



Swiped Out II: More Implications of dating app use abroad and what to do about it

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION: Round II

This session is a continuation of research conducted for the CIEE Annual Conference in Austin last year. The response was overwhelming that practitioners in the field want more information and discussion about this topic. So we:

- **identified changes in the data from 2017 to 2018**
- **expanded qualitative data**
- **more deeply explored motivations and effects, as well as new trends**



INTRODUCTION: **Session Overview**

OVERALL STUDENT SURVEY FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

EFFECTS OF ADDRESSING DATING APPS IN
ORIENTATION/MATERIALS

INSTITUTION SURVEY FINDINGS

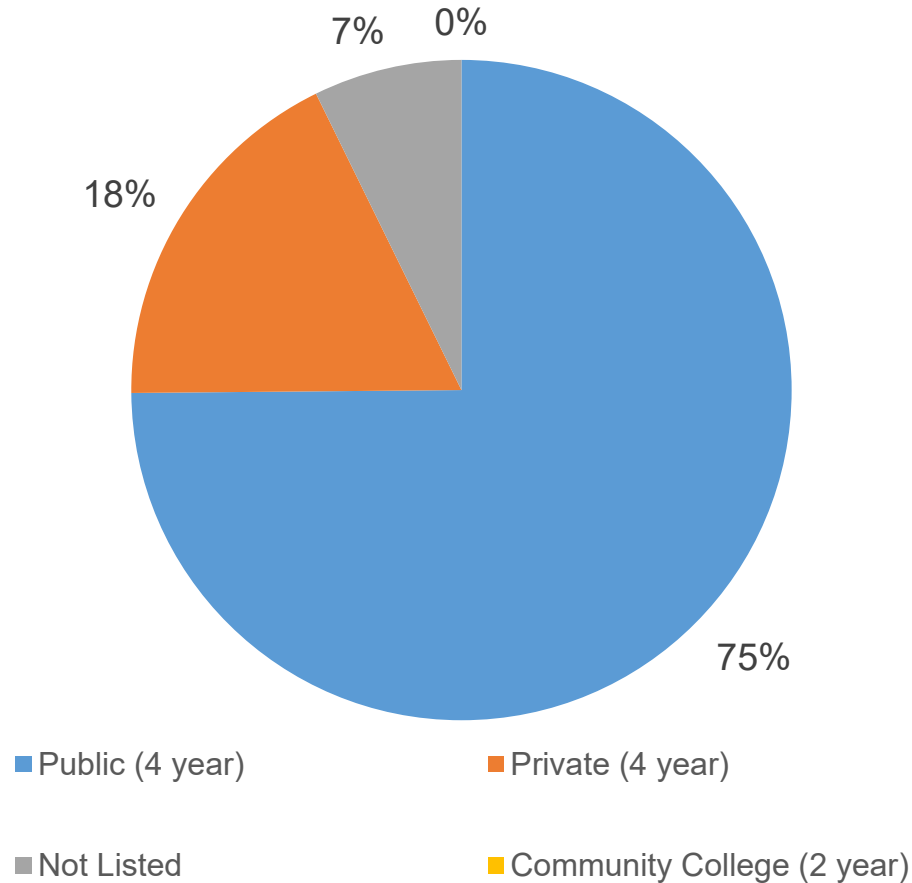
CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION



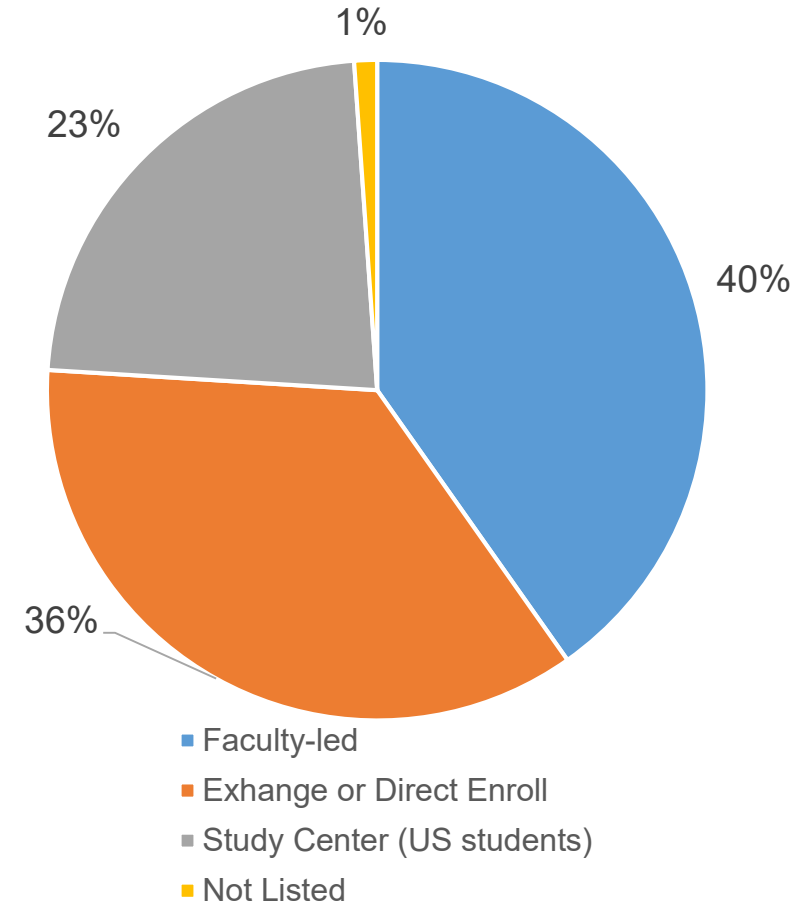
OVERALL FINDINGS

OVERALL FINDINGS: Demographics

Home Institution

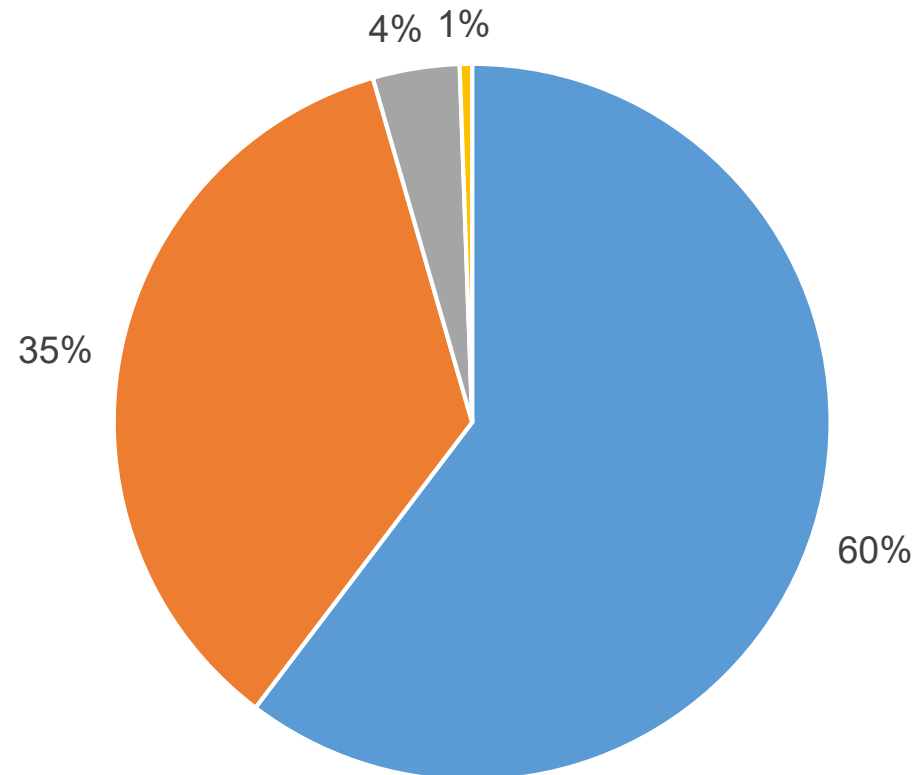


Program Type



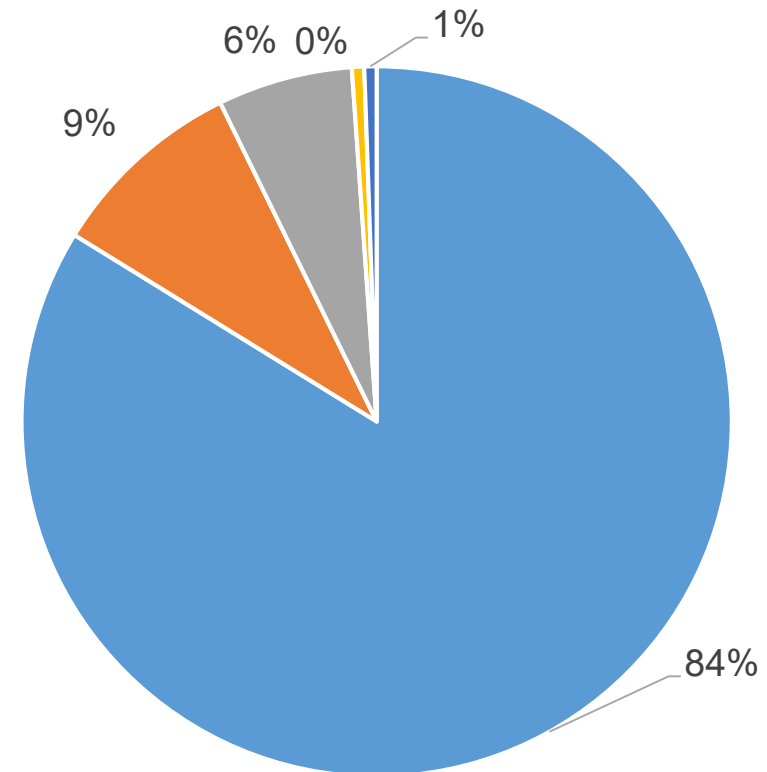
OVERALL FINDINGS: Demographics

Gender Identity



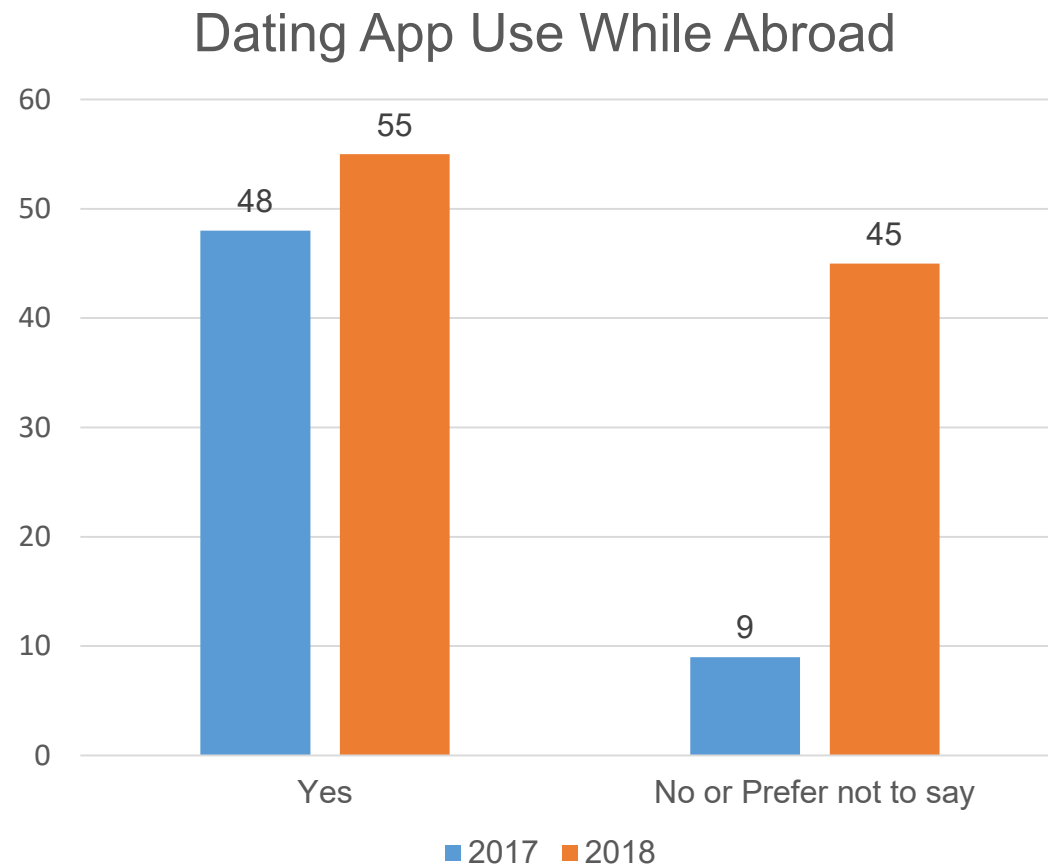
■ Female ■ Male ■ Gender Variant/Non-Conforming ■ Prefer not to say

Sexual Orientation



■ Heterosexual ■ Bisexual/Pansexual ■ Gay/Lesbian
■ Not Listed ■ Prefer not to say

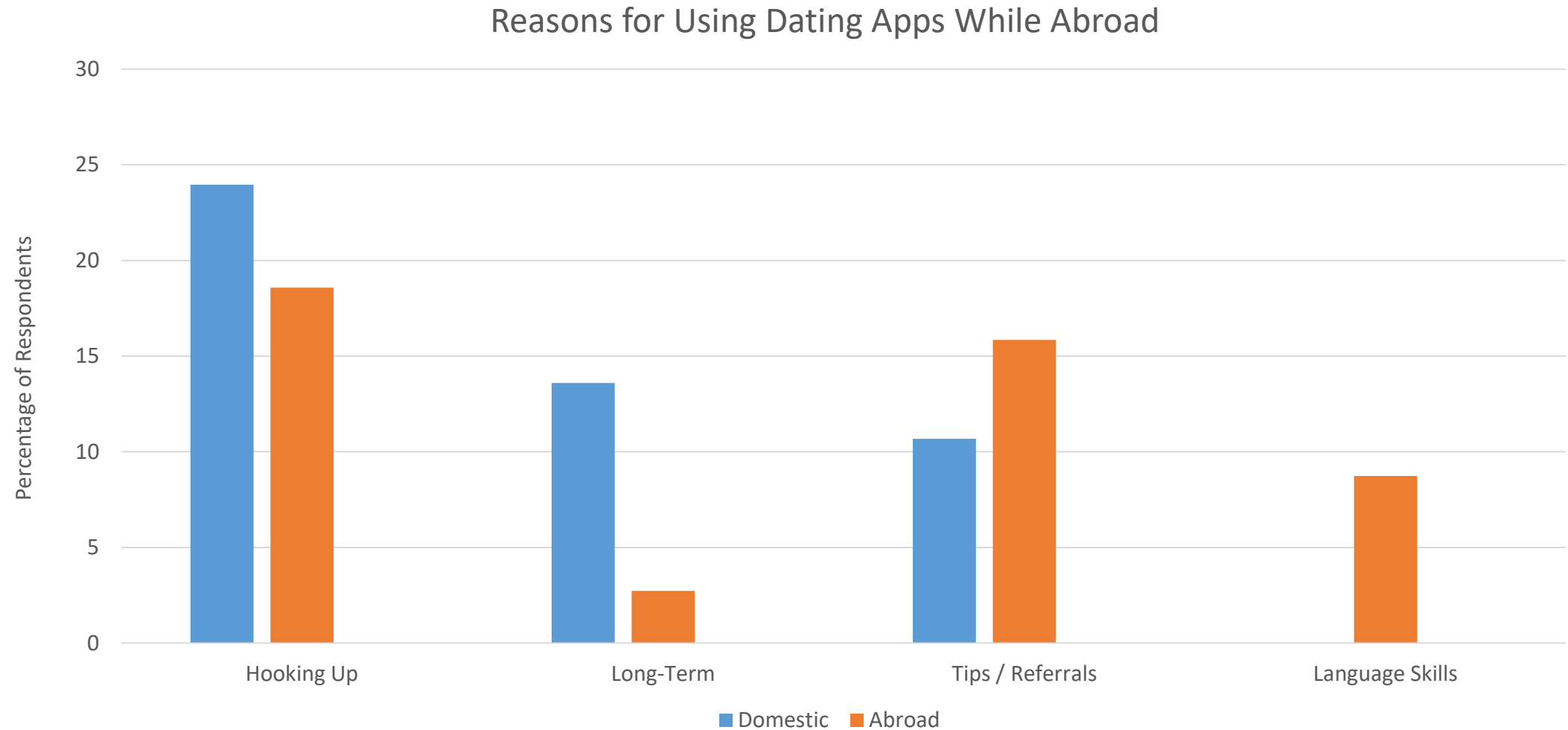
OVERALL FINDINGS: Dating App Use



Number of students using dating apps increased...

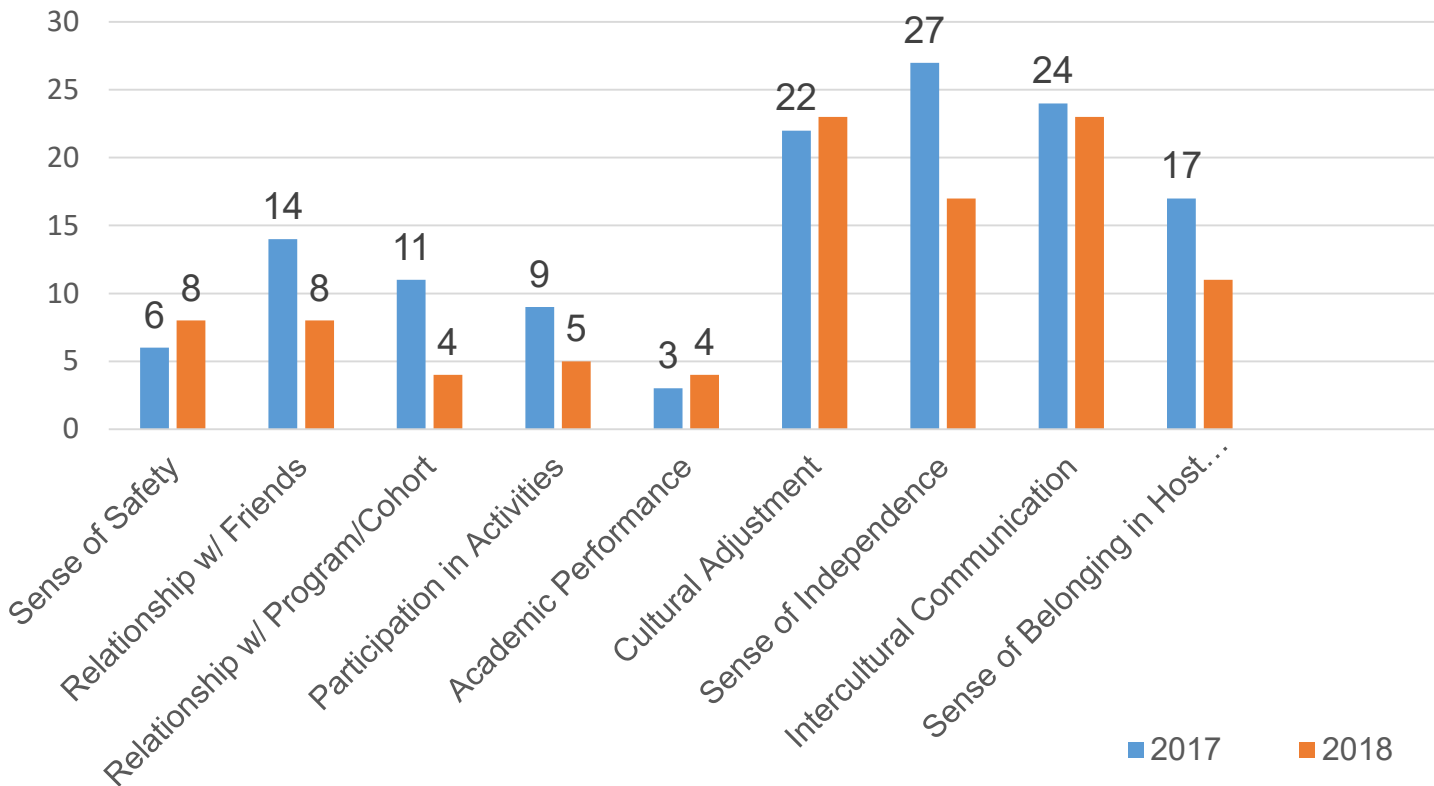
...but so did the number who *did not* use dating apps

GENERAL FINDINGS: Reasons



OVERALL FINDINGS: Impacts

Dating App Use Impacts 2017 to 2018



Options available in 2018 but not 2017:

- Sense of Self-Confidence (30)
- Sense of Identity (14)
- Engagement w/ Host Community (23)
- Language Skills (15)
- Understanding of Host Culture (19)

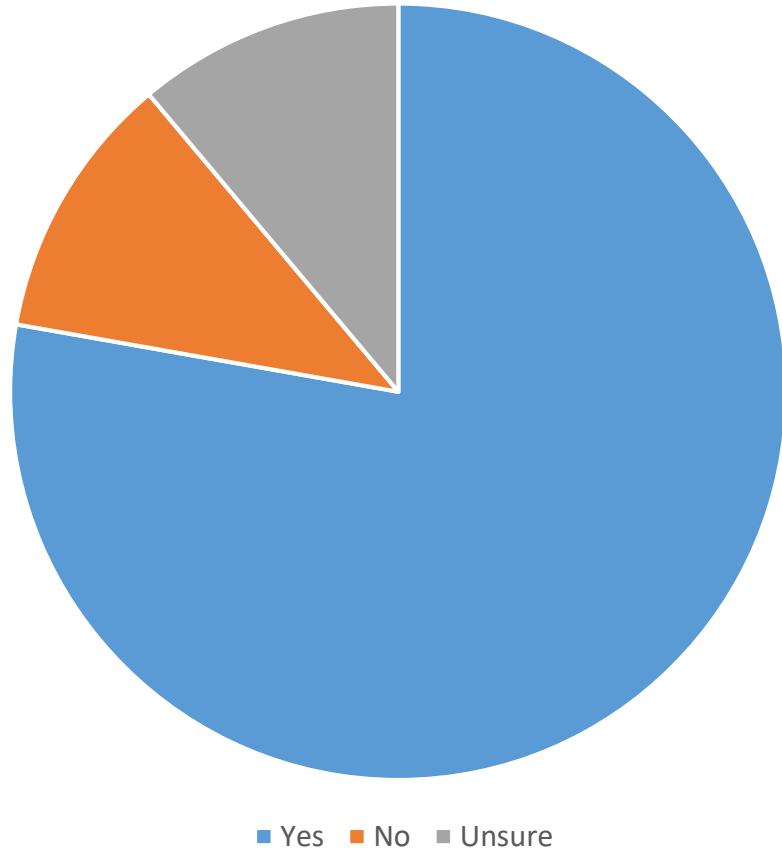
Using the dating app was a mainly positive, confidence-building exercise for me.

I learned that we evaluate others in very culturally-specific ways.

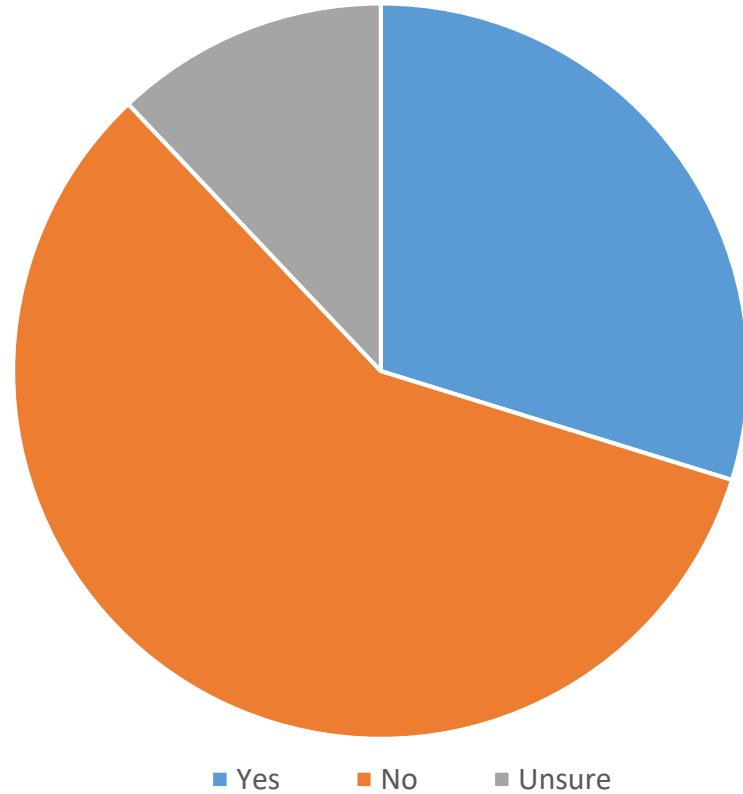


OVERALL FINDINGS: Would You Use Again?

Respondents Who Used Dating Apps



ALL Respondents





DEMOGRAPHICS



DEMOGRAPHICS: Gender

Use of dating apps significantly affected females' sense of **independence** and **confidence**; more so than males.

I felt like I got a certain connection and understanding of the culture... Once I started using Tinder to talk to people, my language skills skyrocketed... It also gave me a self-confidence boost as well...

[Dating app] use made me feel vulnerable and targeted, brought me to unknown locations, and resulted in unwanted attention and obsession by locals that made me feel unsafe at my home, school, and on social media.



DEMOGRAPHICS: Sexual Orientation

LGBTQIA+ respondents felt using dating apps abroad impacted their sense of **identity** and sense of **belonging in their host community** more than heterosexual counterparts.

[Using a dating app to meet] queer Spaniards allowed me to explore the “queer” side of Spain. I learned gay Spanish slang, joined a gay Spanish gym, went out to queer social events and gatherings, and overall found my niche/community.

It was really cool to be the “exotic” person as opposed to being like everyone else. [People on dating app] also had a bigger focus on personality than just physical appearance, unlike the US, so it was weird having very physically attractive people wanting to date because apparently I’m good at holding a conversation.



DEMOGRAPHICS: Sexual Orientation

LGBTQIA+ respondents saw more polarized effects on their use of dating apps abroad:

they reported both a **bigger increase** and a **bigger decrease** in use abroad than their heterosexual counterparts.

I am a queer female who only uses dating apps to find other queer females as it can otherwise be difficult. The only queer people I met abroad were through the dating app and I would use it again for this purpose.

I would be more likely to use a dating app in a Western country, where dating culture is more similar to dating culture in the US. Studying abroad in India, I didn't feel comfortable using dating apps as a queer woman.



DEMOGRAPHICS: Race & Ethnicity

White respondents reported more impact on **host engagement, host understanding, and intercultural communication** while POC reported impact on their sense of **identity**.

POC used dating apps abroad to **find other study abroad students** more than white counterparts while white respondents used dating apps abroad to **meet locals** more than their POC counterparts.

It's fun just to see what kind of students or tourists are there and where they're from.



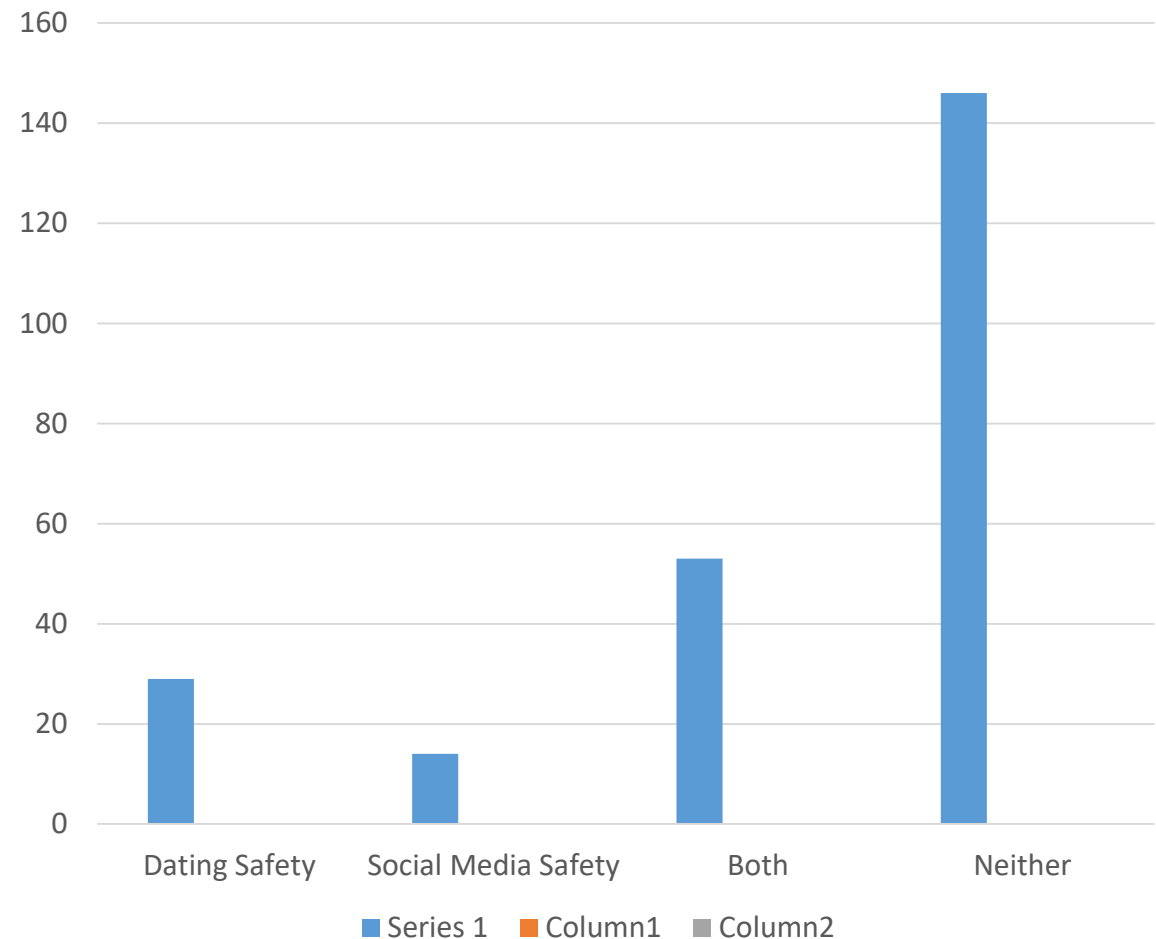
EFFECTS OF ADDRESSING DATING APPS IN MATERIALS & ORIENTATIONS

EFFECTS: Was it Addressed?

Of respondents who received information about dating safety and/or social media safety:

- More than 1/3 did **not have** dating apps covered
- The majority of the remaining respondents had dating apps **covered in both dating and social media safety.**
- In all instances, there is a fairly even spread among whom students receive information about dating apps

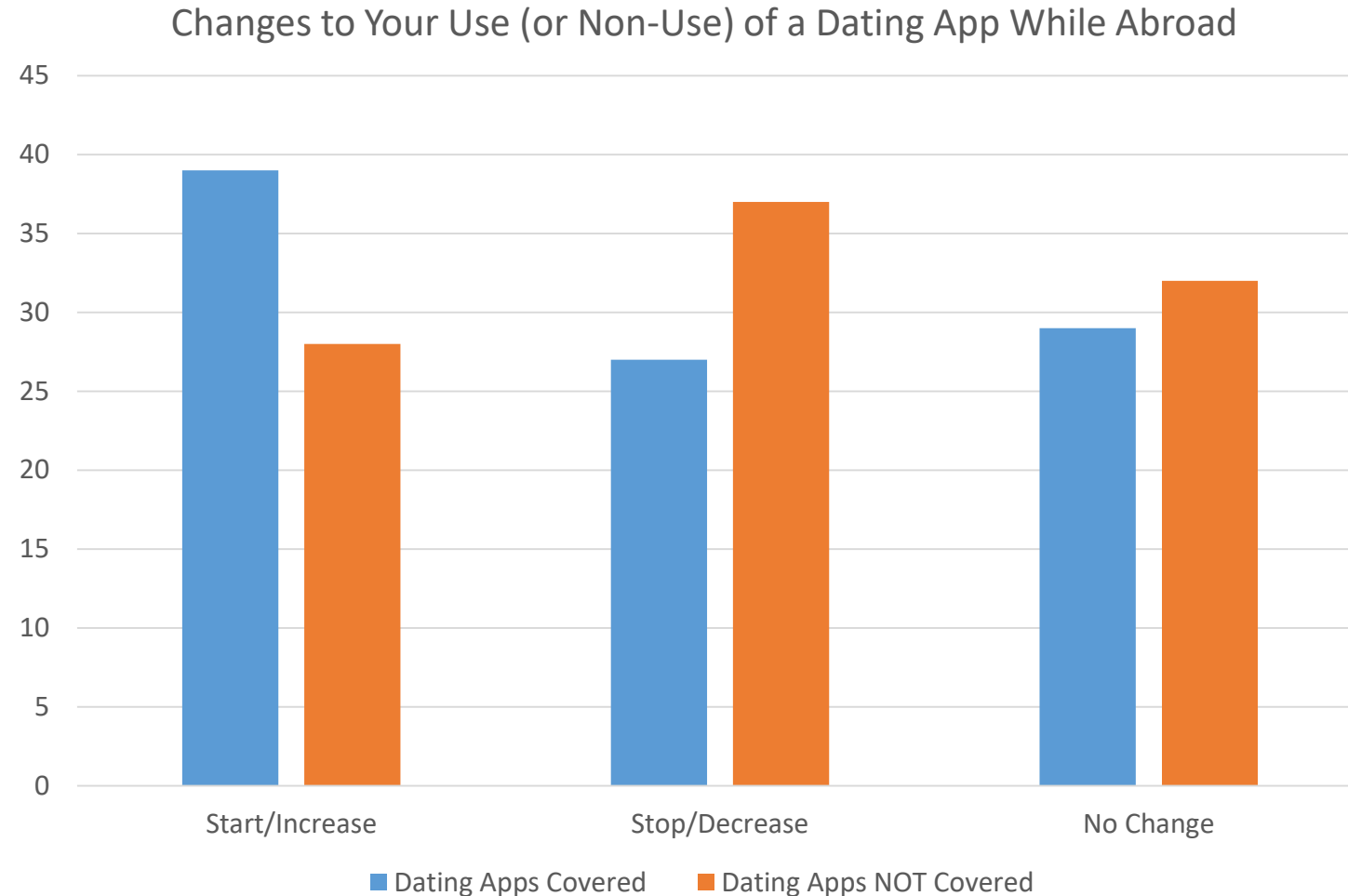
Was Dating App Use Covered as Part of...



EFFECTS: Information = Use

Respondents who did receive information about dating apps **increased their use of them abroad more** than their counterparts who did not receive information about dating apps.

Of respondents who used dating apps abroad, those who did receive information about them are **more likely to use them abroad again** than their counterparts who did not receive information about them.





EFFECTS: Types of Concerns

Perhaps informed students increased their use of dating apps abroad because they had fewer concerns about safety:

- Students who had dating apps covered in orientation and/or materials cited worries such as:
 - **expectations, addiction to sex, STDs, language, seeming creepy, cultural differences.**
- Students who did not have dating apps covered in orientation and/or materials overwhelmingly cited **safety** as their main concern.



EFFECTS: Impact on Experience

Respondents who had dating apps covered reported they had more of an effect on their **understanding of host culture**.

I think dating apps are a big part of how our generation meets people, so it should be covered. We should know which ones locals use (if they even use them at all), and if there are any major differences between the ones in our host city and the US.



INSTITUTION SURVEY RESULTS

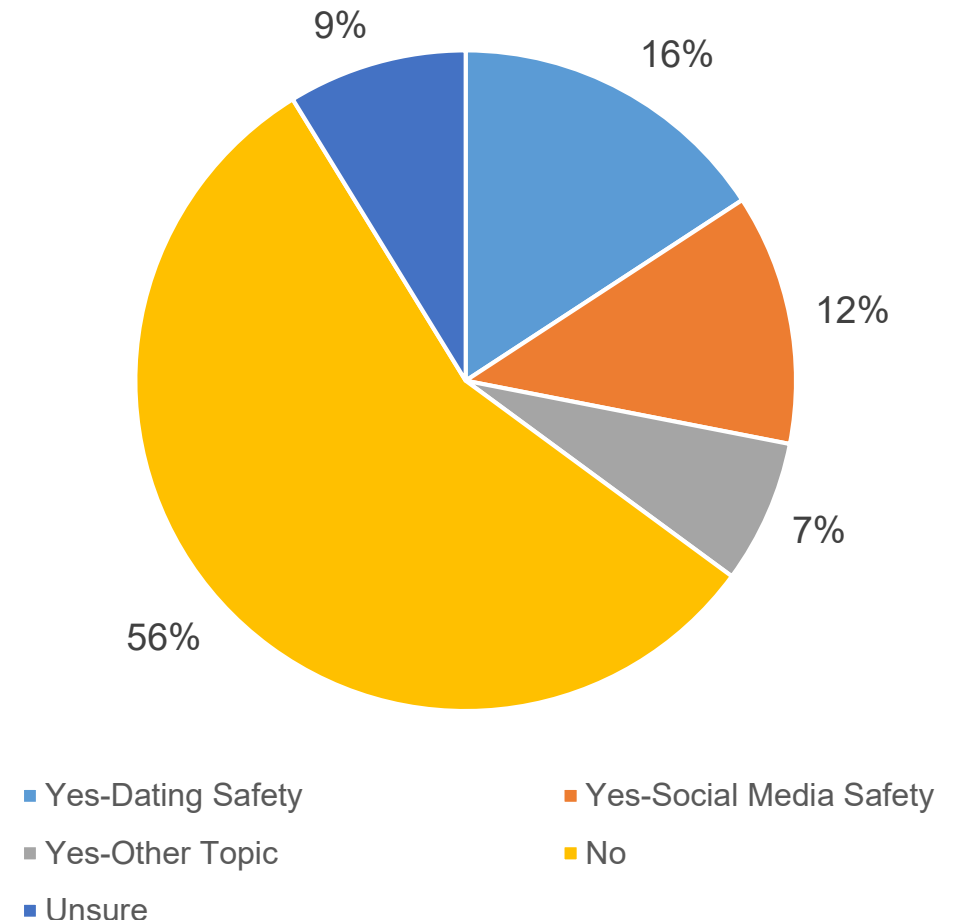
INSTITUTION SURVEY: Comparisons

2018 survey showed **significant increase** in institutions reporting covering dating app in pre-departure orientation and preparation materials. However, **less than a third** of institutions are addressing this topic with their students.

*“We address it during our conversations regarding dating abroad and norms around sex, sexuality, relationships, etc. We address it as a **dating/safety warning**.”*

“We address general rules for safe dating while abroad, as well as the location tracking that can occur through app usage, in all on-site orientations.”

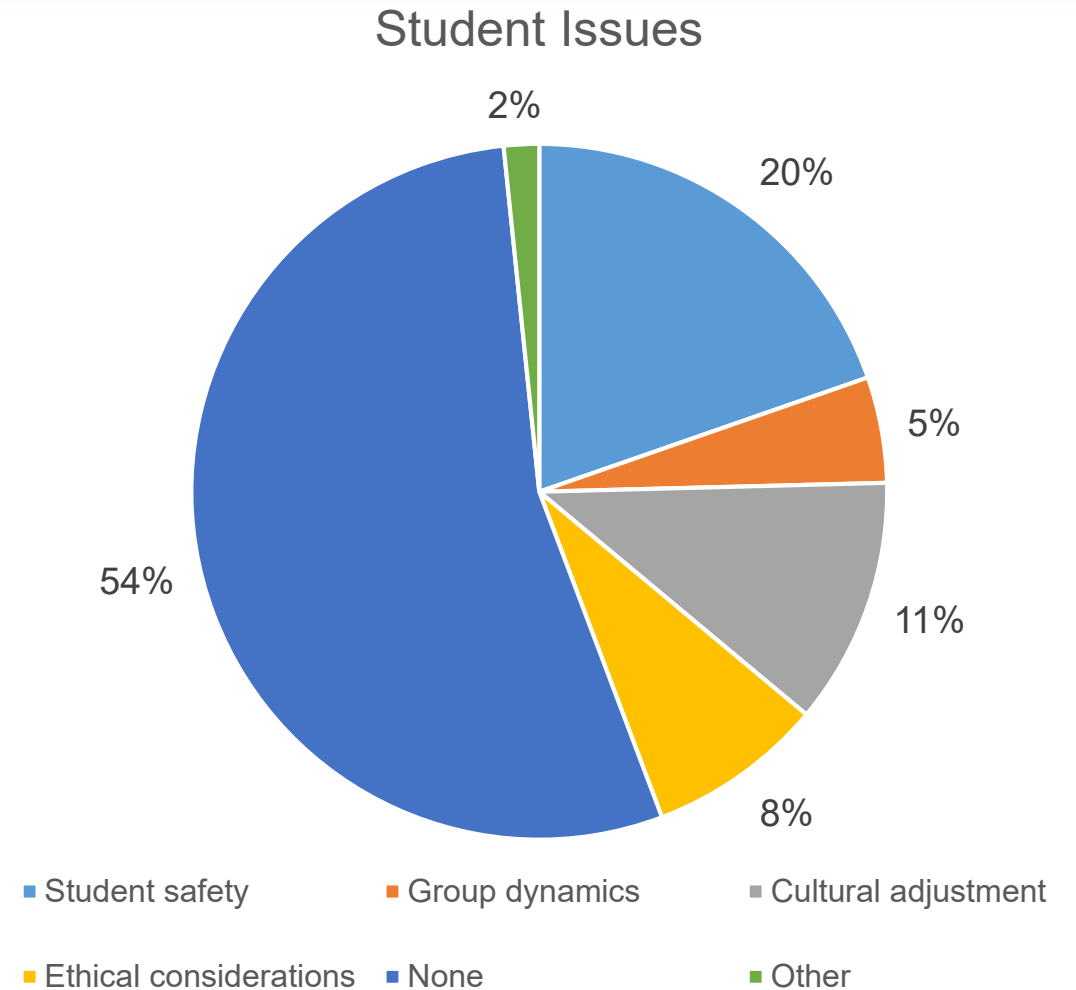
Orientation Coverage



INSTITUTION SURVEY: **Issues**

More than half of institutions **don't report students having any issues** regarding students use of dating apps.

The anecdotal evidence shared by those with concerns points to **a wide variety of issues**.





INSTITUTION SURVEY: **Safety**

As more institutions are having students **share concerns or issues** relating to dating app use, they are finding ways to incorporate it.

*We had issues this current year with students using dating apps and even had some of our students witness a situation from a dating app. My plan is to educate students about the **dangers** and give examples.*



INSTITUTION SURVEY: Concerns

Examples point to an high level of **discomfort** with student sexual activity, and dating apps appear to be blamed for **facilitating these sexual encounters.**

“A student met someone on Tinder and spent the night with him. She showed up late for group activities the next day and her shirt was not buttoned properly and her hair was a mess.”

“It came to my attention that a group of students used ‘sugar’ dating to fund their European travel adventures.”

Sharing of photos rises as a top safety and cultural expectations concern

“We had one student that posted explicit photos on a study abroad trip and tried to bring strangers that she met on the apps around other members of the group.”

“In the Middle East [students] may post photos ...and reach out via apps in ways local students do not understand/misread as sexually interested. In addition, Facebook photos posted by U.S. students may put local students in more socially conservative countries at risk of family and community disapproval.”



CONCLUSIONS



CONCLUSION: Summary Take Aways

- While the majority of students are using dating apps abroad, the majority are also not receiving information about them in orientations or materials.
- Not addressing dating apps in orientation generates more uncertainty and fear about safety.
- Addressing dating apps in orientation generates more use, but perhaps better experiences.
- Students are significantly using dating apps for non-dating purposes, as well as dating purposes, which can positively impact their experience.
- There are unique concerns for females, LGBTQIA+, and POC:
 - Females may be having more negative experiences than males
 - LGBTQIA+ rely on dating apps to find safe spaces and community
 - Dating apps affect POC sense of identity and engagement with locals & host culture
- There is a disconnect between safety as a primary concern for institutions, but not for students
- Institutions tend to frame dating apps negatively, but majority of students have positive experiences



CONCLUSION: Best Practices

- Develop a plan to address dating app use
 - Conduct your own research
 - Ask peer institutions what they are doing
 - Collaborate with Counseling services or Campus Safety
 - Ask students what they want to know
- Strike a balance between talking about safety and dating app use:
 - Make sure to equip students with information on how to use them safely
 - Don't just focus on dangers—acknowledge benefits, too
- Be aware of and specifically address racial, gender, and sexual orientation identity in both cohort and cultural contexts
- Develop a plan to address issues related to dating apps if they arise



CONCLUSION: Unanswered Questions

- How does location affect students' use of dating apps?
 - And is it true outside of dating app use?
- Why was there overall less impact of dating app use on student experience in 2018?
 - Was it because of more choices for response or something else?
- Does the correlation between effects on sense of confidence, cultural adjustment & independence and not using dating apps again mean women are having more negative experiences?
- Why did white respondents use dating apps more for engaging locals and POC more for engaging non-locals?
 - Is this true for outside of dating app use, as well?
- Does using dating apps in other cultures have a more profound effect on otherness?
 - Or is this parallel to domestic use as well?
- Why aren't institutions addressing dating apps in orientations or materials?
 - Do they still feel it isn't their responsibility?
 - Do they not know enough to speak about the topic knowledgeably?
 - Are they even aware of dating app use abroad at all?



CONCLUSION: Case Studies Discussion

CIEE PRAGUE

STUDENT INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU