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

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70TH CIEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AUSTIN

NOVEMBER 8–11, 2017

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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

Background

- 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**
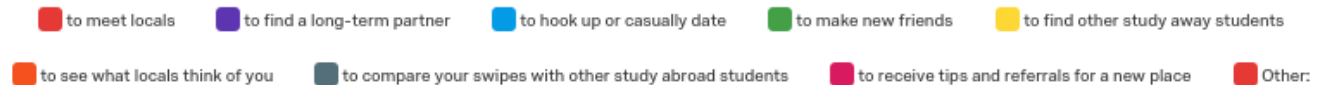- **Skout**
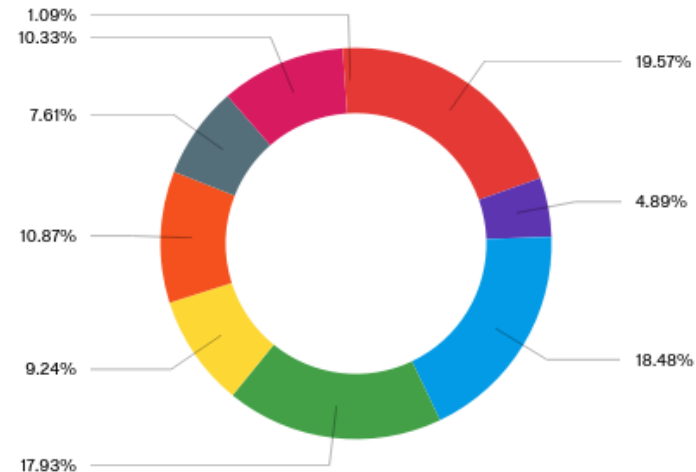- **Wingman**

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

Q7 - Please select all reasons that apply for your use of a dating app while studying abroad:
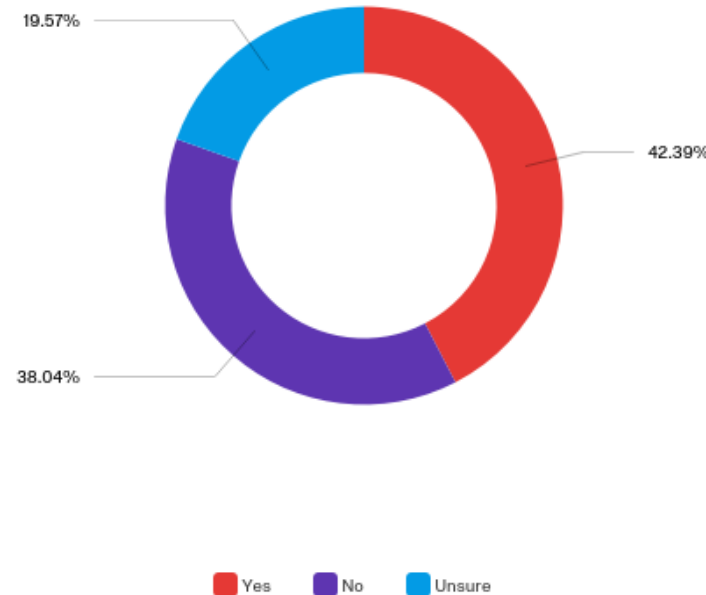

1.09%
10.33%
7.61%
10.87%
9.24%
17.93%
19.57%
4.89%
18.48%

to meet locals | to find a long-term partner | to hook up or casually date | to make new friends | to find other study away students

to see what locals think of you | to compare your swipes with other study abroad students | to receive tips and referrals for a new place | Other:

Student Survey Results – Effects of Use

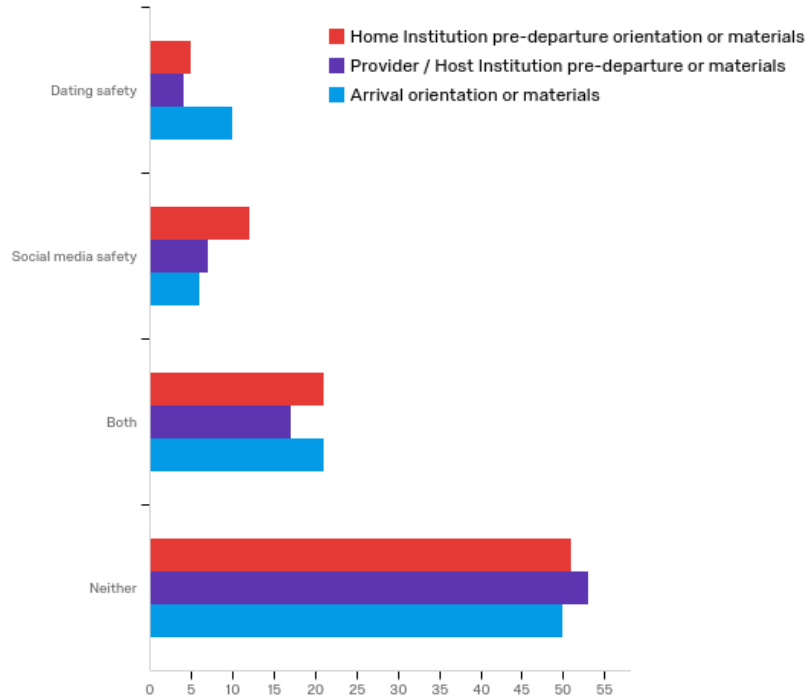Q14 - Did your experience using a dating app have an effect (good or bad) on any of the following?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Your sense of safety	4.51%	6
2	Your relationship with friends	10.53%	14
3	Your relationship with your cohort / program group	8.27%	11
4	Your participation in organized group and cultural activities	6.77%	9
5	Your academic performance	2.26%	3
6	Your cultural adjustment	16.54%	22
7	Your sense of independence	20.30%	27
8	Your intercultural communication	18.05%	24
9	Your sense of belonging to the host community	12.78%	17
	Total	100%	133

Q16 - If you were to study abroad again, would you use a dating app?
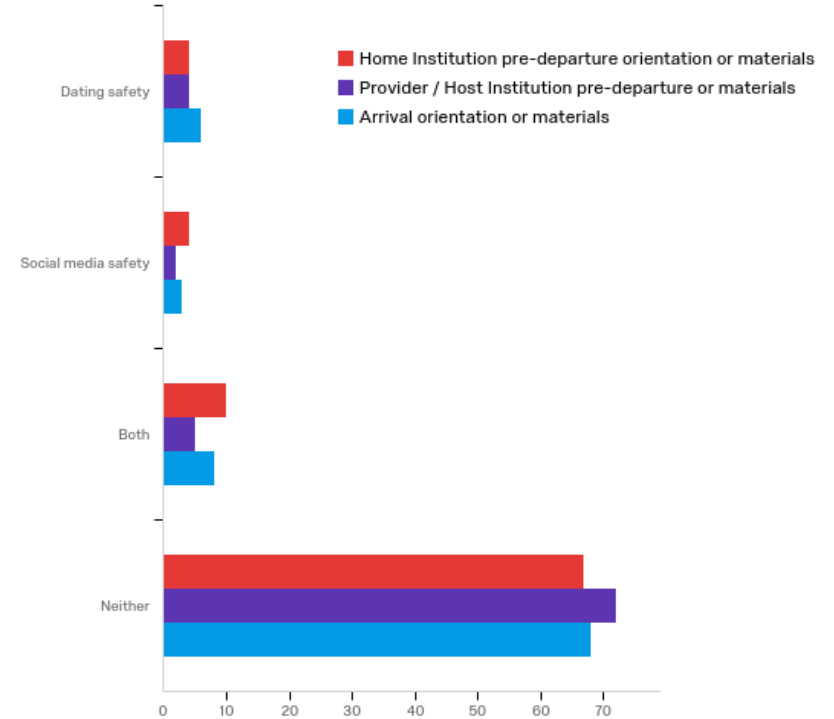

19.57%

42.39%

38.04%

Yes No Unsure

Student Survey Results – Orientation

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

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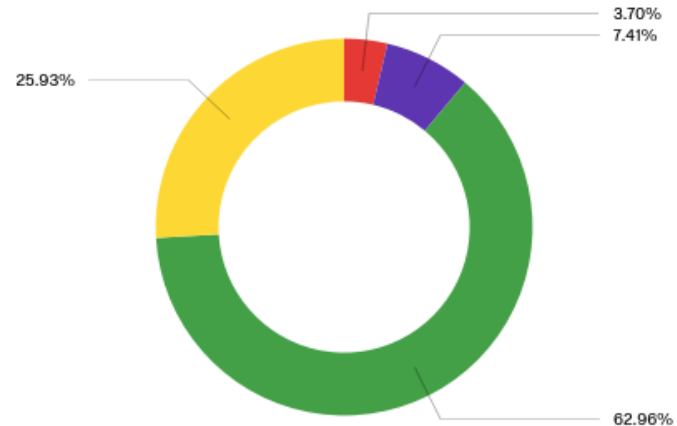
Institutions Survey Results - Orientation

- **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'
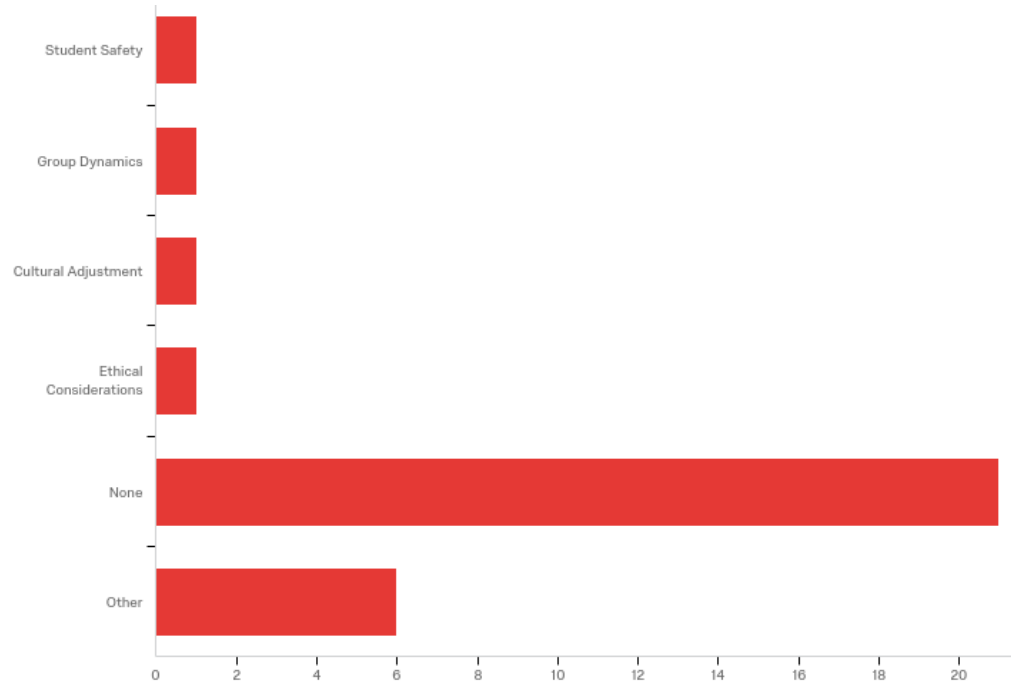 - 'buddy programs'
  - 'health and safety'

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

3.70%
7.41%
25.93%
62.96%

Yes, as a part of dating safety   Yes, as a part of social media safety   Yes, as its own topic or a part of another topic   No   Unsure

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?
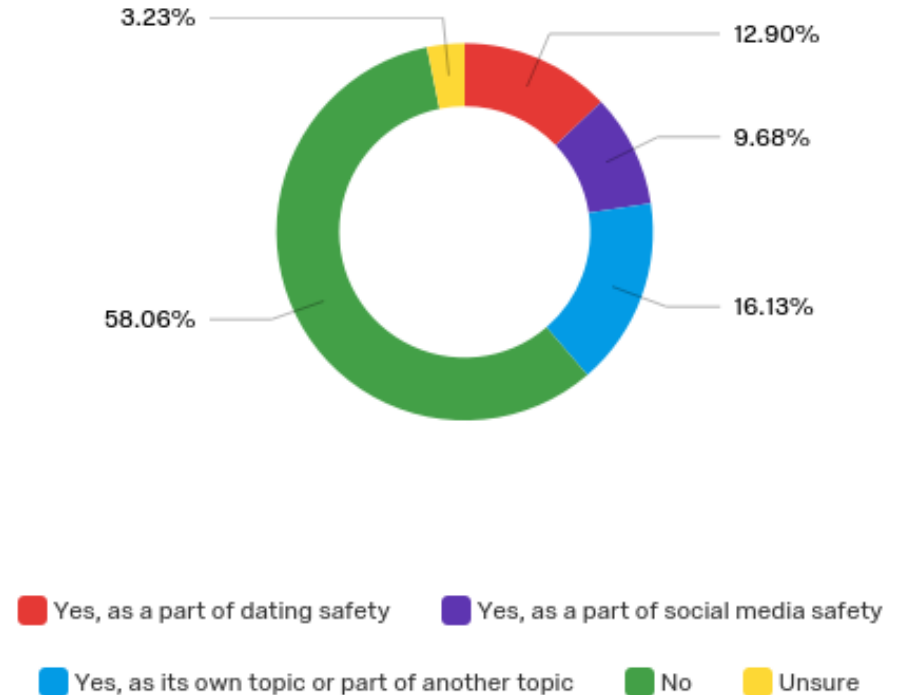
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Provider	12.50%	7
2	Local Site Staff	25.00%	14
3	Host Institution	14.29%	8
4	Home Institution	19.64%	11
5	Student	23.21%	13
6	Other	5.36%	3
	Total	100%	56

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
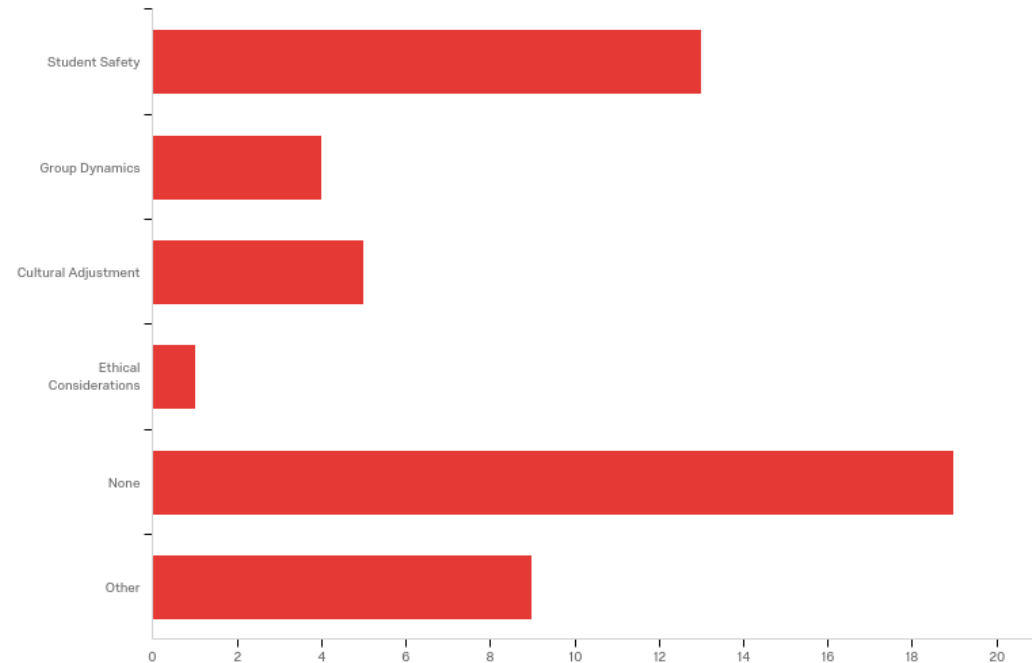
▪Estimate only 40% of students use dating apps

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

3.23%   12.90%   9.68%   16.13%   58.06%

- 🟥 Yes, as a part of dating safety
- 🟪 Yes, as a part of social media safety
- 🟦 Yes, as its own topic or part of another topic
- 🟩 No
- 🟨 Unsure

CIEE Onsite Staff Survey Results – Issues or Concerns

- Main concerns include:
  - student safety
  - cultural adjustment
  - group dynamics

- 55% Reported no issues or concerns as "None" or "Other"

Q4 - Has your site encountered any issues or concerns relating to dating app use and...

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?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Provider	14.29%	8
2	Local Site Staff	33.93%	19
3	Host Institution	7.14%	4
4	Home Institution	12.50%	7
5	Student	23.21%	13
6	Other	8.93%	5
	Total	100%	56

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**
  http://www.mydomaine.com/dating-apps-for-travelers/slide8

- **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

- **Should You Use a Location-Based Dating App While Traveling?**
  http://www.consumer-rankings.com/blog/should-you-use-a-location-based-dating-app-while-travelling/

- **For some gays abroad, social networking poses risk**
  http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2768302/For-gays-abroad-social-networking-poses-risk.html

THANK YOU