

Determining attraction on dating site profiles

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate which characteristics of an online dating site profile determine romantic and social attraction of a profile owner. To investigate this, 40 participants were made member of an online dating site after which each participant rated ten online dating site profiles that were selected based on the matching mechanism of the dating site. The participants subsequently rated their ten profiles on physical attraction, perceived similarity, romantic attraction and social attraction. Furthermore, similarity in physical attractiveness, actual similarity based on demographic characteristics and lifestyle, and the matching scores, which show the percentage of shared views of cohabitation, shared values and equality in personality, were coded. Results revealed that perceived physical attraction is the most important indicator of romantic and social attraction. Perceived similarity also had a significant effect on both romantic and social attraction. Actual similarity in physical attraction was the only determinant of romantic attraction, mediated by perceived similarity and perceived physical attraction. The determinants of social attraction were similarity in physical attraction, again mediated by perceived similarity and perceived physical attraction, and the matching score of shared values, mediated by perceived similarity.

Key words: online dating, impression formation, romantic attraction, social attraction, physical attraction, matching hypothesis, perceived similarity, actual similarity, mating preferences

1. Introduction

In recent years, the popularity of online dating sites increased significantly (Whitty & Carr, 2006). The amount of dating sites in the Netherlands was estimated to be about 250 to 300 in 2007. This makes the Netherlands the fifth country with the most dating sites (Hospes, 2007). A recent survey of Internet usage showed that 23 per cent of the people aged between 16 and 35 uses online dating services (van Deuren & van Dijk, 2011). Moreover, the web has become the fourth most popular strategy to find a date or partner, after work or school, family or friends, and cafe's (Madden & Lenhart, 2006).

Forming an impression of an individual based on online information, however, differs from the way people form impressions when they meet offline in a bar or at work. Unlike in face-to-face communication, it is online not possible to form a first impression on for example the appearance and non-verbal behavior of a person. On a dating site one is not able to directly see, hear, smell, feel, or touch the other person, so the impression formation is not directly affected by someone's non-verbal behavior (Walther, 1996). Therefore, studies investigate how people form impressions of individuals in an online environment. There is already done research on online

impression formation on personal websites and profiles on social network sites (e.g. Vazire & Gosling, 2004; Antheunis & Schouten, 2011).

Little research has been conducted on impression formation on online dating sites. Research in the area of online dating is mainly focused on the effects of the amount of information on a profile, self-presentation, and the number of received messages on attractiveness (e.g. Norton, Frost & Ariely, 2007; Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Whitty, 2008; Fiore & Donath, 2005). Fiore, Taylor, Mendelsohn and Hearst (2008) investigated impression formation on online dating sites and the relationship between different components of information on a profile and attractiveness. They found that the photo was the most significant predictor of whole-profile attractiveness, followed by the free-text components. Even though these results are interesting, the profile info they took into account was limited. Moreover, it is unclear how profile information affects attractiveness because the study only investigates the relationship between profile components and whole-profile attractiveness. Therefore, which components of an online dating site profile influence social and romantic attraction is still unclear.

In offline meetings, physical attractiveness and non-verbal behavior are often the most important cues when creating a first impression (Walther, 1996). Nevertheless, most of these cues are not available on a dating site profile. However, previous research on dating sites did show the photo was the most significant predictor of attractiveness (Fiore et al., 2008). Research also shows that a high degree of physical attraction leads to more romantic attraction (e.g. Byrne, London & Reeves, 1968; Stroebe, Insko, Thompson & Layton, 1971). However, other studies show that people search for someone with a similar degree of physical attraction (e.g. Walster, Aronson, Abraham & Rottman, 1966; Walster & Walster, 1969; Huston, 1973).

Moreover, research shows that people look for partners who are similar in for example personality and demographic characteristics (e.g. Buston & Emlen, 2003; Richard, Wakefield & Lewak, 1990). As a result, dating sites offer matching mechanisms, which measure the extent to which partners have the same views about living together, similar values and a similar personality. These similarities are measured based on a survey, which people have to fill out on most dating sites before they can create a profile. When they visit a profile of a potential partner, matching scores are showed. However, it is unclear if these matching scores have an effect on the perceived romantic and social attractiveness of potential dates. It is important to investigate if perceived similarity and actual similarity on dating sites influence attraction and which characteristics specifically influence romantic and social attraction. Therefore, the main question addressed in this thesis is: 'How do individuals determine the romantic and social attractiveness of an online dating profile?'

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Online dating sites

The idea behind online dating sites is not completely new. For example, for quite some time newspapers or magazines place personals, which have the same intent as dating sites. In these ads, people introduce themselves and tell what they are looking for in a partner. The popularity of both personals and dating sites can be explained by the fact that humans have a basic need to form relationships (e.g. Wood, Froh, Adam & Geraghty, 2010). Research shows that people who are currently in a relationship are often happier than those without a relationship (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Moreover, individuals with a relationship are both mentally and physically healthier and show fewer psychological problems (Gove, Hughes & Style, 1983). Unlike personals, dating sites enable people to search for a partner online. Moreover, on dating sites both individuals have a profile, while in personals only one individual has. Furthermore, dating sites support the whole dating process; from creating a profile, through the search for a partner, to finally making contact with potential dates (Schouten, Antheunis & Kanters, 2012).

The first step in the online dating process is to create a profile. This profile contains information about the person behind the profile. First, there is basic demographic information on the profile such as sex, age, and residence of a person. Aside from this basic information, the majority of dating sites ask for other characteristics when creating a profile. Often, additional demographic information, such as religion, ethnicity, career, and sometimes income can be found on the profile. Other details are whether the person smokes or drinks and whether he or she has children or would like to have children. Moreover, information about appearance, such as length, weight, posture, and the color of eyes and hair is provided (Schouten et al., 2012). 73 per cent of the profiles also contain a photograph of the person behind the profile (Whitty & Carr, 2006), although not all dating sites automatically show pictures. Information about lifestyle, opinions, and personality are included in most of the profiles as well (Schouten et al., 2012). In addition, some profiles include an about-me section in which individuals can tell something about themselves. Finally, information about what one looks for in a future partner is provided on the profile. By viewing a profile one can get to know quite a lot about a person, without ever having met.

The second step in the online dating process is the search for a potential partner. There are basically two ways to search for a partner (Schouten, et al., 2012). On the one hand, this can be done by indicating search criteria, after which profiles will be searched for in the entire database of the site. People can for example give their preferences about the residence, length, posture, salary, and interests of a future partner. They are returned a number of matches who meet these criteria. Secondly, in a number of dating sites the search process is supported by a so-called matching

mechanism. To make use of this mechanism, individuals first need to fill out a survey about themselves. Based on this survey about personality, interests, values, criteria a potential partner should meet, and other characteristics, potential dating partners are matched according to specific criteria that the dating site seems to find important (Schouten et al., 2012). Based on the results of this test the system provides profiles of these matches, hence the name matching mechanism. An advantage of dating sites is thus that they support the search for ideal partners or people who are similar to an individual.

2.2 The popularity of online dating sites

There are several explanations for the recent popularity of online dating sites. First of all, dating sites are a new and accessible way to meet people. Human beings have a natural need for relationships and this need for relationships in combination with the approachability is one explanation for the increased popularity of dating sites (Diener & Seligman, 2002).

A second explanation for the growth of dating sites comes from various general social developments. Increased career pressure and time constraints prevent opportunities for social activities and meeting new people (Barraket & Henry-Waring, 2008). Thereupon, online dating is independent of time, place, and social context, meaning one does not need to be in a certain time or place to meet people.

Thirdly, the specific characteristics at an online dating site play a major role in explaining the success of online dating sites. A dating site gives individuals more control over what to show and tell about themselves and more time to think about comments or information one puts on a profile (Wood & Smith, 2001). Moreover, dating sites are able to identify potential partners based on certain characteristics. As earlier explained, these matching mechanisms automatically couple persons to each other on the basis of personality, shared values or other important characteristics.

2.3 Theories on computer-mediated communication

Research shows that people are able to create validate impressions based on minimal online information of a person. Moreover, impressions formed on online dating sites may be just as accurate as impressions formed face-to-face (e.g. Vazire & Gosling, 2004; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006).

However, according to the *Social Presence Theory* (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976) there are fewer visual cues online than offline, leading to a lower degree of social presence. Social presence can be defined as the degree of interpersonal contact and the feeling of intimacy that is observed in the communication. According to this theory, CMC results in more task-oriented and

less relationship-oriented communication. Later research shows that people can form impressions of each other via computer-mediated communication, but that it simply takes longer than in face-to-face communication (Walther, 1992). This theory is called the *Social Information Processing Theory*. It shows that rather there is a delay of exchanging cues, than a lack of cues. This is because people are naturally motivated to build relationships with each other, including online. In addition, CMC-users develop specific strategies to form impressions of each other online (Walther, 1992). In dating sites, this is shown by a high degree of self-disclosure, which can be defined as the revealing of intimate details about oneself. People are able to form impressions of each other on a dating site, since they exchange a large number of cues on dating profiles.

A later theory, the *Hyper-Personal Communication Framework* (Walther, 1996) shows that CMC is actually more friendly, social, personal, and intimate than face-to-face communication. The first explanation for this is that CMC offers an optimal way of self-presentation. People can think longer and better about the information they would like to share about themselves and choose consciously what they do and do not like to tell. This is also seen in online dating profiles. In addition, an idealized impression formation takes place via CMC, which means that people will idealize a person faster using the cues that are available. Finally, people feel more similar to each other online than offline. Research shows that the more people are similar to each other, the more they will like the other person (Walther, 1996).

Although there are non-verbal cues missing on dating sites, research shows that people are still able to create impressions based on online information about a person (e.g. Vazire & Gosling, 2004). Research on impression formation on social network sites and personal websites showed that people are able to pick up personality traits even from minimal information, such as an email address (Antheunis & Schouten, 2011; Vazire & Gosling, 2004). Often these first impressions hold, even when one gets to know this person better (e.g. Back, Schumukle & Egoss, 2008). Previous research shows that the personality traits that people associate with this minimal amount of information often include some validity. People are for example able to pick up personality traits from a small video of a person (Borkenau & Lieber, 1992), the bedrooms and workplaces of a person (Gosling, Ko, Mannarelli & Morris, 2002) and their music preferences (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006). Although online impression formation differs from a face-to-face meeting, it is to conclude that people are still able to create a good impression of a person. Finally, a first impression is as important online as offline (e.g. Kelley, 1950; Ellison et al., 2006).

Even though it is clear that people are able to form accurate impressions online, it is still unclear on the basis of which characteristics on a dating profile people base these impressions. It is important to investigate the characteristics that have an influence on attraction, since this

determines whether someone will contact the person behind the profile or not and whether they will eventually start a relationship.

2.4 Determinants of attraction

Interpersonal attraction is one of the most common used concepts for explaining whether people like each other or not. Interpersonal attraction is a multidimensional construct, which consists of multiple dimensions. Usually a distinction is made between a social or liking dimension, a task dimension, and a physical dimension (McCroskey & McCain, 1974). Task attraction is not relevant for this research, since we are not interested in how easy or worthwhile working with a potential partner is. Although the two are strongly related, physical attraction usually precedes social attraction, as the cues to physical attraction are usually more readily available when first meeting a person (e.g. Byrne et al., 1968). Moreover, in this study we want to measure the desire to be romantically involved with a person and the wish to start a relationship with him or her. Therefore, romantic attraction, which measures the extent to which one evaluates a person as a potential partner, is also an important construct (Foster, Witcher, Campbell & Green, 1998). In this study, both social attraction and romantic attraction are taken into account as determinants of attraction on dating sites.

2.5 The role of physical attraction

Several cues available on a dating site may affect the extent to which someone finds a profile owner socially or romantically attractive. An important factor is the perception of physical attractiveness of the profile owner based on the photos available on the profile.

Theories of romantic and social attraction emphasize the importance of physical characteristics (e.g. Dion, Berscheid & Walster, 1972; Walster et al., 1966). Studies show that people feel more romantically attracted to individuals they perceive as physical attractive. Physical attraction is also strongly related to romantic and social attraction felt towards a stranger (e.g. Byrne et al., 1968; Stroebe et al., 1971). Moreover, research indicates that men and women not only prefer physically attractive partners, but also actively select these individuals in real-life dating contexts (Walster et al., 1966).

The photo on an online dating profile could thus play a large role in determining attractiveness. However, in a previous study, Levine (2000) states that “the beauty of the virtual medium is that flirting is based on words, charm, and seduction, not physical attraction and cues”. Another study also argues that “because time, distance, and body are eliminated, the mind and spirit can be connected” (Rollman, Krug & Parente, 2000). These studies thus put emphasis on word-based communication, since there is minimal physical appearance. Other studies, which are focused

on dating sites, show different results. First of all, research presents that over 85 per cent of the users of an online dating site indicate they would not contact a person without a photo on their profile (Whitty & Carr, 2006). They also found that members of a dating site believe the need to present a good physical image of themselves is more important than any other characteristics (Whitty, 2008). Moreover, previous research underlines the importance of an attractive picture on a dating profile, because it has a major influence on the overall attractiveness of the profile (Fiore, et al., 2008). The expectation is therefore that physical attraction will lead to romantic and social attraction.

H1 There will be a positive effect of perceived physical attractiveness on romantic and social attraction

2.6 The role of perceived similarity

Another important factor in addition to the perception of physical attractiveness of the profile owner is the perceived similarity. On the basis of a profile, people can tell a lot about the person behind the profile and they can thus easily see whether this person is similar to them. However, it is unclear if people also actively search for someone who is similar and if perceived similarity on dating sites will lead to a higher level of romantic or social attraction.

Research on relationship formation does show that people often search for a partner who is similar to them (e.g. Arrindell & Luteijn, 2000). In addition, several studies reflect that partners who are similar to each other in various aspects indicate that their marriage has a higher quality and their relationships last longer than partners who are not alike (e.g. Antill, 1983; Russell & Wells, 1991). As a result, similarity contributes to having a good and stable relationship (Arrindell & Luteijn, 2000).

This desire of similarity is explained in various studies. Partners who communicate well and understand each other, often have a relationship of higher quality. If partners agree in many areas, fewer conflicts arise and the relationship requires less effort, resulting in satisfaction (Kaslow & Robinson, 1996). Contrarily, partners who are fewer alike have more conflicts and are therefore less satisfied with their relationship. This leads to new conflicts, turning the relationship into a negative spiral, which causes a faster ending of the relationship (Jacquet & Surra, 2001). As a result, the expectation is that the feeling of equality increases attractiveness.

H2 There will be a positive effect of perceived similarity on romantic and social attraction

2.7 The role of the *matching hypothesis*

Although research presents that the degree of physical attractiveness of a person is important (e.g. Byrne et al., 1968), other research suggests that equality in physical attractiveness is a more important indicator of romantic and social attraction.

According to the so-called *matching hypothesis*, people have a higher chance of long-term relationships with someone as physically attractive as themselves (Walster et al., 1966). Later research also showed that partners who were similar in physical attractiveness found each other most attractive. Further studies of Murstein (1972) showed that two people with similar physical attractiveness earlier tended to have a relation with each other than two people who differed in physical attractiveness. Research by White (1980) stated that partners are not only looking for someone who is equal to them in the degree of physical attractiveness, but that people who have a relationship with someone they find as physically attractive as themselves are often happier and more in love than other couples.

An explanation for this *matching hypothesis* is the fact that people are afraid of rejection and therefore choose a person who is as attractive as they are, so the chance of rejection by a more attractive person decreases (Huston, 1973). According to Brown, Cash, and Noles (1968), it is not necessarily the fear of rejection that declares the *matching hypothesis*, but it is the fact that people adjust their expectations in line with what they have to offer to others.

The expectation is that people who perceive similarity in physical attractiveness between another individual and themselves will find the other person more romantically and socially attractive. However, this perceived similarity in physical attractiveness is mediated by perceived physical attractiveness, since people may find another person more physically attractive if he or she has a similar level of physical attractiveness.

H3 There will be a positive effect of perceived similarity in physical attractiveness on romantic and social attraction, mediated by physical attractiveness

2.8 The role of the *matching scores*

Besides perceived similarity, actual similarity may also influence romantic and social attraction, since people actively seek for someone who is similar to them (e.g. Byrne, 1961).

First, research shows that similar attitudes and beliefs are factors that increase relationship quality (e.g. Larson & Holman, 1994). Equality in attitudes also leads to social attraction (e.g. Byrne, 1961). Moreover, people actively seek for partners who share the same attitudes and who agree with them on different topics (e.g. Sparakowski & Hugston, 1978).

In addition to similar attitudes, shared values are also important in relationships (Rokeach, 1973). An explanation for this importance of shared values in relationships is the fact that values relate to the purpose in life and people use them as guiding principles. They provide a strong foundation of the self and people will therefore feel more attracted to people who share those values. Therefore, in a relationship similar values lead to higher relationship quality (Larson & Holman, 1994).

Finally, people search for a partner with similar personal characteristics (e.g. Arrindell, & Luteijn, 2000; Botwin, Buss & Shackelford, 1997). Research showed that equality in different personality characteristics leads to more satisfaction in a relationship (e.g. Botwin et al., 1997; Watston, Klohn, Casillar, Nus Simms, Haig & Berry, 2004; Richard et al., 1990).

On a dating site, potential partners have access to a huge amount of information about potential partners without having met before. On basis of this information people can see whether they are similar to each other or not. This actual similarity can be based on two important characteristics on a dating profile: matching scores and free-choice components. On most dating sites, people need to fill in a survey about themselves before joining. This survey contains questions about their personality, their values and their views on living together. Based on these answers, matching scores between the person and potential partners are calculated. When viewing a profile of a potential partner, these matching scores are provided.

Lexamore, which is part of Match.com, the world's largest dating site, provides four matching scores: the overall matching score, the similarity in views about cohabitation, the shared values, and the degree to which personalities are equal. These scores are all based on the degree of similarity between two people and range from 0 to 100 per cent. These score are shown prominently on ones profile, allowing the user to form an impression of a profile's owner at a glance. In this way the site thus guides the attention of user towards these matching scores and so may influence the impression one forms of a profile owner (Schouten et al., 2012). However, it is unclear whether these matching scores play a prominent role in determining the attractiveness of a profile owner.

Based on the literature, there is expected that similar views about living together, equal values and equal personalities will lead to increased romantic and social attraction. Shared views about living together, shared values and equality in personality will also lead to more perceived similarity. Therefore, we expect these matching scores, which display these types of similarity, to influence romantic and social attraction towards a profile owner via perceived similarity.

H4 There will be a positive effect of similarity in (a) views about cohabitation, (b) values, and (c) personality on romantic and social attraction, mediated by perceived similarity

2.9 The role of actual similarity

In addition to the matching scores, which try to catch opinions about cohabitation, shared values, and personalities in a single score, the actual similarity between a profile owner and the person viewing the profile may be directly observed from additional profile information. These additional characteristics are the free-choice components shown on the profile, which can be roughly divided into demographic and lifestyle characteristics.

Research shows that individuals look for partners who are equal in background, ambition, financial resources, attraction, commitment, health, level of social status, intelligence, reliability, the desire for children, and the degree of family ties (e.g. Regan, Levin, Sprecher, Christopher & Cate, 2000; Buston & Emlen, 2003). Furthermore, Lewis (1972) states that during the initial phase, people assess the extent to which they resemble one another in demographic background. Other research also shows that potential partners are first evaluated or filtered in terms of similarity on various social attributes, including religion, education, and social class. Later on in the relationship, the partner is assessed on value consensus and similarity in terms of attitudes and values (Kerckhoff & Davis, 1962). In addition, the *Wheel Theory of Love* states that people are most attracted to those who resemble them on key social and cultural variables, such as religion and educational background (Reiss, 1960). Intelligence is also emphasized when considering long-term relationship partners (e.g. Kenrick, Sadalla, Groth & Trost, 1990; Regan et al., 2000).

According to the study of Regan and colleagues (2000) similarity in interests and activities are also viewed as important, although similarity in personal values and attitudes were viewed slightly more important. Moreover, it appears that people look for partners with an equal level of ambition and dedication (Buston & Emlen, 2003). Furthermore, research showed that smoking, and perhaps more generally lifestyle, seems to be one of the key domains over which sorting takes place in the marriage market (Clark & Etilé, 2005).

Due to the fact that dating site profiles include a large amount of demographic characteristics, such as education, age, religion, nationality, ethnicity, number of children and the desire of having children, we expect that this information will also affect romantic and social attraction of a profile owner via perceived similarity. Additionally, to these demographic characteristics, information about the lifestyle of a person is given on the profile, such as the hobbies, activities in the spare time, sports, and smoking behavior. The expectation is that actual similarity in the form of demographic characteristics and lifestyle will lead to more romantic and social attraction, mediated by perceived similarity.

H5 There will be a positive effect of similarity in (a) demographic characteristics, and (b) lifestyle on romantic and social attraction, mediated by perceived similarity

All five hypotheses are summarized in Figure 1.

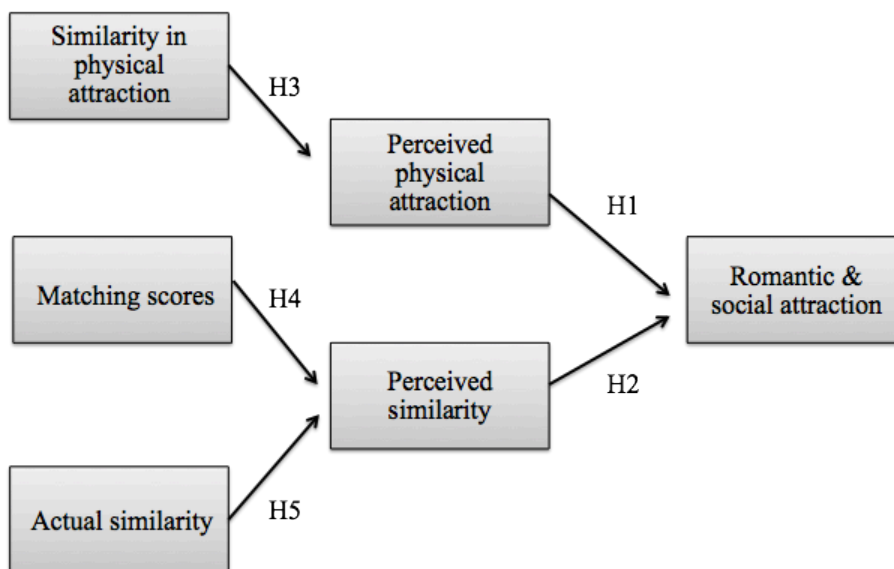


Figure 1 Summary of the hypotheses

3. Method

3.1 Procedure

The data were collected in multiple stages. First, 40 participants were made member of an online dating site. Second, for each participant, ten profiles were selected based on the matching mechanism provided by the online dating site. Third, these profiles were coded by the researchers in order to determine the matching scores and actual similarity between the profile owner and the participants to which the profile was matched. Finally, each participant rated these ten profiles on perceived similarity, physical attraction, social attraction, and romantic attraction. Therefore, the final analyses are based on 400 online dating site profiles. These steps are discussed in detail below.

First, 40 respondents, 20 males and 20 females, were asked to participate in the study. All of the participants were aged between 20 and 25 ($M = 21.38$; $SD = 1.39$). 75% of the participants were single (14 male, 16 female). All respondents were heterosexual. The level of education was measured using the Dutch system of education, leading to the following composition: two respondents had a secondary school level, two other respondents had a level of MBO, 12 respondents came from HBO and 24 respondents were university students.

The 40 participants were informed about the setup of the study and were asked to fill out an online questionnaire. The questionnaire addressed personal information necessary to create an online dating profile for the participants. Furthermore, participants were asked to rate their own physical attractiveness, which was used later to calculate *matching in physical attractiveness*. The four items measuring physical attraction were “I am very sexy looking,” “I am physically attractive,” “I am pretty,” and “I like the way I look.” The measures were based on McCroskey and McCain’s *Measurement of Interpersonal Attraction* (1974). The response categories ranged from (1) completely disagree to (5) completely agree. The four items formed a one-dimensional scale, with Cronbach’s alpha of .88 ($M = 3.37$; $SD = .40$).

Next, for each of the 40 participants, a research assistant created an online dating site profile on *Lexamore*. *Lexamore* is one of the biggest online dating sites in the Netherlands (Google Trends, 2012) and the Dutch branch of *Match.com*, an online dating company based in the US. *Match.com* has more than 20 million members and is active in over 25 countries. Moreover, it is the 76th most viewed websites in the US (Alexa.com, 2012). There is chosen for *Lexamore* as object of this study not only because it’s one of the world’s largest dating sites, but also because of its extensive matching algorithms which are used to match online daters. Moreover, when viewing an online dating site profile on *Lexamore*, the profile not only shows extensive demographic and lifestyle information, but *Lexamore* also provides matching scores based on personality, values, and cohabitation attitudes, all of which may be used to assess a profile owner. Therefore, *Lexamore* is most suitable for this research purpose.

Second, for each participant, ten profiles were selected based on the matching mechanism provided by the online dating site. Per respondent ten of their matches were randomly selected from the first page of matches that *Lexamore* provides. These profiles were saved and edited in such a way that the profile owner was made untraceable.

Most profiles on *Lexamore* do not include a photo of the profile owner. Usually this photo can only be seen when the profile owner gives permission to view the photo, which is usually after first contact is made (Schouten et al., 2012). Because the goal of this study is to investigate the effect of both physical attractiveness and similarity, we included a photograph on the selected dating site profiles. To do so, 42 photographs of men and 50 photographs of women were collected from a French dating site. These photos were rated on physical attractiveness by 15 people on a scale from 1 (*not all physically attractive*) to 10 (*very physically attractive*). The photos were then sorted by average rating of attractiveness and within each percentile a photo was randomly chosen. This way, 20 different photos (10 male and 10 female) that varied in physical attractiveness from not at all attractive to very attractive were obtained. These photos were added to the 400 dating site profiles so that each respondent would see each of the ten photos only once.

3.2 Profile coding

The third step in the research process was to determine demographic and lifestyle similarity between profile owner and the participant who rated the profile. To do so, all 400 profiles were coded in order to create a matching score for both demographic and lifestyle similarity between the participant who rated the profile and the profile owner.

To measure the actual similarity in demographic factors, similarity in age, education, religion, and desire for children were combined into a composite score. These four factors are the most readily discernible factors provided on a dating site profile that are relevant to take into account. However, not all profile information that *Lexamore* provides on the profiles was included. Nationality and ethnicity were not included in this study, since all respondents were Dutch and Caucasian. In addition, none of the respondents had children, so the number of children was discarded from similarity score as well. Finally, the marital status was not included in the study, since none of the respondents had previously been married.

For the difference in age, the absolute value of the difference between the respondent and the person behind the profile was measured. Differences of more than ten years were brought back to ten, since there were only three situations in which the age difference was this high. The similarity in education was measured by looking at the difference between the levels of education people previously indicated on their dating site profile. The levels were assigned according to the Dutch education system, leading to five main categories: primary school, high school, MBO, HBO and University. If the level of education was the same, zero points were given. For every difference in level an extra point was added, with a maximum of four points. To measure similarity in religion, both religions were compared. If they were the same, ten points were assigned, if they differed zero points were assigned. Finally, the desire of having children was measured. In the questionnaire there were seven possible answers: 'No', 'I'm not sure', 'Yes, one child', 'Yes, two children', 'Yes, three children', 'Yes, more than three children' and 'Yes, but I do not yet know how many'. These answers were brought back to three categories: 'No', 'I'm not sure' and 'Yes'. If one of the participants wanted children and the other did not, zero points were assigned. If one was unsure and the other wanted or did not want kids, or when they both were not sure, one point was assigned. If they both agreed on having kids or not having kids, two points were assigned. The points assigned to the difference in education and age were reversed, so for all items the highest points corresponded with the highest amount of similarity. All items in the scale were recoded to a scale ranging from zero to ten, after which the scores of all four items were averaged. This score was used as a measurement of actual similarity in demographic factors.

In order to measure actual similarity in lifestyle, there is calculated a composite score based on the factors that are the most readily discernible *Lexamore*. These were information about hobbies, activities in leisure time, sports, and smoking habits. First, *Lexamore* lists up to three hobbies, three activities and three sports for each profile owner. For each hobby, activity, and sport that the profile owner and the participant judging the profile had in common, one point was assigned. For smoking, each participant had to choose between five options of smoking habits: ‘Never’, ‘Rarely’, ‘Only on occasion’, ‘Regular’ and ‘Often’. These were merged in two categories, non-smoking, when a person never smoked, or smoking, which included all other categories. If both the participants and the profile owner agree, ten points were assigned else zero points were assigned. Again, all items in the scale were recoded to a scale ranging from zero to ten, after which the scores of all four items were averaged. This score was used as a measurement of actual lifestyle similarity.

Besides actual similarity, in this stage, we also coded the four matching scores created by *Lexamore*’s matching algorithm. These matching scores are also clearly visible on the profile (see Figure 1). In the analyses, the three specific matching scores were included. The overall matching score was left out because this score is an average of the three other scores and including it would lead to multicollinearity between the overall matching score and the three other matching factors.


3.3 Profile rating

Finally, each participant was asked to rate ten different profiles. Of the ten profiles we selected that were matched to each participant according to the matching mechanism on *Lexamore*, five were judged by that participant while the other five were randomly distributed across the other participants, while making sure that each participant saw each of the ten photos only once. Thus, the participants rated five profiles they were actually matched to and five random other profiles. The participants were not aware of this, so in their perspective all profiles they judged were matches. This is done to vary actual similarity across participants, because else the matching score given by *Lexamore* and the actual similarity between respondents would so closely match as to create multicollinearity between these variables. The participants saw each of the ten profiles in random order. Participants could look at the profile for as long as they wanted. After reviewing each profile, they filled in a questionnaire, which asked them to rate physical attractiveness of the profile owner, perceived similarity, and romantic and social attraction.

The profile the participants saw were very similar to the *Lexamore* profile and contained all matching scores and information about demographic and lifestyle similarity mentioned above. However, the information about the eye color and hair color was removed from the profile, because the photo often did not match these descriptions. The characteristics that remained visible on the

final profile were: photo, nickname, career, residence, nationality, marital status, length, the percentage of shared views on cohabitation, the percentage of shared values, the percentage of the match between personalities, the overall match factor, the number of children, the desire to have children, education, ethnic background, religion and practicing of this religion, smoking habits, hobbies, activities during leisure time and sports. Figure 2 shows an example of a final profile, which was used as stimulus material in the second study.

Haar profiel : Laatste login: - dan 3 dagen






zusterilise (28 jaar)

Verpleegkundige

Oosterhout, Noord-Brabant


Nederlands, Nooit getrouwd


170 cm






ONTDEK zusterilise gratis

Schrijf haar nul

Stuur Haar een bericht 

Haar om haar foto vragen 

Haar mijn foto tonen 


Uw Match Factor met haar :

Uw opvattingen over samenleven: 87%

Uw gedeelde waarden: 69%



Match tussen uw persoonlijkheden: 64%

Het volledige relatierapport lezen



Bent u geïnteresseerd in haar?

Voeg haar aan uw lijst met favorieten!

 Ja
 Nee

In een oogopslag
Gedetailleerd profiel
Haar hobby's
Uw Match Factor
Uw correspondentie

Over zusterilise

Aantal kinderen:	0
Zij wil kinderen krijgen	Ja, weet nog niet hoeveel
Haar opleidingsniveau:	HBO
Haar etnische achtergrond	Europees
Haar godsdienst:	Katholiek
Praktiserend:	Incidenteel praktiserend
Rookt:	nooit

Zij houdt van

Haar hobby's:	Theater, Winkelen, Muziek
Haar vrije tijd:	Familie, Theater, Avondje met vrienden
Haar sport:	Voetbal, Zwemmen

Figure 2 Example stimulus material

3.4 Measures

3.4.1 Physical attraction.

To measure physical attraction the same items have been used as in the first questionnaire where respondents had to answer questions about their own physical attraction. The items used measuring

physical attraction of the person on the profile were “This person is very sexy looking,” “I find this person physically attractive,” “This person is pretty,” and “I like the way this person looks.” The measures were based on McCroskey and McCain’s *Measurement of Interpersonal Attraction* (1974). The response categories ranged from (1) *completely disagree* to (5) *completely agree*. The four items formed a one-dimensional scale (explained variance 90%), with a Cronbach’s alpha of .96 ($M = 3.00$; $SD = 1.06$).

3.4.2 Perceived similarity.

To measure perceived similarity the following four items of the *Perceived Homophily Measure* (McCroskey, Richmond & Daly, 1975) were used: “This person behaves like me,” “This person is similar to me,” “This person is like me,” and “This person thinks like me.” The response categories ranged from (1) *completely disagree* to (5) *completely agree*. The three items of perceived similarity formed a one-dimensional scale (explained variance 70%), with Cronbach’s alpha of .85 ($M = 2.66$; $SD = .69$).

3.4.3 Romantic attraction.

The five items of romantic attraction, based on the *Romantic Attraction Measure* (Campbell, 1999), was measured on 5-point scales ranged from (1) *completely disagree* to (5) *completely agree*. The items measured the extent to which one evaluates a target as a potential romantic partner (Foster et al., 1998). The items were: “I find this person attractive,” “I find this person desirable as a dating partner,” “I would like to date this person,” “I feel good about myself if I were dating this person,” and “My friends would be approving of me if I were dating this person.” The five items formed a one-dimensional scale (explained variance 79%), with a Cronbach’s alpha of .93 ($M = 2.75$; $SD = .91$).

3.4.4 Social attraction.

The measures of social attraction were based on McCroskey and McCain’s *Measurement of Interpersonal Attraction* (1974). The six items measuring social attraction were: “I think this person could be a friend of mine,” “This person would fit well in my circle of friends,” “I would like to have a friendly chat with this person,” “This person seems pleasant to be with,” “This person and I could establish a personal friendship with each other,” and “I would like to meet and talk to this person in person.” The response categories ranged from (1) *completely disagree* to (5) *completely agree*. The six items formed a one-dimensional scale (explained variance 75%), with a Cronbach’s alpha of .93 ($M = 3.15$; $SD = .81$).

4. Results

4.1 Effects of matching

As said, all participants rated five profiles that were actually matched to them according to the matching algorithms of *Lexamore* and five other, randomly assigned profiles. To check if results differed for matched and randomly assigned profiles, we conducted separate analyses for both groups. Analyses indicated that results did not differ meaningfully, so the remainder of the analysis is based on all 400 profiles.

4.2 Procedure of testing the hypotheses

The first hypothesis stated there would be a positive effect of perceived physical attraction on romantic and social attraction and the second hypothesis stated there would be a positive effect of perceived similarity on romantic and social attraction. Hypotheses 3 through 5 pose mediated relationships. The third hypothesis stated there would be a positive relationship between perceived similarity in physical attractiveness on the one hand, and romantic and social attraction on the other hand, mediated by perceived physical attraction. The fourth hypothesis stated there would be a positive effect of similarity in (a) views about cohabitation, (b) values, and (c) personality on romantic and social attraction, mediated by perceived similarity. Finally, the fifth hypothesis stated there would be a positive effect of actual similarity in (a) demographic characteristics, and (b) lifestyle on romantic and social attraction, mediated by perceived similarity.

To test the mediated relationships proposed in the hypotheses, Baron & Kenny's three-step approach to mediation was employed (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In the first step, the dependent variables are regressed on the independent variables. For this study, it means that we first conduct two regression analyses with similarity in physical attraction, matching score of view of cohabitation, matching score of shared values, matching score or personality, actual similarity in demographics, and actual similarity in lifestyle as independent variables and romantic attraction and social attraction as dependent variables.

The second step in the Baron & Kenny approach is to regress the mediated variables on the independent variables. This means that we conduct two regression analyses with similarity in physical attraction, matching score of view of cohabitation, matching score of shared values, matching score or personality, actual similarity in demographics, and actual similarity in lifestyle as independent variables and perceived similarity and perceived physical attractiveness respectively as dependent variables.

The third step in the approach is to include all independent and mediating variables as independent variables in a single regression. In the case of full mediation only the mediating

variables (perceived physical attractiveness and perceived similarity) should be significantly related to the dependent variables (romantic attraction and social attraction). As a result, the direct effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables should no longer be significant. For this study, this means that we conduct two regression analyses with perceived physical attraction, perceived similarity, similarity in physical attraction, matching score of view of cohabitation, matching score of shared values, matching score of personality, actual similarity in demographics, and actual similarity in lifestyle as independent variables and romantic attraction and social attraction as dependent variables.

4.3 Step 1: Effects of matching and objective site characteristics on romantic and social attraction

To test the direct effect of the independent variables on romantic and social attraction, we conducted two regression analyses. Table 1 and 2 show the results of these analyses. Similarity in physical attraction was the only significant predictor of romantic attraction, $\beta = .56, p < .001$. The matching score of view of cohabitation ($\beta = .05, p = .27$), shared values ($\beta = .06, p = .17$) and personality ($\beta = -.04, p = .40$) did not show a relation with romantic attraction. The actual similarity in demographics ($\beta = .08, p = .07$) and the actual similarity in lifestyle ($\beta = .02, p = .66$) were also no significant predictors of social attraction.

Table 1 Regression analysis of matching hypothesis and objective site characteristics on romantic attraction

	B	SE	Beta	Sig.	95% CI
(Constant)	2.57	.40		.00***	[1.79, 3.35]
Matching hypothesis - Similarity in physical attraction	.63	.05	.56	.00***	[.54, .72]
Matching score - view of cohabitation	.00	.00	.05	.27	[-0.00, 0.01]
Matching score - shared values	.05	.00	.06	.17	[-0.00, 0.01]
Matching score - personality	-.00	.01	-.04	.40	[-0.01, 0.01]
Actual similarity - Demographic	.04	.02	.08	.07	[-0.01, 0.09]
Actual similarity - Lifestyle	.01	.02	.02	.66	[-0.03, 0.05]

Note. N = 384; CI = confidence interval; $R^2 = .31$; *** $p < .001$

Similarity in physical attraction was the most significant predictor of social attraction, $\beta = -.52, p < .001$. The matching score of the shared values was also a significant predictor of social attraction, $\beta = .12, p = .01$. The matching score of view of cohabitation ($\beta = .03, p = .46$) and the matching score of personality ($\beta = .00, p = .96$) did not show a relation with social attraction. Finally, the actual similarity in demographics ($\beta = .08, p = .06$) and the actual similarity in lifestyle ($\beta = .06, p = .21$) were also no significant predictors of social attraction.

Table 2 Regression analysis of matching hypothesis and objective site characteristics on social attraction

	B	SE	Beta	Sig.	95% CI
(Constant)	2.34	.36		.00***	[1.63, 3.06]
Matching hypothesis - Similarity in physical attraction	.52	.04	.52	.00***	[.44, .61]
Matching score - view of cohabitation	.00	.00	.03	.46	[-0.00, 0.01]
Matching score - shared values	.01	.00	.12	.01**	[0.00, 0.02]
Matching score - personality	.00	.01	.00	.96	[-0.01, 0.01]
Actual similarity - Demographic	.04	.02	.08	.06	[-0.00, 0.08]
Actual similarity - Lifestyle	.03	.02	.06	.21	[-0.02, 0.07]

Note. N = 384; CI = confidence interval; $R^2 = .29$; ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

4.4 Step 2: Effects of matching and objective site characteristics on perceived physical attraction and perceived similarity

The second step was to measure the effects of the independent variables on both perceived physical attraction and perceived similarity. The results of these regression analyses are shown in Table 3 and 4. As expected in the hypothesis, similarity in physical attraction did have an effect on perceived physical attraction ($\beta = .68, p = .00$). The matching scores and actual similarity did not have an effect on perceived physical attraction.

Similarity in physical attraction also had an effect on perceived similarity ($\beta = .25, p = .00$). The matching score of view of cohabitation did not have a significant effect on perceived similarity ($\beta = .03, p = .57$). However, the matching score of shared values ($\beta = .17, p = .00$) and the matching score of personality ($\beta = .10, p = .04$) did have a significant effect on perceived similarity. Finally, actual similarity in both demographics ($\beta = .09, p = .05$) and lifestyle ($\beta = .17, p = .00$) did have an effect on perceived similarity.

Table 3 Regression analysis of matching hypothesis and objective site characteristics on perceived physical attraction

	B	SE	Beta	Sig.	95% CI
(Constant)	3.37	.41		.00***	[2.55, 4.18]
Matching hypothesis - Similarity in physical attraction	.89	.05	.68	.00***	[.79, .98]
Matching score - view of cohabitation	.00	.00	.03	.44	[-.00, .01]
Matching score - shared values	.00	.00	.00	.95	[-.01, .01]
Matching score - personality	.00	.01	-.00	.94	[-.01, .01]
Actual similarity - Demographic	.03	.02	.05	.17	[-.01, .08]
Actual similarity - Lifestyle	.00	.02	.01	.86	[.04, .05]

Note. N = 384; CI = confidence interval; $R^2 = .46$; *** $p < .001$

Table 4 Regression analysis of matching hypothesis and objective site characteristics on perceived similarity

	B	SE	Beta	Sig.	95% CI
(Constant)	.91	.34		.01**	[.25, 1.58]
Matching hypothesis - Similarity in physical attraction	.21	.04	.25	.00***	[.13, .29]
Matching score - view of cohabitation	.00	.00	.03	.57	[-.00, .01]
Matching score - shared values	.01	.00	.17	.00***	[.01, .02]
Matching score - personality	.01	.00	.10	.04*	[.00, .02]
Actual similarity - Demographic	.04	.02	.09	.05*	[-.00, .08]
Actual similarity - Lifestyle	.07	.02	.17	.00***	[.03, .11]

Note. N = 384; CI = confidence interval; $R^2 = .14$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

4.5 Step 3: Effects of perceived physical attraction, perceived similarity, matching and objective site characteristics on romantic and social attraction

In the last step, the effects of perceived physical attractiveness, perceived similarity, similarity in physical attraction, matching scores and actual similarity on romantic and social attraction were

investigated. The results are shown in Table 5 and 6. Both physical attraction ($\beta = .77, p = .00$) perceived similarity ($\beta = .24, p = .00$) and had a positive effect on romantic attraction. The matching score of view of cohabitation ($\beta = .02, p = .46$) and the matching score of shared values ($\beta = .00, p = .47$) did not have a significant effect on romantic attraction. However, the matching score of personality did show a negative relation with romantic attraction ($\beta = -.06, p = .02$). Actual similarity in both demographics ($\beta = .02, p = .54$) and lifestyle ($\beta = -.03, p = .28$) did not show a significant relationship with romantic attraction.

Table 5 Regression analysis of perceived physical attraction, perceived similarity, matching hypothesis and objective site characteristics on romantic attraction

	B	SE	Beta	Sig.	95% CI
(Constant)	.05	.25		.84	[-.44, .54]
Physical attraction	.66	.03	.77	.00***	[.60, .72]
Perceived similarity	.32	.04	.24	.00***	[.24, .39]
Matching hypothesis - Similarity in physical attraction	-.03	.04	-.02	.46	[-.10, .05]
Matching score - view of cohabitation	.00	.00	.02	.47	[-.00, .00]
Matching score - shared values	.00	.00	.02	.47	[-.00, .01]
Matching score - personality	-.01	.00	-.06	.02*	[-.01, -.00]
Actual similarity - Demographic	.01	.01	.02	.54	[-.02, .04]
Actual similarity - Lifestyle	-.01	.01	-.03	.28	[-.04, .01]

Note. N = 381; CI = confidence interval; $R^2 = .77$; * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

Social attraction also showed a positive relationship with both physical attraction ($\beta = .54, p = .00$) and perceived similarity ($\beta = .36, p = .00$). The matching score of view of cohabitation ($\beta = .01, p = .84$), the matching score of shared values ($\beta = .06, p = .07$), and the matching score of personality ($\beta = -.03, p = .29$) did not have an effect on social attraction. Actual similarity in both demographics ($\beta = .02, p = .49$) and lifestyle ($\beta = -.01, p = .71$) also did not show a significant relationship with social attraction.

Table 6 Regression analysis of perceived physical attraction, perceived similarity, matching hypothesis and objective site characteristics on social attraction

	B	SE	Beta	Sig.	95% CI
(Constant)	.55	.28		.05*	[.00, 1.09]
Physical attraction	.42	.03	.54	.00***	[.35, .48]
Perceived similarity	.43	.04	.36	.00***	[.35, .51]
Matching hypothesis - Similarity in physical attraction	.06	.04	.06	.14	[-.02, .14]
Matching score - view of cohabitation	.00	.00	.01	.84	[-.00, .00]
Matching score - shared values	.00	.00	.06	.07	[.00, .01]
Matching score - personality	-.00	.00	-.03	.29	[-.01, .00]
Actual similarity - Demographic	.01	.02	.02	.49	[-.02, .04]
Actual similarity - Lifestyle	-.01	.02	-.01	.71	[.03, .02]

Note. N = 381; CI = confidence interval; R² = .65; * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

These results show that there is almost full mediation, since only the mediated variables (perceived physical attractiveness and perceived similarity) show a significant relationship with the dependent variables (romantic attraction and social attraction) and the direct effects of the independent variables (similarity in physical attraction, matching scores, and actual similarity) on the dependent variables are no longer significant. However, the matching score of personality does have a direct relationship with romantic attraction. In contrast to the expectations this relationship is negative.

4.6 Results summarized

The positive effect of perceived physical attraction on romantic and social attraction confirms the first hypothesis. Moreover, the second hypothesis is confirmed, since a positive relationship was found between perceived similarity and both romantic and social attraction. The third hypothesis stated similarity in physical attraction would have a positive relationship with romantic and social attraction, mediated by perceived physical attraction. As expected, results reveal a positive relationship between similarity in physical attraction on the one hand and romantic and social attraction on the other hand. This relationship is mediated by perceived physical attraction. Therefore, H3 is confirmed as well. The fourth hypothesis stated there would be a positive effect of similarity in (a) views about cohabitation, (b) values, and (c) personality on romantic and social attraction, mediated by perceived similarity. However, a similar view of cohabitation did not have a

direct influence on romantic or social attraction, neither did it have an effect on perceived similarity. Therefore, H4a is not confirmed. The matching score of shared values did have a positive effect on social attraction, but not on romantic attraction. The relationship between shared values and romantic attraction as well as social attraction was mediated by perceived similarity. Therefore, H4b is partly confirmed. The matching score of personality did not have a direct relationship with romantic or social attraction. In contrast to what was stated in the hypothesis, a negative direct relationship was found between personality and romantic attraction. Therefore, H4c is rejected. Finally, the fifth hypothesis stated there would be a positive effect of actual similarity in (a) demographics and (b) lifestyle on romantic and social attraction, mediated by perceived similarity. For both similarity in demographics and lifestyle no direct effect on romantic or social attraction was found. However, both similarity in demographics and similarity in lifestyle did have a significant relationship with perceived similarity. Therefore, the effect of similarity in demographics and lifestyle on romantic and social attraction is mediated by perceived similarity. As a results, Both H5a and H5b are partly confirmed. Figure 2 shows a summary of the results.

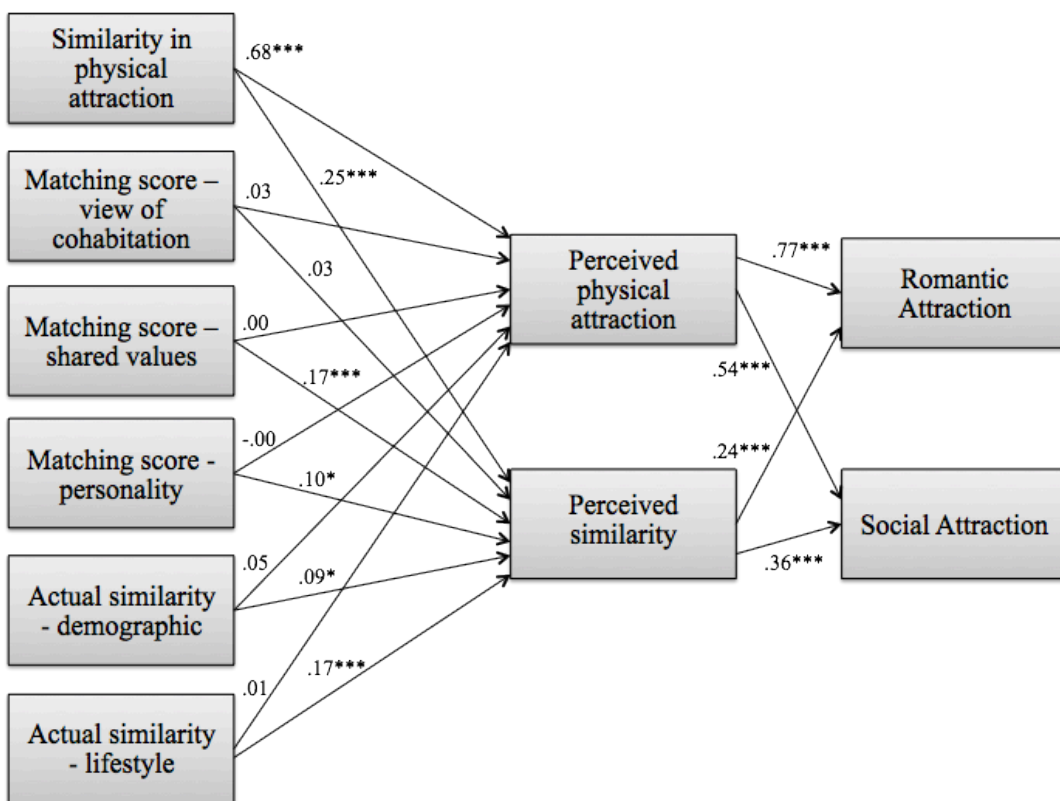


Figure 2 Summary of the results

5. Discussion

5.1 The role of physical attraction

The aim of this study was to investigate how individuals determine the romantic and social attractiveness of an online dating profile. As expected from prior research, physical attraction had a significant effect on romantic and social attraction. Even though there was a minimal amount of physical information available on the profile, namely a single photo, physical attraction still was the most important determinant of romantic and social attraction. This is in line with previous research, which emphasized the importance of physical characteristics in relation to other factors and the major influence of a photo on the overall attractiveness of the profile (e.g. Dion et al., 1972; Walster et al., 1966; Fiore et al., 2008). This study also highlights the similarity between online and offline attraction, since previous research already showed the importance of physical attractiveness in offline settings (e.g. Byrne et al., 1968; Stroebe et al., 1971).

5.2 The role of perceived similarity

Even though physical attraction is the most significant predictor of romantic and social attraction, other factors also play a significant role in this process. Prior research showed that people are more attracted to people who are similar to each other (e.g. Arrindell & Luteijn, 2000). This study confirmed that perceived similarity has a positive effect on romantic and social attraction. If people feel more similar, they will also feel more attracted to each other.

5.3 The role of the *matching hypothesis*

The *matching hypothesis*, which stated similarity in physical attraction has a positive effect on romantic and social attraction, was confirmed too. Not only physical attraction itself is important, but also the fact whether the potential partner has a similar degree of physical attraction as the person visiting the profile. When people are more similar in physical attraction, they will be more attracted to each other. This is in line with earlier research, which indicates the importance of equality in physical attraction for a long-term relationship (e.g. Walster et al., 1966). However, a mediated relationship between the similarity in physical attraction and perceived physical attraction was also found. This indicates that individuals perceive people with a similar degree of physical attraction as themselves as more physical attractive than people who are not similar to them in the degree of physical attraction.

5.4 The role of the matching scores

The third hypothesis predicted that perceived similarity would have an effect on romantic and social attraction. Therefore, for the matching scores, which measure the extent to which people are similar on personality, values, and view of cohabitation, similar results were expected. We took into account three matching scores that *Lexamore* provides when viewing a profile. Of these matching scores, only shared values was a significant indicator of social attraction. Other matching scores did not have a direct effect on social or romantic attraction.

Even though research pointed out the importance of similarity in personality (e.g. Richard et al., 1990), no significant relationship was found between the matching score of personality and romantic or social attraction. A small negative direct effect of personality matching score on romantic attraction was found, which indicates that people might look for a partner who is not similar to them in personality. An explanation for the fact that no relationship was found between the matching score of personality and attraction could be that the profile only showed a percentage of similarity in personality, but did not show in what specific way people are similar or different from each other. Previous research shows similarity leads to more satisfaction and a higher relationship quality (e.g. Larson & Holman, 1994; Richard et al., 1990), but it could be that this is only the case once people really experience these similarities or differences in actual interaction. There can be concluded that actual similarity in personality is not a significant indicator for forming a first impression when meeting online, but it can play an important role once people get to know each other and start a relationship.

Similarly, cohabitation did not have an effect on romantic or social attraction. This is in contrast to prior research, which indicated the importance of similar attitudes (e.g. Byrne, 1961; Larson & Holman, 1994). The explanation for this could be similar as the explanation for the lack of an effect between personality and attraction. Similar attitudes about cohabitation might only become relevant in actual interaction. It could be that similar views are not yet important for creating a first impression, and that they will become more important once people are in a relationship. Often people tend to break up faster if they do not agree in many areas. More conflicts will arise and people will get less satisfied with their relationship, which leads to new conflicts and finally a breakup (Jacquet & Surra, 2001).

Finally, the matching score of shared values also did not predict romantic attraction. Shared values, however, did have a positive effect on social attraction. This is in line with prior research that explains that similar values lead to higher relationship quality (e.g. Larson & Holman, 1994). These results can be explained by the fact that values are a core concept in human life, since they highly correlate with the purpose of life and are used as guiding principles (Rokeach, 1973). If people in a relationship have the same values they will most probably also have

the same purpose in life and they will therefore have less conflicts. Fewer conflicts and more agreeableness between partners require less effort, resulting in higher relationship satisfaction (Kaslow & Robinson, 1996). This effect between shared values and romantic and social attraction is mediated by perceived similarity. This indicates that people feel more similar to each other if they have a higher matching score of shared values.

5.5 The role of actual similarity

Finally, the role of actual similarity in demographics and lifestyle was investigated. Prior research showed that individuals search for partners who are similar to them in demographic characteristics and lifestyle (e.g. Clark & Etilé, 2005; Arrindell & Luteijn, 2000). However, this research showed that actual similarity was not significantly related to romantic or social attraction.

As mentioned before, perceived similarity did have a positive effect on romantic and social attraction. These results indicate that people do not actually have to be similar to each other; as long as they have the feeling they are similar they already like the other person better. The difference found in effects for perceived similarity and actual similarity could be due to the fact people tend to feel more similar to each other online (e.g. Lea & Spears, 1992; Spears & Lea, 1992; Walther, 1996). An explanation for this feeling is that people tend to overestimate the minimal cues available on a dating site (e.g. Walther, 1996). Even though there are minimal cues available, the cues that are available show a large amount of self-disclosure. Since there are almost no audio-visual cues available, this large amount of self-disclosure can lead to higher perceived similarity (e.g. Dubrovsky, Kiesler & Sethna, 1991). Moreover, it could highly be possible that actual similarity is more important once people meet in real life and build a relationship together, especially since previous research emphasized the importance of similarity in offline relationships (e.g. Regan, et al., 2000; Buston & Emlen, 2003).

5.6 Implications

This study has several implications for theory and future research. First, this study investigated the characteristics people use to determine romantic and social attractiveness. Only one study (Fiore et al., 2008) has investigated the influence of characteristics of a dating profile on attractiveness before. However, that study only looked at the attractiveness of profile-components in relation to whole-profile attractiveness. This study investigated which specific characteristics on a profile influence social and romantic attraction. Similar as in the findings of Fiore et al. (2008), this study shows that physical attraction plays an important role in romantic and social attraction. In addition to these findings, it is found that similarity in physical attraction has a positive relationship with perceived physical attraction. The *matching hypothesis* stated in previous studies (e.g. Walster et

al., 1966) thus also plays a role online, when people have only one photo as a determinant of physical attraction.

In addition to previous findings, it is found that perceived similarity has a positive relationship with romantic and social attraction on dating sites profiles. However, actual similarity in demographics and lifestyle did not play a significant role. These results suggest that people do not have to be similar to each other in order to feel alike. People on dating sites may thus have a feeling of similarity, without being actually similar to each other on basis of demographic characteristics and lifestyle. To determine similarity, people rely as much on matching scores as on actual similarity.

This study was the first to investigate the role of the matching scores that online dating sites provide in the online dating process. The matching mechanism of the dating site we used in this study tries to determine the extent to which people have shared values, shared views of cohabitation and a similar personality. The matching score that shows shared values had a significant effect on social attraction, while the matching score of personality and shared views of cohabitation had no significant effect on romantic or social attraction. Although matching scores do seem to influence perceptions of a profile owner, it is not clear on which characteristics of profile owners these matching scores are based. However, these scores are prominently shown in a profile and do seem to influence attraction at least to some extent, as this study points out. The matching mechanisms of online dating sites thus seem to influence the extent to which people are attracted to each other on online dating sites. Future research could try to more specifically investigate the effect of these mechanisms. Moreover, we urge the dating sites to explain on what information these matching scores are based and how they are calculated. This would help researchers in their study of determinants of attraction, but also would clarify to online dating sites users what specific characteristics determine whether they are attracted to someone else and how they match with someone according to the matching mechanism.

On the one hand, this study highlights the similarity between online and offline attraction, since previous research shows that physical attraction is also the most important determinant of romantic and social attraction in offline settings (e.g. Byrne et al., 1968; Stroebe et al., 1971). Moreover, similarity in physical attraction was an important indicator of romantic and social attraction. This is in line with earlier research, which indicated the importance of similarity in physical attraction in offline settings (e.g. Walster et al., 1966). However, on a dating site there is only one photo as a cue of physical attractiveness, while in offline meetings people use non-verbal behavior and appearance when forming an impression (Walther, 1996).

In contrast to offline meetings, online dating site profiles provide a large amount of information about the person behind the profile. Based on this information people can see at a

glance whether they are similar to each other or not, while offline it takes longer to indicate actual similarity. Previous research shows that similarity leads to more satisfaction and a higher relationship quality (e.g. Larson & Holman, 1994; Richard et al., 1990). This research shows that perceived similarity leads to more romantic and social attraction. Prior research also shows that people search for partners who are similar to them in demographics and lifestyle (e.g. Clark & Etilé, 2005; Arrindell & Luteijn, 2000). Unlike in face-to-face communication, where people know nothing or very little about the demographics and lifestyle of a person when they first meet, on dating sites it is immediately clear whether people are similar in demographics and lifestyle. Since these similarities are immediately clear on a dating site profile, it was thus expected from prior research that people would feel more attracted to potential partners who have a similar lifestyle and similar demographics. However, there was no significant relationship found between these characteristics and romantic or social attraction. It is to conclude that even though similarity is more easily determined online, people do not use this information about actual similarity to determine attraction when they first see each other.

The most important difference between online and offline dating are the matching scores provided on dating sites. Based on a survey, the dating site algorithms determine the extent to which people have shared values, shared views of cohabitation and a similar personality. When looking at prior research, which indicates the importance of similarities in values, views of cohabitation and personality in relationships (e.g. Larson & Holman, 1994; Richard et al., 1990; Richard et al., 1990), these matching mechanisms seem very useful when forming relationships, since people can see at a glance whether they are similar or not. However, no relationships were found between these matching scores and romantic or social attraction, besides shared values. The reason that similarity in demographics and personality does not seem to determine attraction online while they do so offline may be due to the fact that a simple percentage of the degree of similarity might not offer enough information. Possibly, online dating site users want more information than a single matching score to determine the extent to which they think they match with another user. For example, you cannot determine from the matching score in what way you are similar or different to another. Furthermore, it could be possible that actual similarity in personality, shared values, and shared views of cohabitation do not play a significant role in forming a first impression, but that it only plays an important role once people get to know each other better.

It is therefore important to investigate how relationships that start online, will continue once people meet each other offline. First of all, it is important to note that people can consciously think about the characteristics and information they put on a dating profile. In addition, an idealized impression formation takes place, which means that people will idealize a person faster using the cues that are available (Walther, 1996). However, other research shows that first impressions

mostly hold once people get to know the person better (e.g. Back et al., 2008). It is thus unclear how relationships develop if people who met online will start seeing each other offline.

5.7 Limitations and future research

Even though this study gives more insight in the determination of attractiveness of profiles on online dating sites, it has some limitations. First of all, the sample consisted mostly of university students, who were relatively young. This is the case in most partner preferences studies, which makes the results more comparable to prior research (Regan, et al., 2000). On the other hand this decreases the external validity of this study. Research shows that the average age of online daters varies by site (Online dating demographics, n.d.). *Match.com*, the equivalent of *Lexamore*, had an approximate average age range from 21 through 30 years of age, while for example *eHarmony.com* has an average age range from 35 through 54. Moreover, the composition of each dating site's membership changes frequently. Preferences for particular characteristics, such as physical attraction, may for example change with age or when one gains more romantic experience. Therefore, they may also vary per dating site. Future studies could thus try to generalize the results for a larger population and people with different ages and romantic and social experiences.

Another limitation of this study is the fact it did not take into account free-text components. Free-text components, also called about-me sections, allow people to write something about themselves on their dating site profile. Prior research showed that these free-text components are a significant predictor of whole-profile attractiveness (Fiore, et al., 2008). Moreover, on *Lexamore* it is not compulsory for profile owners to give a description of themselves and a large number of users do not include a free-text component. Future research could investigate the exact role of these free-text components on social and romantic attraction by using a dating site where a free-text is obligated.

Finally, in this study we employed an experimental approach in which the respondents were not actually looking for a date. We only investigated romantic and social attraction, but did not investigate what would happen if people were to meet. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude what characteristics, such as actual similarity, will become relevant in future interactions. However, not much research has been conducted on online dating and conducting a longitudinal study before establishing basic relationships seems risky. This study clarified which characteristics on online dating sites determine social and romantic attraction and paved the way for future research to follow people who met on a dating site over a longer period of time.

5.8 Conclusions

Even though forming impressions of others based on a dating site profile differs from the way people form impressions face-to-face, the results reveal that physical attraction is still the most important indicator of romantic and social attraction when people meet online. Perceived similarity also had a positive effect on both social and romantic attraction. Similarity in physical attraction is the only determinant of romantic attraction, mediated by perceived physical attraction as well as perceived similarity. This indicates that people are more attracted to others who are similar to them in physical attraction. The only determinants of social attraction were similarity in physical attraction, again mediated by perceived similarity and perceived physical attraction, and the matching score of shared values, mediated by perceived similarity. However, actual similarity, in both demographics and lifestyle, did not show a significant relationship with romantic and social attraction. The feeling of similarity is thus more important than actual similarity. The matching scores of personality and cohabitation also did not show a significant relationship with romantic and social attraction. Nonetheless, the matching score of shared values did have a positive effect on social attraction, mediated by perceived similarity. Moreover, people rely as much on these matching scores as on actual similarity when determining perceived similarity. Furthermore, they even rely on these matching scores when they are assigned profiles of matches from other persons. Results also show that there is no significant difference between the attraction of own and assigned matches. Nevertheless, most dating sites only display matching profiles (Schouten et al., 2012). This way, dating sites determine for a part the potential relationships that are created via these sites, while it is not clear what the matching scores are based on exactly. Moreover, the results differed for a large part from expectations of determinants of attraction based on prior research in an offline environment. As a result, further research could investigate how these relationships that started online will continue offline.

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8. Appendix

8.1 First questionnaire

Wij vragen uw medewerking aan een onderzoek naar impressievorming op online datingsites.

Doel van het onderzoek

Dit is een onderzoek van de Universiteit van Tilburg. Het onderzoek is bedoeld om na te gaan op basis waarvan mensen profielen op online datingsites beoordelen. Wij hebben daarvoor allereerst de informatie uit deze vragenlijst van u nodig. In het tweede deel van het onderzoek krijgt u profielen die u moet beoordelen.

Deze vragenlijst bestaat uit 6 delen:

1. Zoekopdracht
2. Visie op samenleven
3. Persoonlijkheid
4. Voorkeuren
5. Waarden
6. Persoonlijke informatie

Het gaat bij veel vragen om uw persoonlijke mening.

Uw antwoord kan nooit 'fout' zijn.

Denk bij iedere vraag niet te lang na.

Het gaat om uw eerste indruk.

Alle antwoorden worden anoniem verwerkt.

Het invullen van de vragenlijst kost ongeveer 30 minuten.

We stellen uw medewerking op prijs en zijn uw daarvoor zeer dankbaar.

1. Zoekopdracht (Z)

Z1 - Ik wil graag dat zij ... is:

Z1-1	Subtiel	(5 punts)	Direct
Z1-2	Een verlegen type	(5 punts)	Een verleidelijk type
Z1-3	Instinctief	(5 punts)	Bedachtzaam
Z1-4	Huismus	(5 punts)	Feestbeest
Z1-5	Georganiseerd	(5 punts)	Onvoorspelbaar
Z1-6	Rationeel	(5 punts)	Dromerig
Z1-7	Levendig en energiek	(5 punts)	Kalm en ontspannen

Z2 - Het type vrouw waar ik op val (een keuze mogelijk):

- Sexy
- Sportief
- Actief
- Klassiek
- Natuurlijk
- Artistiek

Z3 - Haar leeftijd

Ongeveer ... (invullen) jaar

Maakt niet uit

Z4 - Haar lengte

Van ... (invullen) tot ... (invullen) cm

Maakt niet uit

Z5 - U wenst iemand te leren kennen die woont in (een keuze mogelijk)

- Dezelfde regio als u
- Maakt niet uit

Z6 - Haar minimale opleidingsniveau

- Ik heb geen voorkeur
- Basisschool
- Middelbare school
- MBO
- HBO
- Universiteit
- Autodidact
- Gepromoveerd

Z7 - Is dit criterium belangrijk?

- Niet erg belangrijk
- Belangrijk
- Erg belangrijk

Z8 - Haar afkomst (meerdere keuzes mogelijk)

- Ik heb geen voorkeur
- Afrikaans
- Arabisch
- Aziatisch
- Europees
- Indiaas
- Spaans/latino
- Overig

Z9 - Is dit criterium belangrijk?

- Niet erg belangrijk
- Belangrijk
- Erg belangrijk

Z10 - Haar geloof (meerdere keuzes mogelijk):

- Ik heb geen voorkeur
- Atheïst
- Agnost
- Boeddhist
- Joods
- Katholiek
- Moslim
- Orthodox
- Protestant
- Anders

Z11 - Is dit criterium belangrijk?

- Niet erg belangrijk
- Belangrijk
- Erg belangrijk

Z12 - Ik wil graag dat zij thuiswonende kinderen heeft:

- Ik heb geen voorkeur
- Ja
- Nee

Z13 - Is dit criterium belangrijk?

- Niet erg belangrijk
- Belangrijk
- Erg belangrijk

Z14 - Ik heb er nogal behoefte aan dat zij mij het volgende brengt

Rust en kalmte (5 punts) Stimulerend en energiek

Z15 - Wanneer ik me zorgen maak verwacht ik van haar

Advies (5 punts) Een luisterend oor

Z16 - Ik wil graag dat zij in staat is om

Tegengas te geven (5 punts) Toegeeflijk te zijn

Z17 - Waar ik als eerste naar kijk bij een vrouw (een keuze mogelijk)

- De mond
- De borsten
- De billen
- De handen
- De voeten
- De ogen

2. Visie op het samenleven (S)

S1 - Lange termijnplannen maken voor ons leven samen:

Dat is belangrijk (4 punts) dat is niet zo belangrijk

S2 - Samen beslissingen nemen:

Dat is belangrijk (4 punts) dat is niet zo belangrijk

S3 - Hetzelfde beeld van de wereld hebben en intellectuele uitgangspunten delen:

Dat is belangrijk (4 punts) dat is niet zo belangrijk

S4 - Vastomlijnde rollen hebben in een relatie:

Dat is belangrijk (4 punts) dat is niet zo belangrijk

S5 - Dagelijks een liefdevol gebaar maken:

Dat is belangrijk (4 punts) dat is niet zo belangrijk

S6 - Gemeenschappelijke passies en activiteiten delen:

Dat is belangrijk (4 punts) dat is niet zo belangrijk

S7 - Voelen dat ik de man van haar leven ben:

Dat is belangrijk (4 punts) dat is niet zo belangrijk

S8 - Voor haar zorgen en mijn liefde tonen:

Dat is belangrijk (4 punts) dat is niet zo belangrijk

S9 - Liefde moet zijn:

Hartstochtelijk (4 punts) Rationeel

S10 - Voor een harmonieuze relatie moet je:

Van dag tot dag leven (5 punts) Lange termijnplannen maken

S11 - Een stukje mysterie bewaren is voor mij:

Het recept voor een langdurige relatie (5 punts) Overbodig, ik bespreek liever alles.

S12 - U krijgt vrienden te eten. Op het menu staat (een keuze mogelijk):

- Hamburger voor iedereen
- Exotische keuken
- Traditionele gerechten
- Verse groenten
- Spaghetti
- Recept van de kok

S13 - In de liefde ben ik nogal:

Idealistisch (4 punts) Realistisch

S14 - Mijn visie op gewoontes in een relatie:

Veiligheid en een stabiele basis vind ik prettig (4 punts) Ik kan niet tegen sleur!

S15 - Wanneer iets mij bezig houdt dan:

Praat ik er spontaan met haar over (4 punts) Durf ik haar daar niet mee lastig te vallen

S16 - Seksualiteit in mijn relatie

Dat is belangrijk (4 punts) Dat is niet zo belangrijk

S17 - De intensiteit van mijn seksuele behoeftes

Ik heb vaak zin om te vrijen (4 punts) Ik heb niet zo'n hoog libido

S18 - De plek die fantasie inneemt in mijn seksleven

Ik maak mijn seksleven graag iets spannender (4 punts) Ik houd niet van experimenteren

S19 - Vanavond hebben jullie allebei behoefte aan ontspanning, dus:

U gaat uit om mensen te ontmoeten (4 punts) Uw telefoon gaat uit en u brengt de avond samen door

S20 - Zij heeft net ruzie gehad met haar beste vriendin

Ik vraag haar wat zij voelt (4 punts) Ik bel haar vriendin om de situatie op te lossen

S21 - Om de vrouw van wie ik houd op te vrolijken

Bied ik haar een luisterend oor (2 punts) Zoek ik oplossingen met haar

S22 - Ik vind de kleding die zij vanavond wil dragen afschuwelijk

Ik zeg dat haar zonder omwegen (2 punts) Ik stel voor dat ze die andere mooie jurk aantrekt

S23 - Zij kauwt luidruchtig op haar kauwgom

Ik wijs haar er meteen op (4 punts) Door mijn houding laat ik zien dat het me irriteert

3. Persoonlijkheid

P1 - Mijn manier van doen: (een keuze mogelijk)

- Zen
- Impulsief
- Besluiteloos
- Dromer

P2 - Wat mij het beste karakteriseert:

- | | | | |
|------|----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| P2-1 | Gevoelig en spontaan | (2 punts) | Kalm en gematigd |
| P2-2 | Gehaast | (2 punts) | Ontspannen |
| P2-3 | Extravert | (2 punts) | Introvert |

P3 - Wat mij het beste karakteriseert:

Zuinig (4 punts) Geldverspiller

P4 - Dagelijks georganiseerd zijn

Dat is vanzelfsprekend (4 punts) Dat is vervelend

P5 - Mijn levensfilosofie

Ik leef met de dag. Oftewel: pluk de dag! (2 punts) Ik kijk vooruit. Beter voorkomen dan genezen

P6 - Over drie tot vijf jaar:

Ik weet vrij goed wat voor leven ik dan wil leiden (4 punts) Ik weet niet eens waar ik over 3 maanden zal zijn!

P7 - Er zit me iets dwars:

Ik stort meteen mijn hart uit (2 punts) Ik houd het voor mezelf

P8 - In eerste instantie ziet men mij als:

Koel en afstandelijk (4 punts) Warm en enthousiast

P9 - Ik geef de voorkeur aan:

Geen verplichtingen hebben (4 punts) Voortdurend erg druk zijn

P10 - Als ik gespannen ben: (een keuze mogelijk)

- Dan stort ik in
- Dan ga ik mediteren
- Dan ga ik sporten
- Dan ga ik eten
- Dan zorg ik goed voor mezelf
- Dan ga ik geld uitgeven

P11 - Bij anderen ben ik nogal:

Open (2 punts) Gereserveerd

P12 - In een discussie:

Ik ventileer graag mijn mening (2 punts) Ik dring me liever niet op

P13 - Wanneer ik word tegengesproken:

Ik laat niet met me sollen (4 punts) Ik reageer niet eens

P14 - Mijn vrienden waarderen mij vooral om:

Mijn nauwkeurigheid en organisatietalent (2 punts) Mijn flexibiliteit en mijn gekke ideeën

P15 - Mijn vrienden waarderen mij voor de eigenschap dat ik:

Situaties objectief kan analyseren (2 punts) Snel enthousiast ben

P16 - Om een belangrijke beslissing te nemen:

Ik vertrouw op mijn instinct (2 punts) Ik baseer mij puur op de feiten

P17 - Ik wil een kado geven en zie iets in de winkel:

Ik koop het nog niet, er is vast iets beters te vinden (4 punts) Ik koop het direct en zonder aarzelen

P18 - in mijn vrije tijd:

Ben ik graag thuis om me te ontspannen (4 punts) Zoek ik graag mensen op, bijvoorbeeld in een bar

P19 - Bij de bushalte zie ik een zeer aantrekkelijke vrouw:

Ik begin makkelijk een gesprek (4 punts) Ik spreek nooit onbekende vrouwen aan

P20 - Ik hoop op promotie, maar een collega wil die functie ook:

Ik verheug me nergens op om teleurstelling te voorkomen (4 punts) Ik geloof in mezelf: in krijg die baan!

P21 - Wat of wie ik graag om me heen heb (een keuze mogelijk):

- Creditcard
- Familie
- Een goede film
- Internet
- Een huisdier
- De natuur

P22 - Ik ben graag vrij om te doen wat ik wil en ik houd niet van verplichtingen

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P23 - Ik houd van uitdagingen en variatie en houd niet van sleur

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P24 - Ik wil graag genieten van het leven

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P25 - Ik kijk vooruit en ik houd niet van onverwachte verrassingen

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P26 - Ik interesseer me voor de standpunten van iedereen

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P27 - Ik ben nogal traditioneel, ik baseer me graag op eerdere ervaringen

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P28 - Ik ben altijd te porren voor reizen en het ontdekken van nieuwe culturen

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P29 - Ik bekommer me om mijn familie en wil hen graag gelukkig zien

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P30 - Niemand zal mij dwarsbomen als een plan mij aan het hart gaat

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P31 - Ik beslis wat we gaan doen als ik met vrienden uitga

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P32 - Ik neem beslissingen graag zelf en laat me niet beïnvloeden

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P33 - Een nieuwe baan schrikt mij niet af. Ik pas mij snel aan nieuwe situaties aan

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P34 - Ik wil vooral plezier hebben en doen wat ik leuk vind

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P35 - Ik voel me graag veilig en houd niet van risico's

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P36 - Ik respecteer hiërarchie en doe niet graag iets buiten mijn bevoegdheid

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P37 - Ik hecht sterk aan waarden die ik van huis uit heb en wil deze voortzetten

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P38 - Ik zet me graag in voor nobele zaken

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P39 - Ik ben niet haatdragend en vergeef gemakkelijk

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P40 - Ik kan privé en werk goed combineren

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

P41 - Ik stel hoge eisen en heb graag controle over wat er gebeurt

Zo ben ik (4 punts) Zo ben ik niet

4. Voorkeuren

V1 - Ik zie mezelf wel wonen (een keuze mogelijk):

- In een tent
- In een iglo
- In een loft
- In een kasteel
- In een huisje
- Op een onbewoond eiland

V2 - Als zij mij een plezier wil doen, dan kiest zij bij voorkeur (een keuze mogelijk):

- Een lekker etentje
- Spanning en sensatie
- Een goede wijn
- Een romantisch avondje
- De nieuwste smartphone
- Parfum

V3 - Mijn definitie van luxe (een keuze mogelijk):

- Klassieke auto's
- Mooie horloges
- Een wereldreis
- Een gelukkig gezin
- Niets doen
- Veel geld uitgeven

V4 - Ik heb een zwak voor (een keuze mogelijk):

- Snoep
- Adrenaline
- Voetbal op tv
- Een siësta onder de appelboom
- Een voetmassage
- Ontbijt op bed

V5 - Mijn favoriete vakantie (3 keuzes mogelijk):

- Trektocht door de woestijn
- Wandelen in de bergen
- Luiëren op het strand
- Stedentrip
- Naar het platteland
- Jungle-expeditie

V6 - Mijn favoriete vrijetijdsbesteding (3 keuzes mogelijk)

- Vrijwilligerswerk
- Auto's
- Computers
- Dansen
- Dieren
- Doe-het-zelven
- Fotografie
- Huisinrichting
- Internetten
- Koken
- Lezen
- Musea/tentoonstellingen
- Muziek
- Naaien/breien
- Reizen
- Rondtrekken
- Schaken

- Schilderen
- Schrijven
- Sporten
- Teken
- Theater
- Tuinieren
- Tv-kijken
- Videospelletjes
- Winkelen
- Anders

V7 - Mijn gezelschapsdieren (3 keuzes mogelijk):

- Exotische dieren
- Honden
- Insecten
- Katten
- Knaagdieren
- Konijnen
- Paarden/pony's
- Reptielen
- Vissen
- Vogels
- Andere dieren
- Ik heb geen dieren

V8 - Mijn avondjes uit (3 keuzes mogelijk):

- Avondje met vrienden
- Bioscoop
- Cafés/bars
- Concert
- Dansvoorstellingen
- Disco
- Familie
- Karaoke
- Lezen
- Met collega's uitgaan na het werk
- Opera
- Restaurant
- Sportief evenement
- Theater
- Anders

V9 - Mijn sporten (3 keuzes mogelijk):

- American football
- Andere watersporten
- Atletiek
- Autoracen
- Badminton
- Basketbal
- Boxen
- Cricket
- Dansen

- Extreme sporten
- Fietsen
- Fitness
- Golf
- Handbal
- Hockey
- Honkbal
- Judo
- Joggen
- Karate
- Motorracen
- Paardrijden
- Rollerbladen
- Rugby
- Surfen
- Skiën/snowboarden
- Squash
- Skateboarden
- Sporten met apparatuur
- Tafeltennis
- Tennis
- Turnen
- Vechtsporten
- Voetbal
- Volleybal
- Wandeltochten/trekking
- Windsurfen
- Zeilen
- Zwemmen
- Geen
- Anders

V10 - Mijn favoriete schilder (1 keuze mogelijk):

- Monet
- Picasso
- Van Gogh
- Da Vinci

V11 - Mijn favoriete muziekstijl (3 keuzes mogelijk):

- Klassiek
- Electro - Techno
- Jazz
- Pop-Rock
- Rap
- Gevarieerd

V12 - Mijn favoriete filmgenre (3 keuzes mogelijk):

- Actie/avontuur
- Romantiek
- Comedy
- De grote klassiekers
- Drama

- Fantasy/thriller

5. Waarden

W1 - Ik wil graag een lange termijnrelatie

Ja het liefst zo snel mogelijk (4 punts) Niet op korte termijn

W2 - Mijn visie op trouw

Iemand bedriegen is verraad (3 punts) Je kunt van elkaar houden en toch vrij blijven

W3 - Mijn band met mijn familie

Familie gaat voor alles (4 punts) Ik ben geen familiemens

W4 - Het contact met mijn familie

Ik heb dagelijks contact met mijn naaste familie (4 punts) Ik heb niet zoveel contact

W5 - Mijn visie op de verhouding tussen ouder en kind

Een goede verstandhouding is erg belangrijk (4 punts) Ieder een eigen rol in het gezin

W6 - Grenzen stellen aan kinderen

Is de basis van goede opvoeding (4 punts) Het is zinloos om hen tegen te willen houden

W7 - Mijn visie op vrije tijd met kinderen

Je moet zoveel mogelijk activiteiten samen doen (4 punts) Tijd voor jezelf houden is belangrijk

W8 - Zorgen voor een evenwichtig voedingspatroon voor de kinderen

Voeding is erg belangrijk voor hun gezondheid (4 punts) Het is niet goed om hen te beperken

W9 - Ik denk dat geld

Uiteindelijk niet gelukkig maakt (4 punts) Essentieel is om gelukkig te zijn

W10 - De rol van spiritualiteit of geloof in mijn leven

Ik leef exact volgens de regels van mijn godsdienst (4 punts) Dit heeft geen rol in mijn leven

6. Persoonlijke informatie

I1 - Mijn geloof

- Dat houd ik voor mezelf
- Atheïst
- Agnost
- Boeddhist
- Joods
- Katholiek
- Moslim
- Orthodox
- Protestant
- Anders

I2 - Mijn godsdienstbeoefening

- Dat houd ik voor mezelf
- Praktiserend
- Incidenteel praktiserend

- Niet-praktiserend

I3 - Mijn dieet

- Ik eet alles
- Ik zit op dieet
- Halal
- Koosjer
- Macrobiotisch
- Veganist
- Vegetarisch

I4 - Mijn alcoholconsumptie

- Dat houd ik voor mezelf
- Geen drinker
- Sociale drinker
- Regelmatige drinker

I5 - Mijn sigarettconsumptie:

- Nooit
- Zelden
- Enkel bij gelegenheid
- Regelmatig
- Vaak

I6 - Mijn afkomst

- Afrikaans
- Arabisch
- Aziatisch
- Europees
- Indiaas
- Spaans/latino
- Overig

I7 - Mijn nationaliteit

Invullen

I8 - Mijn tweede taal

Invullen (niet verplicht)

I9 - Mijn derde taal

Invullen (niet verplicht)

I10 - Mijn beroep

Invullen (niet verplicht)

I11 - Mijn huwelijks staat:

- Dat houd ik voor mezelf
- Nooit getrouwd
- Uit elkaar
- Gescheiden
- Weduwe(naar)

I12 - Het aantal kinderen dat bij mij woont:

- 0
- 1
- 2
- meer dan 2

I13 - Mijn kindwens

- Nee
- Is nog niet zeker
- Ja, 1
- Ja, 2
- Ja, 3
- Ja, meer dan 3
- Ja, weet nog niet hoeveel

I14 - Mijn opleidingsniveau

- Basisschool
- Middelbare school
- MBO
- HBO
- Universiteit
- Autodidact
- Gepromoveerd

I15 - Mijn inkomsten

- Dat houd ik voor mezelf
- Minder dan €10.000 per jaar
- €10.000 tot €20.000 per jaar
- €20.000 tot €30.000 per jaar
- €30.000 tot €50.000 per jaar
- €50.000 tot €75.000 per jaar
- €75.000 tot €100.000 per jaar
- Meer dan €100.000 per jaar

I16 - Mijn lengte in cm:

... (invullen) cm

I17 - Mijn gewicht in kg:

... (invullen) kg

I18 - Mijn figuur:

- Dat houd ik voor mezelf
- Atletisch
- Slank
- Normaal
- Volslank
- Wat extra pondjes
- Overgewicht

I19 - Mijn haarkleur

- Blond
- Bruin

- Grijs
- Kastanjebruin
- Rood
- Wit
- Zwart
- Overig

I20 - De lengte van mijn haar:

- Geschoren
- Heel kort
- Kort
- Heel lang
- Halflang
- Lang
- Kaal

I21 - De kleur van mijn ogen

- Blauw
- Bruin
- Grijs
- Groen
- Hazelnoot
- Zwart
- Overig

7. Aantrekkelijkheid (A)

A1 - Hoe aantrekkelijk vindt u uzelf op een schaal van 1 tot 10?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Measurement of Interpersonal Attraction van McCroskey en McCain's (1974)

In hoeverre bent u het met onderstaande stellingen eens?

A2-2 - Ik zie er sexy uit

A2-3 - Ik heb een knap uiterlijk

A2-4 - Ik ben aantrekkelijk

A2-5 - Ik zie er goed uit

8. Info voor onderzoek (O)

O1 - Nickname als u lid zou worden van een datingsite:

O2 - Naam (zodat juiste profielen gekoppeld kunnen worden bij tweede onderzoek):

O3 - Emailadres:

O4 - Bent u op dit moment vrijgezel

Ja / Nee

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst.

Heeft u nog vragen? Neem dan contact op met: onderzoekdatingsite@hotmail.nl

Wij zien u graag terug bij het tweede deel van het onderzoek tussen 5 en 15 maart.

Hartelijk dank voor u deelname.

8.2 Second questionnaire

Het onderzoek begint nu. Open de eerste afbeelding en bekijk dit profiel goed. Vul daarna onderstaande vragen in. U mag natuurlijk tijdens het invullen van de vragen altijd even terug gaan naar het profiel.

0. Nummer proefpersoon

Numppn: Vul hieronder het nummer in dat uw van de proefleider heeft gekregen:

1. Nummer profiel

Numprofl: Vul hieronder het nummer in van het profiel dat u net heeft bekeken:

.....

2. Social attraction

Bron: McCroskey & McCain (1974)

SocA1: Ik denk dat deze persoon een vriend van mij zou kunnen zijn

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

SocA2: Deze persoon zou goed in mijn vriendenkring passen

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

SocA3: Ik zou graag eens een praatje met deze persoon maken

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

SocA4: Deze persoon lijkt fijn om mee om te gaan

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

SocA5: Ik denk dat deze persoon en ik een goede band op zouden kunnen bouwen

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

SocA6: Ik zou deze persoon eens in het echt willen ontmoeten

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

3. Physical attraction

Bron: McCroskey & McCain (1974)

PhyA1: Deze persoon ziet er sexy uit

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

PhyA2: Deze persoon heeft een knap uiterlijk

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

PhyA3: Deze persoon is aantrekkelijk

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

PhyA4: Deze persoon ziet er goed uit

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

4. Romantic attraction

Bron: Campbell, W. K. (1999). Narcissism and romantic attraction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77, 1254–1270.

RomA1: Ik voel mij aangetrokken tot deze persoon

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

RomA2: Ik zou graag een keer met deze persoon uit willen gaan

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

RomA3: Ik zou graag een relatie willen met deze persoon

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

RomA4: Ik zou me goed voelen over mezelf als ik met deze persoon een relatie zou hebben

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

RomA5: Mijn vrienden zouden blij voor me zijn als ik met deze persoon een relatie zou hebben

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

5. Perceived similarity / attitude homophily

Bron: McCroskey & McCain (1974)

PercS1: Deze persoon gedraagt zich net zoals ik

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

PercS2: Deze persoon is net zoals ik

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

PercS3: Deze persoon lijkt op mij

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

PercS4: Deze persoon denkt net zoals ik

zeer mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 zeer mee eens.

9. Nummer profiel

Numprof2: Vul hieronder ter controle nogmaals het nummer in van het profiel dat u net heeft bekeken:

.....

Dit waren de vragen over dit profiel. Klik op verder om de resultaten op te slaan. U kunt daarna het volgende profiel openen en de vragenlijst opnieuw opstarten.