



## USING COMMUNICATION CUE PARAMETER TO MEASURE POTENTIAL INTERACTION RISKS ON TINDER DATING APP

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**Abstract:** This study examines communication styles and their moral implications on Tinder within the disruptive online dating landscape, focusing on Indonesian cultural dynamics. The paper aims to identify user communication patterns, motivations, and moral concerns on Tinder, especially risks faced by female users in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach, the data were gathered through participant observation. Users were classified into three main groups, including generic and casual responders, direct and explicit communicators, and deceptive scammers, in addition to another category of non-responders. Communication often lacked authenticity, focusing on short-term goals. The study found significant moral degradation that leads to potential risks toward safety, particularly for women. It produces an identification graph of language cues that signal user intent, which can be used to enhance digital safety and protect against scams, harassment, and exploitation. Based on the findings, this study recommends the need for heightened awareness, education, and policy improvements for safer online dating. It advocates for increased user vigilance, especially for women, and suggests that identifying linguistic cues could enhance digital safety against scams and harassment.

**Key Terms:** : *communication etiquette, language measure, language on dating app, online dating, potential moral degradation*

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### INTRODUCTION

Online dating has become a mainstream method for meeting potential romantic partners. Studies show that these platforms have reshaped how individuals approach relationships, prioritizing convenience and efficiency over traditional courtship practices (Cacioppo et al., 2013). Tinder, for example, with its user-friendly interface and instant gratification model, epitomizes this shift (James-Kangal et al., 2018).

Research indicates that communication on platforms like Tinder often bypasses the nuances of face-to-face interactions, leading to more direct and, at times, brusque exchanges (Gatter & Hodkinson, 2016). This shift has implications for the quality of relationships formed online. Traditional markers of politeness and decorum are frequently overlooked in favor of quick, transactional conversations aimed at achieving immediate goals (Ward, 2016).

The decline in polite communication and the rise of transactional interactions have been linked to a broader moral degradation within the context of online dating. Studies suggest that users are often more explicit about their intentions, which can include seeking casual, non-committal relationships (Sumter et al., 2017). This openness, while potentially liberating, also challenges conventional moral frameworks and expectations of relationship-building (Duguay, 2017).

Gender differences in communication styles on Tinder also play a significant role. Men and women approach interactions differently, with men often being more forthright about seeking physical relationships, while women may initially seek emotional connection (Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). These differing expectations can lead to misunderstandings and contribute to the erosion of polite discourse. The impact of these communication styles on relationship satisfaction is profound. Active-constructive responses, where partners engage positively with each other's communication, are essential for relationship satisfaction (Freeman & Almond, 2010). However, the impersonal nature of Tinder interactions often leads to passive or destructive communication patterns, undermining the potential for fulfilling relationships (Freeman & Almond, 2010).

With regards to the issue, cultural norms significantly influence how politeness and morality are perceived in online interactions. In societies where indirect communication and maintaining harmony are highly valued, the directness encouraged by platforms like Tinder can be especially disruptive. This cultural clash adds another layer of complexity to the already intricate dynamics of online dating (Freeman & Almond, 2010). For example, in collectivist cultures, where relationship-building is often a gradual process involving significant social rituals, the instantaneous nature of Tinder interactions can lead to misunderstandings and discomfort (Gatter & Hodgkinson, 2016). This is because the use of casual language, often slang-filled communication style prevalent on the platform can diminish the perceived seriousness of interactions. Research has shown that the language used in profiles and messages on Tinder frequently reflects a non-committal attitude, further reinforcing the transactional nature of these interactions (Sumter et al., 2017). This language trend contributes to the erosion of traditional norms of politeness and formality, impacting the quality and depth of relationships formed through the platform (Ward, 2016).

Several theoretical frameworks can be applied to understand the impact of communication on Tinder on human relationships. Social exchange theory, which posits that relationships are formed and maintained based on the costs and rewards perceived by the individuals involved, is particularly relevant (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). On Tinder, the perceived costs (effort, time) are minimal compared to the potential rewards (companionship, sexual satisfaction), leading to a higher propensity for users to engage in transient, low-commitment interactions. Attachment theory also offers valuable insights, suggesting that individuals' early attachment experiences influence their adult relationship behaviors (Bowlby, 1969). Users with insecure attachment styles may be more drawn to the casual, low-risk nature of Tinder interactions, avoiding the vulnerability associated with deeper emotional connections (Freeman & Almond, 2010).

The communication styles facilitated by Tinder can have significant implications for relationship satisfaction. Research indicates that active-constructive responses, where partners engage positively with each other's communication, are essential for maintaining relationship satisfaction (Gable et al., 2006). However, the impersonal nature of Tinder interactions often

leads to passive or destructive communication patterns, undermining the potential for fulfilling relationships (Gatter & Hodkinson, 2016). Moreover, the commodification of romantic interactions on Tinder—where potential partners are “swiped” based on superficial criteria—can lead to feelings of objectification and decreased self-worth (Sumter et al., 2017). These experiences can negatively impact users’ overall relationship satisfaction and emotional well-being.

The reviewed literature underscores the significant impact of Tinder on the quality of human relationships. The platform’s emphasis on convenience and immediacy has led to a decline in polite communication and a shift towards more transactional, morally ambiguous interactions. These changes raise important questions about the long-term implications for relationship satisfaction and the broader societal norms surrounding romance and communication.

This study offers a novel approach by focusing on the linguistic cues used by Tinder users, not merely as social interaction, but as a means of filtering out harmful behavior such as scams, sexual exploitation, and unmeaningful interactions that distort moral and social etiquette. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on the motivations behind online dating or the general behavior of users, this research examines the specific communication patterns as a potential safeguard against illicit intentions, as it primarily explores the experiences and interactions from the point of view (PoV) of female users who matched with male users on Tinder, shedding light on the gendered dynamics and unique risks women face in digital dating environments. By analyzing the language used in initial conversations, this study provides critical insights into how female users can detect and protect themselves from deceptive or harmful encounters through the production of a language identification parameter.

The study contributes to the growing discourse on digital safety by identifying linguistic cues that signal genuine interest versus manipulation or harmful intent. This is particularly crucial given the rising concerns about sexual assault, scams, and emotional harm facilitated by online dating platforms like Tinder. The research aims to not only understand these communication patterns but to offer practical strategies for users to navigate the complexities of digital intimacy while upholding ethical and moral standards in virtual spaces.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the communication dynamics and moral implications of using Tinder. Qualitative methods are particularly effective for gaining an in-depth understanding of human behavior and social phenomena, providing rich, detailed insights that are not easily quantifiable (Swift, 2022). This method provides a comprehensive framework for exploring the communication dynamics and moral implications of Tinder use. Active participant observation and thematic analysis offers nuanced insights into the ways digital interactions are reshaping human relationships and social norms.

The primary method of data collection was active participant observation for a full month. The study specifically focuses on data collected from the point of view of female participants who engaged with multiple male users for the period of a month. This approach highlights the types of communication styles they encountered, providing insights into the nuanced challenges women may experience in these interactions. The researcher created a profile on Tinder and engaged in conversations with other users. This approach allowed for naturalistic data collection, where interactions were organic and reflective of typical user

behavior on the platform. Participant observation is a well-established method in social research, enabling researchers to gather firsthand insights into social interactions and communication practices (Kawulich, 2005).

The conversations on Tinder were conducted without any predetermined templates or sequences of questions. This ensured that the interactions were spontaneous and reflective of genuine communication styles on the platform. Tinder's algorithm served as the basis for random sampling, in which users appearing on the researcher's feed were selected for observation. A key sampling technique was the inclusion of both verified and non-verified profiles, ensuring a broader range of user behavior and language variety. The decision to include non-verified profiles aligns with the study's aim to explore a wide spectrum of communication, as this reflects typical user interactions on the platform. In this scenario, one of the researchers created an account on Tinder and displayed the data as a female user. So, the matching options were automatically set to the opposite genders. Profiles were swiped right if they met basic criteria, such as having complete at least three individual portrait photos (with no explicit content), domicile, and brief self-description.

The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a flexible and accessible approach that allows for a detailed examination of qualitative data, making it suitable for this study's exploratory nature. The steps of thematic analysis began by thoroughly reviewing chat transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding of the data. Next, initial codes were created to highlight relevant features, focusing on aspects like politeness, moral considerations, and communication styles.

These codes were then grouped based on several emerging themes, such as the decline of politeness, clear expression of intentions, and the transactional nature of interactions. After identifying these themes, they were refined through cross-checking with the original data to ensure accuracy and consistency. Each theme was then precisely defined and named to capture its core meaning, followed by detailed analysis to express its significance. Finally, the themes were compiled into a cohesive report that addressed the research questions and shed light on communication dynamics on Tinder.

The results of the analysis are presented using a language identification parameter, developed to categorize Tinder users into three main types, consisting of casual responders, direct communicators, and deceptive scammers. This parameter outlines specific linguistic cues and interaction patterns for each user category, providing a structured guide that new users, especially women, can reference to assess the intent of their matches early in the conversation. By recognizing these cues, users will be able to anticipate potential risks and avoid investing too much time in interactions that may lead to harassment, scams, or emotional manipulation. This practical tool not only enhances user safety but also empowers individuals to navigate the platform more confidently and make informed decisions about whom they engage with, reducing the likelihood of negative experiences. The categorized data display serves as a quick reference for users to identify red flags or positive signs of genuine intent, contributing to a safer online dating environment.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The three distinct groups, consisting of casual and generic responders, direct and explicit communicators, and deceptive scammers display unique characteristics and intentions,

which are reflective of their communication patterns and ultimate goals. These categories underscore the varied communication styles and intentions that exist within Tinder, illustrating a broader shift in online dating behavior towards convenience, immediacy, and, in some cases, exploitation. This shift reflects the increasing emphasis on transactional interactions, where emotional depth is often sacrificed for efficiency and superficiality. Recognizing these distributions is vital for developing safer, more thoughtful user experiences that prioritize respectful, meaningful engagements, while also addressing the risks associated with deceptive practices and user exploitation, a growing concern in digital dating environments.

The three communication categories reveal troubling trends that indicate a significant erosion of moral standards and social etiquette in online dating. Casual and generic responders frequently engaged in superficial conversations, often driven by convenience rather than genuine interest, mirroring the broader trend of treating human interaction as transactional. These users often resort to minimal effort responses, characterized by their brief and impersonal nature, which strips conversations of emotional depth and sincerity. This behavior may be attributed to the fast-paced environment of Tinder, where users prioritize efficiency over meaningful connections, leading to a decline in politeness and respectful exchanges. Direct and explicit communicators tend to bypass traditional courting norms, engaging in bold, often sexualized, exchanges without concern for formalities or decorum. This group's communication style further degrades moral and social boundaries, as their interactions often demonstrate a disregard for the respectful protocols typically expected in face-to-face social encounters. Explicit communication of intentions without emotional engagement can be seen as a reflection of the disruptive era, where digital platforms facilitate immediate gratification at the expense of relationship-building and moral propriety. Deceptive scammers, though only constituting, represent the most alarming ethical concern. Their manipulation tactics involve establishing false intimacy or leveraging trust to exploit users emotionally or financially. These interactions highlight the darker side of online dating, where moral erosion is most evident, as users engage in deceit for personal gain. Scamming and exploitation on Tinder pose significant threats, particularly to vulnerable users, with implications for both digital safety and psychological well-being. The non-interactionists also suggest a passive form of moral disengagement, where users exhibit disinterest or avoidance behavior. This may reflect the overwhelming nature of the platform, where users are inundated with choices, leading to "swiping fatigue" and a reduction in the quality of interactions.

These findings point to a growing shift toward convenience-driven interactions, where emotional investment and courtesy are sidelined in favor of expedience. The moral and etiquette degradation observed in this study aligns with broader societal trends, where technology-mediated relationships often dehumanize communication and reduce it to mere transactions. The absence of social accountability and censorship on digital platforms like Tinder further exacerbates these trends, allowing users to act with greater impunity.

**Table 1.** Communication Language Used by Three Users Categories

Category 1: Casual and Generic Responders	Category 2: Direct and Explicit Communicators	Category 3: Deceptive Scammers
(i) <i>Hy! Salam kenal.</i> (Hi! Nice to meet you.)	(v) <i>Di sini cari apa?</i> (What are you looking for?)	(xi) <i>Hari Selasa kamu ada waktu ga? Mau ajak ikut seminar, nih?</i> (Are you free on

(ii) <i>Kamu stay di mana?</i> (Where do you live?)	(vi) <i>Anjir, cantik banget sih kamu, beb!</i> (O, f***, you are so beautiful, baby!)	Tuesday? Do you want to attend a seminar with me?)
(iii) <i>Apa kabar?</i> (How are you?)	(vii) <i>Mau liat ***mu dong.</i> (Send me a picture of your ***)	(xii) <i>Dik, kamu mau ga jadi modelku? Aku liat kamu cocok banget. Kalau mau, kamu kirim KTP sama data tinggi badan, berat badan, ukuran baju, yah.</i> (Are you by any chance interested in becoming my model, dear? I believe you will fit in this role. Send me your ID and few information related to your heights, weight, and clothing size.)
(iv) <i>Kuliah apa kerja?</i> (Are you studying or working?)	(viii) <i>Syg, mau liat *** ga?</i> (Sweetie, do you want to see my ***)	(xiii) <i>Iya, ini foto aku. Kenapa emang?</i> (Yes, these photos are mine. Why?)
	(ix) <i>Mau *** sama aku? Kita hook up, yuk!</i> (Do you want to *** me? Let's hook up!)	
	(x) <i>Aku bisa *** kamu, lho.</i> (I can *** you.)	

### Category 1: Casual and Generic Responders

Users in this category typically initiate conversations with simple greetings such as “hi” or a waving hand emoji. Their communication style is characterized by a series of standard questions designed to establish basic personal details and a friendly rapport. Common questions include “Where are you from?”, “Are you still studying or have you graduated?”, and “What do you do for living?” These users often seek to expand their social circles by making new friends or acquaintances. If the conversation persists over several days, they maintain engagement by asking routine questions like “What are you doing?” and initiating discussions on general topics of mutual interest. The interactions remain relatively superficial, with these users rarely delving into deeper or more personal subjects. Very few of them are willing to have a meeting or make a phone call for continuous casual conversation. This type of communicator generally uses shortened and or often abbreviated forms of language of daily messaging with neutral interactive friendly tone, as collected from Tinder, including:

Casual and generic responders often exhibit a cautious approach, which might be due to the awareness of potential risks associated with online interactions. They tend to begin conversations using expressions in quote (i) to (iv) but easily give up on making the conversations going. Their use of non-specific greetings and general questions can indicate a desire to keep conversations light and avoid giving away too much personal information. Additionally, their reluctance to meet in person quickly can be seen as a protective measure to avoid potential scams or unsafe situations.

Casual and generic responders, who initiate conversations with simple greetings and standard questions, exemplify a surface-level approach to online communication. This style marks an online interaction that often prioritizes convenience and efficiency over depth and authenticity (Davis & Jurgenson, 2014). The superficial nature of such communication may be attributed to a desire to minimize emotional investment and reduce the potential for rejection (Ellison et al., 2006). Their research indicates that users often avoid deeper engagement to protect themselves from vulnerability and emotional discomfort, leading to more transactional and less meaningful interactions.

This trend is supported by recent studies highlighting the effects of digital communication on interpersonal relationships. For instance, users frequently engage in brief, non-committal exchanges that prioritize speed over substance (Smith & Duggan, 2013). This behavior reflects the ease of initiating contact through digital platforms often results in interactions that lack depth and genuine connection (Jha & Verma, 2024).

While this approach facilitates easy and low-risk socialization, it also contributes to the erosion of traditional etiquette. The emphasis on quick, casual interactions undermines the development of deeper, more meaningful connections, reflecting a broader trend of declining interpersonal skills in digital communication. The proliferation of digital communication tools has led to a significant shift in how people interact, often favoring brevity and superficiality over thoughtful and engaged dialogue (Turkle, 2015). This shift suggests that the constant presence of digital devices can inhibit the ability to form deeper emotional bonds and maintain meaningful relationships (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2013).

The culture of instant communication fosters a preference for brevity and efficiency, which can detract from the development of nuanced and empathetic interactions (Boyd, 2014). The frequent digital interactions like this can contribute to a reduction in face-to-face communication skills and emotional intelligence (Hampton et al., 2011). Such a trend towards casual and generic responses in online communication reflects broader changes in social behavior, emphasizing convenience and efficiency at the expense of depth and authenticity. This shift has significant implications for interpersonal relationships and social etiquette, as detailed in the literature on digital communication and its effects on social skills and emotional engagement.

### **Category 2: Direct and Explicit Communicators**

This group is characterized by their straightforward and often flirtatious communication style. They typically start the conversation with compliments on appearance, such as “You look so gorgeous” or “You’re really cute!”. These users quickly steer the conversation towards more personal and intimate topics. These interactions tend to escalate rapidly towards discussions of casual sexual encounters or hookups. Users in this category are often quick to suggest meetings in person and discuss logistical details, such as location and potential expenses for the encounter. Despite the explicit nature of their conversations, they seldom inquire about important safety aspects like health records, reflecting a disregard for precautionary measures. Below are several examples of the language expressions used by both direct and subtle communicators. Vulgar and obscene words have been censored with asterisks where necessary:

Communicators of this type typically initiate conversations with compliments about physical appearance, using affectionate terms of endearment. They often ask directly about the respondent’s purpose for using Tinder, despite the platform’s well-known focus on dating. Furthermore, these individuals may lead the dialogue from superficial yet direct opening conversation as cited in quote (v) toward inappropriate topics, such as requesting explicit photos, videos, or engaging in video call sex, and sharing experiences of their sexual activities, as shown in quote (vi) to (x). They will ask their targets to exchange more convenient communication channels, such as WhatsApp or Instagram.

Direct and explicit communicators represent a significant portion of Tinder users who are primarily interested in casual sex and short-term relationships. This behavior is consistent with the “hookup culture” that has been widely associated with dating apps like Tinder (James-Kangal et al., 2018). Their communication style is often aggressive and overtly sexual, which can make other users uncomfortable and increase the risk of harassment and exploitation, particularly for women. The tendency to bypass discussions about safety and health further exacerbates the potential risks involved in these interactions.

Users who engage in direct and explicit communication on Tinder prioritize immediate gratification and physical encounters. This behavior reflects a broader shift towards transactional relationships facilitated by digital platforms. Amidst the emerging adults' relationship attitudes, the pursuit of casual hookups increasingly overshadows the quest for long-term relationships (James-Kangal et al., 2018). This trend is particularly pronounced among younger generations, who are more likely to view dating apps as tools for instant gratification rather than pathways to committed relationships. Users of this type often seek immediate rewards in a prioritization of short-term satisfaction over long-term connection (Timmermans & Courtois, 2018).

The explicit nature of these interactions frequently involves the use of direct, unfiltered language, which can be jarring and inappropriate by traditional standards of politeness. In this context, the domination of non-standard forms and emotive expressions were mostly used to share personal experiences, which may trigger unlawful intention such as harassment. The normalization of such communication styles on platforms like Tinder represents a significant departure from conventional norms of courtship and social etiquette. Informal and explicit language commonly used on dating apps challenges traditional norms of politeness and respect, contributing to a redefinition of social boundaries and expectations in romantic interactions (Ward, 2016).

This shift is supported by recent studies examining the dynamics of online dating. For instance, the immediacy and explicitness of communication on dating platforms can affect user perceptions and experiences, leading to more transactional and less emotionally engaged interactions (Toma & Hancock, 2010). Physical attraction and immediate gratification on dating apps can also detract from the development of deeper emotional connections that further reinforce the transactional nature of these relationships (Sumter et al., 2017).

The impact of these communication styles on social norms represents the casualization of language and the focus on instant gratification have become embedded in the digital dating culture (Duguay & Ross-Nadié, 2019). The explicit and immediate nature of communication on platforms like Tinder underscores a significant shift towards transactional relationships and a redefinition of courtship norms. This trend reflects broader changes in social behavior and communication practices facilitated by digital technologies.

### **Category 3: Deceptive Scammers**

Scammers on Tinder employ highly calculated strategies, often impersonating well-known personalities or claiming to represent talent agencies. They craft elaborate stories and use stolen photos, typically from influencers or other legitimate figures, to establish trust. These scammers commonly present themselves as talent scouts, offering modelling opportunities and sending convincing images of their "jobs," which are, in reality, stolen. Their goal is to extract sensitive personal information, such as ID details and self-portraits, or lure their targets into risky situations by suggesting private meetings, which poses serious safety threats.

This exploitation of Tinder's platform is characterized by sophisticated narratives that can deceive even cautious users, resulting in significant emotional and financial harm. The prevalence of these scams reveals the urgent need for enhanced verification processes and user education to identify and avoid such schemes.

Another form of deceptive behavior is carried out by individuals with business agendas, such as those involved in multi-level marketing (MLM). These users initially engage in casual



conversations, concealing their business motives until a personal connection is established. Once trust is built, they invite their targets to marketing events, often without disclosing the true nature of the meeting until the last moment. This manipulation of personal relationships for business gains can lead to feelings of betrayal, illustrating the importance of transparency in online interactions.

Moreover, a disturbing trend uncovered by the research is the use of photos stolen from public Instagram profiles, including those of Chinese and Indonesian influencers or art figures, to create fake Tinder accounts. Scammers using these accounts engage in pig-butcher schemes, building fake romantic relationships before coaxing their targets into financial scams, such as investments or promising jobs. In some cases, they even request explicit photos or arrange dangerous in-person meetings.

By cross-referencing Tinder profile photos with social media accounts, this study identified how easily scammers manipulate online content to deceive users. This highlights the growing issue of moral and etiquette erosion on platforms like Tinder, where anonymity enables digital impersonation and deceptive practices to thrive. Stronger security measures are urgently needed to protect users from these fraudulent activities.

Communicators of this type tend to start the communication with casual styles of interactions. They persistently create a sense of trust and ‘vague’ transparency to their targets. The approach may take up to a couple of days until they start revealing their cards by sending some offers and ask their targets’ more private communication channels, such as Instagram or WhatsApp, as indicated by the following samples of expressions:

Contextually speaking, these three examples illustrate varying strategies used by such communicators to build rapport and trust before attempting to move the conversation into a more private or manipulative space. In quote (xi), the invitation to a seminar appears innocuous but serves as a subtle attempt to initiate a face-to-face meeting under the guise of a shared interest. The casual tone implies a sense of friendship, masking potential ulterior motives. Quote (xii) takes a more direct approach, leveraging a flattering opportunity of offering a modelling job to gain access to the target’s personal information. By asking for sensitive data like an ID and physical measurements, the communicator aims to exploit the target’s desire for validation and a potential career opportunity. In quote (xiii), the communicator responds defensively to a question about the authenticity of their photos. This tactic often accompanies attempts to disarm the target’s suspicion, establishing a sense of normalcy around the exchange of personal images, thus gradually breaking down boundaries of privacy and trust. In all three instances, the communicators maintain a casual tone while seeking to lower their targets’ defences, whether by appealing to shared activities, career aspirations, or through seemingly harmless exchanges.

The presence of deceptive scammers on Tinder underscores the darker aspects of online dating. These individuals exploit the anonymity and reach of digital platforms to perpetrate fraud and manipulate unsuspecting users. The sophisticated tactics used by scammers to deceive their targets often lead to significant emotional and financial harm (Whitty, 2013). Deceptive scammers, on the other hand, often use overly detailed and persuasive language to lure their targets into a false sense of security (Whitty, 2013). Scammers use a variety of strategies, including creating false profiles and fabricating personal stories, to build emotional connections with their victims before exploiting them for financial gain or other forms of exploitation.

The tactics employed by these scammers involve a blend of persuasive communication and psychological manipulation, exploiting the trust and vulnerability of their targets. In this case, scammers often employ emotionally charged language and psychological tactics to create a false sense of intimacy and urgency, thereby increasing their chances of deceiving victims (Whitty & Buchanan, 2012). This behavior not only violates ethical standards but also contributes to a climate of distrust and caution in online interactions. The impact of such scams extends beyond the immediate financial loss, as it can lead to long-term emotional damage and a general skepticism towards online platforms. Moreover, the tactics used by scammers are evolving with advances in technology. Scammers adapt their strategies to exploit new features and trends in digital communication, reflecting a continuous adaptation to the changing landscape of online dating (Toma & Hancock, 2010).

Psychological and social implications also become a combination of growing concerns over the popularity of online dating scams. For example, deceptive practices on dating platforms can influence users' perceptions of online dating (Smith, 2023). The psychological effects of being scammed in online dating contexts confirm that victims often experience significant emotional distress and a lasting impact on their willingness to engage in future online interactions (Whitty & Buchanan, 2016).

The deceptive practices of scammers on platforms like Tinder highlight significant challenges related to online safety and ethics. The sophisticated tactics used by these individuals contribute to a climate of distrust and caution, impacting users' perceptions and experiences of online dating.

### **Implications for Moral and Etiquette Degradation**

Living in the digital era, people have developed an increasing desire for instant interaction. While this growing need for speed and efficiency in communication may seem convenient, it often comes at the expense of depth and long-term connection. Studies have shown that the environment of online dating platforms can significantly influence user behavior, with anonymity often leading to less respectful communication (Suler, 2004). In this context, Tinder stands out as one of the leading internet-based platforms that fulfills this demand for immediacy. With a simple swipe, users can quickly connect with potential matches, bypassing the traditional, time-consuming procedures of dating. This ease of use enhances users' opportunities to meet people from diverse backgrounds and locations in real-time (Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2012).

With this broader access to potential partners, users' motivations on the platform become more evident. Some engage in direct communication, focusing on quick, goal-oriented conversations that often lack emotional depth or long-term intent. Their communication style tends to be blunt, immediate, and lacking in emotional nuance (Castro & Barrada, 2020). Meanwhile, casual responders approach conversations lightly, keeping interactions at a surface level. These individuals are often driven by a need for social validation or temporary companionship, rarely venturing beyond superficial exchanges (Ballara, 2023). A more troubling group consists of deceptive scammers and explicit communicators who exploit Tinder's platform for personal gain, employing manipulative and persuasive language to deceive others, often for financial or illicit advantages (Whitty, 2013).

In all of these cases, there is a common thread showing that users exert minimal effort to achieve their goals. Whether seeking casual interaction, social validation, or engaging in

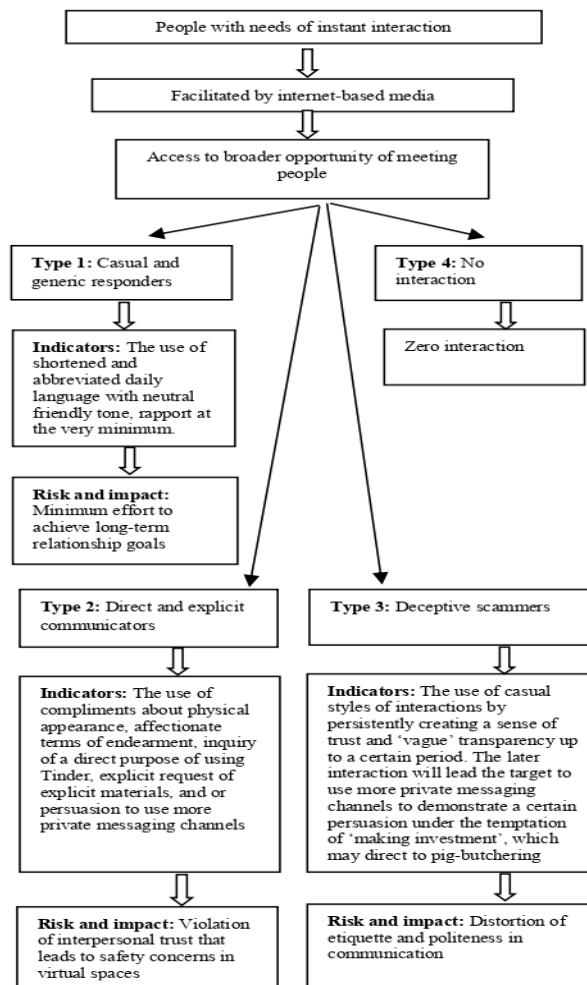
deceptive practices, these individuals prioritize brief, transactional interactions over meaningful connections. The convenience and immediacy that platforms like Tinder provide create a culture where short-term rewards are favored, rather than the formation of deeper, lasting relationships (Finkel et al., 2012). Tinder's focus on immediacy and efficiency fosters a communication style that often bypasses depth and etiquette for transactional interactions, similar to how urgency and emotive appeals in digital marketing maintain engagement in high-stress contexts (Maharani et al., 2024).

This behavior points to a broader distortion of etiquette and politeness in digital communication. Platforms like Tinder emphasize speed and efficiency, gradually eroding traditional norms of respectful and thoughtful engagement. As users focus on instant satisfaction, they increasingly neglect the importance of meaningful, considerate communication (Turkle, 2015). Over time, this shift has led to a decline in the quality of conversations, making interactions more superficial and transactional. The result is not only a loss of emotional depth in relationships but also a weakening of polite communication standards, as human interaction is reshaped by the dynamics of the digital world (Hampton et al., 2011).

The findings of this study culminate in the formulation of linguistic cues that signify the degradation of moral standards, politeness, and etiquette facilitated by online dating apps, particularly among two user groups: direct and explicit communicators and deceptive scammers. As illustrated in Figure 1, these cues encompass specific patterns of language use from the point of view of female users. This parameter diagram is designed to serve as a practical tool for new users, enabling them to anticipate potential risks and more effectively analyze their matches in the early stages of interaction. By recognizing these warning signs, users-especially those who may be vulnerable, such as women-can carefully filters out individuals they may not wish to engage with, thus minimizing the risk of exploitation or harm. The tool empowers users to navigate the platform more safely, giving them greater control over their online dating experience and helping them make informed decisions before investing significant time and emotional energy into potentially risky interactions.

This linguistic parameter acts as a practical guide for Tinder users, helping them recognize warning signs in online interactions. By identifying specific language patterns, such as quick compliments, affectionate language shifts, or overly persuasive messaging, users can develop a sense of caution early in conversations. These cues are especially useful for spotting behaviors that may signal risky interactions, such as requests for explicit content or excessive flattery, allowing users to set personal boundaries and avoid unwanted situations.

Additionally, this tool enhances safety by encouraging users to make thoughtful decisions in their interactions. Clear language cues provide a reference for evaluating communication styles, helping users identify potentially manipulative or exploitative behaviors. This parameter empowers users to feel more secure and make informed choices, ensuring their online dating experience aligns with their well-being and values.



**Figure 1. Language Identification Parameter to Define User Intentions on Tinder**

The varied communication styles observed on Tinder reflect broader trends in digital communication that contribute to the degradation of social etiquette. The emphasis on convenience, immediacy, and anonymity in online interactions often leads to a decline in polite and respectful communication. This trend is consistent with findings from Suler (2004), who introduces the “online disinhibition effect”, describing how individuals are more likely to engage in behaviors online that they would avoid in face-to-face interactions (Suler, 2004). This disinhibition is facilitated by the perceived anonymity and distance of digital platforms, which can reduce self-regulation and increase the likelihood of inappropriate or disrespectful communication.

Furthermore, the transactional nature of many interactions on Tinder, particularly those driven by explicit or deceptive motives, undermines the development of genuine, respectful relationships. The normalization of casual hookups and the prevalence of scams contribute to a culture of superficiality and mistrust, eroding the foundations of traditional social etiquette. The prevalence of casual interactions and deceptive practices on dating apps reflects a broader trend of declining social norms, where superficial engagement often takes precedence over deeper, more meaningful connections (Duguay, 2017).

The findings from this study reveal that the moral degradation in human-to-human interactions is closely linked to the communication styles observed on Tinder. The shift towards instant, succinct, and direct communication is influenced by the randomized match system employed by these apps, which prioritizes efficiency and immediacy over depth and engagement. This trend aligns with the broader cultural shift towards immediacy and efficiency in all aspects of life, often at the expense of more profound, meaningful connections. The focus on quick, transactional interactions reflects a larger cultural move towards valuing efficiency and convenience over traditional social values and norms (Ward, 2016).

The normalization of casual interactions and the erosion of traditional social norms in digital spaces contribute to a decline in moral standards and etiquette. Users often feel emboldened by the perceived anonymity and lack of accountability on these platforms, leading to behaviors that would be deemed inappropriate or impolite in face-to-face interactions. This moral degradation is exacerbated by the environment of digital platforms, where the absence of physical presence and immediate feedback allows for more extreme and less considerate behaviors (James-Kangal et al., 2018). Rather than defaming or ridiculing online dating users, these public figures and institutions should engage in friendly and informative discussions that highlight the importance of safe and respectful online interactions (Ward, 2016).

This discussion highlights the need for a deeper understanding of these trends and their impact on human relationships. As digital communication continues to shape social interactions, promoting awareness and education on maintaining respectful and ethical behavior online is crucial. Addressing these challenges can help foster healthier, more meaningful connections in the digital age, mitigating the erosion of traditional social norms and enhancing the quality of online interactions.

### **Risks and Potential Victims**

In examining Tinder's communication landscape, one critical concern is the vulnerability of women on the platform (Phan et al., 2021). Due to the anonymity and immediacy of online interactions, women are disproportionately at risk of exploitation and harm, especially in encounters with direct and explicit communicators or deceptive scammers. Studies have shown that women on dating apps frequently encounter harassment, unsolicited explicit content, and pressure to engage in sexual activities, which underscores the need for enhanced protections and support systems for female users (Korchmaros et al., 2015). The shield of anonymity allows certain individuals to behave more recklessly, contributing to an unsafe online environment, particularly for female users (Aini, 2024). This lack of openness can result in wasted time and missed opportunities for genuine connection, and in some cases, it can make users more susceptible to deceptive practices (Bramanwidyantari & Helmi, 2024).

Adding to this complexity, cultural stigmas surrounding online dating in Indonesia further heighten these risks (Zhou, 2023). In conservative societies where online dating is taboo, users—especially women—are hesitant to engage openly and authentically, fearing social repercussions (Carbone et al., 2024). This leads to shallow, guarded conversations, which create fertile ground for manipulation by deceptive users. Scammers and ill-intentioned individuals can exploit this reticence, crafting false personas that prey on users' reluctance to disclose personal information (Alkhalil et al., 2021). In such a context, cultural and societal expectations not only limit honest communication but also contribute to users' susceptibility to deception. This phenomenon serves as a cultural reminder for young individuals to be

cautious of the potential dangers of social media, urging them to balance the lessons from their parents with the fast-paced information they encounter online.

Language, in particular, plays a pivotal role in these interactions. On Tinder, the language used can serve as a key indicator of a user's true intentions. Studies show that scammers and deceptive users often employ overly detailed or persuasive language to build trust with their targets, drawing them into manipulative relationships (Lazarus et al., 2023). For women and other vulnerable users, understanding these linguistic cues-whether flattery in early conversations or evasiveness-can be crucial for self-protection (Vrij et al., 2010). It is essential to analyze communication through the use of particular language cues to prevent misunderstandings and protect users from potential scams or misleading intentions (Ellison et al., 2006). Language can be a key indicator of a user's true intentions and emotional state, making it essential for platforms to incorporate tools that can analyze and flag potentially harmful language (Ellison et al., 2006). Likewise, the use of vague greetings or non-committal responses might reflect passive behavior, signaling a reluctance to engage in deeper interactions.

In addressing these risks, education and awareness are paramount. To foster safer interactions, online dating platforms like Tinder must implement educational interventions that equip users with the tools to recognize harmful behaviors earlier (Lee, 2023). Research advocates for the inclusion of in-app resources that can help users identify patterns associated with scams or exploitative behavior, such as unusual language cues or overly forward advances (Dwivedi et al., 2021). For instance, sentiment analysis and natural language processing (NLP) technologies can be employed to monitor conversations for signs of manipulation or deceit (Kavitha et al., 2023). Educating users about the potential risks associated with online dating and providing strategies for identifying and avoiding deceptive behavior can empower individuals to make informed decisions (Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). Educating users about these risks can mitigate potential harm, empowering individuals to navigate online dating more safely and confidently. Moreover, public discussions around the societal stigma of online dating, particularly in conservative cultures, could help reduce secrecy and encourage more open, honest interactions (Finkel et al., 2012).

The need for community guidelines that enforce respectful behavior is also critical (Gross & Vostroknutov, 2022). Platforms should foster environments where respect and politeness are valued, curbing the moral degradation often observed in digital interactions (González-Bailón & Lelkes, 2023). Clear and enforceable rules are needed to prevent deceptive practices and ensure that users adhere to standards of conduct (Whitty & Buchanan, 2012). This approach emphasizes the importance of community standards in shaping user behavior and maintaining the integrity of online dating spaces (Sharabi, 2024). Implementing clearer reporting mechanisms and user education will help establish online spaces where meaningful connections can thrive, rather than shallow or harmful encounters.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals critical insights into communication dynamics and potential safety risks on Tinder, particularly for female users. Different user types, including casual responders, direct communicators, and deceptive scammers, create a complex environment where motivations are often unclear, posing risks of harassment, manipulation, and exploitation,

especially in conservative cultures like Indonesia where online dating is stigmatized. Language plays a key role in signalling user intent by understanding patterns such as vague greetings or overly persuasive messages can help users navigate the platform safely. The study highlights flaws in Tinder's verification process, showing that while it offers some security, loopholes allow users with deceptive intentions to appear credible. This underscores the importance of user awareness and the need for proactive safety education. Furthermore, Tinder's business model, which prioritizes engagement over stringent verification, suggests that users should approach the platform cautiously, recognizing it may not always facilitate genuine connections. The study's findings emphasize the need for enhanced community guidelines, education on recognizing red flags, and stronger safety protocols to foster respectful interactions on dating platforms. While this research is limited by its focus on female experiences and specific cultural context, it provides a foundation for further studies across diverse platforms and demographics, aiming to deepen understanding of online dating ethics and user protection.

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