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Taking it to the next level : the negligible role of trust when online dating goes offline

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Abstract

According to the socioemotional selectivity theory, adults place greater emphasis on finding a life partner. As the traditional dating means and opportunities no longer suffice, online dating has become the perfect intermediary to start an offline relationship. This transition from the online to the offline dating sphere is called modality switching. Interestingly, researchers have not yet addressed the personal variables predicting this behavioral dating transition. From an online viewpoint, when purchasing online goods for offline use, online trust has proven to be crucial. From an offline perspective, general trust is key during initial offline encounters because it guides us in our assessment of another individual. However, the combination of these variables with age has not yet been investigated to explain online dating behavior or modality switching. A total sample of 645 individuals ($n = 339$ online daters) aged between 18 and 73 years completed an online questionnaire. They reported their levels of trust in general and online as well as their modality switching behavior. Results show that age was the overall and only predictor of online dating and continuing the online relationship offline. This research reveals that as individuals grow older, their inclination to switch modalities and date offline increases.

Keywords - Online dating; modality switching; socioemotional selectivity theory; trust

1 Introduction

An obvious goal of online dating is to find a potential partner and eventually meet offline to start a sexual or romantic relationship (Anderson, 2005; Stephure, Boon, MacKinnon, & Deveau, 2009), yet it remains unclear why some online daters switch from the online to the offline dating sphere and others do not (Smith & Anderson, 2016). This transition from online to offline dating is labelled modality switching (Ramirez, Sumner, Fleuriet, & Cole, 2015; Ramirez & Zhang, 2007). In 2016, 15% of Americans used online dating sites or apps to pursue a romantic relationship, and about 1 in 20 married couples had met through online dating (Smith, 2016; Smith & Anderson, 2016). The number of online daters primarily increased among adults under the age of 25 and those in their mid-50s and early 60s (Smith & Anderson, 2016). While the growth of online dating among young adults is due to their extensive use of online dating applications (Smith & Anderson, 2016), the increase in the number of online daters in older age cohorts might be explained by the socioemotional selectivity theory, which states that as individuals grow older, they realize that life is finite and that they do not want to spend it alone (Carstensen, 1995; Stephure et al., 2009; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). Once individuals have the behavioral intention to pursue online dating, the platforms also function as an intermediate step toward having offline encounters. Interestingly, research results indicate that one-third of online daters have never taken online dating offline, and only one-quarter of online daters have commenced a long-term relationship after meeting online (Smith & Anderson, 2016; Smith & Duggan, 2013). This modality switching has previously been studied from a communication perspective (Ramirez et al., 2015). However, the underlying personality traits predicting the inclination for this transition in the first place have not yet been addressed. The aim of this study was to investigate which underlying individual traits can predict why some online daters choose to continue their online dating offline and others do not, focusing on trust and age, because both factors have proven their relevance in the context of online dating (Cali, Coleman, & Campbell, 2013; Donn & Sherman, 2002; Stephure et al., 2009).

1.1 Modality Switching in Online Dating

Online daters occasionally need to decide whether they want to transfer their interactions in computer-mediated communication environments to face-to-face communication (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006; Ramirez et al., 2015). This transitioning of interactions from one communication channel to another is labelled modality switching (Gibbs et al., 2006; Ramirez et al., 2015). One example of modality switching is when people who initially met online meet in an offline environment or, the other way around, when people who met offline continue their relationship via computer-mediated communication (McEwan & Zanolta, 2013). The current study investigated the online-to-offline transition; therefore, all references to modality switching in the remainder of this paper will mean the transfer from the online dating sphere to the offline dating sphere. The reason for modality switching in online dating can be driven by long-term or short-term relational goals (Gibbs et al., 2006). Online daters, for instance, can choose to go on an offline date, which is an important step in the online dating process, because it offers additional cues that could potentially be used to make assessments of whether a second date is favorable (Finkel, Eastwick, Karney, Reis, & Sprecher, 2012). Afterwards, they can decide whether they want to develop this date further into a sexual or romantic relationship (Anderson, 2005; Stephure et al., 2009). As the potential offline outcomes are offline dates and sexual or romantic relationships, this distinction is made when discussing online dating modality switching. When it comes to modality switching and taking online dating offline, other researchers have studied the communication between online partners entering offline environments (Ramirez et al., 2015). They found that when individuals met face-to-face fairly quickly after meeting in an online environment, they tended to benefit from this offline meeting and their relationship grew positively, whereas individuals who met offline after the passage of a considerable period of time noticed negative relational effects (Ramirez & Zhang, 2007). However, it may require a certain level of trust to switch from the online to the offline context.

1.2 How General and Online Trust Can Be Related to Online Dating

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The fact that online daters can choose how much personal information they want to self-disclose and to whom has generated consensus amongst many researchers that online dating raises trust issues (Donn & Sherman, 2002; Norcie, Cristofaro, & Bellotti, 2013; Toma, 2010). Quoting Blau (1964), Beldad, de Jong, and Steehouder (2010) stated that trust is a key ingredient in the initiation and maintenance of social relationships. In online dating, it is the uncertainty or lack of partner knowledge that will bring forward a particular type of trust—namely, general trust, which is applied when the referent is not defined, such as with strangers (Siegrist, Gutscher, & Earle, 2005). “General trust is a belief in the benevolence of human nature in general, [and] plays a role when sufficient knowledge of partners is lacking” (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994, p. 139). It can be seen as the assumption that other people are reliable, and due to individuals’ urge to reduce social uncertainty and the problems this brings, general trust is also often seen as a solution to these issues (Siegrist et al., 2005; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). Moreover, general trust does not solely influence situations where partner knowledge is absent but can also influence the perception of risk (Siegrist et al., 2005). While online dating platforms are often recognized as environments containing potential risks (Couch & Liamputtong, 2007; Couch, Liamputtong, & Pitts, 2012), researchers have suggested that risky situations demand trust (Deutsch, 1958; Luo, 2005).

Kang and Hoffman (2011) studied the relationship between general trust and the usage of online dating websites. They found that individuals who generally trusted other people more were less likely to use an online dating site. While the authors proposed that online daters who are high trustees might lack the need to control online information and are therefore less likely to date online, their reasoning was not thoroughly grounded in theory.

Considering the growing recognition of the role of general trust today (Siegrist et al., 2005), the fact that all individuals have different trust levels (Beldad et al., 2010; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994), and, most importantly, the key role of general trust in initial offline interactions (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994), this study was aimed at further investigating its role in modality switching, such as in initial face-to-face encounters after having met online.

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RQ1: Is general trust in people associated with modality switching in online dating (i.e., offline dates, offline sexual relationships, and offline romantic relationships)?

A key difference between mediated and traditional matchmaking and relationships is the fact that the former happen in an online environment while the latter occur in offline settings. In online environments, where services (e.g., shopping, e-business, taxes, auctions) are provided, the role of online trust is indisputable and has been extensively studied (e.g., Awad & Ragowsky, 2008; Ba, Whinston, & Zhang, 2003; Bart, Shankar, Sultan, & Urban, 2005; Beldad, de Jong, & Steehouder, 2010; Bock, Lee, Kuan, & Kim, 2012; Chang, Cheung, & Tang, 2013; Clemons et al., 2016). Instead of dealing with platforms whose service is to arrange goods or offers online, online dating's service is to provide relationship-seekers with potential partners. Even though online trust has proven to be relevant for other online platforms offering services (Belanger, Hiller, & Smith, 2002; Grabner-Kraeuter, 2002), its role in online dating and online dating platforms has not yet been investigated.

In other online environments, such as online shopping, a significant amount of online trust must be present to reduce information complexity and perceived transaction risk, and to facilitate successful transaction-oriented e-commerce (Belanger et al., 2002; Grabner-Kraeuter, 2002). Online trust can be defined as "an attitude of confident expectation in an online situation of risk that one's vulnerabilities will not be exploited" (Corritore, Kracher, & Wiedenbeck, 2003, p.740). This differs from offline trust because the object of online trust is the Internet (Bart et al., 2005). Moreover, trust has been assumed to be a key factor in individuals' adoption of electronic services (Beldad et al., 2010). Previous research has suggested that online trust can occur in various trustor-trustee relationships (Corritore et al., 2003), such as between the Internet customer and the online shop, or the online buyer and the online auction environment, or the online dater and the online dating platform.

To investigate online trust, the website trust model (Corritore et al., 2003) was developed to study an individual's trust in a specific website. This model states that there are

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different components of online trust, such as external factors and perceived factors. While the external factors include aspects of the environment that enclose a specific online trust situation, the perceived factors include perception of credibility, ease of use, and risk (Corritore et al., 2003; Corritore, Marble, Wiedenbeck, Kracher, & Chandran, 2005). Perceived credibility is composed of four elements—namely, honesty, expertise, predictability, and reputation (Corritore et al., 2003). Perceived ease of use is related to the simplicity of using a certain website (Corritore et al., 2003) or an Internet-based dating environment. Perception of risk is the perceived likelihood that an outcome will be undesirable (Corritore et al., 2003). The final step in the model is where these three perceived factors influence, or are related to, the online trust attitude. This trust model is applicable to larger, more complex models where trust is one among several research components (Corritore et al., 2003), but to our knowledge, it has not yet been applied in the online dating context.

Thus, Internet customers rely on online trust to engage in online behaviors, such as online shopping and auctioning, and receiving the goods offline, yet the question remains whether online trust is also needed to commence online dating and, more interestingly, whether online trust is needed to switch modalities and take online dating toward the offline dating sphere.

RQ2: Is online trust associated with modality switching in online dating (i.e., offline dates, offline sexual relationships, and offline romantic relationships)?

While online trust has proven to be relevant for various online platforms offering services and goods (Belanger et al., 2002; Grabner-Kraeuter, 2002), other individual differences, such as age, might also play a key role. The adoption of online shopping, for instance, has increased among older individuals (Lian & Yen, 2014), and the same trend has occurred in online dating among individuals in older age cohorts (Smith & Anderson, 2016).

1.3 Age Differences According to the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory and the Positivity Effect

Previous studies on online dating consistently looked into the role of demographic variables, such as age (Kang & Hoffman, 2011; Stephure et al., 2009). Although prior research indicated that age does not significantly predict individuals' online dating usage (Kang & Hoffman, 2011), some reports have identified age differences in the number of users with increases among adults under 25 years and above 50 years (Smith & Anderson, 2016). The socioemotional selectivity theory may offer a possible explanation for the expansion in the older age cohorts (Carstensen, 1995). According to this theory, individuals have an array of goals that operate throughout their adulthood and are set in a temporal context (Carstensen, 1995; Reed & Carstensen, 2012). Reed and Carstensen (2012) stated that while these goals are related to attachment and emotional gratification, their importance changes over time. As individuals age, their perception of the time they have left in this life shifts from infinite to finite, which results in differences in preferred goals (Carstensen, 1995; Reed & Carstensen, 2012). Older individuals are, thus, more aware of the time left in their lifespan and place greater emphasis on present goals, such as finding a potential partner (Stephure et al., 2009).

Another explanation follows from the positivity effect, which refers to a preference in older adults (in comparison with younger adults) for cognitively processing positive over negative information (Reed & Carstensen, 2012). Younger adults not only process negative information more thoroughly but also weigh negative information more heavily (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Carstensen & Mikels, 2005). Therefore, older online daters could be predominantly focused on the positive outcomes of online dating, such as finding a life partner, whereas younger adults could be more reluctant to meet offline due to the possible negative outcomes of online dating (i.e., romance scams, "catfishing," deceit). Due to the socioemotional selectivity theory and the positivity effects among adults in older age cohorts, we predicted the following:

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H1: Older online daters will be more likely than younger online daters to switch modalities.

2 Material and Methods

2.1 Sample and Procedure

A convenience sample was recruited through the network of 12 undergraduate students of [name of university deleted for review] during the winter and spring of 2017. All respondents had to give their consent to be part of the study by indicating whether they agreed to participate (1 = Yes, I agree; 2 = I am in doubt; 3 = No, I do not agree). A total of 872 individuals initially participated in the online survey. However, 227 respondents were deleted from the sample due to negative or doubtful consent ($n = 21$), response fallout ($n = 187$), unanswered online dating experience ($n = 2$), or inconsistent answers about online dating experience ($n = 17$) (i.e., indicating that they have never used online dating in one question and indicating that they have online dating experience in another question), which resulted in a final sample of 645 respondents between the ages of 18 and 73 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 25.98$, $SD = 9.70$). This final sample comprised 209 men and 436 women. Table 1 shows that 52.60% had dated online, with 39 individuals having used online dating websites, 316 had used online dating applications, and 8 individuals had used other online dating platforms. Finally, this research was approved by the ethics committee of [name of university deleted].

[Insert Table 1 about here]

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Demographic information

Respondents reported their age, gender (0 = female, 1 = male), and relationship status (1 = a steady relationship with one person, 2 = an open relationship with one or more people, 3 = single).

2.2.2 General trust in people

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General trust was measured by using the 6-item Trust subscale of the 12-item General Trust scale developed by Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994), where respondents answered each question on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree). The General Trust scale had a high internal reliability coefficient ($\alpha = .87$) and the respondents' mean general trust was 25.95 ($SD = 6.60$) on a trust scale of 6 (minimum) to 42 (maximum), where higher ratings indicated higher general trust in others. There was no significant difference between non-online daters and online daters regarding general trust: $t(641) = -1.51, p = .13$.

2.2.3 Online trust

Online trust was measured by using the shortened 18-item Website Trust Model developed by Corritore et al. (2005), which is rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree). Since online dating consists of multiple Internet-based platforms (e.g., websites, apps), items were adapted to measure online trust—that is, trust in the Internet and not solely in websites. The model consists of four subscales—namely, perceived credibility ($\alpha = .78$), perceived ease of use ($\alpha = .63$), perceived risk ($\alpha = .66$), and online trust attitude ($\alpha = .81$). There was a significant difference on all subscales between non-online daters and online daters regarding online trust: $t_{\text{Credibility}}(620) = -2.24, p < .05$; $t_{\text{EaseOfUse}}(609.33) = -2.46, p < .05$; $t_{\text{Risk}}(635) = -2.49, p < .05$; $t_{\text{Trust}}(639) = -2.23, p < .05$.

2.2.4 Offline outcomes of online dating

Respondents with online dating experience ($n = 339$) were asked whether they had ever transposed their online dating to offline settings. Response items were partially based on the online dating activity measure of Stephure et al. (2009). Respondents were asked, "Have you ever gone on an offline date with someone you met through online dating?" (1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = I have never dated online). Next, respondents were able to give multiple answers to the question, "Have you ever been involved in an offline relationship with someone you met through online dating?" (1 = yes, a sexual relationship, e.g., one-night stand, friends with benefits; 2 = yes, a short- or long-term romantic relationship; 3 = no; 4 = I have never dated online). The data showed that of all online daters, 50.7% had gone on an

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offline date (i.e., arranged a face-to-face meeting), 19.8% had had a sexual relationship (i.e., one-night stand, friends with benefits), and 26.0% had had a (short- or long-term) romantic relationship after having met that person online.

3 Results

3.1 Explaining Online Dating Usage

To investigate why individuals date online, a binomial logistic regression analysis was conducted to study the underlying contributors explaining online dating usage. Logistic regression was used because online dating use was operationalized as a dichotomous variable (0 = never used any form of online dating platform, 1 = ever used online dating). Respondents' general trust and the online trust components were entered as predictors. Furthermore, all analyses controlled for sex and age (see Table 2). The results showed that a test of the full model against a constant only model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(7) = 29.48$, $p < .001$, and had an overall success rate of 58.3%. The Wald criterion also demonstrated that only age was a significant predictor of using or not using online dating platforms ($p < .001$). All other variables were not significant predictors.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

3.2 Modality Switching

For the following analyses regarding modality switching, only the data of online daters ($n = 339$) were used. All online daters, regardless of their relationship status, were used in the analyses to include ex-online daters with offline dating experience who perhaps were currently involved with someone.

3.2.1 Offline dates

A binomial logistic regression analysis was used because going on an offline date was operationalized as a dichotomous variable (0 = never been on an offline date, 1 = been on an offline date). Respondents' general trust and online trust were entered as predictors

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while controlling for age and sex. Table 3 shows that the full model was statistically significant against the constant model, $\chi^2(7) = 41.04$, $p < .001$, and had an overall success rate of 61.3%. The results also revealed that only age ($p < .001$) was a significant predictor of going on an offline date.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

3.2.2 Offline sexual relationships

A binomial logistic regression analysis was used because respondents' offline sexual relational behavior was operationalized as a dichotomous variable ($0 =$ never had an offline sexual relationship, $1 =$ had an offline sexual relationship). Again, respondents' general trust and online trust were submitted as covariates while controlling for sex and age (see Table 4). The results indicated that the full model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(7) = 22.66$, $p < .01$, and had an overall success rate of 81.1%. The Wald criterion showed that sex ($p < .01$) and age ($p < .01$) were significant predictors of starting an offline sexual relationship after meeting online. Again, neither online trust nor general trust significantly predicted online dating participants' offline sexual relationships.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

3.2.3 Offline romantic relationships

A binomial logistic regression analysis was used because respondents' offline romantic relational behavior was operationalized as a dichotomous variable ($0 =$ never had an offline romantic relationship, $1 =$ had an offline romantic relationship). As in the previous analyses, respondents' general trust and online trust were submitted as predictors and all analyses controlled for sex and age. The results showed that the full model was statistically significant compared to the constant model without any predictors, $\chi^2(7) = 39.58$, $p < .001$, and had an overall success rate of 78.3%. Table 5 also shows that only age ($p < .001$)

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significantly predicted individuals' offline romantic relationships. Neither general nor online trust predicted online dating participants' offline romantic relationships.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

4 Discussion

This study adds to the literature on modality switching (McEwan & Zanolta, 2013; Ramirez et al., 2015; Ramirez & Zhang, 2007), general trust (Kang & Hoffman, 2011; Siegrist et al., 2005; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994), and online trust (Belanger et al., 2002; Corritore et al., 2003, 2005) by investigating the influence of general trust and online trust as well as sex and age on modality switching when taking online dating offline (i.e., offline dates, offline sexual relationships, and offline romantic relationships). While the changes in communication during modality switching were previously studied (Ramirez et al., 2015), this research investigated the underlying variables predicting the initial inclination to switch from the online to the offline dating sphere. Overall, this research revealed that even though general trust is vital in initial offline encounters on the one hand, and online trust is key in online transactions on the other hand, neither of these two were significant predictors of online dating. Age, however, was the overall predictor of taking online dating offline.

First, regarding the choice to pursue online dating, this study found that neither general trust nor online trust significantly predicted online dating behavior, while age did. This result is in contrast with Kang and Hoffman (2011), who studied the factors that would lead to online dating and found that general trust in others significantly predicted online dating usage, but negatively. The present study does not support the finding that people who are generally more trusting of others are less likely to use online dating (Kang & Hoffman, 2011). A possible explanation is offered by the qualitative research of Lawson and Leck (2006). According to them, online daters start building their relationship only *after* they find each other compatible. This means that trust is built when online daters invest vast amounts of time in each other to become better acquainted (Lawson & Leck, 2006); in other words, this

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is not present from the start. Interestingly, none of the online trust subscales predicted individuals' inclination to pursue online dating. This result is in contrast with other online environments where services are offered, where online trust did predict online behavior. Prior research, on the one hand, indicated that online trust and online trust subscales, such as perceived ease of use, predicted individuals' intended and actual online behaviors (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). On the other hand, lack of trust has also been identified as a reason for people not to engage in e-commerce (Wang & Emurian, 2005). Thus, despite the exhaustively proven importance of online trust regarding online transactions and other online behavior, it does not appear to be present when explaining online dating and online dating usage. In sum, even though qualitative research has confirmed individuals' use of the market metaphor to frame online dating as *relationshopping* (Heino, Ellison, & Gibbs, 2010), the relevant frameworks and scales that explain online shopping behavior, for instance, do not transfer to online dating.

Second, with regard to our first and second research questions, we found that neither general trust in others nor online trust was significantly associated with modality switching. Walther, Loh, and Granka (2005) mentioned that when it comes to effectively adapting relational behaviors across channels (i.e., modality switching), identity issues are of minimal importance. Thus, even though trust issues regarding identity in online dating have previously been recognized (Donn & Sherman, 2002), they appear to have no influence on modality switching.

Third, the one constant predicting variable in the analyses was age, which supported hypothesis 1, even though it had no significant value in the research of Kang and Hoffman (2011). However, the findings did support the prior research of Valkenburg and Peter (2007) and Stephure et al. (2009), who found that individuals in older age categories made more use of online dating. This finding is in line with reports of an increase in the number of online daters in older age cohorts, for whom online dating is the most popular way to meet new people and get married (Gonzaga, 2011; Smith & Anderson, 2016). Valkenburg and Peter (2007) proposed that for people in older age segments, it can be relatively more difficult to

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find a potential partner through more traditional dating strategies. Singles in older age categories are more often divorced, more likely to have children, and perhaps to have a busy career, which makes online dating an easier, more accessible service for finding a romantic dating partner (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). Stephure et al. (2009) also mentioned that as people age, their range of dating options shifts, as does the time available to meet potential partners. Therefore, the results of the present study might also be explained by perceived opportunity to meet a potential partner, which would be very interesting to study in future research.

As theorized, an important explanation for why age seems to be a key predictor stems from the socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1995; Stephure et al., 2009). This theory states that as individuals get older, the realization that life is finite hits, and these individuals will place more value on having emotionally meaningful relationships (Carstensen, 1995; Stephure et al., 2009). Moreover, due to the positivity effect, older individuals potentially overstress positive outcomes, such as finding their life partner, and are perhaps less susceptible to the possibility of encountering negative experiences in online dating. In sum, age might be an important predicting factor regarding online dating usage because individuals place more emphasis on relationships as they get older (Stephure et al., 2009), and yet they might experience that traditional dating strategies no longer suffice (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007) and therefore turn to online dating and subsequently have more offline encounters and relationships. Older online daters will be more likely to have an offline date to assess whether a second date or a sexual or romantic relationship is favorable (Finkel et al., 2012).

Finally, this research found no gender differences when it comes to using online dating platforms or switching modalities, except for having sexual relationships. These results are in line with the research of Kang and Hoffman (2011), who similarly did not find a significant association between online dating usage and gender. Interestingly, the results showed that the odds of having a sexual relationship after meeting online were smaller if the online daters were men. A possible explanation for this imbalance in the current online dating

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scene may be that female online daters are more proactive than others, while the structure of online dating itself also gives women more control over the dating process (McWilliams & Barrett, 2014).

Apart from the contributions of this paper to the scientific literature in the field of online dating, this research also faced some limitations that should be addressed. First, a convenience sample was used to conduct the study, making it difficult to generalize the results to larger populations. Second, the questionnaire utilized self-reported measures. According to Podsakoff and Organ (1986), several problems arise when utilizing self-reported measures (e.g., social desirability). Yet despite some of the problems, these types of measures are fairly indispensable and are in some circumstances more accurate estimates than behavioral measures (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Further, it would have been interesting to have asked additional questions regarding, for instance, the duration of online communication prior to the offline meeting. Additional research could investigate whether this would play a significant role in modality switching in online dating. Moreover, follow-up research could investigate if individuals' views on online/offline dating differ depending on their level of experience with dating.

Finally, this study was conducted solely in [name of country deleted for review]. Therefore, it might be useful to conduct comparative research in other countries to make cross-cultural statements regarding the role of trust in online dating usage and modality switching. With regard to using online dating platforms, we noticed a difference with the American respondents in the study of Kang and Hoffman (2011). Their American participants, who were generally more trusting of others, appeared to be less inclined to date online compared to less trusting people (Kang & Hoffman, 2011), while there was no significant relationship between general trust and online dating among the [name of country deleted for review] participants. The association between online trust and online dating on the one hand, and between trust and modality switching on the other hand, to our knowledge, has not yet been investigated in other countries and therefore cannot be generalized or compared to other cultures. Future studies could replicate these findings in

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order to investigate potential cultural differences.

4.1 Disclosure of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Tables

Table 1

Descriptive statistics (N = 645)

	Men	Women	Total
Age (SD)	26.06 (9.23)	25.93 (9.23)	25.98 (9.70)
Relationship status			
Steady relationship	105	249	354
Open relationship	9	11	20
Single	94	172	266
Online dating usage			
Websites	8	31	39
Applications	115	201	316
Other	1	7	8
Offline dating outcomes			
Offline date	61	111	172
Offline sexual relationship	35	32	67
Offline romantic relationship	28	60	88

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Table 2

Binomial logistic regression predicting online dating usage (N = 645)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE β</i>	<i>Wald χ²(1)</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>e^β</i>	<i>95% CI</i>
<i>Main predictors</i>						
General trust in people	.01	.01	.46	.50	1.01	[.98–1.04]
<i>Online trust</i>						
Perceived credibility	.06	.14	.18	.68	1.06	[.80–1.41]
Perceived ease of use	.08	.11	.62	.43	1.09	[.88–1.33]
Perceived risk	.14	.09	2.17	.14	1.15	[.96–1.38]
Online trust attitude	.07	.10	.47	.49	1.07	[.89–1.28]
<i>Control variables</i>						
Sex	-.17	.18	.84	.36	.85	[.59–1.21]
Age	-.04	.01	14.62	.00	.97	[.95–.98]
<i>Constant</i>	-.48	.75	.41	.52	.62	

Cox & Snell $R^2 = .05$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = .06$

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Table 3

Binomial logistic regression predicting going on offline dates after meeting online amongst online daters (n = 339)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE β</i>	Wald $\chi^2(1)$	<i>p</i>	<i>e^β</i>	<i>95% CI</i>
<i>Main predictors</i>						
General trust in people	.01	.02	.13	.72	1.01	[.97–1.05]
<i>Online trust</i>						
Perceived credibility	.03	.21	.03	.87	1.03	[.69–1.56]
Perceived ease of use	.14	.16	.71	.40	1.15	[.84–1.57]
Perceived risk	.03	.13	.06	.80	1.03	[.80–1.34]
Online trust attitude	–.10	.14	.55	.46	.90	[.69–1.19]
<i>Control variables</i>						
Sex	.06	.26	.06	.81	1.06	[.64–1.78]
Age	.17	.04	17.29	.00	1.18	[1.09–1.28]
<i>Constant</i>	–4.81	1.42	11.57	.00	.01	

Cox & Snell $R^2 = .12$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = .16$

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Table 4

Binomial logistic regression predicting offline sexual relationships after meeting online amongst online daters (n = 339)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE β</i>	Wald $\chi^2(1)$	<i>p</i>	e^{β}	<i>95% CI</i>
<i>Main predictors</i>						
General trust in people	.00	.02	.00	.96	1.00	[.96–1.05]
<i>Online trust</i>						
Perceived credibility	–.20	.25	.64	.42	.82	[.50–1.34]
Perceived ease of use	.06	.20	.10	.75	1.07	[.73–1.56]
Perceived risk	–.15	.16	.87	.35	.86	[.63–1.18]
Online trust attitude	.14	.17	.61	.44	1.14	[.82–1.60]
<i>Control variables</i>						
Sex	–.96	.31	9.81	.00	.39	[.21–.70]
Age	.06	.02	11.39	.00	1.06	[1.02–1.09]
<i>Constant</i>	–1.80	1.30	1.93	.17	.17	

Cox & Snell $R^2 = .07$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = .11$

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Table 5

Binomial logistic regression predicting romantic relationships after meeting online among online daters (n = 339)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE β</i>	Wald $\chi^2(1)$	<i>p</i>	<i>e^β</i>	<i>95% CI</i>
<i>Main predictors</i>						
General trust in people	.01	.02	.23	.63	1.01	[.97–1.06]
<i>Online trust</i>						
Perceived credibility	–.05	.24	.04	.84	.95	[.60–1.52]
Perceived ease of use	–.12	.17	.47	.49	.89	[.63–1.25]
Perceived risk	.12	.16	.64	.42	1.13	[.84–1.53]
Online trust attitude	–.12	.17	.50	.48	.89	[.64–1.23]
<i>Control variables</i>						
Sex	.10	.30	.11	.74	1.11	[.61–2.00]
Age	.11	.02	24.36	.00	1.11	[1.07–1.16]
<i>Constant</i>	–3.15	1.19	7.05	.01	.04	

Cox & Snell $R^2 = .12$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = .17$