



A Study On Friends With Benefits (FWB) Relationships Among Young Adults In Delhi NCR

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the perceptions of young adults regarding Friends with Benefits (FWB) Relationships. It investigates how technology, mainly dating apps and social media, influences their motivations in seeking such arrangements. Additionally, it examines the differences in FWB dynamics between men and women, considering the impact of societal norms on these variations. Snowball sampling was employed to identify subjects, with a questionnaire administered to 50 participants representing a diverse mix of genders, including LGBTQ+ individuals. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 males and 15 females, supplemented by narrative accounts from one male and one female. The study highlights the emotional challenges faced by individuals who develop attachment in FWB relationships where their partner may not reciprocate. The influence of social media and dating apps emerged as a significant topic of discussion. The study concludes with implications for future research and recommendations for further exploration in this area.

Keywords: Emotional Challenges, FWB dynamics, Dating apps, Gender differences, Perception, Societal norms.

INTRODUCTION

Friends with Benefits (FWB) Relationships

A Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationship is a kind of close friendship in which two people, usually friends, have sex without the emotional attachment and commitment that characterizes traditional romantic partnerships. FWB relationship is characterized by friendship and sexual activity but does not entail romantic love, long-term commitment, or exclusivity expectations. Friends with benefits (FWB) are defined as when two friends decide to "fool around" in the bedroom without thinking about the possibility of developing a love connection, according to New York Magazine. A friendship that involves friends having sex but not romance is known as a "friends with benefits" connection (Lehmiller, Vander Drift, & Kelly, 2011). Friends-with-benefits relationships aim to maintain friendships while engaging in physical intimacy without romantic emotional attachment (Gusarova, Fraser & Alderson, 2012).

Types of Sexual Relationships

One-Night Stand

One-night stands are brief encounters in which very little information is exchanged. The parties usually involved part ways the next day with no further communication. A one-night stand occurs when two people have sex only once and never again. The one-night stand is the most studied form of casual sex (Fisher & Byrne, 1978; Li & Kenrick, 2006). Individuals in this relationship meet and quickly progress from zero acquaintance to the act of sex, with little promise of future relationship potential.

Booty Call

Booty calls are made between people who are familiar but not necessarily friends. Booty calls are typically recurring and do not progress to anything more. Essentially, it is a gathering organized to have sex.

Hook-up Culture

Hookups can involve a wide range of behaviours, from kissing to penetrative sex, between partners who are not dating or in a romantic relationship. Because the motivation for the hook-up is understood to be purely for



sexual satisfaction, these types of noncommittal sexual interactions do not imply an impending romantic commitment.

Difference between Hook-up Culture and FWBRs

Though both FWBRs and "hooking up" are experiences of casual sex, they are very different and must be distinguished. A hookup is a broad term for any physical or sexual encounter with the gender of your choice. Depending on who you talk to, it could be sex, making out, or anything in between, whereas a friend with benefits is someone you hook up with over time with the understanding that neither of you wants to be a boyfriend/girlfriend. The hookup is a recurring event.

Sugar Dating or Sugaring

Sugar dating, also known as sugaring, is a fictitious romantic transactional sexual relationship between an older wealthy individual and a younger individual. In exchange for companionship or a dating-like relationship, payment can be received through money, gifts such as designer goods or jewellery, support, or other material benefits. Some of the FWB relationships can be explained as **Faithful Friends**, Close friends who have sex regularly. **Just Sex** when partners associate solely for coitus. **Network Opportunism**: Partners share connections that allow them to interact platonically and sexually, "typically while consuming alcohol."

Existing Motivations Behind FWBRs

According to (Hughes et. al, 2005), there are five reasons behind FWBRs:

Sex (Sexual Motivation Only), Emotional Connection (a desire for closer proximity and/or intimacy), Relationship Simplicity (Wishing for a simple, natural, and stress-free relationship), Relationship Avoidance (The deliberate avoidance of a relationship's exclusive and/or romantic elements), Wanted an FWBR (couples who divorced and took advantage of the opportunity)

According to Self-Determination Motives, humans are inherently drawn to new challenges, change, and novelty.

Exploration and sexual gratification: Sexual gratification and exploration are two common reasons for engaging in FWB relationships (Owen, Fincham, & Moore, 2011). Individuals may seek a safe and comfortable environment in which to experiment sexually while avoiding the emotional complexities that are often associated with committed relationships (Jonason, Li, & Richardson, 2011). Individuals can develop a better understanding of their sexual preferences through FWB relationships, which provide a platform for fulfilling sexual desires and exploring personal boundaries (Bisson & Levine, 2009).

Intimacy and emotional connection: Contrary to popular belief, emotional connection and intimacy can also motivate people to enter FWB relationships (VanderDrift, Lehmillier, & Kelly, 2012). Some people may want to feel close to others while avoiding the expectations and pressures of a committed romantic relationship (Lehmillier, VanderDrift, & Kelly, 2014). Without the constraints of traditional partnerships, FWB relationships can provide emotional support, shared experiences, and a sense of connection (Bisson & Levine, 2009).

Psychological Well-being

Within the context of sexual health, one wonders whether friends with benefits provide positive emotional reactions and thus contribute to the participants' psychological well-being or whether they have the opposite effect. Nonetheless, some studies have found that young adults who participate in friends-with-benefits relationships do not face more negative psychological consequences than those who do not (Eisenberg, Ackard, Resnick and Neumark-Sztainer, 2009). Cooper et al. (2015) discovered that participants in FWB relationships experienced less loneliness than those in traditional romantic relationships.

Sex Differences in FWRBs

Men and women often exhibit distinct patterns in their initiation and expectations within this context, according to research on sex differences in approaching friends-with-benefits (FWB) relationships. More women than men appear to value their experience with friends with benefits goals tend to be more sexual, whereas women's goals tend to be more relational. Continued research into gender differences within FWBRs is critical to understanding potentially changing norms and contextual factors that may influence young people's sexual experiences.

Role of Dating Apps

These apps aim to shorten the process of sifting through potential dating partners, chatting, flirting, and potentially meeting or becoming romantically involved online. Various apps, such as Bumble, Tinder, Happn, Hinge, OkCupid, etc., are popular and used by young adults.



Initial Connection Facilitation: Dating apps provide an accessible platform for individuals to connect with potential FWB partners. These apps provide a virtual space for users to express their preferences, interests, and intentions, easing the initial connecting stages. Thanks to the ease of swiping and matching algorithms, users can quickly identify individuals with similar desires for casual, non-committal relationships.

Clarification of Intentions: Many dating apps allow users to express their relationship intentions explicitly, whether they are looking for a long-term commitment, casual dating, or something more specific like FWB. This open communication assists individuals in finding like-minded partners with similar relationship goals, reducing ambiguity and potential misunderstandings.

OBJECTIVES

To explore perceptions of young adults about Friends with Benefits (FWB) Relationships.

To explore how the use of technology, including dating apps and social media, influences the motivations of young adults to seek FWB relationships.

To examine how FWB dynamics differ between men and women and how societal norms influence these differences.

METHODOLOGY

The present study on Friends with Benefits (FWB) Relationships among Young Adults focuses on people who are currently involved or have prior experience with such arrangements. The primary goal is to investigate the impact of dating apps and social media on the motivations for seeking FWB relationships among young people. Furthermore, the study intends to examine the differences in FWB dynamics between men and women, considering how societal norms influence these differences.

Sample

Participants in the study were chosen using purposive and snowball sampling methods. The sample consisted of 30 people, 15 females and 15 males, who had previously or currently participated in Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships. All participants were between the ages of 22 and 28 and were classified as young adults. Participants were given detailed information about the study's objectives before enrolling. Their participation was contingent on obtaining informed consent, in which they were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the sole academic and research-focused use of the gathered information.

Tools Used for Data Collection

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered to 50 people, including males, females, and LGBTQ+. The questionnaire sought responses to various general questions about Friends with Benefits (FWB) Relationships, intending to gain insight into their perspectives. The questionnaire was organized around three main themes: demographic information, experiences with Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships, and attitudes toward the role of dating apps in such relationships.

Semi-Structured Interview

The interview questions were designed to cover various topics relevant to the study's objectives, ensuring a thorough investigation. The goal was to examine the differences in Friends with Benefits (FWB) dynamics between genders, using a balanced sample of 15 male and 15 female participants. The interview schedule included the following themes: Motivation and Expectations, Emotional Impact, Gender Dynamics, Societal and Cultural Norms, Role of Dating Apps and Social Media, Challenges, Perceptions and Reflection, Transition and Future Outlook.

Pilot Study

A pilot study with two males and two females was conducted to fine-tune the interview schedule for greater specificity in line with the study's goals. Based on the pilot study's feedback and insights, specific questions were removed or rephrased better to elicit participants' desired information and perceptions. Furthermore, new questions were added to the questionnaire to ensure comprehensive data collection and achievement of the study's goals and objectives. Following the pilot study, it was decided to shift from a case study approach to narratives, as participants hesitated to discuss FWB relationships in depth. No further changes were made to the data collection tools during the study.

Procedure for Data Collection

Before beginning the interview process, each participant was given a concise overview of the study's objectives. Using the research technique of active listening, the emphasis was on creating a safe and respectful environment where participants could freely express themselves. Throughout the interviews, participants were



encouraged to emphasize their perspectives and experiences. Strict precautions were taken to protect the confidentiality of participants' identities and responses, ensuring their privacy. Participants were recruited through personal and friends' networks, and interviews were conducted over the phone due to participants' discomfort with face-to-face interactions and concerns about societal norms governing FWB relationships. Some interviews used messaging platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram, with throwaway IDs for added anonymity. Rapport-building techniques were employed, and clear instructions were provided to participants. Each interview session typically lasted 30 to 60 minutes. The researcher typed responses in real time to maintain confidentiality, as the recording was not permitted given the personal nature of the topic. Before proceeding, participants were allowed to decide whether they were comfortable with the interview process and wished to continue participating.

Inclusion Criteria

Young adults aged between 18 and 25 years of age. Individuals should have had direct experience with Friends with Benefits (FWB) Relationships, whether currently or in the past, including LGBTQ+ individuals (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, or other non-hetero normative sexual orientations and gender identities) willingness to participate.

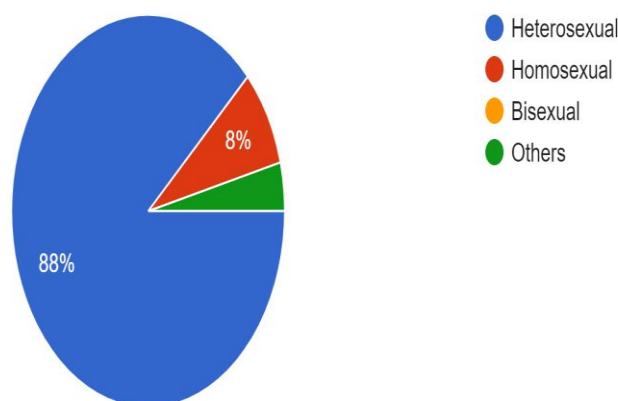
Exclusion Criteria Participants below the age of 18 years were not included. Individuals who have no prior knowledge or experience with friends-with-benefits relationships were strictly excluded from participation. Individuals who did not provide informed consent to participate in the study were also excluded from participation.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to starting the data collection process, all ethical guidelines were carefully followed. The researcher carefully considered the research proposal and made insightful suggestions given by the Technical Review Board. In response to the expert feedback, necessary modifications were incorporated into the proposal to ensure alignment with ethical standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The contemporary landscape of relationships is witnessing a shift, with Friends with Benefits (FWB) arrangements emerging as a dynamic phenomenon. This study delves into the perceptions of young adults regarding FWB relationships, considering the evolving influence of dating apps and social media. Furthermore, the research endeavours to uncover the nuances of FWB dynamics, particularly in the context of gender differences. The exploration reveals that sexual desires and feelings of loneliness often serve as catalysts for engaging in FWB relationships. Through candid narratives shared with the researcher, participants recount their experiences and engage in introspection, shedding light on their internal struggles. Both male and female participants were equally represented in the questionnaire and interviews to enable the researcher to discern any divergences in opinions between genders. Regarding sexual orientation, three individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ participated in the questionnaire via the Google form. However, despite efforts, the researcher encountered challenges in recruiting individuals from the LGBTQ+ community for conducting interviews.



Graph 1: Sexual Orientation

Experience of FWB Relationships



Many individuals perceive Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships as a safe space to share aspects of their lives that they might not feel comfortable sharing with others. One notable aspect is the absence of restrictions on having other partners; even if an FWB partner is aware of one's romantic relationships, they remain available for physical and emotional support. Conflicts can arise in FWB relationships, mirroring those in traditional romantic relationships. However, attachment to an FWB partner can lead to emotional turmoil, significantly when feelings of love develop unexpectedly; as one of the participants stated, "The development of feelings is inevitable" for which the other one is not ready, and you have no other way to stay in touch. Despite the inherent risk of emotional attachment, many participants derive satisfaction from FWB relationships, cherishing the companionship and intimacy they provide, albeit with the understanding that the relationship may eventually end. Some participants grapple with feelings of self-guilt, while others view FWB relationships as either fulfilling or a waste of time, depending on their individual experiences and perspectives.

The findings regarding Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships align with research in several key areas. According to Hughes et al. (2005), FWB relationships often provide individuals with emotional intimacy and support without the constraints of traditional romantic commitments. Similarly, Manning et al. (2006) note that FWB relationships allow participants to share personal aspects of their lives in a nonjudgmental environment, fostering feelings of companionship and understanding. The findings highlight conflict within FWB relationships, mirroring those of Mongeau, Knight, Williams, Eden, and Shaw (2013), who discuss the challenges of navigating boundaries and expectations in these arrangements. The development of unexpected feelings, leading to emotional turmoil, resonates with research by Leh miller (2012), who explores the psychological dynamics of FWB relationships and the potential for attachment and affection to emerge over time.

The dichotomous perspectives on FWB relationships, ranging from the fulfilment of a desire to waste time, reflect the varied experiences reported by participants in research conducted by Owen and Fincham (2011). Additionally, the notion of self-guilt and conflicting emotions is consistent with findings by Jonason and Fisher (2009), who discuss the psychological complexities inherent in casual sexual relationships.

Motivations for Engaging in FWB Relationships

The primary motivations for individuals pursuing Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships are varied. They include maintaining a connection with someone they love but cannot marry, fulfilling sexual desires, coping with heartbreak and subsequent distrust in meaningful relationships, seeking enjoyment and happiness, avoiding the responsibilities of future commitments, experiencing interest without the weight of commitment and expectations, and maintaining privacy about family details. Additionally, for some, FWB relationships provide an opportunity to extricate themselves from a current romantic partner that has become tiresome or irritating.

Perception and Primary Purposes

According to the responses received, participants view Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships as a means of addressing emotional and physical voids resulting from neglect or a lack of love in their lives. They perceive dynamics. FWB arrangements are not solely about sexual gratification but also serve as sources of emotional support and companionship, where individuals can confide in and rely on each other. Some participants even develop strong friendships with their FWB partners, especially when they share common goals and values.

However, there is a prevailing negative perception of FWB relationships due to the potential for emotional entanglement and hurt feelings. Many believe that FWB arrangements should ideally transition into long-term commitments to avoid causing harm. Keeping one's FWB partner unaware of the casual nature of the relationship is seen as unfair and likely to result in emotional pain. Only in cases where both families approve should FWB relationships progress beyond casual encounters; otherwise, they are viewed as transient and disposable.

Despite these negative perceptions, a minority of participants acknowledge the positive aspects of FWB relationships, recognizing that the benefits extend beyond sexual gratification. These benefits may include financial support, emotional companionship, and shared career aspirations. Some attribute the prevalence of FWB relationships to the influence of Westernized culture, where short-term cohabitation allows individuals to quickly assess compatibility before moving on. This reflects a societal shift towards prioritizing casual companionship over long-term commitments. Additionally, primary purposes for engaging in FWB relationships include seeking sexual gratification, emotional connection, and companionship without the constraints of formal commitment (Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2019).

Advantages

The advantages of Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships are manifold. Firstly, no expectations or commitments allow individuals to maintain their autonomy and freedom. This arrangement also ensures privacy, as participants only share the details they feel comfortable divulging. Fulfilling sexual desires is crucial for mental well-being, particularly during a stage in life when these desires are heightened. Additionally, FWB relationships offer a respite from stress and provide companionship for those who may not have the time or inclination for a traditional relationship. Having someone who understands and supports you, academically or



personally, contributes to emotional stability and peace of mind. Moreover, FWB relationships offer a non-judgmental space where opinions remain unbiased, fostering mental, physical, and emotional peace. Participants can enjoy casual hangouts and intimate moments with their FWB partner without feeling obligated to justify their actions. This arrangement empowers individuals to be their bosses in their relationships, allowing them to freely navigate their desires and needs. It is worth noting that while FWB relationships offer numerous advantages, they also pose similar and interconnected disadvantages. Therefore, individuals must carefully consider both sides before engaging in such arrangements.

Disadvantages

In India, there is a notable absence of comprehensive sex education, leaving many young adults ill-equipped to navigate their desires and understand the nuances of relationships. Consequently, some individuals rush into marriages at a young age without clearly understanding what constitutes a healthy relationship. The lack of awareness about contraception, such as condoms, further exacerbates the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Emotional complications can arise in friends-with-benefits (FWB) relationships, particularly when one partner becomes emotionally attached while the other remains detached. Moreover, the absence of emotional connection in FWB relationships can negatively impact self-esteem and lead to feelings of worthlessness.

As FWB relationships progress, both partners may become possessive and intrude into each other's lives, causing distractions from personal goals and family responsibilities. This was evident in the case of a participant who became so engrossed in an FWB relationship that they lost focus on their career aspirations and, hence, could not clear the competitive exam for the purpose for which he came to Delhi. Ultimately, FWB relationships are best suited for emotionally mature and resilient individuals. Those who are emotionally sensitive may find themselves vulnerable to hurt and disappointment.

Change in expectations regarding FWB Relationships

Responses regarding Friends-with-benefits (FWB) relationships were diverse, with individuals typically highlighting the positive aspects while overlooking the potential drawbacks. Both genders were found to experience suffering in FWB arrangements, as expectations often shifted over time. Participants who initially embraced FWB dynamics later became disillusioned, while those who initially harboured negative perceptions began to see the benefits. Emotional attachment often develops alongside physical intimacy, leading to complexities in the relationship. Initially driven by physical desire, individuals eventually seek emotional connection, which their FWB partner may not reciprocate. Discovering disloyalty or lack of emotional commitment can lead to disillusionment and withdrawal from the relationship, causing emotional distress.

Effect on other romantic and long-term relationships like marriage

Many respondents strongly believed in the detrimental impact of friends-with-benefits (FWB) relationships on long-term commitments like marriage, underscoring concerns regarding trust and fidelity. Most young adults believe that it can or cannot affect other romantic relationships. In contrast, few individuals believe such arrangements cannot affect institutions like marriage, which is a very low percentage. The fundamental differences between FWB relationships and marital bonds were highlighted, emphasizing the absence of commitment, loyalty, and trust in the former. Conversely, a minority of respondents suggested that FWB relationships could coexist with marriage, particularly in cases where marital dissatisfaction and lack of emotional connection are prevalent. These individuals viewed FWB relationships as an outlet for unmet needs and emotional fulfilment, especially when traditional marital bonds fail to provide satisfaction.

Emotional and Psychological Well-Being

Half of the respondents, accounting for 50%, expressed concerns about the emotional complexities inherent in Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships, highlighting the potential for turmoil and temporary attachments. Contrary to popular belief, the notion that sexual desires equate to emotional stability was challenged, with participants recognizing that emotional support can be provided through simple acts of listening and presence. While FWB relationships often foster feelings of security and informality, a paradox exists wherein individuals may find themselves more emotionally invested in these arrangements than in their serious relationships. This disparity can lead to stress and anxiety, mainly when one party develops unreciprocated feelings. Moreover, FWB relationships have the potential to strain existing friendships, especially when jealousy and unmet expectations arise. The emotional toll of FWB relationships can manifest in unhealthy coping mechanisms such as smoking, drinking, and poor self-care habits, prolonging the process of moving on and potentially impacting future relationships. Ultimately, many young adults find themselves disillusioned and emotionally detached after engaging in FWB relationships, hindering their readiness for future commitments and contributing to feelings of heartlessness and emotional numbness.

Role of Dating Apps and Social Media



Half of the participants, comprising 50%, observed minimal influence of dating apps and social media on the concept of Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships. They reasoned that the essence of FWB dynamics lies in the preexisting friendship between individuals, emphasizing the importance of knowing each other well for a successful bond. While dating apps may facilitate initial connections, the depth of the relationship depends on personal compatibility rather than app-driven algorithms. Furthermore, social media platforms primarily serve as tools for communication with FWB partners, especially for topics that may be uncomfortable to discuss face-to-face. Conversely, the other respondents believed that social media and dating apps significantly promote FWB relationships among young adults. They noted a trend of hyper-sexualization on social media platforms, with individuals seeking validation through provocative posts and images. This overexposure to sexual content, coupled with early maturation due to social media influence, is seen as a failure of parenting in guiding adolescents towards healthy relationships. Dating apps, including platforms like Jeevansaathi.com and Shaadi.com, are viewed as avenues for quick sexual encounters rather than platforms for meaningful connections, contributing to the normalization of FWB arrangements in modern dating culture. One subject mentioned, "Due to these dating apps, people are changing their partners as if they are changing their clothes". These apps are basically for making connections, but people are misusing them. Social media and dating apps may increase relationships as people think casual dating and FWB are cool. They may not know the consequences of it in the long term, such as - self-guilt, facing problems in commitments, marital affairs, etc. The findings regarding the influence of dating apps and social media largely coincide with the existing literature, indicating their significant impact on friends-with-benefits (FWB) relationships. However, it is noteworthy that the literature review did not specifically address the absence of influence from dating apps and social media, which was reported by 50% of the subjects in the interviews conducted for this study.

Influence of Societal Norms

FWB relationships, often stigmatized by society, are not inherently negative despite their association with fulfilling sexual desires. However, societal norms in India, which prioritize traditional values and discourage premarital sex, create challenges for the acceptance of FWB dynamics. Both genders may suffer if one partner becomes emotionally invested, but the consequences can be particularly severe for women, primarily if pregnancy occurs. The societal repercussions of pregnancy, including potential ostracization and bullying for the child, further compound the complexities of FWB relationships. Additionally, the proliferation of sexualized media has exposed even young children to explicit content, contributing to emotional instability and a focus solely on sexual desires rather than holistic emotional and psychological well-being. Unlike long-term relationships, FWB arrangements lack stability and predictability, making their duration uncertain and potentially leading to abrupt endings.

Impact on Future Generation

The rise in divorce rates and early pregnancies is a concerning trend that will undoubtedly shape the future generation's perceptions and behaviours. Unlike previous generations, today's society seems less inclined towards resolving conflicts within relationships, leading to decreased tolerance levels and a lack of focus on personal development. The sanctity of marriage and long-term commitments is increasingly undervalued, with FWB relationships unable to substitute for the depth and stability offered by marital unions. There is merit in adhering to societal norms that prioritize marriage before intimacy, as it fosters commitment and stability in relationships. Children born to underage mothers face myriad challenges, compounded by societal stigmatization and health risks associated with maternal underdevelopment. The erosion of traditional values and the normalization of casual relationships jeopardize future generations' understanding of love, respect, and commitment. Moreover, early exposure to sexualized content through smartphones accelerates puberty and fosters unhealthy behaviours, leading to potential social and emotional issues in young adults.

The difference in FWB dynamics between Men and Women

Traditionally, women have been perceived as more emotionally attached in intimate relationships, often developing deeper connections through sexual activity, while men tend to prioritize physical pleasure without strong emotional ties. However, contemporary dynamics are shifting, with women increasingly exploring multiple partners and seeking sexual gratification without commitment, mirroring behaviours traditionally associated with men. This evolution challenges traditional gender norms and may lead to hurt feelings and disillusionment among men accustomed to more traditional relationship dynamics. For ages, stereotypes have perpetuated the notion that women have lower sexual desires compared to men, mainly due to societal norms and expectations. However, findings challenge this stereotype, revealing that both men and women harbour similar levels of sexual desire, albeit constrained by social conventions. In exploring FWB relationships, it became evident that both genders engage in these arrangements with equal enthusiasm and openness about their desires and satisfaction. The prevalence of divorces in cases of unfulfilled partner satisfaction underscores the shifting dynamics of modern relationships, where individuals are more vocal about their needs and boundaries. The findings regarding sex differences largely corroborate with the existing literature, indicating



that women tend to value their experiences with friends-with-benefits (FWB) relationships more than men. Women often report less positive emotional reactions, as well as feelings of discomfort and guilt in these arrangements. However, there is a discrepancy noted in some studies, which suggest that males are more likely than females to participate in FWB relationships. Contrary to this, recent findings from the study reveal that both men and women are equally engaged in FWB relationships, seeking to fulfil their sexual and emotional desires without significant gender disparities.

CONCLUSION

Exploring Friends-with-benefits (FWB) relationships presented a multifaceted understanding of this increasingly prevalent phenomenon's dynamics, motivations, and perceptions. Several key insights emerged through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and empirical research findings, shedding light on the complexities inherent in FWB relationships and their implications for individuals and society.

Firstly, FWB relationships were perceived as safe spaces for individuals to share intimate aspects of their lives, offering emotional support and companionship without the constraints of traditional romantic commitments. However, these arrangements were also fraught with emotional complexities, as evidenced by unexpected feelings and conflicts mirroring those in traditional romantic relationships. The emotional toll of FWB relationships manifested in stress, anxiety, and unhealthy coping mechanisms underscored the need for caution and self-awareness when entering such arrangements. Moreover, the media significantly influences the perception and prevalence of Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationships. Web series and OTT platforms often glamorize FWB dynamics, portraying them as exciting and desirable. These platforms are inundated with sexual content and scenes that can distort young adults' perceptions of healthy relationships. Media creators must recognize their responsibility in shaping societal attitudes towards relationships and sexuality. By portraying diverse and nuanced depictions of relationships, they can promote healthier narratives and empower viewers to make informed choices. Additionally, parents and educators play a vital role in media literacy, equipping young adults with the skills to evaluate media messages and discern fact from fiction critically. The findings also revealed shifting gender dynamics in intimate relationships, challenging traditional stereotypes and highlighting the evolving nature of gender roles in modern society. The culmination of this research underscores the significant role parents play in shaping individuals' attitudes towards relationships, including Friends with Benefits (FWB) arrangements. By fostering open communication and creating a supportive environment, parents can empower their children to come and talk to them. Society must adopt a more open-minded approach towards discussions about relationships, moving away from entrenched taboos and stigma. Mutual consent and respect are paramount in ensuring the well-being of both parties involved. It is crucial to recognize that FWB relationships should not coexist with long-term commitments like marriage. Such arrangements have the potential to disrupt not only individual lives but also the families involved, spouses, and children (if any), leading to emotional turmoil and disillusionment. It has become evident that mental health and depression are significant concerns driving individuals towards friends-with-benefits (FWB) dynamics. Today, mental health is a pressing issue that affects countless individuals, yet it remains stigmatized and overlooked. Many people grappling with mental health challenges may turn to FWB relationships as a means of seeking solace or distraction from their inner turmoil. Society must foster open and non-judgmental discussions about mental health, encouraging individuals to seek support and guidance when needed. By destigmatising mental health issues, one can create a more supportive environment where people feel comfortable addressing their concerns and accessing the resources they require to heal and thrive.

Implications

Understanding Perceptions: By exploring young adults' perceptions of Friends with Benefits (FWB) Relationships, the research can provide valuable insights into how these dynamics are perceived in society. Understanding these perceptions can inform educational programs and interventions to promote healthy relationship behaviours and address misconceptions about FWB relationships.

Impact of Technology: Investigating how the use of technology, including dating apps and social media, influences the motivations of young adults in seeking FWB relationships can shed light on the role of digital platforms in shaping modern relationship dynamics. This understanding can guide policymakers and educators in developing strategies to promote responsible use of technology and mitigate potential negative impacts on relationship formation and well-being.

Gender Dynamics and Societal Norms: Examining how FWB dynamics differ between men and women and how societal norms influence these differences can contribute to a deeper understanding of gender roles and expectations in intimate relationships. This knowledge can inform efforts to challenge traditional gender norms and promote gender equality in relationships, ultimately fostering healthier and more equitable social dynamics.

Implementations



Educational Programs: Based on the research findings, educational programs can be developed to provide young adults with accurate information about FWB relationships and promote healthy relationship behaviours. These programs can be implemented in schools, colleges, and community centres to reach a broad audience and facilitate open discussions about relationships and sexuality.

Policy Development: Policymakers can use the research findings to inform the development of policies and guidelines for regulating dating apps and social media platforms. This may include measures to promote responsible use of technology, protect user privacy, and mitigate the negative impact of digital platforms on relationship formation and well-being.

Community Outreach: Community outreach initiatives can be organized to raise awareness about the research findings and facilitate discussions about FWB relationships within the community. This may involve hosting workshops, seminars, and support groups where young adults can share their experiences and learn from each other in a supportive environment.

Counselling and Support Services: Counselling and support services can be tailored to address the specific needs of young adults navigating FWB relationships. This may include providing access to trained counsellors who can guide and support in managing relationship dynamics, navigating digital platforms, and addressing emotional or psychological challenges.

Media Literacy Programs: Media literacy programs can be developed to help young adults critically evaluate portrayals of FWB relationships in media and understand how media representations may influence their perceptions and behaviours. These programs can empower young adults to make informed choices about their relationships and resist negative influences from media messages.

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