SWIPED OUT: IMPLICATIONS OF DATING APP USE BY STUDENTS ABROAD AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

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Session Overview and Objectives

▪ Share current trends and research regarding study abroad student uses and motivations of using dating apps abroad

▪ Examine challenges student use of dating apps abroad presents to individuals/group safety, ethical considerations, and group dynamics

▪ Share best practices among institutions, program providers and onsite staff in terms of orientation activities/resources, student support, and policies
Student use of mobile dating apps, social media safety & dating safety while abroad is an emerging area of uncertainty and concern among education abroad professions.

All three institutions took notice of this trend of uncertainty in the past year with student experiences on both faculty-led programs and affiliate partner programs.

A review of the literature showed no publically available research on student use of dating apps while abroad.
Dating Apps

- Tinder/ Tinder Passport
- Grindr
- Tripr
- Happn
- Bumble
- MoMo
- MileHiMessenger
- Miss Travel
- Ventoura
- Tourbar
- Skout
- Wingman
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General Survey Summary

- 169 student responses
- 65 institutional responses
- 41 CIEE onsite staff responses

- No significant differences between public and private institutions
- No significant differences between types or length of programs

- 86% of students used a dating app while abroad
Student Survey Results – Reasons for Use

- Students use for a variety of reasons
- Half as many use for hook up or casually date abroad compared to back home
- Use for making friends, meeting locals was about the same
- Less interested in what locals think of them than back home
Student Survey Results – Effects of Use

Q14 - Did your experience using a dating app have an effect (good or bad) on any of the following?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Your sense of safety</td>
<td>4.51%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Your relationship with friends</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Your relationship with your cohort / program group</td>
<td>8.27%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Your participation in organized group and cultural activities</td>
<td>6.77%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Your academic performance</td>
<td>2.26%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Your cultural adjustment</td>
<td>16.54%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Your sense of independence</td>
<td>20.30%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Your Intercultural communication</td>
<td>18.05%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Your sense of belonging to the host community</td>
<td>12.78%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>133</td>
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Q16 - If you were to study abroad again, would you use a dating app?

- Yes: 42.38%
- No: 19.57%
- Unsure: 38.04%
Student Survey Results – Orientation

Q10 - During orientation or in orientation materials, did you receive information about...

Q12 – Were dating apps discussed as part of...
Institutions Survey Results - Orientation

**Why not?**
- too little time to cover it
- limited staff awareness of apps and/or frequency of use by students
- belief that they pose minimal risk
- no policy or guidelines

**Some feel it is already addressed through other topics like:**
- ‘meeting locals’
- ‘buddy programs’
- ‘health and safety’

Q7 - Do you address dating app use in orientation materials or during orientation?

- Yes, as a part of dating safety: 25.93%
- Yes, as a part of social media safety: 7.41%
- Yes, as its own topic or a part of another topic: 02.90%
- No: 3.70%
- Unsure: 62.90%
Institutions Survey Results – Issues or Concerns

- Majority report that dating apps have not yet caused any issues or concerns
- Of those that have, most cited safety concerns

Q12 - Has your office encountered any issues or concerns relating to your students' dating app use?
Institutions Survey Results – Responsibility

- Institutions feel this should be addressed by themselves or the overseas partners
- 80% were unsure if partners or providers they work with have policies or guidelines

Q9 - Who do you think should be responsible to address students' use of dating apps while studying abroad?

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<td>Provider</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Local Site Staff</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Host Institution</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Home Institution</td>
<td>19.64%</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.36%</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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CIEE Onsite Staff Survey Results – Orientation

- **Why not?**
  - Not a topic students typically share with CIEE staff
  - No overarching CIEE policy
  - Don’t see additional safety issues or other concerns with dating apps

- Estimate only 40% of students use dating apps
Main concerns include:

- Student safety
- Cultural adjustment
- Group dynamics

55% Reported no issues or concerns as “None” or “Other”
CIEE Onsite Staff Survey Results – Responsibility

- Most reported they are just becoming aware of dating app use, and will begin discussing in onsite orientation
- About 1/3 felt they were responsible
- About 1/3 felt students and/or their parents were responsible

Q9 - Who do you think should be responsible to address students’ use of dating apps while studying abroad?

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<td>Host Institution</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
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Survey Takeaways

- Widespread student use of dating apps, but it appears staff are unaware of extent of use

- Students use dating apps abroad for a variety of reasons

- Students report positive effects on immersion, adjustment, and cultural competence

- Large gap between student demand for info on dating safety, social media safety, & dating apps in orientation and what is actually being provided

- Majority of both institutions and site staff feel providers/site staff/host institutions should be providing info, while about ¼ of each feel it is the students’ own responsibility

- Some institutional and site staff seemed uncomfortable with topic due to lack of understanding the technology
Limitations

- Survey respondents in all three surveys self-selected to respond
- Significant qualitative (short-answer responses) in the Institution and CIEE Site Staff surveys; for this session we primarily focused on analyzing the quantitative responses
- Provider (overseas site staff) responses are only from one provider, CIEE
Concerns & Recommended Approaches

Group Discussion Responses

▪ Example from the audience:

▪ Multiple groups suggested acknowledging its use with students (don’t try to ignore it)

▪ Give suggestions to students of safe, public spaces to meet up with their connections from dating apps

▪ If you have a dating safety section, explicitly talk about dating apps as part of it

▪ Someone noted that tagging your location can be a safety risk

▪ If your housing has guest policies, this could be another way to bring up dating apps
What is our responsibility?

Group Discussion Responses

▪ Talk about dating apps any chance we have—MAKE TIME
▪ Coach and advise students but it their personal responsibility
▪ Onsite staff are best to address cultural nuances
▪ Questions about credibility gap for staff who aren’t using them/haven’t used them. Consider using young colleagues? Could use peers but there is risk in the conversation going astray.
▪ Connect with first year programming on your campus to see how they are talking about it?
▪ Dating is dating is dating – don’t make up new rules for this type of dating that you don’t have for picking someone up in a bar
▪ Connect with IT about cyber security?
▪ Come at it from multiple angles
Ethical Considerations

Group Discussion Responses

▪ There is a liability and risk to not addressing this, and there is risk to students using them
▪ Impact on group dynamics of students using it ‘in’ group and ‘out’ of the group
▪ How does the sexual assault advocacy office talk about these issues?
▪ Address it during cultural orientation – safety concerns, concept of consent, morality police, etc
▪ Noting that one person they interact with on an app is not necessarily representative of everyone in that culture
▪ Is there a language learning opportunity?
Best Practices

- Partner with Student Services/Sexual Assault Advocacy Office to develop dating/meeting locals tips for orientation
- Cal Poly's International Center partners with SAFER office to provide "Passport to Dating" workshop
- Utilize local college students when covering dating safety, social media safety, and dating apps in on-site orientation
Resources

- The Dating Apps Single Travelers Should Download

- Tinder for travel: How to use dating apps to have more fun on the road
  [http://mashable.com/2015/07/16/tinder-for-travel/#myLwvVLi2sqQ](http://mashable.com/2015/07/16/tinder-for-travel/#myLwvVLi2sqQ)

- Should You Use a Location-Based Dating App While Traveling?

- For some gays abroad, social networking poses risk