



The Impact of Dating Shows on the Youth Regarding their Stands on Love and Relationships in Dubai

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ABSTRACT

The spread of dating culture in the past few decades has led to an increase in the research conducted on this topic; however, there's little to no evident research done on the effects of dating shows of the youth of Dubai, aging 15 to 24. This Study dives into the outcomes of reality dating shows both culturally and psychologically, examining if the extent teenagers would reach to find their significant other aligns with their Middle Eastern standards and traditions, as well as if their perspectives on dating, love, and committed partnerships differ depending on how regular their viewership of dating shows really is. Quantative and qualitative methods were both applied to gather statistics and opinions from real and diverse respondents. Microsoft forms were sent out through social media platforms, collecting different point of views through open ended responses as well as grouping based on statistics gathered from multiple choice options giving an insight on age, gender, and nationality. The survey results allowed a deeper outlook on the differing stand points of Dubai's youth, demonstrating that all dating shows collectively have a western agenda that is heavily displayed and imbedded in the details and actions of the contestants. The results also revealed that the younger the watchers are the more prone they are to an open-minded approach when finding a partner. Yet, on the other end of the spectrum older viewers are not highly accepting of all the ideologies displayed throughout the show's episodes. Although further research is needed for gathering more insights on the long-term effects of romantic reality shows on a larger geographic scale, identifying the varying point of views in the entire MENA region.

Keywords: *dating shows, youth of Dubai, Middle Eastern traditions, significant other, dating culture, reality dating shows, committed partnerships*

Introduction

People used to find love through workplaces, mutuals, or via formal meetings with potential matches suggested by family and friends. Based on common interests, social statuses, goals, and overall chemistry. At present, and with the rise of dating shows, the culture of relationships is metamorphosed in terms of cultural, societal, and intellectual standards. "These shows seem to be affecting us on a grander scale; one that is cultural, societal, and psychological. These programs not only reflect societal norms and ideals about love, romance, and gender roles, but they also have the power to change and influence them. By reinforcing certain stereotypes or narratives about relationships, they can influence viewers' perceptions and expectations, both consciously and subconsciously." (Coulibaly, 2024). Dating shows appeal to the younger generations immensely, shaping their views and norms regarding finding your significant other. As of 2017, 32% of Americans aged between 18-29 were active audiences of reality dating shows (Coulibaly, 2024).

"History suggests that 1965's 'The Dating Game' was the match that lit the fuse to the widespread of dating shows." (Franks.J, 2024), leading to the emergence of numerous shows in the early 2000s, like the infamous 90-day fiancé, that some label as "the most successful dating show." (Iqbal, 2024) this is because it "created 54 couples from its nine-season run, of which over half (54%) are still together today." (Iqbal). As evidenced by shows like Love Island, Perfect Match, and the heated Love Is Blind, the audience's growing engagement has contributed to the mass production of a new generation of dating shows targeted at younger audiences, connecting with their experiences and offering relevant nominees whom they can relate to. Due to the enormous popularity of this specific show, producers decided to make a MENA-set version. Due to cultural and religious norms, dating is frequently seen as wrong in this context, sparking parental debate, and captivating many Arab youths, who at last feel represented by these renowned production companies.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Although much research has been accomplished regarding the impact of dating shows on how today's youth view love and relationships, none of them have focused on the effects of such shows a survey of 197 young adults, along with Gómez-López et al. (2019) analyzed the well-being of 13-17-year-olds towards romantic relationships positively or negatively, however, the effects on the youth in Dubai remains unexplored. To attempt to close that gap, this study examines how dating shows affect Dubai's youth, particularly their perspectives on dating, love, and committed partnerships.

1.2. Objectives of The Study

The research's main aim is to study the effects of reality dating shows on the younger generation of Dubai, both psychologically and culturally. It will examine whether the extent to which they would go to find their other half aligns with the traditions and values of their backgrounds, identify the recurring keynotes of the youth's viewpoint on the ideas and attitudes suggested by these shows, and compare the overall approach to love between those who are active audiences of dating shows and those who are not exposed to such content.

1.3. Research Questions.

- What is the impact of dating shows on Dubai's youth?
- How do people who watch reality dating shows regularly differ from those who don't?
- In what way do dating shows try to rub out one's Arab identity and westernize the mindsets of their audience?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Dating shows like *90-Day Fiancé* and *Love Island* (UK/USA) have caught the youth's attention to such an explicit genre and have likewise captured the interest of psychologists, media scholars, and, most significantly, parents eager to understand the outcomes such shows might have on young minds. This study will be uniquely important due to the specific findings provided throughout the research, which can help scholars, psychologists,

and parents gain a better perspective within the context of Dubai. Providing them with a clearer understanding would enable them to guide the youth in the event of any missteps.

1.5. Structure of the Study

The first chapter introduces the statement of the problem regarding the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study.

The second chapter includes previous research on the effects of dating shows, focusing on the differences between the perceptions and the points of view they inhabit through those shows.

Literature Review

Introduction

Traditionally, people found love through work, friends, family, mutuals, and meetings with potential matches arranged by parents, family, or friends, prioritizing common interests, standards, mind goals, and social compatibility. However, now because of the rise of dating shows in the Arab region, specifically in Dubai, relationship standards and dynamics have significantly changed. These shows heavily influenced cultural and societal standards by affecting stereotypes and resulting expectations about love and relationships. As Coulibaly (2024) states, dating shows do not only reflect but also can influence and change the cultural and psychological norms of society as a whole. (p.4). This research explores the impact of dating shows on youth in Dubai and the youth's point of view on dating shows in Dubai.

2.1 Psychological Effects of Dating Shows

2.1.1 Psychological Effects of Dating Shows

Dating shows heavily affect and significantly mold the psychological welfare of their viewers, specifically in self-worth or perception and love expectations. Research states that frequent watching of dating shows leads to fostering unrealistic relationship expectations due to these shows usually portraying "love at first sight" or an

immediate dramatic connection instead of a slow and gradual process (Ferris et al., 2007). The constant watching of very attractive contestants, "perfect" relationships and rich men leads many adolescent viewers to compare their own love lives and physical appearance to these unrealistic relationship standards set by dating shows (Gómez-López et al., 2019). This dynamic and standards are reflected in shows like Love Island and The Bachelor, where physical appearance and over-the-top love gestures are considered more important than emotional validation (Coulibaly, 2024). As a result of dating shows, the audience may feel frustrated with their actual realistic relationships and idealize unrealistic expectations that are hard to reach.

2.1.2 Cultural Shifts Caused by Dating Shows

Dating shows caused a large cultural shift by promoting Western dating norms that don't go with traditional values. Western dating norms that are presented in dating shows like Love Is Blind and 90-Day Fiancé focus on falling in love immediately and personal choice, while traditionally in the MENA region and many cultures outside the West, prioritize involving families and marriage so a long-lasting relationship (Iqbal, 2024). Ferris et al. (2007) argue that dating shows create an illusion of instant, effortless love, shaping unrealistic expectations among viewers. However, Gómez-López et al. (2019) take a different approach, suggesting that while these shows can exaggerate romance, they also reinforce commitment and exclusivity, which aligns with certain traditional values. This difference in Ferris and Gómez-López's opinions highlights that the impact of dating shows is not a one-size fits all situation. These shows also enforce different modern gender roles. Showing women as dominant in romantic efforts and men as emotional and vulnerable as women doesn't align with traditional standards (Gómez-López et al., 2019), which causes new generations to adopt a new point of view on dating and marriage.

2.2 Arab Youth and Media

2.2.1 Influence of Western Media on Arab Cultural Norms

The rise of the absorption of Western media, especially dating shows, caused Arab youth to normalize foreign relationships and dating. Which opposes traditional beliefs and values in all Arab societies, Dating remains a controversial topic, with family approval and reassurance still playing a dominant role when finding the one (Al-Khatib, 2020). However, western social media, especially dating shows, did prioritize an individual's choice over family. This sparked a division between Arab generations where youths especially in Dubai agree with modern dating ways while older generations stick to traditional ways (Mahmoud & Al-Hassan, 2021). While a lot of youths adopted Western ways, some youths stick to traditional values even with the high exposure to Western media and standards.

2.2.2 How Arab Youth Engage with Western Dating Content

Arab youth, particularly in Dubai, who frequently watch Dating shows usually go through a big change in their point of view and standards on love life and relationships, usually in the standards and gender roles. Research by El-Toukhy (2022) stated that arab youth who regularly watch dating shows are more likely to accept the idea of dating. Studies have also shown that in the gulf, including the UAE, globalization and Western media have caused a hybrid cultural identity, meaning that younger generations are blending modern love standards and traditional values (Nasser, 2023). This shows how arab youth in Dubai selectively choose modern ideas while maintaining some, but not all, traditional and cultural beliefs and standards. One of these traditional beliefs that all youths believe in is focusing on marriage more than dating since it is considered more important. This mix between the two cultures is still a controversial topic that's still being discussed among the youth of Dubai.

2.3 Dating and Cultural Norms in the UAE/Dubai

2.3.1 The Role of Tradition and Family in Relationships

the UAE, relationships are shaped by Islamic values and Arab traditions. Marriage is seen as the

ultimate goal, with family playing a huge role in choosing the perfect husband or wife. This helps ensure that both individuals share the same religious and cultural beliefs. Arranged marriages are common because they help maintain family honor and strengthen social ties (Commisceo Global, n.d.).

The country takes these traditions seriously. Public dating is not acceptable and can lead to consequences, as UAE laws are based on Islamic teachings. People are expected to follow cultural and religious rules, especially in public places (Commisceo Global, n.d.).

However, Dubai's diverse population has led to changing views on relationships. While Emirati traditions remain strong, expats especially from Western countries see dating as normal. Still, they must follow UAE laws, where things like living together before marriage can result in legal issues. Meanwhile, young youths are more exposed to Western media, travel, and education, which has influenced how they approach dating. Some try to balance modern ideas with traditional values, but this has led to an issue between the youths and the older population

2.3.2 Societal Views on Dating in Arab Culture

In the customary Arab society, key relationship qualities are showing respect, being discreet, and including relatives. Such features are especially found within traditional cultures, such as that of the UAE. In most of the Arab cultures, older segments consider dating as a challenge to the behavior of Islam, which stresses the need for relationships to be well-regulated and eventually lead to marriage. It is considered shallow dating that contradicts the accepted practices, which instead prefer dating by consent or arranged by the family to maintain the core values of the society (Commisceo Global, n.d.).

However, the youth are influenced by globalization and are revealed to Western media, which often

introduces romance as a private and sentimental bond instead of being guided by the family. Many young Emiratis end up managing these two different influences, aiming to give value to their cultural heritage while still pursuing individual wants. Studies show that younger residents in Dubai are more willing to consider dating, given that it sticks with their personal and familial values (Soulmatcher, 2024).

2.4 Viewership Differences

2.4.1 Comparison of Perceptions Between Frequent Viewers and Non-Viewers

According to Semafor, regular younger audiences view reality dating entertainment from a different perspective because they often blend it with the modernized societal views it presents. For example, young residents of Dubai enjoy the emotional self-expression, intimacy, and romantic autonomy demonstrated in the local adaptation of *Love Is Blind*, as it merges the global entertainment aspect with the importance that Arab culture places on family. Moreover, reality dating shows tend to have a liberal portrayal of relationships, which many younger audiences, especially in Dubai, tend to appreciate and relate to.

Meanwhile, nonviewers, who are typically from older generations, doubt the idea of dating shows by arguing that these shows depict disrespectful behaviors that oppose Islamic and cultural beliefs, like casual dating and placing personal interests first before familial and communal responsibilities. As research has shown, older residents of Dubai tend to reject the individualism shown on TV shows and realize the importance of including family when choosing a partner (Psychology Today, 2022). This difference shows the division of how relationships are viewed and illustrates the cultural clash present between tradition and modernity in Dubai.

2.4.2 Surveys or Studies on Audience Demographics and Opinions

Research focused on the consumption of reality television shows indicates that the biggest

audience for dating programs is young women aged between 18 and 25. Such audiences are usually in search of stories that relate to their experiences and feelings while broadening their views on international dating. Many of the viewers connect with the stories of love and relationships, despite being fictionalized, but which portray love and relationships as a broader subject (Psychology Today, 2022).

On the other hand, older viewers consider reality dating shows as exaggerated and not in line with Arab cultural norms. Studies have also pointed out that people who are sensation-seeking are the ones who watch such programs more, as they are interested in the emotional tension and unpredictability they offer most (ResearchGate, 2024). These results demonstrate the influence of personality traits and generational differences on media consumption patterns in Dubai.

2.5 Identity and Representation in Media

2.5.1 How Dating Shows Might Erase Cultural Identity or Promote Inclusivity

Western dating shows contradict Dubai's way of living, which has a culture that finds its community and family values important. This is because these dating shows depict ideas related to personal independence, self-expression, and reliance on oneself. Critiques claim that these shows could erase the cultural identity of an individual by normalizing actions like casual dating, which is contrary to Arab practices. For example, older Emiratis have shown fear about the effects of global dating shows on the youth, concerned that such programs could undermine the importance of family involvement in matchmaking (Commisceo Global, n.d.).

Even though Western media dominates globally, localized adaptations of dating shows, such as *Love Is Blind: Habibi*, have successfully included Arab cultural values and gender norms to create a media product that feels modern yet is still true to its local identity. These adaptations present a harmony of what might seem like contrasting concepts—global media formats and local cultural ideals—those results in a more profound

representation of the Arab world in modern media and, in turn, a greater acceptance of diverse Arab experiences for audiences both here and abroad (Semafor, 2024).

2.5.2 The Introduction of MENA-Set Shows and Their Reception in the Arab World

The success of these MENA-specific reality shows speaks to the region's capacity to localize worldwide media phenomena. One popular example of Arab culture reaching a global audience is TV programs like Arab Idol and Love Is Blind: Habibi. Such shows, as part of a more diverse TV scene, keep their cultural relevance by showing key elements such as family involvement, modesty, and religion that appeal to Arab viewers (Semafor; 2023).

The reception of these programs differs between generations. Youth viewers often praise their representation of Arab culture in global media, celebrating the balance between tradition and modernity. Yet, there's confusion to all of this—for some, anyway. In the eyes of older audiences, even shows that are culturally adapted can pose serious risks. They can promote Western values that threaten to weaken the Arab world's cultural heritage. This older population is not wrong to be doubtful; they've been around long enough to know what different kinds of media can and do lead to (Semafor, 2024).

Conclusion

This study explores the effect of dating shows on youths in Dubai and their expectations and beliefs in dating after being exposed to dating shows. Research shows that Western dating shows changes and reshaped script of youths dating standards but also causes a hybrid identity where traditional and modern standards are selectively chosen and blended (El Toukhy, 2022). Division and controversial arguments happen between older generations and youths in Dubai. Older generations believe that these shows are a waste of time and that they're ruining the newer generation's minds and standards while youths engage with them for the trendiness and fun or reflections of modern relationships (Psychology

Today, 2022). While dating shows the effects globally have been studied a lot, research on Dubai's youth specifically has never been done. Future research can focus on their long-term effect on Dubai's youths and their point of view. There is little to no research on the effect of the exposure of dating shows on Arab youths' perception of their own identity. While some research explores how it changes the stereotype of relationships, they don't dive deep enough to figure out if it leads to a deep cultural transformation (El Toukhy, 2022; Mahmoud & Al-Hassan, 2021). future studies should explore if the youths in Dubai will fully adopt the western standards or be selectively pick and choose.

Even though this study gives a good understanding of how youth in Dubai are influenced by dating shows, additional research is still vital to look at the lasting behavioral shifts within viewers and how their changing views might affect future relationship norms in the region.

By fulfilling a research gap that has formerly left the youth of Dubai unexamined in this regard, this study prepares for further academic research on the impact of global media on the expectations of relationships in non-Western societies. As scholars, educators, and policymakers continue the efforts to understand the evolving global consumption patterns, their impact on cultural identity and social values remains crucially important to study."It would also be beneficial to explore how older and younger generations in Dubai navigate these changing relationship norms. Are young people truly shifting away from traditional values, or are they simply experimenting while still holding onto cultural expectations? Understanding whether these changes are surface-level trends or deep societal shifts could provide a clearer picture of the future of relationships in the MENA.

This paper aims to recognize the psychological and cultural impact of reality dating shows on teenagers and young adults, ages 15 to 24. By analyzing the differences between those who actively watch dating shows, whether for entertainment purposes, a coping mechanism, or

overall interest in the lifestyle portrayed in such reality shows, an understanding of the ideology shared between those who devoutly engage with these productions compared to others who do not is met.

3.1. Description of Data

This research used the survey's data to inspect how dating shows may influence young people in Dubai. It analyzed whether these shows align with Arab culture towards relationships and how it may be viewed by the teenagers and young adults, parents in particular. The survey also aimed to inspect what truly has a pull on the young viewers to watch such programs, to better understand their appeal. Additionally, it investigated whether western relationships are affecting the typical dating and cultural norms in Dubai.

3.2. Methodology

Analyzing young people's perspective through forms allowed a concise and methodical way to gather opinions and data on how such shows influence their views on love and relationships, and overall behavior compared to older age groups that are not a target audience for these shows. Choosing to use a survey through Microsoft Forms provided sample responses, making it convenient to assess and recognize patterns and trends among the youth of Dubai, of ages 15-24. Since the topic revolves around dating shows, most individuals may have found it personal or unacceptable in their community, the survey gave anonymity, therefore brutal honesty towards the subject.

3.3. Rationale of the Study

The topic "The Impact of Dating Shows on the Youth Regarding Their Stands on Love and Relationships in Dubai" was decided upon as it maintained an unclear understanding of the true effect of reality dating shows on the youth in Dubai, ranging from ages 15-24, and whether reality dating shows could alter long-practiced relationship norms in Dubai. Dubai was selected as the place of study as it mixes two contrasting elements: modernity and tradition, creating an

ideal setting to understand these dynamics. As for the paper's data collection tool, Microsoft Forms was selected since it's a balanced strategy that considers both the individual's personal experiences and numerical trends. In addition, Microsoft Teams is easy to access, share, and collect data. By comparing younger individuals who watch these productions with older individuals who do not, the study provided a good comprehension of the influence of media on modern dating in Dubai, coupled with information on the changes in relationships and cultural norms.

3.4. Procedure of the Analysis

Analysis was implied as soon as survey responses were gathered. Multiple choice questions served as an effortless approach to grouping the survey takers based on Age, sex, nationality, and regularity of watching dating shows. While open-ended questions played a key role in providing a deeper insight into the commonalities and contrasts of the respondents' perspectives and standpoints on relationships.

3.5. Conclusion

This section explored the methodology, including the data description, the way the survey was designed, the study's rationale, and the data analysis procedure. The study planned to figure out the variation in the perspectives on relationships between younger target viewers in Dubai and older non target viewers in Dubai. By studying the responses of the individuals using the Microsoft Teams survey, this paper assisted in grasping the outcome that reality dating shows have put onto traditions and views in the distinct culture present in Dubai.

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the survey responses collected from youth aged 15 to 24 in Dubai regarding their opinions and perspectives on dating shows. The purpose of the survey was to explore and discover how exactly dating shows affected young people's perception of romance, love, and relationships, particularly in the cultural context of Dubai. Factors such as

gender, age, and nationality are considered in the research.

4.1. Outline of Received Responses

To begin the analysis, we shall begin to dissect and analyze the demographic composition of the respondents. In total, we had 47 participants, 29 females, and 18 males. Though somewhat favorable towards women, this gender divide provides a balanced viewpoint on the subject. For the sake of convenience, clarity, and comparison, the respondents were split into three age groups: 15-17, 18-20, and 21-24. Both UAE citizens and foreigners from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including those from Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Tunisia, and Bahrain were among the participants.

Given this variation, it is possible to understand better how young people from various cultural backgrounds view and respond to dating shows in the Middle East. When evaluating how traditional cultural norms impact views of romance, the importance of nationality becomes particularly important.

4.2. Audience of Dating Shows

Whether or not the respondents watch dating shows is the first significant analytical point. 26 (55%) of the 47 respondents said they do not watch dating shows, while 21 (45%) said they do. This suggests that young people in Dubai are mildly interested in these kinds of programs, which is aligned with the popularity of dating programs around the world and their increasing visibility on social media.

When we break down this data by gender, we find that 15 of the female respondents said they watched dating shows, whereas only 7 of the male respondents said the same. This might be because dating shows are frequently advertised with a focus on romance and emotional drama, which are genres that, according to media consumption outlets, generally appeal more to female audiences.

4.3. Reported Data on the Regularity of Consuming Dating Shows

The Microsoft Forms survey created for this paper revealed a varied frequency between the 47 individuals who watch dating shows. Of the participants who consume dating shows, 2 (4%) reported watching dating shows daily, 6 (13%) reported watching weekly, 9 (19%) reported watching monthly, and 4 (9%) reported watching yearly. This information suggests that although dating shows are watched by many, the majority of the viewers are not frequent viewers but rather watch them infrequently.

According to the data collected, female respondents were dominant in the "very frequent" along with the "frequent viewer" division, as they occupied a larger portion of the individuals who reported watching daily or weekly. This might theorize that females are more interested in dating shows than men. On the contrary, male respondents were more dominant in the "non-frequent" category, since males made up a larger portion of the individuals who watch yearly or monthly. This further supports the idea that males' viewing preferences might be inclined to different types of entertainment.

Different age groups showed a difference in how often individuals watch dating shows. Individuals aged 18-21 held the highest record for the number of frequent viewers, with 8 respondents watching dating shows more regularly. This suggests that college-aged individuals who have spare time tend to consume such content. On the other hand, individuals aged 22-24 view dating shows less frequently than those of ages 18-21, having fewer frequent viewers while also tending toward viewing dating shows occasionally, mostly due to career and professional duties.

Due to many factors, including the rules practiced at home, the media influence, and the social norms, migrants reported a stronger and higher rate of watching dating shows, possessing 7 frequent and 2 very frequent viewers, in contrast to the two Emirati participants.

4.4. Are Dating Shows a Representation of Arab Relationship Values?

A fundamental question was raised to participants. Specifically, the question asked if the respondents believe that dating shows showcase the principles of relationships in Arab society. Among the participants of this question, 12 respondents (13.8%) reported that dating shows do indeed reflect the values of relationships in the Arab world. However, to no surprise, a stronger majority of 75 participants (86.2%) refused the idea.

Since a great majority of 75 participants (86.2%) refused the belief that dating shows reflect Arab relationship standards, it is shown that it is widely seen that dating shows do not align with Arab standards and norms. Additionally, there appears to be a significant cultural gap. Many dating shows present ideas such as public dating, public affection, and open relationships, which go against Arab views on courtship, family involvement, modesty, and marriage.

It was demonstrated that males and females had very similar responses to this question, which shows a common feeling of cultural clash. South Asian backgrounds, including Indian and Pakistani participants, largely and strongly disagreed, similar to the Emiratis, who had 100% of them strongly opposing the idea. On the contrary, Western migrants were more split among some who showed openness to the behaviors shown in dating shows.

Age was not a main factor in this case, as individuals of ages 18-24 showed strong disagreement. This concludes that dating shows are viewed as opposing to Arab core relationship values by the youth in Dubai and that the youth in Dubai generally believe it misaligns with their cultural standards.

4.5. Closer Observation of Open-ended Responses

open-ended questions provided a richer comprehension of the likeliness and differences among the Microsoft Forms respondents based on sex, age, and the regularity of watching dating

shows. Initially, the study was conducted on the youth of Dubai as a whole, as they mostly share hobbies, opinions, and regularly participate and engage within the ethnic mosaic that has been exceptionally evident in Dubai over the past few years. As more respondents responded the more a pattern of likeness in standpoints emerged between the 15-16-year-olds, the 17-19-year-olds, and the 20-24-year-olds. For instance, the responses received from the 15 to 16-year-olds portrayed their blessing to highly Western ideologies. An illustration of this is evident in a response collected from a 15-year-old Christian Arab of Egyptian roots who expressed his concern for labeling dating shows as promontory of Western agendas and Westernization as a whole, he demonstrates that “(he) wouldn’t call it “westernization” as much as I (he) would call it freedom.” He believes so since in his opinion “Dating is a personal choice that should be accepted by the public no matter the nationality, gender, religion, etc....”. Another liberated response was collected from a 16-year-old Jordanian female who conveyed “that dating is a normal experience for people in our age group,” she further justified her answer by mentioning that “since we live in Dubai(a place where people come from every pit on earth and share cultures). So, people should be open-minded and allow everyone to do what they want.” On the total other end of the spectrum, 19-24-year-old respondents displayed maturity and certainty when it came to making up their mind on whether dating productions influence the westernization of Dubai’s youth. “(dating shows)seemed Westernized and didn’t resonate with our Arab values at all” as a 24-year-old Syrian male would describe, as well as the 20-year-old Egyptian female who draws attention to the fact that” (Dubai)shall remain an Arab Muslim state with Arab and Muslim boundaries,” regardless of “the amount of all the clashing cultures resigning in the emirates.” are all valid points of view that share almost -if not exactly- the same beliefs. 17 to 19-year-old form takers’ open-ended responses were almost the middle ground between the other 2 extremely opinionated age groups, as no pattern could be determined from the 17-19-year-old respondents since each respondent had a different standpoint on this topic in specific.

4.6. Parental Outlook on Dating Shows

Including a question regarding parent's point of view on this controversial topic, even "daring" as some would express, was vital. A contrast had to be spotted for a judgment to be made whilst comparing the nontarget older generations of parents and the 15-24-year-olds of Dubai who serve as the perfect intended demographic for these productions, as the ethnic mosaic the youth of Dubai dwell in could potentially cause a state of skepticism regarding their inherited societal norms and beliefs, as well as a sense of alienation and disconnection to surroundings. Asking whether respondents' parents "consider the content of dating shows as appropriate to Middle Eastern values" allowed an insight into the bigger picture. The data collected demonstrated that 66% of participants' parents did not find the content displayed appropriate to the Arab culture and norms they have inherited from their ancestors. In comparison, 28% of respondents' parents were neutral towards these productions, and only 6% of form takers' parents regard dating shows as suitable to their heritage and overall morals.

4.7. Shifting Perceptions of Love and Relationships

One of the most significant impacts of dating shows is how they cause teenagers to mature and understand love and relationships at such a young age. Many survey respondents stated that they still adhere to traditional beliefs. For example, the goal of love should always be marriage, or that relationships must follow a cultural path. However, after the launch of dating shows, some began changing their points of view and standards. For a few, dating shows introduced new and open perspectives, such as the idea that dating before marriage is acceptable; however, others found the concept of dating even more appalling and were disturbed by the fakeness and manipulation present in these shows.

On one hand, dating shows can expose youth to different relationship dynamics that can lead to changes in perspectives. However, they can also create unrealistic and extreme expectations of love, particularly for females, which can be

shattered when they experience real-life relationships. This illustrates the negative power social media holds as a potential source of misinformation.

4.8. Conclusion and Interpretation

The results of the survey state that Dubai youth have complex and different points of view on dating and dating shows. While many survey respondents enjoy dating shows because of the drama and entertainment, most are against the Western ideas portrayed in these shows, and only a few believe that these ideas are reflected in the Arab world. Factors such as age, gender, cultural background, parents, and race affect the interpretation of dating shows because youths aren't just watching and absorbing but are also heavily engaged with the content and expressing their points of view. This action shows that dating shows are not just light entertainment but also serve as a platform for diverse opinions. As Dubai continues to grow, more research should be conducted on the long-term effect of dating shows such as youth identity, marriage expectations, and relationship behavior. For now, dating shows are not just entertainment but also a huge cultural shift.

5.1. Summary of Findings

The primary aim of this research was to determine the effects of reality dating shows on the youth of Dubai, aged between 15 to 24. Gathering their standpoints on love, relationships, and Middle Eastern societal norms was crucial in associating active viewership of dating shows and a Westernized outlook on the appropriate approach when finding one's significant half. To collect and assemble data on the views of the younger generations concerning love-based reality shows, a Microsoft Teams survey was shared via social media, which gathered 47 responses from diverse respondents. A conclusion that Dating shows do indeed affect the ideologies of youthful viewers was reached beyond analyzing similar patterns across all responses. Where younger respondents shared an overall open-minded viewpoint that not only approved of dating culture but encouraged it for "expanded experience". Yet, the older

respondents were on the other end of the spectrum and loudly opposed the agenda implemented by dating shows, having preached that regardless of Dubai's diversity, it will remain an Arab Muslim state that does not tolerate dating culture whatsoever.

5.2. Study Findings and Their Implications

Even though dating shows are popular among Dubai's youth, specifically females, migrants, and those whose ages range from 18-21, the idea that dating shows reflect Arab values is rejected by most of the dating shows' viewers. This suggests that there's a cultural conflict present instead of a complete hybrid identity. Due to the popularity of dating shows, it is important that better media education is provided. This would help younger viewers in Dubai think more carefully and strictly on what they watch, especially when such dating shows do not depict Arab relationship values, as agreed by many of Dubai's youth. Even though the individuals have shown a variance in media exposure, the fact that most of the participants of the Microsoft Teams survey disagreed on the idea that dating shows represent Arab relationship values shows the shared cultural understanding of real Arab relationship values among the individuals in Dubai. Although these shows might influence the perspective on love of young individuals, the rejection shown towards the behavior presented in dating shows proves their resilience rather than blind acceptance. However, questions remain on the long-term effects on mental well-being and expectations.

5.3. Limitations of the Paper

This study gave useful information but was limited to an extent. It was studied with only 47 participants, which might not fully represent all the youth in Dubai. Additionally, since responses submitted by participants on the Microsoft Teams survey were self-reported, there is a chance the responses were deliberately made to sound good or acceptable to others, as the topic is sensitive. Moreover, this research merely shows opinions at one moment in time instead of analyzing the long-term effects. In addition, the paper only looked at the youth demographic and did not explore the

influence of other roles, such as family and schools, and how these roles might affect the youth's perspective of dating and relationships in Dubai.

5.4. Recommendations for Further Research

As seen from the findings and limitations faced, future studies should explore a few areas, such as how consistent exposure to dating shows affects relationship standards and expectations, as well as the negativity or positivity that dating shows have on identity development. Future research should also focus on the effect of parental intervention and adult guidance regarding media content related to dating. A deeper and broader investigation of young populations from other countries could help determine whether the adoption of Western dating standards is causing a cultural transformation throughout the entire MENA region and other Arab countries. Lastly, it is important to examine the effect on youth of having local and Arab dating shows that are modeled after Western dating shows.

5.5. Conclusion

This research has clearly shown that dating shows have a strong influence on how the youth in Dubai view relationships and culture. Most young people have rejected the western values projected on such programs, as they clearly don't align with Arab culture and tradition. These teenagers and young adults have proven that despite global influence, they are able to maintain their resilience and hold on to their culture in most cases. It's clear that dating shows may shape varied opinions, however identity and tradition remain as a powerful power in the hands of the upcoming generations.

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