

STUDYING ATTRACTION THROUGH VIRTUAL SPEED DATING

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Want to speed date?

Background:

- People are increasingly turning to internet-based platforms to seek out romantic partners
- Current research can capitalize on this increased technology use (e.g., virtual speed dating) to better understand initial attraction and relationship formation
- Such virtual speed dating research designs allow for real-time observations of dyadic behavior and the later coding of behavioral interactions

Methods:

- 66 FSU students were recruited (33 female, 33 male)
- Upon enrollment, each participant:
 - attended a Zoom-based speed-dating event that included 8–12 4-minute interactions,
 - completed a survey assessing potential partner interest following each speed date, attended a virtual first date with each “match” (i.e., a pair in which interest was mutually reciprocated), and
 - completed four weekly assessments following the event to assess satisfaction with any formed relationships.
- All speed dates and first dates were video-recorded and stored for later behavioral coding

Overall Purpose:

Use a virtual speed-dating design to enhance scientific understanding of romantic partner selection and relationship formation

Total Participants Versus Total Matches

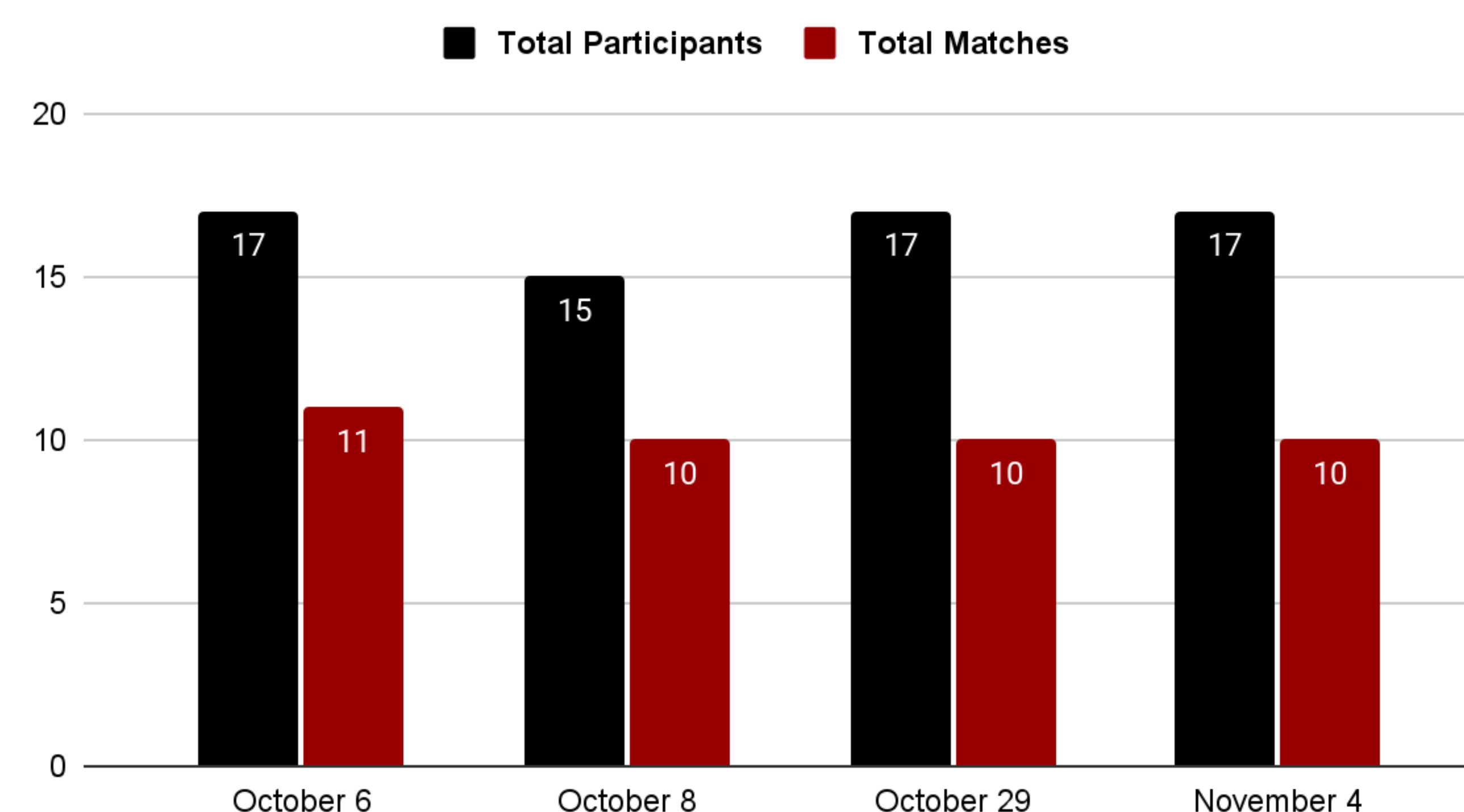


Figure 1. Speed dating participants in each event as compared to the total number of matches made within the specific event.

Romantic Selectivity by Gender

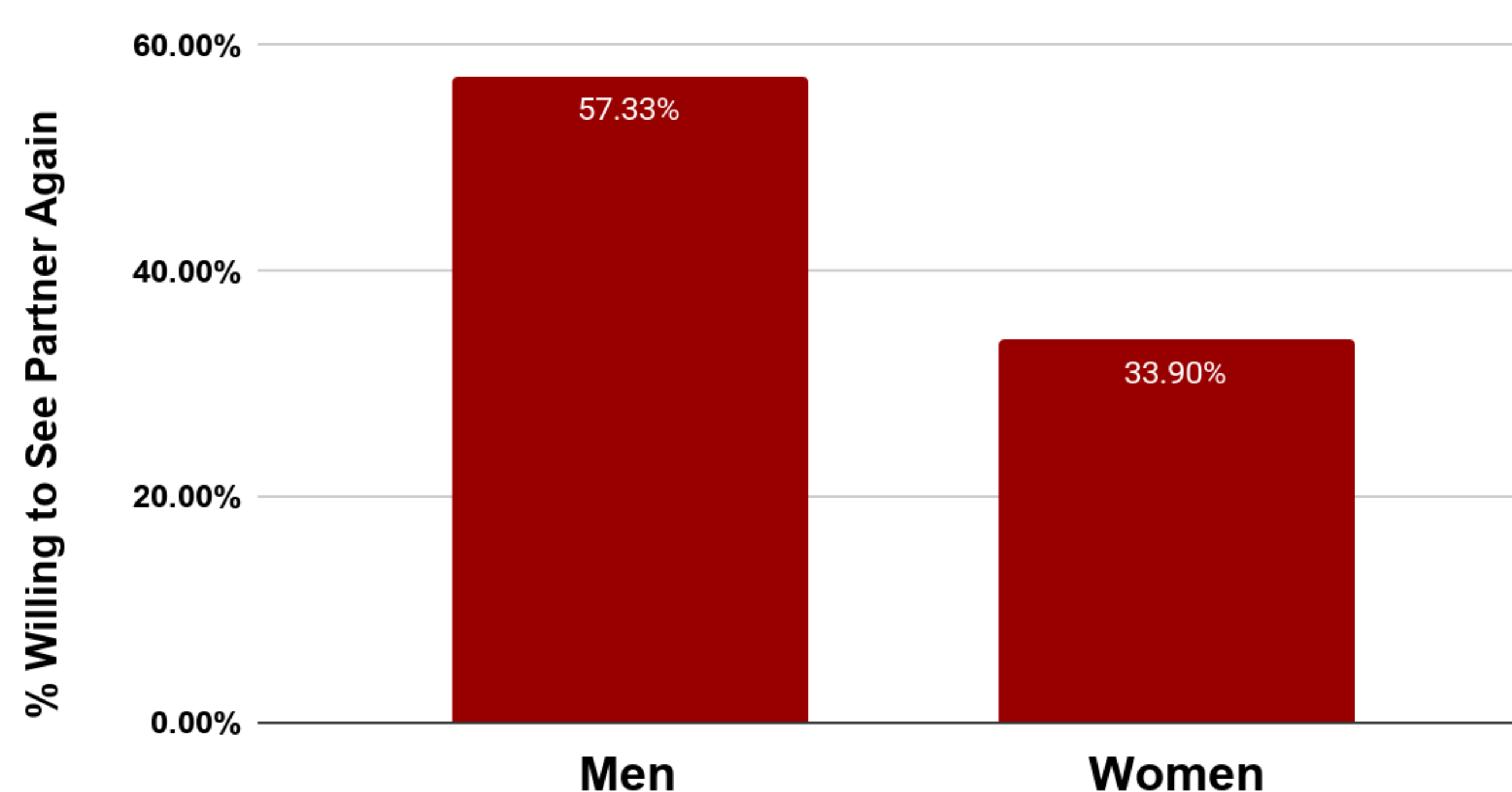


Figure 2. Comparison of men's and women's romantic selectivity, based on a participant's expressed willingness to see their speed dating partner again, $t(57)=4.11, p<0.001$.

Results:

- Thus far, 4 speed dating events were held with 42 total matches (see Figure 1)
- Men were more likely to indicate they would like to see their speed date again (57.33%) than were woman (33.9%), $t(57) = 4.11, p < .001$ (see Figure 2)

Discussion:

- Although the study is still ongoing, these data will help to shed light on the factors that predict initial attraction, why individuals pursue specific partners over others, and why some connections develop into relationships whereas others dissolve
- Consistent with other research, women were more selective
- Internal validity was strong, as relationships were directly observed as they formed, thus reducing recall bias
- However, due to the study design, participants were unable to fully observe body attractiveness, which may have promoted false matches and rejections
- Further research would benefit from using a more diverse sample (e.g., older, same-sex)

Resources:

French, J. E., Bolton, L. J., & Meltzer, A. L. (2024). Virtual speed dating: Utilizing online meeting platforms to study initial attraction and relationship formation. *Personal Relationships, 31*(2), 420–444.