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“Do You Love Me?” Review

“Do You Love Me?” Written by Monica T. Whitty in summary describes the rise in cyber-crime, more specifically the romance scam, also known as the sweetheart's scam. The romance scam is a type of mass marketing fraud where a person creates a fake online dating profile and becomes emotionally close with another individual. They then remain in contact with the victim until this person feels comfortable enough with the scammer to give them money. This article goes into the specifics of who is more likely to fall victim in this situation, why this has become more prevalent as of recent, and what can be done to help people from falling for these attacks.

How does this article relate to the principles of social sciences? This article focuses heavily on how people's emotions can be manipulated for monetary gain and the consequences that it leaves on the victim not just financially but emotionally as well. This is mostly a question of human psychology dealing with how those involved think. It is explained that those who are more trusting and surprisingly less kind are more likely to fall victim, while those that are younger and less educated are less likely to fall for such a scam. These are just some of the twelve variables tested that showed which personality trait may or may not make someone more susceptible to this kind of fraud. Lastly each traits results are summarized, and a short reasoning is given based off the result. For example, unlike how it was hypothesized it was found that more highly educated people were also more vulnerable to becoming a romance scam victim. This was theorized to be because highly educated people are more likely to use online dating sites while also being more overconfident clouding their judgement.

Research was conducted by having over 12,060 participants, who lived in United Kingdom, be recruited from an online panel. As stated in the Article “Of these individuals, 11,780 participants remained in the final sample. In this final sample 10,723 participants were not victims, 728 were one-off victims, and 329 were repeat victims. Of this sample, 200 participants had been scammed by the romance scam.” These people were then asked to fill out a questionnaire, this questionnaire consisted of personality inventories and other items/questions

designed to measure “demographic descriptive data.” the questionnaire asked the participants questions such as their age, gender, education, understanding of cyber security, personal items “(e.g., impulsivity, locus of control, trust in others, trustworthiness, kindness, greed, addiction disposition),” and whether they have been victim to a mass marketing scam and if they have fallen victim to a romance scam. The hypotheses were tested concurrently using “standard forced entry binary logistic regression, with victimhood (scammed or not scammed) as the outcome variable.” Most of the hypotheses were supported; however, two of the meaningful results were found to be the opposite of the predicted outcome. Most noteworthy was that middle-aged women were most likely to be caught by this scheme. The original theory was that old folks, age range of 54 years and older, would be the most common target for the romance scam. However, results showed that people between the ages of 35 to 54 made up 63 percent of the victims, moreover, 60 percent of women were fallen victim to aa romance scam compared to the 40 percent of men.

The results found in this experiment can be traced back to the topics of human psychology and how it relates to cybersecurity, and cyber victimizations, which was addressed in class. The findings of this experiment and documentation are a great help in the ongoing effort to stop cyber criminals and to less those who fall victim to these scams. Having data that shows who exactly is most likely to be the target of the romance scam could help set up awareness campaigns or programs that can help further educated people about safe online practices.

Work Cited

Whitty, Monica T. “Do You Love Me? Psychological Characteristics of Romance Scam Victims.” *Do You Love Me? Psychological Characteristics of Romance Scam Victims*, Mary Ann Liebert, Inc, 2018, <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1089/cyber.2016.0729>.