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Honors Thesis

FACEBOOK COMPLAINTS ON DATING BY GENDER

by

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Submitted to Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment
of graduation requirements for University Honors

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ABSTRACT

FACEBOOK COMPLAINTS ON DATING BY GENDER

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With changes in technology, world events, and society in the last 20 years, dating has been both recreated and redefined. From the dating process itself to new technology, the way American youth see dating has changed from times past. By examining feedback on dating from both genders (collected via Facebook), it is possible to see how dating trends have changed and what is being complained about in each of those time periods. Although no exact causes within this study can be determined about how much technology and world events have influenced the changes in dating trends, the coincidences of both are worthy of note and comparison. With how influential and vital dating trends are to the future of America, comparing and noting the dating complaints can help future researchers find legitimate causes as to why dating and marriage have changed so much in only a couple of decades.

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Facebook Complaints on Dating by Gender

Questions about what people look for in a future partner have been explored and researched repeatedly, as the world constantly changes with new inventions, social customs, and world events. Over the past 20 years specifically, technology has significantly added to that change in culture, as access to communication devices has dramatically improved. Items such as cell phones are small and complex enough to be utilized as a viable communication tool in many ways. Apple's iPhone, which was introduced in 2007, is a great example of one such communication tool, and there are now more cell phones in the world than people (Hillyer, 2020). Additionally, phone calls, emails, and texts are no longer the only way to communicate, as social media sites like Facebook have also entered and dominated the picture. Apps such as Facebook utilize their own operating system and only require the Internet to operate, not service (Volle, n.d.). Therefore, the only necessity for communication on a mobile device is access to the Internet. In the year 2000, less than 7% of the world was online and now over half the globe has some sort of access to the Internet (Hillyer, 2020).

Processes of communication have been prioritized and recreated through social media with the refinement and creation of computers, wifi, and the World Wide Web. The creation of the World Wide Web and associated technology developed in 1989 (World Wide Web Foundation, 2020), and it was not long after

that social media platforms started being generated as a new way to meet and communicate (Hillyer, 2020). Facebook was one of these platforms. Created in 2004 and still utilized today, Facebook had over one million users when it was first created as Thefacebook in 2004 (A&E Television Networks, 2024) and is still utilized by about 32.7% of all people worldwide (Kepios, 2023). What started as a way for college students to communicate quickly became a massive communication station in the first year of its creation and then Facebook as it is known today (A&E Television Networks, 2024).

The creation and utilization of websites such as Facebook and Twitter have also caused a dramatic change in how people date, especially with the introduction of dating apps (Chen et al., 2023). With the rise in Internet platforms, this new lucrative avenue was thoroughly utilized. Now, around 39 billion American users turn to these dating apps to find their future partners instead of finding their partners through face-to-face interactions (Chen et al., 2023). These apps advertise their own ways to help you get dates, with things like “superlikes” from Tinder (Rad & Mateen, 2012), or with Hinge’s matchmakers who helped create an algorithm to help you match with someone (McLeod, 2012). Tinder itself boasts 55 million people worldwide on their app (Rad & Mateen, 2012). With so much technology catered to dating, finding a partner that “perfectly fits you” would seem to be easier. Especially with 55

million people at your fingertips (Rad & Mateen, 2012). Tinder and other apps typically apply the “swipe” feature, where users can swipe left or right (Arifin, 2023) to indicate their interest in other users (Isisag, 2020). This amount of “gamification,” or turning apps that have nothing to do with video games into something that models a video game, contributes to the same amount of gratification in a “match” as there is in winning a game, with the added bonus of actually finding someone to date (Isisag, 2020). Dating apps are also as mobile as the user, able to be used on breaks at work, or stops between classes (Isisag, 2020). This mobility is a huge asset for dating apps, potentially explaining why 53% of young people under 30 use dating apps in the U.S. (Vogels & McClain, 2023). Additionally, 34% of all men have tried a dating app, while only 27% of women have tried dating apps, making women less likely to try and possibly date or use dating apps (Vogels & McClain, 2023).

Features such as “matches” are supposed to occur when both parties share certain interests and like each other enough to choose each other (Rad & Mateen, 2012). Theoretically, this feature can help both parties to have a better start and also to better communicate, especially if the concern is the first initial acknowledgment of attraction. With both parties having already expressed interest, they do not need to worry as much about whether the person they are messaging is receptive to their advances. However, these individuals report a lot

of pressure on this first interaction, because the same person the interested party is talking to is simultaneously talking to other matches on the same app (Hall & Canterbury, 2011). In this way, first impressions have become possibly more important than before. Companies like Cosmopolitan try to advise as to how to successfully start a conversation online (Gulla & Shearing, 2023). This makes these first initial online interactions without the confirmation of mutual attraction even harder. Trying to “DM”, or direct message, someone on social media without an app can be daunting. This has prompted companies like Quora and Reddit to receive questions like “How do I slide into DM’s” (Quora, 2019) or “How do I slide into DM’s effectively” (r/seduction, 2020). In Quora specifically, some of the answers had over 44 million answer views (Quora, 2019). Hall and Canterbury (2011) conducted a study examining these initial moments of trying to make a good first impression. This study identified people more likely to utilize assertive strategies when first approaching a woman and then how women would respond to such approaches. These researchers were also able to find some answers to the same question of how to make a good first impression, such as that more sexist and assertive approaches only worked well on women who were also sexist (Hall & Canterbury, 2011). This study, like Quora and Reddit, demonstrate how important that first impression is online.

And just as first interactions have changed, dating and the basic cultural practices of finding a lifelong partner have also adjusted. Meeting someone new has never been easier, with thousands of ways to approach someone online and in person. However, with all of this access, where finding like-minded individuals is as simple as finding online forums with your exact hobbies, it is questionable if people are finding what they are looking for, as evidenced by people marrying later (Government Census, n.d.). According to Figure 1 by census.gov, marriage ages from about 20 years ago to now have risen from about 25 years old for women and 27 years old for men to a little over 28 years old for women and 30 years old for men. The average age has steadily increased, with only small dips, from the 1970s, which is when the first cell phone was created in 1973 (McNamee et al., 2023). Additionally, marriage rates in general have started to decrease (Korhonen, 2023) as shown in Figure 3, as well as the number of births per year in the U.S. according to Figure 2 (Korhonen, 2023). It seems counterintuitive that while finding similar individuals to oneself is as easy as a Google search, finding a partner for life may not be as easy as expected. With the changes in technology that were supposed to assist in meeting new people and creating marital unions, it is important to understand the possible impact of the ease of technology and the surge of dating apps, as the dating experience on those rates drops rather than increasing.

There are also other current world events to consider when trying to understand people's satisfaction with dating. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, took the world by storm and made meeting people face to face, or in real life (IRL), nearly impossible, with social distancing and many dating spots shutting down. In fact, nearly 73,000 businesses were shut down due to COVID-19 (Jones, 2023). As such, Internet usage went up, and according to Figure 4, with the start of the pandemic, it went up by 10.2%, as seen in Figure 4, with data taken from ITU (2024). The Pew Research Center reported that 90% of Americans found Internet access to be extremely important to them during the pandemic (McClain, 2021). As such, with both the increase in technology and the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on technology use, dating is an almost exclusively online activity now.

However, technology and the pandemic are not the only culprits influencing how dating has changed in the last 20 years. Women are now making up 50% of the workforce and can set up future ideals and goals for themselves outside of the home (News Editor, 2008). Since the 2000s, there have also been far more women in the workforce, as shown by Figure 5, created by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017). Although Figure 5 only predicts the change after 2015, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics has since come forward with current data (as recently as 2023), showing that while 67.9% of all

men above 25 are in the workforce, 55.4% of all women are also in the workforce (2023). Although Figure 7 from the US Bureau shows how this statistic switches between each state (2022). This demonstrates that within the last 20 years, women have become a stable workplace presence, which has also been a change that has occurred around the same time as advances in technology. With both of these changes, it could be possible that with far more women in the workforce, dating practices have also changed, as more women have increased their financial independence, personal resources, and career aspirations (News Editor, 2008).

Relationships among partners with two different schools, careers, and lives can make dating and marriage difficult and stressful (News Editor, 2008). Depending on the state, as many as 60% of all women are in the labor force, as shown in Figure 5, with data created for Women's History Month by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022). And according to Figure 6, more women in the US had degrees and continued school than men (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). This can help explain not only how the marriage age for men and women has changed but also the process of becoming a married couple after the first date. Not only have the ages changed in marriage, but the amount of people getting married has significantly decreased (Korhonen, 2023). People are dating

for longer and marrying less, possibly due to how different the U.S. dating culture is in general.

Relationships themselves have been reimagined with the inclusion of cyberstalking, hookups, and the increase in cohabitation. Cyberstalking is similar to the unfortunate act of stalking, or following someone with the intent of gathering information or getting closer to the victim. Cyberstalking, however, is done exclusively online. With the opportunities for online communication growing, as well as public postings available to be accessed by anyone, the ability to stalk other users online increased (Wilson, Sheridan, and Garratt-Reed, 2022). Anyone willing and able to post publicly about their lives online runs the risk of giving out personal information, like where they live or the places they frequent by showing off a few pictures online or by posting about different family events. Consequently, many social media users have found themselves becoming victims of cyberstalking. This action became common when users would find someone they found attractive online. By watching public posts created by friends and family, these cyberstalkers could find out personal information about their victims, such as age, home address, family members, and interests (Wilson et al., 2022). And, by knowing this information, they could approach their victims online through messages or in person with previous knowledge of the person they were stalking to receive a favorable outcome, like a date or a hookup.

Hookups are also more prevalent as a way to receive the sexual gratification of a relationship without any of the stress of an actual relationship (Reling, 2020). *Hookups* are defined as sexual encounters with no expectations for future contact. This has also been made more possible through the availability of dating apps, as users can find like-minded individuals to assist them for a night and then never have to contact them again. Although in multiple sources, “hookup culture” seems to be exaggerated, as seen through a study done by Myers (2011) and a study done by Reling (2020). It is still believed to be a way to avoid both commitment to a significant other and emotional intimacy. As such, hookups are seen, according to Reling (2020), to be more encouraged and requested by men, as women were less likely to include themselves in hookup culture. There are also apps like Tinder that pride themselves on the fact that they can assist their users with finding hookups. On the app itself under learning, it states “Some sites, like Hinge and eharmony, are designed for long-term relationships, but on the Tinder app, we’re all about the experience and offer possibilities for whatever it is you’re looking for” (Rad & Mateen, 2012). In 2016, 12-14% of adults were still virgins at the age of 20-24 (Shields, 2016), while in 2002 that data was around 23% (Finer, 2007). This data is only as accurate as how truthful the participants of these studies and questionnaires were, but the data is still staggering, given that in a little over 10

years, around 10% more people admit to losing their virginity than before. As new generations become aware of the era of smartphones and tablets, their ability to work hard towards a goal such as a relationship has been brought into question. Izzo headed a study on dating tendencies in 2022 and concluded that the new generations did not have much of a chance in dating, as hookup culture was encouraged and the initial courting process was shortened due to technology. Singles were doing what was expected of them, and with the speed at which couples were being introduced and then encouraged to have intimacy soon after, there was not much build-up that allowed for emotional intimacy to be initiated (Izzo, 2022).

Cohabitation, however, was something that could help blossoming couples get to know one another. With hookup culture normalizing sex before marriage and sex for pleasure, cyberstalkers able to retrieve personal information out of a social media website, and technology shortening the time a couple can go from strangers to lovers, these could be part of the reason that cohabiting has become so popular. *Cohabitation* is defined as living together with a significant other before marriage and has risen 29% from 2007 to 2016 (Stepler, 2017). With this rise in popularity, it has become a significant part of the dating process. Seventy-eight percent of Americans ages 18-29 find cohabitation to be acceptable without plans for marriage, and 13% more people

believe cohabitation to be approved, so long as the couple agrees to get married (Horowitz et al., 2019). This brings the total of 18- to 29-year-olds who believe cohabitation to be a part of the dating process to 91% according to the Pew Research Center. There are many possibilities as to why cohabitation has become such a large part of the dating process now, but one possible reason is that it may allow new couples to try out the marriage before the actual commitment. With cohabitation, anyone can get to know the real person behind any sort of facades or personas and see how well couples mesh together concerning habits. According to a study done by Izzo (2022), people still craved connection and emotional intimacy, and cohabitation gave this to couples without the exclusive commitment of marriage. In fact, 46% of American society says that couples who cohabit without getting married are better off never getting married (Horowitz et. al, 2019).

With so many changes in the dating world, since it went digital amid technological advances and sociocultural changes in the past 20 years, it is important to understand how men and women feel about such changes and what challenges they have found in online dating. With these findings in mind, I hypothesize that both genders will have significant complaints about the changes in the dating process, especially with the change from more in-person dating to mostly online. I also hypothesize that men will consistently complain

about women over the years and that women will complain more about how the dating process goes too fast, as hooking up and cohabiting encourage a physical relationship before an emotional one can be cultivated.

Method

To evaluate how men and women feel about changes and what challenges they have faced in online dating, Facebook was used as a tool to see how perceptions on dating have changed throughout the years, to get insight into just how much gender roles have changed over the past two decades, and to investigate what men and women on Facebook are complaining about regarding dating. This evaluation will allow us to see if these changes in society are for the better and if society is appreciative of all the changes shown by if all the dating complaints stay the same from 20 years ago.

Platforms and Participants

Facebook was chosen as the media platform to search through, as it is still valid today among the youth, and it is one of the oldest and most continuously popular platforms among social media platforms today. Heterosexual couples were the focus of the study, as there was not significant enough data to include homosexual or non-gender-specific relationships. There were only two complaints found from same-sex couples, which were excluded from the study. As already published works are being used, funding and IRB approvals were not

necessary, as there was no additional contact with the authors of each post. No Facebook users' names were kept, and no wording of any posts was kept on file to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

Data Collection

This study is descriptive in nature and used a convenience sample by using Facebook posts. Posts were searched with the keywords “hate dating” for every single year Facebook had been in service. The posts were then selected at random with an emphasis on their descriptive nature. Posts were discarded if they were about someone else’s reason to stop dating instead of the original poster’s, and the original post was included if possible. Posts were not discarded if they had been deleted (as Facebook still allows deleted posts to be found and accessed). Posts were also discarded if they were posted by a corporation or business instead of an actual Facebook user. No posts were kept after a theme was analyzed.

When possible, a total of 5-6 posts for each gender for each year were taken, with a total of at least 50 posts for each timeline. One exception was made for the first timeline due to the lack of posts. The timelines were separated about every four years: from 2004-2009 (with a slightly longer timeline counting when Facebook was under different management and just starting as Thefacebook),

2010-2014, 2015-2019, and finally 2020-2024. Twenty-five of these posts will be posted by men and the other 25 posts will be posted by women.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, defined and utilized by Teaching and Teacher Education by Science Direct (2024), was utilized to analyze the posts selected. Each post was carefully placed into a category, depending on what each Facebook user was complaining about, which means that posts were combined into ideas/themes that represented the similarity that complaints had to each other. There were no pre-selected theme categories to allow for a natural description of the data. The categories were created after all posts had been selected, and new categories were added as the need was found with the different themes presented by each timeline. This resulted in some years having more, less, or slightly different categories. The focus was on remaining accurate and true to the content, and no posts were forced into a category they did not fit into or dropped as they did not meet the predetermined categories. The categories determined from the data were infidelity, the dating process going too fast, interracial dating, both genders, dating process, dating process taking too long, friend zone, and the posters themselves being the problem.

Results

The results of the many posts collected were far more different than had previously been expected, and yet they show just how dramatically society has changed in the last 20 years.

Thematic Categories

The first category identified was infidelity, explained as users blaming their partners who cheated or talked about cheating, or blaming their situation (e.g., someone dating a married person) for their reason to hate dating. The second category is the complaint that people are starting to date, get married, or even say “I love you” too fast and that is the reason that users hate dating. The third category is interracial dating as a complaint, either because the user expressed hate for dating people from other races or because they hate people making comments about them dating someone from a different race.

The fourth and fifth categories are complaints about the same gender and the opposite gender in dating. These complaints were tallied if people stated a specific action by a man or a woman caused them to stop dating, or if the users simply complained that they hated the opposite gender as a whole because of something one individual of the opposite gender did. Complaining about the same gender ruining their chances in dating was also a fairly common

complaint, which further indicated the need to have complaints about both genders added as categories for each gender.

The sixth category was about those who hated the dating process and had complaints about how they viewed the dating process itself. The sixth category was also for people who complained about dating in general and stated their hatred for it emphatically with very little description of why. The seventh category for the years 2004-2009 was due to users complaining that others were taking too long to start dating. And the eighth category for 2004-2009 was the friend zone category where users complained about either being friend-zoned or friend-zoning others. The ninth category for every other timeline was people blaming themselves for hating dating as they believed that they were the problem for why they hated dating. The last category, the tenth overall or eighth from the second time period on, was characterized by those who hated dating due to people either stereotyping them or because others did not meet their stereotypes.

As these posts were counted, categories were only dropped from the graphs if they had no other posts in later years, which is why 2004-2009 had different categories than the other years. But as 2004-2009 had no complaints about dating where they were blaming themselves, that category was dropped in that first year to ensure there was room for the relevant categories and then was

added back in subsequent years when categories friendzone and taking too long were discarded.

First Time Period (2004-2009)

In the first timeline, as shown in Figure 8, there were many different categories that Facebook users complained about, and yet complaining about the opposite gender was the highest complaint, as 38% of users complained that the opposite gender was their reason for hating to date. This was quickly followed up by 20% of users believing people were moving too fast in dating and 12% that complained about the entire process of dating. Every other category made up 10% (interracial) or less. All of the complaints are shown below in Figure 5.

Within the first set of years, we can also see that there was a broad range as to what Facebook users believed their issues with dating were. Interracial dating also, between both genders, took up 10% of all posts, which is the highest complaint throughout the time periods.

Second Time Period (2010-2014)

For the second timeline, as shown in Figure 9, things start to streamline slightly. There are fewer categories necessary here, meaning there are more complaints about the same specific issues. Fifty-two percent of women complained specifically about the dating process or dating in general, far more than their main complaint last time period of men, which did not exceed 40% of

the posts. In fact, complaints about the dating process or dating itself increased 32% from the last period, coinciding with technology becoming more accessible. However, men are far more spread out, with a large portion still complaining about the dating process or dating itself at 36%, while 24% of men complained about women as shown in Figure 6 below. Although men still have a lot to complain about women as a whole, as dating technology became more commonplace, there was a significant increase from 12% to 36% complaining about the dating process. The amount of infidelity as a complaint for women also increased, rising from 8% of women previously complaining about infidelity to 20%, while men's complaints about infidelity stayed slightly below the level found in the last period.

Third Time Period (2015-2019).

In the third timeline, as shown in Figure 10, we see something slightly similar, with a large portion complaining about the opposite gender as in the first timeline, and a lot of users are still complaining about the dating process, as well, especially women. Eighty percent of complaints from men were about the dating process and women, and 72% of complaints from women were about the dating process and men. Infidelity comments have also disappeared in this timeline, which is surprising, as the last time period had them the highest of any other year. Throughout these time periods, however, interracial complaints, or

complaints made by users about hating to date because of other people getting into their business as an interracial couple, have stayed fairly consistent with 4 to 12% of complaints by either men or women.

Fourth Time Period (2020-2024)

From 2020-2024 when far more world events occurred such as COVID-19, women again complained most frequently about the dating process (52%), while men continued to complain about women (48%). As shown in Figure 11, however, a large portion of men are still complaining about the dating process, as well, but men also had a broader range as to what they were complaining about than women did and were the only gender to complain about infidelity this time. Interracial complaints, however, had no complaints from men and only one complaint from women. This was the first time this happened for interracial complaints, which may mean that interracial complaints were declining over time.

Across the Time Periods

The highest categories, throughout the years, were complaints about the opposite gender, the dating processes, or both. However, there was a drastic change from the first timeline and the last timeline in what women are complaining about regarding dating, which can be shown in Figures 12 and 13. Where men and women complained about opposite genders in 2004-2009,

and those statistics changed drastically to women complaining far more about the dating process and later continuing to complain about the dating process or dating itself (Figure 12). Where there was no gap in the first timeline, the second time period held a 16% difference in how many women were complaining about the dating process, a 4% difference in the third timeline, and a 32% difference in the last timeline. Women, all together, seem to be more dissatisfied with how dating has changed than men. Where there was a 4% gap between men and women complaining about the opposite gender in the first timeline, there was a 32% gap by the last year, making men's biggest complaint women instead (Figure 13).

Discussion

With the changes the United States has seen in technology and how that technology and world events have possibly changed dating, there has been a large increase in online dating, which accompanies gender role changes in relationships and the workplace. This study found an increase in men and women complaining about the online dating process and the opposite gender in this process. Women's dissatisfaction with how dating has changed may help understand men's complaints about the dating process and women, and vice versa. As women find more dissatisfaction with the dating process, dating may have also become more difficult for men, and women therefore may be further

discouraged from dating in turn. Although only complaints were searched for and evaluated in this study, complaints about the dating process, in general, speak to how incredibly different dating has become and how much the ease and lifestyle of current dating practices are not appreciated. In a world where everything is at the touch of a finger, it seems that both genders found many challenges while adapting to the changes in dating culture.

Women's Point of View

The way the dating process changed from mostly in person to the majority of it being online seems to have been more discouraging for women than helpful. Women had the largest complaints about infidelity in the second time period, at 20% of all women's complaints, which is 12-16% more than any other time period. This is also 12-16% more than men ever complained about infidelity in any other time period. This could be because, in the second time period, at this point between 2010-2014, many technology users fully started to understand how to use the technology at their disposal. As the ability to access technology increased, the ability to catch significant others in the act of cheating with a message trail also increased. Between the first timeline to the second, there is also a 40% increase in women complaining about the online dating process specifically. In every timeline after, those numbers continued to stay up between 40%-52% of all women's complaints. This represents the largest

and most consistent change after the first year. The percentage of these complaints helps us understand possible reasons for the increasing marriage age (Government Census, n.d.) and the reduced number of women who are putting themselves out there on dating apps (Vogels & McClain, 2023).

Women's complaints about the dating process however ranged from complaining about their specific part in the process, or what they saw their part in the dating process to be, to complaining about how much they hated what dating had become. For example, the dating process escalating so quickly from the first initial meet-up may have become a problem for many women according to the posts analyzed. It seems that with everything moving so fast and with the pressure of the hook-up culture, it may be difficult for women to feel secure in forming a relationship and trusting that the initial encounter will grow into a long-term relationship. There were also many posts from women about all the effort and work they put into making a life with their partner, and making a home before the couple broke up, which with an eventual breakup, contributed to women expressing hate that they then had to start all over after all the work they just put into their last relationship. They expressed feeling discouraged that they had to start from the first step in dating again, and they did not want to go back to the beginning.

These complaints were echoed through the time periods, possibly explaining why fewer women want to date, and why fewer women utilize dating apps in the first place. But there are other possibilities as to why women are avoiding dating. It could be that women are utilizing their increasing freedom and independence by not actively trying to date, or that the idea of dating men threatens independence for these women. This independence issue could also be related to women's current career goals, and their possible increased standards as to what men will add to their lives or careers. This could make it difficult for women to find someone who meets their standards if they are, at times, making more money than men, and have increased expectations in other areas that impact relationship decision-making. It could also be that after having hookup culture more available, women are finding it easier to have their sexual needs met and then find their emotional intimacy through other avenues, like friendships.

Men's Point of View

Men's top two complaints over the time periods were about the dating process and women. There are many suggestions as to why this could happen. From the complaints, there seems to be a lot of resistance for women to get back into dating as if they had to convince women to date. This can be understood in the context of the findings from the women's perspective, indicating that as

women have complained about how insecure they feel in the dating process and how much work the dating process is for them, men may find themselves having to put a lot of effort into trying in a different way (that of convincing women to date them).

Men also had complaints about women comparing them to their exes, and them trying to show women that they were not like their exes, which further reinforces that general tone of men finding themselves in a position to more explicitly show they are good potential mates and therefore worth dating. There were also many complaints from men across the timelines about being unable to find somebody who was looking for a long-term relationship, rather than just a short fling or hookup. Men have also listed the dating process as a large part of their hate of dating. A lot of the complaints from men about the dating process were about how they just wanted to find somebody for them already, and that they were tired of looking, which is in itself counterintuitive, given the general gender stereotype that women more often want relationships while men want more casual sex. The current findings show men as a bit tired of the dating process, as well, due to finding little results despite all of their efforts. The 2015-2019 time period, especially, showed a significant number of complaints about the dating process from men, and in this time period, there was only a 4% difference between men and women complaining about the dating process.

These findings could possibly support the theory that the newer generations are not used to putting as much effort into achieving things (Izzo, 2022), which could be likely due to technology making most information and items so accessible. These complaints could also show that men are impatient to receive the emotional intimacy they crave, as reported by Izzo (2022) in that they are tired of the hookup culture and ready for something more. With many apps trying to accomplish this, it could be that these apps are falling short of expectations, or that with the app making everything easier, men believe relationships are supposed to be easy. Finally, it could be that even as men complain that they are ready for more, with their current lifestyle of hookups, reduced plans or expectations of marriage, and with cohabitation as an option, they have different ideas from women on how to accomplish their desires for something more permanent.

Dating Improvement Suggestions

To encourage more dating and the utilization of the resources currently made for dating, there are three possibilities to encourage the dating pool to grow. The first would be to change the dating apps themselves. As Tinder has made everything more accessible by allowing users to signal their intent to be friends, only available for hookups, etc., this could become more streamlined by adding actual groups. Just like how many apps now can separate into one's

gender preference, the intent of the relationship could become their own group to be switched between, with the ability to change it in the app when a user pleases. This could also be done with other preferences that are important to new couples, like if religion is important to a user, or number of children desired, or the desired timeline for a relationship.

Second, these apps can also change the content of their superficial questions and make them as detailed as possible. Some apps have already started this process, such as Hinge, which has far more detailed questions in each of its profiles to help women and men find what they want, which is why it has its logo of actually helping people get married (McLeod, 2012). Adding items like embedded videos could also assist with showing potential dating candidates more about users' personalities and mannerisms. This would also assist those trying to make first contact so that they do not need to cyberstalk to find information about a person, as all the information a user wants available will be right there to choose from to find something in common to talk about.

Third, apps could lean into the idea of gamification by adding more games for dating app users to play against potential significant others as an ice breaker, therefore making that initial contact easier and more comfortable for both genders. Although making the dates more like games could be causing dating itself not to be taken as seriously, it may work to get people interested in dating

again and make it fun, as billions of people use them to meet people online (Isisag, 2020). This would not be as needed if the point of the date is to hook up, but this would be a great introduction for those looking for a long-term relationship and would therefore address a lot of the concerns mentioned by both genders in the posts evaluated. This idea paired with the idea of adding to the superficial questions will likely help take pressure off the initial reaction and help get rid of first-time nervousness. It should also assist dating app users in finding a person they get along with outside of just messaging and video calls and the games may clue users into their mannerisms when the other user wins or loses. Pairing mobile games with dating apps would also be a great way to get both mobile apps more money. These kinds of app fixes are already proving to be helpful, but they could improve.

Future Research

Continued research will be needed to understand how to assist men and women better navigating the changing dating scene for the better. Social media is also a place where many complain, making it a good place to rant at the moment, but a legitimate questionnaire would allow for more specific research questions and more complex research designs. More research into what exactly women were complaining about in the dating processes and what exactly men were complaining about women may also help to determine what else dating

apps need to do to encourage users, as well as what society needs to change to encourage young people to date. Further research and testing on common ground between the genders could bring different aspects of dating to light. Gathering data from other online platforms and different kinds of dating apps will likely also greatly enrich knowledge about dating, as this study focused exclusively on Facebook users, who compose only a part of the dating population.

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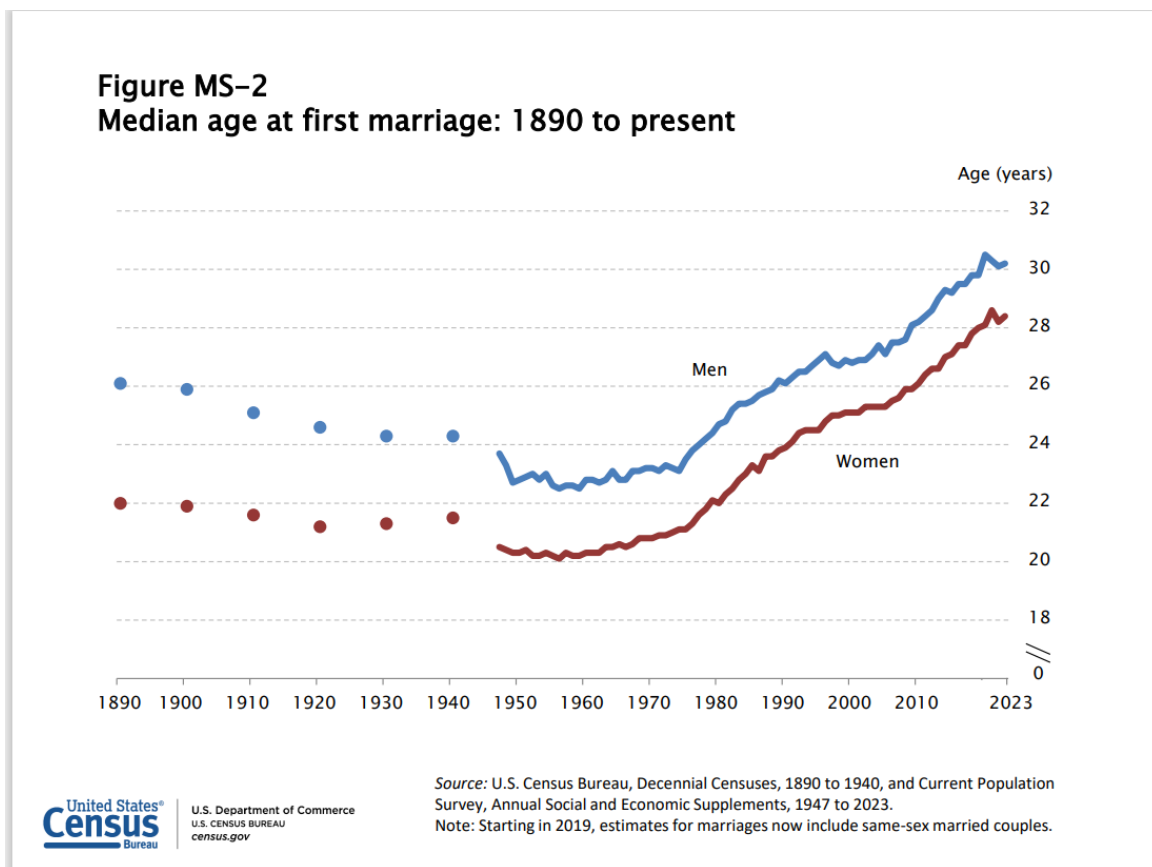
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Appendices

Figure 1

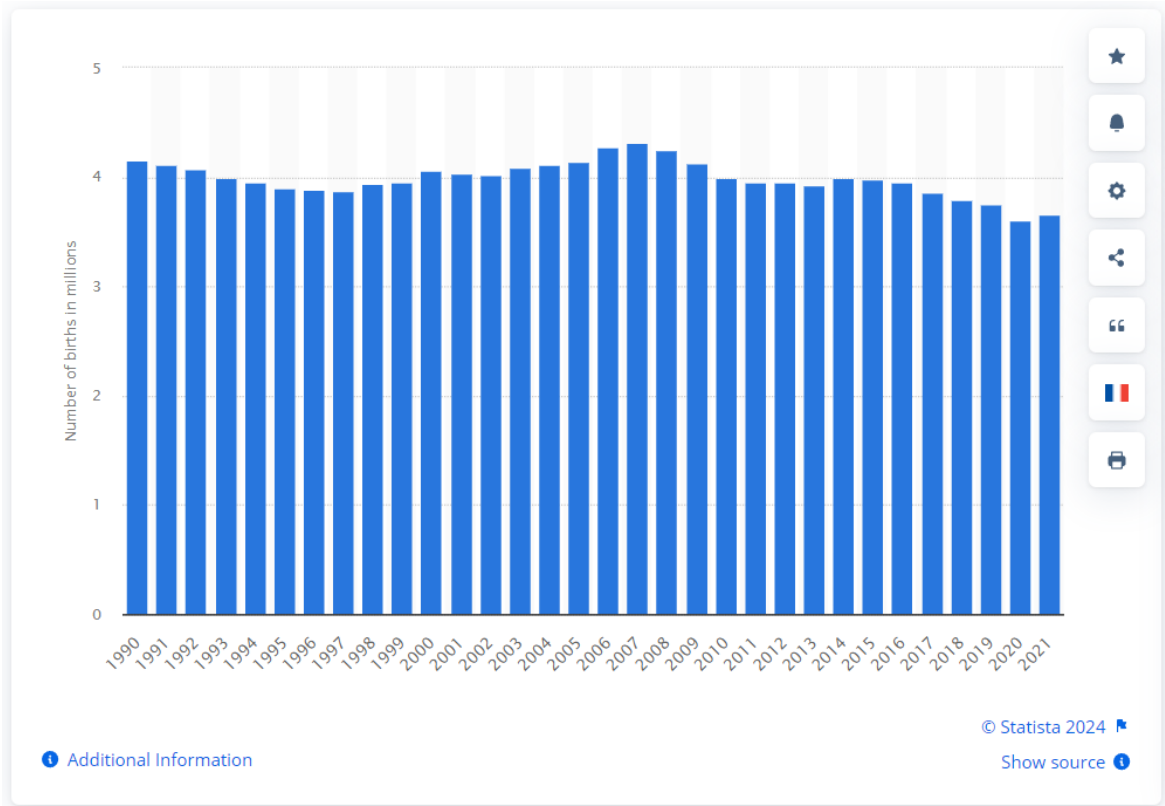
Median Age at First Marriage: 1890 to Present



US Census Bureau statistics on the age of first marriages by couples in the United States. Statistics are plotted about every ten years along with the current year this graph was published.

Figure 2

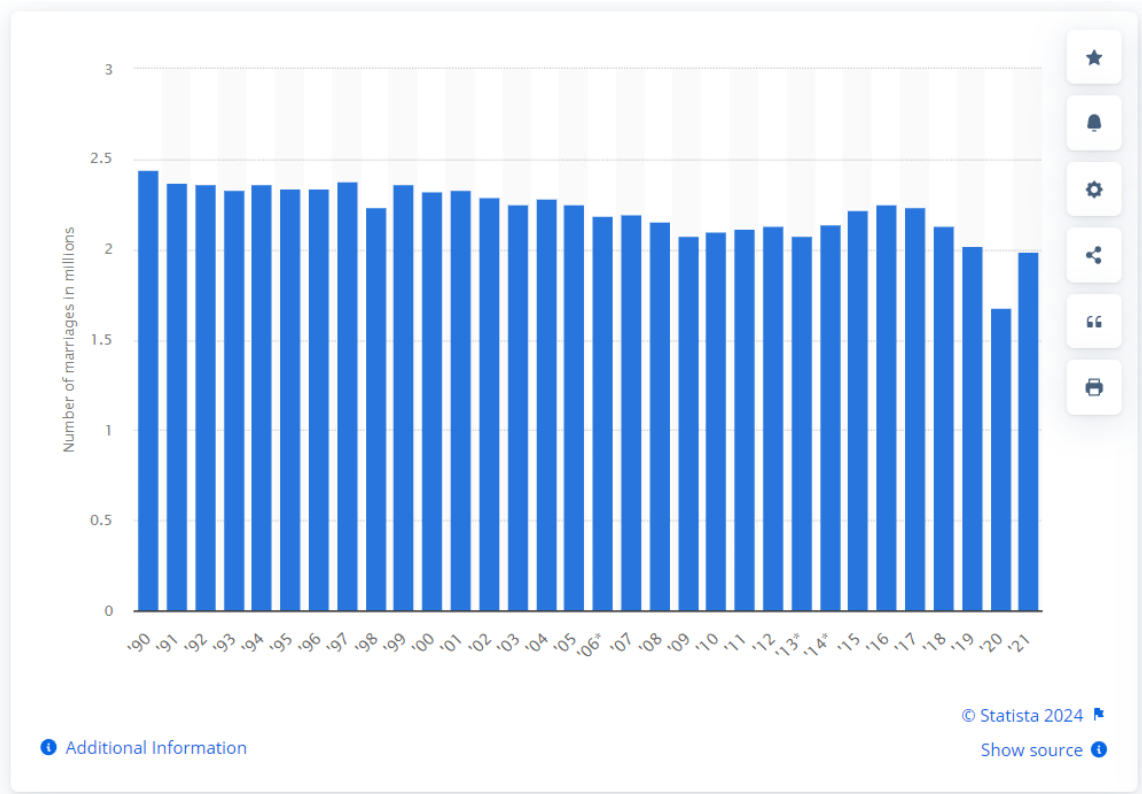
Number of Births in Millions



Graph taken from Statista.com published in 2023 with data on the number of births in the US from 1990 to 2021.

Figure 3

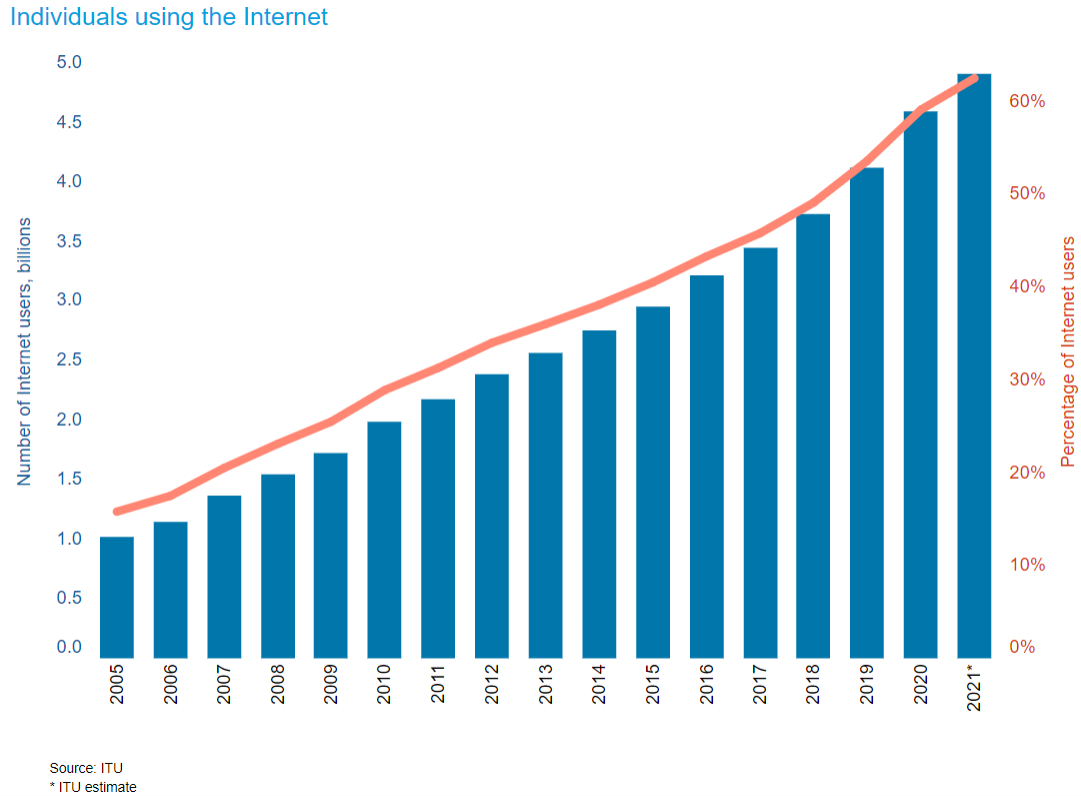
Number of Marriages in Millions



Graph taken of the number of marriages graphed in the millions according to Statista.com, published in 2023 with data from 1990 to 2021.

Figure 4

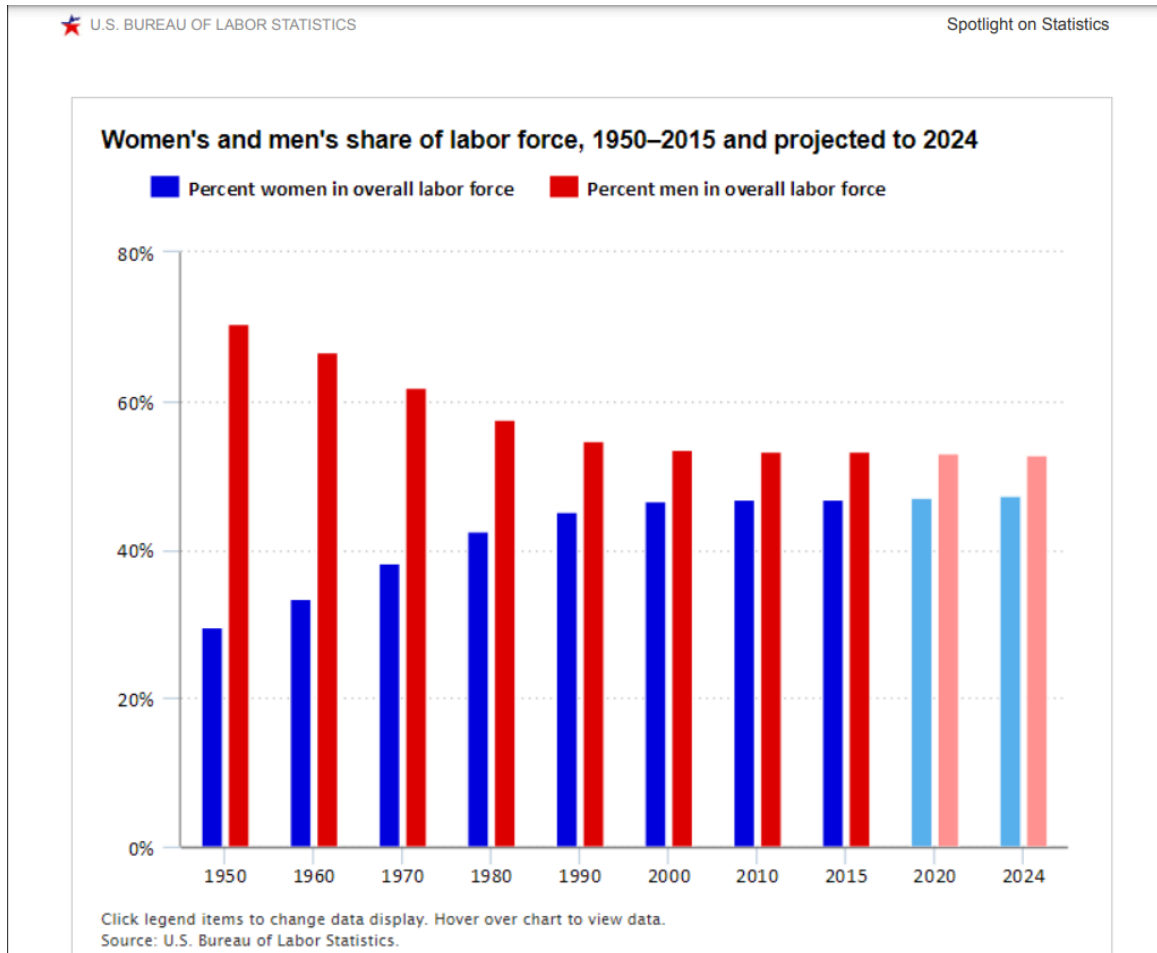
Individuals Using the Internet



A graph published by Facts and Figures 2021 about the number of individuals using the Internet in billions across the world. The graph then places everything into percentages of the world with an orange line on top of the bar graphs.

Figure 5

Women's and Men's Share of Labor Force, 1950-2015 and Projected to 2024

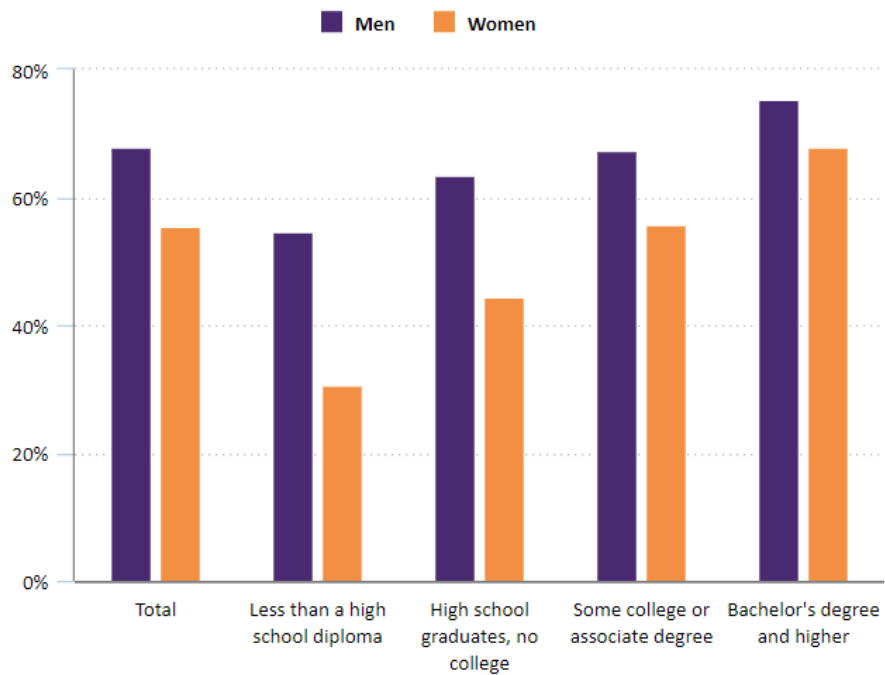


This graph published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics graphs the percentage of all women and all men in the workforce, from 1950 to 2015. The graph has projected statistics from 2020-2024.

Figure 6

Employment–Population Ratios for Men and Women ages 25 and older by Educational Attainment, 2022 annual averages

Employment–population ratios for men and women ages 25 and older by educational attainment, 2022 annual averages



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

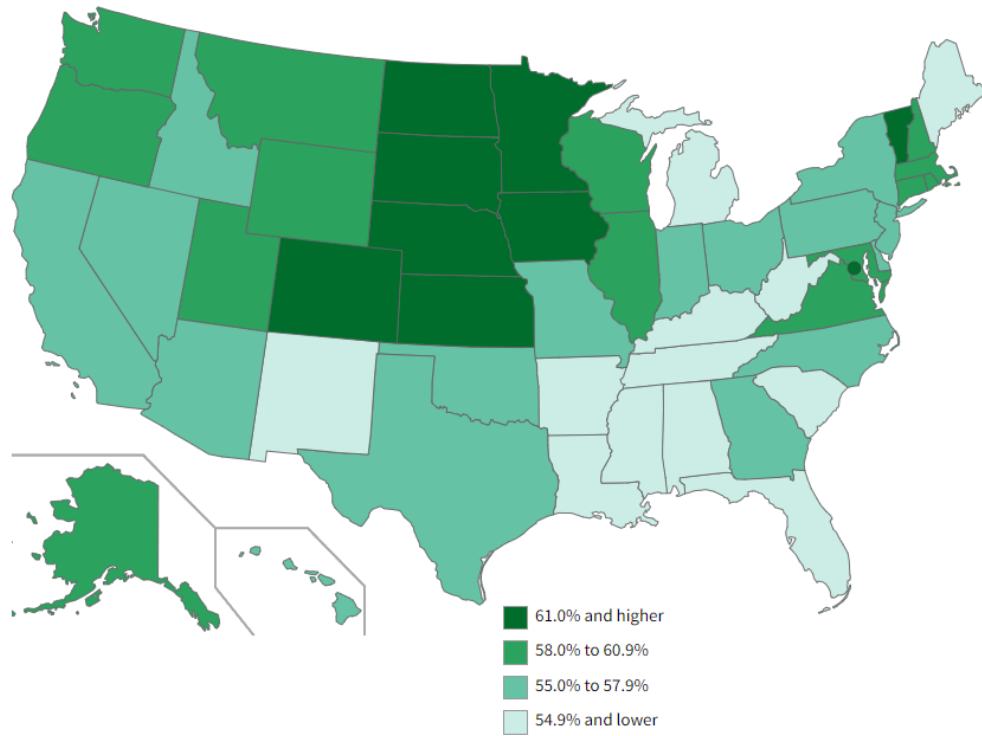


The graph published in 2023 by the US of Labor Statistics and shows the number of people in the US without specific educational degrees by gender.

Figure 7

Labor Force Participation Rate for Women, by State, 2022

Labor force participation rate for women, by state, 2022

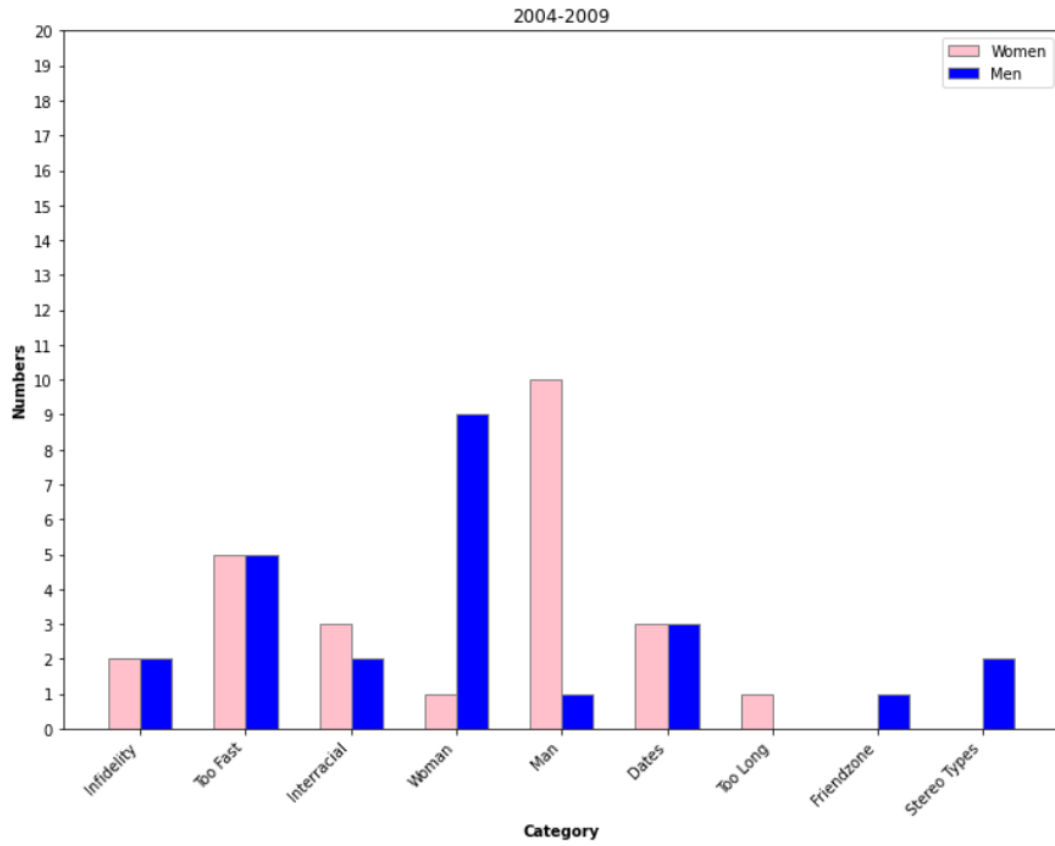


Hover over a state to see data.
Hover over legend items to see states in a category.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

This graph published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics shows how much in percentages of the labor force is made up of working women. The lighter the green of the state, the lower the percentage of women in the workforce.

Figure 8

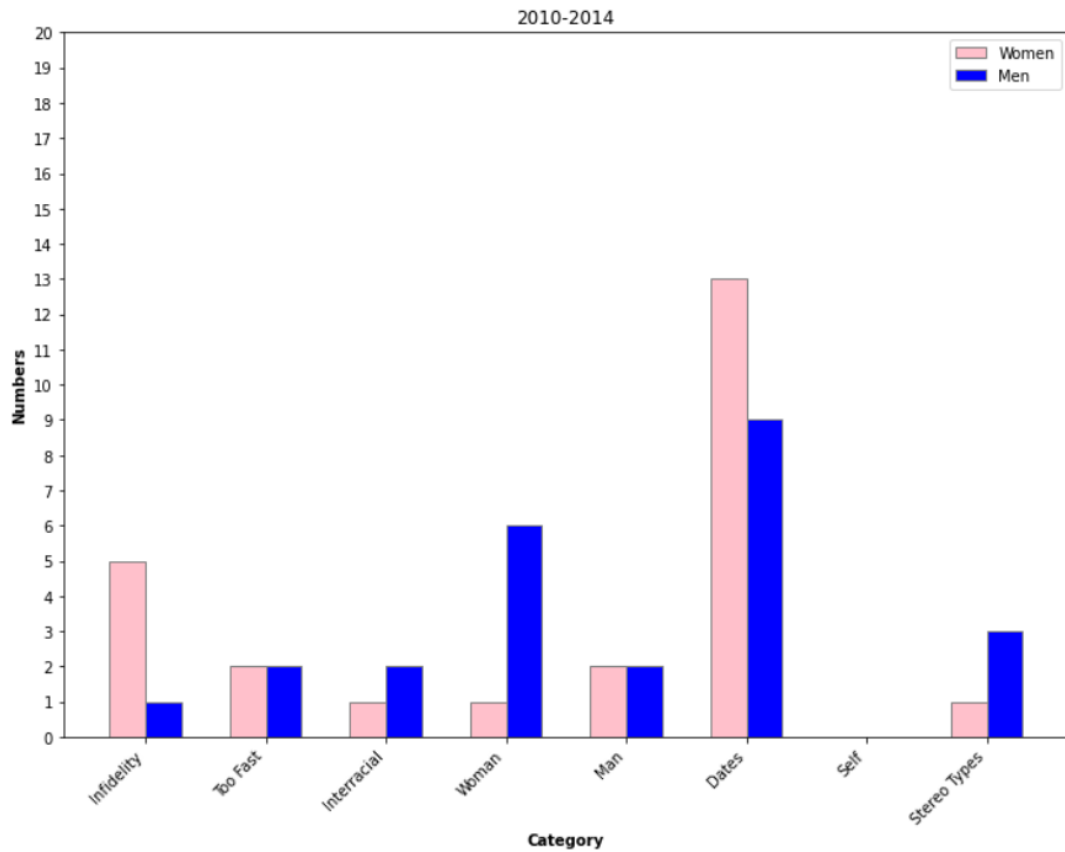
First Time Period: 2004-2009



This graph was created to showcase the number of randomized public posts found on Facebook between the years 2004 to 2009 when “hate dating” was searched.

Figure 9

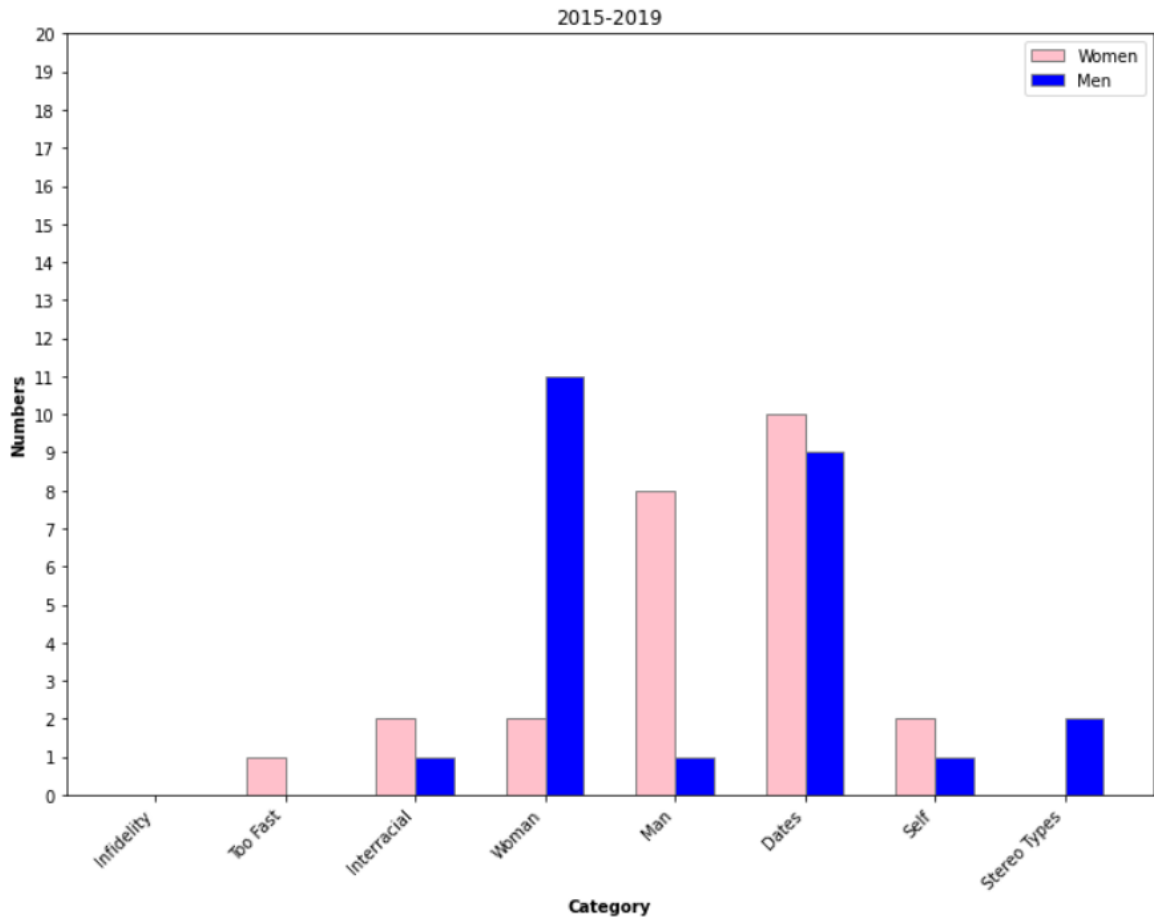
Second Time Period: 2010-2014



This graph was created to showcase the number of randomized public posts found on Facebook between the years 2010 to 2014 when “hate dating” was searched.

Figure 10

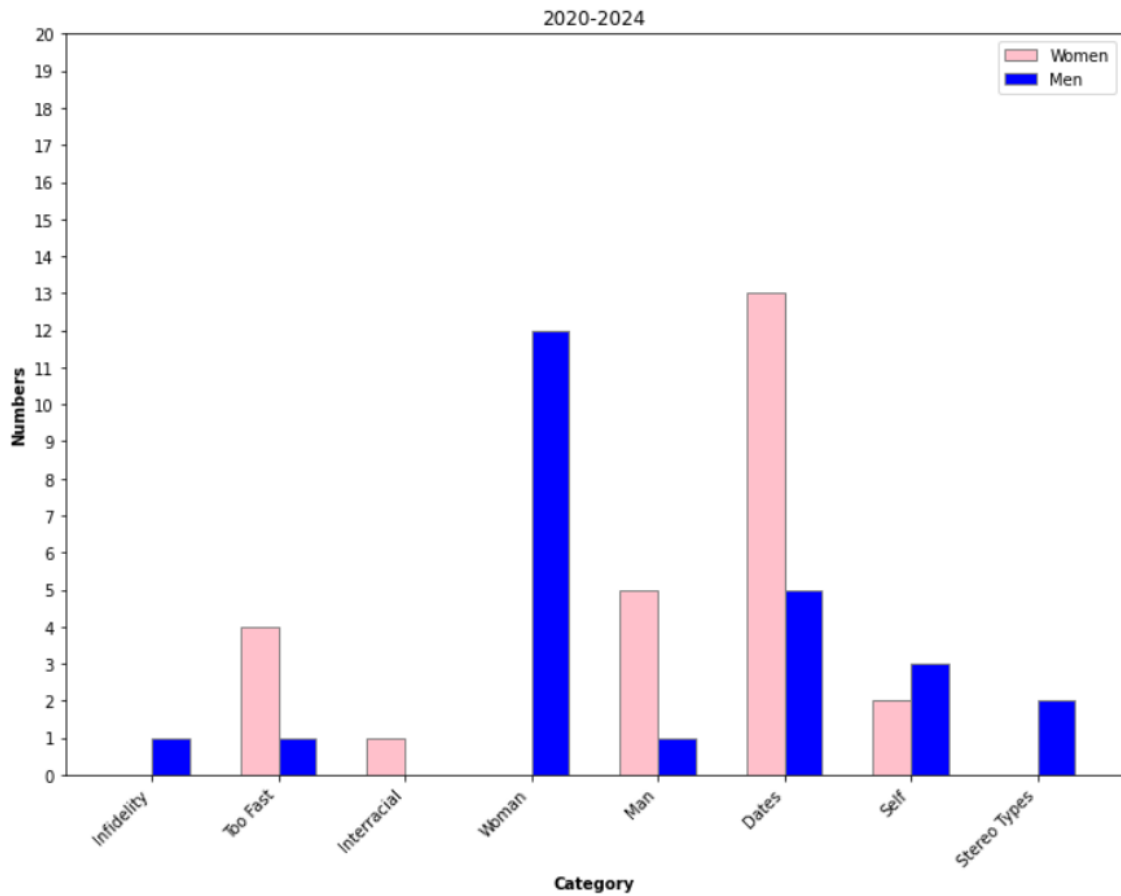
Third Time Period: 2015-2019



This graph was created to showcase the number of randomized public posts found on Facebook between the years 2015 to 2019 when “hate dating” was searched.

Figure 11

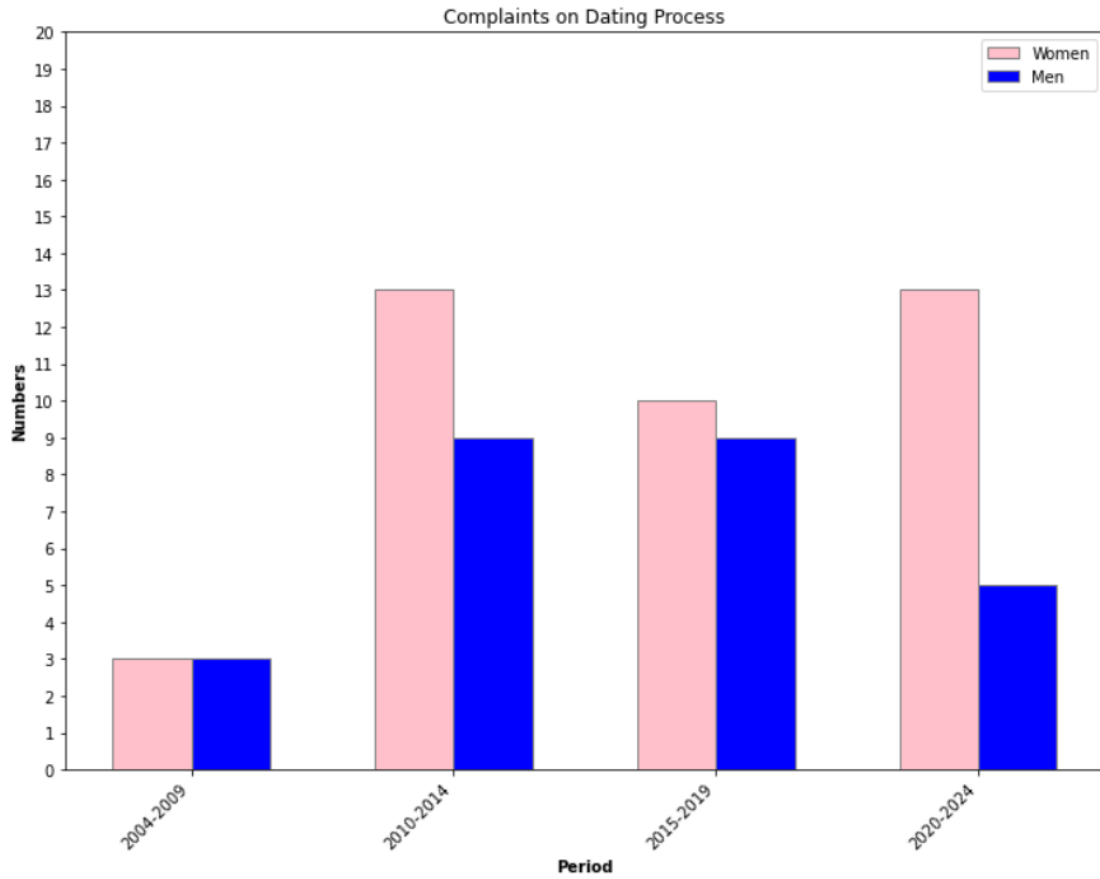
Third Time Period: 2020-2024



This graph was created to showcase the number of randomized public posts found on Facebook between the years 2020 to 2024 when “hate dating” was searched.

Figure 12

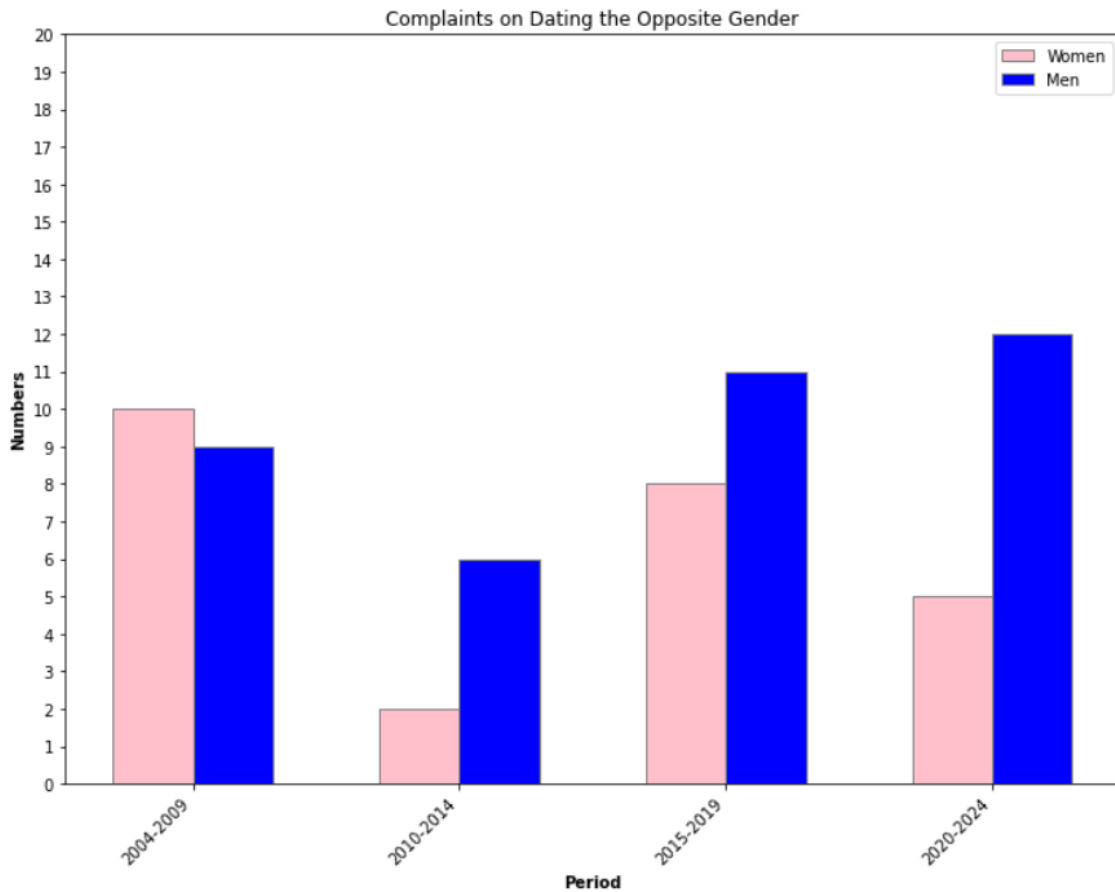
Complaints on the Dating Process Through the Time Periods



This graph was created to showcase the number of randomized public posts found on Facebook between the years 2000 to 2024 about the dating process when “hate dating” was searched.

Figure 13

Complaints on Dating the Opposite Gender Through the Time Periods



This graph was created to showcase the number of randomized public posts found on Facebook between the years 2000 to 2024 about the opposite gender to the posters when “hate dating” was searched.