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SEARCHING FOR LOVE AND INTIMACY AS AN EVERYDAY PRACTICE:
OBSERVATIONS ON DATING AND ONLINE DATING

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Searching for Love and Intimacy as an Everyday Practice:
Observations on Dating and Online Dating

Günlük Bir Pratik Olarak Aşk ve Yakınlık Arayışı:
Tanışma ve Çevrimiçi Tanışma Üzerine Gözlemler

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Abstract

This study explores the place of online dating in the everyday life and the place of intimacy in online dating. Through repetition and becoming an everyday practice, online dating embodies a different pattern of intimacy than regular dating. We argue that this pattern is made up with a variety of factors and these factors give birth to the concept of “imagined intimacy”, which is an assumed, or imagined-to-be intimacy.

Raison d'être of imagined intimacy arise from the iterative, cyclical, and situational natures of online dating; self-narration becomes a signifier of socio-cultural capital, the communication between parties become more fragile through repetition and frequency, and since online dating becomes a practice of everyday life; original intimacy's consistency and continuity gets broken. While we sought to understand these factors with this study, we also asked if imagined intimacy is relevant to explain the discrepancies embodied by online dating and the changing terrain of overall dating.

We did extensive surveys and interviews with ten online daters by using purposive sampling to find an answer to this question and found out that the “imagined intimacy” is relevant and present among online daters. Moreover, when given a chance it has the potential to transform into an original intimacy.

Keywords: Online dating; sociology of everyday life; intimacy; imagined intimacy; social media; digital culture

Özet

Bu çalışma online dating'in gündelik hayattaki yerini ve yakınlık kavramının online dating'deki yerini inceler. Tekrar etme ve gündelik hayat pratiğine dönüşmesiyle online dating, alışlageldik dating'den farklı bir yakınlık/samimiyet örüntüsünü cisimlendirir. Bu örüntünün, çeşitli faktörlerle oluştuğunu ve bu faktörlerin de olduğu var sayılan ya da hayal edilen yakınlık anlamına gelen “imagined intimacy” kavramını ortaya çıkardığını öne sürüyoruz.

Olduğu hayal edilen yakınlığın varoluş nedenleri online dating'in yineleyen, döngüsel ve durumsal doğasından ileri gelir; öz-anlatı sosyo-kültürel sermayenin bir göstereni haline, taraflar arasındaki iletişim -tekrar ve sıklıkla- daha kırılğan hale ve online dating gündelik hayatın bir parçası haline gelir ve asıl yakınlık kavramının tutarlılığı ve sürekliliği kırılır. Araştırmamızla bu faktörleri anlamaya çalışırken, aynı zamanda olduğu hayal edilen yakınlığın online dating'de vücut bulan uyumsuzlukları ve genel olarak dating'in değişen coğrafyasını açıklamada anlamlı olup olmadığı sorusunun cevabını aradık.

Bu soruya cevap bulmak için özel amaç örnekleme kullanarak online dating yapan insanlarla kapsamlı anket, görüşme ve araştırmalar yaptık. Araştırmamızın sonucunda, “imagined intimacy” kavramının online dating yapanlar arasında anlamlı olduğunu bulduk ve şans bulduğunda asıl yakınlığa dönüşebilme potansiyeli taşıdığını gördük.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Online dating; gündelik hayat sosyolojisi; yakınlık; intimacy; imagined intimacy; sosyal medya; dijital kültür

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INTRODUCTION

Years of observations on the internet, social platforms and apps have led to this study. Probably it all started with 90s' World Wide Web, which allowed to send and receive information from and to computers or sources that are physically in different locations. Once stood for the scientific data that is exchanged between scientists and computer programmers, now "information" is contextually used for almost anything; from "Can you grab some bread for tomorrow?" to watching some YouTuber promoting a product or to connecting with possible employers on LinkedIn.

Before we dive deeper into this study, it is important to define a background, or a terrain of online social realm and note its evolution checkpoints in Turkey.

It all started with the emergence of ways to socialize on the internet in the second half of 1990s. These ways included IRC client Mirc, chat program ICQ and huge number of forums; since then they already had been updated, outdated, and then exchanged with new and more convenient platforms to socialize online.

After Facebook became popular in Turkey, around 2007, people started to get used to the notion of "a friend's friend" and to sending "pokes", messages, and friend requests to people that they don't know in person.

But this was not completely unfamiliar to them, since dictionary pages like Eksisozluk, forums like 80630, websites like Yonja, messaging apps like ICQ and MSN Messenger, chat clients like Mirc, social profile pages like Myspace, social music platforms like Last.fm, college students' forums and social websites like Sosityomat had large number of users in their databases. However, with Facebook, we met with the concept of regular updates for the first time. At the time, people were already fluid in and on the internet, the only thing needed was to make the process of interacting with others a little bit easier. We can observe these changes

through the updates Facebook went through. However, even Facebook was deficient in providing a smoother user experience.

Just like the old saying “everyone likes picture books”; photos were easier to tell a story than writings and messages. As a result, Instagram and similar apps that are visually-oriented became popular. Instagram became the most popular social media platform today by taking “extra” layers out of the app’s user interface and making major simplifications to their user experience. For instance, a couple of years ago, “complementary” apps from independent developers like InstaMessage was used frequently to connect and exchange messages with strangers on Instagram. I found an old website page that has a one question survey in it: “Which dating app you use the most?” The answers show at that time, InstaMessage was the first one with 37% and Tinder was second with 18%. (KızlarSoruyor, 2019) Then Instagram released Instagram Direct messaging feature and boom, InstaMessage was history. (Google, 2019) Another good example is Instagram Stories that disappear after 24 hours. Stories feature was copied from Snapchat and became an instant hit. To be up to date with the daily and temporary content, people started using Instagram increasingly. Also leading many Snapchat users to close their accounts and switch to Instagram. Now it became a daily routine of many to share a Story on what they’re up to.

Tinder started at the same time with Instagram gaining more attention and exposure. It is no surprise that online dating, along with all the dating apps, is high in demand. After its initial release in 2012, Tinder was very popular and we can say that it still is the most popular dating app around.

Almost all social apps that survived post-Tinder era has more or less “meeting with new people” feature. Through Groups and Pages features, even Facebook is still used for making new friends by 40+ people and people who are less internet-literate. We can sum up that most of the social apps now have an online dating aspect, however with Tinder, people are exposed to ever increasing number of dating apps. For people who want to define a detailed list of criteria for their search, there is OK Cupid; for ones who like to meet with people that share the similar or

same physical ways and locations they consume, there's Happn. For a more "women-empowered" experience, there's Bumble giving the first message priority to women. Then there's Inner Circle for business and status-oriented people, which you can connect with LinkedIn. Maybe there are lots of apps to choose from, however Tinder's easy interface and simple "swipe left for no, swipe right for yes" style of matchmaking is the most common form of online dating right now, along with Instagram.

I have a long history with computers and internet; I started using a Macintosh when I was 3 years-old and was there with my laptop when "internet" first released to public and common households in Turkey, in the 90s. Friends came to our house for surfing on the web, I was and am one of the "early adopters" of the internet culture, if not the first. I also was a lonely child with an active imagination, and found it fascinating to connect with and listen to the stories of people that I didn't know existed before. As a member of "heavy internet users" community in Turkey, I have always been interested in online connections and their nature. Adding to this lineage of social internet culture, through years I have listened to numerous online stories from friends and acquaintances.

Years and years of collecting stories, experiences, encounters and observations from people, I was driven to turn this knowledge into a research, a research on how rapidly online dating is becoming an everyday activity and how it is transforming the meaning and the execution of the concept of intimacy by changing the practice of how we connect.

This study focuses on ten cases of different people, ten profiles that use online dating. We tried to reach people that are regular users, who can be defined as "online daters". I conducted both surveys and open-ended interviews. We can say this can be interpreted as a pilot study, which can bring up new topics and areas of discussion to explore for future researches on intimacy, digital culture, digitalization, and online dating practices.

First chapter will focus on the literature, defining the milieu of online dating as a part of digital culture and a medium to express or experience intimacy. I will

explore the concepts of everyday life, socio-cultural capital in digital mediums, and intimacy. After that, I will put forward the concept of “imagined intimacy” to explain the discrepancies that are born from the very nature of online dating; such as the gap between expectation and reality.

In the second chapter, I will examine the research in detail. This section will go through methodology, planning, execution, sampling, sample size and techniques that are used to collect information.

In the third chapter, I will go through the responses of ten cases, ten people I’ve interviewed with and we will elaborate on the results. First, I will explore major tendencies that appeared between subjects. I will also focus on interesting, noteworthy responses of the participants in this section and explore their answers to understand where “intimacy” stands in their everyday dating practices in depth.

These findings will loosely define the current online dating scene and meaningful tendencies that are observed in the analysis and results will be discussed further, under several topics. These topics include; expectations from online dating, how it integrates into everyday life, the relation between expectation of and experience on intimacy, how intimacy reflects on self and on others, finally, if the concept of imagined intimacy is our participants.

In conclusion, we will summarize our findings. According to our findings, we will try to see whether the use of online dating as an everyday practice created a shift in the meaning of intimacy for our online dater subjects. Finally, we will discuss if “imagined intimacy” is relevant for their cases. Here, we will also draw conclusions from the study and note opportunities, themes and concerns that can be relevant for future researches.

1. CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. The Effects of Online Dating on Everyday Life

There are a variety of apps people use in online dating. However, based on my observations on social media trends and online dating in Turkey, I believe Tinder and Instagram are two main mediums right now. When you check app ratings and top lists¹ in the App Store, you can see both have a wide global penetration and audience. With respect to total population in Turkey, 63% of the population are active social media users and Turkey is globally 13th in social media. In the light of new data that surfaced this January; Turkey is the first ranking country in Instagram use on a global scale, because 58% of total social media users also use Instagram. (Dokuz8haber, 2019)

These apps are a part of everyday life; recently Apple announced, then integrated the “screen time” feature for iPhones to control and limit the negative effects of mobile phone use, and at times addiction. (Apple Inc., 2019) This is a feature, which give users the amount of time they use their screens, app by app. “I’m lowering my screen time” is a sentence that is heard more day by day among people who use smart phones. In a very recent Cnet article, Sharon Profis say;

Somehow, checking my inbox or swiping through Instagram for a few minutes is never enough. "Just checking something real quick" often turns into a 30-minute dopamine-fest of pretty photos, double-taps and swipes that somehow make me feel productive, when I'm not. (Profis, 2019, p. 1)

¹ Instagram app page on App Store:
<https://itunes.apple.com/tr/app/instagram/id389801252?mt=8>
Tinder's app page on App Store:
<https://itunes.apple.com/tr/app/tinder/id547702041?mt=8>

In the Introduction, I tried to tell the history and story of online dating and the emergence of Tinder and Instagram as platforms of online dating in Turkey from my perspective. While mobile phone, social media and internet addiction are topics that are globally discussed both among scholars and in the media; online dating started to show a similar pattern with them.

Tinder itself is a global phenomenon. In Tinder, the app shows you a card of a person with their photo and you can swipe them left for no and right for yes. In Tinder terminology, “Yes” translates into “hearting” them. Before swiping them left or right, you can spend some time on their profiles. When you tap on their card, their profile opens. Here you can see more photos, Spotify music info, common interests, photos from their Instagram account (if connected) and a short description they wrote about themselves. If they also choose you, then the app says “It’s a Match!” One of you starts a conversation and the rest is up to the user. Most users cross to another platform after this step, probably because of two main reasons; (1) messaging feature and the app itself is way too slow and (2) due to privacy matters, it is not preferred to use Tinder in public. After a while, people who meet through Tinder jump to other mediums like WhatsApp and Instagram, as “a second base”. Both apps are more personal than Tinder, in the sense that you are visible to people in your “real” life, not only to strangers.

In both Tinder and Instagram, you must be current, up to date and present to attract potential dates. At the end of a Vox article explaining the algorithm of Tinder by Kaitlyn Tiffany, the author mentions a debate she attended. For her, the highlight of this debate was Helen Fisher. For Tiffany, Fisher “argued that dating apps can do nothing to change the basic brain chemistry of romance. It’s pointless to argue whether an algorithm can make for better matches and relationships”. (Tiffany, 2019, p. 1)

While the algorithm might not be changing the brain chemistry, the app, and the overall online dating culture it presents might be changing the social behavior, on the stance that online dating is extremely accessible and easy to use. User

experiences of Tinder and Instagram are very effortless and easy. I think especially Tinder is like a “human catalogue”, in which you can browse different potential partners randomly.

An early article dating back to 2012, makes a “critical analysis from the perspective of psychological science”, their findings are very insightful in understanding online dating. Scholars of the article note the following in the summary section;

...matching do not always improve romantic outcomes; indeed, they sometimes undermine such outcomes. Regarding access, encountering potential partners via online dating profiles reduces three-dimensional people to two-dimensional displays of information, and these displays fail to capture those experiential aspects of social interaction that are essential to evaluating one’s compatibility with potential partners. In addition, the ready access to a large pool of potential partners can elicit an evaluative, assessment-oriented mindset that leads online daters to objectify potential partners and might even undermine their willingness to commit to one of them. It can also cause people to make lazy, ill-advised decisions when selecting among the large array of potential partners. (Finkel, Eastwick, Karney, Reis, & Sprecher, 2012, p. 3)

Then again, in their findings, Finkel et al. observed an “assessment mindset”, in which people rapidly and continuously assess a multitude of potential romantic partners. Their findings show that “Assessment mindsets may promote the tendency to commoditize other people”. (Finkel, Eastwick, Karney, Reis, & Sprecher, 2012, p. 50)

You access Tinder from anywhere, anytime. You can access it in your spare time, in your cigarette breaks, when you are using public transportation, and so on... Therefore, it is not only a human catalogue, but a human catalogue that comes in pocket size. It is as easy as unlocking the screen of your smart phone, you can instantly start swiping people left and right, browse and browse new people to find a suitable partner. This study will argue that the more you use it, the more it becomes a part of your daily life. Online daters' search for love and intimacy doesn't seem to cease easily.

Social media already altered the way we represent ourselves in a digital world, and it had been long since it started to make changes the way we represent ourselves in "real" everyday life too. On the digital side; sharing food photos on Instagram, joining the football conversations on Twitter, celebrating birthdays through Facebook are all a byproduct of this transformation. We can trace these transformations on the account of real everyday life as well. Let's take the Instagram example; these practices translated into more people going to restaurants with meals that look good on camera, thousands of restaurants to open Instagram accounts to share their beautiful food, ultimately made Instagram a medium, in which people hunt for new restaurants. Checking-in at a restaurant, or sharing a photo from a popular café now has cultural and social values, which are used as socio-cultural currencies that also has value in the "real" everyday life. Digital behaviors that have "sign values" give birth to common practices or embodiments of performances. I believe this shows how persistent Goffman's observations on daily life are. These sign values display or show their worth under the categories of class, popularity, socialization, "coolness", hipness, etc. So, if you have a gourmet side to you, sharing a photo of a beautiful pizza or tagging your post with the hashtag "foodie" becomes a way of performing it. To quote from Goffman;

When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his

general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him.

For those present, many sources of information become accessible and many carriers (or “sign-vehicles”) become available for conveying this information. If unacquainted with the individual, observers can glean clues from his conduct and appearance which allow them to apply their previous experience with individuals roughly similar to the one before them or, more important, to apply untested stereotypes to him. They can also assume from past experience that only individuals of a particular kind are likely to be found in a given social setting. They can rely on what the individual says about himself or on documentary evidence he provides as to who and what he is. If they know, or know of, the individual by virtue of experience prior to the interaction, they can they can rely on assumptions as to the persistence and generality of psychological traits as a means of predicting his present and future behaviour. (Goffman, 1956, p. 1)

Similar sign-values, or in Goffman's terms, "sign-vehicles" are also present in online dating. What is it they want to represent to and see from the other side? What is it that makes them feel intimate with a date? Do they represent themselves as real as they can be? Are there any tendencies or extremities in different cases? Are there minor tendencies, or are there any minor ones? In the scope of this study, we want to observe these little details that penetrate the everyday life of online daters.

1.2. The Effects of Online Dating on Intimacy

Online dating is becoming an everyday practice and one of the implications can be a change or a shift in the perception of intimacy among online daters. In the soil of online communication, intimacy is a topic that is rather untouched. Along with that, technology develops, mobile phone penetration increases, and social-online platforms update with each day. In a very fast paced, digital world; what are the tendencies of online daters towards the concept of intimacy? Can we still speak of a traditional understanding of intimacy, or is there an emerging, brand new type of intimacy? More rapidly than ever; online dating has begun to change the society and sculpt minor changes on social norms and social world.

Dictionary definition of intimacy, according to Merriam-Webster is; "(1) the state of being intimate : FAMILIARITY, (2) something of a personal or private nature". (Merriam-Webster, 2019, p. 1) In the same page, they have a section of "English Language Learners Dictionary" definition of intimacy as well and I believe it gives a more detailed definition; "emotional warmth and closeness, a quality that suggests informal warmth or closeness, sexual relations".

With each day, using online dating gets easier and easier and it becomes a common practice. As a pocket human catalogue that has high penetration among the overall internet users on global and local scale, online dating holds the power to make

changes to the concept of intimacy, on the societal plane. Bridges, on his book titled *The Illusion of Intimacy* says that:

The illusion of intimacy contributes mightily to this failure and many others, and it is a significant factor in the online world. The emphasis on illusion, fantasy, deception, fragility, the speed-up, and the collapse of the natural course of relationship building may all take their toll on the individuals involved and their relationship. In many ways, it seemed that online relationships may even be perceived by participants as not being “real” relationships. (Bridges, 2012, p. 64)

Online dating kept accelerating its spread in terms of users and gained speed in terms of updates, upgrades, and all the conveniences it presents. Resulting from this on societal level, I believe there is a new aspect, a new way, or a new perception of intimacy is born upon what Bridges call “the collapse of the natural course of relationship building”. This new type of intimacy is a “make-believe” or an “imagined intimacy”.

If we compare *imagined intimacy* with the original meaning of the word; in *imagined intimacy* (1) “the state of being intimate” is exchanged with the imagination of being intimate, (2) “something of a personal or private nature” is exchanged with commodification or capitalization of something that is personal or private in nature. The terms “commodification” and “capitalization” are in line with Pierre Bourdieu’s work on cultural capital. Because what is formed here stems from the negation of a personal or an intimate experience with something similar to the original, but different from the original in the sense that it sets cultural capital and social capital in motion. Bourdieu defines cultural capital as follows;

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 17)

I believe this negation birthing from *the imagined intimacy*, also gives birth to the *objectified state of cultural capital*. Because online dating practices, embody the form of a cultural good; with pictures, descriptions, music taste and interests, and with use of mobile phones. However, it also carries some aspects of social capital as well.

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition — or in other words, to membership in a group— which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 21)

Intimacy and imagined intimacy do not have a superiority or inferiority relation between them. While imagined intimacy is a form of intimacy that carries “the imagination of being intimate” and digitally indicates a level of “socio-cultural capital”; it does not mean that it is worse or lesser than “regular” intimacy. It is just another form of intimacy; that is born from three distinct features of online dating. Firstly, online dating is highly iterative in its nature; if a partner is not found suitable, then it goes back to the start. Moreover, most of the people talk to more than one person at the same time. Iteration and number of options make the communication in online dating more concentrated. Secondly, in online dating each part creates their own narrative; self-narration and creating a space for communication are important; however, “regular” intimacy has similar aspects. To elaborate, in the imagined intimacy of online dating, self-narration becomes also a signifier of socio-cultural capital. An emerging, intimate relationship can always be intense; but in imagined intimacy, concentration resulting from repetition and frequency makes way to a different space of communication, that might be more fragile at times. Finally, as a third ground, online dating integrates to everyday life as a practice; while regular intimacy is defined more with consistency and continuity this makes imagined intimacy cyclical or situational.

On online dating mediums, people reflect themselves as however they like and this brings up questions on sincerity, authenticity, or realness. For instance, a study on self-presentation—in online dating environments—has found out that people represented their ideal-selves more than they represent their actual selves.

One way in which participants reconciled their conflicting needs for positive self-presentation and accuracy was to create profiles that described a potential, future version of self. In some cases, participants described how they or others created profiles that reflected an ideal as opposed to actual self: “Many people describe themselves the way they want [to be] ... their ideal themselves.” For example,

individuals might identify themselves as active in various activities (e.g., hiking, surfing) in which they rarely participated, prompting one participant to proclaim sarcastically, “I’ve never known so many incredibly athletic women in my life!” (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006, p. 425)

Another study suggests that face-to-face relationships generate more intimacy, with respect to “computer-mediated” ones. Moreover, they claim that people who had online relationships, showed less intimacy in their face-to-face relationships afterwards.

As suggested by the media and promised by online dating services, some degree of intimacy was reported in computer-mediated relationships, but stronger intimacy was reported in all participants' face-to-face relationships. Results also indicated that individuals who had online, virtual relationships reported less intimacy in their own face-to-face relationships compared to individuals who had engaged exclusively in face-to-face relationships, suggesting that people may turn to virtual relating after challenges in their face-to-face experiences. (Scott, Mottarella , & Lavooy, 2006, p. 760)

While Scott et al. elaborates on the different levels of intimacy, their study dates back to 2006. However, at the time, there weren’t any online dating apps and even Instagram was created in 2010. Therefore, when we speak of *imagined intimacy*, we do not differ it from face-to-face communication; because right now, online

dating includes seeing each other face-to-face too. But this might be still relevant for the period before meeting face-to-face.

Ben-ze'ev lists paradoxical aspects of online relationships as distance and immediacy; lean and rich communication; anonymity and self-disclosure; sincerity and deception; continuity and discontinuity; and marginal physical investment and considerable mental investment. (Ben-ze'ev, 2004, p. 27) For this study, I want to focus on “sincerity and deception”. Ben-Ze'ev elaborates on the topic as follows;

Sincerity is a great asset to successful personal relationships as it is correlated with a higher degree of intimacy. (...) Accordingly, someone who wants to be emotionally close to another person will attempt to be sincere – or at least need to fake sincerity. By sharing intimate information, you are flattering the other person with your trust. Accordingly, if you are seeking to flatter someone, one of the best ways of doing this is to reveal a secret. (Ben-ze'ev, 2004, p. 44)

The importance of sincerity and how it affects intimacy and online dating is another topic that is questioned in this study. What is it they seek in a date, for them to open up, tell their personal stories, or express themselves sincerely? Do their dates share intimate details about their lives to them? Is there a correlation between romantic, friendly, and sexual intimacies? Is online dating a way for them to express their more intimate sides?

At the end of this literature survey, I'd like to use Ben-Ze'ev notes on the gap between sincerity and imagination;

A related conflict in cyberspace is that between sincerity and imagination. On the one hand, online relationships involve more sincere communication,

which more accurately expresses the real attitudes of the correspondents. On the other hand, imagination and fantasies, which ignore offline reality, play a central role in online relationships. These accurate and inaccurate descriptions of reality actually refer to different aspects. Online relationships typically involve more accurate descriptions of people's own personal attitudes, but less accurate descriptions of the reality beyond them. When someone writes to her online friend that she would like to have sexual intercourse with him, she typically describes her present emotions in an accurate manner; in face-to-face relationships, such sincere expression of one's desires is less frequent. But when this woman writing to her online friend describes how she is taking his clothes off and kissing his lips, she is describing an illusory reality, which exists in her fantasy. Sincerity about emotional desires is not at odds with a fantasy concerning the fulfillment of these desires. (Benze'ev, 2004, p. 45)

This conflict between sincerity and imagination is very crucial for our study, because it backs up and gives foundation to our concept of *imagined intimacy*. Since one, does not omit the other; it can even be fruitful for online daters to share and exchange intimacy and imagination at the same time. For online daters, the dualistic nature of *the imagined intimacy* might be; giving them a freeing space from daily life's problems and rush, letting them explore their different —maybe more intimate— sides, helping them to run away from the self-representation that the society and norms dictate on them, and comforting their anxieties. Through our findings, we will figure out if *the imagined intimacy* is observable among online

daters. Following Ben-ze'ev, we will also see if imagined intimacy is desirable for them.

2. CHAPTER TWO: THE RESEARCH METHOD

2.1.The Research Design

This study was built upon three main pillars, which also affect one another. First one is the lack of former researches on the topic; to get the most fruitful information on the way people perceive and express intimacy through online dating, this led me to tailor a mixed research method that is both qualitative and quantitative.

Second one is the need to build up relevant research instruments and techniques from scratch to ground the mixed research method; through former observations on people's encounters and stories, we crafted two sets of questions. Primary set was survey questions; with them we tried to collect data on the tendencies of the overall sample group. The other one is the interview questions, which helped me to learn more about the experiences and thoughts of the sample group. This is also planned to acquire in-depth insights case by case.

2.2.Population and Sampling

This brings us to the third pillar; for a young subject that pairs online dating with intimacy, there is a need to structure a sampling method and size that does not define but explore each case on its own as a profile, as a persona and ultimately, as a case. It would be too early to draw mass or broad conclusions at this time, since online dating is rather a new trend and intimacy is a new topic of discussion under it. We are focusing on experiences of and stories on a rising trend among the general population and this makes leaving people who don't do online dating out from this

research and limiting the sample size necessary. I used Maximum Variation Sampling, a form of Non-Probability Sample and a subtype of Purposive Sampling. This was mostly because I wanted to reach participants that fit a profile. As the researcher of this study, I had years of observation on the online social and dating scene. I currently work in an advertising agency, which focuses on digital campaigns and social media. Estimations and decisions on the sample and sampling heavily relied on this prior knowledge. The main aim of this study is to obtain insights from these profiles' place in online dating scene with respect to the concept of intimacy. Since we are looking to examine and obtain insights from a diverse range of cases, the sample is not required to be statistically representative and it can even be better if few of the participants were selected from unfamiliar or rare cases. Another reason for using this sampling method stems from an organic need of this study; which is to access relevant participants who can share their various experiences, rather than finding out the mass tendencies of the general population. So, I decided to interview people that only have/had a history of online dating and has a dating frequency that is equal to "from time to time". The major intent in this was to get fruitful insights on the terrain and current situation of the online dating scene from different perspectives.

Following this research design, I found ten people, who are suitable for the survey, and started the process of interviews.

2.3. Research Instruments

2.3.1. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of questions that helped us to understand each case's stance in the dating scene and helped us to create a profile. There were questions measuring openness to online socialization, sharing, and communication, background in relationships, social media habits, tendency to meet new people

through internet, projections on prospective relations, expectations on relationships, expectations from online dating & online dating platforms, social interconnectedness among different online mediums, numbers of people that they date, intercourse habits, frequency of feeling intimate with their dates, preferences of people who they want to spend time with, level of self-representation for both others and themselves, when do they open, get personal, or give secrets to their dates, the difference between enjoyment from face to face interactions versus online interactions, and general sense of trust the people they date.

We wanted to know their habitual or everyday use of overall dating like a tool and asked them if they feel bad when they didn't date for a while. We wanted to know if there's an expectation about the people they're about to meet and if this expectation is decided before the date, during the date, after multiple dates, etc.

For instance, we asked them if they would have intercourse without using condom with a. a person they've met on the internet, b. a person they've met through a friend, c. a person they've met in an environment. Since these partners can transmit them diseases, this question was important to understand if there's a difference in the level of trust towards any of these groups of strangers. In this case, it not only revealed their level of trust, but also showed us if they thought intercourse is an intimate activity for them or not. Such questions were fruitful in understanding where our subjects stand toward different types of "contact mediums".

We used the same grouping for some intimacy and sincerity related questions as well. We asked them if they express themselves as they are to; a. people they meet online, b. people they meet through their friends, and c. people they meet randomly in public places. Then we asked them if people they meet online, people they meet through their friends and people they meet randomly on public places express themselves as they are.

Moreover, we grouped the "contact mediums" as; a. people they have history with (their own circle), b. friend's or acquaintance's friends (networking), c. online dating platforms (including social apps and dating apps), d. random meet ups in public places (streets, music and arts venues, parties, transportation vehicles like

planes, and so on) and finally, e. people they have never met (complete strangers). Last one was added to see their overall openness to new and unknown future encounters; while “people they have history with” are there to observe the desire to go back to or revisit former and familiar experiences. With each question in the test, we asked them to rank order their preference of “contact mediums” from most to least.

There were also questions that required numerical answers, to get more idea on average stats for themselves. We can take “in a year questions” as an example. In these questions, they were asked to give average numbers considering the total number of people they date in a year; like the number of people they feel close with, they see as having a relationship potential, they have intercourse with, they share their private stories or secrets with and how many of them shared their private stories or secrets with them.

2.3.2. The Interviews

We went on with open-ended interview questions to get more elaborate answers. By doing so, we tried to touch several topics at once and heard their side of the story; the definition of intimacy for them, ways they show that they feel intimate with someone, past experiences that are worth noting, their expectations of and views on online dating.

We asked them about the requirements for them to feel intimate/sincere, easy and close in relationships, their ways to show they feel close to someone, the differences between dating and online dating for them, which of them they would prefer and why, the things they seek in a dating app or in online dating in general, the definition of intimacy and sincerity, the topics that they don’t talk or share with the people around them but talk or share with people they’ve recently met, and finally, the people that they had met online but felt really close and intimate with, and together, shared a special experience.

2.4. Data Analysis

This section consists of the findings of the survey that is processed and analyzed with SPSS and Excel programs.

First, we will go through the questionnaire findings. We will group the answers in several categories and topics. As we have mentioned earlier, these findings are not to draw major conclusions or illustrate correlations for the general population, but rather to note down the tendencies of the sample. This analysis will help us on understanding where each profile stands with respect to the other profile and with respect to the sample group's choices. Therefore, questionnaire findings will enable us to see the terrain, on which online dating tendencies emerge.

To begin with, we interviewed and surveyed 5 female and 5 male participants, between ages 23 and 35. Only one participant is a high school graduate, 7 of them are college graduates and 2 of them have a master's degree. All of them are employed.

2.4.1. Social Life and Relationships

When we asked them which of the following answers defined them the best; 2 of them say "I see multiple people at the same time", 8 of them say "I don't regularly have relationships".

None of the subjects were in a relationship at the time of the interviews. But when they have a relationship; 2 of them stated that they are polygamous and 8 of them stated that they are monogamous.

Except one, all of them had a relationship longer than three years. However, on their last relationship; 4 of them lasted less than a year and 6 of them lasted longer than a year.

Son ilişkiniz ne kadar sürdü? / What was the length of your last relationship?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-3 ay (1-3 months)	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
	3-6 ay (3-6 months)	1	10.0	10.0	30.0
	6 ay-1 sene (6 months – a year)	1	10.0	10.0	40.0
	1-3 sene (1-3 years)	3	30.0	30.0	70.0
	3 seneden fazla (more than 3 years)	3	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: Length of Relationship

8 of them think that their social circle fits them, 2 of them don't think that. On the other hand, half of the participants thought that they deserve a better social circle.

Çevrenizin size uyduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? / Do you think your social circle fits you?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Evet (yes)	8	80.0	80.0	80.0

	Hayır (no)	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Social Circle

This might be an indicator that even if they think their social circle suits them, they are open to meeting new people.

While half of them use social platforms to make a better circle of friends; 8 of them socialize with their friends' friends to make a better circle of friends. This reveals social platforms are not a way to make "friendly" new connections for half of the participants.

Daha iyi bir çevre edinmek için sosyal ağları kullanıyor musunuz? / Do you use social networks to have a better social circle?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Evet (yes)	5	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Hayır (no)	5	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Better Social Circle – Social Networks

Daha iyi bir çevre edinmek için etrafınızdaki insanların çevresini kullanıyor musunuz? (Networking, arkadaşının arkadaşlarıyla sosyalleşmek, vb.) / Do you use the social networks of other people to have a better social circle?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Evet (yes)	8	80.0	80.0	80.0

	Hayır (no)	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Better Social Circle – Friends’ Network

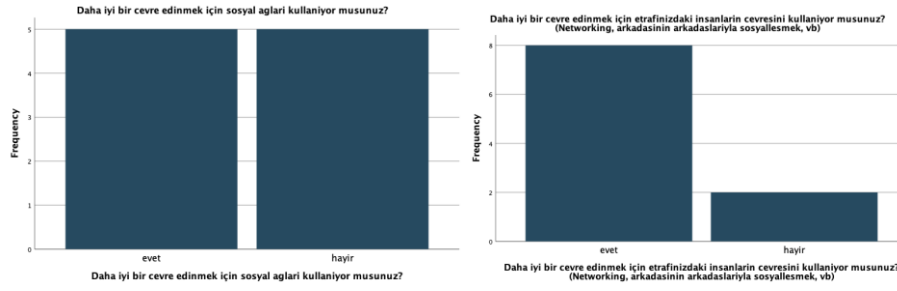


Chart 1: Better Social Circle – Social Networks

Chart 2: Better Social Circle – Friends’ Network

This may be resulting from their expectation to find a partner (romantic, sexual, serious, flirty, or etc.) through online platforms and their expectation to socialize in a friendly way through networking.

We can note that in a reverse manner, 3 of them don’t believe that they can find the relationship they’ve been looking for through their own friend circle. This might be the driving reason for them to explore new people from networks that are outside of their reach.

Kendi çevrenizden aradığınız ilişkiyi bulabileceğinize inaniyor musunuz? / Do you think you can find the relationship you want through your own social circle?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Evet (yes)	3	30.0	30.0	30.0

	Hayır (no)	7	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Finding a Relationship – Own Network

All except one don't start a relationship, thinking how long it will last in. To the statement "the length/duration of a relationship is an important factor to determine its value"; half of them neither agree nor disagree, and half of them disagree.

İlişkinin değerini belirlemede uzunluğu-suresi önemli bir faktördür. Bu cümleye... / When deciding the value of a relationship, it's length is an important factor. To this sentence...					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Katılmıyorum/ I disagree	5	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Kararsızım / I am not sure	5	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Length of a Relationship

2.4.2. Social Media

All the participants use YouTube regularly, except one they stated that they don't use it to socialize. That one person has a YouTube channel and is an online content

creator that has more than 10K followers on this platform. His most used social app is also YouTube.

We can say that Instagram is the most popular app that they also socialize with because 9 use it regularly. The participant that doesn't use Instagram is because she closed all of her social media accounts and her most used social app is LinkedIn now.

LinkedIn comes 3rd with 8 points, Tinder and Twitter share the 4th position with 7 points and 3 points below them, we see Facebook is 5th in rank. However, Instagram is the most used app with 8 participants.

Sosyal amaçla en sık kullandığınız sosyal ağ hangisidir? / Which social network do you use the most for social purposes?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Instagram	8	80.0	80.0	80.0
	Linkedin	1	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Youtube	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Social Networks – Social Purposes

On the time they spend on social media apps; all of them spare “some of it” for sharing content that is about them and again, “some of it” for browsing the contents that the pages they are following create. 5 of them spare “most of it” for browsing contents that are created by other people.

On the frequency of checking out the profile pages of people they find physically attractive or grab their attention; one person said “never”, 2 people said “rarely”, 6 said “from time to time” and one said “frequently”. In the case that they are not connected or “friends” with a person they are attracted to 2 said “never”, 2 said

“rarely”, 4 said “from time to time” and 2 said “frequently”. The latter one might be revealing on the “stalking” tendency of the participants.

Hoşlandığınız insanla sosyal ağlarda arkadaş değilseniz profiline ne sıklıkta girip bakarsınız? / If you're not friends with the person you like, how frequently you visit their profile?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hiç bakmam / never	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Nadiren bakarım / rarely	2	20.0	20.0	40.0
	Ara ara bakarım / time to time	4	40.0	40.0	80.0
	Sık sık bakarım / frequently	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Profile Visits

When we asked them if they would have a talk on important matters through social messaging apps like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, Instagram Direct, etc.; 3 of them said they “would not”, 3 said they “might”, 3 said “I would” and 1 said they “would definitely”. When we analyze the same question for messaging through dating apps like Tinder, Bumble, Ok Cupid, etc.; 2 said they “would never”, 1 of them said they “would not”, 5 said they “might”, 1 said “I would” and 1 said they “would definitely”. So, 7 of them at least “might” have a talk on important matters through both social messaging and dating apps. Even the counts change,

we can say that this might be taken as an indicator for a tendency or fluidity to online sharing.

Sosyal mesajlaşma uygulamalarında önemli bir konuyu konuşur musunuz? (Whatsapp, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, Instagram, vb.) / Would you have a talk on important matters through social messaging apps?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Konuşmam / I would not	3	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Konuşabilirim / I might	3	30.0	30.0	60.0
	Konuşurum / I would	3	30.0	30.0	90.0
	Kesinlikle konuşurum / I definitely would	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 9: Social Messaging Apps – Important Conversations

Dating uygulamalarında mesajlaşırken önemli bir konuyu konuşur musunuz? (Tinder, Bumble, OkCupid, vb.) / Would have a talk on important matters on dating apps?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Asla konuşmam / I would never	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Konuşmam / I won't	2	20.0	20.0	30.0
	Konuşabilirim / I might	5	50.0	50.0	80.0
	Konuşurum / I would	1	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Kesinlikle konuşurum / I definitely would	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 10: Dating Apps – Important Conversations

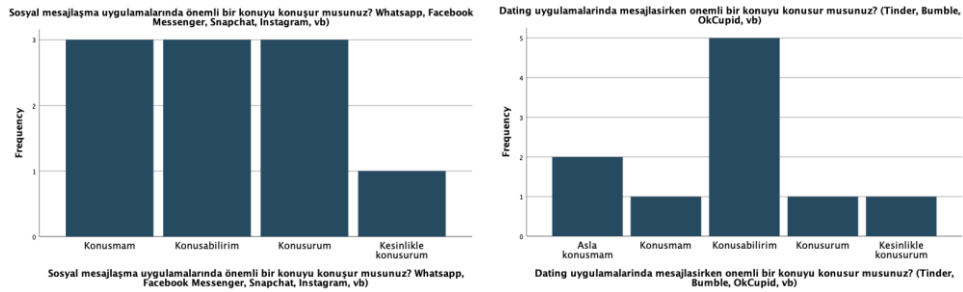


Chart 3: Social Messaging Apps – Important Conversations

Chart 4: Dating Apps – Important Conversations

On the other hand, when we asked them if they would share important moments on their social media accounts; 1 said they “would not”, 7 said “might” and 2 said “would”. This is consistent with the data above, since 9 of them said at least they “might” and almost all of these subjects added that they “could share based on the situation”.

İyi ya da kötü, önemli anları sosyal medya hesaplarınızda paylaşırsınız? / Would you share important moments (good or bad) on your social media accounts?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Paylaşmam / I won't share	1	10.0	10.0
	Paylaşabilirim / I might share	7	70.0	70.0
	Paylaşıyorum / I would share	2	20.0	20.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0

Table 11: Social Media – Important Moments

Online dating’de beğendiğiniz birini sosyal medyadan takip eder misiniz? / Would you follow the social media accounts of someone you like on online dating?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Evet / yes	9	90.0	90.0	90.0
	Hayır / no	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 12: Online Dating to Social Media Following

2.4.3. Online Dating

Mostly they connected their social media accounts to a dating app. One of the profiles, mainly uses Instagram like a dating app but the overall most used app is Tinder. The profile that don't use any other social media apps except LinkedIn uses LinkedIn the most because of her job. Even if it was not written in the options, we've observed that people connect their Spotify accounts to their dating app profiles. This might show they give importance to the music taste of or sharing music with their dates.

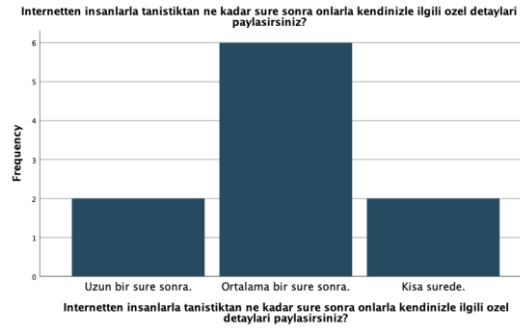


Chart 5: Sharing Private Details

After meeting online with somebody, only 2 of them share personal details about themselves “after a long while”, 6 said “average amount of time” and 2 said “in a short amount of time”.

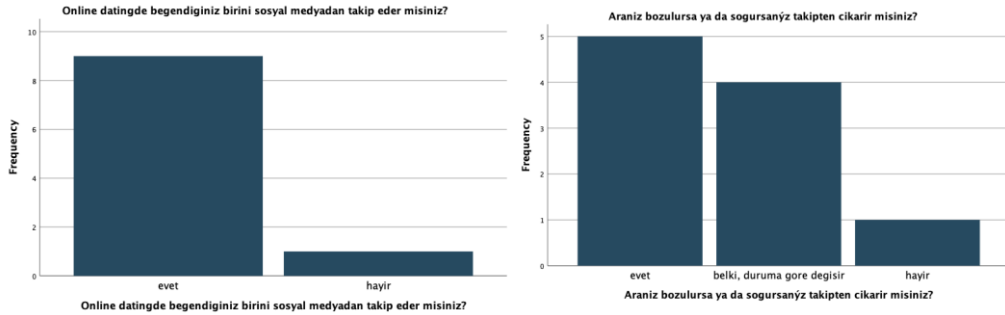


Chart 6: Online Dating to Social Media Following

Chart 7: Losing Interest and Unfollowing on Social Media

If they like a person they've met through online dating, 9 of the participants follow their dates on social media. In addition, on unfollowing a person they've met through online dating if they fell out with or grew away from them, 5 said "yes", 4 said "maybe, depends on the situation" and 1 said "no" unfollow. It makes 9 of them in total, who consider unfollowing.

This might indicate they move between follows and unfollows; therefore, they are mobile or fluid on social media.

Tecrübelerinize göre, internetten tanıştığınız insanlar ne kadar güvenilirli? / According to your experiences, how trustworthy were the people you met online?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Güvenilir değillerdi / they were not trustworthy	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Ortalama derecede güvenilirlerdi / they were somewhat trustworthy	4	40.0	40.0	50.0
	Güvenilirlerdi / they were trustworthy	3	30.0	30.0	80.0
	Oldukça güvenilirlerdi / they were highly trustworthy	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 13: Experiences - Trustworthiness

On trust of others that they've met through the internet, 9 of the participants said that they were at least "somewhat trustworthy". Among them, 2 of them said "extremely trustworthy", 3 said "trustworthy" and 4 said "somewhat trustworthy".

Although I should note that "trust" in this question's context, is a general sense of trust. It is not to feel completely secure with the potential date, it is not to fully believe everything their date does or it is not to treat everything they say as true. For instance, participant No.4 added, "noting seriously bad happened to me yet" with a smile. We shall treat the concept of trust here in a simpler way, as basic as the question of "Would this do harm or do good to me?"

Bundan sonra internetten tanıştığınız insanlara ne kadar güvenirsiniz? / From now on, how much would you trust the people you met online?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Biraz güvenirim / I would trust somewhat	5	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Güvenirim / I would trust	5	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 14: Future - Trust

We asked them how much they would trust people they will meet in the future from the Internet, 5 said "somewhat" and 5 said "I would. Then, we can say that regardless of the past experiences, they tend to "trust" the people they will meet in the future on the internet.

However, 3 of the participants noted further opinions on the topic. Participant No.2 added that it depends on the person in question. Participant No.6 said that now that he is more selective, he can trust. No.9 noted that for him, it is no different than meeting offline; so, neither he trusts, nor he mistrusts. I can say that while their trust depends on various factors; “trust” here, should be taken as an overall feeling of security, instead of a deep or a true feeling of reliability towards their date. They don’t prefer people, who seem unhealthy, dangerous, or too risky for them. They observe people and stop talking to the ones they don’t feel comfortable or compatible with. Feeling of security comes from their knowledge, deriving from experiences and observations they had, they think they are behind the “decision wheel”.

Moreover, on when they understand that something’s going to happen between them and their dates; 1 of them said “I generally don’t understand”, 1 picked “after a couple of dates”, 4 of the participants picked “after I talk with them face-to-face for a while”, and last 4 picked; “I have an idea before the date”. The answers vary among all participants, however in order to understand if something’s going to happen with their dates; a group of them said they have an idea before meeting their dates face-to-face for the first time and a group of them said after speaking face-to-face for a while. This might not be only because they engage in online activities (such as chatting, liking, posting a comment on their photo, etc.) with their dates before meeting face-to-face for the first time. Along with their ‘stalking’ tendency, this might be an indicator that some people prefer gathering online information about their potential dates before the date. In addition, some people might be in need of face-to-face interaction to understand this.

Dating uygulamasında tanıştığınız biriyle aranızda bir şey olup olmayacağını ne zaman anlarsınız? / When do you understand that something's going to happen between you and your date?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Genelde anlayamam / Generally, I don't understand	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Birkaç buluşma sonra anlarım / I understand after a few dates	1	10.0	10.0	20.0
	Biraz yüz yüze konuştuktan sonra anlarım / I understand after speaking face-to- face for a while	4	40.0	40.0	60.0
	Buluşmadan önce kafamda bir fikir vardır / I have an idea about this before the face-to- face date	4	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 15: Dating Expectations

5 of them said “half of the time” and 5 of them said “mostly” to the question on the frequency of relationships that start on online mediums. This indicates that most of their relationships start online, this gives great importance to the online dating scene in Turkey.

İlişkileriniz ne sıklıkta online ortamda başlar? / How frequently your relationships start online?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yarı yarıya / half of the time	5	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Çoğunlukla / mostly	5	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 16: Frequency of Online Relationships

7 subjects think making new friends through online mediums is equally enjoyable with that of face to face and most of them enjoy meeting people through online platforms. When we asked to complete the sentence “With respect to meeting people face to face, I find meeting online...”; 4 replied “less pleasing”, 4 replied “as much pleasing as meeting face to face” and 2 replied “more pleasing”. They enjoy meeting online, but of course there might also be some barriers to it.

While 3 of them want to meet with their date as soon as possible, 7 of them say the duration depends on the person.

The average number of people our subjects talk to at the same time through online dating apps or platforms are 2,1 and the average number of people our subjects talk to at the same time through social media apps or platforms are 1,6.

Genellikle online dating uygulamaları ya da mecralarında ortalama olarak aynı anda kaç kişi ile görüşüyorsunuz? / On average, generally how many people do you see in online dating apps or platforms at the same time?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
	1	3	30.0	30.0	40.0
	2	2	20.0	20.0	60.0
	3	2	20.0	20.0	80.0
	4	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 17: Number of People – Online Dating Platforms

Genellikle sosyal medya uygulamaları ya da mecralarında ortalama olarak aynı anda kaç kişi ile görüşüyorsunuz? / On average, generally how many people do you see in social media apps or platforms at the same time?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	4	40.0	40.0	40.0
	1	1	10.0	10.0	50.0
	2	2	20.0	20.0	70.0
	3	1	10.0	10.0	80.0
	4	1	10.0	10.0	90.0
	5	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 18: Number of People – Social Media Platforms

2.4.4. Intimacy and Dating as an Everyday Activity

As seen below, most of the subjects told that they are not sure if they get the intimacy or sincerity that they seek through online dating. Only 2 of them said yes.

Online dating’de aradığınız yakınlık ya da samimiyeti bulduğunuza inanıyor musunuz? / Do you believe that you find the intimacy or sincerity you seek in online dating?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hayır / no	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Emin değilim / not sure	6	60.0	60.0	80.0
	Evet / yes	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 19: Intimacy in Online Dating

Most of them noted that online dating can be used for a variety of reasons and that even their reasons change from time to time, however when asked to decide between one of them; 7 of them said that people use online dating as an everyday activity instead of a real interaction.

Size insanlar online dating’i hangisi için kullanıyorlar? / Which one best suits to explain why people use online dating?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	gercek bir etkileşim / a genuine interaction	3	30.0	30.0	30.0
	gunluk bir aktivite / a daily activity	7	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 20: Genuine Interaction vs. Daily Activity

When we asked them if they express themselves as they are to people they meet online, 8 of them said “yes” and 2 of them said “definitely yes”. When we asked them if they express themselves as they are to people they meet through their friends; 6 said “yes”, 2 said “definitely yes” and 2 said “not sure”. When we asked them if they express themselves as they are to people they meet randomly in public places; 6 said “yes”, 3 said “definitely yes” and 1 said “not sure”.

Then we started asked the same question for their dates and the results changed in favor of participants. I observed that most of them had doubts about it. First, we asked them if people they meet online express themselves as they are to them; 2 said “yes”, 7 said “not sure” and 1 said “no”. Second, we asked them if people they meet through their friends express themselves as they are to them; 5 said “yes” and 5 said “not sure”. Finally, we asked them if people they meet randomly on public places express themselves as they are to them; 3 said “yes” and 7 said “not sure”.

Respondents think that they express themselves as they are to their dates, regardless of the first contact medium. However, when it comes to the other side of the equation, they are not sure if their dates express themselves as they are.



Chart 8, 9 and 10: Self Expression– Internet, Friends and Public

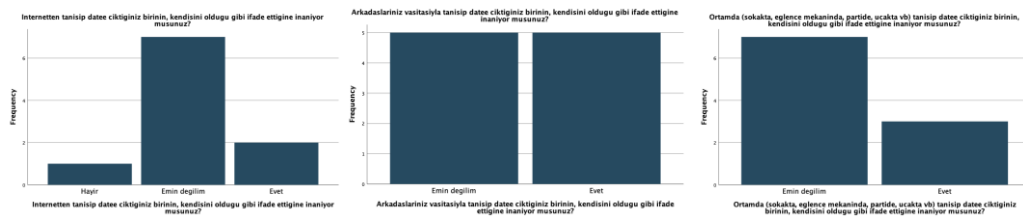


Chart 11, 12 and 13: Others' Expression – Internet, Friends and Public

This is interesting, because while they have a general sense of security or safety towards people they meet online; they are not sure the people they meet online are sincere. This confirms what we said earlier on security versus reliability; they don't prefer people who seem too risky for them. If their observations or instincts tell them that this person is not sincere, then they can always act accordingly. Based on their preferences and stories in the following interviews section, we can say that they stay away, stop seeing or limit these people's presence in their lives.

We also wanted to check the condom use question, to see if there is something relevant to trustworthiness. We see that there are minor differences according to the medium of first contact; because in all the mediums, 8 people at least say "no" to intercourse without condom. However, number of "absolutely not" responses vary. This is not a clear identifier, except for random meet ups in public places (streets,

music and arts venues, parties, transportation vehicles like planes, and so on). In that case, they mostly say “absolutely no”.



Chart 14, 15 and 16: Condom Use – Internet, Friends and Public

Half of them say that they feel bad when they do not date for a while. This can be taken as an indicator to use online dating as an everyday activity, a pastime and maybe even an addiction.

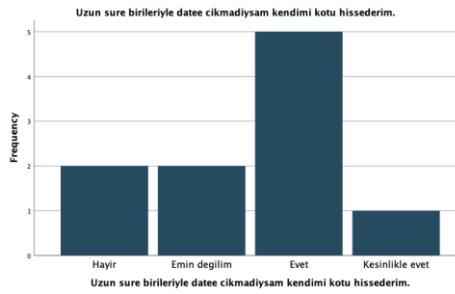


Chart 17: Not Dating and Feeling Bad

2.4.5. Dating and Intimacy: Numbers “In a Year”

We designed five “in a year” questions, in order to understand sample’s tendencies and habits in numbers and see the number of partners according to various variants. First chart is prepared with the answers of the participants and gives case-by-case numbers and the second chart is to compare the mean of these numbers, question-by-question.

PARTICIPANTS IN A YEAR...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
...date'e çıktığınız kaç kişiyle kendinizi yakın hissediyorsunuz? (How many dates feel close/intimate with?)	10	3	5	4	2	3	8	1	8	1
...date'e çıktığınız kaç kişide ilişki potansiyeli görüyorsunuz? (How many dates do you consider as having relationship potential?)	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	4
...date'e çıktığınız kaç kişiyle seks yapıyorsunuz? (How many dates do you have intercourse with?)	25	3	7	6	5	4	15	4	10	16
...date'e çıktığınız kaç kişiye sırlarınızı veya özel hikayelerinizi anlatırsınız? (How many dates do you tell your secrets or intimate stories?)	0	0	3	3	2	3	2	1	3	8
...date'e çıktığınız kaç kişi size sırlarını veya özel hikayelerini anlatır? (How many of your dates tell you their secrets or intimate stories?)	3	2	7	3	2	3	7	4	3	4

Table 21: In a Year – Numbers

Highest count appears to be the number of intercourses they have in a year and lowest one is the number of people they consider as potential relationship material. Reading the data, we might say that their dates are more likely to end up with intercourses and less likely as potential relationships. We see the number of dates they feel close to/intimate within a year comes second place after the number of intercourses they have with a date.

Statistics						
		Bir senede date'e çıktığınız kaç kişiyle kendinizi yakın hissediyorsunuz?	Bir senede date'e çıktığınız kaç kişiyle ilişkili potansiyeli görüyorsunuz?	Bir senede date'e çıktığınız kaç kişiyle seks yapıyorsunuz?	Bir senede date'e çıktığınız kaç kişiye sırlarınızı veya özel hikayelerinizi anlatırsınız?	Bir senede date'e çıktığınız kaç kişi size sırlarını veya özel hikayelerini anlatır?
N	Valid	10	10	10	10	10
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.50	1.50	9.50	2.50	3.80
Minimum		1	0	3	0	2
Maximum		10	4	25	8	7

Table 20: In a Year – Frequencies

For our participants, their dates tell their intimate stories or secrets to them more than they do the same to others. Furthermore, we can differentiate three groups of tendencies among our participants. First group don't share their personal stories or secrets to their dates however in return, some of their dates tell their intimate stories or secrets to them. These are participants 1 and 2. Second group share their intimate stories or secrets to their dates as much as their dates do the same, these are 4, 5, 6 and 9. Finally, third group share their personal stories or secrets to their dates but in return, their dates outnumber them in sharing the same. This final group consists of participants 3, 7, 8 and 10.

3. THE RESULTS

In this section, we will dive into open-ended answers that are interesting and noteworthy to this study. The answers we received here will help us understand each case in depth and to draw conclusions on whether “the imagined intimacy” is an emergent and recurrent theme across all cases. Maybe it will even help us to coin a better wording for or extend the definition of “the imagined intimacy”.

We will focus on open-ended responses of ten participants. This focus will be an extensive one; we’ll cover responses under a question or a group of questions. Our sampling method plays a major role in this section. I believe it allowed us to observe emerging dating and intimacy tendencies, during their formation process in the society. Hopefully, these tendencies might be used to construct new studies or bring up new topics to discuss in the future. In addition, we’ll also try to understanding some noteworthy differences, similarities, or extremities among subjects.

3.1. Definition of Intimacy in Dating and Online Dating (Q.78 & 83)

Open-ended questions begin with number 78, “What is needed for you to feel sincere, comfortable, and intimate in relationships?” This question brought forward a couple of extra concepts like honesty, realness, long term plans, quality time, openness, transparency, and friendliness.

Participant 1 says that he can’t be in a way as people ‘would love’ him and he is already as he is. For the second participant, the other person must give confidence and this is the most important thing for her. Participant 3 needs to see these from the other side, only then he can be himself. When he sees that they are honest and outspoken, he feels more intimate. Fourth participant emphasized time factor;

It takes a certain amount of time. I need to feel safe and be comfortable with them. I must see the same

intimacy from him. I need to see him put me in a special place in his life. Talking about his long-term plans, telling me he likes me, spending a long time together, telling me about his plans. Maybe the right word is not spending “a long time”, it is spending a “certain amount of time”. Because if I completely lost interest in someone, I don't care about them anymore. (Participant 4)

Participant 5 says she must feel that the other person is sincere and needs to be convinced that the probability for them to lie is low. Participant 6 gave his opinions word by word;

The other person should equally be sincere, intimate, and relaxed. They must give confidence. I expect comfort, sincerity, and intimacy. I feel the same way in return. If I like them too much; I try to comfort them, but they must be sincere. Sincerity; what we call as honesty must be present. Otherwise I don't feel comfortable, I can't feel close. Therefore, I distinguished it from closeness and comfort. Comfort, as I said, is important. If the other person is comfortable, it makes you feel comfortable too. They may not be close to you. If a person is friendly and intimate, they'll attract you. But you can feel close to a cold person, if you like them physically or emotionally or mentally. Even though they are not that intimate. (Participant 6)

This might be an indicator of imagined intimacy, because even though the other side doesn't reflect intimacy, participant 6 can feel intimacy based on physical, emotional, or mental attraction.

On the contrary, participant 7 starts her sentences by stating the necessity of sincerity;

First, there must be sincerity, honesty, fun. I feel comfortable with humorous people. It's very important that he's smart. To feel intimate, we must get along and share a similar vision. He doesn't have to share my interests. But he must have improved himself in his area of interest. This is not something you can acquire later on. We both have things, which we are passionate about. He's got to have what he's passionate about. If he is sincere and relaxed, I become like that too. If he is similar to me, I would feel close to him. Like if education, self-improvement, sports, eating healthy... If he is also a person who takes care of himself, and his body I would think he is close to me and feel relaxed.
(Participant 7)

Participant 8 underlines that their date should make them feel they are feeling relaxed. They shouldn't shy away. She says, "If he shares with me; or shares special/private things with me, this shows he is close to me".

Participant 9 gives great importance for the other side to be honest and sincere;

The other side must be absolutely honest and sincere. Honesty. It is a very integral point for me. To be transparent, be warm. A little funny, at least with a sense of humor. I have no expectation in terms of

beauty etc. I have no condition; at the point of attraction it is importance but I have no expectation. It's important feel warm towards each other. You can experience very interesting stuff with people you would expect the least. At that point, universal beauty standards do not apply. There are things that start to be important in my relationship preferences. With age. For example, the first thing needed for me to build up a relationship with a person, I have to spend time with them. If she's honest, sincere, warm, and a sweetie, this increases my chances of spending more time with them. This is the same even in friendships. But after that point, for our relationship to evolve into something special; they have to be well-educated, wise and conscientious. (Participant 9)

It can be noted that for most of the participants it is important to have a sense of 'humor' in their interactions with their dates. While they do not say it directly, their responses imply that humor and fun are also signs of comfort, and maybe even sincerity.

Participant 10 agrees with the 9, in terms of honesty and says;

It's compassion, honesty, time. In fact, a 6-month relationship is not more or less meaningful than a 2-year relationship. In this question, the reason that I say "time" is because it is needed both for me to learn other side's habits and different sides, and for other side to reflect themselves fully. I want to add kindness and affection too. (Participant 10)

While these keywords give a definition of sincerity and intimacy for each case, some are about the things they seek in a partner.

While these keywords reveal differing perspectives on sincerity and intimacy, it also reveals something insightful in understanding the nature of intimacy for all cases. That is, interestingly, 9 out of 10 participants expressed it is a need for them to see the other side is “mutually” experiencing the same sincerity and intimacy they are experiencing. I take this as an elaborate finding, because Merriam Webster Dictionary defines “mutuality” as (1) “the quality or state of being mutual” and (2) “a sharing of sentiments: intimacy” (merriam-webster.com, 2019). We can say that their definition of sincerity is close to the dictionary definition, in the sense that they also need a mutuality of feelings. However, there is more; the question here was inspecting the things they need for them to feel sincere, comfortable, and intimate in relationships; and this highlighting of “mutuality” shows that they have to see a form or level of “intimacy” from other people to build up intimacy themselves.

On a side note, this is not to say that there must be “reciprocal” relation; because “reciprocal” would mean that one side does something the other side does the same in return. Here, in participant’s statements, mutual or shared feelings emerge at the same time, there is a “mirroring” behavior. When we go back to two questions on having a talk on important matters on social messaging apps and through dating apps; 7 of them said at least they “might” have a talk on important matters through both social messaging and dating apps. This shows they are already open to talking about important matters online. However, this does not degrade the importance of mutuality.

On question 83, we asked them to complete a sentence, that is; “For me, sincerity and intimacy... (Complete the sentence as you like.)” While the collective responses reveal that they all give great importance on sincerity and closeness; here, they also make their own definitions of sincerity and intimacy from their personal perspectives. Sincerity is more universal, it has the same importance for all kinds

of relations; be it friendship, love, etc. However, they affiliate closeness more to relationships; whether it is romantic or sexual. For instance, Participant 4 says;

(It is...) To build a real communication with the other person. Being able to talk about everything with them. Concrete things, intangible things; thoughts, experiences, future plans... Mutually valuing each other. The other person telling me something he wouldn't tell everybody. Them showing me they care about me; bringing something and saying "oh I saw something like this and it reminded me of you". This is the same for romantic relationships too, but in addition, affection and emotional closeness is involved. (Participant 4)

In line with participant 4; number 8 says;

The other person is to be honest and relaxed. I think sincerity is a way of forming a relationship, regardless of what type it is. And it is proportional with the interaction you get from the other side.

Closeness is actually the same. I can't say that I feel it more in a long-term relationship. (participant 8)

For participant number 9, what brings sincerity and closeness and helps you to get closer easier is glances and energy. After he had a phase of enlightenment, he thinks that his ability to understand the other person's internal, core energy has developed.

Participant 10 wanted to give keywords, instead of sentences in his answer. His keywords are; "Sharing", "spending time" with each other and good intentions.

Participant 1 emphasized sharing everyday activities with the other person; like spending a weekend with someone in the city, doing other things than having sex; like going to parks, cooking together. He says that he can achieve these things through online dating. Since the question was asking them to define sincerity and closeness, this means that for him, online dating works as a vessel to actualize sincerity and closeness with people he meets online.

Participant 2, maybe because of past encounters, says that one has to be sincere about their feelings, on what they want and shouldn't try to fool the other person, and play with them. She adds, "It's being human".

Subject 3 states that it is like sharing things open-heartedly. For her, this is independent from the length of their friendship or what they feel. They say; "I should be next to someone because I really want to be there".

Participant 5 defines intimacy and closeness as;

(...) something everyone should make each other taste. Without keeping from others, these are things that should be transferred from one another in the best way possible.

Not asking if someone's going to judge you, or thinking that you'll make a fool of yourself when you ask something. Just ask it right away! I think I give sincerity and closeness by asking myself "what's the worst that can happen" and I instantly become overdose sincere. (Participant 5)

What we learned with these two questions is they give great importance to sincerity and honesty. Sincerity is integral and they want it to be mutual, they need to see it in a partner; otherwise they feel deceived. They responded consistently and clearly to sincerity; the notion of "mutuality" was common in all cases and this shows us that in sincerity, seeing a level of intimacy is a must for them. However, on

“closeness” or “intimacy”; they started to describe or define their ideal partners. Be it romantic, sexual, emotional, mental, or something else; for them, all kinds of expectations they have are highly affiliated with closeness towards their online relationships. Intimacy for them has two sides; one is their inner definition, which is grounded on sincerity and mutuality; the other one is their definition deriving from the expectations they have towards their dates and relationships. This very expectation creates a gap that is possibly filled with imagined intimacy.

While Ben-ze'ev's says that “Online relationships are overwhelmed with imaginary content, which may be an obstacle when people attempt to actualize the relationship or when there is a discrepancy between the imagined partner and the actual one”. (Ben-ze'ev, 2004, p. 138) it is in line with our findings in the sense that these imaginary contents are constantly present in participants' minds through these expectations.

3.2. Feeling Close to Somebody (Q.79)

When we asked them “How do you show if you are feeling close to somebody?” with question 79, some themes were remarkably repetitive and persistent among different cases. Let's begin with the “verbally expressive” theme group, in which they display interest and closeness through speaking, talking and overall verbal communication. This group includes participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9. Among them there are different colors; for instance, while participant 5 says she loves to make her dates laugh at the expense of being ridiculous, participant 8 says she tells “beautiful” things like appreciating beautiful traits of the person.

A subgroup of them (participants 1, 3 and 9) use social media, texting, messaging, emojis and Instagram Story replies to stay current and follow the object of their interest closely. I have to add, this social media use might not be limited to these participants, since we have discovered earlier that our group is fluid on social media and has a tendency to stalk people they are attracted to on social media. Even if

there is no contact or messaging with the person they find attractive, they use social media to passively observe and have an idea on them. This finding is also supported by statements of participant 3 on “sending cute messages from all social mediums to stay up to date” and participant 9 on “following them closer on social media to find our mutual interests and differences”. This consistency is revealing on the nature of their interest, because they want to be present in other people’s lives to express their closeness.

Another subgroup with participants 3, 5, 6 and 10, have a humorous side to them, from doing funny stuff to have a laugh together or smiling more to that person than they do normally to others.

Second theme apparent in the group can be called as “physical affection seekers”, they want to show and receive physical affection towards the people they are attracted to. Participant 4 summed this as, “I feel physically close, physical closeness apart from a sex... Cuddling each other, doing nothing but laying down together and loving each other. Kissing from the cheek when we meet. It’s physical affection”. Along with her, subjects 2, 7, 8 and 10 express their attraction through their physical outputs as well. List of these physical outputs include cuddling, hugging, sitting to their laps, laying down together and doing nothing, kissing from the cheek. Participants 2, 7 and 8 do not need any reason to touch, they say they become “touchier” overall with that person.

Third theme group is clustered around the label of “gift and experience sharers”; they share material gifts or immaterial experiences with the people they are attracted to. This group include participants 1, 4, 7 and 10. They plan activities for mutual interests, learn more on things their date likes, prepare surprise meals, do complimentary favors, give material gifts, organise original experiences. For instance, participant 7 says:

I generally love to make my friends and boyfriends happy by preparing surprises for them. If I see something that reminds me of them, I buy it for them. I wrote a song for one of my boyfriends and uploaded

it on YouTube and sent it to him as a surprise. I gifted a friend something she saw on the internet. I also love to show my love through material affection.
(Participant 7)

Tinder has a feature with which you can set a geographic perimeter for your search and even before this study, I've heard people preferring dates that are close to them in location, living in nearby neighborhoods. For our study, geographical proximity is preferable to some; but apart from that another theme is more prominent for this study; regardless of where they live, they want to be close to a person they are interested in by all means. This include touching, sending messages, preparing surprises for them. Some of the respondents underlined that they do the same things to their friends and loved ones as well. So, they reflect what they already perform when they feel close to someone in their daily lives and they don't separate their dates from their real lives. Following this, we may conclude that online dating is not completely different from conventional forms of dating or 'old-fashioned' face-to-face dating. As opposed to some who may say that people do online dating just for sex, or fun; from responses we can see that people involved in online dating also want intimacy, closeness, sharing etc. This need is independent from the length of the relationship; their relationship may last short or long, but the need of true bonding is present.

3.3. Online Dating versus “Normal” Dating (Q.80 & 81)

We will discuss questions 80 and 81 together as much as we can since they are connected to each other. One of them asks about the differences between online dating and “normal” dating for them, the second one asks if they prefer online dating or “normal” dating. These responses were important for understanding their expectations, but also revealing on their opinions on online dating mediums.

Question 80 was, “What are the differences between online dating and normal dating for you?” and question 81 was, “Which one would you would prefer, online dating or “normal” dating? Why?” The responses we had here unearth several topics at once. To begin with, all of them believe there is no difference between online dating and normal dating for them. Participant 1, 7, 8 and 9 directly told this. Participant 1 says that there is no difference between a woman he meets on Tinder and a woman he meets at Babylon music venue.

I can say that the rest of the participants would agree, because they see online dating merely as a vessel, a medium or a channel to meet new people. Online dating and traditional dating are equal in rank, they are just different ways of building new connections for them. Some of them even gave examples from their online friends.

Participant 8 says there is no difference between online and offline dating for her, it just depends on the person because generally other people’s perception on online dating is a little bit more sexual. She added she had a phase like that, and another phase considering if she can have a relationship. However, she believes her expectations are the same when she meets someone through a friend.

Some of the participants gave very illustrative examples through analogies. These analogies they came up with, to define online dating as a medium, are quite fascinating:

Tinder, your cousin, a friend, or a public space; they are all middlemen. In the next step, I see no difference; online dating is just a tool for people to find each other. It’s a product of modern society, where men and women work during the day and have no time to socialize. Dating apps appeared because of this and in this sense, they are beautiful. Back in the old times, people went to wedding ceremonies; in fact, oftentimes they got married to the people they’ve met in such occasions. (Participant 9)

It's like seeing the other person's CV before meeting them. Normal dating is something that you go with less information. (Participant 5)

Online dating lets you learn more about their brain. It is like living together before getting married to your partner. (Participant 3)

Just see it as a portal to meet with people; when you are looking for a home you go to Sahibinden.com, it's the same in online dating for making new friends. (Participant 7)

Online dating is like purchasing something from Hepsiburada.com. You see the product, you like it and you want to buy it.

What are these elements? It has a visual, tastes, like music, or a description they explain themselves. It depends on what you want to gain from there, if there's something you want to get. It is the same for everyone; there is a greater chance for you to come across someone from online than offline. The variety of people is greater. More people mean more probability for all of us. (Participant 10)

Most of them enjoy knowing more about the person they are interested in before the date or before things get serious. What is more interesting is that according to

these statements, online dating makes looking for potential dates as easy as online shopping for products. Observing a person before going on a date goes hand in hand with this “convenience”. Can a person get addicted to online dating; just like online shopping, smoking and drug abuse? While, this question requires further studies, we can say that it is becoming a part of everyday life and everyday practices.

We can back this up with the help of responses to question 81. Participant 1 prefers online dating because it skips several processes at once and prevents time loss. Participant 2 doesn't have a preference but says online dating is easier for her to access, and she uses it because she has no time. Participant 3 picks online dating and adds:

You can understand if they're funny, stupid, what is their job, what kind of life they have... You can even see it on their Instagram profiles without even talking to them, and do social profiling. The time span for jumping to Instagram is very important, if you do it so soon she won't follow you back. When you move your conversation from a dating app to Instagram, the spark fades a little because of the change in user experience and medium. But messaging from Tinder is not very convenient in public. Most women do the messaging around 7 p.m.; in weekdays it is after they come back from work and in weekends it is Sunday evening. I suppose they think like this; they live whatever they like on Saturday. And when they're vacantly hanging out by themselves at home they login. Also, for weekdays, they check the app when they wake up in the morning. (Participant 3)

Participant 4 said she would have preferred face to face meeting if it was possible to meet new people all the time. But since there's no such thing, she does online dating. Participant 7's response is consistent with it.

Everyone wants a coincidental “oops I dropped my books” kind of first contact. To be honest, I would prefer that too. But online dating sorts you under several labels and I say why don't I give a chance.
(Participant 7)

As we have mentioned earlier, Tinder and Instagram's user experiences facilitated online dating. Our study shows that the conveniences these apps provide play a huge part in their dating practices and it also has effects in their everyday lives. All the subjects talked about different facilitations online dating offers; however, the speed of communication with ease of use and accessibility, and the space it provides of observation are the most highlighted ones. For question 80, participant 1 said, “You can get closer easier both on sexual and friendly terms, because you know more about them before seeing them for the first time”. Participant 4 said, “Online dating is faster and you have more initiative. I can see what they like; you can understand their mindset or if you can get along or not”. Participant 9 had a more detailed opinion on convenience and his opinion demonstrates how online dating becomes a habit;

Online dating facilitates this, in the sense that without spending money, labor, effort people come to your screen. In the very least, you begin communication by first impression; finding attractive or beautiful. It brings new, potential people in front of you from the comfort of your own home and couch. (Participant 9)

Participant 5 backs up participant 9, with his answer to question 81:

Online dating is more accessible and easier; therefore, I don't prefer normal dating. Normally you can't even spare some time for your friends in your daily life. You don't lose that time in online dating; you can do online dating while on a bus, listening to music or when you've met with a friend you haven't seen in a month. You decide if you have time to spare for it after the date. (Participant 5)

Participant 10's response to question 80 and participant 6's response to question 81 show us how online dating eliminates the hardships of communication in public spaces.

Participant 6 says he prefers online dating and adds...

Because it lets you talk about things you can't in normal dating. Maybe asking questions you normally cannot. Regardless of age, you might like someone way too much, get too excited to say anything at all. Online dating can be more comfortable. (Participant 6)

This answer is very good for understanding self-representation, because they also feel more relaxed and open when they communicate online. Because, just like Benze'ev noted, they also feel more free to express themselves.

Participant 10 demonstrates a good example for people who don't like to be labelled by the first impressions of others, and prefer defining themselves. Online dating seems to give him a space for freedom in expressing himself as he likes;

Offline is more boring. Online gives versatility on learning something about them with asking questions and this is intriguing for me. With online dating I feel like myself. With offline, I feel like I must be the person they labelled me as when we first met. If I drank too much of alcohol, it's because I wanna hang out like a rockstar, not that I am always like that. This is a barrier, if I don't get that signal from the other side, date becomes unproductive: less dialogue, no further plans. This is in a bad way. Especially with the people I meet randomly in public places, there is an anxiety of looking cool. I don't feel physically comfortable in public places. I don't even know where to put my hands and arms. (Participant 10)

Along with other participants' responses, this makes me wonder if "normal" or "traditional" dating styles will be outdated or maybe even obsolete in near future. Participant 2 stated that she doesn't remember when was the last time she did normal dating and participant 5 said there is no normal dating for her anymore. Participant 4 told us that around her, no one meets organically anymore. She finds online dating very helpful for meeting new people due to fast-paced everyday life.

Of course, the matter in discussion has also negative characteristics. Participant 2 says, "Online dating has many question marks to it. You keep on solving them all the time and it is tiring. You get to know this person only from his own statements and you trust". This shows the hit and miss aspect of the story. First you must go through hundreds of profiles to find someone suitable, then you talk with them and pick the most suitable one for you and your intent. After that, if you both feel compatible you go on a date. If you survive the first one, second date comes but there is no algorithm for them to be sure about their dates. Let's remember some results from the analysis. On the moment they understand something's going to

happen with their date; 4 of them said “I have an idea before we meet”. 4 replied “after talking face to face for a while”, 1 said “after a couple of dates” and 1 said “generally I don’t”.

Another finding to remember is that participants think that they express themselves as they are to their dates. However, when it comes to the other side of the equation, they are not sure if their dates express themselves as they are, especially towards people they meet online.

In addition, to the question “How frequently your relationships start online?”; 5 said “half and half”, 5 said “most of the time”. This might create an unfortunate pattern; because most of the people they date are people they meet online. Eliminating 4 people who have an idea before they meet, the rest of the participants need some face to face time to understand if their date is suitable for them. Lack of sincerity and openness of the other person seems to be one of the causes of habitual or cyclical online dating; in the sense that they must go back to ground zero, after each failed attempt or each time their relationship with another date ends.

Just like in real life and in other places on the internet, another risk in online dating is deception and scams. There is always a chance for other people to upload photos that don’t belong them or tell lies about their past, present, and future.

Online dating has more surprises; The person you meet might not be what you expected in terms of looks or personality. Or even might not be human at all. I pick my most beautiful pictures, but also am careful to select the ones that represents me the best. There are people who do the exact opposite. There are scammers like this. Therefore, online dating lacks reliability, cause first eye contact has importance on reliability. It is called “cyberspace” because of this. You create a world of your own, but when you unplug it stops. (Participant 6)

This is valid not only for participant 6, all subjects believe that other people don't show their true selves and online dating lacks a level of reliability. But does this contradict our earlier finding that they would at least "somewhat trust" people they might meet in the future from the internet? On the contrary, they emphasize reliability and note such examples through their responses. Therefore, we can say that this demonstrates they had become "seasoned online daters".

3.4. Expectations (Q.82)

Question 82 asked them, "What is it that you seek in a dating app or in broader sense, in online dating?" There were two sets of responses; one set was on the type of relationship they seek and the other revealed their expectations from online dating platforms and apps.

Participant 1 says he is not looking for a relationship, he adds he doesn't look for a relationship generally. He thinks in online dating platforms people are not serious and he doesn't look for anything because it is not something he can find in online dating.

He uses Tinder more than he does OK Cupid, because he thinks Tinder is more user friendly. He thinks Tinder creates an intimate and special place.

Second participant is looking for sincerity, regardless of relationship expectations, because, again, she doesn't think relationships can be found when you search for them. But she adds;

I think I want to get away from my life. The other side knows only what I tell them. He won't know anything that I don't want to speak about at that moment or things that I don't want him to know. (Participant 2)

This is revealing on two topics; the feeling of security and online representation of the self. She feels secure with her online dates, because sometimes your social circle knows too much about you, and you feel like there is an obligation to tell them everything; therefore “getting away” here, carry a level of liberation from obligations deriving from the roles you have in your life.

Participant 3 expects quality selection of people from the apps and he adds; “There shouldn’t be any whores, yahoos, stupid people. But it’s hard in Turkey”.

While participant 10 says that he is tired of seeing escort’s profiles, and the app should do something about it; Participant 6 has a similar note; “I don’t want to see fake profiles. There should be bodyguards at the entrance; meaning they should be picky about the members”.

Participant 7 notes that she erased Happn app because it showed everyone at once, and she doesn’t want to see hookah smoking people. For her, education is very important and she wants to set her own criteria. She adds, “This is why I love Ok Cupid, it eliminates a certain education level since the app language is English. And secondly, you answer tons of questions and it shows both my and other person’s personality”.

Returning to participant 6, his first expectation in online dating is expanding his social circle. He adds he has various expectations from online dating, such as meeting new people, spending his spare time, having a good time; finding a sexual partner or a relationship, or just having fun.

(The people I meet through online dating) are more “bulls eye” actually. Because in online dating you can pick; or you set up some criteria, they set up some criteria and the app show you someone accordingly. This is why online dating apps are preferred.
(Participant 6)

Participant 9 talks about his favorite feature of Tinder;

When you buy premium you can show yourself at a different location. I tried this before, I used it to Portugal and Estonia. ...This is not only about sexuality, local people know better and they show you places you can't find on your own; like a pub, or a hot venue. For instance, when I went to Amsterdam, all the people told me about the known coffeeshops, but when there are local people around, they can take you to coffeeshops outside of the city center.
(Participant 9)

Participant 4 doesn't differentiate a flirt from a relationship in terms of respect. She says; "Not only physically, I want him to mentally value me and give importance to my opinions. I want to enjoy spending time and having conversations with him". She notes that she makes online dating to find a flirt or a relationship, and having sex without emotional involvement is not for her.

On a side note, the type of interaction both parties expect is a topic on its own. Sex is one of them in online dating. In routine daily life, everyone says "some people use Tinder just for sex", this is why it shows in the responses. Participant 8 says that even if she is there just for sex, she still needs to feel an attraction and mental harmony.

Participant 5 told she doesn't want to feel loneliness anymore. Online dating serves as a way to talk and connect with people. Since he gave up using Tinder 3 years ago, she mostly uses Instagram for online dating. During the interview I asked her to explain how is the "process" like when you use social platforms as online dating mediums, she replied;

The urge of writing them something comes when you are using Instagram and Twitter. I can comment on

their photos, write under a Twitter thread and join a conversation, I can write a private message. The person I write can be someone new or one of the people that I'm already flirting with. It can be triggered by a dream I had that day, or an excitement. For me, it a feeling no different than saying "I want to punch someone in the face right now" or "I wish there was a pillow to cry on right now". Meaning that I experience an emptiness of "I wish there was someone for me to tell something". When I'm telling about this to my friends, I say "Ayşe shared this and I relieved myself under it". Because I want to do something and I do it. It can be a chit chat or asking them how they feel and listening to them. Because I generally socialize on social media, these interactions become my daily experiences and I share them to my friends as experiences I had.

(Participant 5)

Her answer is revealing on the topic we discussed with Goffman's observations on daily life and our assumption that social media changed the way we behave also in our "real" daily lives. She shares these digital communications as the things that happened to her that day and this is an example on how digital communication creates a social capital that has a value in real life.

3.5. Noteworthy Experiences and Stories (Q.84 & 85)

Our subjects are all seasoned online daters, they had many different experiences with a variety of people. In this part, I want to focus on the most interesting ones I came across during the interviews.

Question 85 was; “Are there any subjects that you keep from the people around you, but have already talked with people you have just met? Can you give an example, or examples?”

We can group the subjects here; participants 1, 4, 7, 9 says no. Participant 6 says there must have been; but can't seem to remember any examples and participants 2, 3, 5, 8, and 10 said yes.

Participants 2 shares things about her work life, because her own friends scrutinize everything way too much when she talks to them. Participant 3 says he opens easier about his sexual stories and enjoyments with them, but also might share his psychology if he is not feeling happy. He also adds;

I also tell some of them to the people around me, but the people I know might talk behind my back, but a person I know less can do less harm to me. At most, I can block or erase from Tinder. (Participant 3)

On a side note, participant 3's comments here also reveal the speed factor in online dating. When a conversation starts, it can bloom quickly by adding each other from other social platforms, exchanging phone numbers, sending photos and messaging with an increasing momentum. On the other hand, as participant 3 says, it can end as fast as it started. You can erase, omit or block the person you're talking to; so online dating also has immediate results like unmatching on Tinder and blocking from social communication platforms (Whatsapp, Facebook messenger, Instagram).

This is in line with Ben-ze'ev argument on discontinuity, he says that;

In online relationships, one person can just disappear for a while without any explanation. This sudden discontinuity does not prevent each of them from ruminating about the relationship and experiencing various emotions toward the other person. However, significant discontinuity reduces, and sometimes even eliminates, the extent of concentration on the other person. (Ben-ze'ev, 2004, p. 48)

Therefore, there is an immediate reward and punishment in online dating. Opening up to strangers or 'new acquaintances' from online mediums and telling them about your important or private matters are things that conventionally require a level of intimacy. In contrast, the speedy nature of online dating might be contributing to Ben-ze'ev's discrepancy between 'imagination' and 'sincerity' because when social interactions happen fast; one might lose the sight of things, have a tendency to overlook facts or miss important details that are revealing about the person in question or about themselves and all of these possibilities make room for imagination to fill the gaps; therefore building up to an imagined intimacy.

Participant 8 tells the problem she faces at work to get a fresh perspective, but also notes that confidentiality of telling a stranger is the second reason for this. Participant 10 opens up his family issues and this is something new for him; since he thought that talking about your family is something shameful. The most interesting story came from participant 5. She responded with a true story; the story of the time when she first realized that she was bisexual.

When I first realized that I was bisexual, a better term would sapiosexual though, instead of telling this to the people around me, I told this to people I met through the internet. It was an important period, in the

middle of my mom and dad's divorce. Before that, I usually categorized "I should tell this to mom" and "I should tell about this to my dad". For instance, we played truth or dare and I kissed a girl at the park... I even told such things to my mom. But they were in a period, which separated them from their parental identities, and I didn't want them to question if this person is sick, evil, normal; or ask "is my child x". I didn't know how they'll approach; and I didn't want the balance between us to collapse. Or things to change. This is why I also didn't tell this to my friends. I didn't know how it will affect our friendship. We can say it is fear, fear of losing the bond between us. So, I told about this to the people who don't know anything about me, and won't question me. They were people, who I was already talking to, can ask questions and think that are knowledgeable about the topic. ...I first opened up to my sister. Whether you like it or not, you begin to live a different life. Things they don't know multiply. You start to keep the bond you tried to preserve once, at a distance. There are things they know and they don't know. If I have a long term relationship my mom knows, and my dad knows too even if I don't tell him in person. They can't reach information on my platonic loves, or what I do every night. Because you drew the line back then, and because of that line they can't be included. But it's not the case for my sibling. Or it's not like that when I'm around friends, who I feel comfortable with. (Participant 5)

This story shows how online communication and online dating can create spaces for people to represent their true-selves. For close friends and family, where there is a fear of losing the person, people don't easily take risks. This is why intimate but 'threatening', 'scary' or 'fragile' stories might be kept for an intimacy that is easier to let go or to risk. We can say that this "imagined intimacy" or "imagined closeness" is one, which you can easily take risks by talking about things that you may not normally talk about with people close to you. If imagined intimacy is not needed or desired anymore it can easily be ended, blocked or limited, and this makes it a delicate or fragile type of intimacy.

This is similar to Ben-ze'ev's discussion on the dual nature of online relationships. He points out this duality on sincerity and imagination;

A high degree of concealment along with a high degree of self-disclosure and sincerity are both common in online relationships. In such relationships, we often either do not know anything real about our online partner or know more about her than her most intimate friends do. Such extreme levels of familiarity are not common in offline circumstances. Having no true information at all about our offline friend is impossible, since our activities together will reveal some of her characteristics. It is also rare, however, to know our actual friend's most profound secrets; she is likely to keep such secrets private since they may make her extremely vulnerable. (Ben-ze'ev, 2004, p. 45)

Participant 5's story is also a good example on true intimacy; sometimes you want to be selectively intimate with people, sometimes sincerity comes from a stranger that is more related to your context than the people around you. This might show us, how real intimacy flourishes in the midst of barriers or works its way through

odds and creates a space for self to perform its desires, needs, and tendencies. We can conclude that this story suggests when it finds a way to perform itself in a suitable environment, *imagined intimacy* might transform into a real intimacy.

Question 85 was; “Had there been any people that you have met online but felt really close to and had a special experience with? If yes, can you tell its story?” All participant said yes to this question. A person he hung out for 10-11 months as open-relationship, told Participant 1 about the problems she had with his father and how he reminds her of his dad. A person participant 2 dated for a week introduced her to his cousins. Her date was here for a limited time and after that he went back to London. She finds this quite interesting, she says “family is important” and questions why he did something like that. She thinks that it might be because she gives sense of trustworthiness to people.

Participant 3’s example of special experience is a girl she met on Tinder. They hung out for 2 years, and during this period, there were times they both had significant others. He explains “Then I fucked with her best friends and everything went downhill. It was special because she sent beautiful nudes, sex was quality, messaging was great and woman was a true experience”.

Participant 4’s last relationship lasted three and a half years. After she broke up with her boyfriend, she used Tinder for the first time and started dating different people. She had a very good communication with the last person she got close with, in fact, she says that they had a better communication than her last relationship.

Participant 5 said he had experiences he hadn’t ever thought of before. One of them is still flirting with someone, after learning that they had a significant other. Another one is having webcam sexuality for 3-4 years with someone who she never met face-to-face. She says she was okay with this because she thought “this person opens the same intimacy to me and gives me the sincerity that they expect from me”.

Participant 6 says that he had many close friends from the internet, an on and off relationship that lasted for 7-8 years. He notes that he had sexual encounters, in which they tried different fantasies.

Participant 8 says there was a person she dated for a while and felt extremely close to them. The other person was equally intimate with her, telling her things that he usually never tell anybody; like psychological problems he has and family issues. She says “I thought we could have a relationship, but then I realized that I can’t deal with these things at that moment. It turned into a relation that we meet whenever we want to see each other, sometimes not sexual, sometimes we share our problems; something between friendship and sexuality”.

Remember participant 10 starting to enjoy telling his family issues to his dates, and participant 3 talking about his problems to strangers? Along with participant 8’s response here, we can see that there are various standpoints on similar topics. These topics are similar, in terms of intimacy. They all see the same topics as intimate and special.

Noting that she is not familiar with spirituality, Participant 7 says that she orgasmed by “reiki” and she found it fascinating.

In general, you can think of my life like a rainbow. I want to be with people with different colors. I met an industrial engineer, then I learned that he is also a diver... Or I met a Turkish director again from online dating. We did a road trip in Sweden and he filmed the story of my road trip and film got an award in a festival. I love experiences. ...I have a friend who works on artificial intelligence. I sit and listen to him. I have a friend who I label as personal politics advisor. Right now I’m talking to a Frech guy, he’s going to teach me how to play ukulele. There was a Norwegian guy. He taught me how to make

notebooks. I am a person who shapes her life through experiences. (Participant 7)

In online dating you have many options to choose from and you can never know what will come up next. This aspect makes online dating a fun activity and participant 7's response demonstrates online dating's fun side. For people who constantly seek change, or ones that have extremely stable lives, online dating adds motion and different flavors to life. Through this lens, we can say that it is also a spare time activity that might create very special experiences.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the stories of our participants, some topics were highlighted. To begin with, for our participants sincerity and honesty are very important in all relationships, and this includes friendships, family ties, etc. However, the most prominent observation we found here is that in order for them to be sincere, they need to see the same sincerity from the other side. All participants consistently responded with an expectation from the other side to be equally sincere and honest. We called this as “mutuality”, and noted that if they didn’t see this mutuality in their partners, they feel somewhat deceived.

On feeling close and intimate with somebody, our findings showed us Benze’ev’s paradox between sincerity and imagination. They expect and want to experience sincerity. However, closeness is different for them, because it is where they define an ideal partner; they give an imaginary definition of the person they would be close to or intimate with. Be it sexual, mental, romantic; all these expectations revealed an imagined intimacy; since these “imagined” relationship and intimacy expectations are highly related to closeness for them. So, we found out that, imagined intimacy is relevant in the sense that pre-made, “imagined” definitions of what they expect in an ideal relationship, and it coincides with their expectations on intimacy they would like to experience.

On the differences between online and normal dating, we saw that the conveniences these apps provide play a huge part in their dating practices and it also has effects in their everyday lives. The speed of communication, ease of use, accessibility, and the space it provides for observation people beforehand were important themes for the participants.

On self-representation, we found out that they feel more relaxed and open when they communicate online. Because, just like Ben-ze'ev noted, they also feel more free to express themselves. Lack of sincerity and openness of the other person seems to be one of the causes of habitual or cyclical online dating; in the sense that they must go back to ground zero, after each failed attempt or each time their relationship with another date ends. Online communication and online dating creates a platform, a place for them to represent their true-selves. Sometimes you want to be selectively intimate with people, sometimes sincerity comes from a stranger that is more related to your context than the people around you. We found out that real intimacy might be actualized through imagined intimacy, when an online dater needs a space for self to perform its desires, needs, and tendencies. That is to say, if the environment is suitable, real intimacy finds its way to perform itself with a transformed imagined intimacy.

From the results, we have seen that imagined intimacy can begin at any point throughout the online dating communication. During the communication, each part expresses themselves through their everyday life signifiers and this shows their social and cultural status. These signifiers can be observed as details in their photos, Spotify connections that show their current favorite songs, their bios or written material on their profiles, or an Instagram link attached to their profiles.

Self-narration is created from both sides in one online dating partner and this creates a temporary digital realm or a space of communication. Repetition of total online dating experience gives way to a communication that is more concentrated and fragile at the same time. Therefore, this space of “mutual” self-representation and self-narration is more concentrated and fragile as well and this is how imagined intimacy is more fragile and concentrated than regular intimacy. Throughout our findings, it is reinforced that imagined intimacy is cyclical and situational. Given the chance, imagined intimacy might transform into a regular intimacy, however the frequency and number of options might be a barrier to form a consistent and continuous form of bond.

Further research can be done on many aspects of the topic. To begin with, asking why people prefer small, “island-like” imagined intimacies over continuous and consistent regular intimacies, that are more like “continents” would give interesting results. Do people utilize imagined intimacy for a period of time, like “a phase”; or would they prefer imagined intimacy if they could attain various imagined intimacies throughout their lives, like even when they are “old”, “ugly”, “disabled”, or unfavorable in some way. Would this new form of fragile intimacy change the overall understanding of intimacy for humankind, since online dating is accelerating and spreading enormously? How does it affect relations that are founded outside the online realm? Can imagined intimacy be an heir to some other form of intimacy that is anthropologically present before digitalization and online dating? Furthermore, a quantitative optimization of this study would be helpful in understanding overall societal tendencies of the population.

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APPENDIX: SURVEY AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

BÖLÜM 1: TEMEL BİLGİLER

1. Cinsiyet

Kadın

Erkek

2. Yaş

18-23

24-29

29-35

36-42

42+

3. Eğitim Durumu

Lise

Üniversite / Lisans

Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

Profesör

4. İş Durumu

Çalışıyor

İşsiz

İş aramıyor

BÖLÜM 2: İLİŞKİLER

5. Şu Anki Aktif Dating Durumu

Aktif olarak date'lere çıkıyorum.

Ara sıra date'lere çıkıyorum.

Aktif olarak date'lere çıkmıyorum.

6. Eęer varsa ařaęıdakilerden hangisi sizi daha doęru tanımlar?

- Evliyim.
- Ciddi bir iliřkim var.
- Bir sredir iliřkim var.
- Partnerimle aık iliřki yařıyorum.
- Birka kiři ile aynı anda grřyorum.
- Dzenli iliřki yařamıyorum.

7. Ařaęıdakilerden hangisi sizi daha doęru tanımlar?

- İliřkim var, tek eřliyim.
- İliřkim var, ok eřliyim veya aık iliřki yařıyorum.
- İliřkim yok, olunca tek eřliyim.
- İliřkim yok, olunca ok eřliyim.

8. Son iliřkiniz biteli ne kadar oldu?

- 3 yıldan fazla
- 1-3 yıl
- 6 ay - 1 yıl
- 3 - 6 ay
- 1 - 3 ay
- Birka hafta

9. Son iliřkiniz ne kadar srd?

- 3 yıldan fazla
- 1-3 yıl
- 6 ay - 1 yıl
- 3 - 6 ay
- 1 - 3 ay
- Birka hafta

10. Bugne kadarki en uzun iliřkiniz ne kadar srd?

- 3 yıldan fazla
- 1-3 yıl

- 6 ay - 1 yıl
- 3 - 6 ay
- 1 - 3 ay
- Birkaç hafta

11. Yaşadığınız ülkeye ait hissediyor musunuz?

- Evet
- Hayır

12. Çevrenizin size uyduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

- Evet
- Hayır

13. Daha iyi bir çevreyi hak ettiğinizi düşünüyor musunuz?

- Evet
- Hayır

14. Daha iyi bir çevre edinmek için sosyal ağları kullanıyor musunuz?

- Evet
- Hayır

15. Daha iyi bir çevre edinmek için etrafınızdaki insanların çevresini kullanıyor musunuz? (Networking, arkadaşının arkadaşlarıyla sosyalleşmek, vb.)

- Evet
- Hayır

16. Kendi çevrenizden aradığınız ilişkiyi bulabileceğinize inanıyor musunuz?

- Evet
- Hayır

17. “İlişkinin değerini belirlemede uzunluğu/süresi önemli bir faktördür.”

- Kesinlikle katılıyorum.
- Katılıyorum
- Kararsızım

Katılmıyorum

Asla katılmıyorum.

18. “Uzun ilişkiler, kısa süren ilişkilere göre daha çok önem taşır.”

Kesinlikle katılıyorum.

Katılıyorum

Kararsızım

Katılmıyorum

Asla katılmıyorum.

19. “Bir ilişkiye ne kadar süreceğini düşünerek başlamam.”

Kesinlikle katılıyorum.

Katılıyorum

Kararsızım

Katılmıyorum

Asla katılmıyorum.

BÖLÜM 3: SOSYAL MEDYA

20. Aşağıdaki sosyal ağlardan hangilerini düzenli olarak kullanıyorsunuz?

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter

Snapchat

Pinterest

LinkedIn

Reddit

YouTube

Tinder

OkCupid

Diğer: _____

21. En sık kullandığınız sosyal ağ hangisidir?

Facebook

- Instagram
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- Reddit
- YouTube
- Tinder
- OkCupid
- Diğer: _____

Aşağıdaki seçeneklerden size en uygun olanlarını işaretleyin.

SORULAR ŞIKLAR	Tamamını	Çoğunu	Yarisını	Birazını	Buna zaman ayırmam
22. Sosyal medya uygulamalarında geçirdiğiniz zamanın ne kadarını kendinizle ilgili içerik paylaşmaya ayırırsınız?					
23. Sosyal medya uygulamalarında geçirdiğiniz zamanın ne kadarını diğer					

insanların paylaştıkları içeriklere bakmaya ayırırsınız?					
24. Sosyal medya uygulamalarında geçirdiğiniz zamanın ne kadarını takip ettiğiniz sayfaların paylaşımlarına bakmaya ayırırsınız?					

25. Fiziksel olarak beğendiğiniz, ilginizi çeken insanların profillerine ne sıklıkta girip bakarsınız?

- Çok sık bakarım.
- Sık sık bakarım.
- Ara ara bakarım.
- Nadiren bakarım.
- Hiç bakmam.

26. Hoşlandığınız insanla sosyal ağlarda arkadaş değilseniz profiline ne sıklıkta girip bakarsınız?

- Çok sık bakarım.
- Sık sık bakarım.
- Ara ara bakarım.
- Nadiren bakarım.

Hiç bakmam.

27. Sosyal mesajlaşma uygulamalarında önemli bir konuyu konuşur musunuz?

(Whatapp, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, Instagram)

Kesinlikle konuşurum.

Konuşurum.

Konuşabilirim.

Konuşmam.

Asla konuşmam.

28. İyi ya da kötü, önemli anları sosyal medya hesaplarınızda paylaşır mısınız?

Kesinlikle paylaşıyorum.

Paylaşıyorum.

Paylaşabilirim.

Paylaşmam.

Kesinlikle paylaşmam.

BÖLÜM 4: ONLINE DATING

29. En sık kullandığınız online dating servisi hangisidir?

Tinder

Bumble

OkCupid

Match

Raya

Hinge

Happn

Plenty of Fish

Siberalem

Inner Circle

Diğer: _____

30. Dating uygulamalarında mesajlaşırken önemli bir konuyu konuşur musunuz? (Tinder, Bumble, OkCupid, vb.)

- Kesinlikle konuşurum.
- Konuşurum.
- Konuşabilirim.
- Konuşmam.
- Asla konuşmam.

31. Dating uygulamasında mesajlaştığınız biriyle ne kadar süre içinde buluşmak istersiniz?

- İlk fırsatta buluşurum.
- Kısa sürede buluşmak isterim.
- Kişiye göre değişir.
- Uzun bir süre buluşmayı istemem.
- Hiç buluşmamayı isterim.

32. Dating uygulamasında tanıştığınız biriyle aranızda bir şey olup olmayacağını ne zaman anlarsınız?

- Buluşmadan önce kafamda bir fikir vardır.
- Buluştuğum ilk anda anlarım.
- Biraz yüz yüze konuştuktan sonra anlarım.
- Birkaç buluşma sonra anlarım.
- Genelde anlayamam.

33. Kullandığınız dating uygulamasına başka bir sosyal hesabınızı bağladınız mı?

- Evet
- Hayır

34. Evet ise hangi hesaplarınızı bağladınız?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Snapchat

- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- Reddit
- YouTube
- Diđer: _____

BÖLÜM 5: DATING vs. ONLINE DATING

35. İnternette insanlarla tanıştıktan ne kadar süre sonra onlarla kendinizle ilgili özel detayları paylaşırsınız?

- En kısa sürede.
- Kısa sürede.
- Ortalama bir süre sonra.
- Uzun bir süre sonra.
- Çok uzun süre sonra.

36. Tecrübelerinize göre, internette tanıştığınız insanlar ne kadar güvenilirlerdi?

- Oldukça güvenilirlerdi.
- Güvenilirlerdi.
- Ortalama derecede güvenilirlerdi.
- Az güvenilirlerdi.
- Güvenilir değillerdi.

37. Bundan sonra internette tanıştığınız insanlara ne kadar güvenirsiniz?

- Kesinlikle güvenirim.
- Güvenirim.
- Biraz güvenirim.
- Güvenmem.
- Asla güvenmem.

38. Arkadaşlıklarınız ne sıklıkla online ortamda başlar?

- Her zaman.

- Coğunlukla.
- Yarı yarıya.
- Nadiren.
- Asla.

39. Romantik ilişkileriniz ne sıklıkla online ortamda başlar?

- Her zaman.
- Coğunlukla.
- Yarı yarıya.
- Nadiren.
- Asla.

40. "Yüz yüze tanışmayla kıyasladığımda; yeni insanlarla online olarak tanışmaktan..."

- Çok daha fazla keyif alırım.
- Daha fazla keyif alırım.
- Yüz yüze tanışmak kadar keyif alırım.
- Daha az keyif alırım.
- Çok daha az keyif alırım.

41. "Yüz yüze başlayan arkadaşlıklarım ile kıyasladığımda; online ortamda başlayan arkadaşlıklarımın..."

- Çok daha iyi olduklarını düşünürüm.
- Daha iyi olduklarını düşünürüm.
- Eşit düzeyde olduklarını düşünürüm.
- Daha kötü olduklarını düşünürüm.
- Çok daha kötü olduklarını düşünürüm.

42. Online dating'de beğendiğiniz birini, sosyal medyadan takip eder misiniz?

- Evet
- Hayır

43. Aranız bozulursa ya da soğursanız takipten çıkarır mısınız?

- Evet
- Duruma göre değişir, belki

Hayır

44. Sizce insanlar online dating'i aşağıdakilerden hangisi için kullanıyorlar?

Gerçek bir etkileşim

Günlük bir aktivite

45. Online dating'de aradığınız yakınlık ya da samimiyeti bulduğunuza inanıyor musunuz?

Kesinlikle evet

Evet

Emin değilim

Hayır

Kesinlikle hayı

46. Genellikle online dating uygulamaları ya da mecralarında ortalama olarak aynı anda kaç kişi ile görüşüyorsunuz?

47. Genellikle sosyal medya uygulamaları ya da mecralarında ortalama olarak aynı anda kaç kişi ile görüşüyorsunuz?

Aşağıda size en uygun olan cevabın yanına çarpı koyarak işaretleme yapın.

SORULAR ŞIKLAR	Kesinlikle Evet	Evet	Emin Değilim	Hayır	Kesinlikle Hayır
48. İnternette tanışıp date'e çıktığımız birine, kendinizi olduğunuz gibi ifade					

ettiđinize inanıyor musunuz?					
49. Arkadařlarınız vasıtasıyla tanışıp date'e ıktıđınız birine, kendinizi olduđunuz gibi ifade ettiđinize inanıyor musunuz?					
50. Ortamda (sokakta, eđlence mekanında, partide, uakta vb.) tanışıp date'e ıktıđınız birine, kendinizi olduđunuz gibi ifade ettiđinize inanıyor musunuz?					
51. İnternette tanışıp date'e ıktıđınız birinin, kendisini olduđu gibi ifade ettiđine inanıyor musunuz?					
52. Arkadařlarınız vasıtasıyla tanışıp date'e ıktıđınız birinin, kendisini olduđu gibi ifade ettiđine inanıyor musunuz?					

53. Ortamda (sokakta, eğlence mekanında, partide, uçakta vb.) tanışıp date'e çıktığınız birinin, kendisini olduğu gibi ifade ettiğine inanıyor musunuz?					
54. “İnternette tanışıp date'e çıktığım biriyle kondomsuz seks yaparım.”					
55. “Arkadaşlarım vasıtasıyla tanışıp date'e çıktığım biriyle kondomsuz seks yaparım.”					
56. “Ortamda (sokakta, eğlence mekanında, partide, uçakta vb.) tanışıp date'e çıktığınız biriyle biriyle kondomsuz seks yaparım.”					
57. “Uzun süre birileriyle date'e çıkmadıysam kendimi kötü hissederim.”					

58. “Buluşma öncesi date’e çıkacağım insanla ilgili beklentim belirlenmiş olur.”					
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BÖLÜM 6: BİR SENEDE...

Aşağıdaki soruları ortalama olarak rakamlarla cevaplamaya çalışın.

59. Bir senede date’e çıktığınız kaç kişiyle kendinizi yakın hissediyorsunuz?
60. Bir senede date’e çıktığınız kaç kişide ilişki potansiyeli görüyorsunuz?
61. Bir senede date’e çıktığınız kaç kişiyle seks yapıyorsunuz?
62. Bir senede date’e çıktığınız kaç kişiye sırlarınızı veya özel hikayelerinizi anlatırsınız?
63. Bir senede date’e çıktığınız kaç kişi size sırlarını veya özel hikayelerini anlatır?

BÖLÜM 7: YAKINLIK

Aşağıdaki soruları, size en yakın gelen şıktan en uzak gelen şığa kadar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 şeklinde numaralandırarak yanıtlayın.

SORULAR	Geçmişini bildiğim insanlar	Arkadaşları mın arkadaşları	İnternette yeni tanıştığım insanlar	Bir ortamda yeni tanıştığım insanlar	Hiç tanımadığım insanlar
ŞIKLAR					
64. Hangisine daha çok güvenirsiniz?					

65. Hangisine daha çok güven vermek istersiniz?					
66. Hangisine özel konularda daha rahat açılırsınız?					
67. Hangisi özel konularda size daha rahat açılır?					
68. Hangisinin yanında daha kendiniz gibi hissedersiniz?					
69. Hangisiyle birlikte ne daha mutlu hissedersiniz?					

70. Hangisinin yanında daha rahat hissedersin iz?					
71. Hangisinin yanında daha gergin hissedersin iz?					
72. Hangisinin samimiyeti ne daha çok inanırsınız?					
73. Hangisine daha samimi davranırsın ız?					
74. Hangisiyle zaman geçirmek daha çok ilginizi çeker?					
75. Sevgilinizi n hangisinde n olmasını					

tercih edersiniz?					
76. Evleneceğiniz insanın hangisinde n olmasının tercih edersiniz?					
77. Cinsel partnerinizi daha çok hangisinde n seçersiniz?					

BÖLÜM 8: HİKAYELER

78. İlişkilerde kendinizi samimi, rahat ve yakın hissetmeniz için neler gerekir?

What is needed for you to feel sincere, comfortable and intimate in relationships?

79. Birine yakın hissettiğinizde bunu nasıl gösterirsiniz?

How do you show if you are feeling close to somebody?

80. Sizce online dating ve normal dating arasında ne fark var?

What are the differences between online dating and “normal” dating for you?

81. Online dating ve normal dating arasından hangisini, neden tercih edersiniz?

Which of the following you would prefer, online dating or “normal” dating? Why would you prefer it?

82. Bir dating app’te ya da genel olarak online dating yaparken aradığınız şey nedir?

What is it that you seek in a dating app or in broader sense, in online dating?

83. Bana göre samimiyet ve yakınlık...

(Cümleyi kendinize göre tamamlayın.)

For me, sincerity and intimacy... (Complete the sentence as you like.)

84. Etrafınızdaki insanlarla konuşmadığınız ama yeni tanıştığınız insanlara anlattığınız konular var mı? Bir örnek verebilir misiniz?

Are there any subjects that you keep from the people around you, but have already talked with people you have just met? Can you give an example, or examples?

85. Online tanıştığınız ama kendinizi çok yakın hissettiğiniz ve özel bir deneyim yaşadığınız insanlar oldu mu? Olduysa birinin hikayesini anlatır mısınız?

Had there been any people that you have met online but felt really close to and had a special experience with? If yes, can you tell its story?

**ETİK KURUL DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU/RESULT OF EVALUATION BY
THE ETHICS COMMITTEE**

(Bu bölüm İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul tarafından doldurulacaktır /This section to be completed by the Committee on Ethics in research on Humans)


Başvuru Sahibi / Applicant: Dijle Özdemir

Proje Başlığı / Project Title: Searching for Love and Intimacy as an Everyday Practice : Observations on Dating & Online Dating

Proje No. / Project Number: 2019-20078-77

1.	Herhangi bir değişikliğe gerek yoktur / There is no need for revision	XX
2.	Ret/ Application Rejected Reddin gerekçesi / Reason for Rejection	

Değerlendirme Tarihi / Date of Evaluation: 10 Mayıs 2019


Kurul Başkanı / Committee Chair

Doç. Dr. Itr Erhart


Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Aslı Tunç


Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Turgut Tarhanlı


Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak Boratav


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Prof. Dr. Koray Akay