

Is It Fake? How Motivation and Self-Presentation Influence Subjective Security in Dating Apps

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Resumo

The rise of dating applications has transformed interpersonal relationships through algorithmic mediation, offering social and emotional benefits while exposing users to digital risks, such as fraud, manipulation, and identity falsification. This study explores how user motivations and self-presentation styles influence perceptions of subjective security on these platforms. Using data from 82 users and applying Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), this study identifies key motivational factors - sexual orientation, relationship seeking, and entertainment - as most impactful on perceived security. Among the self-presentation styles, exploratory false, authentic, and deceptive approaches significantly affected users' feelings of safety. A demographic analysis revealed that younger users (18–27 years) were more prevalent and more susceptible to fraud with prolonged app usage, particularly catfishing. The study concluded that subjective security is shaped by both individual behaviors and platform characteristics, underscoring the importance of improved safety features and user education.