Effort and Online Dating: Is Creativity in Online Dating Profile Texts Perceived as Effortful and Attractive?

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between creativity in online dating profile texts and perceived attractiveness, whether perceived effort mediates this relationship, and whether online daters with higher long-term relationship intentions would perceive owners with higher scores on perceived effort as more attractive. To investigate this, two types of online dating profile texts were created: creative profile texts and non-creative profile texts. To test the hypotheses, an online experiment with 195 members of the dating platform Parship was conducted. The participants evaluated one profile text and were asked to report their impressions about the profile text and the owner of the profile. As expected, results show that owners of creative profile texts score higher on perceived effort. Additionally, perceived effort positively mediates the relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness. Thus, owners of creative profile texts score higher on perceived effort, which leads to higher attractiveness scores than owners of non-creative profile texts. At the same time, the direct effect of text creativity on perceived attractiveness showed that owners of non-creative profile texts were perceived as more attractive than owners of creative profile texts. The results also show that people's long-term relationship intentions do not moderate the relationship between perceived effort and perceived creativity. These findings add to literature on creativity in online dating, showing that creativity is perceived as effortful. It also adds to literature on effort, showing that perceived effort is a factor that people use to assign someone's attractiveness. Altogether, this study highlights the relationship between creativity and perceived attractiveness in the online dating context.

Keywords: creativity, online dating, perceived effort, attractiveness, relationship intention

Effort and Online Dating: Is Creativity in Online Dating Profile Texts Perceived as Effortful and Attractive?

Online dating has become a common and popular approach to meet potential partners (Rosenfeld et al., 2019). In 2017, 39% of the heterosexual couples in the United States met their partner via a profile on an online dating website or application (Rosenfeld et al., 2019). Usually, a profile on an online dating website or application consists of photographs and a limited description of that person (Dürnberger & Springer, 2022; Sharabi, 2020). Dating websites and applications often provide a template with pre-fabricated answers to create a dating profile (Almjeld, 2014). This might cause that online daters are forced to present themselves in structured and limited ways (Almjeld, 2014). Therefore, dating profiles might look alike, while it is suggested that being different from others helps to attract attention (Toma, 2015).

The similarities in dating profiles might be resolved by using creativity in the profile text. However, creativity is a complicated construct, since it entails multiple factors (Feldhusen & Goh, 1995). Yet, there is consensus that to be creative, novelty and appropriateness are required (Runco & De Jaeger, 2012; Stein, 1953). Novelty indicates that something is original and unusual (Acar et al., 2017), whereas appropriateness refers to something useful or something that fits the context (Acar et al., 2017; Barron, 1955). To be creative, both novelty and appropriateness should be present (Diedrich et al., 2015).

Creating a creative dating profile, thus a dating profile that is novel and appropriate, might help to attract others. The use of creativity namely has a positive influence on perceptions of someone's attractiveness (Gao et al., 2017a). This is similar in the online dating context, where owners of profile texts that were perceived as original were also perceived as more attractive (Van der Zanden, 2021). Therefore, using creativity in dating profile texts might help to be perceived as attractive.

One reason why creative profile texts may be considered attractive is because creativity may be an indication of effort. Creativity is likely to cost effort (Modig et al., 2014), therefore, owners of creative dating profiles might have higher perceptions of effort than owners of non-creative dating profiles. Perceived effort is the amount of energy or attention that others believe is assigned to a specific process or behavior (Kellogg, 1987; Mohr & Bitner, 1995), in this study, the process of writing an online dating profile text. In general, people expect that writing a creative text cost more effort than a non-creative text (Yao & Shao, 2021). Consequently, this can mean that people use creativity as an indicator of the effort that has been put into the creation of a creative text (Dahlén et al., 2008). Thus, owners of a creative text might be perceived as more effortful. In turn, they might also be perceived as more attractive.

It might be likely that the owner of a dating profile who scores higher on perceived effort is perceived as more attractive. Research namely suggests that products that cost more effort to create are judged of better quality than products that cost less effort to create (Kruger et al., 2004). Additionally, products that cost more effort to create are perceived as more attractive as well (Fuchs et al., 2015). This indicates that people use effort perceptions to judge the quality and attractiveness of products.

Moreover, people with long-term relationship intentions might perceive owners of dating profiles as more attractive when this person scores higher on perceived effort. It is suggested that people with serious dating intentions like it when they perceive that others put in effort (Blackwell et al., 2014). People might like effort since this indicates that others are committed to pursue a relationship (Rusbult et al., 1998). Thus, people with serious dating intentions are likely to value the effort someone puts in.

Overall, limited research on creativity in online dating profile texts has been done, yet existing research has shown that creativity can positively influence someone's attractiveness.

Additionally, studies in other research domains (e.g., marketing) have shown that perceived effort might be a factor that influences perceived quality. Yet, little is known about the role of perceived effort might play in the online dating context, therefore, the research question of this study is: Do creative profile texts positively influence the profile owners perceived attractiveness, does perceived effort mediate this relationship, and do long-term relationship intentions moderate this relationship? This will be examined by means of an online experiment in which participants from the online dating platform Parship will be asked to judge the perceived effort and perceived attractiveness of the owners of creative and non-creative dating profiles.

Theoretical Framework

Online dating is a popular way of encountering new people and meeting potential partners, either for short- or long-term relationships (Bonilla-Zorita et al., 2020; Matthews, 2018; Toma, 2015). In 1995, the website Match.com was launched; on this website, people could create a dating profile and communicate with others, which was the beginning of online dating (Bonilla-Zorita et al., 2020). Dating websites are still used extensively, yet over the last years, mobile dating applications such as Tinder have increased in popularity (Ward, 2016). These dating applications are usually location-based, while dating websites are usually not. Yet, on both dating websites and dating applications, people are able to create a profile and communicate with others (Ward, 2016). Since online dating is possible via mobile applications and websites, this study will continue to use the term "online dating platforms".

Online dating platforms focus on three classes of service for their members: access, communication, and matching (Finkel et al., 2012). First, access refers to potential partners on dating platforms. Users of dating platforms are exposed to potential partners and are able to see and evaluate their profiles. These dating profiles relate to a database of the dating

platform, therefore there is a wide network of potential partners (Finkel et al., 2012; Toma, 2015). After evaluating the profiles of potential partners, users often have the possibility to contact them (Finkel et al., 2012), which refers to the second service: communication. Communication is the interaction with potential partners. After having found a potential partner, dating platforms allow their members to communicate privately on their platform, for example via online chatting or webcam interaction (Finkel et al., 2012; Fiore et al., 2008). Lastly, matching refers to the algorithms that many dating platforms use. These algorithms identify potential partners based on possible compatibility of personality, values, and beliefs, and present these potential matches to their members (Finkel et al., 2012; Toma, 2015). There are several ways to find potential matches: some dating platforms allow the member to find potential matches for themselves by using keywords, while other dating platforms use mathematical algorithms to find potential matches (Toma, 2015).

To start with online dating and to find potential matches, users should first create a dating profile. These profiles generally consist of some photographs, a description of that person in the profile text, and demographic information, such as their name, age, and gender (Sharabi, 2020). Dating profiles are seen as personal advertisements (Wilson et al., 2007) in which people present themselves with a profile picture, but they also present who they are by writing in their profile text about their personality traits, occupation, favorite activities, what they are looking for in a relationship, and their relationship goals for instance (Fiore et al., 2008; Whitty, 2008).

In these personal online advertisements, there is a lack of social cues since there is no non-verbal communication (Whitty & Gavin, 2001). Since people create their own profile and because there is no non-verbal communication, people have control over how they present themselves (Walther, 2007). People on online dating platforms usually first present themselves to others, which they do on their profile (Gibbs et al., 2006). During this phase of

self-presentation, impression management may play a role (Zytko et al., 2014), which starts with selecting a profile picture and writing a profile text (Ward, 2016). Impression management is defined as "the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them" (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 34). Thus, people are aware or possibly even concerned about how others perceive them (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). People are aware of impression management and attempt to manage and control this by selecting an attractive picture and writing a good text for instance (Ellison et al., 2006), because they want to be perceived in a certain way (Goffman, 1959).

Assigning an attractive profile picture or writing a good text might help others to form positive impressions (Mierke et al., 2011; Sharabi, 2020; Tong et al., 2019). Writing a creative text, for example, might have a positive effect on impression formation (Van der Zanden, 2021). People on online dating platforms mainly form an initial impression based on the profile picture, whereas the profile text is used to broaden this impression (Fiore et al., 2008; Van der Zanden, 2021). Therefore, the way people present themselves in the profile picture and the profile text is likely to have an influence on how attractive others find them.

Thus, people on online dating platforms base their impressions about someone's attractiveness on the profile picture and the profile text (Mierke et al., 2011; Tong et al., 2019). Impressions on someone's attractiveness are mostly based on their profile picture (Van der Zanden, 2021), yet, research about creativity in online dating profile texts suggests that an original text leads to positive impressions about someone's attractiveness as well (Van der Zanden, 2021). Thus, people possibly form more positive impressions about someone's attractiveness when this person has written a creative text.

Additionally, in other fields, such as marketing, research shows that people have positive feelings towards creativity in products and advertisements as well (Ang et al., 2012).

Therefore, in several domains, creativity might be a positive factor (Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Wang & Netemeyer, 2004). The feelings of positivity towards creative advertisements might also occur in online environments, such as online dating. Research on online social network sites (e.g., Facebook) shows that people who are creative were liked more because they expressed diverse and original behaviors (Gosling et al., 2002; Stopfer et al., 2013). Therefore, this might suggest that people who are perceived as creative are liked more and are perceived as more attractive.

Thus, the use of creativity might have positive effects on impressions. This might be since people link creativity to humor and intelligence (Gao et al., 2017b; Van der Zanden, 2021; Watkins, 2017). Creativity might positively influence someone's attractiveness since it is seen as a positive factor (Watkins, 2017). Research shows that people who are perceived as creative are also perceived as more attractive (Prokosch et al., 2009), which might be because they are perceived as humorous and intelligent (Van der Zanden, 2021; Watkins, 2017). Therefore, in online dating profile texts, the use of creativity might result in higher attractiveness scores.

Thus, creativity might have a positive influence on someone's attractiveness, yet creativity remains difficult to describe (Gero, 1994; Taylor, 2017). Creativity has several factors that are related to each other (Feldhusen & Goh, 1995), which makes creativity complex and abstract (Acar et al., 2017). Despite this difficulty, there is consensus that creativity consists of two factors: novelty and appropriateness (Runco & De Jaeger, 2012; Sternberg, 1999). Novelty indicates that something does not occur often, which makes it unusual and original (Acar et al., 2017). It is indicated that something that is novel, such as a novel idea, is invented by a small selection of people and is therefore unusual (Runco & Charles, 1993). In the online dating context, novelty is something that is different from what is generally seen (Van der Zanden, 2021). Appropriateness indicates that something fits the

context. is useful, and effective (Barron, 1955; Stein, 1953). In the online dating context, that might be writing about common personal information (e.g., age, occupation, hobbies) in a profile text (Gibbs et al., 2010). Thus, the profile text should be socially meaningful (Sternberg, 1999).

To be creative, both novelty and appropriateness are required (Runco, 1988). An idea that is novel but not appropriate will be considered less creative than an idea that is novel and appropriate (Diedrich et al., 2015). Therefore, novelty should be balanced with appropriateness, so that something is also original but also useful (Runco, 1988). Thus, both factors should be present to make something creative (Diedrich et al., 2015). In the online dating context, dating profiles that are both novel and appropriate are likely to be perceived as creative (Van der Zanden, 2021).

Overall, creativity consists of novelty and appropriateness, and is perceived as an attractive trait to attract potential dating partners (Griskevicius et al., 2006). Specifically, research in the online dating context concludes that owners of dating profile texts who were perceived as original were also perceived as more attractive (Van der Zanden, 2021). Furthermore, men who use creative compliments during an interaction were perceived as more attractive than men who use literal, and thus less creative, compliments (Gao et al., 2017a). The use of creative compliments namely gives an indication of someone's creative and intellectual abilities (Gao et al., 2017a). Therefore, creativity in dating profile texts possibly results in higher attractiveness scores. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Owners of dating profile texts that are creative are perceived as more attractive than owners of dating profile texts that are not creative.

The use of creativity in profile texts might not only lead to higher attractiveness scores in online dating, the use of creativity might also lead to higher perceived effort scores (Yao & Shao, 2021). Moreover, perceived effort can also be used to make evaluations of the owner of a dating profile (Dwiggins & Lewandowski, 2015). Rsearch on customer satisfaction suggests that higher perceived effort results in more satisfaction (Mohr & Bitner, 1995). This might happen during online dating as well; when it is perceived that someone puts effort in their profile, it might be liked and appreciated. Thus, higher perceived effort scores possibly result in positive judgments.

Perceived effort refers to the amount of energy or attention that an observer believes is assigned to a process or behavior (Mohr & Bitner, 1995). This is often related to motivation (Mohr & Bitner, 1995); someone who persists in a process or behavior for a long time is likely to be motivated and will probably score high on perceived effort (Mohr & Bitner, 1995). Thus, motivation might be an important factor when assigning someone's perceived effort.

In the online dating context, it might be possible that when people perceive much effort was put in the creation of a profile, the profile owner might be perceived as motivated to find a potential partner, while a profile owner might be perceived as less motivated to find a potential partner when people perceive that this person put less effort in the creation of a profile. An experiment in a school setting investigated whether people used perceived effort to infer someone's motivation (Graham & Folkes, 1990). This experiment showed that students were rewarded when the teacher believed they assigned much effort to a task, thus the teacher believed the students were motivated to fulfill that task. On the other hand, students were punished (e.g., receiving negative feedback) when the teacher believed they assigned little effort, thus the teacher believed the students were less motivated (Graham & Folkes, 1990). Thus, the perceived effort that was observed was used to infer whether the

students were motivated to fulfill a task (Graham & Folkes, 1990; Mohr & Bitner, 1995). This might happen in the online dating context as well; it might be that when people believe more effort was put into the creation of the dating profile, it results in being perceived as more motivated to find a potential partner. Thus, the perceived effort someone exerts in their profile gives an indication of someone's motivation, which might help others to evaluate these dating profiles (Dwiggins & Lewandowski, 2015).

Owners of dating profiles might be able to show that they are motivated and might be perceived as more effortful when they use creativity in their profile text; creativity is namely likely to cost time and effort (Modig et al., 2014). This might cause that owners of creative dating profile texts score higher on perceived effort than owners of non-creative dating profile texts (Yao & Shao, 2021). People are likely to assume that a creative advertisement cost more energy to create than a non-creative advertisement (Kirmani & Wright, 1989). Thus, the use of creativity in a dating profile text possibly leads to higher perceived effort scores.

Creative dating profile texts are likely to have a positive influence on perceived effort, but previous studies mainly investigated perceived effort in the field of marketing. Research shows that people assume that creative advertisements are the result of hard work and investing effort in the process of creating advertisements (Kirmani & Rao, 2000). Similarly, it is suggested that people associate creative advertisements with greater effort. Thus, when an advertisement is creative, people believe it costs greater effort (Dahlén et al., 2008). Since dating profiles are perceived as advertisements as well (Wilson et al., 2007), it is likely that owners of creative dating profiles score higher on perceived effort.

Using creativity in dating profile texts might therefore help to be perceived as effortful. Moreover, people use creativity as a cue for effort (Yao & Shao, 2021). Product descriptions that are creative are judged as effortful, whereas creative advertisements refer to a great devotion of time and cost (Dahlén et al., 2008; Dahlén et al., 2018). Thus, people use

creativity as a cue to make a value attribution of the effort (Dahlén et al., 2018; Kahneman, 2011). Since people assume that creative advertisements require more effort to devise and execute than non-creative advertisements (Kirmani & Wright, 1989), this shows that people use creativity as a perception to indicate effort (Dahlén et al., 2008). Thus, owners of creative dating profile texts are likely to score higher on perceived effort. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: Owners of dating profile texts that are creative score higher on perceived effort than owners of dating profile texts that are not creative.

As mentioned, perceived effort can also be used to evaluate the owner of a dating profile (Dwiggins & Lewandowski, 2015). Yet, the effects of perceived effort on people's evaluations and judgments are mostly investigated in the field of brand appreciation and technology. In these fields, it is suggested that perceived effort is a factor to assign attitudes. Specht and colleagues (2007) suggest that perceived effort is a factor for customers to evaluate brands. Customers assign effort to the motivation of employees; when customers feel that a lot of effort has been put into the employees' motivation and behavior, they are likely to be more satisfied and positive about the brand (Specht et al., 2007).

In the field of technology, it is indicated that the perceived effort executed by recommendation agents (e.g., filtering to match customers' preferences) positively affects the perceived quality of the recommendation agent (Li & Tsekouras, 2012). Thus, customers are likely to have positive attitudes about a recommendation agent when the customer perceives that the recommendation agent executes tasks that cost much effort (Li & Tsekouras, 2012). These findings might show similarities with the online dating context; people might have more positive attitudes towards online daters who score high on perceived effort since they

are possibly more motivated to find a potential partner. Additionally, higher perceived effort scores might also result in more success, such as higher attractiveness scores (Dwiggins & Lewandowski, 2015).

Higher perceived effort scores might lead to more success, while lower perceived effort scores might lead to failure (Graham & Folkes, 1990). This might be since effort is seen as a factor that people can control (Weiner, 1986), which causes that high perceived effort results in positive emotional reactions and rewards (success), while low perceived effort results in negative emotional reactions and punishment (failure) (Graham & Folkes, 1990). Thus, when someone scores high on perceived effort, this person is likely to get more positive emotional reactions. In the online dating context, it might be that the owner of a dating profile who is perceived as effortful is more likely to have success, such as finding a partner or being perceived as attractive, than an owner of a dating profile who is not perceived as effortful.

Thus, owners of dating profiles who score high on perceived effort might have more success, such as being perceived as more attractive (Dwiggins & Lewandowski, 2015). Nevertheless, most studies on effort and attractiveness were investigated in the field of marketing. Research shows that people use effort to assign the quality and the attractiveness of products (Fuchs et al., 2015; Kruger et al., 2004). It is suggested that products that cost more effort to create were perceived of better quality (Kruger et al., 2004). Other research followed up on this and indicated that products of higher perceived quality were perceived as more attractive (Fuchs et al., 2015). Handmade products, products that required more time to create and cost greater effort, were perceived as high-quality products and led to more attractiveness (Fuchs et al., 2015). Similarly, marketing campaigns that were perceived as more effortful were perceived as higher of quality compared to marketing campaigns that were perceived as less effortful (Kirmani & Wright, 1989). These findings indicate that people use perceived effort to make a quality or attraction judgment.

People might use perceived effort to make judgments since it is related to commitment and motivation (Ben Hamida et al., 1998; Rusbult et al., 1998). Someone who puts in effort is likely to be committed (Rusbult et al., 1998). Thus, in the dating context, it might be that someone who is committed and willing to put in effort has serious intentions to pursue a relationship (Rusbult et al., 1998). The effort someone puts in gives an indication of someone's motivation as well (Ben Hamida et al., 1998). It is indicated that someone who is motivated is willing to put in effort (Dwiggins & Lewandowski, 2015). Additionally, people who are motivated to put in effort are also likely to have more success (Van Lange et al., 1997; Wieselquist et al., 1999), which makes effort a desirable factor (Dwiggins & Lewandowski, 2015). In the online dating context, this possibly means that owners of dating profile texts that have higher perceived effort scores will have more success, such as being perceived as more attractive.

Overall, perceived effort is a desirable factor and gives an indication of commitment and motivation. It is also used to make attraction judgements. In the online dating context, it might be that the owner of a dating profile is perceived as exerting a lot of effort, which leads to higher perceived attractiveness scores. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H3: Higher scores on perceived effort lead to higher perceived attractiveness scores.

H4: Owners of creative dating profile texts score higher on perceived effort than owners of dating profile texts that are not creative, which in turn leads to higher perceived attractiveness scores.

Perceived effort may be considered attractive by those online daters who have strong intentions to find a long-term relationship partner and are willing to commit to a relationship.

Research in the online dating context indicates that people with serious dating intentions appreciate and like it when they perceive that others put in effort (Blackwell et al., 2014). These people showed that they had serious dating intentions by using a facial picture instead of a body picture. By using a face picture, people avoid that they are being perceived as looking for a hookup (Blackwell et al., 2014). Other research shows that members on online dating platforms want to find partners with similar goals (Sharabi & Timmermans, 2020). This suggests that members who are committed to a relationship and willing to exert effort are more attracted to partners who are committed and willing to exert effort as well (Sharabi & Timmermans, 2020; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017).

In addition, people who have serious dating intentions also appreciate and like it when they perceive that others put in effort (Blackwell et al., 2014). Thus, someone with serious dating intentions possibly appreciates the effort a potential partner exerts in their profile. This might be appreciated and might lead to more attractiveness (Dwiggins & Lewandowski, 2015). Thus, the intention to commit to a relationship might play a role in judging owners of online dating profiles on their effort and attractiveness. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H5: Long-term relationship intentions moderate the relationship between perceived effort and perceived attractiveness, in such a way that the higher people score on relationship intentions, the higher they assign perceived effort as attractive.

H6: The effect of text creativity on perceived attractiveness through perceived effort depends on people's relationship intentions, such that the effect is stronger for people who score higher on long-term relationship intentions.

The conceptual model with all the constructs within this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model
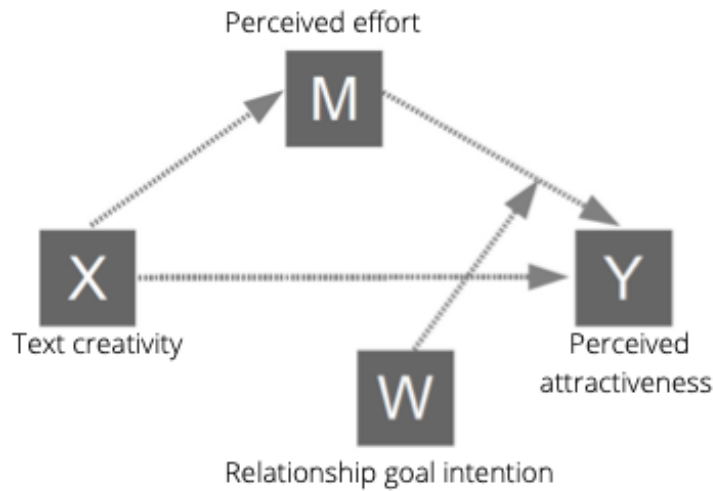
Method

Design

This study was part of a broader experiment that investigated the effects of creativity in online dating profile texts on impression formation. This specific study focused on the effect of text creativity on perceived attractiveness, with perceived effort as a mediator variable and long-term relationship intentions as a moderator variable. The study used a between-subject design, meaning that in the experiment, participants encountered only one profile text from one condition: a creative profile text or a non-creative profile text.

Participants

The participants were recruited via the online dating platform Parship. Parship was only involved in recruiting the participants for the experiment. Since this study was part of a

broader experiment, only a part of the data was used to analyze the hypotheses. For this specific study, 199 people participated in the online experiment. After removing the data from participants who did not finish the experiment ($n = 4$), the data of 195 participants could be used for the analyses. Of the sample, 43.7% identified as male, and 56.3% identified as female. The average age of the participants was 55.74 years ($SD = 10.96$). The native language of most participants was Dutch (96.5%), while the other 3.5% did not have Dutch as their native language. Most participants had a bachelor's degree (48.2%), followed by a master's degree (24.1%), and a college degree (13.6%). Among the sample, most participants indicated that they had long-term relationship intentions ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 1.69$; measured on a 7-point Likert scale).

Materials

For this study, eight dating profile texts were created. These texts were divided into two categories: four creative dating profile texts and four non-creative dating profile texts. Prior to the creation of the dating profiles, we created templates for the dating profile texts. This was done so the profiles in the different conditions would be similar to each other. Thus, the people behind the profile would have the same hobbies and personality traits in the different conditions. Thus, the dating profiles only differed on creativity. An example of a template that was used can be found in Appendix A.

Next, the creative and non-creative dating profile texts were created. To create a creative dating profile text, thus a profile text that is both novel and appropriate, metaphors were used. Metaphorical language is a form of imaginary language where a conceptual domain is projected to another domain (Dictionary.com, n.d.; Gao et al., 2017a). Metaphors are linguistic structures that require creativity, cognitive computation, and cross-domain projection of different concepts (Eviatar & Just, 2006; Fauconnier & Turner, 1998). Overall,

metaphors are positively valued in writing (Silvia & Beaty, 2012). Metaphors were used since they are more likely to be perceived as original than literal language (Van der Zanden, 2021; Yang et al., 2019). Therefore, the creative profile texts contained metaphors, so that the profile texts differed from the regular dating profile texts. The non-creative profile texts contained literal language which would come across more often.

Additionally, self-disclosure was used to create the creative texts and non-creative profile texts. Self-disclosure is a form of self-presentation (Porter et al., 2017) and refers to communicating personal information to someone (Cozby, 1973). The use of concrete self-disclosure (e.g., "Coffee and a cracker with cheese or jam are essential in my morning ritual") gives detailed and specific information (West & Holocomb, 2000), and is judged as more creative than texts with general self-disclosure (e.g., "Food is essential for me") (Van der Zanden, 2021). Therefore, concrete self-disclosures were added in the creative profile texts, while general self-disclosures were considered in the non-creative profile texts.

After the profile texts were created, they were placed in an online dating profile format to create a realistic profile (see Figure 2). Normally, online dating profiles display a name and a picture. To create gender-neutral profiles, this study added a blurred name and picture.

Figure 2

Dating Profile Example of the Different Conditions
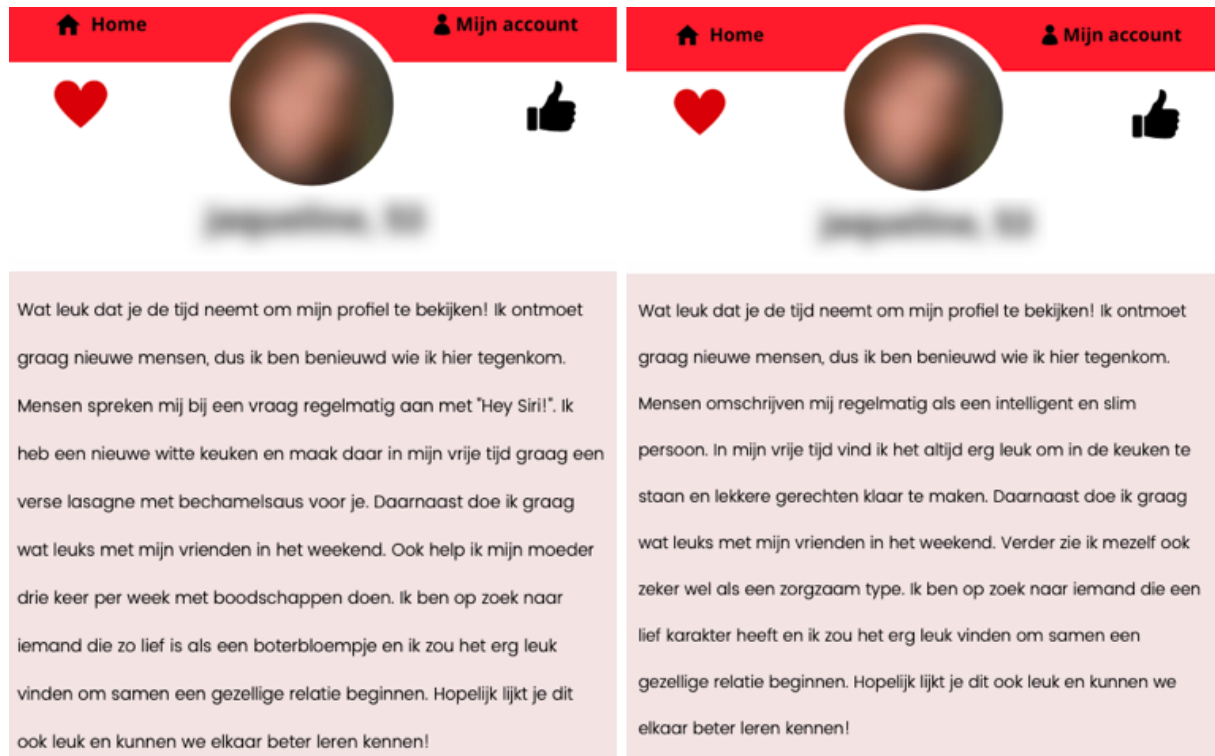
Note. The left example is from the creative text condition (novel and appropriate), whereas the right example is from the non-creative text condition (not novel, but appropriate).

Pretest

To ensure that the dating profile texts were perceived as creative or non-creative, a pretest was performed. The goal of the pretest was to confirm that creative profile texts were perceived as more creative than the non-creative profile texts. The pretest was performed in cooperation with two other thesis students. Therefore, the participants in the pretest were also asked to indicate whether the profile texts were perceived as novel and appropriate. In total, 66 participants participated in the pretest who all judged seven dating profile texts on perceived creativity. To measure perceived creativity, participants were asked to answer one item, namely: "This profile text is creative" (Berkes, 2021; Van der Zanden, 2021). This item was measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely

agree). All measures, including the novelty and appropriateness measures, can be found in Appendix B.

The participants were recruited through convenience sampling, and they did not participate in the main experiment. Of the 66 participants, 68.2% indicated to be female ($n = 45$) and 31.8% indicated to be male ($n = 21$). The mean age of the participants was 36 years old ($M = 35.98$, $SD = 15.19$). Among these participants, 21.1% stated to be single ($n = 14$), 37.9% were currently in a relationship ($n = 25$), and 30.3% were married ($n = 20$). Lastly, only a small amount of the participants indicated to be currently active on one or more dating platforms (9.1%, $n = 6$), while 45.5% was not currently active on a dating platform, but did have an online dating account in the past ($n = 30$). 45.5% of the participants indicated that they have never had an online dating account ($n = 30$).

To test whether creative texts differed from non-creative texts on perceived creativity, an independent t-test was performed. The difference score was not normally distributed (z-score skewness/kurtosis = -2.75 and 2.50). Therefore, the p-value may not be reliable and more weight should be placed on the bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals that will be provided. On average, the perceived creativity score of creative texts ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.64$) was higher than the perceived creativity score of non-creative texts ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.24$). This difference was significant ($Mdif = 1.90$, $t(126) = 7.40$, $p = .001$) and generalizes to the population, BCa [95% CI: 1.38, 2.39]. The difference represents a large-sized effect $d = 1.31$. Thus, as intended, the results show that creative texts were perceived as significantly more creative than non-creative texts, which means that these profile texts could be used in the main experiment.

Procedure

As mentioned, this study was part of a broader experiment. Therefore, only the procedure, measures, analysis, and results relevant for this study will be discussed. The main experiment was created in Qualtrics. The experiment was held online and took about ten minutes to complete. After the participants opened the experiment, they were welcomed and informed about the procedure of the experiment. Next, participants were asked to give permission to participate in the study. Since participation was on a voluntary basis, participants could end the study at all times.

Hereafter, the participants received some demographic and general questions regarding their age, gender, educational level, sexual preferences, and long-term relationship intentions. Subsequently, participants were instructed that the experiment was about to begin. The participants were told that they would see one dating profile, and they were instructed to closely read the text on the dating profile. After reading the text, as a manipulation check, the participants were asked to answer a question about the perceived creativity of the dating profile, which was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) with the item: "I think this profile is creative" (Van der Zanden, 2021). Next, participants were asked to answer questions about the perceived effort that the owner of the dating profile put into creating the profile and about the attractiveness of the owner of the profile. Finally, after the participants answered these questions, they proceeded to the end of the experiment, where they were thanked and debriefed.

Measures

All items in this study were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The study's mediation variable was perceived effort (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$), which was measured with three items. Perceived effort was measured

using scales derived from the study by Mohr and Bitner (1995). These scales were adapted to fit the online dating context, such as "The owner of this profile exerted a lot of energy in writing the profile text". The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the perceived effort scale was .94, indicating that the internal consistency of the scale is excellent (M = 4.07, SD = 1.47).

The perceived attractiveness of the profile owner, which was the study's dependent variable, was measured with a self-made 3-item scale, inspired by items of existing scales by McCroskey and McCain (1974), and Campbell (1999) (Cronbach's α = .61; M = 3.60, SD = 1.15). Two examples of perceived attractiveness items are "I think that the owner of this profile is attractive" and "I think I could fall for the owner of this profile". The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the perceived attractiveness scale was .61, indicating that the internal consistency of the scale is questionable. This score was mostly caused by the recoded item "I do not think that I could start a relationship with the owner of this profile". Since the inter-item correlation of this item with the other items was positive, and otherwise perceived attractiveness would be measured by only two items, the item remained part of the perceived attractiveness scale.

The moderator variable in this study, which was long-term relationship intention was measured with an adapted item from a study by Timmermans and De Caluwé (2017): "I am looking for a long-term relationship" on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Long-term relationship intention was asked to analyze whether this moderated the effect of perceived effort on perceived attractiveness. All scales can be found in Appendix C.

Statistical analysis

To test the mediation and moderation hypotheses, the PROCESS v4.1 macro in SPSS (Hayes, 2012; model 14), with a bootstrapping approach with 10,000 samples and 95% Monte

Carlo confidence intervals was used. In this study, the independent variable was text creativity, which consisted of two levels: creative and non-creative profile texts. Perceived attractiveness was the dependent variable. Perceived effort was the mediating variable, and long-term relationship intention was the moderating variable. Moderated mediation analyses test the conditional indirect effect of a moderating variable (long-term relationship intention) on the relationship between a predictor (text creativity) and an outcome variable (perceived attractiveness) via a potential mediator (perceived effort) (Hayes, 2015).

Results

Manipulation Check

To investigate whether also the participants in the main experiment perceived the creative dating profile texts as more creative than the non-creative dating profile texts, an independent samples t-test was performed that compared the mean ratings of the manipulation check item on perceived text creativity (i.e., "I think this profile text is creative") for all eight profile texts. The assumptions that were tested for an independent samples t-test can be found in Appendix D. The difference score was not normally distributed (z-score skewness/kurtosis = 2.27 and -2.29). Therefore, the p-value may not be reliable and more weight should be placed on the bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals that will be provided. As intended and in line with the pretest, the results indicated that on average, creative profile texts ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 1.59$) scored higher than non-creative profile texts ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.61$) on perceived text creativity. This difference was significant ($Mdif = 1.28$, $t(196) = -5.65$, $p < .001$) and generalizes to the population (95% CI -1.732, -.835). The difference represents a large-sized effect $d = .80$. Thus, in line with the pretest results, the results show that creative texts were perceived as significantly more creative than non-creative texts by members of Parship.

Moderated Mediation Analysis

Prior to hypotheses testing, the assumptions for a regression analysis were tested. These results can be found in Appendix E. Next, the moderated mediation analysis was performed. The means and standard deviations for the creative profile texts and non-creative profile texts on the mediator perceived effort and the dependent variable perceived attractiveness can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Scores (SD) for the Dependent Variable and Mediator variable per Condition

Variables	Creative texts ($n = 101$)	Non-creative texts ($n = 98$)
Perceived effort	4.54 (1.45)	3.60 (1.35)
Perceived attractiveness	3.50 (1.23)	3.70 (1.08)

Note. Perception scores could range from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). Creative texts are novel and appropriate, non-creative texts are not novel, but appropriate.

The first hypothesis stated that owners of creative dating profile texts were perceived as more attractive compared to owners of non-creative dating profile texts. In contrast to this expectation, results show that owners of creative profile texts ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.23$) scored significantly lower on perceived attractiveness than owners of non-creative profile texts ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.08$), $b = -0.42$, $t = -2.52$, $SE = 0.17$, $p = .01$. This negative beta indicates a negative relationship, in such a way that writers of creative profile texts score .42 lower on attractiveness than writers of non-creative profile texts. Therefore, H1 is not accepted.
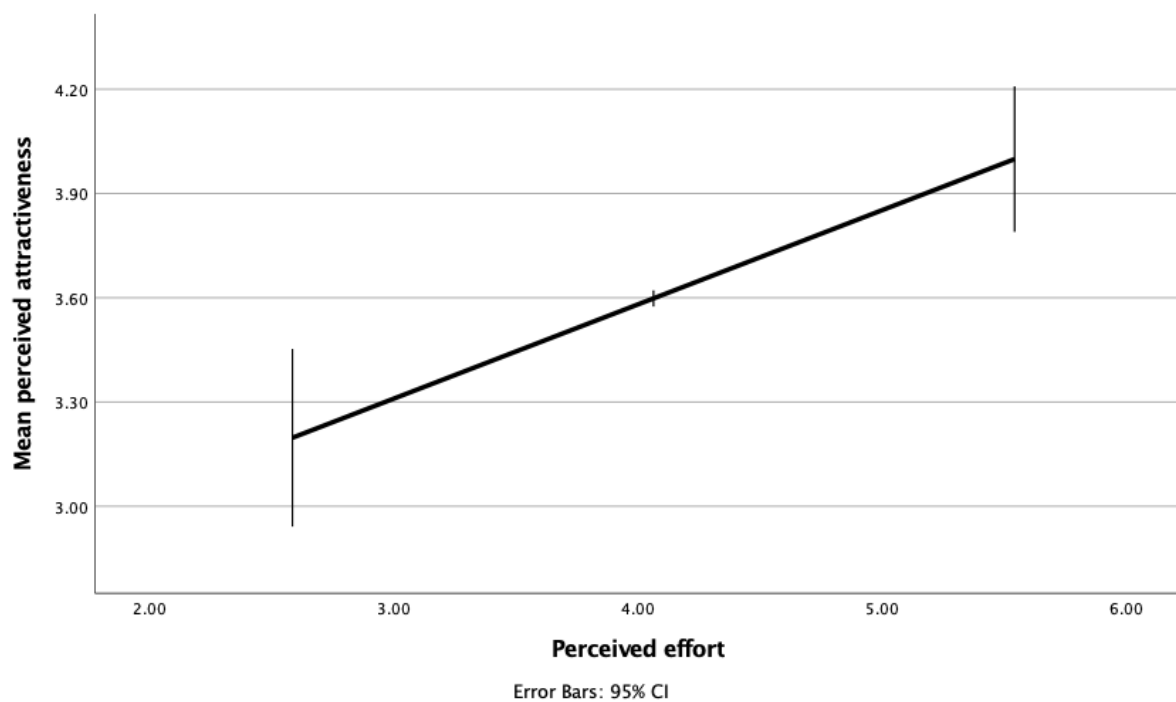
The second hypothesis posed that owners of creative dating profile texts would receive higher perceived effort scores than owners of non-creative dating profile texts. Indeed, results show that owners of creative profile texts ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.45$) scored higher on perceived

effort than owners of non-creative profile texts ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.35$), $b = 0.95$, $t = 4.75$, $SE = 0.20$, $p < .001$. This means that the data support H2.

Hypothesis three posed that higher scores on perceived effort would lead to higher perceived attractiveness scores. Results show that perceived effort is indeed a significant predictor for perceived attractiveness, $b = 0.26$, $t = 4.60$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < .001$. This means that H3 is confirmed: profile owners that score higher on perceived effort also score higher on perceived attractiveness. Figure 3 displays this relationship between perceived effort and perceived attractiveness.

Figure 3

Relationship between Perceived Effort and Perceived Attractiveness

Note. This is a zoomed in figure of the relationship between perceived effort and perceived attractiveness. Perceived attractiveness and perceived effort were both measured with three items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree).

The fourth hypothesis looked at the mediation effect of perceived effort on the relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness. H4 stated that owners of creative dating profile texts would score higher on perceived effort than owners of non-creative dating profile texts, which in turn leads to higher perceived attractiveness scores. Results from the mediation analysis showed that perceived effort mediated the relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness $b = 0.25$, $SE = 0.08$, BCa [CI: 0.11, 0.42]. Therefore, H4 can be accepted. Since the direct and the indirect effect are both significant, the results indicate that perceived effort only partially mediates the relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness.

Hypothesis five posed that long-term relationship intentions would moderate the relationship between the mediator perceived effort and the dependent variable perceived attractiveness, where people scoring higher on long-term relationship intentions perceived owners with higher scores on perceived effort as more attractive. Results show that long-term relationship intentions did not moderate the relationship between perceived effort and perceived attractiveness, $b = -0.05$, $SE = 0.03$, BCa [CI: -0.11, 0.02]. Thus, H5 is not accepted: owners of profiles that were perceived as more effortful were not considered more attractive by those with higher long-term relationship intentions.

The final and sixth hypothesis looked at moderated mediation effect, where it is hypothesized that the effect of dating profile text creativity on perceived attractiveness via perceived effort will be moderated by people's long-term relationship intentions, where the effect is stronger for people scoring higher on long-term relationship intentions. Results from the moderated mediation analysis showed that the effect of text creativity on perceived attractiveness via perceived effort is not moderated by people's long-term relationship intentions $b = -0.04$, $SE = 0.04$, BCa [CI: -0.13, 0.02]. This means that there is no indication of moderated mediation. Therefore, H6 cannot be accepted. Thus, the results show that there

is evidence for a mediation effect, yet this is not affected by people's long-term relationship intentions. Figure 4 presents an overview of the results of the moderated mediation analysis.

Figure 4

Results of the Moderated Mediation Analysis
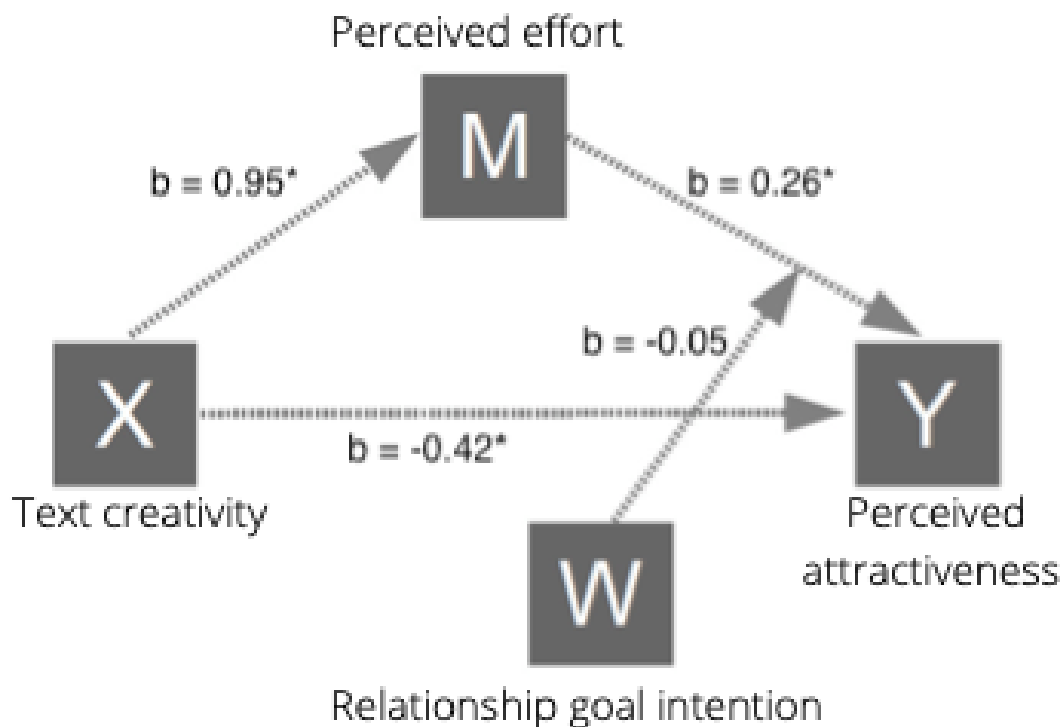
Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. * indicates p < .05.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between text creativity in online dating profile texts and the profile owners perceived attractiveness, the possibility of perceived effort mediating this relationship, and the possibility of long-term relationship intentions moderating the relationship between perceived effort and perceived attractiveness. In the literature, creativity is mostly distinguished into novelty, which is something that is unusual and original (Acar et al., 2017), and appropriateness, which is something that fits the

context (Barron, 1955). To be creative, both novelty and appropriateness are required (Runco, 1988). This study used two text conditions to test the hypotheses surrounding dating profile text creativity and impression formation: we created creative (novel and appropriate) profile texts and non-creative (not novel, but appropriate) profile texts. To accomplish creativity in an online dating profile, metaphors and self-disclosure statements were used to create profile texts (Gao et al., 2017a; Van der Zanden, 2021). Each participant, which was a member of the dating platform Parship, was presented with one dating profile, after which they were asked to report their impressions about the profile text and the owner of the profile.

Findings

The first hypothesis posed that owners of creative dating profile texts would be perceived as more attractive than owners of non-creative profile texts, which was not in line with the results. The results show a negative relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness, meaning that owners of non-creative texts were perceived as more attractive than owners of creative texts. This is in contrast to previous research (Gao et al., 2017a; Griskevicius et al., 2006; Van der Zanden 2021), which has shown that creativity helps to attract potential dating partners (Griskevicius et al., 2006). In the online dating context, owners who score higher on perceived originality are also perceived as more attractive (Van der Zanden, 2021). Especially the use of metaphors gives an indication of creativity, which is also perceived as attractive (Gao et al., 2017a). Thus, the finding in this study does not accord with previous research. A possible explanation why owners of creative texts are not perceived as more attractive might be the amount of information that is given. Creative profile texts use concrete self-disclosure (e.g., "I like to photograph. The best photo I took was on a safari in South Africa where we passed a pack of hunting lions") and thus, gives more specific and detailed information than the general self-disclosure in non-creative

profile texts (e.g., "In my spare time I like going out into nature and photographing the things I come across"). The use of concrete self-disclosure might be perceived as less attractive since giving more information usually leads to less attractiveness (Norton et al., 2007). In general, people like others that are similar to them, therefore when people have more specific information about someone, they are better able to assess incompatibility, which possibly leads to lower levels of attractiveness (Norton et al., 2007). Thus, creative dating profile texts that contain more specific and detailed information about that person may appeal to fewer people and might be perceived as less attractive than non-creative dating profile texts, which gives general information about that person.

As hypothesized, results show that owners of creative dating profile texts score higher on perceived effort than owners of non-creative dating profile texts. This accords with findings from previous studies in the field of marketing (Dahlén et al., 2008; Modig et al., 2014; Yao & Shao, 2021) that suggested that creative texts and advertisements lead to higher perceived effort scores (Yao & Shao, 2021), because of a general belief that more effort is required for developing a creative text or advertisement (Modig et al., 2014). People use creativity to indicate effort and therefore indicate that when something is creative, it probably cost effort (Dahlén et al., 2008).

Furthermore, in line with H3, the results indicate that higher perceived effort scores lead to higher perceived attractiveness scores. This finding is in line with previous research in the field of brand appreciation on effort and attractiveness (Ben Hamida et al., 1998; Specht et al., 2007). These studies showed that people are more positive about a brand when they think that the brand has exerted effort (Specht et al., 2007). Since effort is an important factor to give attraction judgments (Ben Hamida et al., 1998), the findings by Specht and colleagues (2007) are in line with the findings from this study, where people find owners of dating

profiles more attractive when they feel that more effort has been put in the creation of the profile text.

Further investigating the mediation effect, results show that perceived effort mediates the relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness. Thus, text creativity affects perceived attractiveness because of the difference in perceived effort between the creative and non-creative dating profile texts, which means that owners of creative profile texts score higher on perceived effort than owners of non-creative profile texts, which in turn leads to higher perceived attractiveness scores. Nevertheless, the direct effect of text creativity on perceived attractiveness shows that owners of non-creative profile texts score higher on perceived attractiveness than owners of creative profile texts, whereas the indirect effect shows that owners of creative profile texts score higher on perceived effort than owners of non-creative profile texts, which in turn leads to higher attractiveness scores. Hence, the directions for the direct and indirect effects differ from each other. This study only used perceived effort as mediator variable and the results show that perceived effort partially mediates the relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness, which means that there might be other mediators that could also (partially) explain this relationship. Perceived effort has shown to positively mediate the effect in the relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness, yet there might be other mediators that explain the negative relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness. A possible explanation might be that oddness negatively mediates the relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness. This could mean that owners of creative profile texts, thus texts that differ from other texts, are perceived as odd (Van der Zanden, 2021), which is considered less attractive (Van der Heide et al., 2012). Therefore, other mediators, such as oddness, might explain why owners of creative dating profile texts are perceived as less attractive.

Lastly, we considered the potential moderating role of long-term relationship intentions. However, results show that people's long-term relationship intentions did not moderate the relationship between perceived effort and perceived attractiveness, indicating that people with higher scores on long-term relationship intentions do not find owners of dating profile texts that score higher on perceived effort more attractive. There is also no indication of a moderated mediation. Previous research shows that online daters who exert more effort have more serious relationship intentions and they are more attracted to other daters who are also perceived as putting in more effort (Blackwell et al., 2014). Thus, people with serious dating intentions exert more effort and are in turn attracted to people that are perceived as putting more effort as well. Additionally, research about relationship intentions shows that people want to find a partner with similar goals (Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017). This suggests that daters with long-term relationship intentions look for partners with long-term relationship intentions as well (Sharabi & Timmermans, 2020). The conclusions from these studies are not in line with the results of this study.

Theoretical Implications

This study has several implications that add to existing literature on creativity in online dating profile texts, attractiveness, and perceived effort. First, this study reveals that creativity does not necessarily lead to more attractiveness. Previous research highlighted that creativity and the use of metaphors are perceived as attractive (Gao et al., 2017a; Griskevicius et al., 2006). However, the results from this study indicate that the owner of a creative dating profile text is not necessarily perceived as more attractive. This suggests that other factors, such as perceived oddness and amount of given information might play a role in judging someone's attractiveness. Thus, this adds to the literature about creativity and implies that

when something is creative, it does not necessarily mean that the owner of that creative product is perceived as more attractive.

Second, the results of this study show that owners of creative dating profiles score higher on perceived effort than owners of non-creative dating profiles, which accords with previous research that was mainly conducted in the field of marketing (Dahlén et al., 2008; Yao & Shao, 2021). Previous research concluded that the use of creativity in texts and products is perceived as effortful (Dahlén et al., 2008; Yao & Shao, 2021), which might be because people believe that creativity cost time and effort (Modig et al., 2014). The results from this study correspond with these findings as it is found that also in the context of online dating, creativity is used as a cue for effort. As such, this study adds to literature about creativity in online dating and implies that creativity in dating profiles results in more positive effort evaluations.

Third, this study shows that owners of dating profiles with higher perceived effort scores are perceived as more attractive than owners with lower perceived effort scores. Thus, the results gave insight into how people are influenced by perceptions of effort, where higher perceptions of effort results in higher attractiveness judgments. This means that people use perceived effort as a cue to make judgments about someone's attractiveness. Perceived effort functions as a mediator variable in this study. Therefore, the findings imply that text creativity and perceived attractiveness are related via perceived effort. Additionally, high scores on perceived effort might indicate that the owner of a dating profile is committed. This person possibly has serious dating intentions and is therefore perceived as more attractive (Dwiggins & Lewandowski, 2015; Rusbult et al., 1998). Thus, higher scores on perceived effort might indicate that this person is willing to put effort into the relationship as well.

The final implication of this study is that long-term relationship intentions do not moderate the relationship between perceived effort and perceived attractiveness. Thus, the

effort that is perceived that the owner put into the creation of the dating profile is not liked more when someone scores higher on long-term relationship intentions. This adds to the literature about relationship intentions and implies that the intention to pursue a long-term relationship does not moderate the relationship between the effort that is perceived in someone's dating profile and this person's attractiveness.

Practical Implications

This study has yielded practical implications that might be useful for online daters and online dating platforms. First, this study found that writing a creative profile text results in higher perceived effort scores, which in turn results in higher perceived attractiveness scores. Nevertheless, this study also found that without controlling for perceived effort, the owners of non-creative dating profile texts were perceived as more attractive. Online daters can apply these findings by attempting to write a creative profile that is perceived as effortful by using metaphors (e.g., "I am looking for someone as warm a crackling fire") instead of literal language (e.g., "I am looking for someone who is sweet and kind to me"). Especially the use of metaphors might help the owner of a profile to receive higher scores on perceived effort, and in turn to be perceived as more attractive. Therefore, online daters are advised to write a profile text that contains metaphors. This study also used concrete self-disclosure to create a creative dating profile text, yet research shows that giving more information might appeal to fewer people and lead to lower attractiveness scores (Norton et al., 2007). Therefore, online daters are advised to be careful with the use of concrete self-disclosure, since this might be perceived as less attractive.

Owners of creative profile texts score higher on perceived attractiveness when controlling for perceived effort. Thus, perceived effort is a factor that should be considered during the creation of a dating profile text. Since effort is related to commitment and

motivation (Rusbult et al., 1998), it might be helpful for online daters to write a creative dating profile text where they also indicate whether they are committed and willing to pursue a serious relationship.

Further, this study provides online dating platforms with information to advise members on how to write a dating profile text, which might result in more dating success for their members. The dating platform could help their members by giving suggestions on what to write in their profile text. The platform might want to give examples of creative profiles that are likely to be perceived as effortful and that might lead to higher attractiveness scores. More dating success might be helpful for the dating platform as well, since this might result in better reviews and thus, the platform might be perceived as a better tool for online dating.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study offers some interesting findings, yet some limitations should be noted as well. First, the scale that measured perceived attractiveness was not completely reliable. The perceived attractiveness scale used in this study had a relatively low Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .61. This may have had an impact on the perceived attractiveness results. Hence, future research might be able to resolve this by using a different version of the perceived attractiveness scale. Future research might want to use the attractiveness scales from Campbell (1999) and McCroskey and McCain (1974). These scales separately measure romantic, physical, and social attraction, which might give a better indication of perceptions about someone's attractiveness. This study was part of a broader experiment, in order to reduce time for the participants, it was decided to create self-made attractiveness items inspired by items of existing scales, instead of using the items for romantic, physical and, social attractiveness. Future studies should take this into consideration when measuring perceived attractiveness.

Next, future research might want to investigate the effect of metaphors and self-disclosure on perceived attractiveness apart from each other. In this study, metaphors and concrete self-disclosure were used to operationalize creativity. These factors possibly help to increase perceived creativity (Gao et al., 2017a; Van der Zanden, 2021), yet they might not help to increase perceived attractiveness. Research shows that the use of metaphors is perceived as attractive (Gao et al., 2017a; Gao et al., 2017b). On the other hand, it is indicated that the use of concrete self-disclosure might lead to lower attractiveness scores (Norton et al., 2007). Since both metaphors and concrete self-disclosure were present in the creative dating profiles, this might have affected the attractiveness results. Therefore, future research is advised to analyze the effect of metaphors and self-disclosure on attractiveness separate from each other.

Further, this was a quantitative study to measure the effect of text creativity on perceived attractiveness via perceived effort. This resulted in less insight into the reasons why participants made certain choices or assigned certain levels of perceived effort and perceived attractiveness. Therefore, it might be helpful to conduct a qualitative study that is interested in the relationship between creativity, attractiveness, and effort on online dating platforms. Interviews or focus groups could provide more information about the reasons why people make certain choices. For example, why participants perceive owners of non-creative profiles as more attractive. At the same time, this could provide information why participants perceive owners of creative profiles as more effortful and why owners with higher perceived effort scores as more attractive.

Finally, the participants from this study all came from the online dating platform Parship, which may have impacted the results. Overall, the members of Parship are usually adults looking for a serious relationship. On their website, Parship indicates to be the number one dating platform for serious relationships, and they also indicate that 76% of their

members are above 30 years old (Parship, n.d.). This is confirmed by the results; the participants had a mean age of 55.74 years and scored high on long-term relationship intentions ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 1.69$). Therefore, future research could focus on other dating platforms, such as Tinder or Lexa. It is indicated that these platforms are better suited for younger adults, additionally they also focus less on serious relationships (David & Cambre, 2016). Focusing on dating platforms with younger members might give new insights into the perceived attractiveness of creative profiles. Research shows that gifted students (15-18 years) were more likely to be friends and to like someone who they perceived as creative (Hopp et al., 2019). This might be similar for young adults (18-25 years) in the online dating context; young adults might like owners of creative profiles more than owners of non-creative profiles. Therefore, a similar study focusing on younger members from other dating platforms might give new results and insights.

Conclusion

Taken together, this study aimed to investigate whether the use of creativity in online dating profile texts resulted in higher perceived attractiveness scores, whether this was mediated by perceived effort, and whether long-term relationship intentions moderated this relationship. In short, this study found that owners of non-creative profile texts were perceived as more attractive than owners of creative profile texts. Further, this study found that owners of creative profile texts scored higher on perceived effort. There is also evidence that owners of dating profile texts that were perceived as effortful were also perceived as more attractive. Perceived effort was found to be a partial mediator between creative profile texts and perceived attractiveness. There was no evidence for long-term relationship intentions moderating the relationship between text creativity and perceived attractiveness via perceived effort. In conclusion, this study contributes to research on creativity, perceived

effort, and online dating and provides useful insights for owners of dating profile texts to

enhance their attractiveness.

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Appendix A

Template of a profile text:

- Reason for online dating (1x)
- Personality traits (2x)
- Hobbies (2x)
- Type of person (1x)
- Type of relationship (1x)

Table A1

Template of a Profile Text:

Sentence topic	Manipulation		
	Novel - Appropriate	Novel - Inappropriate	Not novel - Appropriate
1 - Introduction			
2 - Why online dating			
3 - Personality trait 1	Metaphor (novel)	Metaphor (novel; inappropriate)	Literal language
4 - Hobby 1	Appropriate concrete self-disclosure	Inappropriate concrete self-disclosure	General self-disclosure
5 - Hobby 2			
6 - Personality trait 2	Concrete self-disclosure (low intimacy)	Concrete self-disclosure (high intimacy)	General self-disclosure (low intimacy)
7 - Type of person	Metaphor (novel)	Metaphor (novel; inappropriate)	Literal language
8 - Type of relationship			
9 - Closing sentence			

Table A2

Example of a Profile Text:

Sentence	Manipulation		
	Novel - Appropriate	Novel - Inappropriate	Not novel - Appropriate
1	Wat leuk dat je mijn profiel bekijkt!	Wat leuk dat je mijn profiel bekijkt!	Wat leuk dat je mijn profiel bekijkt!
2	Ik ontmoet graag nieuwe mensen, dus ik ben benieuwd wie ik hier tegenkom.	Ik ontmoet graag nieuwe mensen, dus ik ben benieuwd wie ik hier tegenkom.	Ik ontmoet graag nieuwe mensen, dus ik ben benieuwd wie ik hier tegenkom.
3	Mensen omschrijven mij als een wandelende zoekmachine	Mensen omschrijven mij als een afgesleten woordenboek.	Mensen omschrijven mij als een intelligent persoon.
4	In mijn vrije tijd maak ik het liefst een verse lasagne.	Ik maak graag een verse lasagne, als ik hem niet laat aanbranden.	In mijn vrije tijd vind ik het erg leuk om te koken.
5	Daarnaast doe ik graag wat leuks met mijn vrienden in het weekend.	Daarnaast doe ik graag wat leuks met mijn vrienden in het weekend.	Daarnaast doe ik graag wat leuks met mijn vrienden in het weekend.
6	Ook help ik mijn moeder met haar boodschappen	Verder help ik mijn zieke moeder die kanker heeft.	Verder zie ik mezelf als een zorgzaam type.
7	Ik zoek iemand die zo zachtaardig is als een marshmallow	Ik zoek iemand die zo zachtaardig is als een lekke band	Daarom ben ik op zoek naar iemand die zachtaardig is
8	om samen een serieuze relatie mee op te bouwen.	om samen een serieuze relatie mee op te bouwen.	om samen een serieuze relatie mee op te bouwen.
9	Het lijkt me leuk om je verder te leren kennen!	Het lijkt me leuk om je verder te leren kennen!	Het lijkt me leuk om je verder te leren kennen!

Appendix B

Scales used in the pre-test

Scales pre-test:

Perceived text novelty scale (Berkes, 2021):

- This profile text is unique

  Deze profieltekst is uniek

- This profile text is different than what most people do

  Deze profieltekst is anders dan wat de meesten hebben

- This profile text is not innovative (R)

  Deze profieltekst is niet vernieuwend

Perceived text appropriateness scale (Berkes, 2021):

- This profile text is appropriate

  Deze profieltekst geschikt

- This profile text does not fit in the context of online dating (R)

  Deze profieltekst past niet in de context van online dating

- This profile text is useful in the context of online dating

  Deze profieltekst is zinvol binnen de online dating context

Perceived text creativity scale (adapted from Berkes, 2021; Van der Zanden et al, 2021):

- This profile text is creative

  Deze profieltekst is creatief.

Appendix C

Scales used in the main experiment

Items main experiment:

<u>Manipulation check creativity:</u>

- Deze profieltekst vind ik creatief

    o I think this profile text is creative

Long-term relationship intention:

- Ik zoek iemand voor een lange-termijn relatie

    o I want to find someone for a long-term relationship

Perceived effort: (Cronbach's α = .94)

- De eigenaar van dit profiel heeft veel tijd gestopt in het schrijven van deze profieltekst

    o The owner of this profile devoted a lot of time to write this profile text

- De eigenaar van dit profiel heeft veel moeite gestoken in het schrijven van deze profieltekst

    o The owner of this profile devoted a lot of effort to write this profile text

- De eigenaar van dit profiel heeft veel energie gestoken in het schrijven van deze profieltekst

    o The owner of this profile exerted a lot of energy in writing the profile text.

Perceived attractiveness: (Cronbach's α = .61)

- Ik denk dat deze profieleigenaar aantrekkelijk is

    o I think the owner of this profile is attractive

- Ik denk dat ik op de eigenaar van dit profiel zou kunnen vallen

    o I think I could fall for the owner of this profile

- Ik denk niet dat ik een relatie zou kunnen beginnen met de eigenaar van dit profiel (R)

    o I do not think that I can start a relationship with the owner of this profile

Appendix D

Figure D1

Assumption check for the manipulation check analysis

Descriptives

Texts				Statistic	Std. Error
Vul in wat voor jou van toepassing is – Deze profieltekst vind ik creatief	Non–creative	Mean		3.33	.163
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.00	
			Upper Bound	3.65	
		5% Trimmed Mean		3.27	
		Median		3.00	
		Variance		2.593	
		Std. Deviation		1.610	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		7	
		Range		6	
		Interquartile Range		2	
		Skewness		.555	.244
		Kurtosis		-.681	.483
	Creative	Mean		4.61	.159
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.29	
			Upper Bound	4.93	
		5% Trimmed Mean		4.64	
		Median		5.00	
		Variance		2.523	
		Std. Deviation		1.588	
		Minimum		1	
		Maximum		7	
		Range		6	
		Interquartile Range		3	
		Skewness		-.552	.241
		Kurtosis		-.868	.478

Manipulation check:
normality assumption manipulation check:
Skewness non-creative texts: .555/.244 = 2.27
Kurtosis non-creative texts: -.681/.483 = -1.41

Skewness creative texts: -.552/.241 = -2.29
Kurtosis creative texts: -.868/.478 = -1.82

Homogeneity assumption manipulation check: 2.593/.2523 = 1.03

Appendix E

Figure E1

Assumption Check for the Regression Analysis

Attract	Non-creative	Mean		3.6973	.10920
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.4806	
			Upper Bound	3.9140	
		5% Trimmed Mean		3.7007	
		Median		3.8333	
		Variance		1.169	
		Std. Deviation		1.08101	
		Minimum		1.00	
		Maximum		6.00	
		Range		5.00	
		Interquartile Range		1.00	
		Skewness		-.038	.244
		Kurtosis		.098	.483
	Creative	Mean		3.5034	.12386
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.2576	
			Upper Bound	3.7492	
		5% Trimmed Mean		3.4883	
		Median		3.6667	
		Variance		1.503	
		Std. Deviation		1.22614	
		Minimum		1.00	
		Maximum		7.00	
		Range		6.00	
		Interquartile Range		1.42	
		Skewness		.116	.244
		Kurtosis		.333	.483

Regression analysis:
Normality assumption:
Skewness non-creative texts: -.038/.244 = -.16
Kurtosis non-creative texts: 098/.483 = .20

Skewness creative texts: .116/.244 = .48
Kurtosis creative texts: .333/.483 = .69

Figure E2

Homoscedasticity and Linearity Assumption: