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What might have been?

How the economic logic of the choice overload hypothesis in the realms of mobile dating negatively influences the evaluation of our romantic relationships

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Contents

Abstract	6
Introduction	7
Theory and Literature	10
Tinder.....	10
Motivations.....	11
Dystopia mobile dating.....	13
Choice overload hypothesis.....	16
Literature review.....	18
Method	21
Procedure and participants.....	21
Measures	21
Results	27
Conclusion.....	33
References	36
List of tables	41
Annex	42
Abstract in German.....	42
Table 4: Multiple linear regression for relationship commitment.....	43
Table 5: Multiple linear regression for relationship investment.....	44
Questionnaire.....	45

Abstract

Mobile dating offers its users access to a higher number of potential mates compared to offline dating. However, the choice overload hypothesis argues that too many options negatively influence the level of satisfaction with a made choice. A high number of discarded options leaves the subject with post-decisional regret due to counterfactual thinking and resonating on *what might have been?* Moreover, sociological literature discusses mobile dating as the downfall of committed romantic relationships. Particularly, the usage of the dating app *Tinder* reduces the willingness to engage and the level of commitment and investment in a relationship. A convenience sample of 457 fairly young and well-educated participants were interviewed by means of an online survey. This study sheds light into contradicting findings of experimental research on this topic. The results indicate that active *Tinder* users are less willing to engage in a romantic relationship compared to former users or subjects that have never used *Tinder*. However, no direct or indirect effects via counterfactual thinking of *Tinder* usage on relationship satisfaction, commitment and investment could be detected. Future research should address this topic with the help of field experiments to investigate possible positive and negative influencing factors of mobile dating on relationships.

Keywords: mobile dating, Tinder, choice overload hypothesis, media effects, relationship satisfaction, willingness, commitment and investment, online survey.

Introduction

The quality of interpersonal life and spending time socializing with others play a central role in the emotional and mental well-being. Happiness is linked to good social relationships to friends, family or romantic partners. Very happy people are spending less time alone but more time in company than others (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Above all, a long-lasting committed romantic relationship is discussed to offer meaning and fulfilment to people and thus enhances individual well-being (Day, Kay, Holmes, & Napier, 2011). Social networking sites (SNS) such as mobile dating apps have the main aim to bring people together. Combining these two arguments, we can theorize about an apparent positive function for users of mobile dating apps such as *Tinder*. However, online dating, in general, has the potential for advantages and disadvantages for its users compared to offline dating (Finkel, Eastwick, Karney, Reis, & Sprecher, 2012).

Using mobile dating applications on smartphones is different from conventional offline dating. These differences can be exemplified by three main characteristics, namely access, communication and matching. Firstly, online dating sites enable users to access and evaluate a larger number of potential mates than in the offline world (access). Secondly, the first contact via computer-mediated communication (CMC) is different from a face-to-face encounter. And lastly, matching refers to the service of pre-selection based on different criteria in order to presumably improve compatibility (Finkel et al., 2012).

One of the numerous advantages (Finkel et al., 2012) of online dating is that users are independent of time and space and the usage of *Tinder* contributes to a social mixing due to it heterogeneous users (Aretz, 2015). The receiving of positive feedback such as a *like*, *match* or an inquiry from another person via online dating apps can contribute to a positive validation of oneself (Strubel & Petrie, 2017). Additionally, the partial anonymity and psychological distance

that online dating offers (Aretz, 2015), fosters establishing social contacts also for individuals with a higher degree of dating anxiety or lower level of rejection sensitivity (Blackhart, Fitzpatrick, & Williamson, 2014; Sumter & Vandebosch, 2018). Furthermore, the big number of potential mates superiors the chances of contact in the offline world (Finkel et al., 2012).

Besides all these positive functions, sociologists theorize a societal change detected in romantic relationships whereat mobile dating apps are symptomatic for its characteristics of negative connotation. The downfall of committed, long-lasting relationships and romantic ideals are argued to be originated by an ongoing process of individualisation and proliferation of technology that manifest in online dating (Bauman, 2003). A capitalistic logic has been applied to the courtship. Relationships are turned into comparable objects of which a cost-benefit analysis can be executed (Illouz, 2007). *Tinder* reinforces this so-called rational approach of *relationshopping* (Heino, Ellison, & Gibbs, 2010) by its inherent features and mechanisms that facilitate to objectify and quantify others. Therefore, *Tinder* usage is argued to lower the willingness to engage in, to reduce the level of satisfaction with and commitment and investment for a romantic relationship (Aretz, 2015; D'Angelo & Toma, 2017; Finkel et al., 2012; Scheibehenne, Greifeneder, & Todd, 2010). This process can, in addition to the above-mentioned sociological perspectives on romantic relationships, be well explained by the choice overload hypothesis. This effect demonstrates how a selection-process involving a high amount of options leads to a lower level of choice satisfaction (see Scheibehenne et al., 2010, for a review).

These assumptions had been tested by means of analyses and diagnoses of society as well as a limited number of interviews (e.g. Dröge & Voirol, 2011; Heino et al., 2010; Hobbs, Owen, & Gerber, 2017). The choice overload hypothesis in particular within the realms of online dating has been empirically tested several times with the help of an experimental design (D'Angelo & Toma, 2017; Langhorst, 2018; Lenton, Fasolo, & Todd, 2008; Lenton & Stewart, 2008;

Portokalidou, 2018). However, the experimental studies lack realism and external validity.

Therefore, this study will be the first to prove the assumed negative impact of mobile dating on the evaluation of a romantic relationship with field data of a cross-sectional online survey to validate existing findings in real-world settings.

By doing that, this study emphasizes on Austrian users of mobile dating applications while zooming in on the very popular app *Tinder*. Characteristics and motives of users might differ respectively the platform, e.g. different apps or webpages, they preferably use. This fact will be partly neglected for theory building and literature review, but not for the empirical data collection.

Theory and Literature

Tinder

Tinder is a very popular location-based dating application for smartphones which was inaugurated in the year 2012 (March, Grieve, Marrington, & Jonason, 2017; Sevi, 2018). The main group of users are depending on the study teenagers, emerging adults or young adults (Aretz, 2015; Mander, 2015). Online dating applications can be classified as a social networking site (SNS) which aims to facilitate the search for mates (Strubel & Petrie, 2017).

Tinder offers its users the possibility to create a profile and view other profiles including mostly pictures, age, distance to the current location and certain professional and personal information voluntarily provided by the individual counterpart. Users can indicate their interest in other users by swiping right and their dislike by swiping left while viewing profiles. If two users confirmed their mutual liking by swiping right, a so-called *match* occurs. Only then, the application allows the initiation of a CM conversation (Aretz, 2015; Sevi, 2018).

Tinder is characterized by its simple and fast registration and initiation process and an intuitive user experience through the minimalistic user interface. Furthermore, the process of swiping has an inherent playful character which transports a perception of inoffensive user actions. For example, users do not immediately know how others have responded to their own profile and vice versa. Therefore, the quality of a swipe stays anonymous until a mutual declaration of only positive interest has been realized (Aretz, 2015). An experience of direct rejection is therefore avoided. This structure of allowing only positive feedback leaves the user with the possibility of justifying the experience of not receiving a so-called *match*. The user could resonate that the person in question might not have seen his or her own profile yet.

In a nutshell, *Tinder* is characterized by its cost-free and uncomplicated use independent from the location of the user and thus one of the most popular mobile dating applications.

However, its mechanisms allow to imply a marketplace metaphor of *relationshopping* that creates a potential for the objectification of potential mates (Heino et al., 2010). It is argued that mobile dating apps address users not only as romantic subjects but also as economic actors who aim for an efficient search for the perfect match. The presentation of users on dating apps features analogies of online shopping sites. Users swipe through profiles and evaluate others by physics, provided characteristics and indicated personal information and rationally prove the compatibility of a prospective mate (Dröge & Voirol, 2011).

Motivations

Very different motivations and aspired or received gratifications lead to the use of online dating sites such as *Tinder*. Sumter, Vandenbosch, & Ligtenberg (2017) identified three goal clusters of six different motivations for *Tinder* usage. The relational goal containing the motivation for a long-lasting relationship or informal sexual encounters; the intrapersonal goal incorporates the gratifications of communication or feeling better through self-worth validation and less alone; and the entertainment goal reflects the excitement while usage or because it is new and trendy to use mobile dating applications.

Similar to these findings, Aretz (2015) identified six clusters, whereas the entertainment and pastime motive was reported highest. The motivation for communication and exchange is next, followed by self-affirmation through matches, chats, dates, sex and/or relationship. In a lower level, participants reported using *Tinder* for the objection of having control over the process of getting in touch with somebody through e.g. written CMC, the search of intimacy and the possibility for self-presentation.

Although it seems that *Tinder* serves primarily as a dating tool with the main purpose of encountering mates and arranging dates, the motivations such as entertainment and

communication indicate that dating is not a necessary function for all users. In line with this, studies indicate that depending on the region a big amount (e. g. 30 % in the US/UK; 42 % of a large convenience sample in Germany) of active *Tinder* users reported to be married or in a relationship (Aretz, 2015; Mander, 2015). Literature provides information that the usage during a relationship increases the potential for cheating behaviour (Hobbs et al., 2017). However, *Tinder* users who find themselves in an ongoing relationship use the applications mostly for experiencing self-affirmation (Aretz, 2015).

In general, *Tinder* is mostly used for the motive of flirting or encountering a mate. However, only a small portion (16 %) of users achieved to conclude a romantic relationship with somebody on *Tinder* (Aretz, 2015). On the contrary, *Tinder* appears to be successful in achieving flirt experiences or sexual encounters. Although casual sex is a definitive motive for the usage (Sevi, 2018; Sevi, Aral, & Eskenazi, 2018; Sumter & Vandenberg, 2018), it also appears to happen without the direct motive and intention for it (Aretz, 2015). In this context, the literature indicates that casual sex, so-called hook-ups, does not per se constitute something negative. Informal sexual practices can also have positive effects on the personal well-being (Vrangalova, 2015). However, informal sexual encounters do have an inherent potential for health risks such as engaging in unprotected sex (Blais & Weber, 2006; Sevi, 2018).

Tinder serves a variety of motivations and gratifications of its users ranging from an entertaining pastime to self-worth validation or finding a mate for a romantic relationship. Primary intentions for using mobile dating apps do not always become successful. On the contrary, unintended output such as casual sex or cheating behaviour is generated through its use.

Dystopia mobile dating

Classic sociological literature has consistently contrasted romantic relationships to market relations. Love used to be idealized as a connection between partners purely based on emotional and sexual appeal. Romantic relationships are connections of interdependent humans who expect self-disclosure and reciprocity from the other. In opposition to the private sphere of love, stands the calculating subject in a competitive economic marketplace, characterized by egoism, self-interest and the maximizing of one's individual benefit. Even though this strict separation has never been completely established in the past, the sociologists of contemporary society draw a different picture. They detect an ongoing cultural transformation of intimacy, sex and romantic relationships. The borderline between the private sphere of romantic relationships and the public sphere of economics is blurring and the economic logic spreads into the emotional world (Dröge & Voirol, 2011).

Illouz (2007), for instance, argues that due to cultural forces based on the rise of psychology in the past century, emotional life is adapting economic approaches of rationalization. This *emotional capitalism* emphasizes the adaption of an economic logic when it comes to interpersonal relations and the implementation of exchange processes in the emotional life. In particular, the popularization of the therapeutic discourse made it common for people to deal with emotions within a neutral process of questioning and evaluation. Emotions are pinned down by naming and objectifying them. Therefore, the intimate life and its emotions are objectified and are now apt for measuring, calculating and evaluation. Relations are turning into comparable objects of which a cost-benefit analysis can be executed. Incorporating this rationality into the emotional life brings aspects such as rational selection, calculated and effective use of means into the process of establishing relations and leads to an intellectualization of the everyday life (Illouz, 2007). In this context, terms such as *relationshopping* (Heino et al., 2010) have been

conceptualized and align online dating practices to processes of the capitalistic marketplace. This metaphor of a virtual dating supermarket suggests a range of products which can be compared (Liegl & Stempfhuber, 2014). In this spirit, the usage of *Tinder* is comparable to window shopping where the users are looking for the best buy.

Baumann (2003) criticised online dating for its potential to turn the search for a romantic partner into a commodified game with replaceable subjects. It is portrayed symptomatic for the downfall of solidity and security inherent in committed, monogamous relationships and romantic ideals of a past golden age. This process is fuelled by a societal change of individualisation and the proliferation of technology which offers a high number of easy to establish but disposable romantic relationships (Bauman, 2003). In addition, changes starting in the late 60s have made it easier to override former restrictive values and expectations of society concerning intimate relationships. Unmarried, homosexual couples as well as patchwork families, polyamory or sexual relationships are increasingly prevalent and accepted by societal norms (Dröge & Voirol, 2011).

This increased autonomy, howsoever, implies a loss of commitment within relationships, whereat mobile dating apps seem to accelerate these assumptions through their introduced mechanisms that facilitate the objectification of others. This objectification and quantification of potential mates result from the seemingly vast number of potential partners in combination with applied matching techniques, the process of pre-evaluating a dating profile based on physics, characteristics and other personal information provided (Finkel et al., 2012). Intimate relationships are now easily apt for evaluation, comparison and exchange (Illouz, 2007). This assessment-oriented mindset continues within a more fact-based and checklist-oriented CMC (Finkel et al., 2012). *Tinder* stimulates this selection process based on the search for compatibility and turns online dating into a “*market transaction where people exchange personal resources like*

education, social status, beauty, and so on, in order to maximize their individual utility” (Dröge & Voirol, 2011, p. 345f). In this sense, the rules of online dating and the greater choice of potential mates might hinder to commit to one person only (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006) because the better catch might be just around the corner. Based on these theoretical assumptions, the first hypothesis will be formulated as follows:

H1: Higher *Tinder* usage is negatively related to the willingness to engage in a romantic committed relationship.

In addition, people nowadays are aware that romantic relationships do not last if compared to previous generations due to changing social values. Therefore, the investment into a relationship will be reduced due to risk aversion. People tend to invest more in themselves and friendships than into their mates because the risk of losing these investments is evaluated to be higher (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995).

In summary, *Tinder* displays profiles one by one. Therefore, the total number of available users is not directly assessable which leads to a tendency of overestimating (Aretz, 2015) the already higher quantity of potential partners compared to offline dating (Finkel et al., 2012). This seeming advantage of numerous potential partners and *Tinder's* playful character of inoffensiveness (Aretz, 2015) facilitates the objectification of other users (Strubel & Petrie, 2017) and cheating behaviour within a romantic relationship (Hobbs et al., 2017). Paired with the theorized economic logic when it comes to interpersonal relations unclothe the mechanism of quantifying and comparing potential mates by means of personal characteristics. This rational selection process might reduce the willingness to engage in, invest in or commit to another person because better options might be available. Thus, the usage of mobile dating apps adapts

users to a more rational approach resulting from a certain continuous learning process concerning romantic relationships than in comparison to a more intuitive process in real life.

Choice overload hypothesis

An ongoing transformation of the romantic life in favour of a capitalistic logic can have a negative impact on the willingness to engage in a relationship, invest in and commit to it. Having said that, we can now draw from another theory coming from economic sciences and apply it to the realms of online dating. The choice overload hypothesis describes the decrease in satisfaction with a made choice when too many options are at one's disposal.

Firstly, having a certain number of choices is preferable and *increases [...] intrinsic motivation, perceived control, task performance, and life satisfaction* (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000, p. 995). Additionally, an increased number of options can be more satisfying as the chance to serve individual needs and preferences is higher (Dolan & White, 2007). However, the availability of too many choices might result in dissatisfaction, regret and frustration with the made choice when it is not clear to the individual what he or she actually desires. The choice-making process itself is experienced to be more enjoyable when given many choices. However, does the number of choices exceed a certain threshold, individuals find it more difficult to process all the given information and tend to apply satisficing heuristics and not optimizing heuristics. This opens the possibility for a curvilinear function between the number of choices and the level of satisfaction with the made choice (Scheibehenne et al., 2010).

Drawing from the choice overload hypothesis and the elaborations made in the previous chapter, a romantic relationship established via the help of *Tinder* should result in a lower level of relationship satisfaction, commitment and investment compared to offline dating. The reason why, is because *Tinder* users should have experienced a higher number of potential mates

compared to individuals encountering mates only in the offline world. Therefore, theory indicates the following hypothesis:

H2.A: Getting to know the partner of an ongoing romantic relationship first on *Tinder* and not in the offline world leads to a lower level of satisfaction with, commitment and investment for an ongoing romantic relationship.

But not only the setting of the first encounter of a romantic relationship should have a negative impact on relationship satisfaction, commitment and investment. Also, a general higher usage of *Tinder* should display the same effects due to continuous learning processes. In this spirit following hypothesis will be tested:

H3.A: Higher *Tinder* usage leads to a lower level of satisfaction with, commitment and investment for an ongoing romantic relationship.

The mechanism behind the choice overload hypothesis are not yet consensually clarified within literature (D'Angelo & Toma, 2017; Hafner, White, & Handley, 2012). One possible explanation is that by increasing the number of choices also the complexity of the selection process intensifies. This leaves the subject with a greater cognitive burden. The perceptual costs of processing a higher number of and/or more complex options thus decrease the level of choice satisfaction (Reutskaja & Hogarth, 2009). Another explanatory approach tries to explain the reduced satisfaction by *choice justification*. The more options to choose from, the more difficult it is to justify the made choice that in turn leads to a reduced level of satisfaction (Sela, Berger, & Liu, 2009). A more promising reasoning for the function of the choice overload hypothesis within

the realms of online dating might be an increased feeling of post-decisional regret when the decision-making process leaves you with a higher number of discarded options (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). Individuals apply counterfactual thinking and deliberate on choices they could have taken but did not. Thus, the question arises *what might have been?* and if other options would have met the individual needs and preferences in a better way. In a nutshell, the relationship satisfaction, commitment and investment diminish mediated via increased counterfactual thinking that fuels negative feelings of regret about the higher number of discarded options (Hafner et al., 2012; Schwartz, 2004).

Based on these theoretical assumptions, the above-established hypotheses will be extended with the following ones:

H2.B: The effect of H2.A is mediated via counterfactual thinking.

H3.B: The effect of H3.A is mediated via counterfactual thinking.

Literature review

The choice overload hypothesis has various times been tested on low-stake products such as chocolates, coffee, pens etc. (Scheibehenne et al., 2010) but also a couple of times within the realms of online dating. In one study, only women were tested and had to choose a hypothetical match out of 4, 14 or 64 online dating profiles. However, the number of options did not have any effect on the level of satisfaction with the selected mate. But results indicate that participants indicating higher mate standards, meaning people with higher expectations on certain criteria for their future partner, generally prefer a greater choice and are more satisfied with the selected mate when more options are given (Lenton & Stewart, 2008).

In the second study, no significant differences between a condition with 4 options compared to the group of 20 potential mates could be detected on choice satisfaction or regret with the made choice (Lenton et al., 2008).

In contrast to the above-mentioned studies, the study of D'Angelo & Toma (2017) could detect an effect supported by the choice overload hypothesis using conditions presenting 6 or 24 online dating profiles for comparison. However, D'Angelo & Toma (2017) applied a slightly different methodological approach. They did not only test the effects directly after the treatment as Lenton's studies (2008) but also evaluated the choice satisfaction additionally one week afterwards. The results indicate that no significant difference could be detected for the testing at time 1 but did show a significant effect at t2. Subjects in the small choice set were more satisfied with the chosen mate than in the group of 24 options. Additionally, participants who were presented the larger set of options were more likely to reverse their decision at t2 and changed their chosen date than in the condition of 6 options. Therefore, time could be detected as a fundamental variable which allows the choice overload effect to emerge. The authors argue that time might be a key factor for high-stake decisions because they require complex cognitive processing. Cognitive dissonance theory argues that an unpleasant emotional state due to divergent thoughts, desires and opinions can increase over time (D'Angelo & Toma, 2017). However, an extended replication of D'Angelo & Toma's study could not confirm above-discussed findings (Langhorst, 2018) and a second replication even came to the result of a reversed effect. Participants that were offered 24 date options resulted to be more satisfied with their decision than in the condition of 6 options (Portokalidou, 2018).

The literature review reveals a contradicting picture concerning the question if a higher number of potential mates might reduce the satisfaction with the made choice. In any case, the findings of the discussed experimental studies lack external validity. Moreover, it is questionable

if a group of 24 or 64 potential mates can adequately represent the tremendous amount of *Tinder* users in the real world of mobile dating. Therefore, this study will try to shed light on this research topic with the help of field data.

Method

This study is the first to analyze the assumed negative impact of mobile dating on the willingness to engage in a romantic relationship and the level of satisfaction with, commitment and investment for an ongoing romantic relationship using field data of a cross-sectional online survey. In comparison to the experimental studies, cross-sectional data is adversely for testing causal conclusions. However, this is a first approach to shed light on the contradicting findings of the laboratory experiments investigating this research topic (D'Angelo & Toma, 2017; Langhorst, 2018; Portokalidou, 2018) and tries to extend the existing literature with the explanatory power of a larger scale online survey.

Procedure and participants

The process of data collection was administered via an online survey hosted by *soscisurvey.de* between June 11 to June 25, 2019. Invitations were sent via e-mail to addresses of students enrolled in selected communication science lectures. The sample constitutes 457 fully responded out of 580 initiated questionnaires and represents a young ($M^{\text{age}}=24$, $SD^{\text{age}}=4.26$) and well-educated (99.2% high-school graduation or higher) convenience sample of mostly communication science students (82.3%). Female participants are characteristically for this study overrepresented (85.1%). The online survey was executed in German language to comfort the mostly Austrian respondents.

Measures

Independent variables

The cited experimental studies testing the choice overload hypothesis within the realms of online dating operationalized the independent variable as conditions with few and many dating

profiles from which the participant could choose one aspired mate. However, a maximum of 24 or 64 dating profiles does not represent real life, where hundreds of potential mates are available on *Tinder*. This study tries to address this lack of external validity and will operationalize the independent variable more globally in terms of users and usage. Respondents who do or did use *Tinder* more frequently, with a higher intensity and over a longer time period will have acquired a more profound perception of a greater multitude of potential partners. High usage compared to low usage will thus foster the economic logic of *relationshopping* and rationality within the emotional world due to a continuous learning process. Therefore, the independent variable will be operationalized as follows:

Tinder users: This study will operationalize *Tinder* users into active users (15.5%), ex-users (42.5%) and non-users (42%) who have never used *Tinder*.

Tinder usage: The degree of usage will be operationalized with the help of frequency (*How often do you open Tinder within an average week?*), intensity (*How long do you use Tinder without interruption when once opened?*) duration in months (*For how long have you been using Tinder altogether?*) and an item for self-evaluation (*Where do you position yourself between the extremes of light user and heavy user?*). Duration in months was rescaled to fit the others' 8-point Likert scale, at which 1 represents low usage ($\alpha=0.66$, $M=3.11$, $SD=1.176$).

Setting of first encounter: When the first encounter of a romantic relationship was made in the offline world, it was coded as 0 and via a *Tinder* match (16%) as 1.

Mediator variable

Counterfactual thinking: Counterfactual thinking about discarded options is discussed to promote the question about what might have been and thus fuels a negative feeling of post-decisional regret (Hafner et al., 2012). The construct is operationalized with the slightly altered

and complemented Quality of Alternatives scale within the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998) by means of the following 6 items tested with the help of an 8-point Likert scale (1=never): *Sometimes I think that maybe somebody else than my current partner could fulfil my ... in a better way.:* (1) *needs for intimacy (sharing personal thoughts, secrets, etc.);* (2) *needs for companionship (doing things together, enjoying each other's company, etc.);* (3) *sexual need (holding hands, kissing, etc.);* (4) *needs for security (feeling trusting, comfortable in a stable relationship, etc.);* (5) *needs for emotional involvement (feeling emotionally attached, feeling good when another feels good, etc.)* and (6) *Sometimes I think that maybe somebody else than my current partner would be a better partner for me.* ($\alpha=0.87$, $M=2.50$, $SD=1.419$).

Dependent variables

All dependent variables were measured with the help of an 8-point Likert scale whereat 1 indicates *agreeing not at all* and 8 represents *total agreement*. A minus (-) is indicating a negatively coded item and will be recoded for the analysis. The level of willingness to engage in a romantic relationship will be measured by means of following two dependent variables of commitment desirability and readiness.

Commitment Desirability: Commitment desirability is “*defined as the subjective desire to be involved in a committed romantic relationship at a given time*” (Tan, Agnew, & Hadden, 2019, p. 2). High commitment desirability is a good predictor for stable and successful relationships. This research will utilize the following three items: *The idea of a long-term committed romantic relationship appeals to me.;* *I want to be in a committed romantic relationship.;* and *I prefer to be involved in a committed romantic relationship that lasts a long time.* ($\alpha=0.84$, $M=6.97$ $SD=1.256$).

Commitment Readiness: The subjective feeling of being ready to enter a committed romantic relationship will be tested using the following three items of the commitment readiness scale (Agnew, Hadden, & Tan, 2019). Readiness can predict commitment within a relationship and fosters maintenance processes such as accommodation, self-disclosure and sacrifices. Additionally, higher relationship readiness predicts more actions towards maintaining a relationship and less leaving behaviour. The scale includes the following items: *Considering all of the factors in my life right now, I am amenable to a relationship.*; *In my opinion, this is the “right moment” for me to be in a relationship.* and *I feel ready for a relationship.* ($\alpha=0.93$, $M=6.50$ $SD=1.808$).

Satisfaction: The level of satisfaction of an intimate relationship will be operationalized by means of the German version (Hassebrauck, 1991) of the generic relationship assessment scale (RAS) (Hendrick, 1988) including the following 7 items: *How well does your partner meet your needs?*; *In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?*; *How good is your relationship compared to most?*; *How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?* (-); *To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?*; *How much do you love your partner?* and *How many problems are there in your relationship?* (-). ($\alpha=0.90$, $M=6.86$ $SD=0.977$).

Investment: Investment is operationalized based on the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998) by means of the following 5 items: *I have invested a great deal of time in our relationship.*; *I have told my partner many private things about myself (I disclose secrets to him/her).*; *My partner and I have an intellectual life together that would be difficult to replace.*; *My sense of personal identity (who I am) is linked to my partner and our relationship.*; and *My partner and I share many memories.* ($\alpha=0.64$, $M=6.38$ $SD=1.071$).

Commitment: Commitment is defined as the intention for a long-lasting relationship which is a good predictor of the persistence of a romantic relationship. This construct will be measured with the help of the following 4 slightly adapted items that are part of a greater Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998): *I want our relationship to last for a very long time.; I would feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future.; I feel very attached to our relationship – very strongly linked to my partner.;* and *I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship (for example, I imagine being with my partner several years from now).* ($\alpha=0.87$, $M=7.38$ $SD=1.022$).

Covariates

Following control variables will be considered for analyzing the proposed hypotheses on the basis of the experimental study by D'Angelo & Toma (2017).

Age ($M=24$, $SD=4.26$)

Sex (0=female=82.3%; 1=male)

Sexual Orientation (0=heterosexual=87.5%; 1=not heterosexual)

Education attainment was anchored by asking for the highest achieved level of formal education, ranging from 1 indicating compulsory school to 5 representing a master's degree ($M=3.44$, $SD=0.646$).

Duration of Relationship is discussed to have an influence on the dependent variables (Rusbult et al., 1998). The indicated duration in months was rescaled to equal the longest relationship with 8 and the shortest with 1 ($M=2.59$, $SD=1.452$).

Previous relationship experiences can have an effect on current ones (Furman, Brown, & Feiring, 1999) and were measured with the help of a single item indicating very positive experiences at 8 ($M=5.86$, $SD=1.667$).

Mate-standard strength (MSS) assess the expectations of the ideal but realistic partner. It has shown that MSS has an effect on the satisfaction of a relationship (Lenton & Stewart, 2008). This variable is anchored by the following nine characteristics: *attractive, a high earner, intelligent, witty, warm-hearted, healthy, sociable, highly educated, and in a high-status occupation* (Buss & Barnes, 1986). The construct was tested by means of an 8-point Likert scale whereat 8 indicates high expectations ($\alpha=0.64$, $M=5.81$, $SD=0.716$).

Romantic beliefs: The idealization of romantic relationships has the potential for positive self-fulfilling effects on the individual satisfaction of a relationship (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996). This construct will be tested with the help of a shortened version of the Romantic Beliefs Scale (Sprecher & Metts, 1989) by means of the following four items on an 8-point Likert scale (1=no agreement): *If a relationship I have was meant to be, any obstacle (e.g. lack of money, physical distance, career conflicts) can be overcome.; Once I experience true love, I could never experience it again, to the same degree, with another person.; The relationship I will have with my “true love” will be nearly perfect.; and I am likely to fall in love immediately if I meet the right person.* ($\alpha=0.71$, $M=4.70$, $SD=1.559$).

Results

In this online survey 457 fairly young ($M^{\text{age}}=24$, $SD^{\text{age}}=4.26$) and well-educated (99.2% high-school graduation or higher) participants were categorized into active users (15.5%), ex-users (42.5%) and non-users (42%). The collected data indicates acceptable values for the assumption of normal distribution except for age ($s=2.060$; $k=4.982$) and sexual orientation ($s=2.391$; $k=3.734$) which slightly trespass the generally accepted range for skewness of plus/minus 2 and indicate a quite high kurtosis. However, this will be neglected as the two variables represent covariates only.

Firstly, hypothesis 1 – *Higher Tinder usage is negatively related to the willingness to engage in a romantic committed relationship.* - will be tested. Because the homogeneity of variances was not given, a one-way Welch's ANOVA was conducted to compare the means of commitment desirability between users ($M=6.44$, $SD=1.443$), ex-users ($M=6.93$, $SD=1.335$) and non-users ($M=7.19$, $SD=1.025$). Commitment desirability is “*defined as the subjective desire to be involved in a committed romantic relationship at a given time*” (Tan et al., 2019, p. 2) and represents one indicator for the level of willingness to engage in a romantic relationship. The robust tests of equality of means indicate that there is a significant difference between the groups [$F(2, 178.436)=8.703$, $p=0.000$]. Games-Howell post-hoc test reveals significant differences between the groups at $p<.05$ except between ex-user and non-users. An ANCOVA including all relevant covariates confirmed the significant difference between groups [$F(2, 438)=4.419$, $p=0.013$].

The second indicator for testing the willingness to engage in a relationship is commitment readiness, which summarizes the subjective feeling of being ready for a romantic relationship. A one-way ANOVA indicates a significant difference between users ($M=5.62$, $SD=2.010$), ex-users ($M=6.61$, $SD=1.799$) and non-users ($M=6.70$, $SD=1.649$) [$F(2, 447)=10.128$, $p=0.000$].

Bonferroni post-hoc test indicates, just as the results of commitment desirability, significant ($p < .05$) differences between the groups except between ex-users and non-users. The additionally performed ANCOVA can confirm this significant result [$F(2, 435) = 5.013$, $p = 0.007$].

In a nutshell, active *Tinder* users feeling least ready and have the least desire for a committed romantic relationship. Ex-users and participants that have never used mobile dating applications are more open towards a relationship compared to active users.

If it makes a difference between currently using *Tinder* and not having it used at all or only in the past, the amount of time spent on this dating application should also affect the willingness to enter a relationship. In order to test that, a regression analysis will zoom in on users and ex-users only and test the effect of the level of usage on commitment desirability and readiness.

Table 1: Multiple linear regression

	Commitment desirability			VIF
	β	β	β	
<i>Tinder</i> usage	0.107	0.148*	0.153**	1.077
<i>Socio-demographics</i>				
Sex (1=male)		0.191**	0.185**	1.553
Age		-0.140*	-0.128*	1.152
Sexual orientation (1=not heterosexual)		-0.251***	-0.190**	1.124
Education		-0.046	-0.031	1.460
<i>Relationship style</i>				
Mate-standard strength			-0.037	1.119
Romantic beliefs			0.336***	1.068
R ² in % (adjusted)	0.8	8.9***	19.0***	
F change	2.985	6.700	16.759	
(df ₁ , df ₂)	(1, 256)	(4, 252)	(2, 250)	

Standardized beta-coefficients (β); N=257; ***= $p < 0.001$, **= $p < 0.01$, *= $p < 0.05$

Contrary to the findings for H1, table 1 indicates a positive impact of *Tinder* usage on commitment desirability. This implies that within the groups of users and ex-users high usage is related to higher desirability for a committed romantic relationship. Additionally, table 1 illustrates that male participants and more romantic respondents are having a bigger wish of being in a long-lasting relationship compared to women. Contrariwise, older and not heterosexual participants less desire being in a romantic relationship with somebody else.

Similar to the findings of commitment desirability, older and not heterosexual participants also indicated not to be ready for a committed romantic relationship (see table 2). But a higher degree of romantic degrees fosters the subjective feeling of being amenable to a relationship. However, the level of *Tinder* usage does not affect this dependent variable.

Table 2: Multiple linear regression

	Commitment readiness			
	β	β	β	<i>VIF</i>
<i>Tinder</i> usage	0.030	0.081	0.085	1.075
<i>Socio-demographics</i>				
Sex (1=male)		0.105	0.101	1.560
Age		-0.136*	-0.122*	1.150
Sexual orientation (1=not heterosexual)		-0.255***	-0.194**	1.124
Education		-0.025	-0.014	1.468
<i>Relationship style</i>				
Mate-standard strength			-0.028	1.120
Romantic beliefs			0.315***	1.075
R ² in % (adjusted)	0.3	6.8***	15.6***	
F change	0.228	5.842	13.897	
(df ₁ , df ₂)	(1, 253)	(4, 249)	(2, 247)	

Standardized beta-coefficients (β); N=254; ***=p<0.001, **=p<0.01, *=p<0.05

Based on these results, hypothesis 1 can be partly verified. *Tinder* usage, in general, is negatively related to the subjective feeling of desire and of being ready for a long-lasting romantic relationship although high usage relates more positively to desirability than low usage.

Now, an ANOVA was executed for testing hypothesis 2.A - *Getting to know the partner of an ongoing romantic relationship first on Tinder leads to a lower level of satisfaction with, commitment and investment for an ongoing romantic relationship*. Participants that indicated to be currently in a romantic relationship were asked if they established their relationship via *Tinder* or not. A total of 16 % of the relationships originated from a *Tinder* match. Comparing the group means with the help of an ANOVA, the dependent variables satisfaction [$F(1, 266)=0.255$, $p=0.614$] and commitment [$F(1, 264)=0.319$, $p=0.573$] did not reveal any significant differences. Participants who established their relationship in the offline world indicated a higher mean ($M=6.45$, $SD=1.050$) on relationship investment compared to individuals being in a romantic relationship that was initiated by *Tinder* ($M=6.01$, $SD=1.116$). The difference between the two groups is statistically significant [$F(1, 267)=6.165$, $p=0.014$]. However, retesting the effect with an ANCOVA including all relevant covariates diminishes the effect and the p-value violates the threshold of statistical significance. [$F(1, 259)=2.770$; $p=0.097$]. Therefore, hypothesis 2.A must be rejected.

A bias-correcting formal mediation analysis including all relevant covariates with a 95% bootstrapped (10,000) confidence interval was executed by means of PROCESS version 3.0 for SPSS written by Andrew F. Hayes. However, it is needless to say that no mediated effect of the setting (offline or on *Tinder*) of the couple's first encounter on relationship satisfaction via counterfactual thinking could be detected ($abI=-.0035$, $SE=.1127$, $CI_s=[-.2220, .2221]$). Counterfactual thinking is operationalized as a negative feeling of post-decisional regret about

discarded options and is negatively partially correlated to satisfaction ($r=-0.780$; $p=0.000$), commitment ($r=-0.619$; $p=0.000$) and investment ($r=-0.387$; $p=0.000$). Neither for the dependent variable relationship commitment ($ab2=-.0101$, $SE=.0906$, $CI_s=[-.1931, .1666]$), nor for investment ($ab3=-.0050$, $SE=.0594$, $CI_s=[-.1251, .1094]$), the setting of the first encounter resulted to have an indirect effect on the dependent variables via counterfactual thinking.

Hypothesis 2.B - *The effect of H2.A is mediated via counterfactual thinking.* – must, therefore, be rejected.

For testing hypothesis 3.A - *Higher Tinder usage leads to a lower level of satisfaction with, commitment and investment for an ongoing romantic relationship.* – a multiple linear regression was executed. Tinder usage does not have any explanatory power for the dependent variable of relationship satisfaction (see table 3). Comparing the groups of participants that have never used Tinder with respondents that indicated to have used mobile dating applications does not reveal any statistically significant differences [$F(1, 260)=0.049$, $p=0.825$].

However, table 3 indicates that male participants are generally less satisfied with their current romantic relationship. But more romantic beliefs and more positive previous experiences in other relationships foster a positive evaluation of the current one. The multiple linear regression models for the dependent variables relationship commitment and investment of hypothesis 3.A reveal similar results. *Tinder* usage does not explain how committed respondents feel in and how much they invest into their relationships. See the tables 4 and 5 in the annex for detailed results.

Unsurprisingly, there is also no mediated effect via counterfactual thinking from *Tinder* usage on relationship satisfaction ($ab1=.0505$, $SE=.0624$, $CI_s=[-.0776, .1717]$). Moreover, neither for the dependent variable relationship commitment ($ab2=.0384$, $SE=.0475$, $CI_s=[-.0542, .1329]$)

nor for investment ($ab3=.0240$, $SE=.0324$, $CI_s=[-.0411, .0896]$), could such a mediated effect via counterfactual thinking be detected. Therefore, hypothesis 3.B - *The effect of H3.A is mediated via counterfactual thinking.* – must also be rejected.

Table 3: Multiple linear regression

	Relationship satisfaction			VIF
	β	β	β	
<i>Tinder</i> usage	0.025	0.031	0.051	1.276
<i>Socio-demographics</i>				
Sex (1=male)		-0.133*	-0.136*	1.078
Age		-0.024	0.025	1.817
Sexual orientation (1=not heterosexual)		-0.003	0.039	1.084
Education		0.031	0.003	1.406
<i>Relationship style</i>				
Mate-standard strength			-0.035	1.054
Romantic beliefs			0.184**	1.071
Previous relationship experiences			0.205**	1.144
Duration of relationship			-0.054	1.724
R ² in % (adjusted)	0.0	0.1	6.6***	
F change	0.162	1.263	5.412	
(df ₁ , df ₂)	(1, 257)	(4, 253)	(4, 249)	

Standardized beta-coefficients (β); N=258; ***=p<0.001, **=p<0.01, *=p<0.05

Conclusion

This study used a convenience sample for analyses involving its inherent limitations. Moreover, the self-selection of the respondents into active users, ex-users and non-users conditioned by the research topic led to unevenly distributed groups for comparison. By including several covariates into the analyses possible biases tried to be controlled for. Additionally, biased self-reporting of the amount of *Tinder* usage could also have interfered with the results. However, the integration of 4 indicators for the variable *Tinder* usage tried to limit these negative effects.

Tinder appears to be the most popular mobile dating app. Only 13.6 % of mobile daters are using a different application than *Tinder*. However, it is surprising for this young collegiate sample that 42 % of the respondents have never used a mobile dating app in their lives. Not everybody jumped on the mobile dating bandwagon so far. But the ones doing it seemed to be quite successful. Nearly every fifth (19 %) respondent who stated to be currently in a romantic relationship also indicated that this relationship originated from a *Tinder* match. But does the usage of *Tinder* influence our romantic relationships?

Several sociologists see mobile dating as the downfall of monogamous relationships and romantic ideals. It is turning potential mates into replaceable subjects within a commodified game (Bauman, 2003) that reduces the willingness to engage in a romantic relationship with one person only (Ellison et al., 2006). This study partly confirms that active *Tinder* users feeling less ready and have a smaller desire for entering a committed romantic relationship compared to former users and participants that have never used mobile dating. Interestingly, the level of usage has a reverse effect on commitment desirability. It can be argued that there is a group of heavy users that use *Tinder* more intensively with the objective to find a future mate compared to low users. However, the directionality of causality cannot be clarified with the given data. *Tinder* can

be the factor that negatively influences the willingness to engage into a relationship because of its playful character (Aretz, 2015) and the tremendous number of easy to establish but also disposable relationships (Bauman, 2003). But it is also reasonable that subject with less willingness to engage in a relationship turn to *Tinder*.

Besides that, mobile dating, in general, is discussed to reduce the level of commitment to a partner (Bauman, 2003) and the investment into a relationship because of risk aversion (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). However, this study using cross-sectional field data could not confirm the existing assumptions made by former diagnoses of society and qualitative interviews (e.g. Dröge & Voirol, 2011; Heino et al., 2010; Hobbs, Owen, & Gerber, 2017). *Tinder* usage did not have any effect on relationship commitment and investment.

The testing of the choice overload hypothesis within the realms of mobile dating has led to contradicting findings (D'Angelo & Toma, 2017; Langhorst, 2018; Lenton et al., 2008; Lenton & Stewart, 2008; Portokalidou, 2018). Theory and results, however, indicated a possible negative impact of online dating on the level of satisfaction with a romantic relationship. This study tried to shed light into the research topic by being the first applying a different methodological approach with higher external validity. The results indicate clearly that male respondents, participants with a lower level of romantic beliefs and/or less positive experiences in previous relationships are less satisfied in their relationships but that the amount of *Tinder* usage does not have any impact on relationship satisfaction.

The dystopia of mobile dating seems to be dead. Mobile dating has advantages and disadvantages (Finkel et al., 2012) but according to this study no negative effects on the satisfaction with, commitment and investment for ongoing romantic relationships. Although the willingness to engage in a romantic relationship is negatively related to the use of mobile dating apps, it is not sure if *Tinder* itself is the influencing factor.

Future research should put the individuum in its centre and continue studying the important research topic of possible positive and negative effects of communication technologies on social relationships in today's highly mediatized dating world. Field experiments could help to shed light into this interesting and complex research area by increasing external validity and at the same time isolating influencing factors.

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List of tables

Table 1: Multiple linear regression for commitment desirability	28
Table 2: Multiple linear regression for commitment readiness.....	29
Table 3: Multiple linear regression for relationship satisfaction.....	32
Table 4: Multiple linear regression for relationship commitment.....	42
Table 5: Multiple linear regression for relationship investment	43

Annex

Abstract in German

Mobiles Dating ermöglicht den NutzerInnen eine höhere Anzahl von potentiellen PartnerInnen als Offline-Dating zu erreichen. Die Choice-Overload-Hypothese argumentiert jedoch, dass zu viele Optionen den Grad der Zufriedenheit mit einer getroffenen Wahl negativ beeinflussen können. Eine hohe Anzahl von ungenutzten Möglichkeiten kann ein Gefühl von Reue aufgrund kontrafaktischen Denkens und der Frage nach dem, was hätte sein können, hervorrufen. Darüber hinaus wird in der soziologischen Literatur das mobile Dating als der Niedergang von langfristigen, romantischen Beziehungen diskutiert. Insbesondere die Verwendung der Dating-App *Tinder* reduziert die Bereitschaft für, sowie das Engagement und die Investition in eine langfristige Beziehung. Eine Gelegenheitsstichprobe von 457 jungen und gebildeten TeilnehmerInnen wurde mit Hilfe einer Online-Umfrage erreicht werden. Diese Studie thematisiert widersprüchliche Ergebnisse experimenteller Forschung zu diesem Thema. Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass aktive *Tinder*-NutzerInnen weniger bereit sind, eine romantische Beziehung einzugehen, als ehemalige NutzerInnen oder Personen, die *Tinder* noch nie benutzt haben. Es konnten jedoch keine direkten oder indirekten Effekte über kontrafaktisches Denken bei der Nutzung von *Tinder* auf die Beziehungszufriedenheit, Engagement und Investition festgestellt werden. Zukünftige Studien sollten sich mit Hilfe von Feldexperimenten mit diesem Thema befassen, um mögliche positive und negative Einflussfaktoren des mobilen Datings auf Beziehungen zu untersuchen.

Schlüsselwörter: mobiles Dating, *Tinder*, Choice-Overload-Hypothese, Medienwirkungseffekte, Beziehungszufriedenheit, Online-Umfrage.

Table 4: Multiple linear regression for relationship commitment

	Relationship commitment			
	β	β	β	<i>VIF</i>
<i>Tinder</i> usage	0.007	0.015	0.065	1.283
<i>Socio-demographics</i>				
Sex (1=male)		-0.142*	-0.145*	1.078
Age		0.085	0.113	1.843
Sexual orientation (1=not heterosexual)		-0.006	0.061	1.096
Education		-0.006	-0.041	1.405
<i>Relationship style</i>				
Mate-standard strength			-0.069	1.055
Romantic beliefs			0.282***	1.073
Previous relationship experiences			0.229***	1.148
Duration of relationship			-0.002	1.750
R ² in % (adjusted)	0.0	0.2	13.4***	
F change	0.014	1.398	10.507	
(df ₁ , df ₂)	(1, 255)	(4, 251)	(4, 247)	
Standardized beta-coefficients (β); N=256; ***=p<0.001, **=p<0.01, *=p<0.05				

Table 5: Multiple linear regression for relationship investment

	Relationship investment			
	β	β	β	<i>VIF</i>
<i>Tinder</i> usage	-0.046	-0.034	0.053	1.275
<i>Socio-demographics</i>				
Sex (1=male)		-0.068	-0.051	1.074
Age		-0.032	-0.084	1.777
Sexual orientation (1=not heterosexual)		-0.066	0.002	1.082
Education		0.026	-0.017	1.408
<i>Relationship style</i>				
Mate-standard strength			0.021	1.057
Romantic beliefs			0.253***	1.071
Previous relationship experiences			0.139*	1.138
Duration of relationship			0.153*	1.687
R ² in % (adjusted)	0.0	0.0	10.2***	
F change	0.552	0.726	8.629	
(df ₁ , df ₂)	(1, 258)	(4, 254)	(4, 250)	
Standardized beta-coefficients (β); N=259; ***=p<0.001, **=p<0.01, *=p<0.05				

Questionnaire



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Page 01

ID

Vielen herzlichen Dank für Ihre Zeit und die Teilnahme an dieser Studie zum Thema **Intro** Dating, Beziehungen und Liebe. Die Umfrage ist jedoch für alle, egal ob Dating-Muffel, verliebt oder single!

Der Fragebogen wird ca. 10 Minuten Ihrer Zeit in Anspruch nehmen.

- Bitte lesen Sie sich die Angaben genau durch.
- Bitte seien Sie bei Ihren Antworten so ehrlich wie möglich!
- Falsche Angaben können die gesamten Forschungsergebnisse verfälschen!
- Es gibt keine falschen oder richtigen Antworten - es zählt nur Ihre persönliche Meinung!
- Verbringe Sie nicht allzu viel Zeit bei einer einzelnen Frage, sondern versuchen Sie sie intuitiv zu beantworten!
- All Ihren Daten werden natürlich streng anonymisiert ausgewertet und vertraulichst behandelt.

Bei Fragen können Sie sich natürlich jederzeit an mich wenden (wolfgang.paul@live.at).

Nochmals herzlichen Dank für Ihre Mithilfe und beste Grüße,

Wolfgang Paul
Universität Wien

Page 02

DA

1. Heutzutage verwenden die meisten jungen Erwachsenen Dating-Apps, wie zB Tinder, Lovoo oder Grindr, um **NU01** zu chatten und Leute kennenzulernen. Haben Sie auch schon einmal so eine App verwendet?

- ☐ Ja, ich verwende momentan immer wieder einmal eine Dating-App.
- ☐ Nein, momentan verwende ich keine Dating-App mehr, habe aber früher einmal eine verwendet.
- ☐ Nein, ich habe noch nie eine Dating-App verwendet.

1 Active Filter(s)

Filter NU01/F1

If any of the following options is selected: 3
Then jump to page %page% after the next button was clicked

2. Welche Dating-Apps verwenden Sie gerade oder haben Sie bereits einmal für eine Zeit lang verwendet? NU02

Mehrfachantwort möglich!

- ☐ Tinder
- ☐ Lovoo
- ☐ Bumble
- ☐ Grindr
- ☐ Candidate
- ☐ OkCupid

☐ Andere (bitte nennen):

3. Mit Hilfe der folgenden Fragen möchten wir erfahren wie häufig Sie Dating-Apps, wie zB Tinder, verwenden. NU03

Dating-Apps werden mal mehr oder weniger oft verwendet. Denken Sie daher bei der Beantwortung der folgenden Fragen an eine durchschnittliche Woche, in der Sie Dating-Apps verwenden.

Wenn Sie momentan keine Dating-Apps verwenden, aber früher einmal eine verwendet haben, dann versuchen Sie sich bitte an eine durchschnittliche Woche zu erinnern, in welcher Sie Dating-Apps genutzt haben.

Bitte positionieren Sie sich zwischen den jeweiligen Extremen!

	ein Mal pro Woche oder weniger	ein Mal pro Stunde oder mehr
Wie oft öffnen bzw öffneten Sie in einer durchschnittlichen Woche eine Dating-App?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	

	eine Minute oder weniger	eine Stunde oder mehr
Für wie lange verwenden bzw verwendeten Sie im Durchschnitt eine Dating-App ohne Unterbrechung, wenn Sie sie einmal geöffnet haben?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	

4. Wenn Sie sich selbst einschätzen müssten, wie würden Sie sich bezüglich der Nutzung von Dating-Apps beschreiben. Verwenden bzw verwendeten Sie Dating-Apps im Allgemeinen sehr wenig (light user) oder sehr häufig (heavy user)? NU07

	light user	heavy user
Ich bin bzw war ein ...	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	

5. Wie viele Jahre und Monate haben Sie Dating-Apps insgesamt verwendet? Bitte versuchen Sie sich an die Zeitspanne zu erinnern und sie ungefähr zu schätzen! Schließen Sie Zeiten, in denen Sie keine Dating-App verwendet haben, aus! Zum Beispiel: Sie erinnern sich, eine App ca. 2 Monate im Jahr 2012; 4 Monate im Jahr 2017 und 9 Monate im Jahr 2018 verwendet zu haben. Dies wären insgesamt 1 Jahr und 3 Monate. NU04

Zu deiner Information: Tinder existiert seit 2012.

Jahre:

Monate:

NU05

6. Mit Hilfe der folgenden Aussagesätze würden wir gerne mehr über Ihre persönliche Meinung zu Beziehungen erfahren. Egal ob Sie sich gerade in einer Beziehung befinden oder nicht, beurteilen Sie bitte die folgenden Statements. Dafür können Sie einen Punkt zwischen den zwei Extremen „überhaupt nicht“ und „voll und ganz“ wählen.

WE01

WICHTIG: Als eine Beziehung definieren wir in dieser Befragung ein längerfristiges romantisches Verhältnis zwischen zwei Personen, welches mindestens ca. 3 Monaten andauert. Jedoch muss eine Beziehung nicht unbedingt monogam sein. Heutzutage werden viele unterschiedliche Beziehungsarten anerkannt, wie zB offene Beziehungen, Freundschaft+ etc.

Ich stimme ... zu!überhaupt
nicht

voll und ganz

kann ich nicht
beantworten

Die Idee einer Beziehung gefällt mir.



Ich möchte in einer Beziehung sein.



Ich bevorzuge es, in eine Beziehung eingebunden zu sein, die eine lange Zeit andauert.



WE02

Ich stimme ... zu!überhaupt
nicht

voll und ganz

kann ich nicht
beantworten

In Anbetracht aller Faktoren in meinem Leben, bin ich offen für eine Beziehung.



Ich bin der Meinung, dass dies der „richtige Zeitpunkt“ für mich ist, in einer Beziehung zu sein.



Ich fühle mich für eine Beziehung bereit.



7. Egal ob Sie sich gerade in einer Beziehung befinden oder nicht, beurteilen Sie bitte folgende Aussagesätze.

RB01

Ich stimme ... zu.überhaupt
nicht

voll und ganz

kann ich nicht
beantworten

Wenn eine Beziehung für mich bestimmt ist, dann kann jedes Hindernis (zB Geldmangel, physische Distanz, Karrierekonflikte) überwunden werden.



Wenn ich einmal die „wahre Liebe“ erlebe, könnte ich sie nie wieder im gleichen Ausmaß mit einer anderen Person erleben.



Die Beziehung mit meiner „wahren Liebe“ wird nahezu perfekt sein.



Es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, dass ich mich sofort verlieben werde, wenn ich die richtige Person treffe.



8. Egal ob Sie sich gerade in einer Beziehung befinden oder nicht, beurteilen Sie bitte folgende Statements ganz allgemein. Versuchen Sie sich dabei vorzustellen, wie Sie sich im Normalfall während Beziehungen verhalten oder fühlen. AT01 

WICHTIG: Das Wort Partner/Partnerin bezieht sich in dieser Befragung auf unterschiedliche Beziehungsarten, wie zB monogame Beziehungen, offene Beziehungen, Freundschaft+ etc.

Ich stimme ... zu.	überhaupt nicht	voll und ganz	kann ich nicht beantworten
Normalerweise bespreche ich meine Probleme und Sorgen mit meinem Partner oder Partnerin.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐		☐
Es hilft mir, mich in schwierigen Zeiten an meinen Partner oder Partnerin zu wenden.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐		☐
Es fällt mir leicht, mich auf meinen Partner oder Partnerin zu verlassen.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐		☐
Es fällt mir leicht, meinem Partner oder Partnerin zu zeigen, wie ich wirklich fühle.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐		☐

Ich stimme ... zu.	überhaupt nicht	voll und ganz	kann ich nicht beantworten
Ich fürchte mich davor, dass mein Partner oder Partnerin mich verlassen könnte.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐		☐
Ich mache mir Sorgen, dass mein Partner oder Partnerin sich nicht so sehr für mich interessiert wie ich für ihn oder sie.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐		☐
Ich mache mir oft Sorgen, dass mein Partner oder Partnerin mich gar nicht so sehr mag.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐		☐

9. Mit Hilfe der nächsten Fragen würden wir gerne mehr über Ihre Dating-Erfahrungen wissen. Egal ob Sie sich gerade in einer Beziehung befinden oder nicht, beurteilen Sie bitte folgende Statements. DV01

Ich stimme ... zu!

überhaupt
nicht

voll und ganz

kann ich nicht
beantworten

Oft bemerke ich bereits beim ersten Date, dass es nicht passen wird und treffe die Person nicht mehr.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

Wenn ich date, dann date ich meist mehrere Personen zeitgleich.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

Oft möchte ich mich nochmals mit meinen Dates treffen, aber aufgrund der anderen Person kommt es zu keinen weiteren Dates.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

Auch wenn das erste Date nicht so gut gelaufen ist, gebe ich der Person meistens noch eine zweite Chance.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

Ich habe viele Dates, aber der oder die Richtige war nie dabei.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

Auch wenn mir ein Aspekt bei meinem Date nicht so gefällt, konzentriere ich mich auf positive Eigenschaften.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

Wenn ich ein erstes Date mit jemanden habe, dann will ich mich mehrmals mit dieser Person treffen, um sie besser kennenlernen zu können.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

Wenn ich jemanden date, dann treffe ich mich sonst mit keinen anderen Personen auf ein erstes Date.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

Wenn ich date, möchte ich mich nicht allzu schnell festlegen, vielleicht lerne ich noch jemanden kennen, der/die besser zu mir passt.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

Meine Freiheiten sind mir wichtig, das muss mein Date auch von Anfang an akzeptieren.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

10. Niemand ist perfekt. Aber denken Sie bitte nun an Ihre idealeN aber realistischeN TraumpartnerIn! Wie wichtig wären folgende Attribute um Ihre perfekte PartnerIn zu beschreiben. MS01

Meine TraumpartnerIn soll ...	überhaupt nicht wichtig	sehr wichtig	kann ich nicht beantworten
attraktiv sein	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●
viel verdienen	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●
intelligent sein	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●
humorvoll sein	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●
liebepoll sein	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●
gesund sein	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●
gesellig sein	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●
hoch gebildet sein	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●
in einem hoch angesehenen Job arbeiten	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●

11. Wie viele Beziehungen führten Sie bereits in Ihrem Leben? BZ10

Beziehung: Romantisches Verhältnis mit einer anderen Person ab ca. 3 Monaten.

[bitte auswählen] ▼

12. Wenn Sie bereits eine oder mehrere Beziehungen in Ihrem Leben hatten, dann beurteilen Sie bitte die Summe Ihrer persönlichen Erfahrungen in diesen Beziehungen. Waren sie eher sehr negativ oder sehr positiv? BZ07

	sehr negativ	sehr positiv	kann ich nicht beantworten
Meine Erfahrungen mit Beziehungen waren im Großen und Ganzen ...	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●

13. Egal ob Sie sich gerade in einer Beziehung befinden oder nicht beziehungsweise egal ob Sie sich gerade eine Beziehung wünschen oder nicht: Wie beurteilen Sie die Anzahl von möglichen Partnern oder Partnerinnen, die für Sie für eine Beziehung in Frage kommen würden? BZ06

	sehr gering	sehr hoch	kann ich nicht beantworten
Die Anzahl von potentiellen Partnern oder Partnerinnen für mich ist ...	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●

Page 11

BS

14. Befinden Sie sich gerade in einer Beziehung?

BZ01

- ☐ Ja, ich befinde mich momentan in einer Beziehung.
- ☐ Nein, ich befinde mich momentan nicht in einer Beziehung.

2 Active Filter(s)

Filter BZ01/F1

If any of the following options is selected: 2

Then jump to page %page% after the next button was clicked

Filter BZ01/F2

If any of the following options is selected: 1

Then hide the questionnaire page(s) SI (otherwise display them)

Page 12

BE

15. Haben Sie Ihren aktuellen Partner oder Partnerin mit Hilfe eine Dating-App kennengelernt? Oder hat Ihnen eine Dating-App dabei geholfen, Kontakt zu Ihrem aktuellen Partner oder Partnerin herzustellen?

BZ04

- ☐ Ja, das erste Kennenlernen erfolgt mit Hilfe einer Dating-App bzw. eine Dating-App hat uns geholfen den Kontakt herzustellen.
- ☐ Nein, das erste Kennenlernen erfolgte über einen anderen Weg.

16. Wie lange dauert Ihre aktuelle Beziehung bereits an?

BZ02

Jahre:

[bitte auswählen] ▼

Monate

[bitte auswählen] ▼

BZ03

17. Eine Beziehung kann nicht in allen Aspekten perfekt sein. Sicherlich haben Sie sich schon einmal Gedanken darüber gemacht, ob nicht vielleicht jemand anderes als Ihr aktueller Partner oder Partnerin ein gewisses Bedürfnis besser befriedigen könnte.

Manchmal denke ich, dass vielleicht jemand anderes als mein aktueller Partner oder Partnerin ...

niemals

sehr oft

kann ich nicht
beantworten

... mein Bedürfnis nach Intimität (Austausch persönlicher Gedanken, Geheimnisse usw.) besser befriedigen könnte.



... mein Bedürfnis nach Kameradschaft (gemeinsam etwas unternehmen, die Gesellschaft des anderen genießen usw.) besser befriedigen könnte.



... mein sexuelles Bedürfnis (Händchenhalten, Küssen usw.) besser befriedigen könnte.



... mein Sicherheitsbedürfnisse (Vertrauen, Wohlbefinden in einer stabilen Beziehung usw.) besser befriedigen könnte.



... mein Bedürfnis nach emotionaler Involviertheit (sich emotional verbunden fühlen, sich gut fühlen, wenn sich der/die andere gut fühlt usw.) besser befriedigen könnte.



... besser zu mir passen würde.



18. Bitte beantworten Sie folgende Fragen bezüglich Ihrer aktuellen Beziehung. Sie können einen Punkt zwischen den zwei Extremen wählen. SF01

	überhaupt nicht	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	voll und ganz		kann ich nicht beantworten
Wie gut erfüllt Ihr Partner oder Partnerin Ihre Wünsche und Bedürfnisse?					☐

	gar nicht zufrieden	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	sehr zufrieden		kann ich nicht beantworten
Wie zufrieden sind Sie im Großen und Ganzen mit Ihrer Beziehung?					☐

	gar nicht gut	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	sehr gut		kann ich nicht beantworten
Wie gut ist Ihre Beziehung im Vergleich zu den Beziehungen der meisten anderen Paare?					☐

	gar nicht	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	sehr oft		kann ich nicht beantworten
Wie oft wünschen Sie sich, dass Sie diese Beziehung lieber nicht hätten?					☐

	gar nicht gut	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	sehr gut		kann ich nicht beantworten
Wie gut erfüllt Ihre Beziehung Ihre ursprünglichen Erwartungen?					☐

	gar nicht	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	sehr		kann ich nicht beantworten
Wie sehr lieben Sie Ihren Partner oder Partnerin?					☐

	gar keine	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	sehr viele		kann ich nicht beantworten
Wie viele Probleme gibt es in Ihrer Beziehung?					☐

19. Bitte beurteilen Sie die folgenden Aussagesätze bezüglich Ihrer aktuellen Beziehung.

IV01 

Ich stimme ... zu!	überhaupt nicht	voll und ganz	kann ich nicht beantworten
Ich investiere sehr viel Zeit in unsere Beziehung.	☐	☐	☐
Ich erzähle meinem Partner oder Partnerin sehr viele private Dinge über mich. (Ich erzähle ihm/ihr Geheimnisse.)	☐	☐	☐
Mein Partner oder Partnerin und ich haben ein gemeinsames intellektuelles Leben, welches schwierig zu ersetzen wäre.	☐	☐	☐
Das Empfinden meiner persönlichen Identität (wer ich bin) ist mit meinem Partner oder Partnerin und unserer Beziehung verbunden.	☐	☐	☐
Mein Partner oder Partnerin und ich teilen uns viele Erinnerungen.	☐	☐	☐

20. Bitte beurteilen Sie die folgenden Aussagesätze bezüglich Ihrer aktuellen Beziehung.

CM01 

Ich stimme ... zu!	überhaupt nicht	voll und ganz	kann ich nicht beantworten
Ich möchte, dass unsere Beziehung für eine sehr lange Zeit andauert.	☐	☐	☐
Ich wäre sehr traurig, wenn unsere Beziehung in naher Zukunft enden würde.	☐	☐	☐
Ich fühle mich unserer Beziehung sehr zugetan – sehr stark mit meinem Partner oder Partnerin verbunden.	☐	☐	☐
Ich bin auf die langfristige Zukunft meiner Beziehung ausgerichtet (zum Beispiel stelle ich mir vor, in einigen Jahren mit meinem Partner oder Partnerin noch zusammen zu sein).	☐	☐	☐

21. Wie lange ist es her, dass Ihre letzte Beziehung beendet wurde?

BZ08 

Jahre:

[bitte auswählen] ▼

Monate

[bitte auswählen] ▼

BZ09 

22. Wie alt sind Sie?SD04 

Ich bin ... Jahre alt.

**23. Studieren Sie Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft?**SD05 

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nein

24. Welchem Geschlecht fühlen Sie sich zugehörig?SD02 

Ich bin ...

- ☐ weiblich
☐ männlich
☐ anderes Geschlecht (bitte nennen):

25. Welche ist Ihre sexuelle Orientierung?SD01 

Ich bin ...

- ☐ heterosexuell
☐ homosexuell
☐ bisexuell
☐ andere sexuelle Orientierung (bitte nennen):

- ☐ Das möchte ich nicht sagen!

26. Welchen formal höchsten Bildungsgrad haben Sie bereits abgeschlossen?SD03 

Ich bin ...

- ☐ Pflichtschule
☐ Lehre/Handelsschule oder ähnliches
☐ Matura/Abitur oder ähnliches
☐ Bachelor-Studium oder ähnliches
☐ Magister/Master/Diplom-Studium oder ähnliches
☐ anderer (bitte nennen):

Last Page

Herzlichen Dank für die Beantwortung dieses Fragebogens!

Falls Sie Fragen oder Anregungen zu dieser Studie haben, können Sie sich gerne bei mir melden (wolfgang.paul@live.at).

Sie können das Fenster nun schließen.

Wolfgang Paul, Universität Wien – 2019