Love and Romanticism through IS: The Antecedents of Desire for Interaction

Research-in-Progress

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Abstract

Dating apps provide live interaction and user profiles with photos, self-descriptions, and information about the geographical distance between the user and potential mates. The literature on the influence of geographical separation information and an individual's expectation of reciprocity on the desire to interact is limited. This study aims to bridge this gap in the literature by exploring two research questions: do perceived geographical separation, perceived similarity, and the perceived attractiveness of online profiles affect a dating app user's desire for interaction; and does reciprocal expectation affect a dating app user's desire for interaction? To answer these questions, we cooperate with a dating app company to conduct quantitative research based on data collected from live interactions and a reflective questionnaire to validate our proposed conceptual model.

Keywords: dating apps, similarity, attractiveness, geographic separation, reciprocal expectation

Introduction

Rather than relying on the intuition of community elders, family members, or friends to select an unacquainted person as a compatible partner, single people who use online dating services place their romantic fate in the hands of the dating service. That dating apps attract more users than online dating websites is so pervasive that dating apps usually top the lists of the most downloaded Android applications or most popular apps in the App Store.

Dating apps essentially offer a combination of services, including access, communication, and matching. Access refers to users' exposure to a “supermarket” or “catalog” of potential romantic partners and the opportunity to evaluate potential romantic partners whom they are otherwise unlikely to encounter (Finkel et al. 2012). Communication provides users with the opportunity to use an app's synchronous messaging system, such as live instant-message chat or live interaction via the front camera of mobile devices to interact with specific potential partners before meeting face-to-face. Matching refers to an app's use of a mathematical algorithm, rather than random selection, to identify potential partners for users and ensure that they experience positive outcomes.

Previous research has shown that sex, shyness, and appearance are the primary factors in delaying a face-to-face meeting and initiating the subsequent development of a relationship (Scharlott and Christ 1995). However, the safety and anonymity of dating websites or apps help people to break free from traditional sex role norms, alleviate the pressure of awkward greetings from users who are shy of interacting with others face-to-face, and increase the attractiveness of an individual's personality to potential partners, in
addition to his or her physical attractiveness. Dating apps not only possess the same functions as dating websites, but also offer location-based services (LBS), which allow users to look for potential partners nearby. The popular dating apps on the App Store or Android application, such as, Badoo, OkCupid, BeeTalk, Match.com, and Zoosk, have already provided the services mentioned above.

Initiating interaction is a key step in the online dating process, which follows access to the “supermarket” of potential partners and leads to follow-up interactive communication. Although dating apps offer an increasingly popular setting for mobile device users, there is no integrated and adapted model to describe how users of dating apps are motivated to initiate an interaction with a potential partner through a simple greeting.

The online profile of a dating app user primarily consists of three important descriptors: photograph, geographical location, and text including age, gender, interests, and matchmaking criteria. Studies of computer-mediated communication have examined the effects of photographs and text descriptors in online profiles on interaction and self-presentation (e.g., Ellison et al. 2012). However, few studies have investigated the effect of geographical location, which is an essential function widely provided by dating apps through LBS.

Empirical evidence on the influence of geographic separation on the building and maintenance of romantic relationships is inconsistent. Some researchers argue that geographic separation makes communication grow fonder, which in turn increases the intimacy of long distance romantic relationship (e.g., Jiang and Hancock 2013). Others argue that with the advancement of information and communication technology (ICT), geographic separation will not significantly influence, or will have only a negligible effect on, romantic relationships (e.g., Morey et al. 2013). The above two contentions are founded on the shared assumption that geographic separation can damage the building or maintenance of romantic relationships, so an immediate and effective way to overcome the harm done by geographic separation is through ICT. However, the harm that geographic separation causes to the building of romantic relationships is not supported by empirical evidence, mainly due to the difficulty of accessing geographic separation data during romantic relationship building. Previous studies have used samples of people in long distance romantic relationships and their geographically close counterparts to investigate the effect of geographic separation on romantic relationships. The findings indicate that those in long distance romantic relationships are likely to develop strategies to cope with geographic separation, but those who are in geographically close relationships fail to do so. Furthermore, the findings on couples, whether in long distance or geographically close relationships, are unable to explain how perceived geographic separation influences the initiation of an interaction, which is a stage far ahead of the development of coping mechanisms for managing geographic separation. The way to bridge this gap is to have access to two geographically separated parties when an individual begins an interaction, so that the relationship between geographic separation and initiating interaction can be determined.

Meanwhile, two old Chinese adages “jìn shù lóu tái xiān dé yuè” and “yǒu yuán qiān lǐ lái xiāng huì” also suggest that according to traditional Chinese culture, the choice of a partner hinges on the distance between two people. The adage “jìn shù lóu tái xiān dé yuè” means that those who are close in distance can enjoy the benefits of their favorable position. The adage “yǒu yuán qiān lǐ lái xiāng huì” means that no distance can sever those who are united by fate. The former adage implies that proximity gives rise to attraction, whereas the latter suggests the opposite; the prediction of either adage cannot be tested unless the issue of locating an individual’s position is resolved.

The emergence of LBS as a potential means of identifying an individual’s location can be used to assess an individual’s perception of geographical separation. LBS may also help researchers to examine empirically whether an individual’s perception of geographical separation affects his or her desire to interact, which will in turn affect his or her future behavior, and thus the predictions of the two adages. Thus, measuring an individual’s perception of geographical separation with the help of LBS information is a critical issue for testing the predictions of the adages.

When selecting a date, or a companion with whom to converse, it is usually desirable that the other party reciprocates one’s choice. Before an interaction, the initiator generally cannot anticipate how various potential partners will respond. The person wishing to initiate an encounter must consider at least two factors: (1) the degree to which he or she finds the attributes of the potential partner attractive, and (2) the degree to which he or she anticipates the other will find his or her attributes attractive and hence respond
favorably to any initiatives (Huston and Levinger 1978). Likewise, when browsing a supermarket of online profiles and initiating an online encounter, dating app users will anticipate the degree to which others will find their online profile attractive and hence respond favorably to their initiatives, based on the explicit or implicit criteria for potential partners disclosed in their online profiles. Thus, dating app users’ desire for interaction is based on their anticipation of others’ goodwill.

Accordingly, when initiating a message, dating app users’ desire for interaction is likely to be affected by the perceived similarity and attractiveness derived from a potential partner’s online profile, their perception of the geographical separation from the potential partner, and their anticipation of the other’s goodwill. Consequently, the following research questions are formulated. (1) Does the perception of geographical separation, perceived similarity, or the perceived attractiveness of online profiles affect dating app users’ desire for interaction? (2) Does reciprocal expectation affect dating app users’ desire for interaction?

**Literature Review**

**Antecedents of Initiating Interaction**

Dating apps and online dating websites essentially offer a combination of access, communication, and matching services. Users can download dating apps from the Android Market or App Store and use them to look for potential partners. However, dating apps differ from dating websites because they can make use of the LBS on mobile devices to label users’ positions. LBS are accessible by mobile devices through mobile networks. As these services use information on the geographic position of a user’s mobile device, dating apps can use it and to locate the geographic positions of other users nearby. However, as dating websites were not established for mobile devices, they are unable to provide a user’s geographic position and thus a dating website user is not aware of other users nearby. Consequently, the geographic information accessible by mobile devices enhances the appeal of dating apps for users. As users are aware of the geographical distance between them and other users, or even their specific location, it is likely to influence their desire for interaction. A study on online dating by Finkel et al. (2012) defined a nine-step process of dating website use, identified the critical factors at each step, and demonstrated the factors that are of interest but have never been explored in previous research. Their nine-step model of the online dating process begins with users seeking information about one or more potential partners and ends with them developing a relationship with a partner (see Figure 1). Matching and access services take place in steps 1 to 4, whereas step 5, initiating contact, is the beginning of the communication process, which interests us most. Thus, step 5 is detailed in the following.

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**Figure 1:** An idealized and typical online dating process (adapted from Finkel et al. (2012))

**Figure 2:** Conceptual framework

Step 5 is the beginning of interaction. According to Finkel et al. (2012), website users are likely to initiate contact with potential partners whose profiles make them appear physically attractive, to have similar
interests and values, and to be of the same general age and education level as them. To the best of our
knowledge, no study has included the perception of geographical separation between dating websites
users and potential partners to explore its effect on initiating online dating interactions. The perception of
geographical separation is associated with the cost arising from the interaction after initiating contact.
Although it is convenient for people to move around in urban areas, either for one-off contact or for
constant interaction, the freshness of interaction is gradually depleted by the perception of geographical
separation. Users ultimately experience a feeling of fatigue, which damages the intensive interaction upon
which a close relationship is based. Besides, previous studies of dating websites have not examined users’
anticipation of the goodwill of potential partners, which is likely to affect their willingness to send an
initial message. Studies have found that users do not initiate contact with those who are rated similarly in
physical attractiveness, but rather contact potential partners with relatively higher attractiveness ratings
(Hitsch et al. 2010). Thus, it is believed that users prefer to pursue more attractive potential partners.
However, most users refrain from contacting those who are stunning enough to be regarded as a challenge
close to climbing Mt. Everest, because the likelihood of them not responding is higher than it would be for
someone of the same or slightly higher attractiveness than the user. Thus, dating app users are likely to
initiate contact potential partners who are expected to respond with goodwill.

In this step, we argue that users’ desire to initiate contact with potential partners is influenced not only by
their perceptions of their online profiles, but also by their anticipation of goodwill. The former involves a
combination of perceived attractiveness, perceived similarity, and perceived geographical separation. The
following sections demonstrate the effect of four factors on dating app users’ desire to initiate contact
through dating apps.

**Perceived Geographical Separation**

Contemporary social life is organized around human mobility rather than fixed locations or bounded
communities. The consequence of increased mobility among people, information, images, physical
objects, and companies is an increase in people’s inner mobility (Wang and Stefanone 2013). Inner
mobility refers to an individual’s mental and spiritual mobility, which helps him to experience the
instantaneous presence of multiple locations (Beck 2000).

A location-based service is any service or application that extends spatial information processing, or GIS
capabilities, to end users via the Internet or wireless networks. The emergence of LBS has encouraged
online dating companies to integrate this service into apps to help users look for potential partners
nearby. An idealized script for online dating is that a dating app user can grab a cup of coffee in a café
while scheduling a date with someone who he or she has just met online.

The emergence of LBS, while presenting optimal information and services to users based on their
locations, arouses users’ privacy concerns and increases their perceived privacy risk because data on their
location is collected. Accordingly, LBS are not widely accepted and used unless users of mobile devices
have to fulfill a task relevant to LBS. Dating apps provide users with both opportunities to arrange dates
with potential partners in the neighborhood, and sufficient protection by only locating users with limited
positioning accuracy and not revealing their specific whereabouts. Thus, it is believed that dating app
users are willing to take the risks of loss of privacy and safety to obtain the high-risk return.

The decision making that dating app users face when reading geographical distance information is
analogous to the decision to make a detour to find a scenic spot stunning enough to deviate from his or
her planned tour. Kwigizile and Teng (2009) investigated trip generation models to predict travelers’
decisions. The models differed in their definitions of geographical connectivity, using four alternative
methods: (1) contiguity, (2) separation, (3) combined contiguity and separation, and (4) economic
linkage. The concept of contiguity is the degree to which the zone in which a traveler is located is similar
to the area where a scenic spot is located. Separation refers to the distance between the center of area
where a scenic spot is located and the center of the area where a traveler is located. The combined
contiguity and separation uses a combination of contiguity and distance to explain spatial interaction. The
economic linkage is a measure of accessibility that introduces economic factors such as retail floor area,
population, and retail sales. A zone is spatially related to another zone if the accessibility measure between
them is higher than that between other zones. Kwigizile and Teng’s (2009) findings indicate that the best
method for defining geographical connectivity is a combination of contiguity and separation, because this
fits well with travelers’ decisions about their trips. Their research findings can be applied to individuals’
perception of the degree of geographical separation between them and potential partners. The concept of contiguity corresponds to the distance similarity for both parties to go to the center of their area. Separation corresponds to the geographic distance between each other. Thus, we propose that the perceived geographical separation consists of (1) the geographical separation between an individual and the center of the area, (2) the geographical separation between potential partners and the center of the area, and (3) the distance between the individual and potential partners. The greater the spatial distance and distance dissimilarity between the two parties, the greater the individual’s perceived geographical separation. We argue that dating app users prefer to initiate interactions with people they perceive as having a low geographical separation.

A previous study found that long-distance dating relationships are distressing, problematic, and atypical (Maguire and Kinney 2010), because a short distance between two parties implies a high frequency of face-to-face meetings, which is a cornerstone to creating mutual understanding, shared meanings, and the emotional attachment of love (Stafford 2010). However, Jiang and Hancock (2013) argue that long-distance romantic relationships are characterized by equal or even greater trust and satisfaction than their geographically close counterparts. Their contention is that long-distance couples engage in more adaptive self-disclosure and form more idealized relationship perceptions than do geographically close couples in the pursuit of intimacy across various interpersonal media. However, their study focused on the association between relationship quality and geographical separation after two people become a couple, whereas we are interested in whether dating app users’ perceived geographical separation reduces their desire for interaction. Thus, we develop our hypothesis as follows.

**Hypothesis 1:** An individual’s perception of geographical separation is negatively associated with his or her desire for interaction.

**Perceived Similarity**

Similarity breeds interaction. This principle, referred to as the homophily principle, has been validated by empirical evidence from social psychologists (McPherson et al. 2001). Lazarsfeld and Merton (1964) distinguished two types of homophily: status homophily and value homophily. Status homophily refers to the major sociodemographic dimension that describes society-ascribed characteristics such as race, ethnicity, sex, or age, and acquired characteristics such as religion, education, occupation, or behavior patterns. Status homophily tends to indicate shared knowledge. People are expected to associate with others who are similar to them for ease of communication and shared cultural tastes. Value homophily includes the wide variety of internal states (e.g., attitudes, abilities, beliefs, and aspirations) that are presumed to shape our orientation toward future behavior. Similarity of values is expected to help people to increase their self-esteem and identification. If an individual feels depressed, encountering someone with similar attitudes or beliefs may raise his or her confidence. If an individual with high dignity finds others who share similar internal states, they will be considered them to be as good as him or herself. Moreover, similarity of values may lead to attraction and indicate future kindness and compatibility (Huston and Levinger 1978).

Extending the concept of homophily defined by McPherson et al. (2001), Tidwell et al. (2013) examined the associations between face-to-face attraction and two types of similarity: actual similarity and perceived similarity. The actual and perceived similarity corresponded to status and value homophily, respectively. They found that the actual similarity–attraction effect decreased, and even disappeared, as the amount of interaction time with a potential partner increased \( r = .08 \). However, perceived similarity has been shown to be a moderate to strong predictor of attraction \( r = .39 \), which does not differ with the amount of interaction.

Previous studies of the similarity–attraction effect have calculated similarity using (1) trait-specific actual similarity, (2) trait-specific perceived similarity, or (3) general perceived similarity. Of these, general perceived similarity seems to be the best predictor of how much an individual will like potential partners, accounting for over 50 percent of the variance in attraction (Tidwell et al. 2013).

Although rich evidence on the perceived similarity–attraction effect has been obtained through laboratory experiments or speed dating, the applicability of such findings to the initiation of interaction between dating app users is in need of re-examination. The findings from laboratory-based experiments are not readily generalized to other natural settings. Moreover, speed dating has little similarity with dating apps...
because a speed dating participant cannot access information about the other participants before encountering them face-to-face, so he or she has to evaluate their similarity through chatting. We argue that the effect of perceived similarity on behavioral intentions, e.g., the desire for interaction, is in need of re-examination. Thus, we develop our hypothesis as follows.

**Hypothesis 2:** An individual’s perceived similarity is *positively* associated with his or her desire for interaction.

**Perceived Attractiveness**

Most individuals respond more favorably to those who are viewed as physically attractive. One reason for the beauty bias is that most people find it rewarding to be in the company of physically attractive people (Mahfouz et al. 2008). The sense of reward implies both direct and indirect rewards. Direct rewards refer to attention, psychological support, money, status, power, information, and other valuable commodities. Indirect rewards refer to the good feeling that comes from being associated with a person who is attractive. People who approximate the ideal standard for beauty are considered to possess more positive personality characteristics than less attractive people, regardless of whether this is actually true. Some embellishment in online profiles to win others’ attention is expected, and even becomes a shared expectation around the communal understanding of embellishment, as long as it does not create or foster false beliefs (Ellison et al. 2012).

Physical attractiveness usually facilitates the formation of a good impression and filters out many cues (Walther and Parks 2002). One study separated male profile texts and corresponding male photos collected from dating websites, and asked females to rate one set of profile texts and a different set of photos to examine the association between the attractiveness of photos and profile texts. The findings indicated that photos rated as physically attractive had profile texts that were rated as more attractive, even though the photos and texts were rated by different judges (Brand et al. 2012). The authors’ contention was that people who are physically attractive are aware that others expect them to have more social desirable traits and hence treat them better; thus, attractive people may internalize the belief that they have superior traits, and may behave in a way that confirms these beliefs. Accordingly, we argue that dating app users who are rated as physically attractive are more likely to arouse others’ perceptions and initiate interactions to obtain a sense of reward. Thus, we develop our third hypothesis as follows.

**Hypothesis 3:** The degree to which an individual finds a target attractive is *positively* associated with his or her desire for interaction.

**Reciprocal Expectation**

Before sending a message to others, dating app users need to click, read and consider the online profiles. Even though online daters engage in mutual communication with those who are more attractive than themselves, their initiation of such interactions may be in expectation of others’ goodwill in return (Hitsch et al. 2010). Why do two parties who are strangers to each other need the expectation of the other’s goodwill to interact? Clark et al. (2010) indicated that the exchange norm and the communal norm account for the development of dyadic relationships. According to the exchange norm, each party in a dyadic relationship does the other a favor with the expectation that the other will want to repay it, and that the recipient of a favor should bear a sense of debt. Both parties regulated by the exchange norm should be aware of the balance of giving and taking. According to the communal norm, each party in a dyadic relationship should give to the other when he or she has a real need that cannot be met by himself or herself, and each party should do this to the best of his or her ability as long as the personal costs are reasonable. However, the recipient does not owe the giver anything.

The exchange norm is applicable to all situations from the initiation of an interaction to marriage or the end of a relationship (Clark et al. 2010). The communal norm, which is regulated by weak exchange, is an idealized norm for interaction that is founded on mutual trust (Clark et al. 2010). People who value and strive to adhere to the communal norm have a stronger sense of security, which leads to more success and equanimity, than those who value the exchange norm.

Previous studies have found that online daters who engage in side-by-side comparisons of potential partners are likely to strengthen their assessment mindset. An assessment mindset is associated with (a)
pursuing the optimal choice among an array of choices, (b) less biased consideration of the pros and cons of alternatives, and (c) more accurate forecasts about the future romantic relationship (Finkel et al. 2012).

Heino et al. (2010) ascribed the assessment mindset to a marketplace perspective, or the objectification of potential partners, which is an underlying assumption of dating websites and dating apps. An online dater may immediately assess the likely rewards and costs associated with forming a relationship with a certain partner, compare them with the alternatives, and use these assessments to decide whether to pursue further contact. Some researchers refer to this phenomenon as the “McDonaldization of romance” (Finkel et al. 2012). Online profiles on dating apps are displayed in a similar way to those on dating websites, so dating app users are likely to deliberate the pros and cons of potential partners before initiating interactions. Consequently, the exchange norm is more applicable to the online setting before a user sends a greeting message. A dating app user is likely to assess the potential and have an expectation of the message recipient’s goodwill in return before he or she sends a message.

In addition, the exchange norm can explain the relationship between dating app users’ expectations of others’ reciprocation and desire to interact, while predicted outcome value theory can be used to support our hypothesis. Predicted outcome value theory proposes that initial interaction behavior serves two related functions: (1) to reduce uncertainty and (2) to predict the most positive outcomes. If the outcome value does not meet the prediction, the individual is likely to terminate or curtail the interaction or continue the entry-level conversation; if the outcome value meets or exceeds the prediction, the individual is likely to escalate the interaction and the relationship beyond this level (Sunnafrank 1988). Previous research also indicates that predicted outcome value is positively associated with nonverbal interaction and liking (Sprecher 2014). Thus, dating app users are likely to predict others’ willingness to interact before sending a greeting message. Thus, we develop our fourth hypothesis as follows.

**Hypothesis 4:** The degree to which the reciprocal expectation that an individual has on others is positively associated with his or her desire for interaction.

**Research Method**

**Research Framework**

A survey will be conducted to examine the effect of perceived geographical separation, perceived similarity, perceived attractiveness, and reciprocal expectation on an individual’s desire to interact. Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework that we propose for further validation.

**Subjects and Research Design**

All registered users of the app have agreed to the terms of use, which specify the right to analyze registered users’ information and to display the results in media or research publications. The anonymized dataset used in this research is freely available upon request from the authors. The dating app had about 500 thousand registered users at the end of 2013, from big cities and developed areas in this region, including Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Taipei, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Singapore. Most users were white-collar workers, and users’ average annual income was above 30 thousand US dollars.

The data for this study will be collected through survey and real data derived from the dating app. The survey instrument is a questionnaire that measures one dependent variable and four independent variables. As registered users send a greeting message to others, the system will record new interactions initiated between two previously unconnected parties. Then, the app will initiate a systematic message inviting the sender to fill out the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the system will record the geographic distance between the two parties. The questionnaire will begin with a short introduction to the study and the name of the party who received the message, followed by the 12-item questionnaire. The control variables are the time taken to respond to the invitation and relevant personal information, which users provided when they registered and created a personal account. The invitation to fill out the questionnaire will expire after one hour, partly because the estimated time for an individual’s mood to return to normal after the excitement evoked by sending the message is less than an hour, and partly because of concern over the confounding effect of lengthy interpersonal interactions on the measurement of the variables of interest. After collecting the survey data and real data, regression analysis will be used to test the hypothetical relationships in the proposed model.
The recommended item-to-response ratio ranges from 1:4 to 1:10 for each set of scales to be analyzed. Based on the latter recommendation, with 12 questionnaire items included in the analysis, data from at least 120 respondents are needed (Hinkin 1998). Recent research indicated that a minimum sample size of 200 should be sufficient to obtain an accurate solution using confirmatory factor analysis (Marsh et al. 1998). The study will aim to collect data from more than 1000 respondents, which exceeds the recommended research requirement for confirmatory factor analysis.

**Dependent Variable – Desire for Interaction**

The desire for interaction will be assessed with two items: (1) “How much do you want to interact with the other person in the future?” and (2) “How much would you like to be friends with the other person?” (1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal). These two items are modified from previous studies (Sprecher 2014; Sprecher et al. 2013).

**Independent Variable – Perceived Geographical Separation**

The perceived geographical separation measure is adopted from Kwigizile and Teng (2009). It comprises three items: (1) “How do you perceive the distance between you and the person you sent a greeting message to?” (2) “How do you perceive the distance between you and your area center?” (area center means the center of the region, such as Grand Central Terminal in New York City, or the main train station in the city, from which an individual can reach other places conveniently); and (3) “How do you perceive the distance between the person you sent a greeting message to and the area center?” (1 = extremely far away, 7 = extremely close).

**Independent Variable – Perceived Similarity**

Perceived similarity is assessed with two items: (1) “How much do you think you have in common with the other person?” (1 = nothing or almost nothing, 7 = a great deal), and (2) “How similar do you think you and the other person are likely to be?” (1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal) (Sprecher et al. 2013).

**Independent Variable – Perceived Attractiveness**

Perceived attractiveness is assessed with three items: (1) “How attractive do you find the person you sent a message to?” (1 = extremely unattractive, 7 = extremely attractive), (2) “How hot do you find the person you sent a message to?” (1 = extremely not hot, 7 = extremely hot), and (3) “How sexy you find the person you sent a message to?” (1 = extremely unsexy, 7 = extremely sexy) (Lee et al. 2008).

**Independent Variable – Reciprocal Expectation**

Reciprocal expectation, adapted from Rubin (1975), is assessed with two items: (1) the expectation of the immediacy of a reply (1 = no response, 5 = immediate response), and (2) the expectation of intimacy in the response (1 = little or no disclosure, 5 = intimate disclosure).

**Control Variables**

The control variables include the users’ personal attributes (e.g., age, sex, educational level, income, user experience), and the users’ preferred attributes for a partner.

**Discussion and Implications**

The information access function of dating apps is designed to encourage users to interact. The photographs on an online profile help to elicit the desire for interaction through physical attraction, and the text description increases the desire to interact by increasing the perceived similarity between users’ attributes. The perception of geographical separation, made possible by LBS, reduces the reluctance to interact due to the uncertainty over geographical distance. The entire online profile is designed to help users formulate rational expectations of the other party’s goodwill and hence initiate an interaction. Although this study is still in the planning stage, we expect our findings to make four contributions. The
first contribution is to validate our research model on the use of dating apps with data from users' self-reported questionnaire responses and interaction records from the dating app database, thus easing concerns about the external validity of laboratory experiments. Our second contribution is to apply the findings of previous research on online dating to a dating app setting. The third and fourth contributions are to include the perception of geographical separation, a unique characteristic of dating apps, and the reciprocal expectation, to investigate their effects on users’ desire for interaction. Our study increases the explanatory capability of previous online dating models of users’ desire for interaction.

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