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Smart-Dating in Speed-Dating: How a Simple Search Model Can Explain Matching Decisions

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Smart-Dating in Speed-Dating: How a Simple Search Model Can Explain Matching Decisions

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Abstract: How do people in a romantic matching situation choose a potential partner? We study this question in a new model of matching under search frictions, which we estimate using data from an existing speed dating experiment. We find that attraction is mostly in the eye of the beholder and that the attraction between two potential partners has a tendency to be mutual. These results are supported by a direct measure of subjective attraction. We also simulate the estimated model, and it predicts rejection patterns, matching rates, and sorting outcomes that fit the data very well. Our results are consistent with the hypothesis that people in a dating environment act strategically and have at least an implicit understanding of the nature of the frictions and of the strategic equilibrium.

JEL Classification: D83, J12

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