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What drives daters to deceive? Comparing experiences with deception while dating online and offline

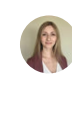
Poster · March 2021

DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0249586


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Introduction

- People lie in one out of every three social interactions with their romantic partners, and even more frequently with strangers (DePaulo & Kashy, 1998).
- Despite the growing number of relationships that begin online (Rosenfeld et al., 2019), few studies have examined whether established patterns of deception manifest in the same way in person and online.
- Research has found that men and women lie about different topics on their dating profiles (Toma et al., 2008), but little is known about what other factors might be associated with the use of deception while dating.
- We explored whether deception prevalence, type, and motivation to deceive are influenced by gender and dating modality.

Method

Participants

- 216 participants (108 students and 108 community members)
- **Eligibility:** Aged 18+, live in North America, and have used a dating app and/or been on a date in person
- **Demographics:** 50% female; aged 18-53 years old ($M = 24.75$; $SD = 6.44$); predominantly White (50.93%), South Asian (17.13%), Black (10.19%), and multiracial/other (10.19%)

Materials

Demographics Questionnaire

General Dating Questionnaire. Participants were asked about their past experience with in person dating or using dating apps.

Deception Experience Questionnaire. Participants were asked about how they present themselves when dating in person or using dating apps.

- Half of participants were asked about dating in person and half were asked about dating apps.
- All participants were asked about their perspectives on, and personal experiences with, encountering and engaging in deception while dating.

Design

2 (**Gender:** Male vs. Female) \times 2 (**Modality:** In-Person vs. Dating App)

Procedure

Participants recruited using social media and the undergraduate participant pool were invited to complete an anonymous online survey using Qualtrics.

Results

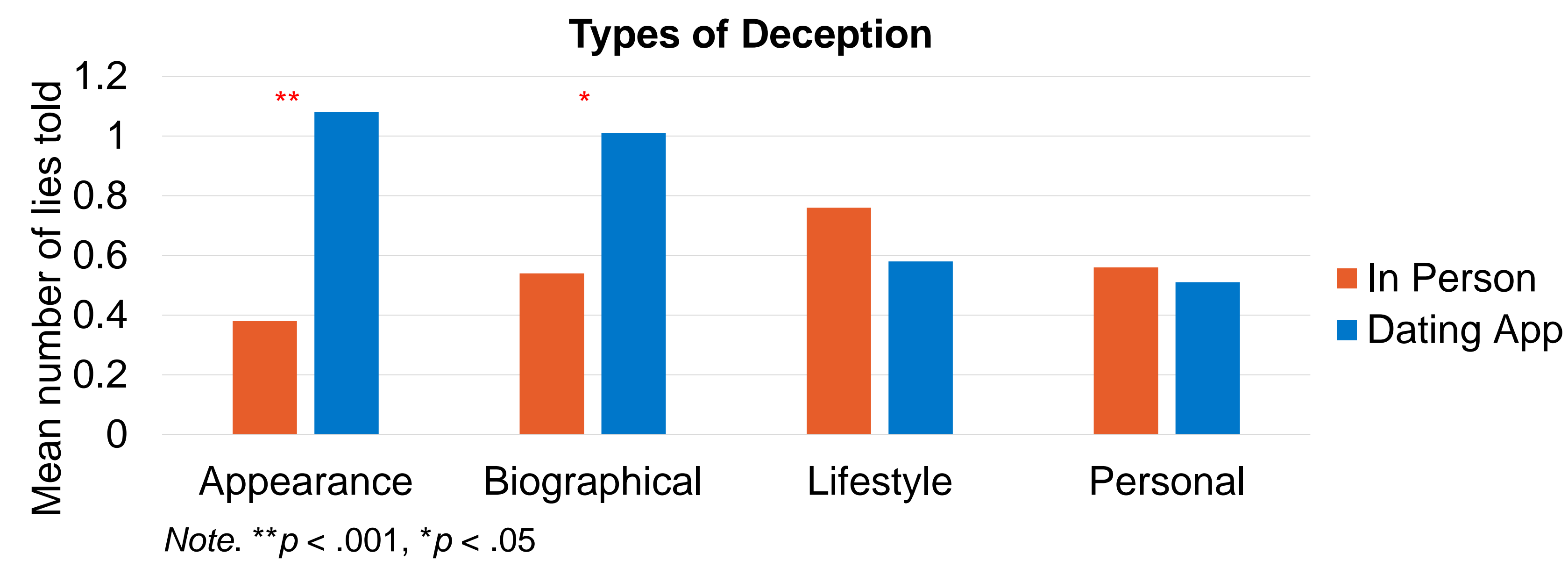
Do daters lie more in person or on dating apps?

- Main effect of **Modality**, $F(1, 211) = 4.68, p = .032, \eta_p^2 = .02$.
 - Daters were less likely to lie in person ($M = 2.23, SD = 3.21$) than on dating apps ($M = 3.27, SD = 3.83$).

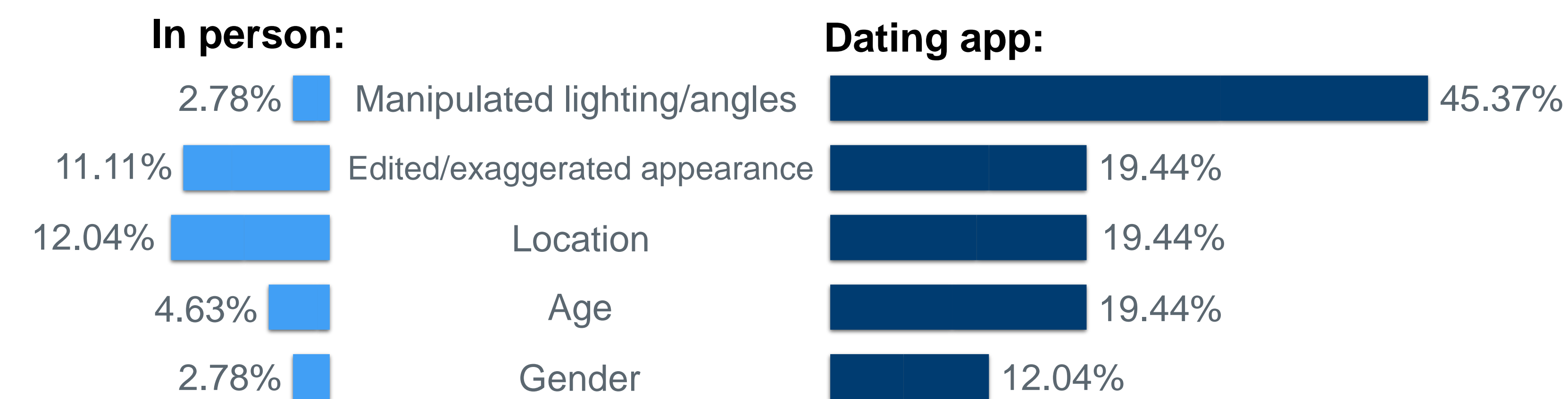


Do daters lie about different topics in person and on dating apps?

- No main effect of **Gender**, $F(4, 209) = 1.53, \text{Pillai's } V^{(s)} = .03, p = .196, \eta_p^2 = .03$.
- Main effect of **Modality**, $F(4, 209) = 8.11, \text{Pillai's } V^{(s)} = .13, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .13$.
 - Dating app users lied about their appearance more than in-person daters, $F(1, 212) = 24.60, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10$.
 - Dating app users lied about their biographical details more than in-person daters, $F(1, 212) = 4.42, p = .037, \eta_p^2 = .02$.



% of Daters Who Intentionally Provided Misleading, Dishonest, or False Information



Do males and females differ in their overall incidence of deception?

- No main effect of **Gender**, $F(1, 211) = 1.94, p = .165, \eta_p^2 = .01$.

Results

Do people's motivations to deceive predict their likelihood of deception?

In person? YES!	On dating apps? YES!
$F(4, 101) = 52.33, p < .001, R^2 = .68, R^2 \text{ adj} = .66$	$F(4, 101) = 8.17, p < .001, R^2 = .24, R^2 \text{ adj} = .22$
Antisocial $\beta = 2.95, SE = .71, t(105) = 4.19, p < .001$	Antisocial $\beta = 1.46, SE = .66, t(105) = 2.22, p = .029$
Self-serving $\beta = .89, SE = .28, t(105) = 3.13, p = .002$	
Protection $\beta = .39, SE = .19, t(105) = 2.04, p = .044$	

Discussion

- We conducted one of the first surveys on the incidence of, and underlying motivations for, the use of deception on dating apps compared to in person.
- We found that using dating apps poses a higher risk of being deceived than dating in-person. However, the prevalence of deception online and offline suggests people are at a high risk of encountering deceit across modalities.
- Males and females did not differ in their prevalence or type of deception.
- Self-serving motivations to deceive were exclusive to dating in person. This result is consistent with literature indicating that people are more likely to lie in person when they are motivated to be likeable (Feldman et al., 2002), as is often the case when meeting a new prospective partner.
- The finding that deception on dating apps was uniquely fueled by antisocial motivations supports recent calls for legislation to protect online daters from "catfishing" (Koch, 2017).
- Future research could investigate what role individual traits (e.g., self-esteem, mate value) play in a person's proclivity to deceive while dating.

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