

February 2023

Rules Of Attraction: Females Perception of Male Self-Representation in a Dating App

Olga Roshchupkina

Ph.D. student Soongsil University Seoul, Korea, o.roshchupkina@gmail.com

Olga Kim

Master's Student Sungkyunkwan University Seoul, Korea

Eun-Ju Lee

Professor Sungkyunkwan University Seoul, Korea

Follow this and additional works at: <https://amj.kma.re.kr/journal>



Part of the [Advertising and Promotion Management Commons](#), [E-Commerce Commons](#), [Marketing Commons](#), and the [Other Business Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Roshchupkina, Olga; Kim, Olga; and Lee, Eun-Ju (2023) "Rules Of Attraction: Females Perception of Male Self-Representation in a Dating App," *Asia Marketing Journal*: Vol. 24 : Iss. 4 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.53728/2765-6500.1597>

This Research Notes is brought to you for free and open access by Asia Marketing Journal. It has been accepted for inclusion in Asia Marketing Journal by an authorized editor of Asia Marketing Journal.

Rules of Attraction: Females Perception of Male Self-Representation in a Dating App[☆]

Olga Roshchupkina ^b, Olga Kim ^a, Eun-Ju Lee ^{a,*}

^a Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, South Korea

^b Soongsil University, Seoul, South Korea

Abstract

In the current study, we explore how women decide whether to accept or reject a potential match offered by a dating app (Tinder). Specifically, we were trying to identify overlying factors that influence the decision and understand how women make a judgment based on limited cues provided by a Tinder profile. Women largely base their decision on the perceived attractiveness and character of the potential match. The findings suggest that attractiveness is highly subjective, with no universal rules that can be quantified; thus, it is hard to predict acceptance of the potential match. There are however factors that contribute significantly to profile rejection, such as a big age difference and the inability to clearly see the face of the person.

Keywords: Tinder, Online self-presentation, Online dating, Mixed methods research

1. Introduction

Online dating apps become more and more important both socially and economically. Meeting romantic partners online is especially prevalent among younger demographics but is among the top choices for other age groups as well (Nolsoe 2020); dating apps gain more social acceptance (Smith and Duggan 2013). They also constitute a huge industry: the global market of online dating apps was valued at USD 7.55 billion in 2021 (Polaris Market Research 2022). Tinder, the most popular dating app in the world, overtook the top earner spot in the App Store with one of its premium functions (Tinder Gold) launch (TechCrunch 2017).

For men, the pre-interaction stage of Tinder usage (selection process) is much more competitive than for women. The previous academic research on Tinder usage showed that women are much more selective than men while “swiping”. It also suggested that just minor changes in male profiles (such as uploading a higher number of pictures) can significantly improve their number of matches (Tyson et al. 2016). There are services (both commercial and community-based)

that offer Tinder profile evaluation and improvement services (mostly for men). The sources of expertise of such services are, however, unknown. The current research aims to discover how women evaluate male profiles on Tinder and what are the optimal profile characteristics.

We employed a mixed methodology for this research: the first stage consisted of 10 qualitative interviews and the second stage was an experiment, combining collecting behavioral data with measuring brain activation with fNIRS. The results supported previous research findings that women are quite selective. The results also showed that while there are no universal rules of attraction, there are more universal patterns for rejecting the match. The major reasons for the rejection, aside from objective factors, such as the big age difference with the respondent, included the ones that can be easily changed. The biggest contribution to the rejection was the fact that the man’s face can’t be clearly seen in the picture, being it because of the face mask, hat, or pose/angle, supporting the previous research that states that the face is “a central source of social information” (Olivera-La Rosa, Arango-Tobón, and Ingram 2019). When a face can be

[☆] This research was funded by Korea National Research Foundation (NRF) (2021R1A2B5B01001391).

Received 10 December 2022; accepted 11 January 2023.
Available online 7 February 2023

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: o.roshchupkina@gmail.com (O. Roshchupkina), olyachi@gmail.com (O. Kim), elee9@skku.edu (E.-J. Lee).

seen, noticeable contributors to rejection were weird or unfriendly facial expressions and excessive photo editing.

The current research contributes to the stream of research on self-presentation in an online dating context (Dunlop 2018; Ellison, Heino, and Gibbs 2006; Gibbs, Ellison, and Heino 2006; Ward 2017). However, we shift the focus from the construction of the profile to the “cue utilization” (Tong et al. 2020) or interpretation of the cues by the addressees. The previous research that explored cue utilization was to our knowledge mostly concentrated on the textual cues (Tong et al. 2020; van der Zanden, Schouten, et al. 2022). The present study, however, aims to approach both textual and visual cues, but focuses specifically on the visual ones, since they were found to be more important for the audience. We also concentrate on the female perspective, since while there are differences in female and male approach to “tindering” there is lack of research exploring each of the gender’s strategies in-depth.

2. Conceptual background

2.1. Research background: Tinder introduction

Launched in 2012 Tinder is currently one of the most popular dating (or social discovery) apps in the world. It is available in 190 countries and more than 40 languages; it was downloaded more than 530 million times since its launch (Match Group 2022). Tinder is a location-based dating and social networking app. Usually, Tinder user profiles include quite limited information, containing one to six pictures, age, interests, and a short bio. When users log into the app, they are shown profiles of other users matching their criteria (usually, users can choose their preferred gender, age range, and maximum distance). Profiles of potential matches are shown one by one, and each of them contains two large buttons, labeled with a cross (reject) and a heart (accept). Users choose one of the options, by swiping the profile left (rejection) or right (acceptance). If both users chose to accept each other, they receive a notification and can start chatting in the app. The whole process of app usage can be roughly divided into two processes: selection (choosing whether to accept suggested profiles or not) and interaction (communication with the matches).

2.2. Academic research of Tinder usage

The previous academic research on Tinder usage and online dating, in general, was mostly related to the users’ personality traits and motives for the usage of the online dating apps (LeFebvre 2018; Ranzini

and Lutz 2017; Sumter, Vandenbosch, and Ligtenberg 2017; Timmermans and De Caluwé 2017a,b). Interestingly, the motives of Tinder usage extend far beyond just finding a romantic or sexual partner and include entertainment, ego-bust, getting in touch with locals while traveling and plain curiosity (Timmermans and De Caluwé 2017a; Ward 2017). Some researchers also explored the consequences of Tinder usage, ranging from the likelihood of forming a romantic relationship (Erevik et al. 2020; Timmermans and Courtois 2018) and well-being (Barrada and Castro 2020) to body image (Barrada and Castro 2020; Strubel and Petrie 2017).

Experience with Tinder, usage strategies and evaluation criteria are quite different for men and women, with men usually employing a “mass-like” strategy and women being more selective (Berkowitz et al. 2021), which can be paralleled with using inclusion vs exclusion strategy (Lee and Park 2019) while forming a consideration set. As a result of such strategies, women receive considerably more matches than men. It also suggested that just minor changes in male profiles (such as uploading a higher number of pictures) can significantly improve their number of matches (Tyson et al. 2016).

The desire to receive more matches and thus more opportunities to interact with potential romantic partners make people choose a self-presentation strategy while constructing their Tinder profile. The first impression in the online environment is relocated from the first meeting to the first interaction with the profile (Ward 2016), thus making it extremely important. Tinder interface heavily empathizes with photos and facilitates rapid judgments, based on very limited cues (Olivera-La Rosa, Arango-Tobón, and Ingram 2019). Previous research suggests that people are trying to choose photos balancing attractiveness and authenticity (Ward 2017). That research, however, does not answer, how those photos are perceived by the observers.

With Tinder being more competitive for men, there are online services (both commercial and community-based) that offer Tinder profile evaluation and improvement services, mostly targeting men. For example, the r/Tinder subreddit has a Weekly Profile Review Thread, where users evaluate other users’ Tinder profiles and offer advice on optimization, attracting hundreds of requests every week (Reddit 2002); online service Roast (ROAST 2022) offers Tinder profile review and optimization. It is, however, questionable, how objective these services are in their recommendations. Thus, we would like to understand how women actually judge male profiles, which criteria they use for evaluation, and if there are ways to make any male profile more effective. Thus:

RQ1: Which criteria females use to evaluate male profiles on Tinder?

RQ2: What are their reasons for accepting/rejecting a male profile?

RQ3: How men can optimize their Tinder profile to get more matches?

3. Research methodology

3.1. Study

In the current study, we aimed to explore how women decide whether to accept or reject a potential match offered by a dating app (Tinder). Specifically, we were trying to identify underlying factors that influence the decision and understand how women make a judgment based on limited cues provided by a Tinder profile.

3.2. Method

Design and procedure. Mixed methods refer to the research designs that use both qualitative and quantitative methods within one study and integrate the results of both methods (Creswell 2014; Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri 2021; Onwuegbuzie, Johnson, and Collins 2009). It is a flexible and adaptive conceptual framework (Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri 2021) that helps to research a certain subject with both breadth and depth, neutralizing the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell 2014).

There are several common mixed methods research design types, that differ according to the order each method is used (they can be used both simultaneously and consequently) (Creswell 2014; Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri 2021). The specific tasks of the current research called for the usage of the exploratory sequential design, where the qualitative phase is conducted first, and the information received is analyzed and used to develop the instrument for the quantitative phase. Thus, the research consisted of two stages (first – qualitative, second - quantitative).

Before the launch of the first stage, we used volunteers to collect the stimuli for the research. 10 women in Seoul (Korea) had installed Tinder app on their phones and took screenshots of each third male profile picture shown to them by the app (15 profiles in total). The pictures then were sent to the researchers and 100 of them were selected to be used as stimuli for the research. 100 is the approximate number of matches people are offered by the Tinder algorithm per day (Degen and Kleeberg-Niepage 2022). The researchers have tried to ensure variety in terms of age, occupation, picture composition,

and content. One variable, however, was controlled – since the experiment was conducted in Korea, which is still quite a homogenous society, we have excluded profiles of the men who looked obviously foreign.

For the first (qualitative) stage of the research, an intensive interview method was used. It is a method of a semi-structured interview that lets the researcher combine a flexible approach with control over the process (Charmaz 2014). While the general outline of the discussion flow is pre-determined in advance, the researcher can adapt to the flow of a certain conversation and to a certain respondent, such as reformulating the questions for better understanding, probing, omitting unnecessary questions, and changing the questions' order. During the interviews, the general attitude to Tinder usage, and evaluation criteria of male profiles were explored. The first part of the interview included a short self-introduction and questions about a participant's dating experience, dating goals, attitude to online dating apps, online dating apps usage experience, and usage strategy. During the second part of the interview, the interviewees were shown several male profile pictures. For evaluating each of the images we have employed think-aloud method, which, true to its name, means that participants speak out loud all their feeling or thoughts, related to the stimuli. This method helps to capture the participants reaction to the stimuli, eliciting their spontaneous responses without any filtering (Bu and Lee 2022). After participants expressed their spontaneous reactions to the stimuli, they were asked how they would behave if there were to follow the original Tinder mechanics: would they swipe right (expressing a desire to have a chance to “match” with this profile) or left (rejecting the “match”). Then, if evaluation criteria were not mentioned spontaneously, the researchers have probed to understand based on which criteria the decision was made, and which parts of the profile attracted the respondents' attention.

The second (quantitative) stage was an experiment, combining collecting behavioral data with measuring brain activation with fNIRS. Based on the results of the first stage metrics for the behavior data collection were selected. During the second stage, 29 participants were shown 100 pre-selected male Tinder profiles each on the computer screen and decided if they would swipe right or left. Additionally, after making a decision, participants evaluated each profile based on the following criteria: attractiveness, nice personality, and trustworthiness using a 7-point Likert scale. During the whole experiment, participants were wearing NIRSIT, which is a wearable fNIRS device that uses a continuous infrared light wave to

obtain a regional hemodynamic response from the prefrontal lobe.

Participants. We recruited 10 female participants for the first stage (Mage = 28.80, SD = 4.04), 5 of whom had at least some experience of Tinder usage, while the remaining 5 had no such experience (including other online dating platforms usage experience). 29 female participants (Mage = 28.06, SD = 4.96) were recruited for the second stage, 2 of them were excluded during the analyses due to problems with data collection software, leaving behind a sample of 27 participants for further analyses. 27 participants were supposed to evaluate 100 profiles each resulting in 2700 cases, but due to the time limits on each case, 13 evaluations were not recorded, leaving the 2687 cases dataset.

3.3. Results

The qualitative interviews conducted during the first stage were transcribed and thematically coded. Moreover, during the interview, the moderators were making notes that were also used during the analyses. Thematic content analysis, which is considered the most common method of qualitative data analysis (Burnard et al. 2008) was used. This approach involves analysing transcripts and notes and identifying common themes and categories emerging from the data.

One of the major themes of the interviews was the evaluation criteria of the male profile. First, most women mentioned that they are looking for someone close to their age and automatically “swipe left” if the age difference is too big (from 2–3 years for those in their early 20s to around 5 years for those in their 30s). Second, women need to see a face of a man to make a judgment, thus they reject most of the profiles where the face cannot be seen clearly, such as presenting pictures of a man wearing a mask, hat, sunglasses, or taken from a big distance or from the back. Third, while the attractiveness of a man is indeed important to them, they also want their potential partner to be or at least look “nice” – kind, attentive, and gentle. This quality is often at least partly evaluated by the facial expression: smiling people are perceived as nice, while those with weird or serious/unfriendly expressions as not so nice. Based on those findings, we added an evaluation of those qualities (attractive, nice) to the experiment. Excessive “cutesy” photo filtering was also evaluated negatively and was often a reason for rejection.

Interestingly, most of the respondents also negatively evaluated pictures that demonstrated nude body parts (mostly upper body, but also legs above the knees), even when the men demonstrated good

physical shape. Pictures from the gym received similar reactions. The respondents gave various reasons, explaining such backlash: an accent on the physical shape can be a signal to some, that a man is not too smart, he cares about physical aspects more than about intellectual ones; it can also be a sign, that a man will be demanding to a physical shape of women he wants to meet; to some, such pictures gave an indirect message that a man is seeking for casual sex rather than dating, which was not a desirable variant for our respondents. There was also hardly verbalised concern that a muscular, athletic man might be more aggressive.

“I feel a bit uncomfortable looking at this picture . . . Maybe a guy really likes going to the gym, so he wants to share his progress, but also it might mean that he is too interested in sports. . . and not that interested in other things, like studying, so probably we won’t match” (F, 22)

Some of the pictures seemingly demonstrated conspicuous consumption: a man, posing in front of an expensive car, an image of a hand with an expensive watch, photo of a fancy meal. They were also evaluated rather negatively; women perceived such pictures as unnecessary bragging. The pictures not including a man himself, but just a hand with a watch or a meal were perceived especially unfavourable as too direct, but at the same time impersonal, aiming to show just money and not a character. We have excluded images that don’t picture a person from the quantitative stage.

“This picture of a watch, I really don’t like it. What did that man want to say? That he has enough money to buy this watch? Does he think it makes him look that good? Good enough that he doesn’t even care to show his face?” (F, 34)

Overall, women have tried to construct a narrative based on the various details of the images, such as background, poses, colours and angles. Every part of an image could be perceived as a cue, a signal of some sort. For example, if a picture background showed nature, women assumed that a man likes nature; if it was taken in a café, they suggested that he likes cafes; if a picture was taken at a sightseeing place, he was perceived as interested in traveling, if there was a cute animal on the picture, a man was seen as an animal lover and/or caring, nice person. Certain angles and poses were also used as cues: e.g., if a picture was taken from below, a man was perceived as literally looking down on the viewer, i.e., too arrogant. Looking away from the camera was perceived as an indication of a shy or dreamy person.

Further evaluation of such cues however depended on the woman – if the suggested trait resonated with her, she reacted positively, otherwise, it might not be meaningful.

Moreover, women showed attention to the general aesthetics of the picture, such as composition, and background. Overall, women preferred pretty or picturesque backgrounds, such as beautiful nature, landmarks, or aesthetic cafés to random ones, such as elevators, bathrooms, or messy apartments. Women clearly preferred shots focused on the person to the ones where a man was somewhere far away or in the corner; moderately staged shots were perceived more positively than the ones with awkward or random poses or facial expressions.

There were some major differences observed between Tinder users and non-users. First, non-users have more barriers to dating app usage. And one of many barriers for non-users is related to trust issues and perceived risk. Previous research shown that mobile SNS usage in general is associated with risk which (especially privacy risk) affects the attitude to the application itself (Kim and Kim 2014) and dating apps can be seen as a less safe variation of SNS. Women tend to be suspicious towards people they can potentially meet online since most of their previous experiences of meeting new people involved at least some “guarantors” of their reputation, such as common friends or same school. And meeting people on Tinder is even riskier than in other SNS app since users can't see if they have any contacts in common.

Those who have already used Tinder or other online dating platforms (among our respondents they also tended to be older) have obviously overcome such barriers and decided to trust their own judgment. There is another interesting difference between users and non-users: while non-users mainly pay attention to pictures, during the profile evaluation, users pay more attention to other cues as well, such as name (real name or an obvious nickname), school, job, and hobbies. These criteria seem to help them to understand at least preliminarily if a man can be trusted or not. Adding school and or profession and a name that is perceived to be real contributed to making a man look more trustworthy for Tinder users (but not non-users). Since trust came up as an important issue, we have added its measure to the experiment. This supports earlier research that consumer category usage experience influences the type of cues they utilise during the evaluative process (Kim et al. 2015).

The actual experiment involved respondents making a choice to reject or accept a potential match based on one profile screenshot, following the original

Tinder mechanic. Moreover, to evaluate the reasons behind the choice respondents had to evaluate each man's perceived attractiveness, character, and trustworthiness. Since each respondent had to evaluate 100 stimuli, measures were very simple and straightforward and consisted of 1 item (“attractive”, “nice”, “trustworthy”) not to overload the procedure.

As for the second stage data analyses, first, we have analyzed the ratio between “swipes right” and “left”, thus accepting or rejecting a potential match, both in general and separately for each respondent and each profile. The results supported previous findings that women are quite selective: only in 30% (822 out of 2687) of cases on average they have chosen to swipe right; some are even more selective – around 20% of the respondents “rejected” more than 80% of the profiles (See Fig. 1).

The results also showed that while there are no universal rules of attraction, there are more universal patterns for rejecting the match. While only one profile out of 100 was “liked” by more than 80% (22 out of 27) of the participants, 38 profiles were “disliked” by the same 80% (See Fig. 2).

During the qualitative stage, the big age difference was one of the most often mentioned reasons for “rejection”. To check this hypothesis, we have performed binary logistic regression with an age difference as an independent variable and outcome (“accept” or “reject”) as a dependent variable. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test showed that the chi-square is not significant (chi-square = 11.476, sig = .176), thus the data fits the model. The regression coefficient is negative ($b = -0.083$, sig = .000), which means that age difference negatively influenced the probability of acceptance. Interestingly, the model can correctly predict only the negative outcomes (100% correct predictions for rejections), but not the positive ones (.0% correct predictions for acceptance). Thus, while a bigger age difference can be a reason for rejection, just similar age is not a reason for accepting a potential match. We have also checked the correlation between age difference and attractiveness: there is a significant negative correlation between these variables (Pearson Correlation = $-.187$, sig = .000), thus women are less attracted to men who are much older or younger than themselves.

Another reason for rejecting a potential match, often mentioned during the qualitative stage was the inability to see a face on the picture clearly, being it due to a mask, sunglasses, or pose/angle. There is a significant positive correlation between a face seen clearly in the picture and a quantity of “right swipes” (Pearson Correlation = $.320$, sig = .001).

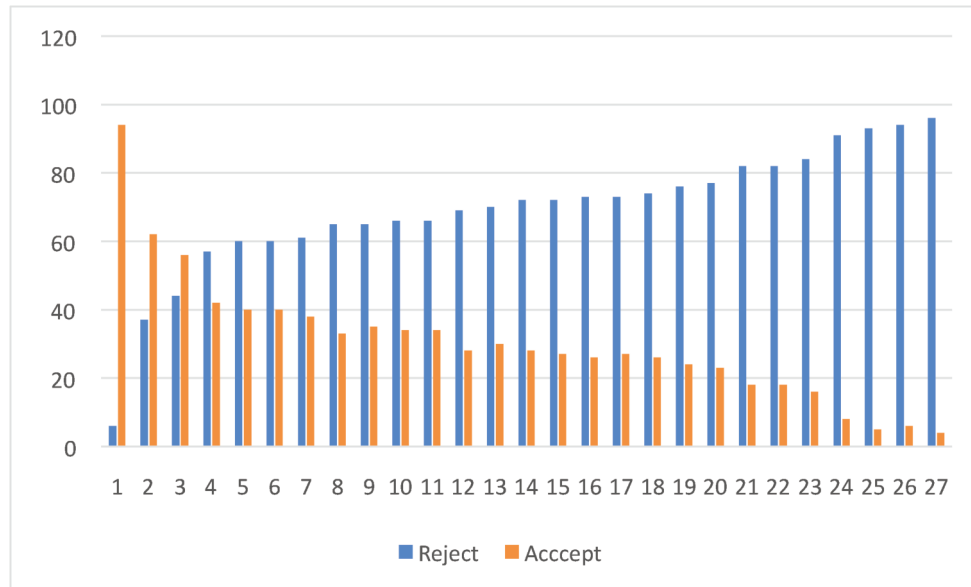


Fig. 1. Number of rejections and acceptances per respondent.

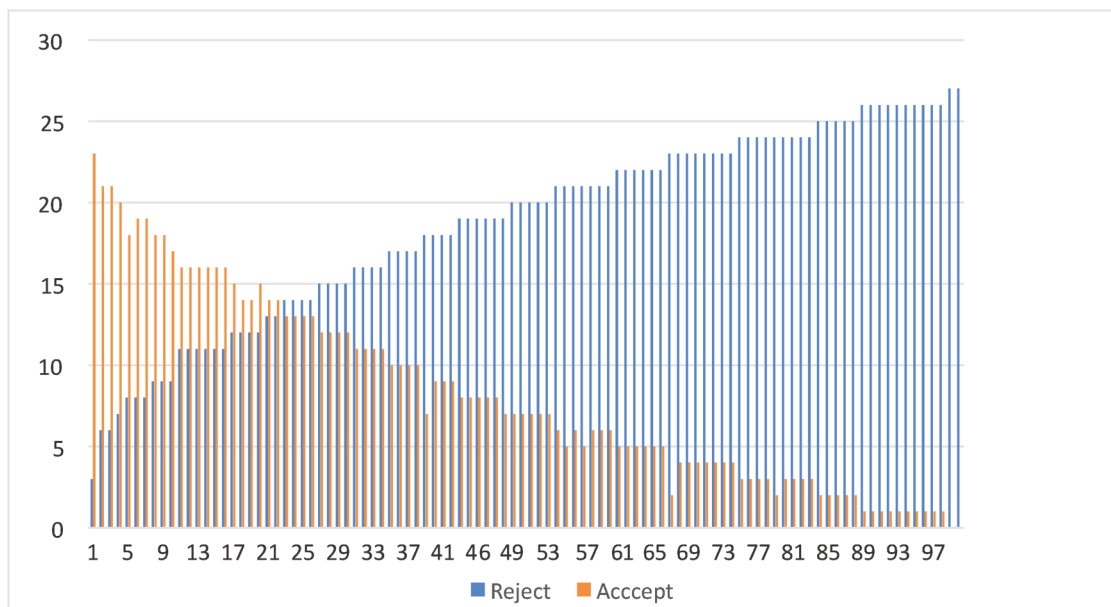


Fig. 2. Number of rejections and acceptances per profile.

To better understand possible reasons for rejection we have additionally analyzed the profiles that were rejected the most (by more than 90% of the participants). In the majority of those pictures (61.5%), a man’s face could not be seen clearly, which supports previous findings. When a face can be seen, there was weird or unfriendly facial expression (60%) or excessive photo editing (20%), which were also mentioned during the qualitative stage as the reasons for swiping left. While the overall quantity of pictures

with excessive filters was not enough to analyze the outcomes more precisely, to some extent our results support the hypothesis that unnatural photo filters facilitate social avoidance rather than social desirability (Olivera-La Rosa, Arango-Tobón, and Ingram 2019).

Additionally, we have performed logistic regression to evaluate the factors influencing the choice. The logistic regression model was able to predict 84.1% of the outcomes in total, with 91% of negative outcomes compared to only 68.4% of the positive ones, once

Table 1. Results of the binary logistic regression analysis.

	β	S.E.	Sig.
Attractive	.783	.053	.000
Nice personality	.514	.057	.000
Trustworthy	.078	.054	.145

again demonstrating that factors contributing to rejection are more predictable. Binary logistic regression analyses showed that such factors as “attractiveness” ($\beta = .783, p = .000$) and “nice personality” ($\beta = .514, p = .000$) significantly contribute to predicting the outcome (see Table 1).

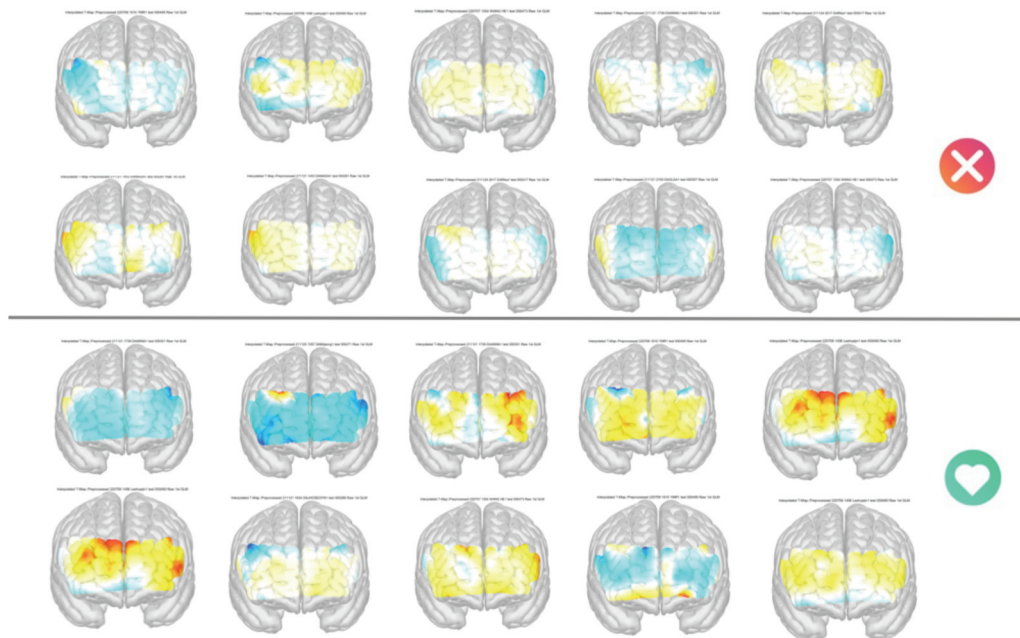
“Trustworthiness” ($\beta = .078, p = .148$) however does not help to explain the choice. Since qualitative stage demonstrated that Tinder usage is associated with trust issues and risk, we can suggest that this factor plays on the other stages, but not on potential match selection stage. For instance, it could be a barrier to the app usage in general. Moreover, it could become more important during the interaction stage, when women communicate with the men they have matched.

The preliminary analysis of the data, collected by fNIRS, once again, shows that patterns of frontal lobe activation are more varied in response to stimuli that are accepted, compared to the ones that are rejected (white areas on the picture mark inactivated areas, while colors mark varying degrees of activation) (see Picture 1).

4. Discussion and implications

Our research shows that while deciding whether to accept or reject a potential match on Tinder, women are highly selective. It also suggests that factors underlying their choice are attractiveness and the perceived nice personality of a man in the picture. The research results also show that while positive results are harder to predict since attractiveness is highly subjective, reasons for match rejection are quite universal. The reasons that will most likely make the male profile rejected can be both objective (big age difference) and those that can be easily changed (such as a face not clearly shown on the picture or weird/unfriendly facial expression).

Additionally, during the qualitative stage of the research, we had some interesting findings, though they were not tested quantitatively. While according to the previous research men view “flexing” (demonstrating their muscles) as an effective strategy for attracting women (Dunlop 2018), our findings demonstrate, that at least in the Korean context such strategy, on the contrary, is perceived rather negatively: women associate flexing with lower intelligence, potential aggression and preference of casual sex to more serious dating. Attempts of showing off by uploading photos of expensive items without any particular context were also perceived quite negatively. Overall, women were inclined to use every possible cue (background, pose, angle, facial expression) from the photo to construct



Picture 1. Examples of frontal lobe activation patterns in response to the stimuli.

a narrative and form an impression about the man depicted in it.

Moreover, we have found some differences between Tinder users and non-users. First, non-users had more barriers to the app and online dating in general, they were much more concerned about the safety and had more trust issues. Second, while for Tinder non-users photo was a primary source of information in the profile, women with previous Tinder usage experience paid more attention to the non-visual cues as well, such as job, education, hobbies, and name.

Our work continues the stream of research on self-presentation in the online dating context (Dunlop 2018; Ellison, Heino, and Gibbs 2006; Gibbs, Ellison, and Heino 2006; Ward 2017), though we shift the perspective from the sender (thus, a person, who creates a profile) to the receiver of a message (a person, who evaluates the profile). The previous research that explored the receiver's end was mostly concentrated on the role of the textual cues (Tong et al. 2020; van der Zanden, Schouten, et al. 2022), while the present research explores the profile more holistically with a focus on the visual cues. Visual cues are extremely important in the online dating context since physical attractiveness is one of the most important determinants in process of searching for a romantic partner and in an online setting such information is mostly derived from the picture (van der Zanden, Mos, et al. 2022).

We also concentrate on women and their criteria of evaluating male profiles. While previous research showed significant differences in male and female swiping strategies and preferences (Berkowitz et al. 2021; Neyt, Vandenbulcke, and Baert 2019), to our knowledge our research is the first one with the focus exclusively on women and their perception of male self-presentation in the online dating apps.

Moreover, our work contributes to academic research, by empirically exploring hypotheses that were previously formulated, but not supported by the data (Olivera-La Rosa, Arango-Tobón, and Ingram 2019). Oliveira-La Rosa et al. suggested that "moral character" (which includes generosity, lovingness, and kindness) judgments would drive swiping decisions for female heterosexual users. Our results to some point support this hypothesis, since "nice character" is a conceptually close characteristic, and it was indeed one of the predicting factors of the decision. Moreover, our data support the same authors' hypothesis stating that unnatural photo filters would facilitate avoidance rather than desirability.

The topic of the current research is important not only theoretically, but also practically since men generally get fewer matches than women (Timmermans and Courtois 2018) while at the same time they

constitute the majority of the customer base (Business of Apps 2022). Thus, managing user satisfaction is important for the company. A deeper understanding of the females' decision-making process will help the company to develop user guidelines for men and thus boost their user experience. It could be also important for the services offering profile evaluations.

The current research, however, has certain limitations. First, only one profile picture was used as a stimulus, but usually, a profile consists of several pictures. Thus, future research can explore profiles more holistically, considering the number and content of pictures and looking for the best combinations. Second, the research was conducted in a Korean context, only Koreans' profiles were used as stimuli. Further research could try to replicate the results in a different context. Third, the measures used in this research were very simple to avoid excessive load on respondents. Thus, future studies might develop more reliable measures. Fourth, we have not controlled for the respondents personality traits, while previous studies demonstrated that hedonic values and independent self-construal, for example, be important in an online social networking context (Kim and Kim 2014), higher-level construal level is associated with variety-seeking behavior (Suh and Won 2019). Furthermore, the level of group identification influences the way people evaluate the stimuli: people with higher group identification are more prone to using group identity and values and not their own preferences as a guidance (Park, Heo, and Shin 2019). Thus, those personality traits can influence the decision-making in Tinder context as well and further studies could explore such influence. Moreover, social anxiety is correlated with self-presentation concerns (Lee and Yi 2018), which in Tinder context can manifest as a fear of rejection and thus influence one's selection process, such as avoiding people who are perceived as more attractive compared to themselves and choosing people with similar attractiveness level ("matching hypothesis") (Kanters 2012). Lastly, Tinder is trying to position itself in Korea as a "friendship" search app to avoid the hook-up image being a barrier for women – this positioning strategy's influence on app usage was not considered, calling for future research in this direction.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

References

- Barrada, Juan Ramón and Ángel Castro (2020), "Tinder Users: Sociodemographic, Psychological, and Psychosexual Characteristics," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17 (21), 1–17.

- Berkowitz, Dana, Justine Tinkler, Alana Peck, and Lynnette Coto (2021), "Tinder: A Game with Gendered Rules and Consequences," *Social Currents*, 8 (5), 491–509.
- Bu, Kyunghee and Luri Lee (2022), "Is the Peak-Affect Important in Fast Processing of Visual Images in Printed Ads?: A Comparative Study on the Affect Integration Theories," *Asia Marketing Journal*, 24 (3), 96–108.
- Burnard, Philip, Paul Gill, Kate F. Stewart, Elizabeth T. Treasure, and Barbara Lesley Chadwick (2008), "Analysing and Presenting Qualitative Data," *British Dental Journal*, 204 (8), 429–432.
- Business of Apps (2022), "Tinder Revenue and Usage Statistics (2022)," (accessed October 12, 2022), <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/tinder-statistics/>.
- Charmaz, Kathy (2014), *Constructing Grounded Theory*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, John W. (2014), *Research Design: Qualitative Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Research Design, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Dawadi, Saraswati, Sagun Shrestha, and Ram A. Giri (2021), "Mixed-Methods Research: A Discussion on its Types, Challenges, and Criticisms," *Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, 2 (2), 25–36.
- Degen, Johanna and Andrea Kleeberg-Niepage (2022), "The More We Tinder: Subjects, Selves and Society," *Human Arenas*, 5 (1), 179–195.
- Dunlop, Johnathan (2018), *App-ily Ever After: Self-presentation and Perception of Others on the Dating App Tinder*, University of South Alabama.
- Ellison, Nicole, Rebecca Heino, and Jennifer Gibbs (2006), "Managing Impressions Online: Self-Presentation Processes in the Online Dating Environment," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11 (2), 415–441.
- Erevik, Eilin K., Joakim H. Kristensen, Torbjørn Torsheim, Øystein Vedaa, and Ståle Pallesen (2020), "Tinder Use and Romantic Relationship Formations: A Large-Scale Longitudinal Study," *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, Article 01757.
- Gibbs, Jennifer L., Nicole B. Ellison, and Rebecca D. Heino (2006), "Self-Presentation in Online Personals: The Role of Anticipated Future Interaction, Self-Disclosure, and Perceived Success in Internet Dating," *Communication Research*, 33 (2), 152–177.
- Kanters, Saskia (2012), *Determining Attraction on Dating Site Profiles*, Tilburg University.
- Kim, Ji Yoon and Sang Yong Kim (2014), "The Effect of Perceived Risk, Hedonic Value, and Self-Construal on Attitude toward Mobile SNS," *Asia Marketing Journal*, 16 (1), Article 9.
- Kim, Yoonjeun, Kiwan Park, Yaeri Kim, and Chung (2015), "Comparison of Experienced and Inexperienced Consumers' Utilisation of Extrinsic Cues in Product Evaluation," *Asia Marketing Journal*, 17 (3), Article 5.
- Lee, Heeju and Se-Bum Park (2019), "The Effect of Inclusion versus Exclusion on Consideration Set Size," *Asia Marketing Journal*, 21 (1), Article 3.
- Lee, Heekyung and Youjae Yi (2018), "The Impact of Salesperson Look-Brand Personality Congruence on Brand Affect," *Asia Marketing Journal*, 20 (3), Article 2.
- LeFebvre, Leah E. (2018), "Swiping Me off My Feet: Explicating Relationship Initiation on Tinder," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 35 (9), 1205–1229.
- Match Group (2022), "About Tinder," (accessed September 12, 2022), <https://www.tinderpressroom.com/about>.
- Neyt, Brecht, Sarah Vandenbulcke, and Stijn Baert (2019), "Are Men Intimidated by Highly Educated Women? Undercover on Tinder," *Economics of Education Review*, 73, Article 101914.
- Nolsoe, Eir (2020), "How Do People Find Love?," <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2020/02/13/how-do-brits-find-love>.
- Olivera-La Rosa, Antonio, Olber Eduardo Arango-Tobón, and Gordon P.D. Ingram (2019), "Swiping Right: Face Perception in the Age of Tinder," *Heliyon*, 5 (12), Article e02949.
- Onwuegbuzie, Anthony J., R. Burke Johnson, and Kathleen M.T. Collins (2009), "Call for Mixed Analysis: A Philosophical Framework for Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches," *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, 3 (2), 114–139.
- Park, Sangwoo, Dakyeong Heo, and Dongwoo Shin (2019), "Social Identity and Regulatory Focus: Can Collective Orientation Influence Consumers' Message Evaluation?," *Asia Marketing Journal*, 21 (1), 89–112.
- Polaris Market Research (2022), "Online Dating Application Market Share, Size, Trends, Industry Analysis Report, By Revenue Generation."
- Ranzini, Giulia and Christoph Lutz (2017), "Love at First Swipe? Explaining Tinder Self-Presentation and Motives," *Mobile Media and Communication*, 5 (1), 80–101.
- Reddit (2022), "Everything about Tinder," (accessed October 12, 2022), <https://www.reddit.com/r/Tinder/>.
- ROAST (2022), "Make Your Tinder Profile Irresistible," (accessed October 12, 2022), <https://roast.dating/tinder/tinder-profile>.
- Smith, Aaron and Maevie Duggan (2013), "Online Dating and Relationships." Pew Research Center.
- Strubel, Jessica and Trent A. Petrie (2017), "Love Me Tinder: Body Image and Psychosocial Functioning Among Men and Women," *Body Image*, 21, 34–38.
- Suh, Jiyeon and Eugene J. S. Won (2019), "The Effect of Construal Level on Variety Seeking across Subcategories," *Asia Marketing Journal*, 21 (3), Article 1.
- Sumter, Sindy R., Laura Vandenbosch, and Loes Ligtenberg (2017), "Love Me Tinder: Untangling Emerging Adults' Motivations for Using the Dating Application Tinder," *Telematics and Informatics*, 34 (1), 67–78.
- TechCrunch (2017), "Tinder Hits Top Grossing App in the App Store on Heels of Tinder Gold Launch," <https://techcrunch.com/2017/09/01/tinder-hits-top-grossing-app-in-the-app-store-on-heels-of-tinder-gold-launch/>.
- Timmermans, Elisabeth and Elien De Caluwé (2017a), "Development and Validation of the Tinder Motives Scale (TMS)," *Computers in Human Behavior*, 70, 341–50.
- Timmermans, Elisabeth and Elien De Caluwé (2017b), "To Tinder or Not to Tinder, That's the Question: An Individual Differences Perspective to Tinder Use and Motives," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 110, 74–79.
- Timmermans, Elisabeth and Cédric Courtois (2018), "From Swiping to Casual Sex and/or Committed Relationships: Exploring the Experiences of Tinder Users," *Information Society*, 34 (2), 59–70.
- Tong, Stephanie Tom, Elena F. Corriero, Kunto Adi Wibowo, Taj W. Makki, and Richard B. Slatcher (2020), "Self-Presentation and Impressions of Personality Through Text-Based Online Dating Profiles: A Lens Model Analysis," *New Media and Society*, 22 (5), 875–895.
- Tyson, Gareth, Vasile C. Perta, Hamed Haddadi, and Michael C. Seto (2016), "A First Look at User Activity on Tinder," in *Proceedings of the 2016 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining*, 461–466.
- Ward, Janelle (2016), "Swiping, Matching, Chatting: Self-Presentation and Self-Disclosure on Mobile Dating Apps," *Human IT*, 13 (2), 81–95.
- Ward, Janelle (2017), "What are You Doing on Tinder? Impression Management on a Matchmaking Mobile App," *Information Communication and Society*, 20 (11), 1644–1659.
- van der Zanden, Tess, Maria B. J. Mos, Alexander P. Schouten, and Emiel J. Krahmer (2022), "What People Look at in Multimodal Online Dating Profiles: How Pictorial and Textual Cues Affect Impression Formation," *Communication Research*, 49 (6), 863–890.
- van der Zanden, Tess, Alexander P. Schouten, Maria B. J. Mos, and Emiel J. Krahmer (2022), "Originality in Online Dating Profile Texts: How Does Perceived Originality Affect Impression Formation and What Makes a Text Original?," *PLoS ONE*, 17 (10), 0274860.