

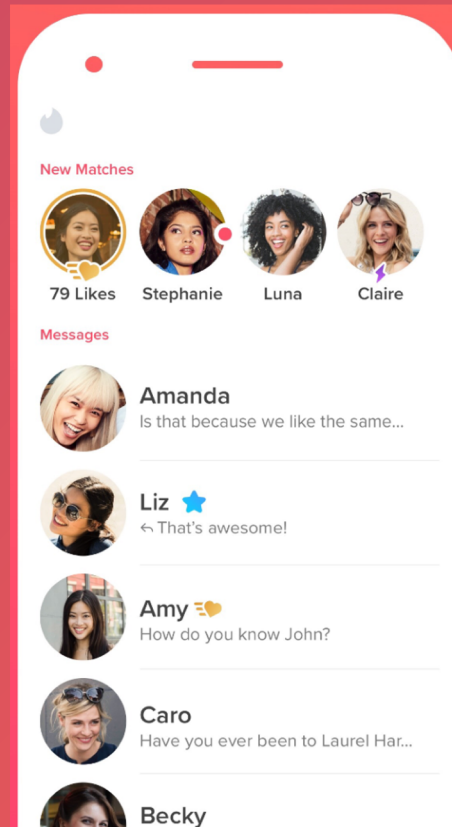


**“Paws”-ing To Swipe:
The Effects Of Inclusion Of Dogs In
Online Dating Profile Pictures**

Maggie Keverline
COMM 499 Thesis Defense

Overview

- Tinder
 - Singles based on proximity and age range
 - Customization options
 - “swipe right” = indicated interest
 - Mutual “swipe right” = match = potential for direct messages



Adding a dog *literally* to the picture

- Dog in profile picture = increased engagement with dating profile?
- Decrease uncertainty
 - Nonverbal messages suggesting approachability, attraction, and positivity
- Increase warranting value
 - Connects online profile to reality

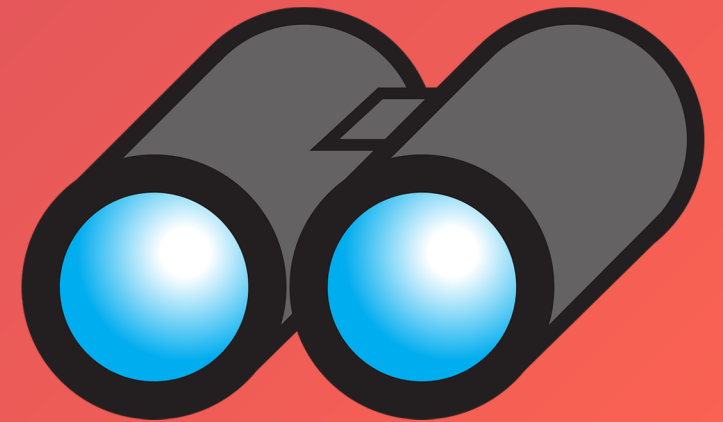


**How does the presence of a dog in a
Tinder profile picture affect viewers'
engagement with that profile?**



Looking
ahead...

- Literature Review
 - Uncertainty Reduction Theory
 - Uncertainty Reduction Theory in Online Dating
 - Warranting Theory
 - Warranting Theory in Online Dating
 - Animal Effects
 - Tinder Engagement
- Hypothesis
- Methods
 - Design/Measurement
 - Participants
 - Results
- Discussion
- Limitations
- Conclusion




Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT)

- Increased communication and learning about the other = reduced uncertainty = impression formation and predicting behavior
- Activated upon 1st encounter
 - “Entry stage”
- Passive*, active, and interactive* strategies



URT in Online Dating

- Inherent desire for information seeking
- Protect privacy and vulnerability
- Dog as opportunity for information seeking and initial conversation



Hey!

Warranting Theory

- High value on information that cannot be easily manipulated or distorted
- Verify identities and claims about another
- CMC: Tracing information back to an offline identity

Warranting Theory in Online Dating

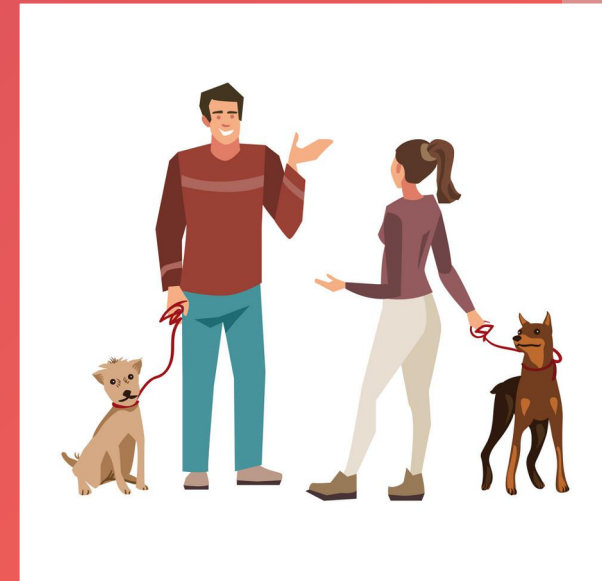


- Inherent desire to meet in person
- Online dating profile with high warranting value:
 - connecting other social media accounts
 - profile creation to reflect your personality
 - presenting multiple pieces of your identity
- Easy to deceive others in CMC
- Dog = another component of offline identity

Animal Effects



- Dogs affect our judgement of others
- Positive outcomes in romantic partners owning a dog together
- Increased social interactions when accompanied by a dog
- Mutual point of interest
- Translated to online interactions



Tinder Engagement



- Desirable qualities in a romantic partner
 - similarity, trust, attraction
- Significance of the profile picture
- Dog as visual enhancement



Hypothesis 1:

Tinder users are more likely to “match,” or swipe right, on profile pictures with dogs in comparison to profile pictures without dogs



Hypothesis 2:

Tinder users are more likely to send a direct message to a “match” with users who have dogs in their profile pictures in comparison to users with no dogs in their profile pictures.

Hypothesis 3:

Participants will perceive the images with dogs as having higher social attraction.

It's a  Match!

Part I: Stimuli Confirmation

- 7 male and 6 female stock photos
- Basic Demographics (age, gender, sexual orientation)
- **Interpersonal Attraction Scale** (McCrosky and McCain, 1974)

Part I Stimuli

Male participants:

Female Participants:



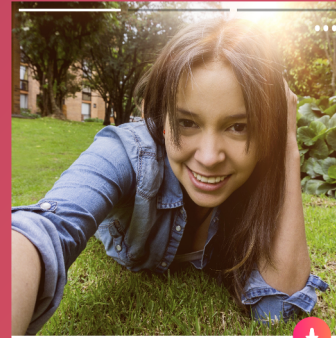
Emily 20
Student
10 miles away

5'6", Gemini



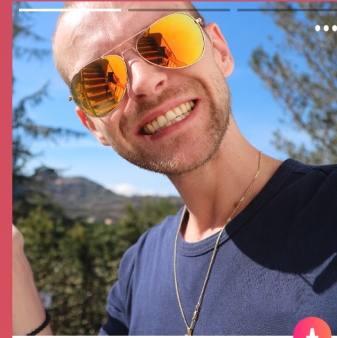
Sarah 22
Student
10 miles away

5'6", Gemini



Jessica 23
Student
10 miles away

5'6", Gemini



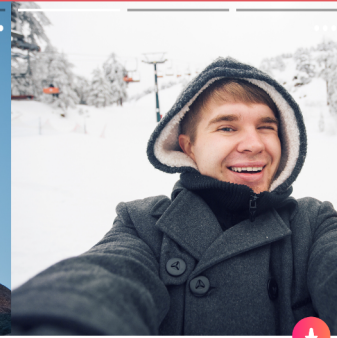
Chris 23
Student
10 miles away

6'0", Gemini



Jacob 22
Student
10 miles away

6'0", Gemini



Andrew 19
Student
10 miles away

6'0", Gemini



Josh 24
Student
10 miles away

6'0", Gemini



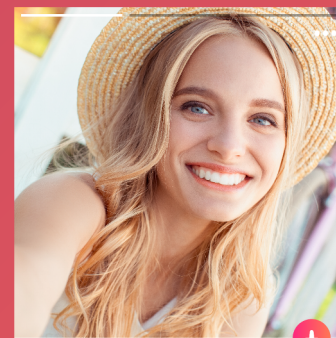
Jessica 21
Student
10 miles away

5'6", Gemini



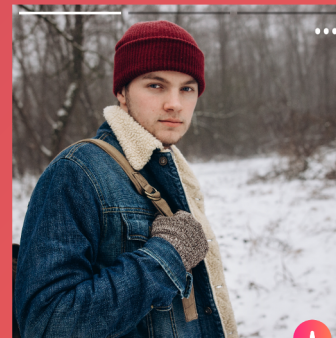
Ashley 19
Student
10 miles away

5'6", Gemini



Samantha 24
Student
10 miles away

5'6", Gemini



Nick 18
Student
10 miles away

6'0", Gemini



Matt 20
Student
10 miles away

6'0", Gemini



Michael 23
Student
10 miles away

6'0", Gemini



Part II: Full Experiment

- **IV:** Tinder profile with or without dog
- **DV:**
 - Swipe right? (Deliberate Evaluations of Potential Romantic Partner, Sritharan et al., 2009)
 - Message? (Single item)
 - Social Attraction (Interpersonal Attraction Scale, McCrosky & McCain, 1974)
- **Other:**
 - Basic Demographics (age, gender, sexual orientation)
 - Familiarity with online dating

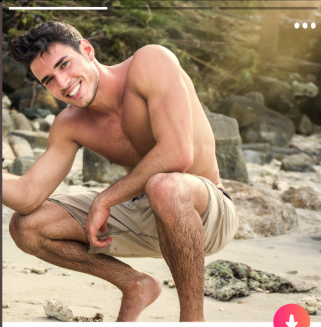

Part II Stimuli

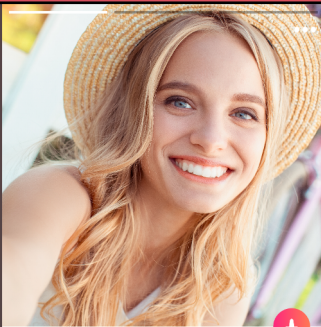
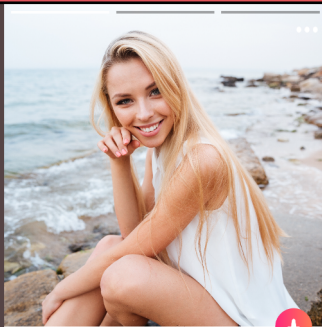
Female Participants:

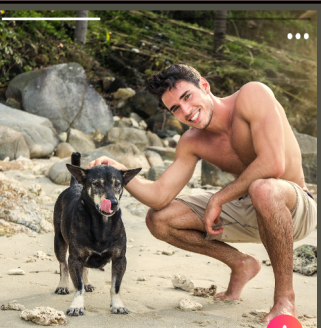

Male Participants:


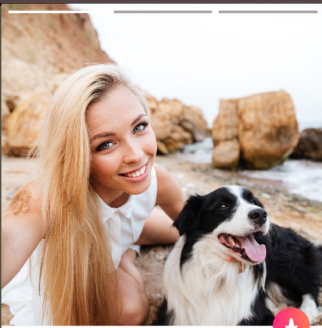
Without Dog (0)

Without Dog (0)

 <p>Matt 20 Student 10 miles away 6'0", Gemini</p>	 <p>Nick 18 Student 10 miles away 6'0", Gemini</p>
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 <p>Samantha 24 Student 10 miles away 5'6", Gemini</p>	 <p>Ashley 19 Student 10 miles away 5'6", Gemini</p>
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 <p>Matt 20 Student 10 miles away 6'0", Gemini</p>	 <p>Nick 18 Student 10 miles away 6'0", Gemini</p>
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 <p>Samantha 24 Student 10 miles away 5'6", Gemini</p>	 <p>Ashley 19 Student 10 miles away 5'6", Gemini</p>
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Male Stimuli I Male Stimuli II

Female Stimuli I Female Stimuli II

With Dog (1)

With Dog (1)

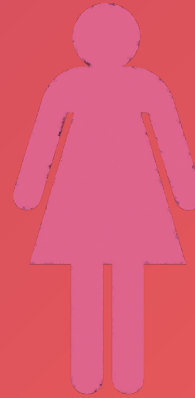
Participants



+

18-24

+



+



Part I:
n=107
male=53
female=54



Part II:
n=247
male=113
female=134

Results:

- H₁: Swipe Right?
 - with: (M=4.04, SD= 1.13)
 - without: (M=3.70, SD=1.27)
 - Statistically significant
- H₂: Direct Message?
 - with: (M=3.48, SD=1.42)
 - without: (M=3.32, SD=1.2)
 - Not statistically significant
- H₃: Social Attraction?
 - with: (M=24.15, SD=5.76)
 - without: (M=23.26, SD=5.50)
 - not statistically significant
- Direct Messages

Discussion

- Dogs as icebreakers, not indicator of attractiveness
- Gender Differences
- Online dating contexts



Limitations

- Heteronormative and cis-normative
- Adobe Stock Images
- Dog breed and attractiveness
- Non-diverse model pool
- Male model statistical differences
- Mechanical Turks
- Tinder Motivations Scale (Timmermans & Caluwé, 2017)

Concluding Thoughts

- Dog as an online dating tool
 - reduces uncertainty
 - increases matches
 - warrants credibility
 - sparks conversations
- Reduced communication apprehension and increased confidence



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My Degree & My Thesis

- **Research Strategies and Methods**
 - Quantitative Research Methods - Dr. Dillon
 - Qualitative Research Methods - Dr. Cunningham
- **Analyzing Gender Differences**
 - Gender and Communication - Dr. Waggoner
- **Foundations in Communication Theory and Media**
 - Intro to Comm - Dr. Waggoner
 - Interpersonal Comm - Dr. Broz
 - Media Literacy - Dr. Collier
- **Significance of CMC and online social platforms**
 - Social Media and Application - Dr. Dillon

Thank you for listening!

