

## The Experience of Gay Men Using Dating Applications in Their Emerging Adulthood

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**Abstract :** Previous studies showed that emergent adults used dating applications the most since it would satisfy their needs for intimacy. It's also found that those emergent adults were mostly non-heterosexual. What's more, in this digital era, more and more bisexuals and homosexuals choose to establish connections with others through Internet to seek a sense of belonging. However, studies rarely focused on gay men in their emergent adulthood to explore their experiences of dating applications. The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of gay men using dating applications in their emerging adulthood and to understand their self-presentations and the process of it among different relationships while interacting with others upon using dating applications. The semi-structured interview was conducted with those gay men who aged from 18 to 29, felt attracted to people with same gender physically and mentally, considered themselves homosexual from their subjective understanding and had been using dating applications for more than half a year. Research invitations were distributed with the assistance of social media platforms and LGBTQ+ friends in the community. This study adopted a qualitative research approach and applied hermeneutic phenomenology as the method to analyze the transcripts transcribed from the recorded audio, and to explore their using experiences and self-presentations while interacting with others while using dating apps. It's expected to find out that there are four stages in the self-presentation process including establishing personal identity, self-exploration and experimentation, exploring shared interest and values, developing and maintaining connections. Plus, gay men's motives to use dating apps play an important role in this process and thus influence how they position the apps in their life. Through this study, professional workers can better understand gay men's considerations and strategies in their self-presentation process as well as the impact of using motives.

**Keywords :** dating applications, emerging adulthood, gay men, hermeneutic phenomenology

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