencing Dating through Agencies

In order to determine the influential weight that each of the Environmental factors had on the use of dating agencies, the analysis of the descriptive statistics was conducted and consequently the means were analysed. This involved the use of the SPSS computer software to determine the variation of the mean across the environmental factors studied. The test was conducted at 95% confidence level, and

the significance level was set at 0.05 (Sig >0.05). The means generated were expressed in 2 decimal points as shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4. 15 Ranking of the Environmental factors influencing the use of dating agencies

Environmental factors influencing the use of dating agencies	Mean
It is very expensive to spend money on night outs in search of a lover	3.69
It is difficult for me to naturally find someone with similar interest like me so the dating agency can sort out the profiles on my behalf.	3.46
someone I had hoped for wasted my time now I find that time is not on my side and I need a dating agency to find potential matches for me	3.46
For me, people on a dating agency are looking for potential partners and they won't mind if I hit on them or contact them	3.33
I am so busy with work that there is simply no time to go out and meet people for dates	3.04
For me dating agency is an easy place to find easy sex	2.78
I believe I don't have what it takes to go out there and meet different people for dates	2.73
Meeting people to date after college ends has been very difficult for me because people are busy	2.62
I lost my spouse/ mate through death and now I find that time is not on my side and I need a dating agency to find potential matches for me	2.54
I am so busy with other responsibilities in life that there is simply no time to go out and meet people for dates	2.48
I have been out there in bars and coffee shops dating and barely found anyone interesting	2.42
I lost my spouse/mate through divorce/ separation and now I find that time is not on my side and I need a dating agency to find potential matches for me	2.11

Findings in Table 4.15 shows a rank of the environmental factors thought to influence dating through agencies. For interpretation, the means in Table 4.15 were rounded off to the nearest whole number where “1” translated to “strongly disagree”, “2” translated to “disagree”. “3” translated to “agree” and “4” translated to “strongly agree”. The factors were therefore segmented into three categories as follows. the first category was comprised of the statements with means rounding off to “4” which translates as “strongly agree” and consequently being the most critical environmental factors influencing dating through agencies. the second category was comprised of the statements with means rounding off to “3” which translates as “agree” consequently being other critical environmental factors influencing dating through agencies. the third category was comprised of the statements with means rounding off to “2” which translates as “disagree” consequently being non critical environmental factors influencing dating through agencies.

Most Critical Environmental Factors Influencing Dating through Agencies

According to table 4.15, the most critical environmental factors that resulted to the use of dating through agencies were three. Namely; the amount of money, commitment and time spent on night outs in search of the “elusive” lover, difficulties in naturally finding someone with similar interest easily, and unprecedented break ups of previously hopeful relationships leaving casualties with very little time for finding potential mates on short notice.

Other Critical Environmental Factors Influencing Dating through Agencies

Other critical environmental factors influencing dating through agencies were that dating agencies were easy places for getting mates who won’t mind being contacted, people have busy work schedules that limit time for going out to meet other people for dates, dating agencies are easy places to find easy sex, low self-

esteem inhibits conventional dating, busy post college life that makes it difficult for conventional dating, and bereavement of a spouse or potential mate late in life limiting the chances of getting another one through conventional dating.

Noncritical Environmental Factors Influencing Dating through Agencies

Non critical factors were that one has conventionally dated for long without finding anyone interesting & loss of a mate through separation or divorce.

Views on Dating Through Agencies Concerning Mate Selection

The third objective was to document young adults' views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection. To achieve this, statements on views regarding agency dating and mate selection were posed to the respondents. The statements addressed views pertaining beliefs, values, culture and attitudes. The statements were set on a 4 point Likert scale where "strongly disagree" was coded as 1, "disagree" was coded as 2, "agree" was coded as 3 and "strongly agree" was coded as 4. The respondents were required to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with those statements. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data and consequently the means, frequencies and proportions were generated.

Beliefs on Dating through Agencies for Mate Selection

The results on the respondents' views on beliefs were as shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4. 16 Respondents' views on beliefs regarding agency dating for mate selection

	Mean	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dating agencies provide me with a vast array of potential mates for dates	3.23	46.2	30.8	23.1	-

Dating agencies provide me with a better chance of meeting potential partners who share my religious beliefs than the conventional methods of dating	3.19	19.2	80.8	-	-
Dating agencies provide me with a better chance of meeting potential partners who share my philosophy of life	2.96	15.4	65.4	19.2	-
People registered with dating agencies misrepresent their real selves.	2.58	23.1	11.5	65.4	-

Findings in Table 4.16 show that the respondents agreed that dating agencies provide a vast array of potential mates for dates as confirmed by 30.8% of the respondents who agreed and a further 46.2% who strongly agreed. According to the key informants, dating agencies build up large databases of potential mates and a variety of services. One of the online agencies had over two thousand people registered with their database suggesting that one client had over two thousand people to select a mate from. The finding further shows that 23.1% of the respondents disagreed. This could be attributed to the fact that the local databases were skewed where more women than men had registered suggesting that the women had lower chances of getting potential mates when compare to their male counterparts.

Table 4.16 also shows that the respondents agreed that agencies provide better chance of meeting people who share similar religious beliefs when compared to conventional methods of dating. This was confirmed by 80.8% of the respondents who agreed and a further 19.2% who strongly agreed. None of the respondents disagreed. The respondents further agreed that dating agencies provide better chances of meeting potential partners who share the philosophy of life as confirmed by 65.4%of the respondents who agreed and a further 15.4% who strongly agreed.

These findings could be attributed to the fact that those enrolling for dating services must provide a profile describing who they were as much as possible so as to attract profiles that match their needs from the databases. As such, issues regarding religious beliefs and philosophy of life were captured in the profiling process to some extent. In support of this argument 65.4% disagreed that people registered with dating agencies misrepresent their real selves as seen in table 4.16. Nevertheless, a small proportion of the respondents suggested that people registered with dating agencies misrepresent their real selves as confirmed by 11.5% of the respondents who agree and a further 23.1% who strongly agreed. This observation is explained by the fact that people seeking other services apart from marriage and lifelong partners were likely to misrepresent their profiles and consequently their religious beliefs and philosophy of life.

Values on Dating through Agencies for Mate Selection

The respondents' views on values regarding agency dating for mate selection were as shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4. 17 Views on values regarding agency dating for mate selection

Views on values	Mean	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
With a dating agency I stand a better chance of meeting potential partners who share my values	3.07	19.2	80.8	-	-
With a dating agency I stand a better chance of meeting potential partners who share my hobbies and interests	3.15	19.2	76.9	3.8	-

As seen in Table 4.17, the respondents agreed that with dating agencies, those enrolled stand a better chance of meeting potential partners with whom they share values. This was confirmed by 80.8% of the respondents who agreed and a further

19.2% who strongly agreed. None of the respondents disagreed. The respondents further agreed that dating agencies provide better chances of meeting potential partners with whom they share hobbies and interests as confirmed by 76.9% of the respondents who agreed and a further 19.2% who strongly agreed. As explained earlier, those enrolling for dating services do fill out a profile describing themselves as far as much as possible to increase the chances of getting specific matches from the databases. In the process, issues regarding values, hobbies and interests were captured.

Culture on Dating through Agencies for Mate Selection

The respondents' cultural views regarding agency dating were as shown in Table 4.18.

Table 4. 18 Respondents' view on culture regarding agency dating for mate selection

	Mean	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
People using dating agencies are desperate	2.15	-	50	23.1	26.9
There is a lot of stigma associated with dating agencies	2.92	30.8	34.6	30.8	3.8

According to table 4.18, the respondents were indifferent on the fact that People using dating agencies were desperate. While 50% of the respondents agreed that People using dating agencies were desperate, 23.1% of them disagreed and 26.9 strongly disagreed. There was also indifference on the view that there is a lot of stigma associated with dating agencies while two third of the respondents were in agreement (34.6% agreed and 30.8% strongly agreed), the remaining one third were in disagreement (30.8% disagreed and 3.8% strongly disagreed).

These findings could be attribute to the fact that half of the respondents held on to the traditional belief system where partners were either arranged by parents or where one had to seek out a partner from within their host and surrounding communities. This segment could therefore hold on to the belief that agency dating was for those who were desperate. The other half of the respondents could have been inspired by the modern school of thought where technology has revolutionized the way of doing things including the dating processes.

Attitude on Dating through Agencies for Mate Selection

The views on attitude were as shown in Table 4.19.

Table 4. 19 Views on attitude regarding agency dating for mate selection

	Mean	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Potential mates met through dating agencies do not make good partners in life.	1.85	-	15.4	61.5	23.1
Dating agencies are the surest way of getting a mate because everyone enrolled therein is looking for someone	2.38	15.4	26.9	38.5	19.2
Dating through agencies delays settling down because one beliefs that a better match with always be forthcoming sooner or later	2.44	42.3	46.2	11.5	-
People using dating agencies are likely to be harassed by potential mates profiled for them	2.62	53.8	42.3	3.9	-
With a dating agency I only get part impression of the potential mates	3.04	3.8	96.2	-	-
When dating through agencies, one is likely to meet potential mates similar to them as opposed to people who complement them.	3.38	38.5	61.5	-	-

With regard to attitude, the respondents were of varied opinions on dating agencies for mate selection. According to table 4.19, 61.5% of the respondents disagreed that mates acquired through dating agencies do not make good partners in life. A further 23.1% strongly disagreed. Only 15.4% of the respondents opined that mates acquired through agency dating do not make good life partners. This observation could be attributed to the fact that dating through agencies was still a fairly new concept in Nairobi whose population was mainly comprised of immigrants from the rural areas where the convectional dating methods were still in use.

There was indifference concerning the view that dating agencies were the surest way of getting a mate because everyone enrolled therein was looking for someone. While 26.9% of the respondents agreed and another 15.4 strongly agreed that dating agencies were the surest way of getting a mate, 38.5% disagreed and another 19.2 strongly disagreed.

There was more consensus on the view that Dating through agencies delays settling down because one beliefs that a better match with always be forthcoming sooner or later. This was confirmed by 46.2% of the respondents who agreed and a further 42.3% who strongly disagreed. Only 11.5% of the respondents disagreed.

There was consensus on the view that People using dating agencies were likely to be harassed by potential mates profiled for them. This was confirmed by 42.3% of the respondents who agreed and a further 53.8% who strongly disagreed. Only 3.9% of the respondents disagreed.

The respondents unanimously agreed that with a dating agency, one only gets part impression of the potential mates. This was confirmed by 96.2% of the respondents who agreed and a further 3.8% who strongly agreed. This observation

was attributed to the fact that with agency dating, one only presents their positive features, qualities and attributes opting to be silent on their weaker side in order to increase their chances of attracting potential matches. It is not until potential matches physically meet that the negative qualities become apparent.

The respondents also unanimously agreed that when dating through agencies, one was likely to meet potential mates similar to them as opposed to people who complement them. Consequently, the philosophy of opposites attract doesn't work through dating agencies. This was confirmed by 61.5% of the respondents who agreed and a further 38.5% who strongly agreed. This observation was attributed to the fact that with agency dating, one presents a checklist of the qualities they would wish to find in their potential mates. It was unlikely for an outgoing person to request for an introvert. It was also unlikely for a Christian faith believer to seek a Christian faith believer. The profile of the potential mates presented to the agencies is therefore highly influenced by the character, qualities and beliefs of the applicant.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the analysis of the data collected for the study. In the process the chapter has assessed and determined the adequacy and accessibility of dating agencies for mate selection in Kenya, and the environmental factors influencing young adults' use of dating agencies for mate selection. A documentation of young adults' views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection has also been done. A summary of the key findings, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research are presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter deals with the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study on the environmental factors influencing dating through agencies for mate selection in Nairobi County, Kenya

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the environmental factors influencing dating through agencies for mate selection. The key findings from each of the three research objectives were as follows.

Sufficiency of Dating Agencies

The first objective of the study was to determine the sufficiency of dating agencies for mate selection in Kenya, with specific regard to their availability adequacy and accessibility. It was established that: -

- i. Dating agencies in were available Nairobi and included Tender Love and Care, Tujuane, Majesty's, Royals, Tinder Online, Hearts of Gold, and Top Introductions among others. The largest of them in terms of database size as of the time of the study was Tinder Online.
- ii. The agencies were easily accessible by way of email, telephone, internet and even physically visiting the offices. Their services were usually advertised in the print and social media.

The awareness within the larger population regarding the existence of dating services was quite low particularly among the men. Eventually, the pool of those signed up for the service was quite small and was largely comprised of women seeking husbands. The dating agencies' databases were therefore skewed and could only provide potential matches to just about half of the service seekers. Most of the respondents had consequently registered with at least two agencies to increase their chances.

Only a small proportion (14.8%) of the respondents had been successful at securing a mate through the agencies and were settled with the outcome. On the other hand, 44.5% still hoped for a better match while 40.7% were yet to get any matches. As such, in as much as the dating agencies in Nairobi were accessible, they fell short of satisfying the needs of their clientele to a certain extent. The fact that there were more women in the databases than men implied that a substantial proportion of the women would miss out on mates, and would have to wait for long periods before getting potential matches. Most of the women sought lifetime partners as opposed to a significant proportion of men who sought casual dating and sex.

Environmental Factors Influencing the Use of Dating Agencies for Mate Selection

The second objective of the study was to determine the environmental factors influencing young adults' use of dating agencies for mate selection. It was established that the most critical environmental factors that resulted to the use of dating through agencies were three: -

- i. The amount of money, commitment and time spent on night outs in search of a mate.
- ii. Difficulties in naturally finding someone with similar interest.

- iii. Unprecedented relationship break-ups leaving casualties with very little time for finding other potential mates on short notice.

Other critical environmental factors influencing dating through agencies were that dating agencies were easy places for getting mates who won't mind being contacted, people have busy work schedules that limit time for going out to meet other people for dates, dating agencies were easy places to find easy sex, low self-esteem inhibits conventional dating, busy post college life that makes it difficult for conventional dating, and bereavement of a spouse or potential mate late in life limiting the chances of getting another one through conventional dating.

The factors that did not influence the use of dating agencies were that one had conventionally dated for long without finding anyone interesting, and that one had lost their mate through separation or divorce.

Views on Dating Through Agencies Concerning Mate Selection

The third objective was to document young adults' views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection. It was established that:

- i. Dating agencies provide a vast array of potential mates for dates, thus providing better chances of meeting potential partners who share the philosophy of life.
- ii. Those enrolling for dating services must provide a profile describing who they were as much as possible in order to attract profiles that match their needs. Those enrolled therefore stand a better chance of meeting potential partners with whom they share values, hobbies and interests.

- iii. Predators seeking other services apart from marriage and lifelong partners were likely to misrepresent their profiles and consequently their religious beliefs and philosophy of life.
- iv. There was a lot of stigma associated with dating agencies and the fact that people using dating agencies were desperate. This was attributed to the traditional views and belief systems where mates were either arranged by parents or where one had to seek out a partner from within their host or surrounding communities in the same manner as his/ her peers. This segment could therefore hold on to the belief that agency dating was for those who were desperate.
- v. Technology has revolutionized the way of doing things including the dating processes.
- vi. Dating through agencies delays settling down this was because of the underlying belief that a better match will always be forthcoming sooner or later. In addition, one was also likely to meet potential mates similar to themselves as opposed to people who complement them.
- vii. People using dating agencies were likely to be harassed by potential mates profiled for them because one only gets a part impression of the potential mates profiled for them.
- viii. There were mixed feelings on that dating agencies was the surest way of getting a mate because everyone enrolled therein was looking for someone.

Dating through agencies was still a fairly new concept in Nairobi County, which is the capital city of Kenya, and whose population mainly comprises of

immigrants from the various rural societies in Kenya, keeping in mind that the traditional dating methods were still largely dominant in the rural communities.

Conclusion

Dating through agencies was practiced in the city of Nairobi where a number of agencies operated and had set up large databases of potential mates coupled with a variety of services. For instance, one of the online agencies had over two thousand people registered with their database suggesting that one client had a pool of over two thousand people to choose a mate from. There were a number of environmental factors that necessitated the use of these services.

However, dating through agency was still a fairly new concept and only a very small proportion of the population engaged in it. In a city where the population is in excess of four million (3 million within the city and 1 million with its suburbs) inhabitants, the largest online agency had in excess of two thousand registered users. The low penetration of the service was influenced by the beliefs, values attitudes and cultural systems that shaped the views of most of the Nairobi residents towards dating agencies. There were a large number of women seeking mates when compared to men and whereas women sought marriage partners, men sought casual dates and sex.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. That dating agencies embark on an awareness creation programme within the larger population on the existence of dating services within the county and nationally.

- ii. That dating agencies implement strategies aimed at attracting more male clients into their services in order to equalise the number of female mate seekers already enrolled with the agencies.
- iii. That a destigmatisation advocacy programme for agency dating be developed and implemented in order to encourage more eligible young adults in both urban and rural communities to consider agency dating.
- iv. That professional counselling be incorporated into the dating agency services particularly for those experiencing low self-esteem, bereavement and post break up trauma among other psychological challenges.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions for further research are made:

- i. Non environmental factors influencing the use of dating agencies for mate selection in Nairobi county, Kenya
- ii. A study on contemporary views of the society regarding dating through agencies for mate selection in Nairobi county, Kenya
- iii. A study on mate satisfaction among couples for partners acquired through modern agency dating in comparison to those acquired through other forms of dating practised in Nairobi county, Kenya

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : Introduction Letter

TABITHA MURUNGU

P.O BOX 30242-00100,

NAIROBI.

24th March, 2018

Dear Respondent,

My name is Tabitha Murungu. I am a student at Pan Africa Christian University pursuing a Master of Arts in Marriage & Family Therapy. The course requires me to do a research in partial fulfilment of the program requirements.

I have chosen your dating agency as the location of study, in my research on the evolving pool of alternatives in mate selection and perceptions of young adults on utilization of dating agencies within Nairobi County. The data that will be collected from this organization will be treated confidential and will not be used for any other purposes other than academic. I hope that you will be able to avail me your full cooperation in the period of research.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Tabitha Murungu

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to gather data about your perception on the influence of dating agencies on mate selection. Your participation is highly appreciated. Kindly put a tick in the box that accompanies the option of your response.

Section 1: BIO- DATA

1. Please tick off your gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Please tick off your age bracket?
☐ Less than 20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐ 36 and above
3. Please tick off your education level
☐ KCPE ☐ KCSE ☐ Post-Secondary Certificate
☐ Post-Secondary Diploma ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Post Graduate Diploma
☐ Masters Degree ☐ Doctorate
4. Please indicate your occupation _____
5. Please tick off your occupation type
☐ Salaried Employee ☐ Self-Employed ☐ Own Business
☐ unemployed
6. Please tick off your monthly income bracket in Kenya shillings
☐ less than 20,000 ☐ 20,001 – 40,000 ☐ 40,001 – 60,000
☐ 60,001 – 80,000 ☐ 80,001 – 100,000 ☐ More than 100,000
7. Please tick off your sexual orientation
☐ Straight ☐ Gay/Lesbian ☐ Bi-Sexual
8. Have you ever used dating agencies?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. If yes, how long have you used dating agencies? _____
 - b. of these, how many agencies are local _____
 - c. What were you looking for through the dating agencies?
☐ Casual sex
☐ A companion for normal friendship
☐ A boy/girlfriend for a short season
☐ Someone to support me financially
☐ A marriage partner

9. Have you at any time been successful in securing a mate through any of the international dating agencies?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

10. Have you at any time been successful in securing a mate through any of the local dating agencies?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Part 2: Adequacy and access of dating agencies in Nairobi

11. Are you aware of any dating agencies in Nairobi?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

b. If yes, please list those you are aware of _____

c. In your opinion, are dating agencies in Nairobi easily accessible to the general public?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Explain _____

d. If yes what is the mode of access to the dating agencies in Nairobi based on your experience? (*tick all that apply*)

☐ physical visit to their offices ☐ telephone

☐ Internet application ☐ Email

Please explain _____

12. Have you ever enlisted for the services of any dating agencies in Nairobi?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b. If yes, how many? _____

13. Have you been able to meet any potential match(es) for mate selection?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b. If yes, how many potential mates have you met through the dating agencies in Nairobi? _____

c. Have you been able to finally select the mate of your choice?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ not sure

d. If yes, how many potential mates did you meet before you met the mate of your choice? _____

14. In your opinion, would you say that the dating agencies in Nairobi adequately meet your needs in the selection of a mate?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ not sure

Explain _____

Part 3: Factors influencing use of dating agencies for mate selection.

The following statements present statements on the factors thought to influence the use of dating agencies in Nairobi for mate selection. Please tick off the extent you agree or disagree with the statements.

Possible factors that influence use of dating agencies	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. I am so busy with work that there is simply no time to go out and meet people for dates				
b. I am so busy with other responsibilities in life that there is simply no time to go out and meet people for dates				
c. I believe I don't have what it takes to go out there and meet different people for dates				
d. It is difficult for me to naturally find someone with similar interest like me so the dating agency can sort out the profiles on my behalf.				
e. someone I had hoped for wasted my time now I find that time is not on my side and I need a dating agency to find potential matches for me				
f. I lost my spouse/mate through divorce/ separation and now I find that time is not on my side and I need a dating agency to find potential matches for me				
g. I lost my spouse/ mate through death and now I find that time is not on my side and I need a dating agency to find potential matches for me				
h. I have been out there in bars and coffee shops dating and barely found anyone interesting				
i. It is very expensive to spend money on night outs in search of a lover				
j. Meeting people to date after college ends has been very difficult for me because people are busy				
k. For me dating agency is an easy place to find easy sex				
l. For me, people on a dating agency are looking for potential partners and they won't mind if I hit on them or contact them				

Part 3: views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection

The following statements present views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection. Please tick off the extent you agree or disagree with the statements.

views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Beliefs				
a. Dating agencies provide me with a wide range of potential mates for dates				
b. Dating agencies provide me with a better chance of meeting potential partners who share my religious beliefs than the conventional methods of dating				
c. Dating agencies provide me with a better chance of meeting potential partners who share my philosophy of life				
d. People registered with dating agencies misrepresent their real selves.				
Values				
e. With a dating agency I stand a better chance of meeting potential partners who share my values				
f. With a dating agency I stand a better chance of meeting potential partners who share my hobbies and interests				
Culture				
g. People using dating agencies are desperate				
h. There is a lot of stigma associated with dating agencies				
Attitude				
i. Potential mates met through dating agencies do not make good partners in life.				
j. Dating agencies are the surest way of getting a mate because everyone enrolled therein is looking for someone				
k. With a dating agency I only get part impression of the potential mates				
l. People using dating agencies are likely to be harassed by potential mates profiled for them				
m. Dating through agencies delays settling down because one believes that a better match will always be forthcoming sooner or later				
n. When dating through agencies, one is likely				

to meet potential mates similar to them as opposed to people who complement them. (the philosophy of opposites attract doesn't work through dating agencies)				
--	--	--	--	--

Appendix 3: Key Informant Interview Guide

The interview guide is designed to gather data about your perception on the influence of dating agencies on mate selection. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Section 1: BIO- DATA

1. Name of the agency _____ optional
2. Informants, current title or administrative position at the dating agency
3. Respondent background experience with regards to years of experience, client base, and successful matches in the dating industry

Section 2: Adequacy and access of dating agencies

4. Are there clients in Nairobi looking for mates through dating agencies?
5. For how long have dating agencies in Nairobi existed? _____
6. What are clients looking for through the dating agencies?

Service	Yes/ No	Proportion of clients looking for the service
Casual sex (heterosexual)		
Casual sex (homosexual)		
A companion for normal friendship		
A boy/girlfriend for a short season		
Someone to support me financially		
A marriage (first time partner)		
Re marriage after divorce/separation		
Re marriage after bereavement		

7. Which particular group (s) within the society are more likely to seek the services of dating agencies for mate selection than others
8. On average, what proportion of clients is normally successful in securing a mate through the dating agencies?
9. Which are the key dating agencies in Nairobi?
10. What is the most common mode of access to the dating agencies in Nairobi based on your experience? (tick all that apply)
11. What proportion of clients is finally able to select the mate of their choice through the agencies?
12. On average how many potential mates does a client meet before finally select the mate of your choice?
13. Which are the most common methods that dating agencies in Nairobi use to get clients

Section 3: Factors influencing use of dating agencies for mate selection.

14. What are the most common reasons given by the clients on their need to the dating agencies for mate selection.

Section 4: Views on dating through agencies concerning mate selection

15. In your opinion, is dating through agencies for mate selection a viable option for the population living within Nairobi? Explain

Appendix 4: Research Authorisation- PACU

24th July, 2018



P.O. Box 56875 - 00200
Nairobi, Kenya
Lumumba Drive, Roysambu
off Kamiti Rd, off Thika Rd
Tel: 0734 400694/0721 932050
Email: enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke
website: www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION & ETHICS CLEARANCE FOR TABITHA MUMBI
MURUNGU REG. NO: MFT/00045/13**

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing a Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy.

She is at the final stage of the programme and she is preparing to collect data to enable her finalise on her thesis. The thesis title is **"Influence of Dating Agencies on Mate Selection": A study of selected dating agencies in Nairobi, Kenya.**

We therefore, kindly request that you allow her conduct research at your organization.

Warm Regards,

Lingona

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
P.O. Box 56875, NAIROBI - 00200.
TEL: 8561820/8561945/2013146

Dr. Lilian Vikiru

Registrar Academic Affairs

Pan Africa Christian University

Lumumba Drive, Roysambu, off Kamiti Rd, off Thika Rd

P.O Box 56875-00200, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: 0734 400694/0721 932050

Appendix 5: Research Authorisation- NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241340, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No. NACOSTI/P/19/10206/25987

Date: 29th January, 2019

Tabitha Mumbi Murungu
Pan Africa Christian University
P.O Box 56875 – 00200
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“The influence of dating agencies on mate selection: A study of selected dating agencies in Nairobi, Kenya”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Nairobi County for the period ending **29th January, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO9001:2008 Certified

Appendix 6: Research Permit- NACOSTI

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. TABITHA MUMBI MURUNGU
of PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY,
53050-200 NAIROBI, has been permitted
to conduct research in Nairobi County
on the topic: THE INFLUENCE OF
DATING AGENCIES ON MATE SELECTION:
A STUDY OF SELECTED DATING
AGENCIES IN NAIROBI, KENYA.
for the period ending:
29th January, 2020

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/19/10206/25987
Date Of Issue : 29th January, 2019
Fee Recieved :Ksh 1000



Applicant's Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation