

Swipe Right: An exploration of self-presentation and impression management on Tinder

Abstract: The emergence of Location-Based-Real-Time-Dating (LBRTD) apps such as Tinder, has introduced a new way for users to get to know potential partners nearby. The design of the app represents a departure from "oldschool" dating sites as it leaves plenty of space for pictures, but only minimal room for self-description. This might change the way individuals decide to portray themselves as their real, ideal or ought-to self. Based on empirical data collected in the Netherlands, we try to assess how Tinder users present themselves, exploring at the same time the impact of their personality and their motives of use.

Keywords: online identity; social networks; online relationships; self-presentation; impression management

1. Introduction

Back in 1994, around the time when Match.com was registered as the first dating website, online match-making seemed an exotic opportunity, more likely to belong in a Hollywood movie (such as *You've Got M@il*, from 1998) than in the daily experiences of the average citizen. A lot has changed since then. A 2013 study from Pew Research has found that an estimated 5 percent of married or committed couples in the US met their significant other online (Lenhart & Duggan, 2014). Even more strikingly, 11 percent of the online adult American population claims to have used a dating site at least once in their lifetime (Lenhart & Duggan, 2014). While less data is available for the rest of the world, the market for online dating has seen a similar trend of dramatic growth in countries such as India (Joshi & Kumar, 2012) and the UK (Kee & Yazdanifard, 2015). As the commonness of the online dating phenomenon increased, the associated level of negative stigma seemed to shrink, as more and more Internet users claimed they consider online dating "a good way of meeting new people" (Smith & Anderson, 2015).

Part of this change in attitude could be due to the evolution of dating sites into dating apps, reaching users in the private space of their smartphones and allowing them for real-time interactions with their contacts. The emergence of LBRTD (Location-Based-Real-Time-Dating) apps such as *Tinder* or *Grindr* has enhanced this mechanism, employing the distance between users as one of the variables on the basis of which significant others can be found. Once users set their demographics of interest, in fact, the algorithm is capable of identifying potential dates, or "matches" in *Tinder*-lingo, as close as the same block, if not the same building. This increased connection between online and offline dating represents an incentive for users to meet "In Real Life" (Gibbs, Ellison & Lai, 2011; Cohen, 2015): this has reinforced the perception of

LBRTD as the cradle of casual, sexual and short-lived relationships. Media have further strengthened this idea electing *Tinder* and similar apps as the flag of Hook-Up culture (Sales, 2015).

While the worry of media does not necessarily mean that LBRTD apps might be revolutionary for the way individuals meet and fall in love with each other, it might nonetheless signal a certain cultural importance for apps like *Tinder* and *Grindr*. Focusing on its co-situating potential for gay men, i.e. the opportunity of creating a community without a common physical geography, research has so far concentrated on the app *Grindr* (Blackwell, Birnholtz & Abbot, 2014; Fitzpatrick, Birnholtz, & Brubaker, 2015), while *Tinder* remains to this day substantially uncovered. We wish to cover this gap, approaching the *Tinder* app as a platform for self-presentation, and addressing the level of authenticity and self-objectification of users who participate.

The goal of the article is thus to explore *Tinder* users' self-presentation on the app, shedding light on how they portray themselves and what shapes the different modes of self-presentation. Especially, we lay our focus on motivational and psychological antecedents, including the motives of relationship seeking and casual dating as motivational factors and self-esteem and narcissism as psychological predictors. Since *Tinder* strongly focuses on photos and first impression, our concern is with photographic self-presentation, i.e., how users portray themselves on the chosen pictures, not so much on the textual elements (as apparent in the voluntary self-description). We will first discuss some of the literature and previous research on online identity and dating (2.1) as well as on impression management (2.2). These literature streams build the theoretical foundation of the empirical parts of the paper. After presenting the sample (3.1), measures (3.2) and method (3.3), we proceed to discuss the

results. We conclude with a short summary of the results and some implications as well as limitations of our approach.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Online together: identity and dating sites

Since their very emergence, social network sites (SNS) have represented a space for individuals to express and experiment with their identities (Kendall, 1998; Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008; Valkenburg, Schouten, & Peter, 2005). While some researchers find elements of self-presentation also in forms of digital communication previous to social media (Bechar-Israeli 1996; Manago et al., 2008; Smahel & Subrahmanyam, 2007), the establishment of an online profile, with a univocal name and identifying elements has strengthened the bond between online identities and offline individuals (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). As anonymous SNS like Facebook or LinkedIn have in fact established themselves as a standard, online self-expression seems to have lost some of the potential for identity experimentation (Strano, 2008, Zhao et al., 2008), favoring instead what has been highlighted as a tension between the portrayals of actual and ideal selves (Ellison, Hancock, & Toma, 2012; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2007; Manago et al., 2008).

Social media borne with the specific intention of facilitating an offline encounter, such as dating sites, have slightly change the priorities of their users when it comes to self-presentation (Toma, Hancock & Ellison, 2008; Whitty, 2008). In fact while the nature of Facebook incentivises users' "anchored relationships", i.e.

relationships from outside the medium (Zhao et al., 2008) dating sites tend to pressure users to project an identity that is desirable for the person they wish to attract the most (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006). Behind their online impression management therefore is more than mere interaction: there's a relational objective that crosses the online/offline barrier, and this substantially changes the type and amount of self-disclosure (Gibbs, Ellison & Heino, 2006).

Previous research on "traditional" dating sites suggests that part of this more strategic impression management might derive from the structure of the website itself. Users typically have to convey an image of themselves through the "reduced cues" offered by the platform (Ellison & al., 2012). On the basis of such cues the choices of potential significant others are made (Antheunis & Schouten, 2011; Lampe et al., 2007; Walther, Anderson, & Park, 1994), determining the success or failure of an encounter before it even takes place. Hence, self-presentation becomes more strategic, and impressions require being more precisely managed (Gibbs et al., 2006).

The work of scholars like Bargh, McKenna & Fitzsimmons (2002), for example, building on the work of Higgins (1987) and Rogers (1951), has identified four types of self-presentation on dating sites: true selves, actual selves, ought-to selves and ideal selves. True selves are considered the core of individuals, and made of characteristics they know to possess psychologically but can hardly explain in their behavior (Rogers, 1951; cf. Bargh et al., 2002). Ideal, ought-to and actual selves instead embody respectively "*those qualities one strives someday to possess, (...) those qualities one feels obligated to possess, and (...) those one actually expresses to others at present*" (Bargh et al., 2002; p.34). A qualitative study by Whitty (2008) found a prevalence of actual selves, signalling a precarious equilibrium between authenticity and self-

promotion as the interaction of couples moves from the website to a real meeting offline.

This seems to match the several quantitative studies that have highlighted a generalised lack of misrepresentation from users of dating sites (Ellison et al., 2012; Ellison et al., 2006; Fahimy, 2011; Hancock, Toma & Ellison, 2007; Toma, Hancock & Ellison, 2008). According to Ellison and colleagues (2012), it is precisely the potential of a future encounter that drives the substantial lack of misrepresentation of users on traditional dating sites. In the words of Ellison et al. (2012, p. 12), the profiles of dating sites users draft a promise: users promise to each other that "*future face-to-face interaction will take place with someone who does not differ fundamentally from the person represented by the profile*". This leads users to be more authentic, and to create identities that resemble more their actual selves.

Tinder, together with all other LBRTD apps, brings an interesting perspective in this framework, as it is designed to encourage an offline encounter between its users. Like other LBRTD apps, Tinder's individual profiles are constructed around pictures, only leaving a very limited space for descriptive texts. This generates image-based strategies of impression management (Strano, 2008). Unlike other LBRTD apps, however, Tinder forces users to borrow their personal picture from their Facebook accounts, increasing the potential of finding common friends. This aspect, together with the app's reliance on smartphone GPS, strengthens the connection between interaction on the app and interaction offline.

2.2 Impression Management, Marketplace Value and Self-Objectification

Among the metaphors used to describe self-presentation online, the theoretical metaphor introduced by Ervin Goffman (1959) has perhaps been the most successful.

Several authors have in fact stated how an individual's digital interactions, as well as physical ones, might be a stage on which an identity is performed through both strategized ("given") elements, and spontaneous ("given off") manifestations of the self (Hewitt & Forte, 2006; Tufekci, 2008; Vitak, Lampe, Gray, & Ellison, 2012; Zhao et al., 2008).

Hogan (2010) diverged from this paradigm introducing the idea of an online profile as a personal exhibition, on which information is filtered and curated by the individual in order to convey a specific self-image. Impression management takes place online differently from offline, but similarly strategy is employed in directing identities to how individuals want others to see them (Ellison et al., 2006; Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011). Even unintentionally shared information, such as bad grammar, is interpreted by a person's network contextually (Walther & Bunz, 2005), similarly to what happens offline to the gaffes falling into Goffman's given-off category.

In the context of dating sites, impression management takes an even more important role as it allows users to highlight information that can be desirable for an audience of potential significant others. Rather than openly lying, users appear to be tweaking information so that they can put their more likeable face forward (Weisbuch, Ivcevic, & Ambady, 2009), even literally, for example altering personal photos to hide characteristics perceived as unattractive (Kapidzic & Herring, 2015; Reich, 2010).

Especially for dating sites, impression management has been studied as part of the *marketplace metaphor*, according to which users allocate an almost economic meaning to online self-presentation (Heino, Ellison & Gibbs, 2010). Under this perspective, affection is almost seen as a commodity on dating sites (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, & Ariely, 2010): users are concerned with shopping for a partner almost as much as they are about selling themselves (Ellison et al., 2012; Heino et al., 2010). Impression

management tactics allows individuals to best offer themselves to an audience of potential buyers (Arvidsson, 2006). LBRTD apps embody the marketplace metaphor in many ways: users represent themselves through pictures, and largely on the basis of the pictures of others decide whom to start a conversation with. The speed of the swiping mechanism suggests a quick evaluation, based on the impressions made, and, following the metaphor, based on an evaluation of a person's market worth (Heino et al., 2010).

Hence, it is not surprising that the issue of user self-objectification seems to emerge in conjunction with apps like Tinder (Tziallas, 2015). Self-objectification had previously been found on social network sites in conjunction with photo editing behavior (Fox & Rooney, 2015), as well as widely studied among teenagers on social media (Kapidzic & Herring, 2015; Manago et al., 2008). A context such as Tinder might represent a space where commodified, as well as potentially stereotypical representations can increase a person's market value. This can affect the online identities of individuals, and how they represent themselves.

In order to explore Tinder and the self-presentation practices of its users, we will find empirical answers to the following research questions:

How do individuals present themselves on Tinder? What are their techniques of impression management? How are these techniques influenced by demographic, motivational and psychological characteristics?

3. Methodology

3.1 Data and sample

We carried out an online survey in the Netherlands to answer the research questions. A total of 156 respondents filled out and completed a self-administered questionnaire in April and May 2015. The respondents were recruited via snowball sampling, i.e., the

link to the questionnaire was posted on social media platforms such as Facebook. The average response age is 22 (standard deviation 3.5, range from 16 to 40), corresponding with the overall Tinder user base that is primarily composed of young people (Escobar, 2014). We suspect that a large part of the respondents is composed of students and the high percentage of respondents with a bachelor and master degree confirms this. Table 1 below shows other basic demographics of the sample. We are aware of the limitations of such a data collection approach and the respondent profile is skewed in many regards. Given the explorative nature of the research, we think that this limitation does not pose a serious threat to the validity of the findings. The first question of the questionnaire asked whether the respondents use Tinder or not. Non-users were then filtered out, so that only those who use Tinder remain in the dataset.

	Absolute Numbers	Percent
Gender		
<i>Male</i>	62	39.7
<i>Female</i>	94	60.3
<i>Total</i>	156	100
Education (current or highest school completed)		
<i>High School</i>	33	21.2
<i>MBO</i>	9	5.8
<i>HBO</i>	25	16.0
<i>University (Bachelor)</i>	63	40.4
<i>University (Master)</i>	26	16.7
<i>Total</i>	156	100
Sexual orientation		
<i>Heterosexual</i>	145	92.9
<i>Homosexual</i>	8	5.1
<i>Bisexual</i>	3	1.9
<i>Total</i>	156	100
Relationship status		
<i>Single</i>	114	73.1
<i>Open relationship</i>	2	1.3
<i>In a relationship</i>	35	22.4
<i>Living together</i>	4	2.6
<i>Married</i>	0	0.0
<i>Divorced</i>	1	0.6
<i>Total</i>	156	100

Table 1: Demographic composition of the sample

3.2 Measures

The measures for the survey were partly taken from the literature and partly newly developed. We used three items from the Narcissism Personality Inventory (NPI)-16 scale (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006) to measure narcissism and four items from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979) to measure self-esteem. Both the narcissism and self-esteem scale reveal sufficient reliability and validity (Cronbach's α for narcissism = 0.77 and for self-esteem 0.81; convergent and discriminant validity given), so that we can proceed to interpret the structural model (Table A2 in the

Appendix).

For the four dependent variables – actual, ideal, ought-to and false self-presentation – we used one item each that was assessed on a five-point Likert scale¹. We assessed self-presentation with the two main modes afforded by Tinder: via the verbal description and via photos. However, we had to drop the verbal description from the analysis because many Tinder users did not provide a verbal description, which led to a substantial number of missing values (92 out of 156). Thus, self-presentation is only analysed with regards to photos in this article. For actual self-presentation, we used the following statement: *“I use different picture(s) in different situations to show others an accurate reflection of who I think I really am.”* Ideal self-presentation was assessed with the item: *“I hide unfavorable physical features in the picture(s) I use.”* For ought-to self-presentation, we used the following statement: *“I choose those picture(s) for my Tinder profile so as to attract the right potential matches.”* And finally, we measured false self-presentation with this item: *“I select picture(s) for my Tinder profile that do not show myself, but another (more attractive) person.”*

One variable covered the amount of Tinder use and measured how many minutes per day the respondents used *Tinder* on an average day (< 5; 6-15; 16-30; 31-45; 46-60; and more than 60 minutes). We included two variables on the use motive, i.e., whether *Tinder* is used to find a relationship or for fun/causal dating. These two motives were assessed separately and could be answered on a five-point Likert scale

¹ We had intended to use scales but this did not work out because of low reliability and insufficient consistency.

(completely disagree – completely agree)². Finally, we used age (in years), gender, education (highest educational degree on an ordinal scale with 6 values, ranging from “primary school” to “university degree (master)”), sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual) and relationship status (single, open relationship, in a relationship, living together with partner, married, divorced) as control variables.

3.3 Method of analysis

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to answer the research question. SEM is superior to other explanatory approaches, such as linear regression, because it allows for the inclusion of latent constructs, the easy testing of indirect effects and the specification of measurement errors. In our case, the inclusion of self-esteem and narcissism as two latent constructs from psychological literature made this method suitable.

4. Results and Discussion

Table A2 in the Appendix presents the frequency counts for the four dependent variables. The respondents in our sample score highest on ought-to self, with an arithmetic mean of 3.63 (on a 1-5 Likert scale). Many users also try to present the actual self. In fact, the majority of all respondents agrees or strongly agrees with the statement:

“I use different picture(s) in different situations to show others an accurate reflection of

² The wording of the relationship seeking item is: „*Trough Tinder use I hope to find a romantic relationship.*” The wording of the casual dating/fun motive is: “*I go on dates with people I meet on Tinder more for fun than to meet a potential romantic partner.*”

who I think I really am an arithmetic.” Very few users present false selves: Only 7 out of 156 respondents (less than 5 percent) strongly agree or agree with the statement “I select picture(s) for my Tinder profile that do not show myself, but another (more attractive) person”. However, a considerable number of users present ideal selves by hiding unfavorable physical features on their photos. Almost a third of all individuals surveyed do this. Overall, Tinder users seem to apply a variety of different self-presentation options (the Spearman correlations between the four modes of self-presentation are low with the largest one – between ideal self and ought-to self – reaching 0.21) but there is a tendency for strategic impression management, as the high values for ought-to self show. In the next step, we try to explain the four different modes of self-presentation.

	Actual	Ideal	Ought-to	False
<i>Motive: Use for relationship</i>	0.18**	0.01	0.24***	0.04
<i>Motive: Use for fun</i>	0.20**	0.03	0.08	0.15*
<i>Amount of use</i>	0.02	-0.06	-0.12	-0.01
<i>Age</i>	-0.06	-0.11	0.03	0.08
<i>Gender</i>	-0.01	0.26***	0.10	-0.03
<i>Education</i>	-0.13	0.03	0.07	-0.17**
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	-0.12*	0.03	-0.06	0.04
<i>Relationship status</i>	-0.14*	0.05	0.03	0.03
<i>Narcisissm</i>	0.07	0.19	0.02	0.29**
<i>Self-esteem</i>	0.05	-0.25**	0.24**	-0.40***
<i>R²</i>	0.13	0.14	0.15	0.18
<i>Fit Values</i>				
<i>CFI</i>	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.94
<i>TLI</i>	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.93
<i>RMSEA</i>	0.046	0.045	0.045	0.041
<i>SRMR</i>	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.076

N=156; standardized regression coefficients with robust standard errors are shown; * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Table 2. SEM path coefficients

Table 2 shows the results of the SEM. Actual self-presentation is positively influenced by both the use motive of relationship seeking and for casual dating. Users who are looking for a relationship portray themselves in a more authentic fashion than those that are not. The same is true for casual dating (the two were assessed separately and are not mutually exclusive, i.e., one can use Tinder for looking for a relationship and casual dating at the same time). Thus, it seems that respondents who have a strong relational motivation in the use of Tinder might represent an incentive for a more authentic self-presentation. This would be coherent with previous findings on dating sites (Toma & al, 2008; Hancock & al, 2007; Ellison & al, 2012). Sexual orientation has a small negative effect: homosexuals and bisexuals tend to portray themselves in a less authentic manner. This might be due the fact that Tinder is perceived as a largely heterosexual app, and hence might come with pressures to limit visibility and try to contain stigma (cf. Kirby & Hay, 1997; Boulden, 2001) Relationship status also has a small negative effect. Compared with single users and those in an open relationship, divorced, married and respondents in a relationship reveal lower levels of actual self-presentation. Given that Tinder is used for dating and primarily addresses singles and people in open relationships this finding does not surprise. Neither narcissism nor self-esteem exerts a significant effect on actual self-presentation. Thus, we fail to explain authentic self-presentation on Tinder with psychological characteristics. Instead, demographic and motivational factors are better suited to explain this form of self-presentation.

Ideal self-presentation is only influenced by gender and self-esteem. Females are significantly more likely to reveal ideal self-presentation than males. This presents us with an interesting case for gender-specific self-presentation, where women might feel a stronger motivation to present an ideal picture of their identity. A similar finding has

been reported in literature about avatars in digital and gaming contexts (Dunn & Guadagno, 2012; Fox, Bailenson & Tricase, 2013) as well as the more mundane social media (Ringrose, 2011; Vandebosch & Eggermont, 2012; DeVries & Peter, 2013). This suggests a stronger pressure on women to an ideal, desirable and perhaps objectified self. In particular for some women this mechanism might be strong enough to offset the tendency to be authentic hoping in a future encounter (Ellison & al, 2012). Self-esteem has a negative effect on ideal self-presentation. Respondents with higher levels of self-esteem seem to have less desire to present themselves in an idealized way on Tinder because they are confident with their actual self-presence (the positive but not significant self-esteem effect for authentic self-presentation points in that direction).

Ought-to self-presentation is positively influenced by the relationship motive – but not the casual dating motive – and self-esteem. It could be that individuals with a lot of self-esteem have a better sense of how to attain intended impressions and influence the users that see their pictures. Also, those who use Tinder with the specific motive of finding a relationship might be better equipped to bring across a clear message and thus attract other users.

False self-presentation is most prevalent among those that use Tinder for casual dating, among less educated users and respondents with low levels of self-esteem and high narcissism. Especially, the strong negative effect of self-esteem is noteworthy, and might confirm the positive correlation between online dating and high self-esteem found by Kim, Kwon and Lee (2010). In this sense, false self-presentation could be a coping strategy to an environment perceived as uncomfortable or triggering. Narcissism also exerts a relatively strong impact, with narcissistic users reporting higher rates of false self-presentation. This is coherent with findings related to social network sites (Fox & Rooney, 2015; Jonason, Lyons, Baughman & Vernon, 2014).

Overall, we are able to explain between 0.13 and 0.18 percent in the variance of self-presentation. This leaves room for the inclusion of additional variables in the future. Considering personality traits, we are best able to predict false self-presentation but cannot really explain actual or authentic self-presentation, which appear to be better defined by demographic variables. Nevertheless, self-esteem and the motives of use were the strongest elements to define user's self-presentation. This points to the value of including motivational aspects in the analysis of online dating. As for the demographic predictors, the most remarkable finding is the gender effect for ideal self. However, the education effects – especially the negative one for false self – also reveal interesting patterns. Future research should include broader age groups to follow up on these demographic effects.

5. Conclusion

This contribution has investigated self-presentation on Tinder with a sample of 156 young users recruited in the Netherlands. Going back to previous research on online dating and impression management in computer-mediated communication, we distinguished four modes of self-presentation: authentic/actual, ideal, ought-to and false. We found that ought-to self-presentation is the most prevalent form, followed by actual, ideal and false. Only very few users present a false picture of themselves by showing a different person on the photo. This might have to do with the primary purpose of the app to meet people in “real-life”. However, ideal self-presentation, where certain (unfavorable) features are hidden is more common in our sample, with almost on third of respondents using such practices. The findings also showed that the different modes of self-presentation are not exclusive. In certain situations, users might present more

favorable – and less authentic – pictures of themselves (e.g., if they have accumulated no or few matches), in others (e.g., if they have accumulated many matches and went on dates) they might use images that reflect their “true” identity. Future research should investigate under which conditions users are most likely to select which mode of self-presentation.

We then tried to explain self-presentation by testing the influence of motivational, psychological and demographic predictors for each of the four modes. By applying SEM, we could show that self-esteem and the motive or purpose of Tinder use is the strongest predictor of self-presentation. Those with high self-esteem tend to reveal more ought-to selves and less false and ideal selves. Also, users with clear motivations for using the app – be it for looking for a relationship or for casual dating – tend to report higher levels of actual and ought-to selves. We think that such users with a clear motivation have invested more time and effort in constructing a profile compared with those that use Tinder just to try it out because it is popular. We found few but remarkable demographic effects. Most notably, female users portray themselves more in an idealized fashion than men. Gender stereotypes and social pressure could account for this effect – which connects nicely to the literature on self-objectification and social media (Vandebosch & al, 2012; DeVries & al, 2013). Moreover, heterosexual and single users – the core target group for Tinder – present themselves more in an authentic fashion compared with homosexual, bisexual respondents and those that live in relationship or together with someone. For homosexual, bisexual individuals and those in relationships Tinder poses a higher risk for exposure and vulnerability. Also, there exist other platforms that specifically target these groups (e.g., Grindr for homosexual daters or Ashley Madison for people in a relationship), where it might be easier to present an actual self. We did not find a significant effect of narcissism, except for false

self. More narcissism leads to higher levels of false self. It seems like narcissistic users use every means possible for self-presentation on Tinder.

Our study is one of the first to empirically investigate Tinder and to shed light on the relatively new phenomenon of LBRTD. We think that the lens of self-presentation is a useful one and the results have several *implications* for research on online dating and impression management. In fact more than standard dating sites, apps like Tinder emphasize instantaneous decisions, and a self-presentation that might be more characterized by Goffman's concept of *given off* than by his idea of *given* (1959). This might bring a tiny shift in the way selves are conceived, whether as actual, ideal, ought-to or false; it appears clear that this requires further research.

Despite this, our study is subject to a number of limitations, providing food for thought and ample opportunities for future LBRTD research. First, our sample was small, cross-sectional and composed of a relatively specific, young audience. This limits the generalizability of the results and might explain some of the findings, i.e., the high prevalence of ought-to self and relatively high scores on ideal self-presentation. Future research is encouraged to use larger sample – if possible with a user base that is representative of the current Tinder user population. Second, we relied on self-reported data, which is subject to a number of problems, such as social desirability, memory bias and response fatigue (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Unfortunately, we could not collect observational or trace data from the respondents. Future research might use mixed-methods approaches and combine different data sources to investigate the phenomenon more holistically. This could be done by conducting qualitative interviews and including users' data in this process (Dubois & Ford, 2015), e.g., by securing informed consent to use the profile picture and/or descriptions. Other promising approaches are big data analyses of actual user profiles, ethnographic

inquiries of specific user groups, e.g., obsessive Tinder users, and experimental studies that manipulate the constraints and opportunities of self-presentation. Third, with narcissism and self-esteem, we only considered two psychological antecedents. Future research should rely on a more holistic set, such as the big-five personality characteristics. Fourth and finally, we could not do justice to contextual factors, such as the cultural background and location of users. A recommendable next step would be to systematically compare different countries and/or regions within a country (e.g., rural vs. urban areas) in terms of Tinder use and self-presentation. Such comparative analyses might shed light on the cultural contingencies of LBRTD and provide useful guidance and much needed empirical material to better understand the phenomenon.

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Appendix

		Absolute numbers	Percent
I use different picture(s) in different situations to show others an accurate reflection of who I think I really am Arithmetic mean: 3.35 Standard deviation: 1.04	<i>Strongly disagree (1)</i>	9	5.8
	<i>Disagree</i>	27	17.3
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	33	21.2
	<i>Agree</i>	75	48.1
	<i>Strongly Agree (5)</i>	12	7.7
	<i>Total</i>	156	100.0
I hide unfavorable physical features in the picture(s) I use Arithmetic mean: 2.67 Standard deviation: 1.17	<i>Strongly disagree (1)</i>	30	19.2
	<i>Disagree</i>	45	28.8
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	33	21.2
	<i>Agree</i>	43	27.6
	<i>Strongly Agree (5)</i>	5	3.2
	<i>Total</i>	156	100.0
I choose those picture(s) for my Tinder profile so as to attract the right potential matches Arithmetic mean. 3.63 Standard deviation: 0.83	<i>Strongly disagree (1)</i>	2	1.3
	<i>Disagree</i>	16	10.3
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	32	20.5
	<i>Agree</i>	93	59.6
	<i>Strongly Agree (5)</i>	13	8.3
	<i>Total</i>	156	100.0
I select picture(s) for my Tinder profile that do not show myself, but another (more attractive) person Arithmetic mean: 1.48 Standard deviation: 0.88	<i>Strongly disagree (1)</i>	109	69.9
	<i>Disagree</i>	29	18.6
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	11	7.1
	<i>Agree</i>	4	2.6
	<i>Strongly Agree (5)</i>	3	1.9
	<i>Total</i>	156	100.0

Table A1: Distribution of the dependent variable items

Construct	Item	Std. loading	t-values	R ²	α	C.R.	AVE
Psychological characteristic							
Self-esteem	se_1	.62	8.17***	.38	.77		.48
	se_2	.59	7.57***	.34			
	se_3	.65	11.93***	.42			
	se_4	.75	11.80***	.56			
	se_5	.85	22.12***	.71			
Narcissism	narc_1	.71	11.84***	.50	.81		.54
	narc_2	.73	12.37***	.54			
	narc_3	.75	12.16***	.57			
Squared correlation Self-esteem and narcissim = .24							
Criterion		≥ 0.5	min*	≥ 0.4	≥ 0.7	≥ 0.6	≥ 0.5
*** p ≤ 0.001							

Table A2. Measurement Model

Question wording	Item number
<i>Self-esteem (5 items)</i>	
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	se_1
I feel I do not have much to be proud of. (reverse coded)	se_2
I wish I could have more respect for myself. (reverse coded)	se_3
All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure. (reverse coded)	se_4
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	se_5
<i>Narcissism (3 items)</i>	
I think I am a special person.	narc_1
I am more capable than other people.	narc_2
I am an extraordinary person.	narc_3

Table A3. Wording of self-esteem and narcissism items