Hedonic Pleasure, Cyber Dating, Live-In Relationship, and Social Acceptance Amongst IT Professionals

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the intricated relationships among hedonic pleasure, cyber dating, live-in relationships, and societal acceptance among professionals working in information technology sector in India. Data were collected from 269 millennials working in the IT sector of India via a survey questionnaire. Structure equation modeling was implied to analyze the collected data. According to the findings of the study, hedonic pleasure has a direct and significant effect on social acceptance, live-in relationships, and online dating of millennial employees. The indirect relationship demonstrates that cyber dating and live-in relationships can fully mediate hedonic pleasure and social acceptance. Employers, academicians, parents, and other stakeholders will benefit from the findings of this study in acknowledging the personal lifestyles of millennial employees towards social acceptance.

KEYWORDS
Cyber Dating, Hedonic Pleasure, IT Professionals, Live-In Relationship, Social Acceptance

1. INTRODUCTION

‘Man is by nature a sociable animal, an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidently is either beneath our notice or more than human,’ said Aristotle, a renowned Greek philosopher (Aristotle, 1984). The above quote is universally recognized and supported by numerous studies (Vinciarelli, 2009; Vinciarelli, 2011; Moustakas, 2015; Ozolins, 2017; Boyatzis, 2020; Shetty et al., 2021; Kumari and Vangapandu, 2021). This clearly demonstrates the significance of social interaction (Colomo-Palacios et al., 2017). However, the glamorous world, on the other hand, is revealing a distinct picture, where people are increasingly moving towards virtual space for both searching as well as building relationships. The key determinants of this transition are technological advancements, a competitive work place environment, and an active lifestyle (Hu and Kellinger, 2008; Tarafdar, et al., 2020; Khurana and Misra, 2021). People are becoming more task-driven and output-oriented to gain success in their professional lives by compromising their personal relationships. This generates the hedonic needs of unfulfilled love, belongingness, and acceptance. People start looking for relationships using dating
apps like Tinder, Bumble, Hinge, Ok Cupid, and others to fulfil these hedonic pleasures. According to an article published in ‘The Indian Express’ by Mehrotra, (2021), India has become the second largest revenue market for dating apps after the US, with $323 million of revenue in 2020. These dating apps are also becoming popular in females as it witnessed 12 percent spike in female users in 2020 (The Times of India, 2021). The usage of online dating applications further triggers to cyber dating and live-in relationships, where couples start living together after hook-up (Rosenfeld, 2018). Looking at the current trends, the present research study is an attempt to evaluate the intricated relationships among cyber dating, live-in relationships, hedonic pleasures, and social acceptance.

Sautter et al., (2010, p. 555) defined cyber dating or internet dating as ‘the use of websites that provide a database of potential partners—typically in close geographical proximity—that one can browse and contact, generally for a fee.’ Cyber-dating had significantly altered the meaning and structure of relationships. The primary motivation for using cyber dating platform is to satisfy the hedonic pleasures such as ‘fun,’ ‘excitements,’ and ‘amorousness’ (Bryant and Sheldon, 2017). Furthermore, literature also claims that cyber dating has increased the likelihood of live-in relationships between partners who meet online for hook-ups on dating sites. Narayan et al., (2021, p. 18) defined live-in relationship as ‘continuous cohabitation for a significant period of time, between partners who are not married to each other in a legally acceptable way and are sharing a common household.’ Initially, live-in relationships were not considered with elegance in emerging societies such as India and it was believed that these are meant for western nations. Now, these relationships are also getting acceptability by emerging societies because of modernization of societies and surge of cyber dating (Tribune, 2021). People living in these societies began to recognize that marriage is not required for total fulfillment of a relationship. Moreover, India has finally stepped ahead and walked with rest of the world by legalising the live-in relationships (Agrawal, 2012; Mkrttchian, and Chernyshenko, 2021). The legal acceptability of this relationship in India has further gain popularity and there has been an increase in number of such relationships (Narayan et al., 2021).

Despite gaining significant importance, there is a scarce literature available that explores the intricated relationships amongst cyber dating, hedonic pleasures, live-in relationship and social acceptability. Further, majority of the research has validated these as solitary constructs without understanding the intricacies among these. Therefore, this becomes the motivation to conduct a study where interaction among these could be empirically validated. This research will have significant implications in understanding the complicated relationships of the modern society of digital era.

The sequence of the manuscript is as follows. The second section deals with theoretical background and hypotheses development followed by research methods in third section. Section 4 covers data analysis and discussion. Conclusion, implications, limitations and future scope is discussed in the last section of the study.

2. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The social exchange theory (Blau, 1986; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2008; Nakonezny, and Denton, 2008) emphasized upon the interpersonal exchange of information on social websites and reinforces the relationship between couples. The theory stresses that a higher level of interaction derives higher hedonic pleasure from the social exchange on hi-tech mediums. Social exchange theory signifies that people in relations are inspired by the favorable consequences (Blau, 1986; Thibaut and Kelly, 1959). From the standpoint of social exchange theory, the desirability and capability to interact varies with the recognitions, and rewards and has inverse relationship with alleged costs (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). As per Sprecher (1998, p. 32), “Although rewards, costs, and reciprocity, as defined in general social exchange theory, refer to any types of exchanges, these concepts can also be redefined more specifically to refer to sexual exchanges.” In most of the close relationships, sexual recompenses are exchanged for confidence and love. The duration of a friendship or romance may also influence the process of social exchange (Nakonezny, and Denton, 2008).
Redmond (2015) also highlighted that social exchange influences the instigation of a relationship and addressed that “If good outcomes are experienced in initial contacts or if these contacts lead the persons to anticipate good outcomes in the future, the interaction is likely to be repeated (p. 17).” Therefore, this research extends social exchange theory by validating role of hedonic pleasures in achieving social acceptance.

Hedonic theory (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Ha et al., 2007; Van der Heijden, 2004; Schacter et al., 2011) posits those individuals choose to form relationships based on their emotional experiences, whether good or bad. Individuals in relationships who have had good emotional experiences are more likely to transmit happiness. This theory has also been extended to validate human behaviour along with consumption behaviour (Holsapple and Wu, 2007; Waite, & Joyner 2001). For example, Titz et al., (2002) used this theory in studying gambling and confirmed significant association between hedonic responses and attitude of gamblers. Hedonic transition to romantic relationships is sometimes considered as an unusual course but it helps in progressing the relationship at fast pace. Launching a new relationship provides a boost on overall well-being and leads to an improvement in work performance (Bao and Lyubomirsky, 2013). Therefore, this theory has been extended to study the associations among cyberdating, live-in relationships and hedonic pleasure among IT professionals.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Hedonic pleasure is derived as the outcome of emotions and joy (Babin et al., 1994; Turel et al., 2007; Bruwer and Rueger-Muck, 2019; Chatterjee, 2021). Employees use a computer-mediated social network that is built on technology. Facebook, Whatsapp and Cyberdating sites for example, can be used to express personal feelings with friends and colleagues (Waite and Joyner, 2001; Hu and Kellinger, 2008; Taronfar, et al., 2020; Pathak, 2021; Tandon et al., 2021). Maximum interactions through the social exchange process increases employee proximity, which can lead to more happiness and excitement in living together (Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2008; Rosen and Sherman, 2006). Hedonic enjoyment aids the employee in attracting specific attention both at work and in society (Grieve et al., 2013). Cooper et al., (1998) and Impett et al., (2005) emphasized the need of understanding the diverse parts of psychological experience from pleasure to generalize the approach-avoidance, sexual, and interpersonal drive. Approach motives indicate positive consequences such as increased interpersonal physical pleasure, increased relationship connection, and care for one another (Grieve et al., 2013). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H1: Employees’ hedonic pleasures have a positive impact on social acceptance.

The pleasure and joy derived from employee-to-employee talks contribute to personal desire and drive individuals to use information technology for entertainment and to frequent social networking sites to share personal feelings with one another (Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009). People participate in the media to meet their personal motives, according to the gratification theory (Katz et al., 1974). Employees use cyber dating sites for hedonic pleasure, finding new friends, romance, chats, curiosity, sexual partners, adventures, and comfort after a life crisis, releasing stress, information, and personal identity (Lawson and Leck, 2006; Wang and Chang, 2010; Mull and Lee, 2014; Stewart et al., 2017; Magsamen-Conrad et al., 2015). Therefore, we posit that:

H2: Employees’ hedonic pleasures have a positive impact on cyber dating.

Joy, excitement, desire, love, passion, commitment, trust, concern for each other, and conflicts are all aspects of romance in a relationship (Bao and Lyubomirsky, 2013). Hedonic adaptation refers to the advantages and disadvantages of a person’s level of happiness after responding to a specific stimuli, such
as pre-marriage levels (Frederick and Loewenstein, 1999). Most millennial employees, regardless of their gender, choose to spend time together to get to know one another and adopt cohabitation or live-in relationships before marrying, preferring to live under one roof (Goodwin et al., 2010; Rhoades et al., 2015). Commitment theory on emotions (Aube, 1998) stressed the importance of desire in couples to stay together for extended periods of time in order to feel hedonic pleasure in their lifestyle (Johnson et al., 1999).

**H3:** Employees’ hedonic pleasures have a positive impact live-in relationship.

Three reasons are given by the researchers for selecting cyberdating. First, for fun (Couch and Liamputtong, 2008; Lawson and Leck, 2006), people can easily access a society-accepted online cyberdating website via mobile phone, laptop, or other apps, browse the numerous profiles, see the attractive pictures of the individuals, and show curiosity to read their characteristics and match such with their taste, and engage in frequent interactions (Wang et al., 2010). Second, to develop the relationship (Couch and Liamputtong, 2008; Wang et al., 2010), the selected online profiles were contacted via mobiles, facebook, or other apps to share the feelings of romance and moments were enjoyed to relieve routine stress and anxiety (Lawson and Leck, 2006), and third, to 'hook up’ with partner through physical contact (Couch and Liamputtong, 2008; Wang et al., 2010). According to (Taylor, 2015), bachelors in their 20s like cyberdating for entertainment and fun, but they are less interested in long-term commitment and building proximity, whereas those in their 30s want to use cyberdating to form a relationship. Men are interested in cyberdating for fun and pleasure, according to (Taylor, 2015; Paul et al., 2000), whereas women are interested in developing a personal and close relationship. Cyberdating is an online method of communication between couples that allows them to exchange as much information as possible through video chats and text messages (Machimbarrena et al., 2018; Borrajo et al., 2015). Cyberdating encourages people to form love relationships by alleviating loneliness, sadness, substance abuse, and shyness (Valkenburg and Peter, 2007; Kim et al., 2009). On the basis of above discussion, following hypothesis has been formulated:

**H4:** Cyber dating mediates the relationship between hedonic pleasure and social acceptance in the employees.

The probable grounds for live-in relationships among employees in their professional domain are self-optimism and self-image (Brissette et al., 2002), warmth (Fiske et al., 2002), likeliness (Fiske et al., 2002), dynamism, value, and social-desirability (Peeters, 2004). Self-optimism assures the high probability of occurrence of positive events, warmth, and likeliness reinforce the trust, passion of romance and care for each other in the relationship. People like to live fast life, try to find the pleasure, joy, peace all around, believe in themselves and expect the high social acceptance (Brissette et al., 2002).

**H5:** Live-in relationship mediates the relationship between hedonic pleasure and social acceptance among employees.

### 2.2 Proposed Conceptual Model

See Figure 1.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1 Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire was divided into two sections: A and B. The demographic features of respondents are found in Section A, while the item statements for hedonic pleasure,
cyber dating, live-in relationships, and social acceptance are included in Section B. For the assessment, the survey questionnaire has a total of 43 item statements. Hedonic pleasure was measured by taking the scale of Snaith et al., (1995), which comprises total 13 items including statements on interest pastimes, social interaction, sensory experience and food drink. Employees’ cyber dating was examined using a 14-item scale segregated into three sub-constructs namely hook up, relationship, and fun. The scale was developed and validated by Clemen et al., (2015) and Wang and Chang, (2010). The items of construct social acceptance (4 items) were derived from the previous study of Bryant and Sheldon, (2017), which reveals the employee’s attitude toward cyber dating. The live-in relationship was assessed using the scale of Fower et al., (2016) included a total of 12 items. All the statements were measured on the Likert’s scale with options 1 to 5 where ‘1’ stands for strongly disagree to ‘5’ strongly agree (see Appendix).

3.2 Data Collection

The data was collected using purposive sampling technique from 269 respondents comprising millennials working in the information technology sector of Tier 1 cities such as Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ahmadabad, and Pune. An online google link was generated and circulated among employees of IT companies. As the nature of information is delicate and personal, therefore respondents were ensured about the confidentiality of the information provided by them. This also helped to meet the condition of social desirability bias (Misra, 2020). To enhance the participation and response rate, reminders were sent to them with a request to circulate the link of questionnaire among their peers also. Employees at the middle and high levels of hierarchy in firms classified as team leaders, system analysts, senior managers, associate director, project manager, chief IT officer, Human resource officer, and others made up a sample of 130 females and remaining 139 males making a sample of 269 respondents in the research study. The working experiences of millennial employees were ranged between 2 to 18 years. The demographic characteristics of millennial employees are discussed in Table 1.

Millennial employees were judged eligible for this study. Because adults between the ages of 25 and 40 are establishing themselves in their work lives and looking forward to enjoying hedonic pleasure with their partners. In India’s Tier 1 cities, there are a large number of information technology companies that provide rich exposure to modern lifestyles and a rejuvenating environment.
4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Structural Equation Modelling Analysis

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using AMOS 20 was used to analyze the data. SEM was preferred over other techniques since it integrates many standard methods such as correlation, multiple regression, factor analysis into one single software (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014).

4.1.1 Reliability and Validity

To assess the reliability and validity of the proposed measurement model, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out with items of live-in relationships, cyber-dating, hedonic pleasure and social adjustment. The CFA (Table 2) indicated that the standardized loadings of all the included variables are significant. One item SA4 of social acceptance was deleted due to low factor loadings. The constructs further demonstrate evidence of reliability (values convergent > 0.60 on all occasions), validity (significant and high standardized loadings as well as average variance extracted > 0.50 on all occasions), composite reliability (values > 0.70 on all occasions), and discriminant validity (AVE estimate of each construct is larger than the squared correlations of this construct to any other construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (Table 3).

4.2 Structural Model

The theoretical model was estimated on all the dependent and independent variables (table 4, Figure 2). Hedonic pleasure in the employees had significant relationship with social acceptance ($\beta=0.22$, $p=0.000$) thereby confirming hypothesis 1 which stated that “Employees’ hedonic pleasures have a positive impact on social acceptance”. Further, hypothesis 2 which stated that “Employees’ hedonic pleasures have a positive impact on cyber dating” is also supported ($\beta=0.73$, $p=0.000$). This finding indicates that IT professional have the passion for visiting cybersites for hedonic pleasure, chatting with new friends and relieve job-related stress. Moving further, the results also indicated the significant positive impact of hedonic pleasure on live-in relationship among the employees working in IT sector ($\beta=0.17$, $p=0.000$) thereby accepting hypothesis 3. This indicates that millennials like to

### Table 1. Demographic characteristics of millennial employees

| S.no | Item | Valid (%) |
|------|------|-----------|
| 1    | Total respondents (N)= 269 |           |
|      | Gender |           |
|      | Male = 139 | 51.67 |
|      | Female = 130 | 48.32 |
| 2    | Education Qualifications |           |
|      | Graduate = 186 | 69.14 |
|      | Postgraduate= 83 | 30.86 |
| 3    | Length of Service (in years) |           |
|      | 2 to 8 years=145 | 53.9 |
|      | 9 to 18 years=124 | 46.1 |
| 4    | Annual Income |           |
|      | 0 to 10 lacs (INR)=102 | 37.92 |
|      | Above 11 lacs (INR)=167 | 62.08 |
### Table 2. Measurement Model

| Dimension           | Std. Estimate | Std. Error | Critical ratio | Average Variance Extracted | Composite reliability |
|---------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cyber-dating        |               |            |                |                            |                       |
| Hook-up             |               |            |                |                            |                       |
| HP1                 | 0.759         |            |                |                            |                       |
| Mean=3.851          | HP2           | 0.873      | 0.066          | 15.172                     |                       |
| SD=0.776            | HP3           | 0.839      | 0.071          | 14.726                     | 0.609                 | 0.903                 |
| HP4                 | 0.722         | 0.075      | 12.346         |                            |                       |
| HP6                 | 0.701         | 0.077      | 11.933         |                            |                       |
| HP7                 | 0.775         | 0.087      | 13.098         |                            |                       |
| Relationships       |               |            |                |                            |                       |
| REL1                | 0.735         |            |                |                            |                       |
| Mean=3.919          | REL2          | 0.798      | 0.088          | 12.769                     | 0.602                 | 0.858                 |
| SD=0.738            | REL3          | 0.824      | 0.116          | 13.187                     |                       |
| REL4                | 0.743         | 0.1        | 11.857         |                            |                       |
| Fun                 |               |            |                |                            |                       |
| FUN1                | 0.671         |            |                |                            |                       |
| Mean=3.344          | FUN2          | 0.86       | 0.129          | 12.7                       | 0.718                 | 0.878                 |
| SD=1.017            | FUN3          | 0.97       | 0.138          | 13.457                     |                       |
| Hedonic Pleasure    |               |            |                |                            |                       |
| HP1                 | 0.592         |            |                |                            |                       |
| Mean=3.782          | HP2           | 0.604      | 0.065          | 13.176                     |                       |
| SD=0.647            | HP3           | 0.652      | 0.121          | 8.808                      |                       |
| HP4                 | 0.683         | 0.129      | 9.1            |                            |                       |
| HP5                 | 0.678         | 0.137      | 9.053          |                            |                       |
| HP6                 | 0.807         | 0.109      | 10.177         |                            |                       |
| HP7                 | 0.776         | 0.102      | 9.923          | 0.572                      | 0.937                 |
| HP8                 | 0.788         | 0.1        | 10.022         |                            |                       |
| HP9                 | 0.782         | 0.112      | 9.979          |                            |                       |
| HP10                | 0.695         | 0.107      | 9.206          |                            |                       |
| HP11                | 0.807         | 0.117      | 10.185         |                            |                       |
| HP12                | 0.788         | 0.13       | 10.029         |                            |                       |
| HP13                | 0.804         | 0.13       | 10.159         |                            |                       |
| Live-in relationship|               |            |                |                            |                       |
| LR1                 | 0.653         |            |                |                            |                       |
| Mean=4.118          | LR2           | 0.722      | 0.067          | 14.006                     |                       |
| SD=0.697            | LR3           | 0.821      | 0.095          | 11.658                     |                       |
| LR4                 | 0.768         | 0.113      | 11.043         |                            |                       |
| LR5                 | 0.667         | 0.105      | 9.814          |                            |                       |
| LR6                 | 0.76          | 0.123      | 10.956         |                            |                       |
| LR7                 | 0.768         | 0.127      | 11.043         | 0.571                      | 0.83                  |
| LR8                 | 0.781         | 0.091      | 11.192         |                            |                       |
| LR9                 | 0.802         | 0.086      | 11.439         |                            |                       |
| LR10                | 0.756         | 0.092      | 10.903         |                            |                       |
| LR11                | 0.807         | 0.124      | 11.495         |                            |                       |
| LR12                | 0.711         | 0.111      | 10.36          |                            |                       |
| Social acceptance   |               |            |                |                            |                       |
| SA1                 | 0.847         |            |                |                            |                       |
| Mean=3.753          | SA2           | 0.989      | 0.058          | 23.705                     | 0.849                 | 0.944                 |
| SD=1.031            | SA3           | 0.923      | 0.06           | 21.509                     |                       |
Table 3. Correlation Matrix

|                    | Hook-up | Relationships | Fun  | Hedonic Pleasure | Live-in relationship | Social acceptance |
|--------------------|---------|---------------|------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Hook-up            | 0.780   |               |      |                  |                      |                   |
| Relationships      |         | 0.775         |      |                  |                      |                   |
| Fun                |         |               |      |                  |                      |                   |
| Hedonic Pleasure   |         |               |      |                  |                      |                   |
| Live-in relationship|       |               |      |                  |                      |                   |
| Social acceptance  |         |               |      |                  |                      | 0.921             |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Note: Diagonal values in bold represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) while off-diagonal values represent the raw inter-construct correlations.

Table 4. Hypotheses

| No. | Hypotheses                                                                 | (β) | C.R. | P Value | Remark        |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|---------|---------------|
| H1  | Hedonic pleasure in the employees significantly impact the social acceptance.| 0.22| 3.618| ***     | Supported     |
| H2  | Hedonic pleasure significantly associated with cyber dating in the employees.| 0.73| 13.47| ***     | Supported     |
| H3  | Hedonic pleasure significantly affects the live-in relationship in the employees.| 0.17| 2.902| .004    | Supported     |

CMIN/df=3.126, GFI=0.945, AGFI=0.923, NFI=0.958, RFI=0.936, IFI=0.918, TLI=0.982, CFI=0.932, RMSEA=0.065

Figure 2. Model after mediation

![Diagram of mediation model with nodes for Cyber dating, Hedonic Pleasure, Social Acceptance, Live-in relationships, and arrows showing the relationships between them. The values 0.73, 0.12, 0.04, 0.17, and 0.52 are shown on the arrows.]
devote some time together to understand each other and implement the practices of live-in relationship before the marriage.

4.3 Model After Mediation

Hypotheses 4 and 5 ascertained that cyberdating and live-in relationship mediate the relationship between hedonic pleasure and social acceptance. Table 5 indicates the mediating effect of cyberdating and live-in relationship. The parameter estimates of relationship between hedonic pleasure and social acceptance became insignificant (β=0.04, p=0.614) thereby indicating full mediation. To confirm the mediation, Sobel test was performed (Mac Kinnon et al., 2012). The value of the Sobel test statistic with cyberdating as a mediator was 2.368 and was significant at p < 0.017. Sobel test was also performed with live-in relationship as a mediator and the value was 2.69 and was significant at p< 0.007. These results imply that cyberdating and live-in relationship depict a full mediating effect on the relationship between hedonic pleasure and social acceptance.

5. DISCUSSION

The research builds a theoretical model by examining the complex linkages that exist between cyber dating, hedonic pleasures, live-in relationships, and social acceptability in employees’ working in IT sector. Due to limited number of studies to date, this research makes an earnest attempt to understand the mediating roles of cyber-dating and live-in relationships thereby validating social exchange theory and hedonic theory. Results of the study indicated the significant positive impact of employees’ hedonic pleasures on social acceptance. This finding corroborates with the results of the previous studies (Turel et al., 2007; Bruwer and Rueger-Muck, 2019). Moreover, In India, there is a great deal of variety in the workforce; these millennials come from diverse geographical locations to work in IT Sector. As they stay away from family and live in a rented house, therefore, feel isolated. Consequently, IT sector employees frequently share their emotions and feeling with peers which in-turn leads to close propinquity, leading to happiness, and excitement of living together.

Findings of the study confirmed strong association between hedonic pleasure and cyberdating indicating that IT professionals really relish virtual meetings as it helps them to get close and share things. This finding is in sync with the previous studies (Mull and Lee, 2014; Stewart et al., 2017; Magsamen-Conrad et al., 2015). Cyberdating sites allow employees to find new friends which help them to reduce job stress and provide them comfort. Moving further, hedonic pleasure is also significantly associated with live-in relationships although its impact was least among other two variables thereby supporting the findings of the previous studies (Bao and Lyubomirsky, 2013; Goodwin et al., 2010; Rhoades et al, 2015). This substantiates that IT professionals spend time

| No. | Hypotheses | Direct effect β | Total effect β | Indirect effect β | P value | Remark |
|-----|-------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------|--------|
| H4  | Hedonic pleasure→cyberdating→ social acceptance | 0.73 | 0.04 | 0.09 | 0.614 | Full mediation |
| H5  | Hedonic pleasure→live-in relationship→ social acceptance. | 0.175 | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.614 | Full mediation |
together to acquaint themselves with the habits of each other, and adopt live-in relationships before marrying, prefer to live under one roof (Rhoades et al, 2015). Thus, they feel hedonic pleasure in their lives by indulging in live-in relationships.

Both cyberdating and live-in relationships showed full mediating effect between hedonic pleasure and social acceptance. Complete mediation specifies the significance of cyber-dating and live-in relationships in increasing social acceptance. These finding support the previous studies (Machimbarrena et al., 2018; Borrajo et al., 2015; Fiske et al., 2002). Both cyber-dating and live-in relationships are framed in response to attitudinal similarity resulting in sustained relationships.

5.1 Implications of the Study

This study bridges the gap by empirically validating the interrelationships among hedonic pleasure, cyber-dating, live-in relationships, and their impact on social acceptance. The results of the study therefore are of great importance to academia as well as industry. Recently, there has been an increase in usage of cyber-dating sites to get rid of seclusion due to job-stress and sadness. The study provides evidence that hedonic pleasure is significantly related to cyberdating, live-in relationships as well as social acceptance. The study also established the mediating role of cyber-dating and live-in relationship thereby extending the contribution of existing theories.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

The study discusses the significant association of hedonic pleasure, live-in relationship and social acceptance. The findings support the following theories namely social exchange theory (Blau, 1986); and hedonic theory (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Ha et al., 2007; Van der Heijden, 2004; Schacter et al., 2011). According to the findings, cyber dating, as an online medium, plays a vital role among millennial professionals in the information technology sector in exchanging regular interactions and expressing emotions for hedonic pleasure. The study extends the contribution of social exchange theory by confirming that higher hedonic pleasure leads to social acceptance in the context of cyberdating and live-in relationships. The individuals require a partner to share their feelings and wish to enjoy life by satisfying their physical and emotional needs. Hence, adopt cyberdating and live-in relationship to make the lifestyle glamorous and dynamic as in Western context (Tribune, 2021). The above discussion confirms that individuals tend to prefer live-in relationships to satisfy their hedonic motives which extend the contribution of hedonic theory.

5.3 Practical Implications

The findings of this study are valuable for employers and the general public in recognizing the living styles of millennials who come from diverse parts of India to work in the information technology sector. According to the findings, hedonic pleasure is significantly linked to cyber dating, live-in partnerships, and social acceptance. The study found the significant mediating effect of cyber-dating and live-in relationships between hedonic pleasure and social acceptance, the increased significance of such findings to sociologists, psychologist, and anthropologist aid in understanding how trends are perceived by Indian society on sensitive problems related to interpersonal relationships. The employers understand the millennials’ basic urges to be free of workplace stress; they may make improvements to their overarching human resources management policies program for the employees. Besides having a hectic work schedule, IT companies should provide sufficient recreation facilities such as yoga camps, short trips, festive celebrations, periodical work-from-home facilities to their employees which will help them in improving the interpersonal relationship and enhance the organizational productivity. Because a stress free rejuvenated mind in a young person contributes considerably to personality freshness, innovations and creativity at work.
6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

The data for this study was gathered using the purposive sampling technique from 269 respondents. The study’s modest sample size will need to be generalized using a large number of participants in future research study. The information collected from the respondents’ was personal and sensitive in nature. So, it becomes difficult to convince the respondents to fill the data. For such subjects, qualitative research approach can be better used to develop a rapport with respondents to extract the actual information. This will also help to record the expressions of the respondents which will further provide the information which they may be reluctant to share. Additionally, the study could have validated other important variables such as performance, career success, and well-being also to make it more comprehensive. To accomplish our research objective, the data was gathered from the IT professionals only. Future studies may consider other sectors in other developing as well as developed countries to have a broader perspective.

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# Appendix

## Table 6. Measurement Scale items

| Hedonic Pleasure (Snaith et al., 1995) | Strongly Disagree | Strongly Agree |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. I would enjoy my favourite television or radio programme. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 2. I would enjoy being with my family or close friends. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 3. I would find pleasure in my hobbies and pastimes. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 4. I would be able to enjoy my favourite meal. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 5. I would enjoy a warm bath or refreshing shower. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 6. I would find pleasure in the scent of flowers or the smell of a fresh sea breeze or freshly baked bread. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 7. I would enjoy seeing other people’s smiling faces | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 8. I would enjoy looking smart when I have made an effort with my appearance. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 9. I would enjoy reading a book, magazine or newspaper. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 10. I would enjoy a cup of tea or coffee or my favourite drink. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 11. I would find pleasure in small things, e.g. bright sunny. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 12. I would be able to enjoy a beautiful landscape or view. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 13. I would get pleasure from helping others. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |

| Employee Cyber dating (Clemen et al., 2015; Wang and Chang, 2010) | Strongly Disagree | Strongly Agree |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. To find a person/people to have sexual relations with. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 2. To find sexual partners. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 3. To find people to “hook up” with | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 4. To have a casual fling. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 5. To engage in a non-committed relationship. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 6. To be free from commitments. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 7. I would rather meet someone through a cyber-format than in person. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 8. To find a companion. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 9. I’m looking for a long-term relationship. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 10. To look for a potential boyfriend/girlfriend. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 11. Meeting people online and through mobile apps is convenient. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 12. It is a form of entertainment. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 13. It is fun to look at pictures and view profiles. | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 14. I would feel pleasure when I receive praise from other people | 1 2 3 4 5 | |

*continued on following page*
| Hedonic Pleasure (Snaith et al., 1995) | Strongly Disagree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| **Social Acceptance (Bryant and Sheldon, 2017; Wang and Chang, 2010)** |                   |                |
| 1. Online/mobile dating is a great way to meet potential partners/ “hook up.” | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 2. Mobile apps and online dating sites are socially acceptable ways to form relationships or “hook up.” | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 3. Mobile apps and online dating sites have a good chance of leading to a relationship or “hook up.” | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 4. Mobile dating apps and online dating sites are popular ways to meet people. | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| **Live-in relationship (Fower et al., 2016)** |                   |                |
| 1. I have more success in my important goals because of my partner’s help | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 2. We look for activities that help us to grow as a couple. | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 3. My partner has helped me to grow in ways that I could not have done on my own. | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 4. It is worth it to share my most personal thoughts with my partner. | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 5. When making important decisions, I think about whether it will be good for our relationship. | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 6. It is natural and easy for me to do things that keep our relationship strong. | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 7. Talking with my partner helps me to see things in new ways. | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 8. I make it a point to celebrate my partner’s successes. | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 9. I really work to improve our relationship | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 10. My partner shows interest in things that are important to me | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 11. We do things that are deeply meaningful to us as a couple | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
| 12. I make time when my partner needs to talk | 1 2 3 4 5 |                |
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