

## HONORS COLLEGE THESES

### Media and Self Representative Perceptions: Deception in Online Dating

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#### Document Type

Thesis

#### Abstract

Even with the increasing popularity of online dating, stigmas surrounding this form of internet connection persist. Since society is inundated with images of deception in online dating, those who have never experienced online dating may believe that mass media accurately represents this type of communication. This study's main research question asks if perceptions about online dating differ between users and non-users; furthermore, these differences will be taken into account when regarding the prominence of mass media in shaping these impressions.

Currently, digital communication is a societal norm; more and more of our lives are documented and facilitated by the internet. Through understanding the differences between online daters and non-online daters, the reach of modern mass media can be better measured and combatted. Through survey questioning and follow-up interviews, Pace University undergraduate students were asked to reflect on their online dating experiences, or lack thereof, and its position in relation to popular mass media, social networking, and individual personality factors. Research designs such as this provide communication studies with the proper balance of quantitative data and qualitative responses to paint a more accurate depiction of society's sentiments.

While this research provides a glimpse of American youth's opinions about online dating, enough data has been gathered to indicate that mass media plays a strong role in shaping perceptions for non-online daters. While those that do online date are less influenced, the role of popular media along with social media necessitates more analysis to contest stigmas surrounding internet communication, especially online dating. Future research can use this study as a tipping point to discover if anxiety from mass media influences not just online dating, but perceptions of other online communication. Since computer mediated communication plays an increasing role in the lives of society today, the relevancy of such studies can prove invaluable to mass media content creators and consumers alike.

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