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THE POWER OF EMOJI FOR PROFILE DESCRIPTIONS ON DATING APPS

Ricardo Casañ-Pitarch
Universitat Politècnica de València

Abstract: Technology has revolved and changed communication in the present digital era. In recent years, the use of emoji has quickly widespread and they have become extremely popular; consequently they are present in many forms of daily life communication. The function of emoji is to introduce more emotion to written texts; something that is more complicated to make by only using words. This paper aims at analyzing the power of emoji on Dating Apps. To this purpose, this research analyzes how the variables of gender, age, and sexual orientation influence on the choice of other profiles, and if these users introduce emoji to their profile description on Dating Apps. In this research, there were 145 participants who filled in a survey, in which they had to confirm if they liked 9 anonymous profiles with no picture. One third of these profiles only included text, another third only contained emoji, and the last third mixed both text and emoji. Results show how the variables of gender, age, and sexual orientation make that some participants were more willing to use emoji than others and if they were more attracted by other users' profiles.

Key words: communication; Emoji; Dating Apps; Age; Gender; Sexual Orientation

EL PODER DEL EMOJI EN LAS DESCRIPCIONES DE PERFILES EN APPS DE CITAS

Resumen: La tecnología ha revolucionado y cambiado la comunicación en la era digital actual. En los últimos años, el uso de emoji se ha extendido rápidamente y estos se han vuelto extremadamente populares; en consecuencia, los emoji están presentes en muchas formas de comunicación de la vida diaria. La función del emoji es introducir emoción a los textos escritos; algo que es más complicado de hacer usando solo palabras. Este trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar el poder de los emoji en las aplicaciones de citas. Con este propósito, esta investigación analiza cómo las variables de género, edad y orientación sexual influyen en la elección de otros perfiles, y si estos usuarios introducen emoji a la descripción de sus perfiles

* Para correspondencia, por favor dirigirse a: Ricardo Casañ-Pitarch (ricapi@upv.es).

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en las aplicaciones de citas. En esta investigación, 145 participantes completaron una encuesta en la que tenían que confirmar si les gustaban 9 perfiles anónimos sin imagen. Un tercio de estos perfiles solo incluía texto, otro tercio solo contenía emoji y el último tercio mezclaba texto y emoji. Los resultados muestran cómo las variables de género, edad y orientación sexual hacen que algunos participantes estén más dispuestos a usar emoji que otros y también que se sientan más atraídos por los perfiles de otros usuarios.

Palabras clave**:** *comunicación; Emoji; Aplicaciones de Citas; Edad; Género; Orientación sexual*

1. Introduction

The use of electronic devices to communicate among users has widespread since the invention of the Internet in 1990. Since then, technology has revolutionized the more traditional communication systems. This communication revolution process has gone from the use of desktop computers to the present when most individuals use their own smartphone. In this sense, smartphone communication seems to be more related to online written chats rather than to oral discourse. Paradoxically, the original use of telephones was to communicate in an oral way; however, it seems that since the existence of the smartphone, users communicate more often in a written way than they used to. Chat application such as *Whatsapp*, *Viber*, *Telegram*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, or even *MSN Messenger*, among others, have made that written communication has gradually overtaken the oral one in non-face-to-face contexts.

The present predominance of written communication in comparison to the oral one could be justified with the fact that the first one is more distant concerning the proximity among the participants involved; the information to be shared can be carefully planned, organized and modified, and it does not require that participants interact in a synchronized way (Olson, Mack & Duffy, 1981; Richards, 1983). In contrast, oral communication is spontaneous; thus, the speaker does not have time to think and consider the information they want to share with the decoders, and this information cannot be erased once has been conveyed (Farrell, 1974; Sui & Bednarz, 1999). In addition, this type of communication involves other verbal and non-verbal codes such as intonation, gestures, body language, or physical appearance, among others (Burgoon, Guerrero & Manusov, 2011; Maíz-Arevalo, 2014; Wilcox, 2004, 2017). As result, these additional communication elements give an additional significance to the messages conveyed that are beyond the words, and some of them have to do with the management of emotions (Garrison, Remley, Thomas & Wierszewski, 2011; Skovholt, Grønning & Kankaanranta, 2014). Vidal, Ares and Jaeger (2016:119) defined emotions as "short-term affective responses to the appraisal of stimuli with reinforcing potential, contribute to the control of basic human behavioral systems".

To counterbalance this lack of emotions in written discourse, glyph forms have been introduced in the text to add emotional states since the decade of the 1980s (Sampietro, 2016). It seems that it was Fahlman who invented the emoticon in 1982 (Davidson, 2012; Dresner & Herring, 2010), although there can be other opinions

regarding who first created them. In words of Wolf (2000:828), she claimed that "the lack of verbal and visual cues can otherwise cause what were intended to be humorous, sarcastic, ironic or otherwise non 100 % serious comments to be badly misinterpreted (not always even by newbies) resulting in arguments and flame wars". The word emoticon is a portmanteau word that stands for emotion and icon; they represent faces, also known as smileys, and they can be represented with keyboard symbols as well (Bloom, 2010). More recently, emoticons evolved towards emoji. These most recent elements share the same idea and purpose of their predecessors; they are icons addressed to transfer emotions. However, emoji also represent jobs, food, animals, or weather, among many others. Thus, it could be acknowledged that the difference between emoticons and emoji lies in the fact that the latest include additional symbols that cannot be represented with ASCII characters. Figure 1 shows a representation of emoticon and emoji.

For the aim of this paper, the power of emoji in dating sites will be assessed. The purpose of this research is to assess how the use of emoji in the users' profile influences in their attempt to attract other users visiting their profiles. The method used consists in showing real profile descriptions from *Tinder*, a dating app, to our participants, who will have to confirm if they would date or not that person only by reading their profile descriptions. One third of the profile descriptions will only contain text, another third only emoji, and the last third will combine emoji and text. Pictures of the profiles will not be shown in order to avoid that this fact could condition the decision of the participant. The variables of gender, sexual orientation, and age will be considered. After conducting this experiment, results will suggest how the use of emoji enhances the chances to be eligible by other users on dating application.

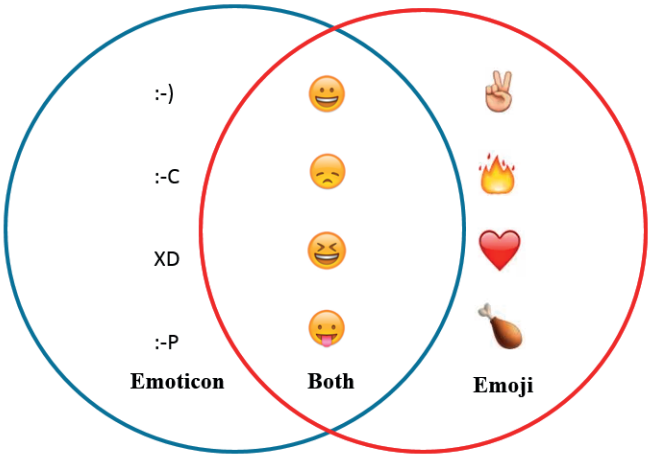

Figure 1. *Emoticon vs Emoji.*

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Introducing Emoji in Written Discourse

As previously stated, the aim of emoticons and emoji is to provide an emotional context to written discourse, and potentially enhance the expression, comprehension, and interpretation of messages (Cantamutto & Delfa, 2019; Derks, Bos, & von Grumbkow, 2008; Dunlap, Bose, Lowenthal, York, Atkinson & Murtagh, 2016; Yus, 2005). However, it shall be acknowledged that some variables may influence in the interpretation and use of these pictographs. This study focuses on the variables of gender, age, and sexual orientation.

To start with, Tossell, Kortum, Shepard, Barg-Walkow, Rahmati, and Zhong (2012) suggested that the use of emoji is twice more often among women than men, being this fact connected to the stereotyped idea that women are more oriented towards caring relationships, showing understanding, and being supportive. Within this perspective, Butterworth, Giuliano, White, Cantu and Fraser (2019) and Prada, Rodrigues, Garrido, Lopes, Cavalheiro, and Gaspar (2018) conducted their experiments whose results suggest that women use more emoji than men, but when men use emoji they receive more positive reactions than women. Tossell *et al*. (2012) tried to explain this fact by alleging that perhaps men are more celebrated for acting in a way that is more common in female communication according to some gender stereotypes.

Another variable that seem to be relevant concerning the use of emoji in written communication is age. In this sense, it is expected that Y Generation or *Millennials*, and the following ones are more likely to have the use of emoji integrated in their daily lives; whereas older generations should gradually be more reluctant to introduce them in their written communication (Jaeger, Xia, Lee, Hunter, Beresford, & Ares, 2018; Prada *et al*., 2018). Previous studies have revealed some relevant results regarding the variable of age on the use of emoji. In this sense, Hauk, Hüffmeier and Krumm (2018) justified this fact by alleging that the youth is more skillful on technology use; a fact that could be connected to the ideas introduced by Prensky (2001) on Digital Natives. Related to this idea, the study conducted by Forgays, Hyman and Schreiber (2014) showed that age was associated to the amount of text messages sent and received; and similarly, Settanni and Marengo (2015) showed that the amount of emoji used in online status published in social networks decreases as users are older. These previous experiments seem to suggest that the degree of emoji usage concerns age; however, it could also be a question of digital literacy.

At last, this research also focuses on considering whether sexual orientation may influence on the use of emoji. Some research has been conducted regarding how sexual orientation may influence on communication (Huffaker & Calvert, 2005; Tang, 2017), but no reference has been made on if this variable may influence on the use of emoji. Apparently, this fact could be considered irrelevant in most contexts; however, this research focuses on the use of emoji on dating apps, and consequently, this variable should be considered. Following Huffaker and Calvert (2005), we think

that this variable may influence in communication since those with non-heterosexual orientations have historically suffered from social discrimination (Foucault, 1990), and virtual worlds have recently sheltered them with anonymity in places where they can freely express their sexual orientation and identity beyond social prejudices and etiquettes.

2.2. Profile Descriptions in Dating Sites

The new market of app has been derived from the smartphone revolution; this has also led to an emerging tendency to use dating apps to establish romantic relationships through technology (Latusek, 2010; Lin & Hsu, 2017). Dating apps constitute a market place that Heino, Ellison & Gibbs (2010) coined as *relation shopping*. This term implies that users can find and select other users in order to start a conversation with the aim of establishing a relationship. Consequently, digital profiles have become effective means of impression management, since this is the first impression that users provide and also their letter of presentation. This tendency to meet new prospective partners online and date them has also increased due to the mobile concept. This fact promotes that the means why which any action is carried out is private, intimate, and the information conveyed does not necessarily have to be shared with anyone else. This also includes text, images, or videos, among others. Furthermore, mobile phones are portable and their connection to the internet is continuous, so written chat communication can be fluent. In addition, it also connects geographically distant people (Hjorth & Arnold, 2013). As result, technology has offered new possibilities of socialization and people seem to have more freedom to intimate with other users in virtual environments than they used in the past, and consequently they are more confident to do so now.

Within this industry, it is likely that one of the most popular dating apps in the present is *Tinder*. In this sense, *Tinder* was one of the first dating apps that was designed specifically for smartphone, rather than being an extension of dating websites such as *Meetic* or *e-Darling*. According to Sumter, Vandenbosch and Ligtenberg (2017), there are different motivations to use dating apps; these may include love, casual sex, ease of communication, and looking for excitement, which finally motivate offline encounters with other users. The way *Tinder* works is based on showing other users within the filters established by the user (age and distance); then, the user can see other users' images and read a brief description of them (500 characters). If they like a user they press ✓ or swipe right. If they do not, they need to press ***X*** or swipe left. If the like is mutual, it is a match and since that moment they can talk in a private written chat. If one of the users breaks the match at any time, the text in the chat disappears and the users will not meet again in *Tinder* unless one of them creates a new account. Therefore, showing appealing descriptions, combining both images and text, increase the possibilities to get new matches. As previously stated, this research does not focus on the images shown in *Tinder*, but the users' written description and the influence of Emoji on them.

3. Method

3.1. Participants and Material

145 individuals participated in this experiment by answering a series of questions from a survey. Among the participants, 36 (24.83 %) were male and 96 (75.17 %) female; the main sexual orientation of the participants was heterosexual, 124 (85.52 %); although there were also 15homosexuals (10.34 %), and 6bisexuals (4.14 %). Regarding the age of the participants, the mean was 38.68 (men: 35.94; women: 39.59), whereas the median was 38 and the mode was the range between 40 and 45 (20.69 %). Although no reference to their nationality was made, the experiment was conducted in Spain.

The survey was designed with *Google Forms* and circulated through Social Networks and IM phone services such as *Whatsapp*. It was divided into three sections. The first one focused on identifying the participants regarding their age, gender, sexual orientation and they were also asked if they had ever used dating apps such as *Tinder*, *Lovoo*, *POF*, or *Happn*. The second section was the core of this studied and it introduced 9 real profile descriptions with no images extracted from *Tinder*; the participants had to respond whether they would like to meet the people being described or not. The research interest of this section lies in the fact that one third of the descriptions (3) only contained emoji, another third (3) only introduced text, and the remaining descriptions (3) combined text and emoji. The third section asked the participants whether they used only text, only emoji, a combination of them, or they did not include any description in their profiles. By conducting this experiment, it is expected that we can determine whether profiles with emoji or the combination of these with text are more attractive to users than those which only contain text. The selection of profiles was made after considering whether the information provided by the users was quite general, so gender and sexual orientation of the users could not be identified; thus, the profiles selected would be eligible by any participant. The Table 1 shows the profiles introduced in the survey.

1	Photography, design, illustration, watercolor, reading... A few of my hobbies. Traveling, sports and being at home quietly, that's me.
2	🏝🏊🏒🏃🌊🏄🌞🌵🏊🏋🎧🍻🍕🍕🥩🥑
3	Normal person😀. I like motorbikes 🏍 I love dogs ❤️🐕 Hanging out and partying with friends 🚶💃
4	🏊🏃🎾🏔🏕🏖🎮🐕

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5	I am cheerful and simple, willing to meet people... I am not interested in anything in particular... I prefer to wait and see... I do not like wasting my time. Always positive
6	The jungle at home…  It's funny that everyone loves travelling  I watch anime
7	Learning every day, always adding, never subtracting 
8	
9	I like sports, music, movies, traveling...

Table 1. *Profiles introduced in the survey.*

4. Procedure and Measures

In order to analyze the data collected, the procedure consisted in measuring the percentage of likes that each profile received. As previously explained, there were 9 profiles and they were classified into three categories formed by groups of three: descriptions only with emoji, descriptions only with text, and descriptions combining text and emoji. The same procedure was repeated considering the variables of age, gender, and sexual orientation. In addition, a last question was included in which we asked our participants about the use of emoji in their profile as an attempt to determine the groups of people who are more or less likely to use them. Based on this information, the following research questions were launched:

RQ1: *Does the use of emoji in profile description increase the possibilities of getting likes from other users on dating apps?*

RQ2: *Do the variables of age, gender, and sexual orientation influence in the choice of users on dating apps when these include emoji in their profile descriptions?*

RQ3: *Do the users of dating apps like using emoji in their profile descriptions?*

5. Results

From a global perspective, our results suggest that dating app users are more attracted towards those profiles with a description with simple text (59.10 %), rather than those with emoji (22.76 %), or the combination of both text and emoji (35.63 %). As it can be observed in table 2, the top three profiles in popularity were the ones that only included text; whereas the following ones in the rank were the profiles that combined text and emoji, and the least popular were the profiles only described with emoji. Having considered these general results, the variables of gender, age and sexual orientation are introduced to determine how they make these general results vary.

Description		**Accept**	**Percentage**	**Description**	**Accept**	**Percentage**
Text	Profile#1	109/145	75.17%	Text	257	59.10%
	Profile#5	79/145	54.48%			
	Profile#9	69/145	47.59%			
Emoji	Profile#2	38/145	26.21%	Emoji	99	22.76%
	Profile#4	31/145	21.38%			
	Profile#8	30/145	20.69%			
Text + Emoji	Profile#3	58/145	40%	Text + Emoji	155	35.63%
	Profile#6	52/145	35.86%			
Profile#7		45/145	31.03%			

Table 2. *General Results.*

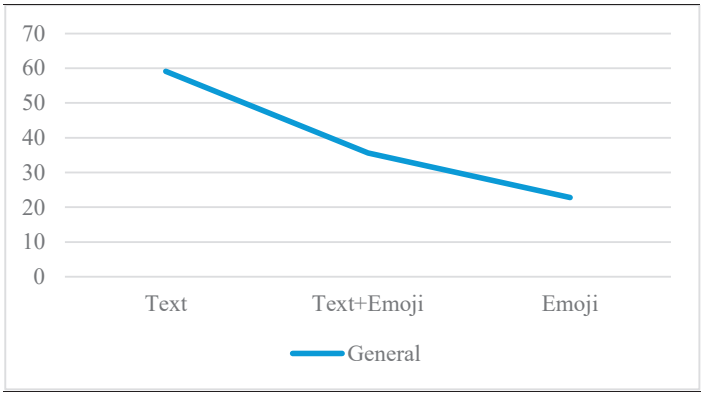

Figure 2. *General Results.*

The first of the three variables that has been introduced to our results was gender. Table and figure 3 show the results obtained. To start with, men clicked on more profiles than women did: 48.15 % - 36.19 %. This implies a percent variation of 33.05 % between male and female. Next, regarding the three target categories in this research, both male and female participants agreed that they preferred profile description in

the following order: (1) text, (2) text with emoji, and (3) emoji. However, the percent variation between male and female participants in each of these three categories varied considerably. Firstly, men and women clicked similar times on the profiles with only text: 60.19 %-58.72 %. The percent variation is 2.50 %. Secondly, men were more attracted towards emoji than women: 32.41 %-19.57 %. The percent variation on attraction towards descriptions only with emoji between and female in this research was 65.61 %. Thirdly, men also clicked more times on profiles combining both text and emoji than women: 51.85 %-30.28 %. In this case, the percent variation was the highest between male and female: 71.23 %. These results suggest that men are more attracted by emoji than women; thus, a significant difference between the two groups is only noticeable when the profiles on dating apps introduce emoji.

Description		**Men Accept**	**Men Percent. 1**	**Men Percent. 2**	**Women Accept**	**Women Percent. 1**	**Women Percent. 2**
Text	Profile#1	30/36	83.33%	65/108	79/109	72.48%	192/327
	Profile#5	15/36	41.67%		64/109	58.72%	
	Profile#9	20/36	55.56%	60.19%	49/109	44.95%	58.72%
Emoji	Profile#2	13/36	36.11%	35/108	25/109	22.94%	64/327
	Profile#4	13/36	36.11%		18/109	16.51%	
	Profile#8	9/36	25.00%	32.41%	21/109	19.27%	19.57%
Text + Emoji	Profile#3	18/36	50.00%	56/108	40/109	36.70%	99/327
	Profile#6	21/36	58.33%		31/109	28.44%	
	Profile#7	17/36	47.22%	51.85%	28/109	25.69%	30.28%

Table 3. *Variable of Gender.*

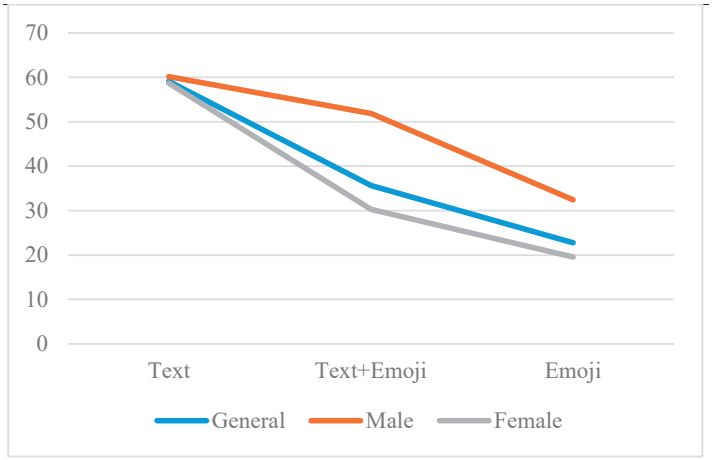

Figure 3. *Variable of Gender.*

The second variable considered in this research was age. In this case, it seems that there are some noticeable differences among the three groups. Results show that participants who were under the age of 30 were more attracted by emoji than the other two groups. The percent variation between participants under 30 and those between 31 and 40 was 78.56 %, whereas the difference between the first group and participants over 40 was more significant, 83.74 %. The percent variation between 31 and 40 years old and those over 40 was 2.90 %. Differences among the groups were also noticeable when considering attraction towards profile descriptions with both text and emoji. The percent variation between the youngest group and those aged 31-40 was 38.29 %, whereas the variation compared with the oldest participants was 77.34 %. At last, attraction to descriptions with only text was most usual among the people over the age of 40, followed by those aged between 31 and 40. The variation between the group with the oldest participants and the one with the youngest was 19.72 %, whereas the difference with the intermediate one was 19.46 %. The variation between the intermediate and youngest groups was insignificant, only 0.22 %. According to these results, it seems that the variable of age is significant within this research.

Description		**<30 Accept**	**<30 Perc. 2**	**31-40 Accept**	**31-40 Perc. 2**	**>40 Accept**	**>40 Perc. 2**
Text	Profile#1	24/37 64.86%	60/111 54.05%	31/40 77.50%	65/120 54.17%	54/68 79.41%	132/204 64.71%
	Profile#5	15/37 40.54%		18/40 45.00%		46/68 67.65%	
	Profile#9	21/37 56.76%		16/40 40.00%		32/68 47.09%	
Emoji	Profile#2	14/37 37.84%	38/111 34.23%	8/40 20.00%	23/120 19.17%	16/68 23.53%	53/204 18.63%
	Profile#4	14/37 37.84%		5/40 12.50%		12/68 17.62%	
	Profile#8	10/37 27.03%		10/40 25.00%		10/68 14.71%	
Text + Emoji	Profile#3	18/37 48.65%	55/111 49.55%	14/40 35.00%	43/120 35.83%	26/68 38.24%	57/204 27.94%
	Profile#6	20/37 54.05%		14/40 35.00%		18/68 26.47%	
	Profile#7	17/37 45.95%		15/40 37.50%		13/68 19.12%	

Table 4. *Variable of Age.*

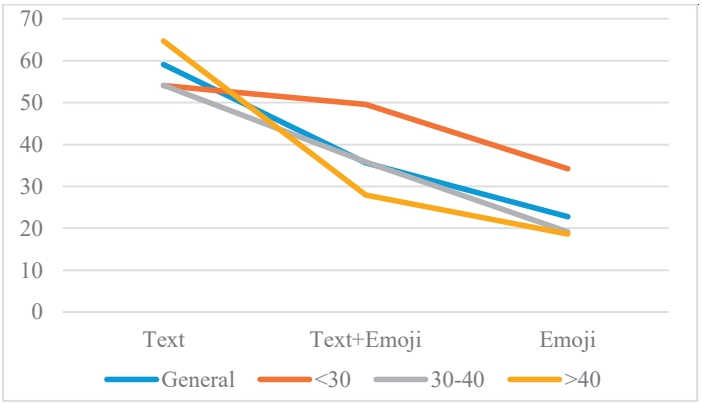

Figure 4. *Variable of Age.*

The last variable in this research was sexual orientation. Different orientations were considered in this study; however, our participants were heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual. Regarding bisexual ones, it should be noticed that there were only 6 participants and we consider that this amount is not representative enough. To start, results have showed that homosexuals clicked on more profiles than heterosexuals: 51.32 %-38.08 %. The percent variation within this category is 34.77 %. In addition, results have also shown that both homo and heterosexual participants were more attracted by profiles with text description, followed by those with the combination of text and emoji, and finally those with emoji only. The variation between these two groups on their attraction towards descriptions with only text is 8.31 % higher for heterosexuals, whereas those with only emoji are 4.61 % higher for homosexuals. The most significant difference is the variation on their attraction towards descriptions with both text and emoji, the attraction of homosexuals for these profiles was 55.82 % higher.

Description		**Hetero Accept**	**Hetero Perc. 1**	**Hetero Perc. 2**	**Homo Accept**	**Homo Perc. 1**	**Homo Perc. 2**	**Bisex. Accept**	**Bisex. Perc. 1**	**Bisex. Perce. 2**
Text	Profile#1	95/124	76.61%	224/372 60.22%	11/15	73.33%	25/45 55.60%	3/6	50.00%	8/18 44.44%
	Profile#5	69/124	55.65%		7/15	46.67%		3/6	50.00%	
	Profile#9	60/124	48.39%		7/15	46.67%		2/6	33.33%	
Emoji	Profile#2	31/124	25.00%	79/372 21.24%	3/15	20.00%	10/45 22.22%	4/6	66.67%	10/18 55.56%
	Profile#4	22/124	17.74%		6/15	40.00%		3/6	50.00%	
	Profile#8	26/124	21.24%		1/15	6.67%		3/6	50.00%	
Text + Emoji	Profile#3	46/124	37.10%	122/372 32.80%	9/15	60.00%	23/45 51.11%	3/6	50.00%	10/18 55.56%
	Profile#6	40/124	32.26%		7/15	46.67%		5/6	83.33%	
	Profile#7	36/124	29.03%		7/15	46.67%		2/6	33.33%	

Table 5. *Variable of Sexual Orientation.*

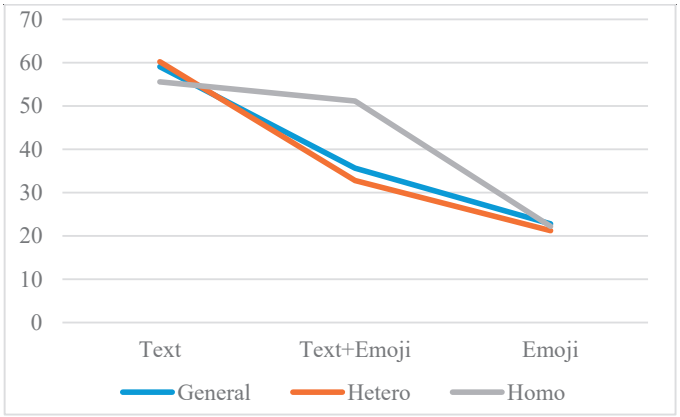

Figure 5. *Variable of Sexual Orientation.*

In addition to the variable introduced to determine the main differences on attraction towards other profiles among the groups analyzed. Our research also focused on asking our participants how they described themselves on dating apps. In this case, the question offered four possibilities: text, text with emoji, emoji, or no description. In general terms, 44.14 % of the participants chose the option of 'only text'; 28.28 % said that they did not introduce any description in their profiles; 21.38 % combined text and emoji; and the remaining 6.90 % only used emoji. Regarding gender, results suggest that male participants are more predisposed on the use of emoji than female, either if it is only emoji or a mixture of emoji and text. Besides, women are more likely than men to leave their profiles with no information. Next, concerning age, the group of participants under 30 used more emoji than the rest; this information contrasts with the group with the oldest participants who in no case used only emoji and only a few times they combined text with emoji. On sexual orientation, it is noticeable that homosexuals are more reluctant to leave their descriptions empty, and they are also more willing to accompany their text descriptions with emoji than heterosexuals.

		Text	**Text + Emoji**	**Emoji**	**No Description**
General (145)		44.14%	21.38%	6.90%	28.28%
Gender	Male (36)	33.33%	38.89%	16.67%	11.11%
	Female (109)	47.71%	15.60%	3.67%	33.94%
Age	<30 (37)	16.22%	43.24%	18.92%	24.32%
	30-40 (41)	53.66%	29.27%	7.32%	29.27%
	>40 (67)	53.73%	4.48%	0.00%	29.85%
Sexual Orientation	Hetero (124)	46.77%	16.13%	8.06%	29.84%
	Homo (15)	40.00%	46.67%	0.00%	13.33%
	Bisexual (6)	0.00%	66.67%	0.00%	33.33%

Table 6. *How users describe themselves on dating apps.*

6. Discussion

Results have shown that the descriptions of profiles on dating app can vary and some factors may influence in the users' choice. This research has focused on the possible influence of three variables: gender, age, and sexual orientation. Our theoretical framework included the ideas of different authors who suggested that the use of emoji could add emotions to the text, and we initially hypothesized that this choice could be beneficial for dating app users. However, our results have suggested that dating app users do not necessarily feel more attracted towards those users who introduce emoji in their texts.

Our first research question was addressed to finding whether the use of emoji in profile description could increase their possibilities of getting likes from other users on dating apps. Our results have found that our participants were still more confident on using plain text descriptions rather than on introducing some emoji to their text, or using only emoji. In this sense, our second and third research questions focused on explaining the participants' behavior on the use of emoji in their profile descriptions regarding their gender, age and sexual orientation.

Regarding our second and third research questions on whether the variables of age, gender, and sexual orientation influence in their choice of users on dating apps when they include emoji in their profile descriptions, and if they use them in their profile descriptions, our results have found that they do; some differences have been noticed within the groups established in each category. To start with, our theoretical framework suggested that women used more emoji than men, and women were also more attracted to descriptions with emoji. Our results have suggested the opposite; men use emoji more often than women in their profile descriptions, and our male participants also seemed to be more attracted to emoji than the female ones. The difference between genders when selecting profiles with descriptions that included only text was insignificant in comparison to the descriptions that included emoji, with or without text. In this case, men felt more attracted by descriptions with emoji. These results break with the stereotyped idea that women use more emoji and are more attracted to them because they are more emotional than men, as suggested by Tossell *et al*. (2012), Prada *et al*. (2018), and Butterworth *et al*. (2019). The reason why men use more descriptions in their profile description could be linked to the ideas of Tossell *et al*. (2012), who suggested that men receive more positive reactions than women when they use emoji. Perhaps, men feel that the use of emoji in their profiles is beneficial; although results have shown that women prefer plain text descriptions.

Next, the variable of age seems to be very significant. Our results have shown that the group with the oldest participants was the ones who most preferred text descriptions and, in contrast, the ones who were least attracted towards emoji. On the other hand, the group with the youngest participants had an opposite interest; and they were the ones who relied the most on profile descriptions with emoji, and the least on simple text descriptions. However, it shall be noticed that the group aged under 30 still had their first preference on descriptions with plain text, closely followed by descriptions combining both text and emoji. These results suggest that there is a generational break

as appointed by Prensky (2001), and those who have grown with the use of emoji are more willing to use them, and they also seem to understand their meaning better. As suggested by Settanni and Marengo (2015) in their research, the amount of emoji used decreases as users are older. In this sense, it seems inevitable that emoji will be more frequent in daily communication in the near future.

On sexual orientation, no previous reference was initially found on whether this factor could influence on the use of emoji. To this aim, our results have compared the behavior of homo and heterosexuals, and it seems that homosexuals use emoji more often than the hetero group. In their descriptions, homosexuals combined more often text and emoji than heterosexuals, and it was rare that they left their descriptions empty. Regarding their attraction to other profiles, homosexuals also seemed to get more attracted towards profiles with emoji than the hetero group. However, their attraction towards profile with only emoji was similar. The difference between the groups on their preference with profiles with only text was quite close, but in this case it was higher for the heterosexual group. With these results, we can only confirm that it seems there is also difference between these two groups regarding the use of emoji.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to assess the power of emoji in dating sites. In this sense, this research has analyzed how the use of emoji in the users' profile influences in their attempt to attract other users, as well as getting some information on their preferences. Some real profiles extracted from the dating app *Tinder* with no picture were shown to our participants, and they had to confirm if they liked them, as it happens in the application. Thus, considering the age of gender, sexual orientation, and age, this research focused on determining if the participants were more interested in profiles with only text, only emoji, or the combination of both. Our results have proved that men, homosexual, and the youngest people are the ones who use and feel most attracted to profiles that include emoji in their descriptions. On the other hand, women, heterosexuals, and the oldest people are less attracted towards emoji and they seem to be more reluctant on their use in their own descriptions. In conclusion, this research recommends that people consider their target profiles and analyze if the use or emoji convenient. In the future, this research could add more participants, who would help to determine with a higher degree of precision each of the variables introduced. With more participants, it would be feasible to create more groups mixing the variables and analyzing how they interfere in their preferences on dating apps.

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9. References

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