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## Tinder Tales: Examining Variations in The Process and Outcomes of Dating

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Tinder Tales: Examining Variations in The Process and Outcomes of Dating App Interactions

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## Introduction

Finding a mate has always been a part of human nature. In the early ages of the human race, finding a mate meant finding someone with whom to reproduce. Later it meant ensuring stability and status for your family name. While romance eventually became the primary motivation for relationships, people seek relationships for a wide array of reasons in the modern world. With the introduction of the internet and smartphones, dating and marrying has a whole new level of complexity that we are still trying to understand.

The romantic love we know today was not always the root of marriage and relationships. Humans used to only pair up to procreate, then came arranged marriages for wealth and stability and now we live in an age where relationships can happen for many different reasons. In Europe, in the early nineteenth-century, and many countries before that, arranged marriages became the tradition to ensure financial success and status of a family. During this time period, families chose partners for their children based on economic need and desire for status in their community. The pool of potential partners was often limited to people within your class, culture, and town. Ackerman (1994) says that happiness in these partnerships was hoped for but was not part of the deal in being married. In many points in history, feeling a passionate attraction to another person could be considered a form of madness (Miller, 2012). Still in modern times, the idea in Western culture that a young person would move out from their parents' house and then date, sleep with, and pick their own partners is unimaginable to many cultures (Buunk et al., 2010). Even in North America, in 1967 76% of women and 35% of men claimed that they would get married to someone they did not love if they were a logically good partner in the relationship (Kephart, 1967). Love has only recently become a priority in relationships.

Romantic love came about in Western cultures the mid-nineteenth century and did not gain high importance in a relationship until much later. Whitty (2013) argues that romantic love did not begin to flourish as a socially accepted mean of courtship until the mid-nineteenth century when the formal wedding ceremony emerged, and individuals began picking and pursuing their spouses. The individuals who got to pick were typically males with the money, resources, and freedom to do so in a time where women still had a lot more restrictions. Researchers argued that for a while, this new idea of courtship and marriage was more about a competition for the ideal women in the community than it was about love (Cate & Lloyd, 1992). As we moved into the twentieth century, individuals in Western cultures gained more independence from their families, began going to college with the opposite sex, and building relationships away from home with those they fell in love with.

The modern idea of a relationship being between two people who met and fell in love and got married became the most acceptable type of relationship starting in the 1800's. This idea still stands in the majority of Western culture today. However, the idea of what a relationship is has been expanded greatly in modern times. In the U.S. as we entered the 1960's, the sexual revolution emerged, and marriage became less important in many relationships (Whitty, 2013). Since the 1960's people have commonly been dating, cohabiting, and marrying for many different reasons although in the U.S. romantic love is still the most cited reason for marriage. However, there is now less pressure that a relationship has to lead to marriage; some may just be for sex, some may end in a friendship.

In the last three decades, the internet has emerged and gained wide popularity, and has become a sizable part of dating culture. People have been meeting partners online from the time there were just text-based chat rooms on basic black and white webpages. In the late 1990's

websites progressed, and we began to see dating websites that facilitated this online meeting and allowed users to present images and profiles that could be screened or matched. Outside of dating sites people were still meeting on social networks like Myspace, Facebook or Twitter where you could learn a lot about someone and start a conversation without ever seeing them in person.

The internet introduced a vast array of potential partners that is much greater than the social circle people used to have to find a suitable match. You can now talk with people around world at any time of day and get an immediate response. The lack of face to face interaction on the internet allows for people to change their communication style. They can be either more open with personal information or use it to hide parts about them that they cannot hide as easily in person. The impacts of the internet on human relationships is being studied, but not yet something we fully understand.

Previous online dating sites like eHarmony or Match.com cost money, ask many questions to create a full profile, and take a significant amount of time between creating a profile and potentially meeting someone. These sites are geared towards individuals looking for long term relationships and advertise themselves as places to find a long-term match. In 2012, an app was released that changed the concept of online dating in ways researchers are just beginning to study. This app, Tinder, along with many other location-based mobile dating applications have become widely popular in dating culture and there is much we can ask about how that will change romantic relationships.

Dating apps are mobile phone applications you can download and use to instantly find potential partners around you to start talking to. Dating apps have become widely popular in the last eight years and have changed the way many young people meet potential partners. In 2016,

nearly 22% of young adults ages 18 to 24 reported using mobile dating apps (Smith & Anderson, 2016). These apps have the appeal of being free and quick to set up. Potential partner profiles are easy to screen, and the apps are proximity based to your location which makes it possible to meet someone within minutes if desired. Tinder allows users to set up a profile with just a few photos and short biography (around 500 characters) and connects through a user's Facebook to validate they are a real person and not a bot. Users are quickly presented with nearby individuals which they can "swipe" through, with a right swipe indicating they are interested and a left swipe to pass on their profile.

With the aspect of convenience and the modern expansion of what a relationship can be, research has found that these apps are being used for much more than meeting people to date. In one study, Timmermans and De Caluwé (2017a), were some of the first researchers to ask the question, "why do people use these mobile dating apps?" Through their studies they developed the Tinder Motives Scale which included thirteen motives; seeking social approval, looking for relationships, seeking sexual experience, improving flirting/social skills, preparing for travelling, getting over previous relationships, gaining belongingness, responding to peer pressure, meeting people with the same sexual orientation, passing time, distracting oneself from work or study, and fulfilling curiosity (Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017a). Kingwell (2017) however, argues that these dating apps are simply fillers that are useful when a user is bored to fill a void in their life, whether it is sex, a relationship, a friendship or something else. Kingwell proposes that it is possible that in reality people just get addicted to the motion of swiping through profiles and simulating "choosing" partners when they cannot be doing so in real life. The majority of existing literature on Tinder focuses on why people use these apps, but not on what they get out of it and how they interact with others on the app.

Since dating websites have been around longer than these apps, more research exists on them that will have to be modified and applied to these apps. Knowing that, it is important to note that there are key differences in the function and use of these apps and dating websites. In modern society people commonly assume that Tinder is an app for “hook-ups” due to the stereotypes of the app portrayed through media (Rense, 2018). Dating websites on the other hand tend to advertise themselves as places to meet a long-term partner. As we are learning from current research, Tinder users are on the app for more than your traditional relationship, and that could potentially change a lot about how they interact with the app and their matches.

It is important to ask if there is a difference in the personalities and motivations of those who use online resources to find relationships versus those who pursue traditional in-person dating. Are they shy? Are they awkward? Do they have low self-esteem? To a person foreign to the concept of online dating, there are many questions about why people choose to go through the internet to find a partner. A study published by Gatter and Hodkinson in 2016 set out to ask, are there differences between the users of dating apps, online dating websites, and those who meet partners offline in terms of motivations, sociability, self-esteem, and sexual permissiveness? Gatter and Hodkinson suggest that research has widely accepted that online population increasingly mimics the offline population as phones and computers become more of our daily lives. As the internet and technology has merged into society and everyday life, it has in turn become a part of our dating lives as well.

Gatter and Hodkinson (2016), found that dating apps are typically used by those in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties, and almost not at all by adults in their mid-forties and over. Online dating websites were typically used by adults in their mid-twenties to mid-forties. They do note that the age difference between groups also accounted for their results in differences between

sexual permissiveness scores, where younger people ranked higher in sexual permissiveness. So, although it appears more Tinder users are sexually permissive, it seems to just be that more young people are sexually permissive, and more young people use Tinder. They also found that men on average were more likely than women to use both dating apps and dating websites.

It is interesting to note that no differences were found in sociability in those who use online dating platforms and those who do not, and self-esteem did not correlate with online dating usage either. Gatter and Hodkinson concluded that users of dating apps and online dating websites do not differ from the general population. This is important in showing that online platforms have become a normal and regular way of meeting potential partners, and although we do not fully understand these online relationships, the people looking for them are not clearly different from people finding offline relationships.

### **Existing Theories of Romantic Relationship Formation**

There are a few key theories of romantic relationships that can be used to start to understand online relationship formation. These theories are not yet tailored to online romantic relationships or dating app interaction but do provide a basis of human relationship formation that may relate to or cause more questions to arise as to what happens when people start to date online.

**Social Evolutionary Theory.** The first is *social evolutionary theory* which explains that humans have evolved to value certain traits in a partner that can aid in support and survival of future children (Buss, 1989). This theory provided the concept that women look for partners that can provide for offspring and thus value high socioeconomic status, and men look for women who are reproductively valuable and thus value physical attraction and youth more. When it comes to online relationships this appears to lead users to use self-selective presentation where



they can manipulate the likelihood of people choosing their profile by selectively displaying positive traits or information on their profile (Wotipka & High, 2016). This impression construction has to maintain enough aspects of reality that ensure how the person presents themselves online will be close enough to the in-person version of themselves so that a partner does not feel deceived (Toma & Hancock, 2010).

**Social Penetration Theory.** The next theory is *social penetration theory*, which argues that people disclose deeper personal information as relationships progress and gradually more trust evolves as a couple mutually shares personal information (Altman & Taylor, 1973). There is not a lot of information on how communication plays out in online relationships, but we can use this concept to study patterns of online disclosure. Joinson (2001) found that when individuals are on online platforms, they are more likely to self-disclose a lot more deep and personal information a lot quicker than they would in person. This could apply to dating app conversations as well since there is not as much of a fear of having to disclose something in person which is a lot riskier than an online platform you can walk away from or delete at any time.

This pattern of quicker disclosure may not always be a positive. Suler (2004) explains a phenomenon called the disinhibition effect where individuals both are more likely to open up in ways they would not in person, but also are more likely to act in ways they normally would not. This can lead to people feeling empowered, in control, and confident, but can also occasionally lead to people becoming harsher critics, acting angrier, and saying hurtful things that they would not with the face to face feedback and social expectations of in-person interactions.

**Social Exchange Theory.** *Social exchange theory* says that people look at relationships in regard to rewards and costs, in a way where people try to maximize rewards and minimize

costs (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). A key part of this theory is that it is important to consider one's previous expectations from prior relationships and observations of other's relationships to predict how satisfied one will actually be. Therefore, to be satisfied in a relationship, the outcomes must match or exceed a person's expectations. Whitty (2008) argues that exchange theory could explain why people often go into online dating profiles with a "shopping list" type mindset to find people who fulfill as many positive qualities as possible with hopes that their relationship will be more rewarding in the end. Another key part of this theory is that the outcomes in the current relationship must also outweigh the possible outcomes of alternatives that are available to us. With an app like Tinder, there are hundreds of available options in the palm of your hand, so it is hard to not constantly wonder and compare what you have, to what you could have.

**Matching and Reciprocity.** Matching presents the idea that we are likely to end up in a relationship with someone who is equally attractive to us (Hitsch, Hortacsu, & Ariely, 2010). Initial attraction is key in forming a relationship and we tend to pair off in the long run on levels of equal attraction unless one partner presents an outweighing factor like a lot of money that can throw off the balance (Whitty, 2008). Reciprocity is the concept that we like those who like us back. The idea is proposed that in person, the likelihood we will approach and try to start a relationship with someone comes down to a potential partner's desirability being a product of their physical attractiveness times the probability of them liking you back (Shanteau & Nagy, 1979). Timmermans and DeCaluwé (2017b), argue that Tinder creates a sort of emotionally safe place for individuals who fear being judged or evaluated negatively. This makes sense since a user is not risking much by uploading a profile. A user will never know if someone does not swipe on their profile and they are only notified when someone they have swiped right on, also swipes right on them so it takes away a layer of the fear of rejection. Since these apps require

mutual swiping, the initial idea of “liking each other back” is kind of taken care of. However, it is unclear how important physical matching is on these apps since people use them for many reasons, not just to find a long-term mate.

### **Present Study**

With so little current research on dating app usage itself, we have to use previous theories to try and understand these online interactions the best we can. These dating apps give you such minimal information, that what you take away from a profile may be similar to having a single first impression of a person in the real world. People are swiping on these apps for a variety of reasons, with different intentions and expectations, and are deciding to swipe based on such minimal knowledge of a person. Unlike dating websites, people use these apps for much more than finding a relationship and their interactions may vary immensely depending on many different factors. Thus, the patterns of communication are truly key to beginning to understand how people develop different types of relationships on these apps, and how it differs from patterns of communication in meeting people in everyday life. This study sets out to explore the journey of a dating app user from motivation to outcome of a dating app interaction and discover which patterns of communication can lead to which outcomes.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

One hundred and sixty-eight undergraduate psychology students at Western Washington University (WWU) participated in this study in exchange for course credit. They were recruited through Sona, the online subject pool used by the Department of Psychology at WWU. The participants sampled represented introductory psychology students in age ( $M= 19.7$  years). They

were primarily female (66.7%), Caucasian (74.4%), and identified as straight or heterosexual (70%). Of the sample, 25% used dating apps weekly and 21.4% used dating apps daily.

## **Procedure**

Participants completed the experiment individually, on their own time online through Qualtrics surveying software and were granted credit upon completion of the survey. This was an exploratory study, and thus participants first answered some demographic questions, indicated how often they used dating apps, and which dating apps they used most. Participants then recalled a memorable experience from these dating apps and wrote a paragraph describing the experience from start to finish. Participants then completed the Tinder Motives Scale (TMS; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017a) to describe their motivations for using the app at the time of that memorable interaction. Participants were then asked to complete a 33-item measure ranking statements that described the characteristics of types of communication used, what they talked about, and their feelings towards the other person. If the participants met online, they were asked to briefly write about their first in-person meeting, and then asked to complete a similar measure, with 25 items that described the characteristics of their in-person communication, emotions, and interactions. Finally, participants were asked to label the outcome of their interaction in one of five categories. They were also asked a few questions regarding satisfaction and how the interaction lined up with their expectations.

## **Measures**

The Tinder Motive Scale (TMS; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017a) is a thirteen-item scale that has emerged from research on the most common reasons why people use dating apps such as Tinder. These thirteen items are a variety of reasons that researchers have observed such as, social approval, curiosity, socializing, seeking relationship, and traveling. Participants were

asked to select which items on the TMS applied to their reasons for using the app at the time of the memorable experience they described. Scores were reduced from the TMS using cluster analysis. From the original thirteen items, four clusters of motivation emerged:

curiosity/boredom, seeking sex, seeking friendship and seeking relationship. These motivations often occurred simultaneously as participants could choose more than one motivation.

Because there was no current applicable scale, a 33-item measure of online communication was developed for the present study. Participants responded on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (very true) in regard to their online communication during this memorable interaction. These statements covered a broad variety of feelings, actions, and attitudes towards the person they were communicating with and the online interaction as a whole. Since this was an exploratory study, we ended up with a lot of data and information about each participant regarding their communication. Principle axis factoring with an oblimin rotation was used to narrow down the online, and in-person communication scales into smaller factor subgroups. Items that cross loaded on more than one factor were removed from our analyses moving forward.

With factor analysis, the measure of online communication ended up dropping from thirty-three to twenty-one items in total. This included ten items regarding romantic interest (i.e. We often had deep conversations, I felt excited when I got a message from this person  $\alpha = .94$ ), two items regarding sexual communication (i.e. We often exchanged sexually explicit photos, We often exchanged verbal sexts  $\alpha = .80$ ), three items regarding negative emotions (i.e. I often felt upset or angry with this person, I often felt scared or hesitant when talking to this person  $\alpha = .62$ ), two items regarding drug and alcohol usage (i.e. I was often under the influence of drugs or alcohol when I communicated with this person, This person was often under the influence of

drugs or alcohol when they communicated with me  $\alpha = .82$ ), two items regarding seeking other options (i.e. I was often looking for other options during the time I was communicating with this person, I was often talking to multiple people while communicating with this person  $\alpha = .74$ ), and two items regarding clear intentions (i.e. This person's intentions were clear to me while we were communicating, this person was very clear about my intentions while we were communicating  $\alpha = .79$ ).

If their interaction included meeting the person face to face, they were then asked to rank twenty-five statements about online communication on the same scale, covering the same types of topics. With factor analysis, the measure of in-person communication ended up dropping from twenty-five to sixteen items in total. This included five items regarding romantic interest (i.e. I felt a lot of romantic chemistry when hanging out with this person, We talked a lot about shared interests when we hung out  $\alpha = .88$ ), two items regarding clear intentions (i.e. I was very aware of this person's intentions while we were hanging out, My partner was very aware of my intentions while we were hanging out  $\alpha = .81$ ), four items regarding seeking other options (i.e. I dated or interacted with other partners during the time I was meeting up with this person, I think my partner was looking for other options during the time we were meeting up  $\alpha = .87$ ), two items regarding drug and alcohol usage (i.e. I was often under the influence of drugs or alcohol when hanging out with this person, We often did drugs or drank while hanging out together  $\alpha = .88$ ), and three items of location and sex that factored together and showed that people hanging out at home are having sex more than those typically going out in public (i.e. Most of our time together was spent at one of our houses, We had sex most of the times we met in person  $\alpha = .62$ ).

## Results

When asked about motivations, it was found that most of our users were on the app because they were curious (75.0%) or bored (70.8%). However, 50.6% were looking for a relationship, 29.8% for a friendship and 29.2% for sex. This shows that people use these apps for a wide variety of reasons and often do not have a clear driving goal or motivation when downloading the app. In general, a plurality of our subjects categorized their outcome as a dead end (33.3%). This could explain why many users stated being on the app daily or weekly as they are not having more long-term experiences. However, 21.4% categorized their outcome as a friendship, 20.2 % as casual dating, 18.5% as a relationship, and 6.5% as a hookup. It is important to clarify the low number for a hookup does not mean more people did not get sex out of their interaction, it could have led to what they would categorize as a relationship, casual dating, or friendship as well. It is important to note that participants were reporting the outcomes for a specific memorable event. That means that these outcomes are not indicative of the typical dating app experience, but rather the memorable ones.

With no direct hypothesis, we wanted to use the data at hand to explore patterns that might exist in dating app interactions from motivation to outcome and everything in between. In order to do this, we ran a correlational path analysis between each stage of the interaction. We used the four motivation types to predict each of the six online communication variables. For pairs that met in person, we used the online communication variables to predict each of the five in-person communication variables. We used the in-person communication variables to predict the five outcome variables. We then searched for patterns of sizable and statistically significant correlations. Although most people were motivated by curiosity and boredom, those two motivations alone did not lead to any clear correlational pathways of communication or

outcomes. Rather, curiosity and boredom motivations were present in most of the interactions. We identified two major correlational pathways that did show clear patterns; that of those seeking friendships and relationships, and a path for those seeking sex. Interestingly, those looking for friendships or relationships had very similar pathways of communication.

Figure one displays the correlational path analysis for those who stated seeking a friendship or seeking a relationship as one of their motivations. Those using the app to find a friendship or relationship were more likely to engage in and experience romantic connection type communication online (things like discussing shared interests, feeling strong chemistry, disclosing personal information), this in turn positively correlated with relationship type interactions and clear intentions in person. This online romantic connection negatively correlated with seeing multiple people in person, which meant that often once there was an online connection, people tried dating that one person and put other options on hold. For those who formed a romantic connection online but did not meet in person, the interaction was still likely to be categorized as a friendship without the need to meet first. Once the in-person meeting took place for those who took that route, there were correlations from that in-person relationship type interaction to casual dating and relationships. We can also see that those with clear intentions less often got a dead-end situation with no real outcome. Finally, we can see that those who acted more romantically in person were less likely to end in a dead end or being just friends.

Figure two displays the correlational path analysis for those who said that sex was one of their motivations in using dating apps. The motivation of sex lead to three categories within online communication. These users tended to be using drugs or alcohol while on the app, be clear about their intentions, and engage in more sexual communication. It appears that these participants, if they met in person, kept clear intentions and continued using drugs or alcohol in



the in-person interaction. It also appears that these people were often looking for multiple options or seeking other options while interacting with this partner, and they were more likely to act in sexual ways when they met up. If their intentions were clear in person, they were less likely to categorize the outcome as a dead end, which means they more often got something out of the interaction. Those using drugs and alcohol in person were more likely to end in a hookup, and those seeing multiple people were less likely to find a relationship.

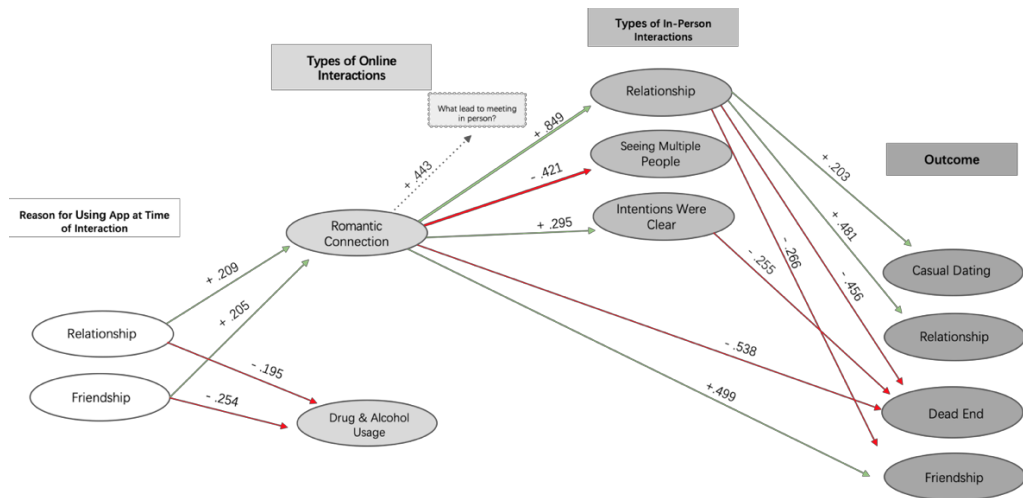


Figure 1. The Friendship/Relationship Motivation Path that emerged from a correlational path analysis examining patterns of communication between motivation and outcome of a dating app interaction.

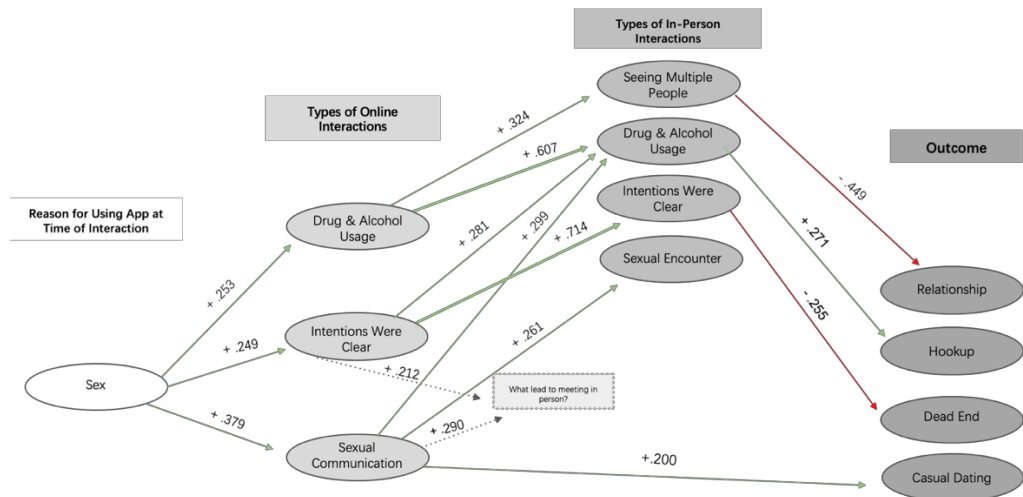


Figure 2. The Sexual Motivation Path that emerged from a correlational path analysis examining patterns of communication between motivation and outcome of a dating app interaction.

## Discussion

Although new theories may need to be created to describe online relationships, and the existing theories of romantic relationships do not completely apply to these dating app interactions, there are some applicable parts of existing theory that can be applied to what we found. In regard to *Social Penetration Theory*, those who wanted relationships and friendships did tend to engage in more intimate self-disclosure, which fits the theory's idea that people open up more as they become more intimate and vice versa (Altman & Taylor, 1973). *Social Exchange Theory* is clearly applicable when it comes to dating apps in the means that there are endless alternatives to compare one's relationship to (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Most of our subjects stated that they ended with a dead-end outcome and the interaction did not go anywhere. This could relate to exchange theory in that there are endless alternatives, so every interaction is being compared to other dating app interactions, and when one thing goes wrong it is easy to give up and move on to a new interaction, thus stability in these relationships could be weakened. It is also really hard to tell what one will get out of an interaction through a simple profile and thus, this theory may not apply until more of a relationship emerges between users.

Our study used younger college students as subjects and thus, *Social Evolutionary Theory* may not be as applicable (Buss, 1989). Only half of our users were looking for a relationship, and with that many 19-year-olds may not be looking for their life-long partner, and the long-term implications of mating may not matter as much to this demographic. The theories of *Matching and Reciprocity* also may not be as relevant with our demographic as matching is observed in long-term partners, and many of our subjects may not be looking for something long-term (Hitsch et al., 2010). However, the idea of wanting to be liked back and accepted by a potential

mate is relevant and overcome by dating apps initially in the required matching function where both people have to express interest in each other with a “swipe” before they can start talking.

As our results showed, most of our participants did not get anything out of their memorable interaction. This may have to do with the fact that so many people use these apps because they are curious and bored and aren't really looking for an interaction to go anywhere. Dating apps are a good place for people to find others to talk to, and many of our users never had met anyone in person from these apps. Although they are called “dating” apps, these findings may imply that dating is not a major reason people download and use them. They seem to be above all, a place to cure one's boredom and fulfill their curiosity. And more often than some may expect, people are connecting and forming friendships through their interactions on these apps. Relationships, casual dating, and hookups only made up 45% of our user's outcomes, so it appears there is a lot more to these apps and the interactions had on them than one might expect.

### **Limitations**

This study was subject to a few limitations. First and foremost, this was an exploratory study due to the lack of existing research on the full dating app experience. This means we did not go into this research with a hypothesis, and some patterns may have been looked over or missed. There is a lot of data at hand that could tell us more than what we chose to extract, but it was important to not mine the data beyond what was necessary for an exploratory overview.

Each participant was only asked to report a memorable experience. This was done to get the most recall of information from one single experience, however it does mean this information may not be representative of the average dating app experience. It is possible that these patterns are more applicable to extreme circumstances, but with many interactions happening for each user, the memorable ones may be what are important to study.

We also asked for retrospective reporting of the interaction. Long-term memory is known to be malleable and it is likely that what subjects reported is not the exact reality of what happened in the interaction (Talamini & Gorree, 2012). The subject could have an altered view on the interaction based on emotional reaction to the outcome, other similar experiences they have had since that interaction, and the alteration that happens each time they access that interaction from their long-term memory.

Finally, this is all correlational data, and that means that our pathways cannot show any clear causation within certain patterns of communication and the outcomes user's experienced. These can show patterns of what often happens, but not what always happens, and each experience will be different regardless of motivation or communication.

### **Future Research**

Many questions have emerged from these findings, the first one being in regard to the demographic that was surveyed. How might these results be different in an older population? The motivations of the users may elicit different patterns of communication, specifically in that older users may be thinking more long term and thus the original theories of romantic relationships may become more important in their interactions. Another question might be about the messages that users portray in their profile and how those signals impact their interactions. User's may be sending messages they are not intending that could be hurting or helping without their realizations. There is a lot of research on self-presentation in face to face interactions, but there is still a lot more to be discovered about impression management online, and especially on dating apps where pictures and information are minimal (Wotipka & Andrew, 2016).

A crucial point that stood out in our data was the correlation between drug and alcohol usage and hookups that was found on our Sexual Motivation Pathway. Intoxication and sex are

not a good mix, especially when often these people do not know each other well, and there can be a lot of gray area. Researchers are beginning to look into one of the dark sides of dating apps, which happens to be people meeting up with complete strangers often in private places. Gillett (2018) argues that this type of sexual abuse is becoming normalized as often the victim feels at fault for agreeing to meet with a stranger, or ashamed of the taboo nature of admitting you met the person on a dating app. Sexual violence is a large problem in our society, and unfortunately dating apps provide another platform for predators to easily find and manipulate victims. These implications could be looked into further along with more public information about safety on these apps.

There are also some questions that arise about the effects these dating apps are having on offline relationships. First of all, how does the satisfaction and success of these relationships that form online compare to those which start offline? The idea that there are so many alternatives could be impacting people's willingness to stick through hard times in relationships. It is also much easier to find other options and cheat on a partner with these apps so easily accessible with no immediate costs. It is possible that getting to talk to people online ahead of time and get to know them before jumping into a relationship could also enhance relationship satisfaction. We can also ask, is the increase of dating app usage having an impact on those trying to find offline relationships? Is it now more awkward to initiate an offline relationship when people are so used to finding relationships online? If we have not gotten there yet, it could be a direction we are heading. There is a lot to be researched moving forward.

## **Conclusion**

Dating apps are still growing and evolving in our lives, and as society becomes more reliant on technology, it will not be surprising if people become more reliant on them for finding

love of all sorts. They have grown immensely in the seven years they have existed, and the growth does not seem to be slowing down. Relationship psychologists will need to take these apps into account in further research and truly start to understand how these apps are affecting individuals and relationships. These apps could be a serious change in how we form romantic relationships and may implicate serious changes are needed in the theories we think we know about relationship formation in this day and age.

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