Tinder Motivations

[Full Title] Love me Tinder: untangling emerging adults' motivations for using the dating application Tinder

[Running Title] Tinder Motivations

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Abstract

Although the smartphone application Tinder is increasingly popular among emerging adults, no empirical study has yet investigated why emerging adults use Tinder. Therefore, we aimed to identify the primary motivations of emerging adults to use Tinder. The study was conducted among Dutch 18-30 year old emerging adults who completed an online survey. Over half of the sample were current or former Tinder users ($n = 163$). An exploratory factor analysis, using a parallel analysis approach, uncovered six motivations to use Tinder: Love, Casual Sex, Ease of Communication, Self-Worth Validation, Thrill of Excitement, and Trendiness. In contrast to previously suggested, the Love motivation appeared to be a stronger motivation to use Tinder than the Casual Sex motivation. In line with literature on online dating, men were more likely to report a Casual Sex motivation for using Tinder than women. In addition, men more frequently reported Ease of Communication and Thrill of Excitement motives. With regard to age, the motivation Love, Casual Sex and Ease of Communication were positively related to age. Finally, Tinder motivations were meaningfully related to offline encounters with Tinder matches. In sum, the study showed that emerging adults have six primary motivations to use Tinder and that these motivations differ according to one's age and gender. Tinder should not be seen as merely a fun, hookup app without any strings attached, but as a new way for emerging adults to initiate committed romantic relationships. Notably, the findings call for a more encompassing perspective on why emerging adults use Tinder.

1. Introduction

Tinder is currently considered to be the most popular dating app for iOS and Android with at least 10 million active users a day (Ayers, 2014; Freier, 2015). In The Netherlands alone around 1.2 million people have already downloaded this free app. Though Tinder was initially introduced as a general dating app (Bosker, 2013), it has also been called the hook-up or sex-app (Ayers, 2014; Sales, 2015; Thompson, 2015). Tinder is one of the first dating apps that is specifically designed as a smartphone application rather than an extension of an existing dating website. To create a personal Tinder profile, Tinder uses information from an individual's Facebook account regarding age, gender, friends and interests. The amount of personal information that is available on a personal Tinder profile is limited and the platform focuses in particular on one's appearance through pictures. Owners of a Tinder profile are asked to indicate preferences regarding online dating partners' gender, age, and vicinity. These preferences are used when searching for potential "matches." Moreover, the app makes it possible through the smartphone's GPS functionalities to locate potential matches in close range of the user. When a match is found, the user decides based on the profile picture and interests of the potential match, if he or she is interested or not. The user indicates his/her interest by swiping right (saying "like") or left (saying "pass"). When two users like each other, a 'match' is made which means that users can chat with each other on Tinder.

Some websites celebrate the opportunities that Tinder offers to hook-up, whereas others lament how Tinder facilitates a hookup culture (Sales, 2015). However, scientific literature on emerging adults' use of dating websites in the past has taught us that users often have a more diverse set of motivations to use these media besides simply hooking up (Gudelunas, 2012; Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014). Up to now, it is unclear which reasons emerging adults have for using this particular dating app. Therefore, the current exploratory study examines the motivations of emerging adults to use Tinder with particular attention for

potential demographic antecedents (i.e., age and gender) and offline consequences (i.e., dates and casual sex encounters) of Tinder motivations.

This knowledge contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First, theory on media use and effects highlights that in-depth knowledge on motivations for media use is necessary to truly understand why individuals choose to consume a particular medium (Nabi & Krcmar, 2004; Slater, 2007; So, 2012). Prior literature on motivations for traditional media, social media and dating websites has highlighted that some motivations are shared across platforms (Sundar & Limperos, 2013), while other motivations are unique to a particular platform (Ryan, Chester, Reece, & Xenos, 2014). As no study has yet explored which motivations drive the use of Tinder, the current study is a first step in addressing this lacuna.

Second, geosocial apps, like Tinder, have been suggested to affect emerging adults' romantic and sexual life, sometimes in an undesirable way, for example increased experiences of sexual harassment (Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2008) and increased risk for sexually transmitted infections (Beymer et al., 2014; Bhattacharya, 2015). Learning about why individuals use these applications is a first step to organize prevention efforts that may combat these potential adverse outcomes.

2. Theoretical background and research questions

2.1 Motivations to Use Tinder

Dating apps, like Tinder, are used most frequently by 25-to-34-year olds (Ayers, 2014; Smith & Duggan, 2013). The Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory may explain why emerging adults are such avid users of Tinder. This theory highlights that individuals use certain types of mass media to fulfill specific needs and desires (Katz, 1959; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). These needs and desires can be specific to one's developmental stage or personality. Although U&G theory was developed to study mass media, the theory has been successfully applied to understand why people use social media (Foregger, 2008; Ryan et al.,

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2014; Shao, 2009; Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009). In this view, the literature has suggested that physical, social, as well as psychosocial gratifications stimulate users' consumption of online dating applications (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007; Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014).

Physical gratifications sought in media content may relate to exercising or eating (Farkas, 2010), but also to sexual pleasure (Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014). Needs of sexual pleasure are increasingly present during emerging adulthood (Diamond, 2004; Garcia, Seibold-Simpson, Massey, & Merriwether, 2015; Patrick, Maggs, & Abar, 2007). Motivations related to sexual pleasure are likely to drive the use of a dating app like Tinder as prior research has revealed similar motivations for the use of other dating applications (Gudelunas, 2012; Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014).

Social gratification sought in media content relates to needs, such as establishing new friendships and finding a romantic partner (Hart, 2015; Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). Emerging adults aim to establish their first long-term serious relationships and increasingly value commitment as a characteristic of social relationships (Sumter, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2013). Prior research suggested that for emerging adults online media are an aid to fulfil these developmental needs of finding a romantic partner and maintaining friendships (Gudelunas, 2012; Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014).

Psychosocial gratification refers to needs that have a psychological origin but interact with social variables (Bartsch, 2012; McAdams & Olson, 2010). Developmental literature argues that several psychosocial needs become more prominent during adolescence and remain important during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Psychosocial needs have been reported to explain users' consumption of dating media (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). For instance, dating applications are used to satisfy a need for sensation (Gudelunas, 2012; Lawson & Leck, 2006; Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014). Moreover, scholars have remarked that the novelty of new media tools are an important motivation for usage among youngsters (Lai

& Yang, 2014; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2010; Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011). In addition, individuals use social media platforms to satisfy psychosocial needs related to self-worth, such as validating the sexual attractiveness of one's own appearance and feeling better about oneself in general (Nesi & Prinstein, 2015; Yurchisin, Watchravesringkan, & McCabe, 2005). Lastly, research on computer-mediated-communication has repeatedly suggested that people use this medium to satisfy a need for (sexual) communication without spatial and social constraints (Couch & Liamputtong, 2008; Subrahmanyam, Smahel, & Greenfield, 2006; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007; Whitty & Carr, 2006).

Although we expect that the motivations of emerging adults will reflect the three broad categories discussed above, i.e. sexual, social and psychosocial, it remains unclear which specific motivations can be identified. Therefore, the main aim of the study is to uncover emerging adults' specific motivations to use Tinder. The results of this exploration will be used to create the first measure of Tinder motivations. Thus, based on the literature on emerging adulthood and motivations for using new media reviewed above, we will explore the following research question (RQ):

RQ1: What are emerging adults' primary motivations to use Tinder?

2.2 Antecedents of Tinder Motivations

Studies have found gender and age differences in users' physical, social and psycho-social motivations to use online tools (Barker, 2009; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Gender socialization literature has emphasized that men and women are socialized toward different physical, social and psycho-social needs (Haferkamp, Eimler, Papadakis, & Kruck, 2012; Tolman, Striepe, & Harmon, 2003). For instance, sexual satisfaction is regarded as particularly important for men (Tolman et al., 2003). Accordingly, men more often attach importance to the physical need of sexual gratification as an explanation for their social media use (Baumgartner, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2010; Clemens, Atkin, & Krishnan, 2015).

Regarding age, developmental literature argues that physical, social and psycho-social needs change while emerging adults grow older (Arnett, 2000; Garcia et al., 2015; McAdams & Olson, 2010). For instance, romantic relationships become more serious during emerging adulthood (Garcia et al., 2015). At the same time, having casual sex becomes increasingly common as emerging adults grow older (Grello, Welsh, & Harper, 2006). Thus, needs, such as having casual sex as well as finding a long-term partner, grow stronger during emerging adulthood. As emerging adults' needs may change when they grow older, their motivations for using a dating application as Tinder may also change. Research supports this reasoning as an influence of age on motivations to use online media has been found (Stephure, Boon, MacKinnon, & Deveau, 2009).

In sum, a second research question reads:

RQ2: Do the motivations to use Tinder differ according to emerging adults' age and gender?

2.3 Consequences of Tinder Motivations

Different motivations may result in different usage patterns of online applications (Joinson, 2008; Lin & Lu, 2011; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012; Ross et al., 2009; Smock et al., 2011). For instance, emerging adults who used social media as a way to maintain their social relationships have been found to use social media more often in general (Lai & Yang, 2014). Thus, the physical, social and psycho-social motivations uncovered for Tinder may influence how often people use the dating application.

Similarly, differences exist in relationships between different motivations to use online media and offline outcomes, such as arranging offline meetings with an online partner or engaging in casual sex adventures with online partners (Gudelunas, 2012). For instance, qualitative research suggests that users who use dating apps because of physical gratification more frequently meet dating app partners offline to have casual sex as compared to users who

are not motivated to use the app for physical gratification (Gudelunas, 2012). This research thus suggests that different gratifications may result in different offline outcomes.

Together, a third research question reads:

RQ3: How do Tinder motivations relate to the frequency of using Tinder and Tinder offline outcomes?

3. Method

3.1 Sample

The sample was a convenience sample recruited though the network of two graduate students from [identifying data deleted] by publishing a link on their social network accounts during the fall of 2014. A total of 266 emerging adults, aged 18-30 years, took part in the study. Of the initial sample 61.3% had used Tinder at least once ($n = 163$) and were part of the analytical sample for this study. A total of 37.6% of the initial sample had never used Tinder ($n = 100$) and, 1.1% did not answer the question ($n = 3$); individuals who had never used Tinder were omitted from the analyses. Of the 163 people who had used Tinder at least once, 59 were current Tinder users and 104 were former Tinder users. The gender distribution of Tinder users was about equal, with 83 male users and 80 female users. On average, Tinder users were 23.74 years old ($SD = 2.56$) and still attending university (62.7%). The current data were part of a larger study looking at body image during emerging adulthood, thus respondents who had no experience with Tinder only completed the second part of the survey.

3.2 Procedure and Design

To gain insights into the uses and gratifications of Tinder an online survey was designed using the Qualtrics online survey tool. The first page of the survey provided the respondents with information about the aim of the study and also detailed their rights as a research participants. Respondents were ensured that the survey was anonymous and were told that they could stop at any time. At the end of this first page the respondents were

requested to indicate whether they wanted to participate in the study. Only respondents who were between 18 and 30 years old and gave their active consent by clicking 'Yes, I would like to participate' continued on to the survey. In all other cases the respondents were automatically led to the end of the survey. Filling out the survey took approximately 20 minutes. Respondents did not receive a monetary award or course credits.

3.3 Measures

3.3.1 Socio-demographic information. Participants indicated their gender and age (in years).

3.3.2 Use of Tinder. Respondents who were current or former users of Tinder indicated how often they used the app on a scale, ranging from 1 = *once or twice*, 2 = *monthly,* 3 = *1 to 3 times a week*, 4 = *4 to 5 times a week, and* to 5 = *every day*. The use of Tinder was normally distributed, skewness = 0.22 and kurtosis = -0.77.

3.3.3 Outcomes of Tinder use. Participants indicated whether they had met a Tinder match offline for a date (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*) and how many Tinder one-night stands they have had. Number of one-night stands was recoded into a dichotomous variable (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*) due to its skewness.

3.3.4 Tinder Motivations. In line with prior explorative studies that aimed to identify motivations for new media usage, the measure of Tinder Motivations was developed in three steps (Malik, Dhir, & Nieminen, 2016). First, following a review of the literature on uses and gratifications in the context of social media, internet dating (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Smock et al., 2011; Valentine, 2013; Wu, Wang, & Tsai, 2010), and sexual online behavior (Baumgartner et al., 2010) a large item pool was created. This item pool consisted of 46 items that reflected a variety of physical, social and psycho-social motivations to use Tinder. For each item, respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed with the statement, on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Second, the item pool was reviewed by one Tinder user and one former Tinder user

who had not been involved with the selection of the items to determine the clarity of the item

phrasing. Based on their feedback, the wording of the items was refined. The final item pool

is included in Appendix A.

As a third and final step to uncover specific categories of dominant motivations for

using Tinder, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis. The results of the exploratory

factor analysis are described below.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Tinder Use and Tinder Offline Encounters

With regard to Tinder use frequency, 23% of the current and former Tinder users

accessed the app on a daily basis. Around 20% indicated that they used the app less than once

a month or had only used it once or twice. Almost half (45.5%) had gone on a real life date

following a Tinder match and 18.6% had a one-night stand following a Tinder match.

Although the offline dating experiences following Tinder were similar for men and women,

men reported more one-night stands than women (see Table 1).

4.2 RQ1: What are emerging adults' motivations to use Tinder?

Before conducting the exploratory factor analysis which aimed to uncover the

underlying motivations emerging adults have for using Tinder, we investigated the Kaiser-

Meyer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy index and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Field,

2005). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was acceptable, KMO = 0.82, as well as the Bartlett's Test of

Sphericity, $p < .001$. Consequently, a principal components factor analysis with VARIMAX

rotation was performed on all 46 items. The full list of items is included in an additional file.

Following the approach taken by Mull and Lee (2014) to identify the number of factors that

had to be retained, we ran a parallel analysis which is also known as a Eigenvalue Monte

Carlo Simulation (EMCS). These analyses are based on 1,000 random created datasets. The

Eigenvalue Monte Carlo Simulation (EMCS) showed that six factors should be retained as the

observed eigenvalues of these factors exceeded the recommended cut-off based on the 95th

percentile (O'Connor, 2000). These six factors explained 48.78% of the variance. Once the

number of factors were determined, items were selected that had factor loadings of .4 and

higher, and had no secondary loadings that differed more than .2 from the primary loading.

Descriptive statistics and psychometric properties for the six factors are presented in

Table 2. The factor loadings of the retained items ranged between 0.56 and 0.86. The

reliability of first four factors was good (Cronbach's α > .85). The fifth factor consisted of

two items with an inter-item correlation of .47, $p < .001$. The final scale consisted of three

items and demonstrated a marginal reliability, Cronbach's α = .65.

The first motivation factor was labelled Ease of Communication and reflected a

psycho-social need, i.e. feelings of being more at ease making connections online than offline.

The Love motivation reflected the motivation to use Tinder to find a long-term committed

relationship (psycho-social need). The Casual Sex motivation indicated using Tinder for

physical, sexual needs including both online and offline sexual behaviors. The Self-Worth

Validation motivation referred to using Tinder to receive positive feedback about one's

appearance and feeling more confident and happy by receiving validation in general (psycho-

social need). The Thrill of Excitement motivation included two items that emphasized the

rush and kick associated with the app (psycho-social need). Finally, the Trendiness motivation

showed that for some emerging adults the fact that Tinder is new and often used by peers is a

motivation to also use Tinder (psycho-social need). The correlations between the motivations

are presented in Table 3.

Paired-samples t-tests were conducted to test which motivations significantly differed

from each other (see Table 2 for mean scores on all factors). A Bonferonni correction was made

(i.e., significance level of .006). All motivations differed significantly from each other ($p_s \leq$

.001), except the motivations Love and Self-Worth Validation (p = .975), and Thrill of

Excitement with Trendiness ($p = .01$). Thus, we can conclude that emerging adults most often use Tinder for the excitement and because it is a new and cool app (these motivations had the highest means and differed significantly from the other motivations). Furthermore, Tinder is more often used to find a steady relationship rather than merely sexual encounters (Love > Casual Sex). Tinder was the least often used because of the ease of communicating with others through this app.

4.3 RQ2: Are there Age and Gender Differences in Tinder Motivations?

Zero-order correlations indicated significant positive relationships of age with the motivations Love, Casual Sex and Ease of Communication (see Table 3). The importance of these motivations thus tends to increase when emerging adults become older. A MANOVA-analysis further revealed significant gender difference for the motivations, Casual Sex, Ease of Communication and Thrill of Excitement, Wilks'$\Delta = .72$, $F(6, 140) = 8.958$, $p < .000$, $\eta^2 = .28$. Men reported a higher Casual Sex, Ease of Communication and Thrill of Excitement motivations than women (p's $< .05$; mean levels in Table 4). Overall, age and gender differences were found for physical, social and psycho-social motivations.

4.4 RQ3: How are Tinder motivations related to Tinder Use and Outcomes?

To review how Tinder motivations were related to Tinder use and outcomes, zero-order correlations were inspected (Table 3), which were followed by regression analyses to further probe the relationships.

Tinder Use. Zero-order correlations showed that the frequency of using Tinder (Tinder use) was positively related to the motivations Love, Casual Sex, Self-Worth Validation and the Thrill of Excitement (see Table 3). Thus, Tinder was used more often by those emerging adults who used the app to find a romantic partner (Love motivation), for sexual satisfaction (Causal Sex motivation), to feel better about themselves (Self-Worth Validation motivation) and because of the kick (Thrill of Excitement motivation).

To investigate the relationship between Tinder motivations and Tinder Use in more detail we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis with 5000 bootstrap samples, including both age and gender as control variables. The results showed that the control variables and six Tinder Motivations together significantly predicted Tinder Use, R^2= .18, Adjusted R^2 = .10, $F(8, 84) = 2.227$, $p = .033$. The bootstrapped results showed that of the six motivations Self-Worth Validation was the only motivation that significantly related to a higher Tinder Use (β = .45, $p = .018$).

Tinder Outcomes. Zero-order correlations showed that using Tinder for Casual Sex was positively related to meeting Tinder matches offline (see Table 3); the motivation was somewhat more strongly related to having a one night stand ($r = .40$) than going on a date ($r = .22$). Furthermore, the Love motivation was positively related with going on a date, and using Tinder for the Thrill of Excitement motivation was positively related

Next, two logistic regression analyses were performed with 5,000 bootstrap samples to more carefully examine how the motivations are related to offline Tinder experiences, i.e. experience with Tinder dates and with Tinder one-night stands. We conducted logistic regressions because going on dates and having one-night stands were operationalized as dichotomous variables. All analyses controlled for gender and age as we revealed above that they relate to motivations to use Tinder. All reported significance levels of regression coefficients are based on bootstrapped analyses.

The logistic regression model predicting going on a Tinder date (yes/no) was significant (see Table 5). Going on an offline date with a Tinder match was significantly predicted by two motivations, namely positively by Love and negatively by Ease of Communication. Thus, those who used Tinder to find a romantic partner were more likely to go on a date with a match, whereas those emerging adults who used Tinder because they felt more comfortable talking online to people than offline, were less likely to go on a date with a

Tinder match.

Finally, the logistic regression model predicting whether respondents had gone on a one-night stand after meeting someone on Tinder was also significant (see Table 5). Having had a one-night stand was predicted by the motivations Casual Sex, Self-Worth Validation and Thrill of Excitement. The motivations Casual Sex and Thrill of Excitement were related to a higher likelihood for a one-night stand, whereas Self-Worth Validation was related to a lower likelihood to have a one-night stand.

5. Discussion

Although media coverage of Tinder suggests that this app is used mainly for meaningless sexual hook-ups, no empirical study had yet investigated emerging adults' reasons to use Tinder. With regard to the first aim of the study, i.e., uncovering emerging adults' primary motivations to use Tinder, the current study identified six Tinder motivations, namely Love, Casual Sex, Ease of Communication, Self-Worth Validation, Thrill of Excitement, and Trendiness. The findings will be discussed by paying specific attention to each motivation (RQ1). For all motivations, we will highlight how they are related to Tinder use (RQ3), offline encounters (RQ3), age and gender (RQ2).

Using Tinder for Love and Casual Sex. The motivations Love and Casual Sex are related to using Tinder to establish new relationships, but are differently inspired by a social versus a physical need. Although Tinder has the reputation of allowing users to easily hook up with someone (Thompson, 2015), the Love motivation was stronger than the Casual Sex motivation. Still, for some emerging adults Tinder did lead to casual sex, as 17% reported that they had had a one-night stand with a Tinder match. These one-night-stands were also uniquely predicted by the motivation for Casual Sex.

With regard to gender, male Tinder users showed a higher motivation for casual sex than female Tinder users. This finding corresponds with literature on males' higher

permissive attitude toward casual sex in general (Petersen & Hyde, 2011) and research on males' higher use of the Internet to look for potential sex partners (Baumgartner et al., 2010; Tappé, Bensman, Hayashi, & Hatfield, 2013).

Finally, both the Love and Casual Sex motivations increased with age. This may be explained by developmental changes in love styles which reflect what people find important in their relationships. Sumter, Valkenburg and Peter (2013) showed that emerging adults increasingly seek out both physical (i.e., passion) as well as psychosocial gratifications (i.e. intimacy and commitment) in their relationships.

Using Tinder because it is easier: Ease of Communication. The psychosocial motivation reflecting the ease of communicating online was relatively low in the current sample. This finding aligns with literature on the rich-get-richer perspective on online dating; People who are already quite social and outgoing engage in online dating more frequently (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). In line with this perspective, we also reported that Tinder users who use the app because they feel more comfortable communicating online than offline, were less likely to meet their Tinder matches offline. Finally, men more often mentioned the ease of communication as a reason to use Tinder than women. Earlier research also showed that men consider online communication as an easier way to meet new people and potential partners than women (Haferkamp et al., 2012).

Using Tinder to feel better: Self-Worth Validation. The fourth psychosocial motivation was Self-Worth Validation, which reflected emerging adults' need to feel better about themselves by using social media. More specifically, they used Tinder to receive positive feedback on their physical appearance and interests. In contrast to many other online dating platforms, you only interact with a match on Tinder if you both indicated that you like the appearance and the interests of a person. This match may be regarded as a validation of one's self-worth among users. The idea that online communication can ameliorate feeling

lonely and unwanted has been demonstrated in earlier studies. For instance, having a large

number of opposite sex friends on the internet was related to feeling less lonely in one's

friendships more generally (Ando & Sakamoto, 2008). However, more research is needed to

establish whether using Tinder actually gratifies this need for validation by online matches,

and for which emerging adults this motivation is particularly strong. Although it is often

suggested that validation by others, particularly a validation of one's physical appearance, is

more important for women than men (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003), no

gender difference was found.

Using Tinder because it is fun: Thrill of Excitement and Trendiness. The last two

psychosocial motivations, Thrill of Excitement and Trendiness, are related to entertainment

needs and are in line with previous U&G studies concerning social networking. These studies

also found that entertainment reasons drive social media use (Foregger, 2008; Harridge-

March, Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010; Mull & Lee, 2014; Ryan et al., 2014). For instance,

people high in sensation seeking are more likely to use the internet to find someone to have

sex with (Baumgartner, Sumter, Peter, & Valkenburg, 2012). Similarly, in the current study

using Tinder for the thrill of excitement related to more risky offline consequences, namely

one-night stands with Tinder matches. With regard to gender, men showed a higher

motivation for the Thrill of Excitement than women. This finding corresponds to earlier

research that showed that men are more open to thrill and adventure than women (Butkovic &

Bratko, 2003; Rahmani & Lavasani, 2012). Although Trendiness was a main motivation, this

motivation was not significantly related to gender, age nor offline behaviors. This result may

potentially reflect that those who use Tinder because it is cool might merely be interested in

exploring the app and less interested in its functionality. It is expected that this motivation

will become less strong over time, when Tinder becomes an established form of online dating.

5.1. Implications, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Our study suggests that Tinder goes beyond the hookup culture. At the same time, Tinder particularly focuses on satisfying romantic and/or sexual needs which may have several implications for the dating experiences of emerging adults. The availability of an app that helps individuals to identify a significant other in their close surroundings at the click of a button may create the perception that nowadays it is very easy to connect and meet up with others. This technological affordance may reflect or possibly re-emphasize the importance of being in a relationship in modern day society (Spielmann, MacDonald, Joel, & Impett, 2015). Now that there are supposedly no more excuses to stay single, being single may be experienced as especially hard. Whether and how views of singlehood will change over time as a consequence of Tinder and similar smartphone applications is an interesting future subject of study.

Moreover, the opportunity that Tinder offers to meet and connect with other individuals may go hand in hand with the experienced threshold to go on a date by its users. The gamification of dating, as some have called this development (e.g., Hakala, 2013), might affect how dates organized through Tinder are viewed and the importance attached to the phenomenon of dating.

Finally, the dating app scene is becoming increasingly diverse and tailored; with new apps released almost weekly that target yet another niche (Xavier, 2016). It will be interesting to see which emerging adults are drawn to which apps, and how these apps may uniquely influence their dating and sexual health behaviors. We might see that niche apps support people to only seek out highly similar others (Stevens & Morris, 2007); the consequences of this development are unknown. However, research on partner similarity underlines the importance of this factor for long-term relationships (Regan, Levin, Sprecher, Christopher, & Gate, 2000). Nevertheless, it will be important within this research to keep in mind that to fully understand the influence of dating apps, the motivations of the users (e.g., trendiness for

Tinder) need to be taken into account as they may not always align with the intentions of the developers of the app (e.g., finding a love match on Tinder).

Although the current study has provided important insights in why emerging adults use Tinder, at least four limitations should be taken into account. First, the newly developed scale of Tinder motivations needs to be cross-validated in an independent sample. The small sample size of the current study did not allow us to adopt a split sample approach to re-examine the observed factor structure. In addition, the validity and reliability needs to be assessed more precisely, by investigating the convergent and divergent validity of the six motivations and the test-retest reliability of the scale.

Second, although the current study took a first important step in showing relationships between Tinder use and several offline behaviors, several potential important (dimensions of), offline behaviors were not included in our study. To better understand the role Tinder plays in the lives of emerging adults, it will be important to include additional measures of offline behaviors and more detailed measures of the behaviors investigated in our study. For instance, future research may examine how much time individuals spend communicating through Tinder before arranging to meet offline. Motivations may influence this amount of time: Individuals who are motivated by a casual sex drive might actually spend less time communicating online as compared to individuals who are motivated to find a love relationship. The latter group may invest more in online communication to see how well their Tinder match share the same values as they do; individuals seeking for casual sex are known to value such information less but to rather rely on physical attractiveness (Regan et al., 2000). In addition, to looking at the time it takes before Tinder matches meet each other offline, it may also be interesting to establish the number of dates that follow from a Tinder match. The number of dates might demonstrate whether Tinder is successful in facilitating long-term relationships.

Furthermore, the cross-sectional design and convenience sample limits the possibility to draw decisive conclusions and generalize our findings. Thus, the present results and its implications are limited by the use of a Dutch sample. The current cultural context is rather liberal and non-paternalistic with regard to talking about sexual topics (Schalet, 2000). At the same time, it has been suggested that the hook-up culture is more salient in the United States compared to the Netherlands, which might result in the casual sex motivation being more prominent among American emerging adults (Joshi, Peter, & Valkenburg, 2014). As such, our findings on the motivations to use Tinder may not be generalizable to other countries. A cross-national study may address this subject more in depth. Moreover, future research on Tinder use and its motivations would benefit from a longitudinal approach in order to improve our understanding of the consequences and antecedents of the six Tinder motivations and use. These studies would be able to demonstrate whether the concerns about the health consequences of using location based dating applications like Tinder are warranted (Beymer et al., 2014; Bhattacharya, 2015).

5.2. Conclusion

With smartphones playing an increasingly important role in our lives and people being nearly continuously connected to their devices (e.g., Korvorst & Sleijpen, 2014; Smith, 2013), it might be safe to assume that dating apps are here to stay. Although it will be interesting to observe whether and, if so, how dating apps will change dating life and the way we view our relationships, our findings suggest that the outcomes of these new technological developments are highly related to the goals of the user. The current study was the first to demonstrate that Tinder should not be seen as merely a fun, hookup app without any strings attached, but as a multifunctional tool that satisfies various needs among emerging adults.

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APPENDIX A

Overview of Original Item Pool Tinder Motivation Items

The items are ordered in the order of presentation to the respondents. The overview includes

full translations of the items, whereas Table 2 in the manuscript presents abbreviated versions

of the selected items. The original scale in Dutch can be requested from the first author.

I use or used Tinder (because)...

1. It is fun (TM1)

2. I enjoy browsing on Tinder (TM2)

3. When I have nobody else to talk to (TM3)

4. Everyone uses Tinder (TM4)

5. My online Tinder connections understand me better than other people (TM5)

6. To find out information about other users (TM6)

7. To look at other people's pictures (TM7)

8. To look at other people's profiles (TM8)

9. It helps me to find a romantic relationship (TM9)

10. I need someone to talk to (TM10)

11. It is exciting (TM11)

12. To cheer myself up (TM12)

13. To relax (TM13)

14. It makes me feel less alone (TM14)

15. To talk to someone about sex (TM15)

16. I find it easier to open up to others online than offline (TM16)

17. To see who else uses the application (TM17)

18. To contact a possible future romantic partner (TM18)

19. It can be exhilarating (TM19)

20. I feel that I communicate more easily online than offline (TM20)

21. I am looking for an exciting relationship (TM21)

22. To gain more self-confidence (TM22)

23. For the kick (TM23)

24. As a pleasant activity when I'm relaxing (TM24)

25. To pass the time, especially when I'm bored (TM25)

26. I feel better when I have a match on Tinder (TM26)

27. To feel more attractive (TM27)

28. I think it is funny (TM28)

29. To exchange sexy pictures with someone (TM29)

30. It is new (TM30)

31. To flirt (TM31)

32. To find out what other people think of me (TM32)

33. It is entertaining (TM33)

34. It is exciting to talk to a stranger (TM34)

35. It helps me to establish new friendships (TM35)

36. Out of habit (TM36)

37. I feel less shy online than offline (TM37)

38. I am looking for a one-night stand (TM38)

39. So people can give me compliments about my appearance (TM39)

40. To feel better about myself (TM40)

41. To find a long-term relationsip (TM41)

42. It is an easy way to meet someone (TM42)

43. It is cool (TM43)

44. When I have nothing better to do (TM44)

45. To find someone to have sex with (TM45)

46. To find someone to be with (TM46)

Table 1

Offline Encounters with Tinder Matches

	Have you been on a Tinder date?		Have you had a One-night Tinder stand?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Women	30	38	5	61
Men	32	40	21	52
All	62	78	26	113

Table 2

Summary Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis including Factor Loadings, Means, Standard Deviations and Internal Consistency.

Motivations	Factor Loading	Mean (SD)
I use/d Tinder (because)....		
Love – M = 2.24, SD =1.01, α = .88		
To contact potential romantic partner (TM18)	0.858	2.36 (1.23)
To find a romantic relationship (TM9)	0.807	2.12 (1.15)
To find a steady relationship (TM41)	0.743	1.87 (1.09)
To find someone to be with (TM46)	0.694	2.13 (1.14)
It is an easy way to meet someone (TM42)	0.596	2.66 (1.36)
Casual Sex – M = 1.88, SD = 0. 94, α = .87		
To talk about sex (TM15)	0.854	1.80 (1.05)
To have a one-night stand (TM38)	0.808	2.06 (1.26)
To find someone to have sex with (TM45)	0.794	2.06 (1.22)
To exchange sexy pictures (TM29)	0.699	1.67 (0.91)
Ease of Communication – M = 1.63, SD = 0.75, α = .89		
Online less shy than offline (TM37)	0.804	1.71 (0.93)
Online easier to open up (TM16)	0.790	1.74 (0.96)
Easier to communication online (TM20)	0.784	1.68 (0.94)
It helps me to find friendships (TM35)	0.694	1.66 (0.90)
Online connections understand me better (TM5)	0.673	1.34 (0.75)
Self-Worth Validation – M = 2.22, SD = 0.87, α = .87		
To improve my self-esteem (TM22)	0.788	2.11 (1.09)
To feel better about myself (TM40)	0.738	2.28 (1.17)

Table 2 (Continued)

Summary Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis including Factor Loadings, Means, Standard Deviations and Internal Consistency.

Motivations	Factor Loading	Mean (SD)
I use/d Tinder (because)....		
To feel attractive (TM27)	0.707	2.67 (1.07)
To feel less alone (TM14)	0.649	1.91 (0.95)
To get compliments about my appearance (TM39)	0.563	2.23 (1.14)
Thrill of Excitement – M = 2.97, SD = 1.00, r = .47		
Because it is exciting (TM11)	0.737	3.10 (1.18)
For the kick of it (TM23)	0.684	2.82 (1.16)
Trendiness – M = 2.71, SD = 0.92, α = .65		
It is new (TM30)	0.761	3.25 (1.16)
Everyone uses Tinder (TM4)	0.731	2.72 (1.17)
It is cool (TM43)	0.573	2.15 (1.15)

Note. The table includes shortened versions of the items; the full scale is included as Appendix A. Between brackets is the original item numbering. Scale ranged between 1 = *completely disagree* to 5 = *completely agree*.

Tinder Motivations

Table 3

Zero-Order Correlations between Tinder Motivations, Tinder Use and Age among Current and Former Tinder Users (n = 163)

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Love	-	.44**	.49**	.41**	.36**	.01	.16*	.29**	.12	.28**
2. Casual Sex		-	.39**	.41**	.40**	.05	.22**	.22**	.40**	.25**
3. Ease of Communication			-	.56**	.16	.23**	.02	-.04	-.11	.17*
4. Self-Worth Validation				-	.33**	.23**	.24**	.04	-.08	.07
5. Thrill of Excitement					-	.18*	.29***	.16	.27**	.11
6. Trendiness						-	.02	-.16	-.11	-.06
7. Tinder Use							-	.36**	.22**	.21**
8. Tinder Dates (0 = No, 1= Yes)								-	.44**	.21*
9. Tinder One Night stands (0 = No, 1= Yes)									-	.06
10. Age										-

$^{*}p < .05,\ ^{**}p < .01,\ ^{***}p < .001$

Table 4

Mean Differences in Tinder Motivations by Gender among Current and Former Tinder Users

(n = 163)

	Gender	
	Women	Men
Love	2.14 (1.01)	2.31 (0.97)
Casual Sex	1.42 (0.62)	2.33 (0.99)[**]
Ease of Communication	1.49 (0.61)	1.76 (0.84)[*]
Self-Worth Validation	2.16 (0.88)	2.29 (0.86)
Thrill of Excitement	2.76 (1.04)	3.15 (0.94)[*]
Trendiness	2.69 (0.96)	2.76 (0.86)

Note. Asterisks indicate significant differences between gender; **p <.001, *p <.05

Tinder Motivations

Table 5

Logistic Regressions Predicting Tinder Dates and Tinder One-Night-Stands including Odds Ratio's

	Tinder Dates					Tinder One-Night Stands				
	B	SE β	Wald's $X^2(1)$	p^b	e^{β} (odds ratio)	B	SE β	Wald's $X^2(1)$	p^b	e^{β} (odds ratio)
Control variables										
Age	0.13	0.08	2.37	.14	1.13	-0.13	0.12	1.14	.29	0.88
Gender	-0.57	0.47	1.48	.24	0.57	0.70	0.74	0.89	.35	2.01
Main predictors										
Love	0.70	0.26	7.19	.006	1.66	0.28	0.34	0.68	.41	1.33
Casual Sex	0.51	0.30	2.81	.08	2.01	1.46	0.47	9.89	.002	4.31
Ease of Communication	-0.76	0.37	4.27	.05	0.47	-0.66	0.61	1.20	.27	0.52
Self-Worth Validation	-0.05	0.29	0.03	.85	0.95	-1.12	0.53	4.58	.03	0.33
Thrill of Excitement	0.09	0.22	0.16	.71	1.09	0.62	0.33	3.44	.03	1.86
Trendiness	-0.31	0.24	1.66	.23	0.74	-0.38	0.35	1.22	.35	0.68
Constant	-2.99	2.01	2.22	.16	0.05	-0.78	2.97	0.07	.79	0.46

Note. All analyses were run on the sample of respondents who were currently using Tinder or have used it in the past. [b] *p*-values are bootstrapped *p*'s.