

# **Motives for the Use of Dating Applications During Travel**

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## ABSTRACT

Although dating applications (“apps”) were initially designed to help people find romantic partners, a recent trend is to use them during travel. Drawing upon data from an online survey of the users of a major dating app, this study investigated the demographic and psychographic characteristics of individuals who used the app during travel, their motivations for doing so, and the nature of the most recent trip on which the app was used.

Users of the app during travel were 61.9% male and on average 25 years old. Fifty-nine percent affirmed that the most recent trip on which they used the app was an international journey. Compared to non-users, they were more likely to be male, to reside in North America, and to be less neurotic, more extraverted, and more risk tolerant.

Among 23 possible motivations for using the app during travel, the motivations to which respondents assigned the most importance pertained mostly to trip enhancement (e.g., “to make my trip fun,” “to have satisfying trips”). Factor analysis of the battery extracted five factors: “Advice Acquisition,” “Trip Enhancement,” “Romance Enhancement,” “Hedonism Enhancement,” and “Diversion.” Respondents who scored highly on a given factor were quite distinct demographically and psychographically.

The overall importance respondents’ ascribed to all 23 motivations about which they were queried was significantly and positively related to their scores on four psychological scales but only one demographic variable and no trip characteristic variables. Thus, the overall importance placed on using the app during travel appears to be more a function of personality than of outward characteristics and behaviors.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

Social networking has become a popular trend for travelers and has completely changed human interactions through the Internet. A typical social networking site is described as individuals connecting with other individuals online to share information (Wasko & Faraj, 2005), and maintain existing relationships (Agarwal, Gupta, & Kraut, 2008). Popular sites such as Facebook serve 2.38 billion monthly users, while Yelp and TripAdvisor are assisting travelers by recommending activities based on their preferences and locations (Hutchinson, 2019). The widespread adoption of smartphones and other technology devices during travel in recent years substantially transformed traveler experiences (Wang, Park, & Fesenmaier, 2012). Social Networking Sites (SNS) play a crucial role in the tourism industry. The information generated by users can raise tourists' awareness of destinations and influence their visit intentions and behaviors (Filieri, Alguezaui, & McLeay, 2015). These sites allow travelers to collect more information about the destination, especially with the development of location-based technologies that can provide real-time information to visitors during their trip (Tussyadiah & Zach, 2012).

From the general idea of connecting people, various social networking sites are now recognizing the emerging trend of niche areas. Multiple social networking sites are starting to create connections between visitors (Adventure Catcher, 2017). The emergence of Airbnb, Uber, and Lyft has shifted the economy and is commonly known as the "sharing economy." It has encouraged people to share their underutilized inventory for a collected fee that is usually below the market price, and become popular with many travelers. Technological innovations and

supply-side flexibility have enabled the peer-to-peer platform to proliferate (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2017).

The interaction between travelers and the host community was termed as “Social Networking Tourism” (SNT) by French (2017). SNT is an extension of social media usage specific to the tourism industry. Examples of SNT websites include Airbnb and HomeAway, which help visitors find accommodations in destinations by creating online communities. Users can rent out their apartments or rooms to tourists at a lower price than hotel rates in these communities. SNT sites also provide a platform for travelers to make friends, share information, or find travel companions (French, 2017).

The advent of the Internet has transformed dating concurrently with its transformation of travel. According to the Statistic Brain Research Institute (2017), as of May 2017, of 54.3 million single individuals in the United States, 49 million had tried online dating, and an estimated 20% of current committed relationships started with online dating (Statistic Brain Research Institute, 2017). Multiple dating sites and applications (hereinafter “apps”) offer a non-sequential decision-making setting that allows users to find potential mate choices in real-time and apply various criteria to optimize matches. For example, users can set their preferred education level, distance, and race for their potential mates. The use of technology increases the available choices for potential mates and facilitates selecting partners with similar or desired characteristics (Whyte & Torgler, 2017).

## **Purpose and Objectives**

Very few studies have investigated the rising phenomenon of travelers using dating apps during their trips. As the tourism industry grows, destinations and organizations are seeking

opportunities to generate additional revenues. Previous research explored smartphone apps used to enhance individual travel experiences (Tussyadiah, 2016), and the rise of online dating (Roscoe & Chillas, 2014). To bring academics and business professionals together to achieve mutual success, an in-depth study is suggested. The purpose of this study is to examine the motivational factors of travelers adopting dating apps during their trip, app users' personalities, and risk-taking behaviors. By understanding these factors, this study will provide insights for destination management organizations (DMOs) and stakeholders to deliver better services to travelers. The results can expand the limited amount of available literature on tourists' experiences with online dating apps. Future research has a practical application, such as supporting DMOs with extensive information through the analysis of traveler experiences.

Pursuant to these broad goals, the specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine whether users of a dating app during travel differ from non-users in terms of their demographic and psychographic characteristics.
2. Profile the demographic, psychographic, and trip characteristics of persons who use this app during travel.
3. Identify the most and least important motivations for using the app during travel.
4. Identify drivers of the overall importance ascribed to using the app during travel.
5. Identify latent motivations for using the app during travel.
6. Identify the demographic, psychographic, and trip characteristics of persons who had high versus low latent motivations for using the app during travel.

## **Research Questions**

To achieve the above objectives, this study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What factors motivate travelers to use dating apps during their trips?
2. To what extent does the adoption of dating apps during travel enhance the overall travel experience?
3. To what extent does the purpose of travel influence the use of dating apps?
4. To what extent does the traveler's personality influence their decision to use dating apps during their trips?
5. To what extent does traveler's risk tolerance affect the adoption of dating apps during their trips?

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Smartphone Use in Tourism**

Smartphones now are like fully functional computers, with powerful processors, efficient operating systems, and user-friendly interfaces that brought profound change to the tourism industry. The essential factor in tourism is tourist experiences, which is an activity-based process that involves three stages: pre-trip, during-trip, and post-trip stages (Craig-Smith & French, 1994). To improve the trip experience and trip satisfaction, tourism stakeholders need to co-create (Lončarić, Dlačić, & Kos Kavran, 2018). Wang (1999) stated that existential authenticity explains visitor experiences. The introduction of the theory helps re-justification the “authenticity-seeking” model in the tourism industry.

For travelers to adopt smartphone apps, developers need to first provide an excellent app. Eriksson and Strandvik (2008) identified possible factors that influence tourists’ intentions and actual use of smartphone devices in tourism services. The study identified significant barriers such as price transparency for tourism apps and app ease of use that limits app usage. After conducting an extensive literature review on technology acceptance, Kim, Park, and Morrison (2008) argued that exertional variables like technology experience and trip experience and internal variables like perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use positively influence each other. These variables further determine a traveler’s willingness to use smartphones for travel purposes. App quality, app interface design, and information quality can determine user intentions (Kim, Ahn, & Chung, 2013). The use of mobile travel guide systems revealed positive attitudes from users and their expectations for entertainment (Tsai, 2010).

Another research stream has focused on the impact of smartphone usage to enhance trip experiences. Smartphone adoption can change trip plans significantly, especially with the capacity to instantly change plans from collected information (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2013). Wang et al. (2012) proposed that smartphones can change a traveler's behaviors and emotions while enabling travelers to solve problems and store memories. Application technologies have shaped traveler's experiences in all three trip stages.

### **Social Media in Tourism**

The improvement of communication and information technologies under Web 2.0 enabled the public's full acceptance of social media, with attendant profound changes to the tourism industry. People who are younger than 35 are highly involved online and are likely to share their travel experiences on social media (Lo et al., 2011). Since tourism products and services are typically expensive and require high involvement from tourists, it is difficult for customers to evaluate the purchase before consumption. With social media sites, travelers can write reviews, comments, post photos, and sometimes rate service providers while traveling (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Other travelers can review such information during the pre-purchase stage to minimize the risk of their product purchase (Cox et al., 2009). The Internet revolution has given consumers more options and information, including price transparency. Unlike the traditional passive recipients of information, travelers are now actively engaged on such platforms, creating the phenomenon known as "electronic word-of-mouth" (eWOM) (Erkan & Evans, 2016).

EWOM is more influential than traditional word-of-mouth because it spreads information faster, is more convenient to use, and avoids face-to-face interaction (Sun et al., 2006). Jalilvand

and Samiei (2012) studied the impact of eWOM on destination choice and employed the theory of planned behavior. The authors investigated 296 inbound travelers who joined online tourism communities in Isfahan, a city in central Iran. Findings indicate that eWOM can have a substantial impact on traveler behaviors, attitudes, and intentions towards the destination. Furthermore, the travel experience influences visitors' participation in eWOM. From restaurants to hotels, eWOM has altered travelers' decision-making and requires service providers to engage and present themselves on social media (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). EWOM could be a cost-effective method for tourism marketing, where it includes communications between consumers themselves and between producers and consumers (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). Positive online customer-generated reviews can significantly improve online bookings of hotel rooms (Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009). Rowley (2001) recommended that commercial enterprises engage with customers online and organize online communities instead of advertising online. Travelers also engage in online communities for social interaction, concern for other travelers, economic incentives, and to enhance self-worth (Hennig-Thurau, Walsh, & Walsh, 2003).

The variation of social media has created numerous sites with different functions. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) classified social media into several categories, such as virtual communities, review sites, blogs, media sharing sites, social networking sites, and others. However, tourism is included on all platforms (Öz, 2015). Specifically, a new category of social networking tourism sites was proposed by French (2017), where sites provide services primarily for travelers. Through these websites, tourists can share time, space, and knowledge. Platforms such as CouchSurfing and Airbnb created a new opportunity for travelers who seek lower lodging prices (French, Luo, & Bose, 2017). These sites allow travelers to interact or meet with each other,

develop social and economic relationships, and seek opportunities (Kavoura & Stavrianea, 2014).

### **Location-based Services in Tourism**

The rapid development of mobile technologies introduced Location-Based Services (LBS), which expanded the digital realm of the tourism industry. LBS provide information based on customers' locations and the diffusion of smartphone technology (Pedrana, 2014). Tracking location information was introduced in the 1980s to track trucks and freights. Commercialized LBS entered after deregulation and technology improvements (Pura, 2005). With the introduction of smartphones equipped with global tracking technologies, LBS created new opportunities for both consumers and suppliers (Yoon, Kim, & Connolly, 2018).

### ***LBS Impact on Travelers***

The ability to freely navigate has encouraged visitors to personalize their experiences. Tourists seek different experiences based on places, space, and landscape (Crouch, 2005). Edensor (2006) recognized that different locations could help tourists form a common understanding of activities to perform. While integrating into these locations, geographic features contextualize tourists and influence their behaviors with collected geographic knowledge.

Multiple studies have incorporated LBS in providing tourism-related activities. To help illustrate the benefits of utilizing LBS, Winter, Pontikakis, and Raubal (2001) used Vienna, the capital of Austria, as an example to demonstrate the use of a navigation system embedded in a mobile device. This article provided initial information on LBS as it predated the introduction of smartphones. Nie, Fu, & Zeng (2009) proposed a navigation system intended to help tourists



arrange routes and provide navigation based on the traveler's location. Yu and Chang (2009) designed methods, process models, and a service framework to deliver personalized location-based tour planning and recommendation services on mobile devices. The purpose of this system was to assist travelers in personalizing their trip plans before or during trips with consideration of their location, needs, time, preferences, constraints, and criteria. Deidda, Pala, and Vacca (2013) identified five essential components for LBS implementation within an infrastructure: an electronic device, a communication network, a positioning component, a data provider, and a service provider.

After analyzing existing recommendation systems, Gavalas and Kenteris (2011) argued that most systems failed to include and exploit travelers' behaviors, evaluations, and ratings. The authors therefore incorporated collaborative filtering techniques and contextual information in their proposed system. They also recommended the installation of wireless sensor networks around sites to collect precise location and provide a connection for users to rate their experience within the system. Further, Driver and Clarke (2008) point out the need to support dynamic and context-based trail management in tourism recommendation systems. They proposed a framework that promotes trail generation, allowing users to manage activities and create to-do lists. The use of location-based technology has enhanced traveler's acquisition of geographic knowledge, contributing to expanding tourist experiences (Tussyadiah & Zach, 2012).

### ***LBS Impact on Service Providers***

The use of LBS has enabled destination marketers to reach diverse traveler segments by offering relevant recommendations based on their consumption and activities. Gretzel (2011) discussed the need for better tourism conceptualized technology to provide more detailed

information, including tourism service providers. Travelers may use multiple methods to make the best suitable decision in choosing service providers. Therefore, destination marketers need to distribute relevant information for tourism marketing (Tussyadiah, 2012). Adomavicius and Tuzhilin (2011) identified three dimensions of data that need to be delivered to customers when providing LBS services to travelers: spatial (where), temporal (when), and technological (how). Tiru et al. (2010) measured the destination loyalty of foreign travelers in Estonia using mobile positioning-based technology by determining the number, duration, geography, and frequency of repeat visitors over five years. The potential of location-based data could assist service providers in distributing location-specific advertisements and personalized packages. As personalization becomes more important in the tourism industry, Scherp and Boll (2004) suggested service providers present dynamic multimedia content to attract travelers with different preferences and interests while considering their surrounding environment and current location.

Service providers are adopting augmented reality (AR) in the tourism industry. Pedrana (2014) identified strengths and weaknesses in the use of AR at destinations. AR contains overlapping information like geography, multimedia, and reality. It differs from virtual reality because users can see the reallocation and its surroundings. The simulation may be useful for travelers before, during, or after the trip, and it can boost enjoyment. However, AR may be a threat to some tourism services like tour operators. Given these circumstances, the author encouraged DMOs to utilize LBS and provide a unique channel for communication and information distribution between travelers and service providers.

## **The Online Dating Process**

Online dating permits individuals to search for a partner by presenting them with a pool of potential candidates with a click of a button. Dating sites market themselves by emphasizing the uniqueness of their services. For example, Coffee Meets Bagel only allows men to make the first move while women choose from the pool of men who already liked them (Esquire, 2019). Other dating sites claim their service is superior to offline dating by emphasizing the number of site users and the higher chances of finding a potential partner (Finkel et al., 2012).

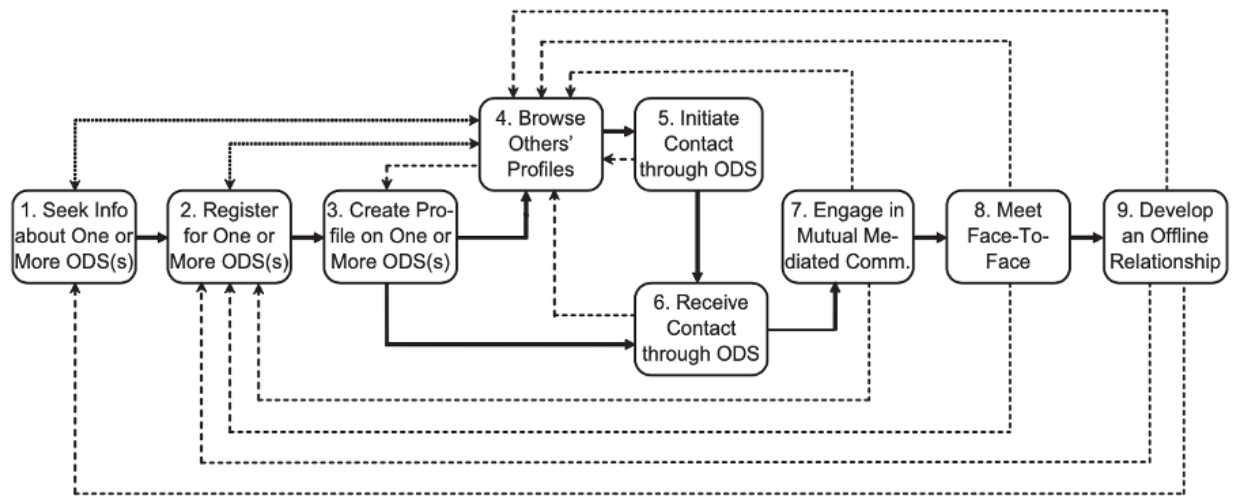
It is important to investigate online dating, as it profoundly influences society. Baumeister and Leary (1995) defined romantic relationship-seeking as a "fundamental human motivation." Having a satisfying intimate relationship can bring multiple benefits. Gallo et al. (2003) found that women in high satisfaction marriages showed a lower biological, lifestyle, and psychosocial risk factors than other groups. In contrast, loneliness and distressed relationships may cause multiple health issues such as low sleep quality, increased blood pressure, depression (Cacioppo et al., 2002).

Finkel et al. (2012) developed a nine-step online dating framework that illustrates the prototypical and idealized process from online to offline (Figure 1). The ideal process for an individual is shown in solid arrows, where the use of an Online Dating Site (ODS) successfully assisted users. During various steps, users can interact with multiple potential partners simultaneously. Two solid arrows emerge from Step 3, where users can be the active conversation initiator or the conversation receiver. The double-headed dotted arrows indicate the mutual influence between these steps. The single-headed dashed arrows represent users going back to an appropriate step when they are dissatisfied with their current circumstances. Users

may stop participating in online dating during any phase of the process. The rise of online dating has encouraged scholars to investigate various aspects throughout the process.

**Figure 1**

*The Nine Steps in The Idealized Online Dating Process (Finkel et al., 2012).*



### ***Step 1: Seeking Information***

The initial step of online dating is the decision to partake. With the increasing attention given to online dating, people accept the transition from meeting people offline to online for various reasons. Many people seek to engage in online dating, especially when they have difficulties finding potential mates offline. People who are divorced or have limited time, such as having a busy career or children might have difficulty finding a romantic partner offline (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). Those who are tired of the traditional bar scene and heard positive experiences from friends and family may inspire users to join the community (Long, 2010).

### ***Step 2: Register in ODS***

After the user has made her/his decision, she/he may register for one or more ODSs. Multiple ODSs are offered online with slight differences between them. Finkel et al. (2012) proposed three factors that affect users' decisions to join: financial cost, current site users, and the possibility to achieve a goal. However, users are concerned about privacy and confidentiality to prevent incidents like cyberstalking (Jerin & Dolinsky, 2007). Smith (2015) found that most ODSs state their privacy and security policies, limitations on user legal issues and liabilities. As most of these sites allow users to subscribe to premium services, their financial information will be collected and protected by the company. Security measures, such as encryption techniques, requiring users to set passwords, and linkage to secure servers, are usually applied to ODSs. However, most ODSs with large data bases cannot wholly guarantee the protection of user information from hackers and illicit users. Ostheimer and Iqbal (2019) suggested ODS users carefully read privacy policies before engaging in online dating to protect their personal information. Nowadays, some ODSs cooperate with third parties to distribute advertisements targeting user segments with collected user information. Individuals who have more severe concerns about privacy may have considerably more uncertainty about ODSs, which prevents them from joining the community (Gibbs, Ellison, & Lai, 2011).

### ***Step 3: Create a Profile***

The next step is to create and post a profile to present users in the ODS. The first impression is always essential, and a high-quality profile will gain other users' attention (Oliviola et al., 2015). The attractiveness of either physical or cultural attributes will increase viewers' desire to spend time with them (McCroskey & McCain, 1974). Yet, in an online environment, the user's information presented in profiles is not entirely verifiable.

As in traditional dating, self-promotion is commonly used in impression management, where individuals desire to show their good qualities to gain others' attention (Vonk, 1999). When composing profiles, online daters commonly use warranting profiles (Toma, Hancock, & Ellison, 2008). To eliminate bias from profiles and national norms, Toma et al. (2008) compared profile information to actual individuals. In total, 80 online dating users participated in the study and visited the lab for measurement. Results revealed that 81.3% of the study sample reported at least one inaccurate statistic with respect to age, weight, and height on their dating site profile. Specifically, 59.7% lied about their weight, 48.1% lied about their height, and 19% lied about their age. Participants were between the age of 21 to 30 in this study with unrepresented elders aged 51 to 65. Small deception does exist in online dating and it is challenging to detect even if users met face-to-face.

#### ***Step 4: Browse Others' Profiles***

Wotipka and High (2016) explored ODS profiles' influence on other users. Profile style may leave an impression and influence the receiver's decision on this profile. To test this theory, the authors collected data from 316 online daters by showing manipulated dating profiles and recorded impression and intention outcomes. Results confirmed that perceived social attraction and trust are correlated with the desire to contact and date the person. Participants have a lower intention to interact with less socially attractive people under the high levels of selective self-presentation, whereas warranting profiles elicited trust and increased positive outcomes. Trust is essential during the initial stages of online dating, and the formation of trust resides in first impressions (Yu, Saleem, & Gonzalez, 2014). High levels of confidence will impel people to form a relationship (Norris & Zweigenhaft, 1999).

Other researchers have focused explicitly on male online dating profiles. Brand et al. (2012) presented a study to investigate female online daters' perceptions of the attractiveness of male profiles. Fifty university psychology students rated 100 college-aged male online daters' photos and free-written texts. Profile photos with texts were rated as more attractive, and perceived confidence from profiles played a mediating role. Hefner and Kahn (2014) proposed that people who view romantic screen media will give higher ratings on profile attractiveness and have stronger recognition of romantic beliefs.

### ***Step 5: Initiate Contact and Step 6: Receive Contact***

Online dating sites allow users to send messages between users, yet multiple factors can influence the decision to contact potential partners. Skopek, Schulz, and Blossfeld (2010) found that among online daters aged 20 to 50, education homophily is the most critical factor in online mate choice, and it significantly increased the rate of sending and replying to messages. When dissimilarity was found, women displayed greater reluctance to contact others with lower educational attainment. Men, on the other hand, had no problem initiating contact with women who had lower educational attainment. The study also found that men had a higher rate of initiating conversation than women.

Rosen et al. (2008) found that a user's profile characteristics can influence other people to initiate correspondence. Important traits such as age and profile pictures were the main factors, followed by body type and smoking or drinking habits. To further investigate online daters' characteristics, Hitsch, Hortacsu, and Ariely (2010) examined the likelihood of daters initiating contact with a potential partner after viewing his/her profile. After viewing other users' profiles, 12.5% of the men initiated contact, compared to only 9% of the women. Men were almost 40%

more likely to make the first move, and men viewed over three times as many profiles as women. Both sexes reported a high likelihood of initiating contact with attractive users, high income, and like themselves. The Gale-Shapley algorithm was adopted in this study to predict equilibrium (stable) matches by correlating individual attributes such as age, looks, income, education, and race. However, collected data suggest that users have a stronger desire to pursue desirable potential partners than those matched by the Gale-Shapley algorithm with suitable complimentary factors.

From the linguistic approach, Schoendienst and Dang-Xuan (2011) analyzed online dating users' messages. They found that users frequently scanned and ignored messages sent by others in the online environment. Responses were determined by the senders' profiles and cues extracted from messages. Some messages had higher chances to receive responses, especially messages characterized by more usage of the pronoun "you," social-process words like "helpful," and less usage of the pronoun "I" and leisure words like "movie". However, the use of negative emotion words was not able to predict the likelihood of responses. In another study, Fiore et al. (2010) found that the reply rate of messages varied by gender, with men replying to 26% of received messages, compared to only 16% of women. The response time can influence the sender, with faster responses implying eagerness for reciprocal communication and increased chances for continued conversation.

### ***Step 7: Engage in Mutual Communication***

Once online daters have communicated several times with their potential partner, they prefer to talk outside of the ODS, such as exchanging phone numbers or social media (Rosen et al., 2008). Users apply information-seeking strategies to seek additional information from others,



and it plays an essential role during the formation of the impression process and relationship development (Ramirez et al., 2002). Through communication, individuals can reduce their uncertainty towards others, and they are encouraged by reciprocity to respond to others' disclosures (Berger & Calabrese, 1974; Gouldner, 1960). In online dating, meeting face-to-face and forming romantic relationships are the goals shared by many users, which can make users feel vulnerable by revealing their personal, intimate information (Gibbs et al., 2011).

Gibbs et al. (2011) examined the uncertainty of online dating concerning privacy concerns and self-disclosure. Applying the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (UTM), they identified four sets of concerns that online daters face: personal security, misrepresentation by others, recognition, and self-efficiency. These attributes can increase uncertainty, whereas seeking more information can help mediate these concerns.

Corriero and Tong (2016) further expounded on uncertainty management on mobile dating apps. They proposed that uncertainty is neither positive nor negative. Instead, an individual's cognitive appraisal determines its valence. The research included two studies that revealed the concerns and goals of online dating users. The first study confirmed Gibbs et al.'s (2011) results on the existence of four sets of concerns and revealed additional concerns: misrepresentation of personal or social information, health or serostatus information, virtual and physical privacy, recognition, and social judgment. Data from the second study indicates that mobile dating app users apply a variety of uncertainty reduction strategies but depend on an individual's relation to their goal of app use and tolerance of uncertainty. A significant limitation of this study is that all participants were male.

### ***Step 8: Meet Offline***

Trust issues are another concern for online daters (Norcie, Cristofaro, & Bellotti, 2013). Meeting strangers online was imagined as horror stories reported in the popular press, in which the actual person was very different from what was presented online (Donn & Sherman, 2002). The uncertainty of the potential partners assisted individuals in forming general trust, in which people assume others are reliable when lacking enough knowledge. It can also be used as a solution to reduce social uncertainty (Siegrist, Gutscher, & Earle, 2005).

Kang and Hoffman (2011) researched the relationship between online dating users and general trust. The authors discovered that trust plays a vital role in motives to participate in online dating. People who generally trust others are less likely to engage in ODS because they seek more control of information. Thus, trust decreases the likelihood of using online dating, perhaps because individuals can build their trust when meeting someone in person. However, as everyone has different trust levels, it is hard to measure precisely the trust level for online daters (Beldad et al., 2010). The decision to meet someone offline requires a great deal of trust.

Hallam, De Backer, and Walrave (2019) further investigated the relationship between trust and age. They measured subjects' level of trust in an online setting as well as in general and found that as individuals age, they are more willing to participate in online dating, and that neither online trust nor general trust were significant predictors of online dating.

### ***Step 9: Develop an Offline Relationship***

After the first date, people usually form their opinion about their potential partners and decide whether to continue seeing each other or go back online and find others. If either person shows no interest in the relationship, either party may go back to Step 4. They could browse

other profiles, join another ODS to expand their chances of meeting a potential partner, or discontinue using online dating services. If both parties are interested in continuing to develop their relationship, more dates will be arranged in the future. Research is lacking on the degree of difference between people who met online and offline in relationship development and maintenance (Finkel et al., 2012).

### **The Rise of Online Dating Apps**

Tinder uses a location-based real-time system to create connections between people. Launched in 2012, it soon became popular globally. Two years later, Bumble was launched and became known as the “Feminist Tinder” (Anwar, 2015). These smartphone apps connect users based on their profiles and real-time locations. Both apps are free but require a Facebook account, an email address, or a phone number to register. Users then need to enter their name and age to create their profile. Six photos or short videos can be uploaded, and 500-character biographies allow users to describe their personalities, motives for using the app, and objectives (Tinder, n.d.). Bumble requires verification of users, in which they must take a selfie after uploading their pictures (Bumble, n.d.).

Additional options allow users to add gender, current work, education, and link the users’ Instagram and Spotify accounts to display additional photos and favorite songs on both apps. While searching for potential matches, users can refine their search by setting their interests in age, gender, and distance. Once these settings are created, users may see other users’ profiles and decide whether they want to create a connection. Users can swipe left if they dislike the person’s profile or swipe right if they like the user and want to start a conversation. If desired, users can use “Super Like” in Tinder or “SuperSwipe” in Bumble on other’s profiles, which will notify the

other end-user. The match is created if both parties swipe right to each other and start chatting (Tinder, n.d.). However, on Bumble, only female users can make the initial contact to matched male users in heterosexual matches. In same-sex matches, either user can send the first message. If there are no messages between the two, then the match will expire after 24 hours (Bumble, n.d.).

Although Tinder and Bumble are free, users can pay for a subscription to upgrade their account for additional features. Both apps can be operated in Android, iOS, and a desktop version. In Tinder, the general free option allows users to have one "super like" per day and less than 100 "right swipe" likes every 12 hours. Advertisements are displayed, and users cannot change their location.

Tinder Plus is offered at \$8.99/month, \$33.99/6 months, or \$44.99/12 months. Additional features include unlimited likes location change, no advertisements, and five super likes per day. Subscribers have unlimited rewind, allowing them to re-swipe earlier disliked profiles and limit what other users can see about their profiles. Tinder Gold was introduced in August 2017 as the premium subscription. It includes all the features in Tinder Plus and two additional features: see who likes the subscribers' profile and let subscribers show on the Tinder Pick feature. Prices for Tinder Gold are offered at 26.99/month, 101.49/6 months, 134.99/12 months (Tinder, n.d.).

Similarly, Bumble's free version allows three "backtrack" every three hours, in which users can re-swipe the previous profile, no location change, no SuperSwipe, and no Spotlight that shows the profile on top for more viewers. There is no official record for the number of swipes, but users reported that Bumble has begun to limit swipe amounts (Hayes, 2019). Bumble Boost was introduced in 2016, which offers three premium features: see who has right-swiped, extend matches by 24 hours, and rematch with expired matches. Bumble Boost is provided at

\$8.99/week, \$24.99/month, \$49.99/3 months, \$79.99/year. Users can buy “coins,” an in-app currency that allows them to use “SuperSwipe” or “Spotlight” without purchasing Bumble Boost (Bumble, n.d.).

### **Online Dating App Information**

As online dating gained attention, the industry has snowballed. The U.S dating service market increased 24% between 2012 to 2015 and is estimated to be worth \$2.5 billion in 2015. By 2020, the industry was forecasted to reach \$3.2 billion, with 5.1% growth per annum (LaRosa, 2018). A popular dating app, such as Tinder, can make \$1,449 per minute or \$88,143 per hour (Hargrave, 2017). According to a recent article in *Vice News*, most dating apps rely on advertisements to produce revenue. Grindr, a dating app for gay men, earns 25% of its revenue through advertising. However, OkCupid, a more accessible site, earns only about 10%–20% of its total revenues from advertising (Charlton, 2015). Collecting subscription fees from users for additional services provides another revenue stream for these apps. Other features can vary from seeing who liked the user profile to location change (Deutsch, 2019).

Tinder is offered in 40 languages and used in 190 countries. There were approximately 57 million Tinder users in 2018 and 4.1 million subscribers for premium features. Since the launch of Tinder, 20 billion matches were created with 10 million active users per day. Bumble reported 22 million users in November 2017 and 27 million downloads as of February 2018 (Hepola, 2018). As of March 2017, Bumble had seen 800 million matches with 10 billion swipes per month, and it is the second most popular Lifestyle app in the iOS App Store (Bennett, 2017).

There are more male app users in the U.S and a higher level of younger users for both apps, with approximately one-third of users aged 18 to 24 (Iqbal, 2019). On Tinder, men are

outnumbered by women for at least two-to-one, which created a reputation for “lascivious intentions” (Hakala, 2015). On Bumble, about 46.2% of users are female, which is slightly higher than 43.3% female users on Tinder (McAlone, 2016). In April 2018, about 85% of Bumble users were “looking for serious relationships,” and 4% of males and 1% of females were “looking for hookups” (Vitto, 2018).

Tinder was released under its parent company Match Group. Match Group is a dating product provider that owns and operates multiple brands, including Tinder, Match, Hinge, OutTime, OkCupid, Meetic, PlentyOfFish, and several other brands. All of these apps allow users to create a profile and connect with other users for free, but each product provides a premium subscription. In 2018, Match Group made \$1.73 billion in revenue, \$533 million in operating income, and \$473 million in net earnings (Match Group, n.d.). Tinder is privately valued at roughly \$10 billion (Heath, 2019). Meanwhile, Bumble's parent company is MagicLab, which also owns dating apps Badoo, Lumen, and Chappy. As of 2018, the company reported \$162 million in net revenue (Reader, 2019). Bumble was valued at more than \$1 billion in 2017, according to Forbes (O'Connor, 2017).

### **Online Dating Apps Social Influence**

The popularity of dating apps gained the attention of academics. MacLeod and McArthur (2019) analyzed Bumble and Tinder and found gender to be a rigid category in these apps that is more related to its function than with user identity. Since Bumble is designed to give women the power to initiate conversations, Bivens and Hoque (2018) argued that the relationship between gender, sex, and sexuality generated in this app limits the achievement of social justice objectives. The authors proposed two infostructure failures within the app, in that it optimizes

straight, cisgender women and contingent straight male to be in an aggressive form of masculinity. Hess and Flores (2018) uncovered #Tinder Nightmares, an Instagram page with posts of Tinder conversations. This page includes toxic masculine performances, such as displaying impolite and rude messages, witty responses from the receiver, and the spearing of such information through digital circulation practices.

To investigate Tinder user motives, Timmermans and De Caluwé (2017) proposed a Tinder Motives Scale (TMS) and measured motivation factors that encourage user participation. From four different studies, the authors found that entertainment and curiosity were the most motivating factors. Ranzini and Lutz (2017) assessed Tinder users' self-presentation, personalities, demographics, and motivations. Self-esteem was found to be the most critical psychological predictor and fostered real self-presentation. Female participants were motivated to use Tinder for friendship and self-validation, while male participants used it for hooking up, traveling, and relationship-seeking.

### **Traveler Demographics and Psychographics**

An emerging trend in traveler characteristics has caught the eye of researchers. Under the changing demographics, travelers are increasingly traveling alone during holidays and vacations. Rosenbloom (2012) defined solo travelers as visitors who arrive at the destination without others in their company. Solo travel has gained growing attention, with 18% of global bookings from solo travelers, a 7% increase over 2018 (Brown, 2019).

Multiple studies have investigated the motives for traveling alone. Laesser, Beritelli, and Bieger (2009) proposed a conceptual model of solo travelers that categorized such travelers into four different groups based on household composition and party size. Solo travelers were found

to foster new social contacts and nurse their curiosity while traveling. Mehmetoglu, Dann, and Larsen (2001) investigated 13 socio-psychological justifications for traveling alone. Travelers were willing to travel solo to reduce planning and costs, experience nature, and meet locals. Sex was a motivator for traveling alone because travel provides sexual opportunities. Bianchi (2016) identified feelings of freedom, relaxation, discovery, and interaction with others as critical factors that satisfy solo travelers, with safety concerns and poor services as dissatisfaction factors.

The growing trend of solo women travelers is noticeable (Pereira & Silva, 2018). Bond (1997) examined solo women travelers' intentions for solo travel to be adventurous, bold, and confident quests for self-awareness, adventure, and new experiences. Yet, not all researchers support this theory. Whyte and Shaw (1994) explored the fear of violence and travel behaviors. Travelers modified their plans at the destination in three ways: reducing night-time participation, finding others with whom to participate, and changing activity. However, such activities may lessen trip enjoyment.

Solo travelers may have a higher chance of participating in SNT. French (2017) found that users participated in the online community to find other travelers or hosts that were willing to provide free accommodations. Interaction and networking with others at the destination is crucial for travel satisfaction, thus joining SNT sites may assist solo travelers in meeting with others. Like SNT, solo travelers may use online dating apps to network with other travelers or residents.

Traveling with others does not necessarily diminish freedom. Enjoying and exploring the destination with friends and family can provide positive benefits such as bonding (Durko & Petrick, 2013). Those who travel with business associates may be encouraged to participate in



SNT. Dirks and Skarlicki (2009) studied the importance of how coworkers think of each other. Coworker's perception of capability and integrity of others could predict their performance. Thus, individuals are more likely to enjoy pleasure with friends or strangers than with coworkers, whereas Kriwoken and Hardy (2018) emphasized travelers' desire to make social connections with like-minded individuals and form social groups while traveling.

### **Trip Characteristics**

Travelers can be segmented based on their trip purpose, and they do not have common expectations towards service providers or form similar destination images (Radder & Wang, 2006; Hankinson, 2005). Purposes for travel can be identified as four main categories: leisure, business, visiting friends or relatives (VFR), and other personal business (Chadwick, 1987). Morrison (1996) found that trip purpose can significantly influence travelers' behaviors. Categorizing travelers by their trip purpose can reveal differences in the use of smartphone devices to assist with information gathering and the interactions between travelers and the host community.

### **Leisure Travelers**

Many studies have examined the correlation between the quality of life and leisure travel (e.g., Allen & Beattie, 1984). Neal, Sirgy, and Uysal (1999) found that travel experiences with tourism service contributions can positively impact overall life satisfaction. Neal, Uysal, and Sirgy (2007) extended this research by accounting for length of stay. Travelers with extended vacation stays had higher overall life satisfaction compared to tourists with shorter stays.

Wang (2017) identified two major contributors to leisure trip satisfaction: Physical Life Satisfaction and Social Life Satisfaction. Physical Satisfaction occurs when stimulation and comfort coincide. Stimulation refers to pleasant arousal and physical effort, while comfort refers to the fulfillment of basic human needs and illuminate negative stimuli, like hunger and fatigue. Tourism can significantly influence physical well-being and lead to physical Satisfaction (Neal et al., 1999). With a more extended timeframe and first-time visit excitement, leisure travelers typically desire to explore the destination fully (Folkard, 2003).

To ensure satisfying trips, travelers' behavior at the destination vary based on their intentions. For example, when visiting Hawaii, Asian visitors are mostly interested in shopping, whereas European visitors want to explore nature (Woodside & Martin, 2008). The involvement of travelers can be a significant factor in generating behavior confirmation for leisure travelers. Tourists' destination behavior and participation in leisure activities at the destination can contribute to creating memories, leading to the achievement of behavioral confirmation and social well-being (Backman & Crompton, 1991). Achieving physical satisfaction and social satisfaction are crucial factors in achieving the overall satisfaction for leisure travelers.

### **Business Travelers**

Whereas most people are seeking relaxation during their trip, business travelers often are under a work-related liability during their travel (Unger, Uriely, & Fuchs, 2016). With continuous work demands and hours on the road, challenging situations often confront business travelers and increase their stress levels (Chen, 2017). According to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005), international business travelers usually are traveling 12 nights per trip, while domestic business travelers are away for four nights per trip. Frequent business travelers,

especially those who have more extended stays, often see traveling as a hassle and do not enjoy it as much (Faulkner, 2016). As such, business travelers face stress and tiredness that may cause various physical and psychological conditions (Rogers & Reilly, 2000).

The intensive workload may encourage business travelers to eat unhealthily, increase engagement in smoking or alcohol consumption, and exercise less (Burkholder et al., 2010). Rundle, Revenson, and Friedman (2018) revealed that business travelers might suffer mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, which requires the employers' attention. Business travelers have a higher chance of receiving red flags for several health issues like jet lag, sleep deprivation, frequent alcohol consumption, high blood pressure, and detachment from families and friends (Richards & Rundle, 2010). Travel stress can have a substantial effect on business travelers' mental health and well-being. Under such pressure, business travelers might decrease their productivity and lower their quality-of-life (Burkholder et al., 2010).

Although business travelers' journeys at the destination focus on business obligations, components of leisure elements occur during the trip (Millán, Fanjul, & Moital, 2016). When a less busy day occurs, travelers may explore the destination and engage in sightseeing, shopping, and trying local cuisines (Abulibdeh & Zaidan, 2017). Ein-Dor and Hirschberger (2012) investigated the relationship between stress and sexual activity. They invited 75 five heterosexual Israeli adults to self-report their sexual activity and daily emotions. Having sex was likely after a stressful day, and for both genders, sexual activities can help relieve stress. As business travelers tend to get lonely on the road, there is a high chance of engaging in casual sex and one-night stands, thus, higher chances of participating in online dating (Dahir, 2001). Pratt

(1995) investigated HIV infections for business travelers and suggested that companies provide more information on sexual health.

### **Visiting Friends and Relatives**

Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) is defined as a form of travel in which the host and visitors have face-to-face interaction at the destination (Munoz, Griffin, & Humbracht, 2017). VFRs have shown participation in commercial tourism activities such as accommodation bookings and leisure activities (Braunlich & Nadkarni, 1995; Tran, Moore, & Shone, 2018). Backer (2010) explored the use of commercial accommodation by VFR travelers on the Sunshine Coast of Australia and found that 26% of VFR travelers stayed in hotels. For those VFRs staying with families or friends, they may have an extra budget for other activities such as shopping and dining (Seaton & Palmer, 1997). Activities of VFR may vary based on the familiarity of the destination. When travelers are very familiar with the destination, they tend to participate in fewer tourism activities (Pearce, 2012). However, O'Leary and Morrison (1995) noted that VFR travelers might also participate in leisure activities with family and friends at the destination.

Given that the host of VFR lived at the destination, they can present relevant and accessible information for travelers and alter traveler behaviors (Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007). VFR travelers show less willingness to conduct destination research before departure, perhaps not even during the trip as they plan upcoming activities with the host (Gitelson & Crompton, 1983). Although the VFR traveler's goal is to be with family and/or friends, time is an essential element. One party may be on holiday or vacation at the destination with abundant time to spend, while the other party may still work eight hours a day under a daily routine

(Yousuf & Backer, 2017). Therefore, VFR travelers may seek others with whom to spend time while waiting for the host to return from work. Under such circumstances, the innovation of online dating using location-based services may attract VFR visitors to join the online community.

## **Motives for the Adoption and Use of Dating Apps During Travel**

### **Socializing**

#### ***On Social Media***

Humans build beneficial relationships in social living and have a strong desire to feel connected (Brewer, 2004). Gest et al. (2001) found that socializing will increase the time spent in social settings and peer networks' growth. Emmons and Diener (1968) further stated that sociability could positively increase life satisfaction, whereas less sociable individuals feel high levels of loneliness and anxiety when interacting with others (Collins & Read, 1990).

In the most recent Cigna 2020 Loneliness Index, about 61% of survey respondents reported feeling lonely. Men reported slightly higher levels of loneliness than women, and the younger generation (Gen Z) reported 8% more loneliness compared to millennials (Gunther, 2020). Under such circumstances, people increase their Internet usage to manage their feelings of loneliness. While some studies argued that lonely people tend to post fewer photos on social media (Scott et al., 2018), other research found that loneliness will encourage people to use the Internet to create an interaction (Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2003). McKenna and Bargh (2000) argued that the Internet offers individuals a broader social network that could help lonely people strengthen their social skills. Social loneliness, family loneliness, and romantic loneliness positively affect peer communication online (Lee & Hyun, 2015).

Online virtual communities and social networking sites have multiplied in recent years and attracted many users by providing a social platform, especially in the tourism industry. Bagozzi and Lee (2002) found that people who participate in online social networks are more focused on social interaction, involvement, and connection with others. Balasubramanian and Mahajan (2001) developed a conceptual framework for the economic leverage of virtual communities based on an extensive review of virtual-community literatures. The authors proposed that economic activities associated with virtual communities should not coincide with its social interactions but should be embedded within them. Virtual community users add value by contributing, obtaining value by participating, and gaining satisfaction from other users' consumption and approval of their contribution. Online involvement may develop emotional and enduring associations based on shared interests and reciprocity towards other online community members. This phenomenon was discovered in virtual tourism communities where people share their travel stories, ask for advice, and spread word-of-mouth (Wu, Xiao, & Wu, 2017; Munar & Jacobsen, 2013; Ribeiro et al., 2014).

### ***On Dating Sites***

An individual's involvement in online dating is related to how she/he values romantic relationships (Scheinbaum & Zinkhan, 2004). However, people use online dating for multiple reasons. Bryant and Sheldon (2017) found that among college students the fun element was the strongest motivation for using online dating. Respondents considered online dating to be "a form of entertainment" and stated that it was "fun to look at pictures and view profiles." As online dating sites gain popularity by offering user-friendly services, participants indicated a high level

of social acceptance for dating apps, with most students agreeing that online dating is an excellent way to meet others.

Loneliness is another motivating factor that encourages people to join online dating services (Lawson & Leck, 2006). In traditional environments, finding friends with similar interests, personalities, and backgrounds at school or workplace can be challenging, especially in small communities (Wang & Chang, 2010). Internet users' broad base has changed this situation, making it more natural to meet like-minded individuals (Bonebrake, 2002). People who make friends online tend to take precautions to interact with others safely and expand their social circle (McCown et al., 2001). The popularity is understandable as different platforms offer a variety of services that encourage people to participate. Cyberdating provides a new way to meet people, a form of adventure (Bryant & Sheldon, 2017).

### ***During Travel***

For those who enjoy socializing, traveling is a great way to interact with people. Wang (2000) speculated that as a tourist, it is less relevant to experience authentic objects or physical settings; visitors are looking for existential authenticity, which is an authentic self and genuine relationships with others. Participating in travel tours means spending time with strangers. This can be an excellent way to meet new people and make new friends, particularly for those who have less opportunity to socialize in their daily lives (Chang, 2007). Loker-Murphy and Pearce (1995) found that meeting people from other countries motivated travelers to engage in backpacking. Thurnell-Read (2012) found that during a premarital all-male stag tour organized by British men to visit an Eastern European city, expression of intimacy, bonding, and emotions were developed toward other members of the tour group. Through shared activities, signs of

group cohesion and a sense of togetherness were shown. People are more relaxed and comfortable during vacation when they escape from their social restraints, a sense of solidarity and communion emerges (Shields, 1991).

Solo travelers also show signs of high social interaction with others. Mehmetoglu et al. (2001) found that solo travelers were willing to travel solo for fewer plans and meeting others. Bianchi (2016) reconfirmed that solo travelers are highly motivated to discover the destination and interact with locals.

### **Information Searching**

Recent empirical studies revealed a relationship between travel motives and outcomes with the mediating effect of travel involvement (Wong, Law, & Zhao, 2018). High travel involvement increased travel satisfaction and destination revisit intention, but required travelers to have extensive knowledge of the destination (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). A relationship between involvement and information search was discovered in multiple studies, and findings show that the link is most definite during the pre-trip stage (Ferns & Walls, 2012; Carneiro & Crompton, 2010).

Earlier studies have focused on what kind of information travelers are searching for and what travel-related products they purchase (Bonn, Furr, & Susskind, 1998; Weber & Roehl, 1999). Fodness and Murray (1999) proposed a tourist information search model in which search strategies are related to tourists' characteristics, search contingencies, and behavior search outcomes. Pan and Fesenmaier (2006) utilized information hubs that provide numerous links to related websites. The vacation planning process was found to follow a hierarchical episode structure. While at the destination, travelers favor location-based services to find nearby



activities (Lu, Arikawa, & Sugiyama, 2018). Since dating apps use location-based real-time services, they provide a more natural way to connect with the local community (Xue et al., 2017). A local citizen can confidently offer expert opinions on travel-related opportunities at the destination (Rompf, DiPietro, & Ricci, 2005). Rompf (2001) discovered that travelers perceive referrals from locals as genuine and trustworthy, and that residents' opinions influenced travelers' decision-making at the destination (DiPietro et al., 2007).

Walls, Shani, and Rompf (2008) corroborated DiPietro et al.'s (2007) findings while revealing that travelers' trust residents regardless of their occupations. The most common recommendations were entertainment facilities and dining, with limited lodging facilities recommendations. Nonetheless, experienced travelers should be considered as an essential source of information since they have been to the destination before and transmit information through word-of-mouth (Gretze & Yoo, 2008). Arsal et al. (2010) incorporated information sources from experienced tourists and residents in the online tourism community. The study confirmed that residents could influence visitors' travel decisions, and experienced travelers could be a great information source and alter potential visitor's decision-making. Residents were more influential when travelers made on-site travel decisions such as menu recommendations and itinerary modifications. Experienced visitors were more influential than others in general travel-related questions, like transportation, accommodation, and monetary issues.

### **Relationship Seeking**

Relationship formation has transformed drastically with the use of the Internet. Shapiro et al. (2017) discovered a correlation between Tinder usage and risky sexual behaviors among young adults. The attitude towards engaging in casual sex and finding "friends with benefits"

was referred to as the “hookup culture” (Sales, 2015). The term “hookup” was defined as a sexual encounter between strangers or brief acquaintances with or without sexual intercourse. It is typically a one-time-only occurrence with no expectations for further relationship development (Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000).

Travel, especially to international destinations, provides people with an opportunity to be anonymous, free from the inhibitions imposed by a need to maintain a reputation, or adhere to the cultural norms in their place of residence. McKercher and Bauer (2003) argued that when people travel, they leave behind some social baggage to enjoy themselves, including changes in sexual behaviors. Other scholars supported this theory as they see tourism offers a distinctive social reality and reflects on an individual’s sexual behavior (Bloor, 1995; Wickens, 1997). The travel experience is a fourfold progression that adapts to the place and time, then further stimulates the mental and sensual transitions (Selänniemi, 2003). It was hypothesized in this study that the dating app selected would to a certain extent be used to these ends.

Researchers have sought the reasons and rationales for the acceptance of sexual permissiveness during travel. The famous advertising slogan, “What Happens in Vegas, Stays in Vegas,” revealed tourists’ tolerance of sexual permissiveness during travel (Berdychevsky, Poria, & Uriely, 2013). Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, and Yu (2002) focused on college students’ activity during Spring Break. They found that youth engaged in antinormative behaviors such as casual sex, drug use, and binge drinking that rejected or contradicted their day-to-day lifestyle. The idea of a “dirty weekend” was mentioned by Hemingway (2006), where seaside resorts were the littoral pleasure zone for sexual activities in Brighton, UK. Pritchard and Morgan (2006) further presented the idea that “dirty weekends” encourage people to transition from the everyday norm and temporarily enjoy pleasure. Anonymity during travel is a critical factor that allows

tourists to enjoy the freedom which promotes the participation of casual sex travel (Vivancos, Abubakar, & Hunter, 2010). Poria (2006) found that for gay and lesbian people, the ability to remain anonymous reduced social pressure and allowed them to enjoy sex during travel.

The formation of gender roles favors men over women in sexual relations. Men suffer less reputation damage when engaging in non-conventional sexual adventures than women, and men have higher levels of acceptance and engagement in casual sex than women (Berdychevsky et al., 2013b; Eiser & Ford, 1995). However, women exploring sexual activities during the journey will enhance their feelings of control, adventurousness, and empowerment (Berdychevsky, Gibson, & Poria, 2013). Berdychevsky et al. (2013b) found that when women were on lazy vacations or adventurous trips they had a much higher desire to engage in sexual intercourse with local men than during their daily routine and sought to increase their trip satisfaction. Businesswomen may control their sexual desire, where research participants view casual sex during a business trip is inappropriate (Berdychevsky et al., 2013b).

The concept of romance tourism points out the differences between travelers seeking purely sexual involvement and travelers seeking romance, love, and emotional envelopment that could lead to long-term relationships (Bauer, 2014). Pruitt and LaFont (1995) found that as tourism became much more accessible, Western females traveled to Jamaica to pursue romance or companionship with local men. Similarly, Meszaros (2017) points out that Western men will go across the sea to find their brides. The traditional image of marriage has encouraged males to seek international marriage in which the partner will perform "emotional labor of selflessness." Meszaros defined this labor with two components in which wives mold their aspirations according to their husbands' desires and maintain their physical appearance to benefit their

husbands. From this standpoint, the hope of finding a future life partner during travel may encourage people to use dating apps.

### **Enhancing Travel Experience**

Trip satisfaction is related to individuals' socio-demographic attributes such as age, gender, and personality, as well as travel mode availability and trip duration (Mao, Ettema, & Dijst, 2016). Mokhtarian et al. (2015) found that traveler's health issues, physical constraints, and low access to public transportation can decrease trip pleasantness. By investigating visitors' perception of safety and security with trip satisfaction in Turkey, Tasci and Boylu (2010) discovered that travelers' positive attitude toward Turkey's safety, security, and hygiene helped travelers have a satisfying trip. However, participants with a secondary school degree were harder to satisfy.

The Internet and its associated products have given travelers a much easier way to learn about travel products and assist people in making travel-related decisions (Jun et al., 2007). Thus, the Internet plays a vital role in trip satisfaction by reducing uncertainty, maximizing utility, enhancing knowledge, and increasing efficiency (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998). Aside from satisfying functional travel needs, the Internet helps travelers increase their trip enjoyment. Jun, Hartwell, and Buhalis (2012) presented several needs that visitors seek to satisfy through the Internet. Aesthetic needs refer to traveler's need to visit a new place because they saw it online. Sign needs indicate that travelers want to share their information and recognition from others by posting online. Innovation needs are satisfying travelers' curiosity by presenting new information about the destination through an Internet search, and hedonic needs are traveler's need to have fun and enjoy the destination.

## **Big Five Personalities**

Individuals' personalities have been extensively studied, especially in the communications field. Mount, Barrick, and Stewart (1998) argued that personality traits are individuals' interpersonal interactions that influence their job performance. More recently, Krishnan and Atkin (2014) researched the role of personality traits on social networking site usage.

Eysenck (1967) proposed a system to categorize personality traits as Psychoticism (P), Extraversion (E), and Neuroticism (N), known as the PEN model. This model was later replaced by the Five-Factor Model (FFM) presented by McCrae and Costa (1997). These authors structured personality into five dimensions: neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experiences. A discussion of the role of each of these dimensions in the use of dating apps, especially during travel, follows.

### **Neuroticism (N)**

Neuroticism is described as a stable temperament (Barnhofer, Duggan, & Griffith, 2011). High levels of neuroticism indicate moodiness, anxiety, tension, depression, insecurity, emotionalism, and self-depreciation (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). Neurotic individuals are more likely to have social anxiety about public self-presentation and self-consciousness, such as expressing their hidden self-aspects (Darvill, Johnson, & Danko, 1992). Watson and Watts (2001) argued that individuals with high neuroticism tend to have discrepancies between their actual self and ideal self (Seidman, 2013). The Internet has created a safe space for neurotic individuals to freely express themselves rather than through face-to-face interactions (Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, and Fox, 2002). However, this will encourage people to present only their

ideal selves online (Seidman, 2013). Using Facebook as a platform, Forest and Wood (2012) measured the social media involvement of persons with low self-esteem. People use Facebook for self-disclosure: Facebook “walls” are famous for their ability to respond to posts and delete posts (Ross et al., 2009). Similarly, highly neurotic people can be active online, engaging in such activities as posting blogs and becoming addicted to instant messaging and texting (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Ehrenberg et al., 2008). Yoo and Gretzel (2011) found that neurotics were less likely to contribute to travel-related forums or discussions. During travel, neurotic individuals tend to avoid risks (Jani, 2014).

Computer-mediated communications are commonly used in online dating, and research indicates that neurotics use the Internet to seek companionship (Correa, Hinsley, & De Zuniga, 2010). Without face-to-face interactions, neurotics can avoid intimacy, argument, and rejection in the online environment (Amiel, & Sargent, 2004). Neurotics have been found to have lower relationship satisfaction, instability, marital relations, and shorter relationships (Kelly and Conley, 1987). Although online dating sites are very goal-orientated towards initiating relationships, they nevertheless offer neurotics a way to reduce their anxiety and stress from daily interpersonal interaction, which could help them find a sexual partner (Clemens, Atkin, & Krishnan, 2015). These authors further confirmed the theory that neurotics seek a sense of identity, distraction, and companionship through online dating sites.

### **Extraversion (E)**

Extraverted people tend to have high assertiveness, sociability, talkativeness, carefree attitudes, dominance, and optimism. Low scores indicate introversion, such as being submissive, avoiding close relationships, and overly controlling their impulses (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985;

McCrae & Costa, 1997). Extraverted people tend to focus more on their public self-consciousness (Lee, Ahn, & Kim, 2014) and self-monitoring (Briggs, Cheek, & Buss, 1980). In the online environment and the “real world,” extraverted individuals have more extensive connections with others and high self-esteem (McLean, & Pasupathi, 2006). Thus, it is not surprising that extraversion engage in more frequent online activities, such as the use of social networking sites (Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2002).

Marcus, Machilek, and Schütz (2006) found that extraverted users were more engaged in elaborate online self-presentations and more frequently hosted homepage weblogs in which they shared their own lives and opinions. When posting pictures online, extraverted members choose fewer conservative images of themselves (Krämer & Winter, 2008). Gosling et al. (2011) argued that extraverts made more significant use of Facebook to communicate with others and post comments on their friend’s pages.

When extraverted people travel, they tend to interact with the local community and like to visit adventurous tourist sites (Kahle, Matsuura, & Stinson, 2005). Extraverts frequently contribute to online travel forums to share their experiences (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). Jami (2014) found that extraverts liked hiking and group activities, whereas introverts preferred cultural visits, boating, and beach recreation.

Extraverts have a higher quality of friends and are more satisfied with their romantic relationships than introverts (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998; Kelly & Conley, 1987). Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) stated that, extraverts are less nervous about sexual conquests and tend to seek out sexual stimulation because they are more positive about the rewards afterward than possible punishments. With high levels of self-esteem and social interaction, extroverts are more likely to participate in online dating (Kim, Kwon, & Lee, 2009).

## **Agreeableness (A)**

Individuals who are considered agreeable tend to be generous, helpful, considerate, warm, compassionate, and sympathetic. At the same time, individuals who are considered disagreeable tend to be condescending, critical, skeptical, and hostile personalities who try to push limits (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Due to their orientation toward others, agreeable individuals have belongingness motivations that encourage them to participate online (Seidman, 2013). Agreeable people present a more authentic version of themselves and have higher perceived control over their online self-presentation (Leary & Allen, 2011). On social networking sites, they would refrain from attention-seeking. Seidman (2013) found a positive correlation between agreeableness and communication. Agreeable people are more likely to use social networking sites to maintain connections and seek acceptance.

However, Ehrenberg et al. (2008) suggest that agreeable people favor face-to-face communication rather than computer-mediated communications, although no specific evidence shows a link between agreeableness and the number of online friends (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010). Lounsbury et al. (1999) argued that agreeable individuals are more inclined to seek advice from others. They will read and accept customer reviews from rating sites and post their own experiences (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). Highly agreeable travelers tend to be more comfortable participating in tourism activities that others recommend or listening to most participants (Jani, 2014).

Agreeable individuals have more successful and satisfying romantic relationships (White, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2004). Karney and Bradbury (1995) found evidence of marital stability among people with higher agreeableness personality traits. Clemens et al. (2015) found that agreeable individuals used online dating due to peer pressure from offline friends, whereas



disagreeable individuals used online dating to seek companionship and socialize. Because disagreeable individuals are hard to deal with face-to-face, online dating allows them to have more control and present themselves more appealingly.

### **Conscientiousness (C)**

Individuals who rate high on conscientiousness are purposeful, punctual, ethical, dependable, and have high aspirations. At the same time, those with low scores are described as daydreamers, instant gratification-seekers, and self-indulgent (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Leary and Allen (2011) reported that conscientious participants on the Internet would present themselves consistent with group norms such as fewer personas and authentic self-presentation. Conscientious individuals are more likely to be cautiously self-resenting and to regret inappropriate posts on social media (Moore & McElroy, 2012).

Conscientiousness was found to be negatively related to uploading photos on social networking sites (Seidman, 2013). From this perspective, Wilson, Fornasier, and White (2010) argued that conscientious people are negatively associated with social media use, are cautious online, and are willing to meet their need for belonging offline. Conscientious individuals tend to do what others expect them to do, such as posting their travel experiences and knowledge online (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). Jani (2014) found that highly conscientious individuals prefer to go shopping and spend time with family while on vacation, while low conscientious individuals prefer to do athletic activities or gaming because they are more flexible and less organized.

From these descriptions, Clemens et al. (2015) construed that conscientious individuals are goal-oriented and efficient in time management, encouraging them to participate in online dating to meet others and develop their romantic relationships efficiently. However,

conscientious people are more focused on finding a link on dating sites rather than sexual partners. Conscientious daters are ethical and see more responsibility if finding a sex partner, and as they value time, they would prefer non-mediated interpersonal interactions (Langstedt, 2013). Those who score low in conscientiousness tend to use online dating to build an identity (Clemens et al., 2015). Low conscientious individuals would upload and share their pictures online to be social (Amaichai-Hamburger & Vinitsky, 2010). Clemens et al. (2015) explained this behavior as the online environment allowing these people to receive immediate attention and boost their ego.

### **Openness to Experiences (O)**

McCrae and Costa (1997) described those who are open as being sensitive, creative, non-conforming, rebellious, intellectually curious and with a high cultural interest. In the online context, people with higher openness are more self-disclosing, posting more often than others, revealing their personal information online, and learning about others' plans and activities through online interaction (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010; Ross et al., 2009). Like extraversion, open individuals have often been considered the source of scrutiny in communication (Clemens et al., 2015). As openness is associated with trying new things, people with higher openness traits tend to adopt new media tools faster (Ross et al., 2009). Yoo and Gretzel (2011) identified that open people largely contribute to online travel content and are less likely to perceive structural barriers when sharing their experiences. High openness travelers are more likely to participate in adventurous activities, visit historical sites, and be close to nature (Jani, 2014).

Openness has been found to negatively affect marital stability, satisfaction, and duration (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Shaver & Brennan, 1992). However, Bouchard, Lussier, and Sabourin (1999) observed that when the husband has higher levels of openness, the wife typically appreciates it and has more satisfaction towards their relationship. Neyer and Voigt (2004) argued that since openness includes not only open-mindedness, unconventionality, and tolerance, but intelligence and creativity, these could increase attractiveness. Clemens et al. (2015) and Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2010) suggested that open people participate in online dating to socialize with others.

### **Risk Perceptions**

Risk is defined as exposure to dangerous chance and the potential of losing something of value (Martin & Priest, 1986; Priest & Martin, 1985). Haddock (1993) identified three types of risks: absolute, real, and perceived. Absolute risk is evaluated by commercial providers and individuals who implement safety and security procedures to minimize the actual risk (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005; Haddock, 1993). Perceived risk refers to an individual's perceptions of negative and uncertain consequences of an action beyond one's acceptance level (Dowling & Staelin, 1994). Most research focuses on the analysis of perceived risk rather than real risk because people are more concerned with the outcomes related to themselves (Freudenburg, 1988).

### **Travel Risk Perceptions**

In the tourism context, risk refers to perceived risk and experience during the pre-trip purchasing process and the during-trip product consuming stage. It is primarily concerned with

international travelers (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). Reichel, Fuchs, and Uriely (2007) argued that traveler's behavior and destination choice are influenced by perceived risk because their decision is based on perception, not reality. When travelers are facing higher perceived risk, they will be more rational during the decision-making process to reduce the risk (Fodness & Murray, 1998). Some risk-reduction methods include collecting more information and buying a more expensive or frequently advertised brand (Deng & Ritchie, 2018).

The perception of risk varies among tourist characteristics. Lepp and Gibson (2003) found that the tourist role and their preferences for novelty or familiarity are associated with international tourism. The organized mass tourists seek the most familiarity, while independent travelers seek familiarity, but travel independently. Explorers prefer a balanced mix of novelty and familiarity, while drifters seek innovation and are willing to follow the host society's ways. Therefore, the authors argued that travelers' risk-taking behavior varies.

Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) distinguished three groups of tourist's risk perceptions. The risk-neutral group thinks there is no risk at the destination; the functional-risk group perceives organizational, mechanical, and equipment risks; and the place-risk group considers traveling as risky. Backpackers are attracted to dangerous locations, and the perception of risk may vary depending on travelers' personality and nationality (Elsrud, 2001; Maritz, Yeh, & Shieh, 2013). Seddighi, Nuttall, and Theochaous (2001) found that cultural background was fundamental in determining travel agents' perceptions of instability at selected Mediterranean destinations.

Travelers' perceived risk can be categorized into several different areas. Cook and McCleary (1983) investigated traveler's risk perceptions in time and budget risks, and visitors tend to use cognitive distance estimates in choosing a vacation destination rather than the distance. Further, Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) proposed three categories of individuals'

perceived travel risks: Physical-equipment risk, vacation risk, and destination risk. Sönmez and Graefe (1998) conceptualized ten categories: equipment/functional, political instability, psychological, satisfaction, social, terrorism, time, financial, health, and physical risks. Deng and Ritchie (2018) proposed six categories of significant travel risks: physical, psychological, social, performance, financial, and time risks related to international university students. However, as there are many perspectives of risk perception categories, there are no widely accepted models to evaluate and investigate tourists' perceived travel risks (Fuchs & Reichel, 2006).

### **Online Dating Risk Perceptions**

A primary concern of using online dating is the increased levels of sexual risk behavior among online daters. Individuals who use online dating seeking sexual partners report a higher number of sexual partners, a high rate of unprotected sexual activities, and sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnosis (Benotsch et al., 2016). Buhi et al. (2013) found that college students with both online and offline partners have multiple vaginal and oral sex partners, a higher chance of unintended pregnancy, and a higher risk of being diagnosed with STI. Liao, Millett, and Marks (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of male online daters' sex-seeking and sexual risk behaviors with other men. They found that 40% of men who had sex with other men used the Internet to seek sexual intercourse. McFarlane et al. (2004) suggested that compared to women with no Internet partners, women who seek sexual partners online perform higher-risk behaviors. Still, they are engaged in more protective sexual intercourse. Although the Internet's role affects STI transmission, online dating is a complex activity, and the repercussions for STIs still need further research (Couch, Liangputtong, & Pitts, 2012).

Meeting strangers may cause concerns about safety and physical risks (Lawson & Leck, 2006). In a study of online female daters, Padgett (2007) found that most women were concerned about their safety before meeting face-to-face. Participants of this study used online screening, such as frequent conversation, picture exchange, and phone calls. Respondents relied on their intuition, instinct, or gut feeling to decide whether to meet in person. Eight percent of female survey respondents stated that they felt unsafe when they met face-to-face with their male date. Respondents used multiple methods to enhance their security when meeting ODS contacts face-to-face, including meeting in public during the daytime, using their own transportation to and from the first date, creating a safe call to friends or family, and bringing a friend or carrying pepper spray to the first meeting.

Other studies have revealed several risk perceptions from online daters. Couch et al. (2012) observed four categories of risks: risks of lies and deceit, sexual threats, emotional and physical risks, and personal safety risks. From the 29 participant interviews, most participants had concerns about lying and deception, such as inaccurate photos and relationship status, since it is difficult to discern the truth from what is presented online. Some participants argued that they were concerned about emotional risks when meeting people online—that they might develop connections online but be disappointed after meeting the individual in person. Significant concerns about sexual risks, such as sexual violence, STIs, and pregnancy, especially among females, were also articulated. Both males and females were concerned about personal safety. Couch and Liamputtong (2007) found that the principal concern of online daters was sexual safety. However, they use various methods to manage and minimize their perceived risk, such as comparing their online dating perceived risks with other activities to justify their actions. Most participants felt confident in managing perceived risk in online dating.

## Summary

From the literature review, it is clear that travelers' trip purposes significantly influence their behaviors. Business travelers have higher levels of stress compared to leisure travelers. However, since many business travelers are lonely and stressed, they seek to engage in sexual activities. Travelers visiting friends and family are less willing to conduct destination research before departure. Traveler characteristics can also motivate their adoption of online dating apps. Solo travelers tend to foster new social contacts and nurse their curiosity during travel. They are motivated by the feeling of freedom, relaxation, discovery, and interaction with others, and they have a higher chance of participating in Social Networking Tourism (SNT).

Visitors are looking for existential authenticity, which is an authentic self and authentic relationships with other travelers or residents. Information searching while traveling is crucial for travelers. High travel involvement will increase travel satisfaction and destination revisit intention, yet high travel involvement requires to have extensive knowledge of the destination. Cyberdating has become a popular way to meet various people and finds romantic partners and "hookup" partners. During travel, visitors may seek sexual opportunities as they are away from some social baggage. A delightful travel experience will lead to trip satisfaction and Internet use has helped travelers enhance their trip satisfaction. Aside from satisfying functional travel needs with the use of the Internet, it helps travelers to have fun and increase their trip enjoyment and entertainment.

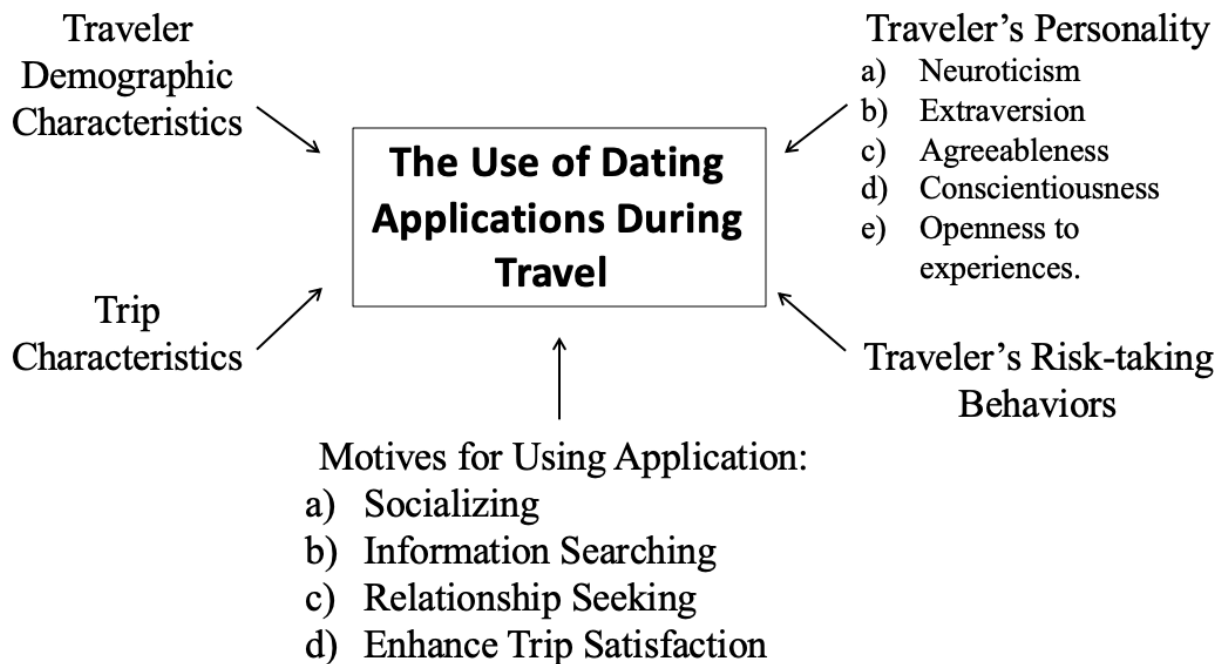
Individuals' personality is a strong determinant in multiple areas such as job performance, interpersonal interactions, and social networking sites usage. Five personality dimensions are widely used in research, which are neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness,

and openness to experiences. All personality shows a possible use of the Internet and engagement in online dating sites.

Lastly, perceived risks are faced by both travelers and online daters. When facing higher perceived risk, travelers will be more rational during the decision-making process to reduce risk. However, the knowledge of risk varies among tourist characteristics, with group travelers seeking the most familiarity and explorers seeking novelty. Meeting strangers online can raise concerns about sexual safety, physical safety, and emotional risks. Therefore, the proposed conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 2. It illustrates the motivating factors that might encourage travelers to adopt online dating apps during travel.

**Figure 2**

*Conceptual Framework*





## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methods**

This study explored travelers' use of a major dating app during travel based on a survey of individuals who stated that they had used this app during their travels. It also sought to document the users' motives for using the app during their travels. Both users and non-users of online dating apps during travel were investigated to permit comparisons of the characteristics of those used, versus did not use, the app during travel. The study aimed to identify possible relationships between participants' behaviors and their personality types and risk tolerances. Thus, quantitative methods were considered the most appropriate means to these ends.

### **Research Design**

Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed on the online dating app to reach app users from both genders. Data were collected from September 2019 to November 2019. To distribute questionnaires on the app, the author created a research profile with a brief description of the study to arouse the interest of prospective participants. To ensure that this profile would have minimal influence on participants' responses, she used her professional photograph as the main picture with an additional casual picture and set the account to display to both genders. Other information was included, such as the location of the researcher and her age. A male researcher assisted her using the same methods to help ensure that participants would be balanced in terms of gender. No incentives were offered or given for participation.

The author consistently "swiped right" on all app users to apply random sampling, causing her profile to appear to all users within the allowed daily maximum of swipes and inviting them to participate in this study. Whenever a match was made, the researcher sent a

short introduction, attached a brief statement to ensure participants understood that the study was legitimate, and secured permission from participants to join the study. A survey link was then sent to potential participants. Directly communicating online with potential participants and explaining the study helped the researchers secure cooperation. Since the survey language was English, geographic bounds exist in this study, and most participants were from English-speaking countries.

### **Instrumentation**

A questionnaire designed to create data that could be analyzed to meet the project objectives was developed. The questionnaire was made available to participants through the Qualtrics online survey platform. A copy is appended.

Timmermans and De Caluwé (2017) proposed a Tinder Motives Scale and used a survey to test their hypotheses. This study provided a framework for measuring motivations for using the app during travel. Some questions were adopted from Timmermans and De Caluwé (2017), while others were specifically created for this study. The motivations battery consisted of 23 questions can be divided into four main concepts: socializing (five items), information searching (eight items), relationship-seeking (four items), and enhancing travel experience (five items). A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure tourists' motivation where 1 indicated “Not At All Important To Me” and 7 indicated “Extremely Important To Me.”

Additionally, 23 questions were taken from the previous study conducted by Mayfield, Perdue, and Wooten (2008) to measure the Big Five Personality dimensions. Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Openness to experience were each measured with five items; Extroversion and Agreeableness were each measured with four items.

Participants were also asked to measure their behaviors on a scale from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”). Questions regarding risk-taking behavior attitudes were selected from Weber, Blais, and Betz (2002). Risk behavior was measured by asking respondents to indicate the likelihood of their engaging in each of eight activities or behaviors that could occur on a trip, on a scale from 1 (“very unlikely”) to 5 (“very likely”). The items were: “frequent binge drinking,” “going camping in the wild,” “going on a safari in Kenya,” “going on a two-week vacation in a foreign country without booking accommodation ahead,” “traveling on a commercial airplane,” “engaging in unprotected sex,” “never using sunscreen when you sunbathe,” and “periodically engaging in a dangerous sport (e.g., mountain climbing or sky diving).”

Descriptive and reliability statistics for all six scales are presented in Table 1. As shown therein, Cronbach’s Alpha for the sample as a whole ranged from 0.639 for the Agreeableness scale to 0.836 for the Neuroticism scale. The Alpha levels of all scales except the Agreeableness scale (0.639) and the Risk Behavior scale (0.642) are sufficiently high for the scales to be considered reliable. The Alpha levels of the Agreeableness and Risk Behavior scales, on the other hand, are undesirably low.

**Table 1***Descriptive and Reliability Statistics for Scales Used in This Study.*

| Scale                  | Scale Parameters          |           |                          |                                | Observed Outcomes |         |         |       |           |                  |     |       |           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|-------|-----------|------------------|-----|-------|-----------|
|                        | Range of Response Options | No. Items | Range of Possible Scores | Mathematical Midpoint of Scale | Sample as a Whole |         |         |       |           | App Users Only   |     |       |           |
|                        |                           |           |                          |                                | n                 | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Dev. | Cronbach's Alpha | n   | Mean  | Std. Dev. |
| Neuroticism            | 1-5                       | 5         | 5-25                     | 15.0                           | 787               | 5       | 25      | 12.99 | 4.72      | 0.836            | 443 | 12.29 | 4.74      |
| Extraversion           | 1-5                       | 4         | 5-20                     | 12.5                           | 774               | 4       | 20      | 13.84 | 3.11      | 0.761            | 431 | 14.13 | 3.06      |
| Openness to experience | 1-5                       | 5         | 5-25                     | 15.0                           | 780               | 8       | 25      | 18.80 | 3.47      | 0.672            | 437 | 18.96 | 3.60      |
| Agreeableness          | 1-5                       | 4         | 5-20                     | 12.5                           | 790               | 5       | 20      | 14.71 | 2.96      | 0.639            | 446 | 14.62 | 3.11      |
| Conscientiousness      | 1-5                       | 5         | 5-25                     | 15.0                           | 782               | 6       | 25      | 16.66 | 3.77      | 0.724            | 440 | 16.56 | 3.70      |
| Risk Behavior          | 1-5                       | 8         | 8-40                     | 24.0                           | 767               | 8       | 38      | 23.23 | 6.05      | 0.642            | 430 | 24.62 | 5.82      |

Because only one analysis involved the sample as a whole, Cronbach's Alpha was also computed for the principal focus of this study—persons who used the app during travel. The results of this analysis revealed a somewhat higher Alpha level of 0.674 for the Agreeableness scale. Nevertheless, the low reliability of these two scales is a limitation of this research, and results based on the Risk Behavior scale should be interpreted with caution.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

The analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. A significance level of 0.05 was used throughout the analysis. Negatively worded items in the battery that measured personality types (e.g., “I often get into arguments with my family and co-workers,” “I never seem to be able to get organized”) were reverse-coded prior to computing scores on the scales to which these items pertained.

The variables that measured the countries in which respondents resided and spent the most time during the most recent trip on which they used the app were used to create several new variables. If the countries of residence and principal destination on such trips were identical, the trip was coded in a new variable as a domestic trip; otherwise, it was coded as an international trip. Also, the countries in which respondents resided and in which they spent the most time on the most recent trip in which they used the app were recoded into new variables that recorded the World Bank region (e.g., “Europe and Central Asia,” “Middle East and North Africa”) in which these countries were located. These new, region-level indicators of trip origins and destinations, in turn, were converted into dummy variables used in the multiple regression analysis reported below.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Results**

#### **Characteristics of the Sample as a Whole**

Eight hundred nineteen respondents completed the questionnaire. The response rate was 16%. The primary residences of respondents were in 42 countries, including nations in North America, South America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Oceania. However, most participants (55.9%) were from the United States. Fifty-one percent were female and 49.4% were male. Ages ranged from 18 to 69 and averaged 25.4. Eight-five percent were under age 30. Fifty-six percent of respondents reported that they had used the app during their travels; 44.0% reported that they had not.

#### **Characteristics of Users Versus Non-Users of the App During Travel**

Respondents who reported that they used the app during their travels differed in several respects from those who had not. During travel, users of the app were more likely than their counterparts to be male and reside in North America. They were also less neurotic, more extraverted, and more risk-tolerant than their counterparts (Table 2). No statistically significant differences emerged in terms of the other scales or age.

**Table 2**

*Demographic and Psychographic Characteristics of Respondents Who Used, Versus Did Not Use, App During Their Travel.*

| Variable                    | All in Analysis<br>n=755-800 | Used App<br>n=422-452 | Did not Use App<br>n=333-348 | Test Statistic | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Sex                         |                              |                       |                              |                |          |
| Male (%)                    | 49.4                         | 61.9                  | 33.0                         | $X^2 = 65.70$  | 0.000    |
| Female (%)                  | 50.6                         | 38.1                  | 67.0                         |                |          |
| Region of residence         |                              |                       |                              |                |          |
| East Asia and Pacific (%)   | 19.6                         | 19.9                  | 19.2                         | $X^2 = 25.11$  | 0.000    |
| Europe and Central Asia (%) | 18.8                         | 13.5                  | 25.5                         |                |          |
| North America (%)           | 57.6                         | 63.0                  | 50.8                         |                |          |
| South Asia (%)              | 2.6                          | 3.1                   | 2.1                          |                |          |
| Other (%)                   | 1.3                          | 0.5                   | 2.4                          |                |          |
| Neuroticism scale (mean)    | 13.00                        | 12.29                 | 13.89                        | $t = -4.78$    | 0.000    |
| Extraversion scale (mean)   | 13.84                        | 14.13                 | 13.47                        | $t = 2.98$     | 0.003    |
| Risk Behavior (mean)        | 23.23                        | 24.62                 | 21.46                        | $t = 7.44$     | 0.000    |

### **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents Who Used the App During Travel**

App users were 61.9% male and 38.1% female. Although their ages ranged from 18 to 50, they averaged 25.0, and 87.8% were under age 30. The primary residences of app users were in 30 countries, including nations in North America, South America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Oceania. The most frequently cited country in which users primarily resided was by far the United States (61.6%), distantly followed by Indonesia (5.7%), Singapore (5.0%), the United Kingdom (4.0%), The Netherlands (3.3%), India (2.8%), the People's Republic of China (2.4%), and Malaysia (2.1%). Less than 2.0% of users primarily resided in other countries.

### **Trip Characteristics of Respondents Who Used the App During Travel**

Respondents who used the app during travel were queried about the most recent such trip. The period during which this trip occurred ranged from 2014 to 2019 and, on average, was 2018. Most users (51.2%) stated that their trip purpose was a “vacation,” 22.4% stated that it was “business,” 16.1% stated that it was to “visit friends/relatives,” and 8.1% stated that it was education-related. Less than 1.0% stated that it was a combination of these purposes or some other purpose.

Responses to the query, “In what country did you spent the most time on this trip?” included 52 nations. However, the most frequently cited country was by far the United States (38.2%), distantly followed by Japan (8.2%), Indonesia (5.1%), the People's Republic of China (4.0%), the United Kingdom (4.0%), Thailand (3.8%), and Australia (3.1%). Less than 3.0% cited some other country.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents who used the app during their travels affirmed that the most recent such trip was an international journey. This might explain some respondents' use of



the app to obtain locals' suggestions on accommodation, dining, activity, and attraction opportunities, discussed below.

Party sizes ranged from 1 to 11 and averaged 2.96. The most frequent responses to the query, "Who went on this trip? Please check all that apply" were "just myself" (36.8%) and "friend(s)" (31.7%), distantly followed by "adult family member(s)" (14.9%), "business associates" (9.6%), "organized group" (2.9%), "child(ren) age 10-17" (2.2%), "child(ren) under age 10" (1.8%), and "other" (0.2%).

### **Most and Least Important Motivations for Using the App During Travel**

Participants were asked to respond to a battery of 23 items covering a broad range of possible motivations for using the app during travel. As shown in Figure 3, eight items had mean scores above the midpoint of the scale (4.0): "to make my trip fun" (5.13), "to have satisfying trips" (4.70), "to pass time" (4.57), "to enhance my travel experience" (4.57), "to broaden my experience at the destination" (4.41), "to make new friends" (4.36), "to meet locals" (4.22), and "to get activity suggestions from locals" (4.09).

Figure 3

*Mean Levels of Importance Ascribed to Each Item in The Motivations Battery.*



Four of these top eight motivations pertained to using the app for trip enhancement, two of these items were social in nature (“to make new friends” and “to meet locals”), one pertained to information searching (“to get activity suggestions from locals”), and one pertained to diversion (“to pass time”). The fact that four of the top five motivations pertained to trip enhancement suggests that respondents considered the quality of their travel experiences to be the most important aspects of their trips and were willing to use services outside of the tourism industry to ensure such quality.

Respondents ascribed lower levels of importance to the other items in the battery. In particular, on average they ascribed the least importance to using the app “to fall in love” (2.63) and “to find someone for a serious relationship” (2.60).

#### **4.6 Drivers of Overall Importance Ascribed to Use of the App During Travel**

The overall importance of respondents placed on the use of the app during travel was measured by averaging each respondent’s responses to all 23 items in the motivations battery. These averages were approximately normally distributed with a mean of 3.71, a standard deviation of 1.05, a skewness of -0.164, and kurtosis of -0.378.

Averages ranged from 1.13 to 6.43. To determine what accounted for these variations in the overall importance respondents placed on the use of the app during travel, this variable was regressed on all demographic, psychographic, and trip characteristics variables. “Demographic variables” included the region in which the respondent resided. Trip characteristics measured on a nominal scale (e.g., purpose of trip, region of destination) were converted to dummy variables to permit their inclusion.

Since the purpose of the analysis was exploration rather than prediction, standard stepwise regression procedures were employed. No serious violations of the assumptions of

normality, linearity, or homoscedasticity were detected. The probability-of-F-to-enter was set at  $\leq 0.050$ ; the probability-of-F-to-remove was set at  $\geq 0.100$ .

The results indicated that the model was statistically significant,  $F(5, 301) = 12.13, p < 0.001$ , with an adjusted  $R^2$  value of 15.4% (Table 3). Variance inflation factors, which ranged from 1.03 to 1.28, were within the recommended value of 10 or below (Hair et al., 2010, p. 204).

**Table 3***Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Overall Mean of Motivations Battery.*

| Predictor                    | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Beta Coefficients | t     | p     | Collinearity Statistics |      |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|------|
|                              | B                           | Std. Error |                   |       |       | Tolerance               | VIF  |
| Constant                     | 0.656                       | 0.438      |                   | 1.498 | 0.135 |                         |      |
| Openness to experience scale | 0.048                       | 0.016      | 0.165             | 2.929 | 0.004 | 0.876                   | 1.14 |
| Neuroticism scale            | 0.051                       | 0.012      | 0.241             | 4.356 | 0.000 | 0.902                   | 1.11 |
| Extraversion scale           | 0.071                       | 0.020      | 0.210             | 3.524 | 0.000 | 0.780                   | 1.28 |
| Resident of South Asia       | 0.750                       | 0.320      | 0.125             | 2.345 | 0.020 | 0.974                   | 1.03 |
| Risk Behavior scale          | 0.020                       | 0.010      | 0.112             | 2.073 | 0.039 | 0.939                   | 1.06 |

NOTES: n = 307.  $F(5, 301) = 12.13, p < 0.001$ ; Adj.  $R^2 = 0.154$ ;  $S_e = 0.933$ ; VIF = Variance Inflation Factor.

Five independent variables entered the regression equation in the following order: the openness to experience scale, the neuroticism scale, the extraversion scale, a dummy variable that measured whether the respondent was a resident of South Asia, and the Risk Behavior scale. Thus, only one of the eight demographic variables and none of the 18 trip characteristics included in the analysis were statistically significant predictors of the dependent variable. Apparently, the importance placed on using the app during travel is more a function of personality than outward characteristics and behaviors.

All five variables that entered the equation remained in the equation throughout the analysis and were positively related to the dependent variable. The neuroticism scale had the highest beta coefficient.

### **Latent Motivations for Use of the App During Travel**

To obtain further insights into motivations for using the app during travel, data from the motivations battery were factor-analyzed to identify the latent structure of responses to this battery. The use of a factor model was considered appropriate after applying Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy to a correlation matrix of the 23 items in the battery. The former showed a value of 6,166.18 ( $p < 0.001$ ) and the latter value of 0.874.

The analysis produced five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 that collectively explained 69.1% of the variance in the data (Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Eigenvalues for, and Percentage of Variance Explained By, The Five-Factor Model.*

| <b>Factor</b> | <b>Eigenvalue</b> | <b>Total Variance Explained</b> |                     | <b>Common Variance Explained</b> |                     |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
|               |                   | <b>Percent</b>                  | <b>Cum. Percent</b> | <b>Percent</b>                   | <b>Cum. Percent</b> |
| 1             | 8.169             | 35.5                            | 35.5                | 51.4                             | 51.4                |
| 2             | 2.932             | 12.7                            | 48.2                | 18.5                             | 69.9                |
| 3             | 2.520             | 11.0                            | 59.2                | 15.9                             | 85.8                |
| 4             | 1.231             | 5.4                             | 64.6                | 7.7                              | 93.5                |
| 5             | <u>1.037</u>      | <u>4.5</u>                      | 69.1                | <u>6.5</u>                       | 100.0               |
| Sum           | 15.889            | 69.1                            |                     | 100.0                            |                     |

All variables in the five-factor model had commonalities of 0.496 or higher, and 13 had commonalities of 0.670 or greater. A “scree” of eigenvalues was apparent after only the third factor. However, after the five factors were rotated to simple structure on varimax criteria, the rotated factor matrix (Table 5) included distinct and readily identifiable factors with few cross-loadings, each of which significantly contributed to an understanding of the latent structure of the data. The five-factor model was therefore selected for interpretation and subsequent analysis.



**Table 5***Rotated Factor Matrix of The Five-Factor Model.*

|                                                            | Factor             |                  |                      |                       |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
|                                                            | Advice Acquisition | Trip Enhancement | Romance Facilitation | Hedonism Facilitation | Diversion    |
| Motivation for Using App During Travel                     | 1                  | 2                | 3                    | 4                     | 5            |
| To pass time                                               | -0.053             | 0.073            | -0.094               | -0.098                | <b>0.688</b> |
| To meet other travelers                                    | 0.357              | 0.269            | 0.184                | 0.158                 | <b>0.561</b> |
| To make new friends                                        | <b>0.403</b>       | 0.343            | 0.271                | -0.288                | <b>0.425</b> |
| To get accommodation suggestions from locals               | <b>0.719</b>       | 0.244            | 0.048                | -0.093                | -0.056       |
| To get accommodation suggestions from other travelers      | <b>0.784</b>       | 0.111            | 0.050                | 0.002                 | 0.030        |
| To get dining suggestions from locals                      | <b>0.760</b>       | 0.314            | 0.006                | -0.117                | -0.091       |
| To get dining suggestions from other travelers             | <b>0.857</b>       | 0.112            | 0.063                | -0.069                | 0.068        |
| To get activity suggestions from locals                    | <b>0.747</b>       | 0.365            | -0.014               | -0.102                | 0.083        |
| To get activity suggestions from other travelers           | <b>0.855</b>       | 0.147            | 0.023                | 0.013                 | 0.194        |
| To get tourist attraction suggestions from locals          | <b>0.772</b>       | 0.296            | 0.007                | -0.040                | 0.089        |
| To get tourist attraction suggestions from other travelers | <b>0.834</b>       | 0.140            | -0.009               | 0.011                 | 0.158        |
| To fall in love                                            | 0.004              | 0.047            | <b>0.942</b>         | -0.009                | 0.045        |
| To find someone for a serious relationship                 | 0.063              | 0.028            | <b>0.923</b>         | 0.015                 | 0.013        |
| To build an emotional connection with someone              | 0.016              | 0.145            | <b>0.886</b>         | 0.011                 | -0.050       |
| To find a one-night stand                                  | -0.165             | 0.154            | -0.011               | <b>0.898</b>          | -0.038       |
| To increase my sexual experience                           | -0.159             | 0.164            | 0.037                | <b>0.886</b>          | -0.090       |
| To find others with whom to party                          | 0.140              | 0.182            | -0.021               | <b>0.521</b>          | <b>0.470</b> |
| To broaden my experience at the destination                | <b>0.422</b>       | <b>0.746</b>     | 0.009                | -0.024                | 0.075        |
| To make my trip fun                                        | 0.112              | <b>0.733</b>     | 0.096                | 0.275                 | 0.104        |
| To enhance my travel experience                            | 0.188              | <b>0.726</b>     | 0.054                | 0.245                 | 0.085        |
| To have a satisfying trip                                  | 0.279              | <b>0.704</b>     | -0.018               | 0.121                 | 0.060        |
| To learn more about the destination                        | <b>0.534</b>       | <b>0.613</b>     | 0.074                | -0.041                | 0.037        |
| To meet locals                                             | 0.214              | <b>0.607</b>     | 0.170                | 0.005                 | 0.232        |

NOTES: n = 388. Factor loadings of 0.40 or higher are in bold-face type.

The five factors were labeled as follows:

Factor 1 was labeled “Advice Acquisition.” The items that loaded highest on this factor pertained to obtaining suggestions from locals and other travelers on accommodations, dining, activities, and attractions (Table 5).

Factor 2 was labeled “Trip Enhancement.” The items that loaded highest on this factor were: “to broaden my experience at the destination,” “to make my trip fun,” “to enhance my travel experience,” “to have a satisfying trip,” “to learn more about the destination,” and “to meet locals.”

Factor 3 was labeled “Romance Facilitation.” The items that loaded highest on this factor were: “to fall in love,” “to find someone for a serious relationship,” and “to build an emotional connection with someone.”

Factor 4 was labeled “Hedonism Facilitation.” The items that loaded highest on this factor were: “to find a one-night stand,” “to increase my sexual experience,” and “to find others with whom to party.”

Factor 5 was labeled “Diversion.” The items that loaded highest on this factor were “to pass time” and “to meet other travelers.”

Overall, these results indicate that respondents who used the app during travel had highly diverse motives for doing so.

### **Characteristics of Persons Who Had High Versus Low Latent Motivations for Using the App During Travel**

To obtain insights into the characteristics of respondents who ascribed different levels of importance to using the app for various reasons during travel, app users were categorized

according to whether their score on a given factor, generated using the regression method, was less than -1, -1 to 0, 0 to 1, or greater than 1 standard deviation from the mean. The app users comprising each category were then compared in terms of their demographic, psychographic, and trip characteristics.

The following statistically significant relationships emerged from the analysis.

Respondents who ascribed importance to using the app during travel for:

- “Advice Acquisition” tended to be younger and more extraverted than their counterparts (Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Demographic, Psychographic, and Trip Characteristics of Respondents Who Ascribed Varying Levels of Importance to Each of The Five Factors Extracted from The Motivations Battery.*

|                                               | All in Analysis<br>n=369-388 | Factor Score       |                         |                       |                   | Test<br>Statistic     | p     |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------|
|                                               |                              | < -1 sd<br>n=62-77 | -1 to 0 sd<br>n=113-146 | 0 to 1 sd<br>n=99-143 | > 1 sd<br>n=51-77 |                       |       |
|                                               |                              |                    |                         |                       |                   |                       |       |
| <b><u>Factor 1: Advice Acquisition</u></b>    |                              |                    |                         |                       |                   |                       |       |
| Age (mean)                                    | 24.84                        | 26.23              | 24.97                   | 24.20                 | 24.36             | F=3.76                | 0.011 |
| Extraversion scale (mean)                     | 14.04                        | 13.43              | 13.84                   | 14.15                 | 14.89             | F=2.77                | 0.042 |
| <b><u>Factor 2: Trip Enhancement</u></b>      |                              |                    |                         |                       |                   |                       |       |
| Openness to experience scale (mean)           | 18.95                        | 17.81              | 18.25                   | 19.50                 | 20.19             | F=7.74                | 0.000 |
| Risk Behavior Scale (mean)                    | 24.58                        | 23.45              | 23.78                   | 25.48                 | 25.35             | F=3.03                | 0.029 |
| <b><u>Factor 3: Romance Facilitation</u></b>  |                              |                    |                         |                       |                   |                       |       |
| Sex                                           |                              |                    |                         |                       |                   |                       |       |
| Male (%)                                      | 59.8                         | 45.1               | 52.7                    | 68.6                  | 76.8              | X <sup>2</sup> =21.05 | 0.000 |
| Female (%)                                    | 40.2                         | 54.9               | 47.3                    | 31.4                  | 23.2              |                       |       |
| Extraversion scale (mean)                     | 14.04                        | 12.87              | 13.88                   | 14.75                 | 14.54             | F=6.16                | 0.000 |
| Openness to experience scale (mean)           | 18.95                        | 17.88              | 18.58                   | 19.44                 | 20.12             | F=5.88                | 0.001 |
| <b><u>Factor 4: Hedonism Facilitation</u></b> |                              |                    |                         |                       |                   |                       |       |
| Sex                                           |                              |                    |                         |                       |                   |                       |       |
| Male (%)                                      | 59.8                         | 36.4               | 56.6                    | 66.1                  | 79.2              | X <sup>2</sup> =32.04 | 0.000 |
| Female (%)                                    | 40.2                         | 63.6               | 43.4                    | 33.9                  | 20.8              |                       |       |
| Openness to experience scale (mean)           | 18.95                        | 18.04              | 19.06                   | 19.01                 | 19.65             | F=2.71                | 0.045 |
| Agreeableness scale (mean)                    | 14.60                        | 15.21              | 14.74                   | 14.63                 | 13.71             | F=3.19                | 0.024 |
| Conscientiousness scale (mean)                | 16.49                        | 16.55              | 17.23                   | 16.13                 | 15.79             | F=3.12                | 0.026 |
| Risk Behavior Scale (mean)                    | 24.58                        | 22.72              | 23.83                   | 24.80                 | 27.33             | F=9.56                | 0.000 |
| Party size (mean)                             | 3.06                         | 3.68               | 2.89                    | 2.45                  | 3.62              | F=4.21                | 0.006 |
| <b><u>Factor 5: Diversion</u></b>             |                              |                    |                         |                       |                   |                       |       |
| Sex                                           |                              |                    |                         |                       |                   |                       |       |
| Male (%)                                      | 59.8                         | 61.5               | 66.1                    | 60.1                  | 42.9              | X <sup>2</sup> =8.84  | 0.031 |
| Female (%)                                    | 40.2                         | 38.5               | 33.9                    | 39.9                  | 57.1              |                       |       |
| Neuroticism scale (mean)                      | 12.48                        | 11.65              | 12.07                   | 12.52                 | 14.23             | F=3.61                | 0.014 |
| Openness to experience scale (mean)           | 18.95                        | 19.28              | 19.52                   | 18.66                 | 18.04             | F=2.73                | 0.044 |
| Risk Behavior Scale (mean)                    | 24.58                        | 22.82              | 24.44                   | 25.32                 | 25.06             | F=2.83                | 0.038 |

- “Trip Enhancement” were more open to experience and risk-tolerant than their counterparts.
- “Romance Facilitation” tended to be male and more extraverted and open to experience than their counterparts.
- “Hedonism Facilitation” also tended to be male and more open to experience than their counterparts. However, they were not more extraverted than their counterparts. Instead, they were less agreeable, less conscientious, and more risk-tolerant than their counterparts. Those who ascribed either very little or very much importance to using the app for “Hedonism Facilitation,” compared to those between these extremes, tended to be members of larger travel parties during the most recent trip on which the app was used.
- Respondents who ascribed importance to using the app for “Diversion” tended to be female, more neurotic, less open to experience, and more risk-tolerant than their counterparts.

Although males tended to ascribe greater importance to using the app during travel for both “Romance Facilitation” and “Hedonism Facilitation” than females, it was mostly different males who did so. Only 21.3% of the males in the  $> 1$  sd category of “Hedonism Facilitation” were also in the  $> 1$  sd category of the “Romance Facilitation” category. Only 24.5% of the males in the  $> 1$  sd category of “Romance Facilitation” were also in the  $> 1$  sd category of the “Hedonism Facilitation” category.

Respondents who scored highly on a given factor were quite distinct in terms of their demographic and psychographic characteristics. This, in turn, suggests that marketing appeals to reach such users, to be effective, would require highly specific targeting.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Discussion**

In this final chapter, the contributions of the study to knowledge and to tourism industry practice are discussed. This is followed by sections on study limitations and suggestions for further research.

#### **Contributions to Knowledge**

Over time, many organizations and destinations adopt new methods to attract more visitors, and many studies have investigated the relationship between various mobile travel apps and trip satisfaction (Tussyadiah, 2016). The recent trend of travelers adopting dating apps during their travel has been discussed in travel blogs and articles but has been largely undocumented in the tourism literature. The study reported upon here helps to fill this gap in the tourism research literature by identifying relationships between such motives and personality and risk-taking behaviors. In so doing, this study has expanded the literature on tourists' experiences in host communities and the use of online dating apps during travel.

Unlike Trip Advisor and Airbnb, which are designed to be virtual tourism communities connecting travelers and travel service providers, online dating apps, when used during travel, are solely focused on connecting travelers to locals and other travelers. The advent of the Internet has encouraged tourists to go beyond traditional tourism product limitations by using such tools to personalize their trip experience and satisfy their needs. As Leurs and Hardy (2019) found, in doing so, online dating apps enable travelers to meet locals, receive advice, and gain companionship. The emerging phenomenon of using dating apps during travel has challenged the

tourism industry to respond to growing traveler needs for companionship and information seeking.

This study revealed that during their travels respondents used the app for many reasons other than those for which it was originally designed. Most (51.2%) respondents stated that the purpose of the most recent trip on which they used the app was a “vacation,” and a plurality (36.8%) stated that they traveled alone on this trip. Fifty-nine percent of respondents who used the app during travel affirmed that the most recent such trip was an international journey. Respondents who used the app during travel ascribed more importance to using it to socialize and enhance their travel experiences than to obtain information or facilitate romantic or sexual experiences.

This study confirmed the crucial role in the tourism industry played by travelers’ use of smartphones. Its findings corroborate those of Kim et al. (2008), that an app’s usefulness and users’ trip experiences can positively influence each other. Travelers are willing to adopt new smartphone technologies if they are perceived to be useful and easy to use. This study also corroborated Tussyadiah and Zach’s (2012) findings that the use of location-based technology helped enhance tourist experiences. Dating apps are easy to use, useful for travelers, can enhance trip experiences, and can encourage potential users to join. They also allow users to set a search range using Location-Based Systems, supporting Yoon et al.’s (2018) contention that LBS systems offer new opportunities to both consumers and suppliers.

Many of the results of this study are consistent with those of previous research. This consistency supports the credibility of this study’s findings and contributes to the development of theory in this area of research. Specifically:

- The fact that 36.8% of respondents were solo travelers, and socializing was the sixth most important motivation for the app corroborate Laesser et al.'s (2009) finding that solo travelers seek new social contacts when traveling, and Bianchi's (2016) finding that solo travelers feel a need to interact with others.
- The fact that respondents who used the app during travel had higher levels of risk tolerance than those who did not corroborates Couch and Liamputtong's (2007) finding that most dating app users felt confident in managing the perceived risks of online dating.
- The fact that respondents were driven by multiple motivations, including a desire to enhance the travel experience, meet others, and obtain advice on the destination, corroborates Timmermans and Caluwé (2017) findings that socializing and traveling were some of the factors motivating the use of Tinder, and Bianchi's (2016) and Kriwoken and Hardy's (2018) finding that travelers wanted to interact with others and form social groups.
- The fact that respondents used the app to enhance their trip satisfaction and not just for its original purpose of facilitating hookups and casual dating corroborates Leurs & Hardy's (2019) finding that that people used online dating apps to facilitate social interaction and satisfy their desire for authentic travel experiences. This emerging phenomenon has been discussed in travel blogs and articles, but has been largely undocumented in the tourism literature.

In addition, the relationships that emerged in this study between the importance respondents ascribed to using the app during travel for various reasons and personality types and risk behavior are almost entirely consistent with the findings of past research. Specifically:



- The fact that respondents who ascribed importance to using the app during travel for “Advice Acquisition” were more extroverted than their counterparts corroborated Kahle et al.’s (2005) finding that extraverted people tended to interact with the local community,
- The fact that respondents who ascribed importance to using the app during travel for “Trip Enhancement” were more open to experiences and risk-tolerant than their counterparts. corroborated Clemens et al. (2015) and Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2010) findings that open people participate in online dating to socialize with others,
- The fact that respondents who ascribed importance to using the app during travel for “Romance Facilitation” were more extraverted and open to experience than their counterparts corroborated McLean and Pasupathi’s (2006) findings that extraverted individuals have more extensive connections with others,
- The fact that respondents who ascribed importance to using the app during travel for “Hedonism Facilitation” tended to be more open to experience and less agreeable, less conscientious, and more risk-tolerant than their counterparts corroborated Clemens et al.’s (2015) finding that disagreeable individuals used online dating to seek companionship, Langstedt’s (2013) finding that conscientious individuals were unwilling to find sexual partners online, and McFarlane et al.’s (2004) finding that women who sought sexual partners online engaged in higher risk-taking behaviors.
- The fact that respondents who ascribed importance to using the app during travel for “Diversion” were more neurotic, less open to experience, and more risk-tolerant than their counterparts, corroborated Amichai-Hamburger et al.’s (2002) finding that when online neurotics can freely express themselves and have more control of their

conversations, and Correa's et al. (2010) finding that neurotics sought companionship online. However, they contradict with Jani's (2014) finding that neurotics tended to avoid risks during travel.

### **Contributions to Tourism Industry Practice**

This study has practical implications for tourism stakeholders and DMOs. As travelers go beyond what the traditional tourism market offers and seek innovative ways to enhance their travel experiences, this study provides an in-depth understanding of traveler desires. DMOs could consider organizing events for social grouping and advertise in online dating apps to seek participants. Additionally, DMOs could hire local people to serve as "influencers" on such apps. Online dating apps are an excellent place for stakeholders to reach out to younger travelers. Therefore, travel services could also consider advice on such apps. Dating apps can also extend their services and create a specific section for travelers and locals.

Finally, the results of this study revealed that respondents' motives for using the app during travel are quite diverse, and that respondents who scored highly on a given factor are quite distinct in terms of their demographic and psychographic characteristics. These results suggest that marketing appeals to reach such users, to be effective, would require highly specific targeting.

### **Study Limitations**

A few study limitations, beyond those already mentioned, should be noted. First, the results might be culture-specific since most respondents and trip destinations were in the United States. Cross-cultural validation in different cultural settings is therefore necessary. The rapid

growth of technology has enabled technology companies to offer dating apps in various countries to accommodate users from different cultures. For example, in China Tantan is a dating app that is similar to the Tinder and Bumble apps widely used in the West, and Minder is an online dating app designed specifically for Muslims. Therefore, future research could expand this study by focusing on dating apps designed for members of different cultures.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

This initial foray into the largely unexplored domain of people's dating apps during travel has yielded some insights. However, much remains to be discovered, especially given the low adjusted R-squared value that emerged from the multiple regression analysis. In particular, this research did not explore the relationship between users of the app during travel and destination behavior. Yet Filieri et al. (2015) emphasized that traveler behavior and intention vary across destinations. Future research is needed to ascertain whether travelers change their usage frequency depending on a specific destination. This study also did not investigate participants' education levels. As mentioned by Skopek et al. (2010), education level is an essential element in online dating, suggesting that future studies should investigate whether travelers' app usage and behavior vary by level of educational attainment.

Since this research focused on app users' motives for using dating apps during travel, deeper insights into this phenomenon could be gained by exploring the reasons for travelers not using dating apps during travel. Similarly, deeper insights into travelers' motives for using dating apps during travel could be gained by comparing such motives to those of the residents of host communities who use the app to meet visitors to their communities.

A fundamental conclusion that can be drawn from this research is the importance of psychological variables in explaining the use of this app during travel. Therefore, such variables should be measured in future studies on this subject, but in a manner that will yield scales with greater reliability than was possible in this study. A basic means by which this could be accomplished would be to increase the number of items in the psychological batteries. Given the need to minimize the lengths of questionnaires, space for more items in such batteries could be created by collapsing the eight items on “Advice Acquisition” employed in this study to only two: “to obtain advice on things to see and do from locals” and “to obtain advice on things to see and do from other travelers.”

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**Appendix A**  
**Survey Instrument**

## Survey on The Use of Dating Applications During Travel

**Please tell us a little about your use of [name of app] during your travels. All of your responses will be completely confidential.**

1. Have you used [name of app] during your travels?

☐ Yes ☐ No → **SKIP TO QUESTION 4**



Please tell us about the **most recent** trip in which you used [name of app].

1a. During what year did this trip occur? \_\_\_\_\_

1b. In what country did you spend the most time on this trip? \_\_\_\_\_

1c. What was the purpose of this trip?

☐ Vacation

☐ Visit friends / relatives

☐ Business

☐ Other; please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

1d. How many persons, including yourself, went on this trip? \_\_\_\_\_ persons

1e. Who went on this trip? Please check all that apply.

☐ Just myself

☐ Friend(s)

☐ Adult family member(s)

☐ Business associate(s)

☐ Child(ren) under age 10

☐ Organized group. Name of group: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Child(ren) age 10-17

☐ Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you currently a [name of one subscription level] or [name of another subscription level] subscriber on [name of app]?

☐ Yes

☐ No

→ **SKIP TO QUESTION 3**



2a. Which type of subscription do you have?

☐ [name of one subscription level]

☐ [name of another subscription level]

☐ Not Sure

3. Listed below are some reasons people use [name of app] during their travels, followed by scales from 1 to 7, where 1 means “not at all important to me” and 7 means “extremely important to me.” For each reason listed, please select the number on the scale that represents how important or unimportant that reason for using [name of app] during your travels.

| Reason For Using [name of app] During Your Travels                | Not At All Important To Me |   |   | Somewhat Important To Me |   |   | Extremely Important To Me |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| To meet other travelers                                           | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To meet locals                                                    | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To find others with whom to party                                 | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To pass time                                                      | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To make new friends                                               | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To get accommodation suggestions from <b>locals</b>               | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To get accommodation suggestions from <b>other travelers</b>      | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To get dining suggestions from <b>locals</b>                      | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To get dining suggestions from <b>other travelers</b>             | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To get activity suggestions from <b>locals</b>                    | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To get activity suggestions from <b>other travelers</b>           | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To get tourist attraction suggestions from <b>locals</b>          | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To get tourist attraction suggestions from <b>other travelers</b> | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To find someone for a serious relationship                        | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To fall in love                                                   | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To build an emotional connection with someone                     | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To find a one-night stand                                         | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To increase my sexual experience                                  | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To enhance my travel experience                                   | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |
| To make my trips fun                                              | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4                        | 5 | 6 | 7                         |

|                                             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To learn more about the destination         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| To broaden my experience at the destination | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| To have satisfying trips                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**4. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.**

| <b>Statement</b>                                                                            | <b>Strongly disagree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Neither disagree nor agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Strongly agree</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| I often feel inferior to others.                                                            | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| When I'm under a great deal of stress, sometimes I feel like I'm going to pieces.           | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| I often feel tense and jittery.                                                             | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| Sometimes I feel completely worthless.                                                      | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| Too often, when things go wrong, I get discouraged and feel like giving up.                 | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| I really enjoy talking to people.                                                           | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| I often feel as if I'm bursting with energy.                                                | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| I am a cheerful, high-spirited person.                                                      | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| I am a very active person.                                                                  | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| I am intrigued by the patterns I find in art and nature.                                    | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| I often try new and foreign foods.                                                          | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| I have little interest in speculating on the nature of the universe or the human condition. | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |
| I have a lot of intellectual curiosity.                                                     | 1                        | 2               | 3                                 | 4            | 5                     |

|                                                                       |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| I often enjoy playing with theories or abstract ideas.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I often get into arguments with my family and co-workers.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Some people think I'm selfish and egotistical.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Some people think of me as cold and calculating.                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I generally try to be thoughtful and considerate                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I keep my belongings neat and clean.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I'm pretty good about pacing myself so as to get things done on time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I waste a lot of time before settling down to work.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sometimes I'm not as dependable or reliable as I should be.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I never seem to be able to get organized.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**5. How likely would it be for you to engage in each of the following activities or behaviors?**

|                                                                                       | <b>Very unlikely</b> | <b>Unlikely</b> | <b>Not sure</b> | <b>Likely</b> | <b>Very likely</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Frequent binge drinking.                                                              | 1                    | 2               | 3               | 4             | 5                  |
| Going camping in the wild.                                                            | 1                    | 2               | 3               | 4             | 5                  |
| Going on a safari in Kenya.                                                           | 1                    | 2               | 3               | 4             | 5                  |
| Going on a two-week vacation in a foreign county without booking accommodation ahead. | 1                    | 2               | 3               | 4             | 5                  |
| Traveling on a commercial airplane.                                                   | 1                    | 2               | 3               | 4             | 5                  |
| Engaging in unprotected sex.                                                          | 1                    | 2               | 3               | 4             | 5                  |
| Never using sunscreen when you sunbathe.                                              | 1                    | 2               | 3               | 4             | 5                  |
| Never wearing a seatbelt.                                                             | 1                    | 2               | 3               | 4             | 5                  |

