

T.C.

BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT

H. HAMARAT

**INVESTIGATING PREDICTORS OF ONLINE DATING MOTIVATION:
DARK TRIAD TRAITS, REJECTION SENSITIVITY, AND
INTERPERSONAL EMOTION REGULATION**

MASTER'S THESIS

HAZAL HAMARAT

BAU 2023

ISTANBUL 2023

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ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATING PREDICTORS OF ONLINE DATING MOTIVATION: DARK TRIAD TRAITS, REJECTION SENSITIVITY, AND INTERPERSONAL EMOTION REGULATION

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Master's Program in Clinical Psychology

Supervisor: Dr. Bahar Tanyaş

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The study aimed at exploring the predictors of online dating application adoption, with a focus on gender. The motivations to adopt these applications which were having casual sex, forming romantic relationships, avoiding negative emotions, not feeling alone, having fun and wasting time were explored in relation to the variables of Dark Triad Traits, Rejection Sensitivity, and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation. The sample consisted of 128 heterosexual participants who were online dating application users (60 women, 68 men) aged between 18-34 ($M=24$, $SD=3,22$) at the time of data collection. Sociodemographic Information Form, Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, Short Dark Triad (SD-3), and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire were employed to collect data. First, Mann-Whitney U, Chi-square tests, Spearman Rho correlational analysis and then Log-Linear analysis was conducted to analyze data. For men, psychopathy trait from Dark Triad Traits were found to be related to casual sexual relationship motivation; social modeling, soothing, and perspective-taking strategies from Interpersonal Emotion Regulation were associated with romantic relationship motivation. For women, online dating applications appeared to function as enhancing their mood instead of forming short or long-term relationships. The results of the study were discussed in the light of relevant literature. Theoretical implications of the results were presented and suggestions for future research were mentioned.

Key Words: Dating, Online Dating Applications, Dark Triad Traits, Rejection Sensitivity, Interpersonal Emotion Regulation



ÖZ

ÇEVİRİMİÇİ FLÖRT PLATFORMLARININ KULLANIM MOTİVASYONLARININ İNCELENMESİ: KARANLIK ÜÇLÜ KİŞİLİK, REDDDEDİLME DUYARLILIĞI, KİŞİLERARASI DUYGU DÜZENLEME

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Bu çalışma, cinsiyete odaklanarak çevrimiçi flört uygulamalarını kullanan heteroseksüel bireylerin motivasyonlarını araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu amaç dahilinde kadın ve erkek katılımcılar arasındaki farklara odaklanılmıştır. Çevrimiçi flört uygulamalarını kullarımdaki motivasyonları romantik ilişki yaşamak, cinsel ilişki yaşamak, zaman öldürmek, yalnız kalmamak, olumsuz duygulardan kaçınmak ve eğlenmek olarak kategorize edilmiştir. Belirlenen temel motivasyonlar Karanlık Üçlü kişilik özellikleri, reddedilme duyarlılığı ve kişilerarası duygu düzenleme değişkenleri ile incelenmiştir. Örneklem, yaşları 18-34 ($M=24$, $SS=3,22$) arasında olan ve güncel olarak çevrimiçi flört uygulaması kullanıcısı olan 128 heteroseksüel kişiden (60 kadın, 68 erkek) oluşmaktadır. Sırasıyla Sosyo-demografik Bilgi Formu, Reddedilme Duyarlılığı Ölçeği, Kısa Karanlık Üçlü Kişilik Ölçeği (SD-3) ve Kişilerarası Duygu Düzenleme Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Verileri analiz etmek için Mann-Whitney U, Ki-kare testleri, Spearman Rho korelasyon analizi ve Log-Linear analizleri yürütülmüştür. Erkekler için, Karanlık Üçlü Kişilik'ten gelen psikopatik kişilik özelliklerinin, rastgele cinsel ilişki motivasyonunu yordadığı; Kişilerarası Duygu Düzenlemesi alt ölçeklerinden sosyal modelleme, yatıştırma ve bakış açısı alma stratejilerinin, romantik ilişki motivasyonunu yordadığı görülmüştür. Kadınlar için çevrimiçi flört uygulamalarının, kısa veya uzun süreli ilişkiler kurmak yerine ruh hallerini iyileştirme işlevi gördüğü sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları ilgili literatür ışığında tartışılmıştır. Sonuçların teorik çıkarımları tartışılmıştır. Son olarak yeni çalışmalar için öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Flört, Çevrimiçi Flört Uygulamaları, Karanlık Üçlü Kişilik, Reddedilme Duyarlılığı, Kişilerarası Duygu Düzenleme





Dedicated to single people.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OD Online Dating

RS Rejection Sensitivity

IER Interpersonal Emotion Regulation

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Framework

The modernized world introduces us to many utilities of technological improvements. Online dating (OD) applications are one of these utilities which are promoted to reach out many people to date easily through mobile phones at any minute (Epstein, 2009). Rosenfeld, Thomas and Hausen (2019) argue that OD use overrides conventional dating methods such as meeting through friends, at school or pubs and cafes for young people.

Different age groups use OD applications, but mostly young people adopt these applications (Lefebvre, 2017; Ranzini & Lutz, 2017). This may be because emerging adulthood is a phase of forming severe and intimate romantic relationships (Arnett, 2000). This phase involves questions such as what kind of partner one likes to be with and what kind of a relationship one wants to be in (Arnett, 2000). The internet facilitates dating period for emerging adults, and they become aware of having many options in terms of partners and relationship style.

OD platforms are more likely to be used to initiate ephemeral relationships rather than find mutual and steady romantic ones (Bhave, 2019; Yeo & Fung, 2017). They also encourage new dating practices and make them prevalent outside of online spheres (Pancani, Aureli & Riva, 2022). Booty calls, friends with benefits, and one-night stands which fall under the category of short-term mating are prevalent among users of OD applications. An abundance of potential partners in the applications may strengthen a belief that one can find a “better” catch at any minute (Best & Delmege, 2012) so individuals are less likely to choose one person and commit him/her at a time (Finkel, Eastwick, Karnaal, Reis & Sprecher, 2012).

Users adopt these applications with various motivations such as having casual sex, finding love, excitement, entertaining, feelings of boredom, or avoiding negative emotions (Barrada & Castro, 2020; Peter & Valkenburg, 2007; Sumter et al., 2017). The two main motivations of using OD applications are identified in the literature; these are building up long-term romantic relationships and having casual sexual relationships. Mostly, in the relevant literature, studies have a gendered view on the

motivation to adopt these applications. For instance, some studies conclude that men look for casual sex, and women look for romance through these applications (Sumter et al., 2017; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017). However, other studies suggest that women are also inclined to have casual sex via OD applications (Barrada & Castro, 2020; Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). Thus, gender-based analysis on the motivations to use OD applications is not conclusive. However, there is a general theme of using OD application for short-term encounters across different studies.

Short-term encounters -such as casual sex- are said to be related to health risks such as sexually transmitted diseases (i.e., HIV), additionally, these encounters may affect people psychologically (Bersamin et al., 2013; Garcia, Reiber, Massey & Merriwether, 2012). Studies display that casual sex might elicit some unwanted feelings such as regret, sadness, and disappointment (Garcia et al., 2012; Owen, Rhoades, Stanley & Fincham 2008) especially when one's desires or expectations do not match the outcome. For example, some individuals are likely to consent to casual sex with the hope of initiating a long-term romantic relationship (Owen & Fincham, 2010).

Compared to short-term ones, long-term or committed relationships enhance social development, psychological well-being, and physical health (Moss & Schwebel, 1993; Braithwaite, Delevi & Fincham, 2010). Diener and Seligman (2002) discover that satisfying, intimate relationships are one of the strongest predictors of being happy. Distressful relationships, breakup or loneliness, conversely, make individuals vulnerable to various illnesses such as cardiovascular diseases or sleep (Cacioppo et al., 2002) and mental health problems (Simon & Barrett, 2010). One of the reasons why people seek therapy is to deal with the problems in their romantic relationships. Therefore, relationships made through OD applications have many effects and implications on individuals' lives.

This study compares men and women participants regarding their underlying motivations to use OD applications and these motivations are explored in relation to Dark Triad Traits, Rejection Sensitivity, and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation. Dark triad traits (Machiavellism, narcissism, psychopathy) are characterized by manipulations, emotional deficits, and grandiose thinking (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). They are found to create volatile environments to pursue short-term relationships (Jonason, Valentine, Li & Harbeson, 2011). Sevi (2019) argues that this association

between dark triad and short-term mating is also valid for those who use OD applications. This association might be especially valid for men because some studies find it only for men but not for women (Jonason, Li, Webster & Schmitt, 2009; Jonason, Valentine & Li, 2012a).

Rejection sensitivity (RS) can be defined as an anxious expectation for and overreaction towards rejection by others. Downey, Feldman and Ayduk (2000) suggest that individuals who report high scores in RS avoid romantic relationships because they are likely to have expectations of either being rejected or ending with a breakup. Since individuals with high rejection sensitivity have high levels of anxiety during face-to-face interactions, they tend to use online platforms (Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2018). However, they might still get anxious during online interactions. OD applications can be a relatively safe means of compensating their need for connection. Substantiating this, Blackhart, Fitzpatrick and Williamson (2014) reveal that rejection sensitivity is a significant predictor of adopting OD applications. Hance, Blackhart and Dew (2018) conclude that since it is easier to represent their true-selves on online platforms, individuals high in RS tend to use OD applications.

Emotion regulation implies adjustments to emotional ups and downs when responding to external and internal challenges (Gross, 1998). Interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) refers to utilizing others or interpersonal relations to regulate one's emotions (Zaki & Williams, 2013). IER is still an emerging topic in emotion research and emphasizes the interpersonal aspect of emotion regulation rather than intrapersonal dynamics. Hofmann and Doan (2018) contend that individuals whether wittingly or unwittingly regulate their emotions through social interactions. Wadley, Smith, Koval and Gross (2020) argue that digital platforms might be used for controlling emotions. Some individuals seem to use OD for this purpose, too. Peter and Valkenburg (2007) find that individuals who recently broke up with their partners are highly inclined to adopt OD applications to cope with negative feelings.

In the second chapter, conceptualizations of and findings about OD will be more elaborated; dark triad traits, RS and IER will also be reviewed and discussed in relation to intimate relationship and use of OD applications. In the third chapter data collection methods, sample characteristics and information about data collection instruments will be described. The fourth chapter will present the details of the analyses and the study

results. In the last chapter, findings will be discussed with reference to the relevant literature.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With technological improvements, romantic relationships are carried on online platforms. Research on OD applications in the psychology field is scarce. It is important to conceive what individuals look for in OD platforms and how individuals use these applications. Because close relationships are highly influence on physical and psychological well-being (Berkman, 1995; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Diener & Seligman, 2002).

Although the variety and the number of these applications increase year by year, studies regarding OD applications are relatively limited in providing insights into various dimensions of individuals' motivations to date online. OD applications are developed mainly to facilitate individuals' dating life. However, these applications are adopted for multiple motivations different from dating. Sumter et al. (2017) identify some of the incentives which are to form romantic relationships, to have casual sexual relationships, to entertain oneself, to validate self-worth etc. In the present study, the motivations to adopt these applications are studied to better understand why individuals use these applications in Turkey as well as to identify potential psychological factors associated with these motivations.

Gender becomes an essential issue while studying OD applications because men and women are found to have different motivations to adopt OD applications (Sumter et al., 2017; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017). Also, in Turkey sexuality and romantic relationships are highly gendered. However, it is unknown if the motivations to adopt OD applications differ for men and women in Turkey.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This thesis is aimed to identify motivations to use OD applications among heterosexual individuals, aged between 18-34, and living in Turkey. These motivations are categorized as meeting someone to build a romantic commitment/relationship, having casual sexual relationships, wasting time, avoiding negative emotions, having fun and not feeling alone through OD applications. These motivations were explored in their relationship with Machiavellism, narcissism, psychopathy, rejection sensitivity, and interpersonal emotion regulation strategies with a particular focus on gender differences.

1.4 Research Questions

The two main research questions that the current study addresses are (1) what are the motivations for women and men to adopt OD applications and (2) are the motivations to adopt OD applications related to Dark Triad Traits, Rejection Sensitivity, and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation.

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

H1. Men are more likely to use OD applications with a motivation to have casual sexual relationships than women.

H2. Women are more likely to use OD applications with a motivation to form romantic relationships than men.

H3. High levels of dark triad traits are expected to be adopting OD applications to have casual sexual relationships for men.

H3a) Machiavellism level of individuals is expected to be a predictor of having casual sexual relationship through OD applications for men.

H3b) The narcissism level of individuals is expected to be a predictor of having casual sexual relationships through OD applications for men.

H3c) The psychopathy trait is expected to be a predictor of adopting online dating applications for casual sexual relationship motivations for men.

H4. High levels of rejection sensitivity are expected to predict the adoption of OD applications for having casual sexual relationship motivation for both genders.

H5. High levels of IER strategies are expected to be associated with adopting OD applications for forming romantic relationship motivation for women.

H5a) Social modeling strategy from IER is expected to be associated with adopting OD applications for forming romantic relationship motivation for women.

H5b) Soothing strategy from IER is expected to be associated with adopting OD applications for forming romantic relationship motivation for women.

H5c) High levels of enhancing positive affect strategy from IER are expected to be related to forming romantic relationship motivation of OD applications for women.

H5d) High levels of perspective-taking strategy from IER are expected to be associated with adopting OD applications for forming romantic relationship motivation for women.

1.5 Significance of the Study

It becomes important to uncover what motivations lead individuals to date online meanwhile, users of these applications are increasing day by day. Although OD applications are developed to facilitate individuals' romance life, they also contain some potential risks which might affect individuals' well-being. The widespread adoption of OD applications deserves a closer look by mental health professionals considering how intimate relationships influence on both physical and psychological well-being (Braithwaite et al., 2010; Dush & Amato, 2005). This study aims at identifying what men and women look for in OD platforms. With this aim, this study will provide a broad exploration of individuals who date online so they might adopt these applications with more realistic expectations.

In the relevant literature, there are inconsistent findings regarding gender differences in motivations to adopt OD applications. Moreover, most studies focus on Western cultures. For example, dark triad traits are found to be an indicator of seeking short-term relationships for men in the UK, USA or Canada (Jonason et al., 2009; Lyons, Messenger, Perry & Brewer, 2020), but this relationship has not been with a Turkish sample. Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature about the role of rejection sensitivity in shaping motivations to use OD applications though it is known that rejection sensitivity is a predictor of OD application adoption (Blackhart et al., 2014). Regulation of emotions is a function of online platforms for some individuals (Wadley et al., 2020). However, like rejection sensitivity, interpersonal emotion regulation is an under-researched topic related to the use OD applications for different motivations.

This study contributes to the literature by exploring of OD practices of Turkish young adults and their motivations to adopt these applications. Also, this study provides some insights to the clinicians about dating applications and their users. As OD applications are a new medium for meeting potential partners, more research regarding OD applications is necessary to capture the patient profile better in clinics.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Relationships are of central importance to individuals' lives. The need to belong or connect with others is defined as a necessity to survive, and a lack of social bonds has repercussions on one's psychological well-being (Berkman, 1995; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Diener & Seligman, 2002). Romantic relationships are the most intimate forms of making connections. Long-term, committed romantic relationships enhance one's physical well-being and mental health by providing social support and emotional satisfaction or decreasing risky behaviors (Braithwaite et al., 2010; Dush & Amato, 2005). On the contrary, intimacy-deficient relationships are found to be associated with anxiety, stress-related symptoms, and emotional problems (Medalie & Goldbourt, 1976; Patton & Waring, 1984).

Dating is a phase of romantic relationships and can be defined as spending time with a potential future partner to get to know each other (Šutić et al., 2023). Traditionally, people meet at school, parties or workplaces or by matchmakers, and they begin dating if there is a mutual interest. Technology, however, transforms such encounters in the sense that two parties can meet with the help of dating applications (Hamilton, 2017).

OD applications are developed for mainly “dating” as their names imply; users adopt these applications or go online on these platforms for motivations such as having casual sex, finding love, excitement, self-validation, and regulating feelings of boredom (Sumter et al., 2017; Barrada & Castro, 2020). In the literature, two main motivations for using OD applications are identified as building up long-term romantic relationships and having casual sexual relationships. These motivations seem to differ by gender for heterosexual individuals. However, there are inconsistent findings about what motivates men and women to use OD applications. Some studies suggest that men look for casual sex and women look for romance (Sumter et al., 2017; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017). Other studies suggest that men also look for romance (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017; Nguyen, 2018) and that women use these applications

for casual sex. However, in some studies female users score higher on the motivations such as regulating their boredom, seeking excitement, or getting social than male users (Clemens et al., 2015; Ranzini & Lutz, 2017).

In Turkey, dominant narratives about sexuality set up a dichotomy between genders. For instance, men get more permissive messages about sexuality from their parents, or men are allowed if not encouraged to have more sexual partners in their lifetime (Askun & Ataca, 2007; Boratav & Çavdar, 2011). According to Nazik, Sönmez and Akben (2021), women in Turkey are found to hide their sexuality even though they have sexual experiences. The authors argue that sociocultural variables affect both genders but mostly women regarding sexuality issues. Deniz (2020) conducts a qualitative study about OD applications with women and finds out that women who reported Tinder use for casual sex, said that they did not see those men they had sex with for the second time, and that they kept their use of these applications secret. The author concludes that Tinder application has a reputation that it being a mobile application for sex and being a regular user of this application has negative connotations for them. It can be a problem if a single woman uses Tinder while people don't care even if a married man uses this application because sexual practices are approved for men but not for women in Turkey (Boratav & Çavdar, 2011). Thus, the dichotomy between genders in the offline world seems to be extending to the OD platforms. On the other hand, to our knowledge, in Turkey no study compares men's and women's experiences of sexuality in OD applications. Given the strong cultural influences on gender and sexuality, in the current study, gender differences in the motivations to adopt OD applications, including one's motivation to meet up with others for sex, are investigated.

2.2 Online Dating Applications

OD applications can be defined as modernized matchmaking environments where individuals connect to potential partners over websites or mobile phone applications. Although people used to be judgmental about meeting strangers online, it is increasingly accepted as a legitimate and practical means of meeting people, building up romantic relationships, or having casual sex (Hertlain, 2018; Schwartz & Velotta, 2018). OD applications can be exemplified as Tinder, OkCupid, Bumble,

Grindr, and Happn. Tinder is the most popular OD application, which reached 64 million downloads in 2022 (Dixon, 2023).

Madden and Lenhart (2020) state that 37% of internet users reported using the Internet to pursue romantic relations in a nationally representative sample of 3215 people in the USA in 2005. Anderson, Vogels and Turner (2023) report that 3 in 10 adults said they have adopted OD applications in research conducted in 2019 with 4860 adults who live in the USA. The same study also states that there has been an increase in OD usage regardless of respondents' marital status. 15% of individuals indicated that they adopted OD applications in 2015 which rose to 30% in 2019. Rosenfeld et al. (2019) find that since 1990 meeting a potential partner via online platforms has been increasing compared to traditional methods such as meeting at restaurants/bars or by third parties.

The use of OD applications tremendously increases during the 2019 Coronavirus pandemic (Chisom, 2021). The pandemic leads governments to take caution against social contact with an effort to reduce the transmission of the virus. Nationwide quarantines are announced, and people get isolated at their homes and begin working remotely; education and social activities are either suspended for a while or carried out online. These drastic alterations to control the virus's spread threaten the basic need of human beings: to connect and bond with others (Chisom, 2021). Online platforms to communicate with people are among a few efficient solutions to cope with isolation, stress, and negative feelings imposed by the outbreak (Moore & March, 2020).

There are some advantages to using OD platforms (Finkel et al., 2012; Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). First, these applications claim that they have the algorithms to match people with compatible partners. For example, Tinder offers portability, availability, locatability, and multimodality (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017). By filtering irrelevant profiles, users can reach people with similar interests and backgrounds (Schwartz & Velotta, 2018). Secondly, meeting people in foreign countries or even building a long-distance relationship via OD applications is now possible. In earlier times, geographical proximity to the future/present partner highly influences in one's partner choice (Bossard, 1932; Segal, 1974), yet OD applications

do not limit users to geographical barriers (DeVoss, 2018). Thirdly, using of an OD application is convenient in the sense that a newcomer may start connecting with others within minutes.

On the other hand, these applications also contain some potential risks. Deception in online platforms is widespread due to the anonymity of the users' accounts (Lamphere & Lucas, 2019). Users might be uploading photographs that do not belong to themselves, and may quickly tell lies or fibs (Abramova, Baumann, Krasnova & Buxmann, 2016). Furthermore, objectification of individuals by their photographs is another face of OD which transforms cyberspace into a market (Best & Delmege, 2012; Licoppe, 2015). Rather than having an authentic dialog to get to know each other, OD conversations are mostly said to be prepared to reach out to immediate sex (Licoppe, 2015). Also, the applications work based on the logic of swiping profiles. This action is said to be quick, impulsive, and repetitive in OD applications so that disruption of intimacy is inevitable (David & Cambre, 2016).

There might be some subtle problems with OD practices, too. Since individuals can reach out to new people at any minute, it is easier to break up with someone or stop talking in the face of minor imperfection (Epstein, 2009; Carpenter & McEwan, 2016). Thus, unwillingness to commit to one partner at a time due to the large pool of candidates is a prevalent problem in online platforms (Finkel et al., 2012). It is not rare that users of OD applications come across one profile who stops replying to the messages without saying goodbye as a reaction to which a new vocabulary emerged: ghosting (LeFebvre, 2017).

The geolocation feature of OD applications lets users know those who also use the application in the neighborhood. When GPS is on, any user can locate any available person to date or have sex with at a close distance. Although this seems to be a functionality of applications, it might also proceed to dangers such as sexual assault or harassment (Murphy, 2018). With the help of GPS function, applications enable the predator to track or stalk users; they talk to their houses, schools, jobs, or other places not disclosed on the application. Despite these potential problems, OD applications are widely accepted across many countries and cultures nowadays. This new way of relating to others certainly brings new practices, habits, and risks to the dating arena,

and all these changes seem to shape the future of intimate relationships (Ben-Ze'ev, 2012; Hamilton, 2017; LeFebvre, 2018).

2.2.1 Gender difference in motivations to use OD applications. Studies show that romantic relationships and sexuality follow a gendered path. The idea of gender binary, meaning women want love, and men want sex, is rooted in the evolutionary perspective in psychology (Buss & Schmitt, 1993), and it is a prevalent and dominant discourse in many societies and cultures (Oliver & Hyde, 1993). Parallel to this canonical understanding in societies, it seems that there is some gender difference in the ways men and women employ technology in building up long-term romantic relationships or finding partners for sexual relationships. According to a study conducted in USA, Bagley and Kimberly (2017) find that technology is used more frequently by men than by women for flirting, seeking partners, or romantic endeavors. However, in a study conducted in Sweden, men and women do not differ in their sexual exploration, such as seeking partners or buying erotic objects on the Internet (Cooper, Månsson, Daneback, Tikkanen, & Ross, 2003), yet this result is attributed to the fact that women's sexuality has been affirmed in Swedish culture by the authors.

The literature on the motivations to use of OD applications (Almond, Harcourt-Medina & Taylor, 2019; Barrada & Castro, 2020; Cöbek, 2021; Yeo & Fung, 2017) is also congruent with the traditional view of “men want sex, women want marriage” narrative (Abramova et al., 2016; Almond et al., 2019; Sumter et al., 2017; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017). Men appear to use OD applications for sex, while women want to make friends or get settled in romantic relationships (Zinck, Weir & Fisher, 2021). However, some studies challenge these findings as men are also interested in forming long-term relationships through OD applications (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017; Nguyen, 2018).

Barrada and Castro (2020) reveal that women were not less likely than men to pursue sexual aims in OD applications in a study conducted in Spain. Similarly, more than men, women say that they engage in casual sex via OD among users in Belgium (Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). For a Turkish sample of OD users, the ‘women look for love, men look for sex’ narrative seems to continue (Cöbek, 2021). Deniz (2020),

on the other hand, in a qualitative study with women users of Tinder shows that women use Tinder for casual sex in İstanbul. Yet, they do not explicitly assert their use of the application.

2.3 Dark Triad Traits

Paulhus and Williams (2002) combine socially malevolent traits, Machiavellism, narcissism, and psychopathy into a group and refer the group of traits as Dark Triad, believing that there is a common ground characterizing them. Machiavellism is a trait that is characterized by manipulateness, emotional detachments, contemptuousness, and utilitarianism (Christie & Geis, 1970; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Individuals with higher Machiavellism scores will likely show alexithymia (Wastell & Booth, 2003). They tend to have emotionally detached relationships (Christie & Geis, 1970), and avoid intimacy and closeness due to the fear of betrayal; thus, they are more likely to prefer short-term relationships (Ali & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Ináncsi, Láng & Bereczkei, 2015; McHoskey, 2001). Moreover, rather than intimacy and closeness, individuals high in Machiavellian traits give importance to their partner's status and wealth (Ináncsi et al., 2015).

The sub-clinical form of narcissism derives from clinical narcissism, and it retains some aspects of a clinical type, such as grandiose feelings, entitlement to the exploitation of others, and feelings of superiority (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). There are two sub-types of narcissism which are vulnerable and grandiose narcissism. The former sub-type is characterized by anxious defensiveness and shame, whereas the later one is depicted as exhibitionistic, arrogant, and feeling superior to others (Yakeley, 2018). Jonason and Kavanagh (2010) find that narcissistic individuals are game players and enjoy keeping their partners uncertain. They also indicate that narcissistic individuals are pragmatic in their relationships, and it is important that a relationship serves their purposes.

The third trait characterizing Dark Triad is psychopathy. Paulhus and Williams (2002) include psychopathy as a dark trait, not as a disorder, yet as a personality trait. Cooke and Mitchie (2001) define psychopathy trait with three dimensions (1) impulsive and antisocial actions, (2) deficient affectivity, (3) callous and selfless interpersonal behavior. Flight and Forth (2007) say that antisocial tendencies

associated with psychopathy may cause individuals to use physical violence. They also say that individuals high in psychopathy trait have emotional deficits leading them to lack empathy, low tolerance for frustration, and delinquent behaviors. One of the critical characteristics of psychopathy is an inability to attach to others closely (Conradi, Boertien, Cavus & Verschuere, 2015).

Self-centeredness, emotional coldness, and disagreeableness are common characteristics of dark traits (Jakobwitz & Egan, 2006). On the other hand, despite their similarities, it is acknowledged that they are distinct from each other. Paulhus and Williams (2002) state that self-enhancement is the distinguishing feature of narcissism. Aggression and impulsive behaviors are psychopathy traits' distinctive features (Baughman, Dearing, Giammarco & Vernon, 2012). Unlike narcissistic and psychopathic individuals, Machiavellistic individuals are manipulative in interpersonal relationships, making them more likely to use others for their purposes.

2.3.1 Dark triad traits and intimate relationships. The relationship between short-term mating orientation and dark triad traits takes some attention in the literature, although results are conflicting. Jonason et al. (2009) indicate that men high in dark triad traits tend to pursue short-term mating. Similarly, Tsoukas and March (2018) also find a partial association between dark triad traits and short-term mating. According to their results, only psychopathy and sadism can predict short-term mating strategy, yet they find no association of narcissism and Machiavellism with short-term mating. On the other hand, Schmitt et al.'s (2017) results indicate an association between narcissism and short-term mating.

Several studies conclude that individuals with higher levels of dark traits opted to form casual relationships rather than steady, longer-term ones (Jonason et al., 2009; Jonason, Valentine & Li, 2012). This association is attributed to their fear of rejection (Jonason et al., 2011), their search for arousal and their impulsivity (Golmaryami, Vaughan & Frick, 2021; Jones & Paulhus, 2011). Jonason et al. (2011) suggest that individuals high in dark triad traits are likely to decrease their standards for a mate, so they facilitate their chance to find partners for short-term mating. Based on evolutionary understanding, authors argue that this is an adaptive strategy in mating when the conditions are not best for these individuals, they can shift from plan A to

plan B. Thus, they could protect themselves against rejection or frustration in relationships. They might not want to deal with rejection by others, so they strategically approach love affairs to ensure they are welcome.

However, Apostolou, Paphiti, Neza, Damianou, and Georgiadou (2019) find that people with narcissistic tendencies are good at making and keeping long-term, intimate relationships in contrast to those with Machiavellistic and psychopathic tendencies. Though, according to their results, narcissism trait is associated with long-term relationships, unlike other dark traits, authors interpret these results with caution because they think these participants are inclined to manipulate their answers to maintain their positive self-image.

In summary, the literature indicates a consistent finding that psychopathy trait is associated with short-term relationships (Golmaryami et al., 2021; Jonason et al., 2011). For Machiavellism and narcissism traits, the results are contrasting, some studies confirm these two dark traits are also associated with short-term relationships (Schmitt et al., 2017). Yet, other studies could not find any association (Tsoukas & March, 2018), or they find positive associations between long-term relationships and these two dark traits (Apostolou et al., 2019).

2.3.2 Dark triad traits and online dating adoption. Despite the extended literature on dark traits and romantic relationships, there is scarce evidence on how dark triad traits are relevant to using OD applications and building up relationship on these platforms. Sevi (2019) finds that in the US, Tinder users are high on dark triad traits compared to non-users. Tinder is perceived to be a hook-up app (LeFebvre, 2018), and consistent with this view, Sevi (2019) finds out that people high on dark traits use Tinder for their short-term sexual aims. As substantiating this finding Lyons et al., (2020) indicate that psychopathy is highly related to the intention to reach out to partners to have casual sex through OD platforms, yet Machiavellism is associated with self-enhancing aims such as social or self-presentation skills. Sunbay-Bilgen (2020) finds that antisocial and narcissistic tendencies predict the number of relationships formed and the number of casual sex among OD application users in Turkey. However, Barrada and Castro (2020) find no significant relationship between dark personality and the use of OD applications. Thus, though there are some

supporting findings for short-term relationships and dark traits through OD applications, the literature on the use of OD applications and dark traits is inconclusive. The present study will explore the association between short term mating and dark triad traits for those using OD platforms with a Turkish sample.

2.4 Rejection Sensitivity

Rejection sensitivity (RS) is a term developed for individuals anxiously expecting and displaying overreaction in the face of rejection from significant others (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Belonging and being valued and accepted by others are basic human needs. Behind other needs, such as power, achievement, or approval, there is a need to affiliate oneself with others (Baumeister & Leiry, 1995). Being undervalued and rejected is associated with negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, loneliness, and depression (Buckley, Winkel & Leary, 2004). On the contrary, being accepted and valued increases the levels of happiness, joy, and excitement (Baumeister & Leiry, 1995).

The attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) claims that parents' early responses to a child's needs have consequences on the child's psychological health in the future. Accepting, non-judgmental, containing parents' attitudes give babies a secure bond with their primary caregivers and significant others. These infants discover and explore their environment securely, get help from others when needed, and feel worthy of love (Feldman & Downey, 1994). Rejecting attitudes of parents such as criticism, neglect, or violent acts are internalized by children and may lead children to have difficulties in their adult life (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Feldman and Downey (1994) suggest that the internalization of these attitudes will be experienced as rejection sensitivity in adult life. For instance, it is assumed that rejected children regularly avoid social interactions due to fear of rejection even in innocuous situations or get stressed in intimate relationships during adulthood (Downey, Bonica & Rincón, 1999; Ayduk & Gyurak, 2008).

2.4.1 Rejection sensitivity and intimate relationships. RS influences romantic relationships in many ways. Firstly, rejection-sensitive people avoid relationships because they have high expectations of rejection (Downey et al., 2000). Also, due to increased arousal faced with rejection, intimacy, and closeness cannot be

experienced as pleasing by these individuals (Fan, Chen & Lin, 2022). Secondly, relationship conflicts are perceived as threatening for rejection-sensitive individuals, so that they might feel lonely in a romantic relationship (Nowland, Talbot & Qualter, 2018). Also, they might over-sacrifice and suppress their genuine emotions in relationships to avoid potential rejection (Downey et al., 2000). However, when faced with rejection, they overreact with outbursts and anger (Ayduk & Gyurak, 2008). People high in RS are more likely to break up with their romantic partners than those low in RS (Downey et al., 1998).

Demircioğlu and Göncü-Köse (2018) find that inclination to social media sites is common among individuals with RS. According to the authors, this inclination is caused by high anxiety levels during face-to-face interactions. Deficiency in face-to-face interaction is compensated by interactions on social media platforms for individuals high in RS. Similarly, Hance et al. (2018) find that individuals high in RS use OD applications to express themselves more freely and interact with others and disclose themselves without feeling too anxious.

Dating applications facilitate individuals to present appealing aspects of their personality or appearance. Users can control what to share with their potential online partners to avoid rejection, which decreases their anxiety level in interpersonal relationships. Substantiating this, Blackhart et al. (2014) examine attachment styles, Big Five Personality Traits, RS, and self-esteem to predict OD application usage. They reveal that RS is the only significant predictor of adopting OD applications. The authors argue that people high in RS interact only with users who are interested in their profiles, which might decrease their expectations of further rejection. Authors also assert that OD context offers individuals many other reasons for not getting a reply from a potential date. They claim that in a conversation on the OD applications, individuals high in RS think that the other person might be too busy to text back, or he/she might be met someone else, they might leave the application, etc. However, unlike what the authors claim, these possibilities may not be valid for individuals high in RS. Because people who are less concerned with rejection might consider these possibilities, individuals high in RS will be more likely to perceive these as rejection cues too.

There are limited studies that directly measure the relationship between rejection sensitivity and dark triad traits. Yürek (2018) does not find any association between psychopathy, Machiavellism, and RS, but in her study, narcissism and RS are significantly correlated with a Turkish sample. It is concluded that RS may predict dark traits, specifically vulnerable narcissism, in individuals. Yakeley (2018) indicates that vulnerable narcissism may appear as oversensitive, insecure, and anxious as opposed to grandiose type. Çağlayaner and Çoklar (2020) also find that RS is associated with both vulnerable narcissism and grandiose narcissism, although the relationship with grandiose narcissism is smaller than vulnerable narcissism. RS together with vulnerable narcissism, may lead to withdrawal from relationships and getting lonely to protect one's self-image. But there is scant evidence on how dark triad traits as a whole and rejection sensitivity are associated, but available findings indicate a possible relationship of RS with only narcissism.

2.5 Emotion Regulation

Emotions are affective states triggered by environmental cues or internal stimulations (i.e., thought, memory, etc.) and accompanied by physiological responses in bodily sensations (Hofmann, 2016). In earlier times, emotions, especially negative emotions, are perceived to be counter-productive; they are believed to be the unsettling conditions that interfere with individuals' goal-directed behaviors (Hebb, 1946). In later years emotions are said to have an adaptive value that alerts human beings in the face of emotion and helps them take appropriate action (Ekman, 1992; Tooby & Cosmides, 2010). In the last three decades, the idea that negative emotions are problematic for individuals' mental and behavioral functioning is lifted. Rather, difficulty in emotion dysregulation is conceptualized as a risk factor for psychopathology, and that hampers one's adjustments (Hofmann & Doan, 2018; Thompson, 2019).

Gross (1998, p. 275) defines emotion regulation as “the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions.” According to Gross (1998), there are five ways to regulate emotion: (1) situation selection, (2) situation modification, (3) attentional deployment, (4) cognitive change, and (5) response modulation. Situation

selection, situation modification, and attentional deployment strategies can be employed before an emotion occurs to alter its impact, but response modulation can only be employed after an emotion has already occurred. Situation selection refers to choosing one situation over the other, considering the feelings that will be generated. Situation modifying refers to altering the situational conditions after selecting one situation. Attentional deployment requires one to choose one aspect of the situation to focus on. Cognitive change refers to selecting a meaning that will be attached to the situation. Response modulation refers to influencing the response once an emotion is generated.

Hofmann (2016) criticizes Gross's (1998) emotion regulation theory due to its overemphasis on intrapersonal processes and mechanistic explanations. One's ability to regulate emotion is highly influenced by early attachment relations with the primary caregiver (Cassidy, 1994; Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003). Infants seek proximity to their attachment figures to regulate immense stimulation originating from intrinsic and extrinsic sources (Bowlby, 1988). They balance internal processes and demands of the external world with the help of an adult who seems to be more capable of dealing with the world (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2014). Internalizing these experiences helps a child regulate his/her emotions in the short and long term (Mikulincer, Shaver & Pereg, 2003). Considering the development of emotion regulation ability, the importance of interpersonal relations in emotion regulation is recently endorsed that emotions come into existence or get regulated through social interactions and affiliations (Hofmann, 2016; Zaki & Williams, 2013). In other words, individuals rely on others to regulate their emotions through these strategies (Gökdağ & Naldöken, 2021).

Hofmann (2016) reveals four types of emotion regulation strategies within the interpersonal context. These are *enhancing positive affect* by looking for others to boost happiness, *soothing* by leaning on others to calm down, *perspective-taking* by taking others' opinions to not worry too much and *social modeling* in which one observes others' way of coping. Individuals adopt enhancing positive affect strategies to increase their level of joy and happiness. Perspective-taking can be adopted to take other's opinions or be reminded of others' worse experiences, so individuals do not worry or feel bad. Soothing can be adapted to utilize others to be comforted when an

individual is feeling down. Individuals may adopt social modeling strategy to see how other people cope with difficulties in life.

Shi, Koval, Kostakos, Goncalves, and Wadley (2023) indicate that smartphones are used for emotion regulation and are heavily used to ward off negative emotions, i.e., boredom or stress. Dolev-Cohen and Barak (2013) also suggest that messaging facility of online platforms helps individuals to self-reflect their thoughts and feelings; this might be one of the reasons behind utilizing these platforms to regulate emotions. Blumberg, Rice, and Dickmeis (2016) conclude that social media platforms provide individuals with a sense of belongingness or closeness and that digital venues are utilized to downregulate negative moods and upregulate positive ones.

Dissolving a romantic relationship also triggers negative emotions like sadness or anger. Peter and Valkenburg (2007) find that the lesser time passes after a breakup, the more likely individuals are to look for romantic dates on online platforms. Similar results are located in the literature stating that individuals look for new people to date as soon as they experience a breakup with their partners as a coping mechanism to deal with negative or unwanted emotions triggered by their separation experiences (Harvey & Hansen, 2000). It may be possible that individuals who cannot stand their negative emotions after a breakup look for others to regulate themselves. It seems they do not want to feel their emotion but evade it or avoid feeling it. Inclination to use the Internet to regulate emotions might also apply to OD platforms. For instance, Blake, Portingale, Giles, Griffiths and Krug (2022) find out that dating applications are mostly adopted by individuals with emotion regulation difficulties.

Since IER is a relatively new concept, there are scarce studies in the literature focusing on IER in romantic or close relationships. However, some studies show that IER strategies increase relationship satisfaction (Jitaru & Turliuc, 2022) and help relationship formation in new contexts (Niven, Garcia, van der Löwe, Holman & Mansell, 2015). Thus, it is possible to infer that individuals who adopt these strategies might tend to form relationships rather than avoid them. Hofmann (2016), on the other hand, indicates that increased adoption of IER strategies implies an inability to self-regulate. Because these individuals cannot regulate their emotions by themselves, they

mostly lean on others to regulate their inner states. Therefore, it can be concluded that coping with negative emotions might seem complicated for some individuals, so they prefer finding a new person to have a romantic relationship with as soon as they experience a breakup.

In this respect, mobile applications -including OD platforms- are an easy way to find someone to talk to and avoid negativity. As mentioned above, these dating applications offer portability and availability so individuals can adopt these applications and start chatting with others at any minute (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017). Williams, Morelli, Ong, and Zaki (2018) demonstrate that individuals high in IER strategies tend to seek other people in the face of an emotional event. However, there appears to be a difference between men and women in relation to emotional sharing. Studies (Sariso, 2017; Williams et al., 2018) find that women, compared to men, are more likely to prefer being in the presence of others when they experience a bad situation and talk about it to be soothed.

To sum up, the Internet and social media platforms are used to self-regulate for some. Recently OD applications are also adopted for the same purpose. Individuals experiencing negative emotions do not want to process these emotions, but rather they might be avoiding them by adopting dating applications. Breaking up with a romantic partner is painful, and some individuals cannot soothe themselves on their own. Hence, these applications function as a life-preserver for them to get over their past relationships. However, they might be looking for people to start a new relationship in dating applications. Therefore, they can calm themselves down with the existence of a new partner.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This correlational study aimed to predict motivations for adopting OD applications. Dark Triad Traits, Rejection Sensitivity, and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation were identified as predictor variables and casual sexual relationship motivation and romantic relationship motivation were main output variables.

3.2 Participants

435 people were reached out to the link for filling out the questionnaires. The inclusion criteria were (1) using OD applications in Turkey, (2) being heterosexual, (3) having been using OD applications for at least 3 months at the time of data collection. 183 people reported that they did not adopt the applications anymore at the time of data collection; they might have consented to participate in the study without reading the informed consent form in detail. 123 people did not complete all questionnaires. That was why 306 people had been excluded from the study. A total of 128 participants completed the socio-demographic form and all the scales. One participant was excluded during the analysis as his data showed a response set. Six of these participants were older than 29 years old, and 10 participants had been using the OD applications for less than 3 months; they were not excluded from the study though they did not meet the inclusion criteria; because it was challenging to reach those who meet all requirements.

Of these participants, 46,9 % were heterosexual females (N= 60), and 53,1 % were heterosexual males (N=68). The mean age of the participants was 24, with a standard deviation of 3,22. The majority were between 22-25 years of age (N= 57, 44,4 %). Participants were highly educated: 40,6 % (N= 52) of them were university graduates. 50,8 % were still in education (93,8 % of those in education were pursuing university education).

Most participants were in full-time employment (44,53 %), 32,81 % of them did not work, 15,60 % were in part-time employment, and 7,03 % were students only. Only two participants stated that they were divorced, 98.4 % were singles. 94,5 % of participants did not have children. The majority of the participants (36,7 %) reported that their earnings (household earnings) were between 7.001 TL and 14.000 TL per

month. The details of the participants' demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Statistics of Participants

Sample	N	%
Gender		
Female	60	46,9
Male	68	53,1
Age		
18-21	29	22,6
22-25	57	44,4
26-29	36	28,2
30-34	6	4,8
Occupation		
Student Only	9	7,03
Works full time	57	44,53
Works part time	20	15,63
Does not work	42	32,81
Education Level		
Continuing education	65	50,8
High School	3	2,3
University	52	40,6
Master	8	6,3
Continuing education at		
High School	1	1,5
University	61	93,8
Master	3	4,6
Marital Status		
Single	126	98,4
Divorced	2	1,6

Table 1 (Continued)

Demographic Statistics of Participants

Sample	N	%
Children		
Yes	7	5,5
No	121	94,5
Income Level		
Between 0-7.000 TL	27	21,1
Between 7.001-14.000 TL	47	36,7
Between 14.001-21.000 TL	18	14,1
More than 21.001 TL	36	28,1
Monthly Expenses		
Less than 3.000 TL	30	23,4
Between 3,001-5,000 TL	43	33,6
Between 5,001-7,000 TL	31	24,2
More than 7,001 TL	24	18,8
Does income cover expenses?		
Income does not cover expenses	38	29,7
Income covers expenses	63	49,2
Income exceeds expenses	27	21,2

Both female and male participants showed similar distributions regarding the duration of OD application usage. On the other hand, in terms of frequency, most women (43%) were using the applications several times a month, on the other hand, most men (39%) used them several times a week. 78% of women and 93% of men met someone through OD applications. 40% of women and 62% of men who met people through OD applications had started romantic relationships. For most women (80%), these OD relationship/s lasted 0-6 months, and for men, the duration of the OD relationships was more changeable (see Table 2).

Table 2

Online Dating Application Usage Information of Participants

OD USAGE	Female (%)	Male (%)
How long?		
Less than 6 months	36	34
6 months - 1 year	32	34
More than 1 year	32	32
How often?		
Once in 2-3 months or less	20	16
Several times in a month	43	31
Several times in a week	27	39
Everyday	10	14
Met someone through OD Apps?		
Yes	78	93
No	22	7
Relationships through OD Apps?		
Yes	40	62
No	60	38

Table 2 (Continued)

Online Dating Application Usage Information of Participants

OD USAGE	Female (%)	Male (%)
How Long OD		
Relationship Lasted?		
0-6 months.	80	45
6 months – 1 year	4	31
1 year – 2 years	8	7
More than 2 years	8	17

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Data collection instruments. A Socio-Demographic Form, Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, Short Dark Triad Scale (SD3), The Symptom Assessment-45 Questionnaire (SA-45)- Anxiety Sub-Scale and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (IERQ) were employed to collect data.

3.3.1.1 Socio-demographic information form. This form includes questions regarding participants' age, gender, where they live (whether it is a metropolitan, city, village, etc.), their monthly earnings, education level, and so on. Online dating patterns are also asked in this form, such as 'how often do you use these applications', 'have you ever met other users', 'what was your main motivation when adopting these applications', and so on. There are questions about their former romantic relationships too. Overall, the form consists of 30 questions. Some of the questions are yes/no questions, but most questions are assessed on a Likert scale (See Appendix B).

3.3.1.2 Rejection sensitivity questionnaire (RSQ). The Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire is developed by Downey and Feldman (1996). It has 18 hypothetical situations that ask the respondents how anxious/concerned they would feel when they demand favors from others and how much they expect others to reject them. The answers range from very concerned/anxious to very unconcerned on a 6-point Likert scale. The calculation of one's rejection sensitivity score is done by adding up all points. Thus, the minimum score participants get from the scale is 18, and the maximum score is 108. The scale shows high internal validity ($\alpha = .83$). Three weeks test re-test reliability is .83 test, and 4 months test re-test reliability is .78, which is good. The Turkish version of the scale was first translated by Erozkun (2004) and the

internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish version is found to be .81. In addition, with the factor analysis performed to test the validity of the scale, it is seen that 17 items of the scale have a factor load of .40 and 1 item has a factor load of .30 which shows that the scale is valid. In the present study, Cronbach alpha is found to be .84 which is satisfactory.

3.3.1.3 Short dark triad scale (SD-3). This scale is developed to measure Dark Triad Traits namely Machiavellism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Jones and Paulhus (2014) develop the short version of the questionnaire to make it a less tiring and time-consuming scale. The original study, coefficient alphas range from .68 to .74 (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). Turkish version of the short version is available, consisting of 27 items which are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=completely disagree- 5= completely agree) (Özsoy et al., 2017). Each sub-scale of Machiavellism, narcissism, and psychopathy has 9 items. Cronbach alpha values of each sub-dimension are .70, .79, and .79, respectively. However, no test re-test reliability is assessed for the Turkish version of the scale. In the current study, Cronbach alphas are .76 for Machiavellism, .76 for narcissism, and .69 for psychopathy sub-scales (see Appendix C).

3.3.1.4 The symptom assessment-45 questionnaire (SA-45). This questionnaire is developed by Davison et al. (1997). It is a self-report questionnaire to assess symptoms of depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic obsessive-compulsive symptoms, interpersonal sensitivity, somatization, paranoid ideation, and lastly, psychoticism. The questionnaire has 5 items for each sub-scale, yet only the anxiety sub-scale is used in the current study to control its possible effect on using OD applications. The Turkish version of this scale is adapted by Epözdemir (2009). Cronbach alpha coefficients range from .58 to .83 for non-clinical samples. The anxiety sub-scale is found to have good reliability ($\alpha = .80$). For the current study, the anxiety sub-scale's Cronbach alpha is .87 (see Appendix F).

3.3.1.5 Interpersonal emotion regulation questionnaire (IERQ). An interpersonal emotion regulation questionnaire is conducted by Hofmann et al. (2016) given the importance of social relationships when considering emotion regulation. Turkish adaptation of the scale is made by Gökdağ, Sorias, Kıran, and Ger (2019). The scale has 4 factors which are classified as (1) social modeling, (2) soothing, (3) enhancing positive affect, and (4) perspective taking. Each factor has 5 items that are assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (1=not at all true-5=completely true). Cronbach

alpha values of factors range from .81 to .89. Total internal consistency of the questionnaire is found to be .91, and it is satisfactory. Its 2-week test-retest reliability coefficients are changed from .63 to .88 for each sub-dimension which are satisfactory (see Appendix D). For the current study, Cronbach alpha is found to be .90.

3.3.2 Data collection procedures. Before collecting data, ethical approval was taken from Bahcesehir University Ethical Committee. Data were collected with Qualtrics which is an online data collection tool that enables researchers to ask various types of questions. Participation in this study was voluntary. The present study was shared on social media platforms (i.e., Instagram, Twitter, etc.). Some of the university students who study at Bahcesehir University and Beykoz University received credit for their participation or for finding participants for the study. Informed consent was obtained from the participants at the beginning of the study. After consent was given, participants were presented with the socio-demographic questions. These questions were followed by Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, Short Dark Triad Scale, Anxiety Sub-Scale from Symptom Assessment-45 Questionnaire, and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. It took between 15 and 20 minutes to fill in the forms. There were some conditional questions (i.e., have you ever had a sexual relationship with someone you know via an online dating application?) If any participant answered these questions, yes, further questions appeared for him or her.

3.3.3 Data analysis procedures. At the end of data collection, data were exported to Microsoft Excel and then to IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics 26. Before the analysis, data were screened to reveal the missing responses. The assumptions for normal distribution were checked. Since predictor variables were non-normally distributed, logarithms of the relevant scores of scales were calculated, and then the data were re-analyzed to check normality. However, the logarithmic data were not normally distributed, either. Thus, non-parametric tests were used to analyze the data.

Chi-square tests were used to assess gender differences in the use of online dating applications. Mann-Whitney U tests were employed to compare males and females regarding study variables. Participants rated motivations to adopt online dating applications, which is why Spearman Rho's correlation was used to reveal the relationships of the motivations to adopt OD applications for both female and male

participants. Log-linear analyses were employed to predict the motivations to adopt OD applications with particular attention to gender.

3.4 Limitations

This study has suffered from some limitations. First of all, as one of the inclusion criteria, the study only involved the current OD application users with a history of at least 3 months of use. Since it was hard to get to current OD application users, the number of participants was less than the proposed sample (sample size was 350 based on 5% confidence interval) at the beginning of the study. Moreover, it was a convenient sample; participants were reached out through both online and offline means. Another limitation was that the majority of the participants were university graduates which also made the sample relatively biased. Though we do not have any comparative sample which gives us a representative value of OD application users' education, the ratio of higher education was high given the education level of the general population in this age range. Thus, it should be noted that this sample does not represent the OD application users population in Turkey. Instead, these findings can be considered to be limited to those relatively educated young adults who use OD applications in the country.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Preliminary Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

In order to determine whether the data should be analysed with parametric or non-parametric tests, the scale scores' normality, skewness, and kurtosis values were assessed. P-p plot and Shapiro-Wilk tests were employed to check the normality assumption of the scales, namely Rejection Sensitivity, Short Dark Triad (SD-3), Anxiety Sub-Scale from Symptom Assessment-45 Questionnaire (SA-45), and lastly, Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were significant. Neither original scores nor logarithms of these scores showed normal distribution. Therefore, though at the beginning of the study, it was planned to analyze the data with a hierarchical regression model, its non-parametric equivalent, Log-Linear Analysis, was conducted in the current study.

Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variables' mean, median, and standard deviation scores were calculated along with the minimum and maximum scores from the Machiavellism (MAC), Narcissism (NARC), Psychopathy Sub-Scales (PSYCHO) of Short Dark Triad Scale (SD-3); Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RS); Anxiety Sub-Scale of Symptom Assessment Checklist (SA-45); Social Modeling (SM), Soothing (ST), Enhancing Positive Affect (EPA), Perspective Taking (PT) Sub-Scales of Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (see Table 3).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

VAR.	MIN	MAX	MEAN	SD	MDN
MAC	15	50	34.04	6.66	34.5
NARC	11	45	28.5	6.49	28.5
PSYCHO	9	37	20.85	5.79	20
RS	18	118	55.92	17.47	55.5
A	5	35	15.50	8.41	12.5
SM	6	30	19.82	6.025	21
ST	5	25	14.90	5.41	15
EPA	5	25	20.48	3.93	21
PT	4	20	9.09	3,33	9

Notes: MAC: Machiavellism, NARC: Narcissism, PSYCHO: Psychopathy, RS: Relationship Sensitivity, SM: Social Modeling, ST: Soothing, EPA: Enhancing Positive Affect, PT: Perspective Taking, A: Anxiety

Analysis of Gender Differences

Prior to the primary analysis, male and female participants were compared in terms of their use of OD application. The results indicated that meeting face-to-face with someone known through OD applications differed by gender ($\chi^2 (1) = 5.40, p < .05$). Male participants ($n=63, 58.4\%$) were more likely than female participants ($n=47, 51.6\%$) to meet up face to face with someone they've known through OD applications. The gender difference was also significant ($\chi^2 (1) = 24.25, p < .05$) as regards to having sexual relationships with someone known through OD applications. Similarly, men ($n= 50, 36.1\%$) were likelier to have casual sexual relationships with someone they've met through OD applications compared to female participants ($n=18, 31.9\%$). Female and male participants did not differ on the variable of forming long/short romantic relationships with someone known through OD applications ($\chi^2 (1) = 0.190, p > .05$).

In terms of motivations to adopt OD applications, male and female participants were compared by conducting Mann-Whitney U tests. The results showed that men and women differed in their motivations for casual sexual relationships, not feeling alone, and avoiding negative emotions. Men ($Mdn= 85,29$), more than women participants ($Mdn= 40,93$), use OD applications to have casual sexual relationship motivation ($U= 626,000, z=-6,986, p < .01, r = -0,61$). Women ($Mdn= 72,70$), compared to men ($Mdn= 57,26$), were more likely to adopt OD applications for the purpose of not feeling alone ($U= 1548,000, z=-2,416, p < .05, r = -.135$). Similarly, women ($Mdn= 73,30$), more than men ($Mdn= 56,74$) tended to use OD application to avoid their negative emotions ($U= 1512,000, z=-2,605, p < .01, r = -.230$).

Table 4

Comparisons of Scale Scores Between Genders

	Female (Mdn)	Male (Mdn)
MAC	55,33	72,59*
NARC	66,30	62,91
PSYCHO	57,88	70,35
RS	71,64*	58,2
A	72,58*	55,51
SM	67,76*	55,18
ST	71,53*	51,93
EPA	68,72*	54,35
PT	60,38	61,53

Male and female participants were also compared in terms of study variables, namely Dark Triad Traits (Machiavellism, narcissism, and psychopathy), Rejection Sensitivity, Symptom Assessment Questionnaire (Anxiety Sub-Scale), and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation (social modeling, soothing, enhancing positive affect, perspective taking). Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted for these comparisons. According to the results, Men's Machiavellism scores were significantly higher than women's Machiavellism scores ($U=2590,0$, $z=2,630$, $p<.05$, $r=.232$). Female participants' rejection sensitivity scores were significantly higher than male participants ($U=1611,50$, $z=-2,047$, $p<.05$, $r=.180$). Also, female participants are found to have higher scores on the anxiety sub-scale than males ($U=1441,00$, $z=-2,622$, $p<.05$, $r=.233$). Female participants were also more inclined to use the social modeling strategy of IER than male participants ($U=1441,50$, $z=-1,971$, $p<.05$, $r=.179$). On the soothing sub-scale of IER, female participants also had higher scores than males ($U=1230,50$, $z=-3,071$, $p<.05$, $r=.279$). Women also adopted enhancing positive affect strategy more than male participants did ($Mdn=20,00$), ($U=1387,50$, $z=-2,265$, $p<.05$, $r=.205$).

Correlations between the study variables were examined for males and females by conducting Spearman's correlation coefficient analysis. Rejection Sensitivity, Machiavellism, narcissism, and psychopathy sub-dimensions of Short Dark Triad Scale (SD-3), and social modeling, soothing, enhancing positive affect, and perspective-taking factors of IER were analyzed. Table 5 and 6 display the Spearman correlation output on the mentioned variables.

Table 5

Bivariate Correlations among Scales for Female Participants Only

Var.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
MAC	-							
NARC	,135	-						
PSYCHO	,471**	,087	-					
RS	,112	-,166	,181	-				
SM	,007	-,083	,033	,137	-			
ST	,239	,081	,278*	,079	,364**	-		
EPA	-,317*	,105	-,231	,085	,462**	,250	-	
PT	,101	-,150	,110	,097	,358**	,154	-,130	-

Notes: **: $p < .01$, *: $p < .05$. MAC: Machiavellism, NARC: Narcissism, PSYCHO: Psychopathy, RS: Relationship Sensitivity, SM: Social Modeling, ST: Soothing, EPA: Enhancing Positive Affect, PT: Perspective Taking, A: Anxiety

For female participants, as can be seen in Table 5 Machiavellism was negatively correlated with enhancing positive affect strategy ($r = -.317$, $p < .05$). Also, psychopathy level was positively related to soothing strategy from IER ($r = .278$, $p < .05$). However, these correlations were relatively weak.

Table 6

Bivariate Correlations among Scales for Male Participants Only

Var.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
MAC	-							
NARC	,479**	-						
PSYCHO	,585**	,371**	-					
RS	-,017	-,053	-,049	-				
SM	,007	,038	,004	,118	-			
ST	,167	,273*	,043	,220	,472**	-		
EPA	,211	,244*	-,054	,064	,404**	,327**	-	
PT	,090	,146	,017	,116	,618**	,504**	,222	-

Notes: **: $p < .01$, *: $p < .05$. MAC: Machiavellism, NARC: Narcissism, PSYCHO: Psychopathy, RS: Relationship Sensitivity, SM: Social Modeling, ST: Soothing, EPA: Enhancing Positive Affect, PT: Perspective Taking, A: Anxiety

For male participants, soothing strategy was significantly correlated with narcissism ($r = .273$, $p < .05$). Enhancing positive affect strategy was significantly correlated with narcissism ($r = .244$, $p < .05$). Again, these correlations were weak.

Table 7

Bivariate Correlations between the Study Variables and the Motivations for Female Participants

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
MAC	-	0,135	,471**	0,112	0,007	0,239	-,317*	0,101	0,140	-0,099	-0,061	,323*	0,231	0,104	,280*
NARC		-	0,087	-0,166	-0,083	0,081	0,105	-0,150	-0,076	0,109	0,067	0,013	-0,091	0,026	-0,213
PSYCHO			-	0,181	0,033	,278*	-0,231	0,110	0,241	-0,101	0,116	,257*	0,129	-0,085	,280*
RS				-	0,137	0,079	0,085	0,097	0,190	-0,026	-0,009	0,200	0,156	-0,091	,306*
SM					-	,364**	,462**	,358**	0,051	-0,059	0,175	0,051	-0,008	,302*	0,212
ST						-	0,250	0,154	,314*	-0,077	0,130	0,143	-0,129	0,221	0,243
EPA							-	-0,130	0,181	-0,025	0,152	0,107	-0,023	,415**	0,095
PT								-	-0,040	-0,093	-0,099	-0,013	0,017	-0,028	0,192
A									-	0,116	0,057	0,145	0,006	-0,058	0,137
CSR										-	0,009	-0,119	0,014	-0,093	-0,055
RR											-	-0,042	-0,123	-0,026	0,050
WT												-	,611**	,404**	,468**
HF													-	0,156	,273*
NA														-	,460**
ANE															-

Notes: **: p<0,01, *: p<0,05. MAC: Machiavellism, NARC: Narcissism, PSYCHO: Psychopathy, RS: Relationship Sensitivity, SM: Social Modeling, ST: Soothing, EPA: Enhancing Positive Affect, PT: Perspective Taking, A: Anxiety, CSR: Casual Sexual Relationship, RR: Romantic Relationship, WT: Waste Time, HF: Have Fun, NA: Not Feeling Alone, ANE: Avoiding Negative Emotions

For female participants, Spearman Rho correlations were run to reveal how the motivations to adopt OD applications were related to the Rejection Sensitivity, Dark Triad Traits (Machiavellism, Narcissism, Psychopathy), Anxiety, and IER (Social Modeling, Soothing, Enhancing Positive Affect, Perspective Taking) scores. According to the analyses, women's Machiavellism scores were significantly related to the motivations of killing time ($r=.323$, $p<.05$) and avoiding negative emotions ($r=.280$, $p<.05$). Their psychopathy scores were correlated with the motivations of killing time ($r=.257$) and avoiding negative emotions ($r=.280$, $p<.05$ for both). Rejection sensitivity scores were correlated with the motivation of avoiding negative emotions, too ($r=.306$, $p<.05$). Social modeling strategy of IER was related to the motivation of not feeling alone ($r=.302$, $p<.05$). Enhancing positive affect strategy was correlated with the motivation of not feeling alone for adopting OD applications ($r=.415$, $p<.01$).

Table 8

Bivariate Correlations between the Study Variables and the Motivations for Male Participants

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
MAC	-	,479**	,585**	-0,017	0,007	0,167	0,211	0,090	0,045	0,098	-0,073	,288*	,327**	-0,109	0,046
NARC		-	,371**	-0,053	0,038	,273*	,244*	0,146	0,220	0,061	-0,016	-0,029	,289*	-0,126	-0,130
PSYCHO			-	-0,049	0,004	0,043	-0,054	0,017	0,174	,304*	-0,095	0,172	0,210	-0,148	-0,130
RS				-	0,118	0,220	0,064	0,116	,341**	0,007	0,163	0,002	0,087	,385**	,401**
SM					-	,472**	,404**	,618**	0,081	,307*	0,225	0,064	-0,013	0,229	0,172
ST						-	,327**	,504**	,247*	0,144	,335**	-0,095	-0,107	,307*	,266*
EPA							-	0,222	-0,060	0,171	0,034	,278*	,287*	-0,029	0,081
PT								-	0,201	0,195	,324**	-0,072	-0,045	0,167	0,178
A									-	0,079	0,074	-0,053	0,078	,386**	,269*
CSR										-	-0,137	,248*	,313**	-0,033	0,125
RR											-	0,135	0,017	,387**	,343**
WT												-	,550**	0,113	,254*
HF													-	0,156	,263*
NA														-	,807**
ANE															-

Notes: **: $p < .01$, *: $p < .05$. MAC: Machiavellism, NARC: Narcissism, PSYCHO: Psychopathy, RS: Relationship Sensitivity, SM: Social Modeling, ST: Soothing, EPA: Enhancing Positive Affect, PT: Perspective Taking, A: Anxiety, CSR: Casual Sexual Relationship, RR: Romantic Relationship, WT: Waste Time, HF: Have Fun, NA: Not Feeling Alone, ANE: Avoiding Negative Emotions

For male participants, Spearman Rho correlations displayed that Machiavellism scores were related to the motivation of killing time ($r=.288$, $p<.05$) and having fun ($r=.327$, $p<.01$), narcissism scores were associated with motivation of having fun ($r=.289$, $p<.05$), psychopathy scores were related to having casual sexual relationship motivation ($r=.304$, $p<.05$) for adopting OD applications. Men's rejection sensitivity levels were correlated with the motivations of not feeling alone ($r=.385$) and of avoiding negative emotions ($r=.401$, $p<.05$ for both). In terms of the IER variable, the social modeling strategy was related to the motivation to have casual sexual relationships for men ($r=.307$, $p<.05$); the soothing strategy was related to the motivations of forming romantic relationships ($r=.335$, $p<.01$), of not feeling alone ($r=.307$, $p<.05$), and of avoiding negative emotions ($r=.266$, $p<.05$); enhancing positive affect strategy was related to the motivations of killing time ($r=.278$) and having fun ($r=.287$, $p<.05$ for both); lastly perspective-taking strategy was related to the motivation of forming romantic relationships ($r=.324$, $p<.01$).

4.2 Log-Linear Analyses for Motivations of Online Dating Adoption

In order to conduct log-linear analyses, firstly, data were converted into categorical variables. The data were measured on Likert scales; thus, the median values of the scales were calculated for each scale/sub-scale.

According to the H1, dark triad traits and rejection sensitivity were expected to predict adopting OD applications for casual sexual relationships. Provided that the assumptions to run a log-linear analysis were met (no expected count less than 1 and no more than 20% less than 5), a five-way log-linear analysis was designed to predict the motivations to adopt OD applications with Machiavellism, narcissism, and psychopathy scores from Dark Triad Traits, Rejection Sensitivity, and seeking casual sexual relationships as motivation to use OD applications. The goodness-of-fit table showed Pearson and Likelihood ratio, and both of them were 0 meaning the saturated model fitted the data perfectly ($\chi^2(0) = 0$, $p=.01$). Next, K-Way and Higher Order Effects table was given by SPSS. According to the table, (K=1) main effects and any higher order effects could not be removed since removing them would affect the fit of the model ($\chi^2(31) = 46.00$, $p<.05$). Two-way interactions (K=2) were also significant; thus, this model could not be removed either ($\chi^2(26) = 41.024$, $p<.05$). The three-way interaction effect was not significant, thus, removing this effect from the model did not significantly affect the fit of the model ($\chi^2(5) = 16.883$, $p>.05$).

Since log-linear analysis did not provide which predictor variable was related to the outcome variable, chi-square tests were employed for breaking down total effects. Results yielded a significant relationship between the psychopathy trait and the motivation to have casual sexual relationships ($\chi^2 (1) = 6.949, p < .05$). However, there was no significant association between adopting OD applications for the motivation to have casual sexual relationships with the Machiavellism trait ($\chi^2 (1) = .815, p > .05$), narcissism ($\chi^2 (1) = .033, p > .05$) or rejection sensitivity ($\chi^2 (1) = .815, p > .05$).

Data were also explored for any gender differences. For the Machiavellism, narcissism, and rejection sensitivity, the results were insignificant for female or male participants. Yet, although for men, the results yielded a significant association between psychopathy and the motivation to have casual sexual relationships ($\chi^2 (1) = 3.956, p < .05$), for women, there was no significant association between psychopathy trait and casual sexual relationship motivation ($\chi^2 (1) = .278, p > .05$). Odd ratios indicated that men who had higher levels of psychopathy trait were 2.82 times more likely to adopt OD applications for having casual sexual relationships than men who had lower levels of psychopathy. Given these results, H1 was partially supported.

A five-way log-linear analysis was run with the sub-scales of IER. Pearson and Likelihood ratio were shown on the goodness-of-fit table, and according to the table, the saturated model was the perfect fit to the data ($\chi^2 (0) = 0, p = 1$). K-Way and Higher Order Effects table displayed that main effects and any higher order effects ($K=1$) could not be removed since removing them would affect the fit of the model ($\chi^2 (31) = 108.591, p < .05$). Two-way interactions ($K=2$) were also significant ($\chi^2 (26) = 92.736, p < .05$). Any three-way interaction effect was not significant ($\chi^2 (16) = 21.613, p > .05$).

Chi-square tests were employed to break down the total effects. Social modeling strategy from IER displayed a significant association with romantic relationships motivation ($\chi^2 (1) = 7.988, p < .05$). However, there was no significant association of adopting OD applications for the motivation to form romantic relationships with enhancing positive affect ($\chi^2 (1) = .360, p > .05$), perspective taking ($\chi^2 (1) = 2.082, p > .05$), and soothing strategies ($\chi^2 (1) = 2.476, p > .05$) with adopting OD applications for the motivation to form romantic relationships. Data were examined for gender differences. For male participants, the results yielded a significant association of social modeling ($\chi^2 (1) = 9.129, p < .01$), perspective taking ($\chi^2 (1)$

=5.322, $p < .05$), and soothing ($\chi^2 (1) = 6.858$, $p < .01$) strategies with the motivation to form romantic relationships. Odds ratios indicated that men who adopted the social modeling strategy to regulate their emotions were 5.05 times more likely to use OD applications with an aim of forming romantic relationships than men who did not adopt this strategy. Also, men who used perspective-taking strategy were found to be 3.42 times more likely to adopt these applications to form romantic relationships than men who did not use the perspective-taking strategy. Finally, results indicated that men who used soothing strategy to regulate their emotions in interpersonal relationships were 4.04 times more likely to adopt OD application with the aim of forming romantic relationships. These findings supported the second hypothesis for men, but it was not supported for female participants.

Although it was not hypothesized initially, for women especially, Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient results indicated some significant associations for adopting OD applications with the motivation of avoiding negative emotions and not feeling alone. A seven-way log-linear analysis was run with Rejection Sensitivity, Social Modeling, Soothing, Perspective Taking, Enhancing Positive Affect, and the motivations of avoiding negative emotions and not feeling alone. K-Way and Higher Order Effects table displayed two-way interactions ($K=2$) were significant ($\chi^2 (57) = 287.769$, $p < .01$). Since the focus was on women's motivations to adopt OD applications for this analysis, only women's results on log-linear and chi-square was mentioned. For women, rejection sensitivity was significantly related to the motivation of avoiding negative emotions ($\chi^2 (1) = 8.949$, $p < .01$), also enhancing positive affect strategy was related to not feeling alone ($\chi^2 (1) = 11.324$, $p < .01$). According to the odd ratios, women who were high on rejection sensitivity were 6.25 times more likely to adopt OD applications for the purpose of avoiding negative emotions than women who were low on rejection sensitivity. Also, women who were higher on enhancing positive affect strategy to regulate their emotions were 7.79 times more likely to adopt OD applications to not feel alone.

Chapter 5

Discussions and Conclusions

The current study aimed to identify motivations for adopting OD applications and uncover potential psychological factors associated with these motivations. The hypotheses for the present study were as follows: **(H1)** Men are more likely to use OD applications with a motivation of having casual sexual relationships than women. **(H2)** Women are more likely to use OD applications with a motivation to form romantic relationships than men. **(H3)** Dark Triad Traits, namely Machiavellism, narcissism, and psychopathy, are expected to be predictors of adopting OD applications for casual sexual relationship motivations for men, **(H4)** High levels of rejection sensitivity are expected to predict to have casual sexual relationship motivation through OD applications both for men and women, **(H5)** High levels of IER strategies namely social modeling, soothing, enhancing positive affect, and perspective taking are expected to be related to form romantic relationship motivation through OD applications for women. Other motivations to adopt OD applications were presented as killing time, having fun, not feeling alone, and avoidance of negative emotions. These were not explicitly involved in the hypotheses, yet they were explored more in detail because analyses indicated some possible relationships with the predictor variables.

The present study confirmed the first hypothesis. Men (60.2%) were more likely to adopt OD applications for the purpose of casual sex than women (10%). The study did not confirm the second hypothesis since men (33%) and women (35%) did not significantly differ on their motivation to form romantic relationships via OD. The third hypothesis was partially supported. Only psychopathy trait was found to be a predictor of adopting online dating applications for casual sexual relationship motivations for men (Hypothesis-3c). However, hypotheses regarding Machiavellism and narcissism as predictors of the motivation for casual sexual relationships were not confirmed by this study. Hypothesis 4 of high levels of rejection sensitivity as a predictor of OD application use for having casual sexual relationship motivation was not confirmed, either. Hypothesis 5 regarding one's interpersonal emotion regulation strategies and his/her motivation to form romantic relationships was partially

confirmed in the present study. Specifically, social modeling (H3a), soothing (H3b), and perspective-taking (H3d) strategies were able to predict the motivation to form romantic relationships via OD applications only for men but not for women. Lastly, in addition to these hypotheses, the study has two significant findings for women. (1) high levels of rejection sensitivity were able to predict the motivation of negative emotion avoidance. (2) enhancing positive affect strategy predicted the motivation of not feeling alone.

Below, the findings of the present study will be discussed in light of relevant literature. Theoretical and clinical implications of the study will be presented and suggestions for future studies will be made.

5.1 The Findings of the Current Study

The current study confirms the first hypothesis. It is found that men (60.2%) are more likely to use OD applications to have casual sexual relationships than women (10%). This result is compatible with some studies in the literature stating that men adopt these applications to have casual sexual relationships more than women (Abramova et al., 2016; Almond et al., 2019; Sumter et al., 2017; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017). In the current study, some women seek sexual partners (10%) through OD applications, yet their ratio was much less compared to men (60.2%). This statistic might be related to gender norms about sexuality: women might be reluctant to disclose their sexual aims on OD applications. Thus, there is a possibility of women's tendency to underreport their motivation to find sexual partners through OD applications. Nazik, Sönmez, and Akben (2021) find that single women in Turkey hide that they have sexual experiences. Substantiating the current study's result, Boratav and Çavdar (2011) reveal that men experience and express their sexuality more freely than women in Turkey. It may be possible to conclude that traditional gendered norms about sexuality are still strong in Turkey. Even if women have sexual experiences through online platforms, they do not easily verify that as opposed to men.

The second hypothesis cannot be confirmed because the current study is not able to find any significant difference between men (33%) and women (35%) in terms of the motivation to form romantic relationships through OD applications. This result is compatible with some findings in the literature, which state that similar to women, men also look for love through OD applications (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017; Nguyen, 2018). However, men report adopting these applications for having casual sex (60.2%)

more than developing romantic relationships (33%); women have more interest in forming romantic relationships (35%) than having casual sex (10%). Despite this difference, they are not significantly different in terms of their motivation to find a romantic partner on online platforms. This conclusion might be related to (1) increased working hours which make it hard to find a partner and invest in a long-term relationship. Because compared to earlier times, the modernized world requires more time and labor from individuals, so there is less to give a romantic relationship (Schwartz & Velotta, 2018). Moreover, (2) in recent years, the worldwide coronavirus pandemic might decrease the possibility of finding partners offline (Chisom, 2021). That is why both men and women tend to look for romance through online platforms. Online dating applications seem to become a remedy for the troubles of modern life.

For the third hypothesis, the log-linear analysis indicates a significant relationship only between psychopathy traits and casual sexual relationship motivation for men. This result is consistent with the literature stating that psychopathy trait is associated with short-term mating (Holtzman & Strube, 2013; Jonason et al., 2012a; Lyons et al., 2020; Tsouskas & March 2018), including those short-term relationships built up on the OD platforms (Sevi, 2019). Golmaryami et al. (2021) suggest that the behavioural aspect of psychopathy is responsible for the association between short-term relationships and psychopathy rather than psychopathy's affective deficiency. Psychopathy is characterized by impulsivity and a tendency for insensitive risk-taking; these are said to increase their preference for short-term relationships, including casual and unprotected sex (Cooke & Mitchie, 2001). On the other hand, Tsoukas and March (2018) argue that individuals high in psychopathy trait do not care for their partners' needs and feelings due to a lack of empathy; this may facilitate having short-term relationships without thinking of consequences for their partners'. The nature of relationships formed through OD applications is said to be ephemeral and non-serious (Bhave, 2019; Šutić et al., 2023). The applications' design and interface are developed to encourage users to quickly "swipe" profiles (David & Cambre, 2016) without even screening. Psychopathy's associations with fast mating strategy (Jonason & Kavanagh, 2010) might be fitting this design of the applications. Moreover, consistent with the literature, the association between psychopathy and short-term relationships is only valid for male participants in the current study. It is important to note that there is no floor effect for psychopathy traits for women in the present data but still no relationship

between psychopathy and short-term mating is found for female participants. Studies in the literature support this gender difference that dark triad traits are mostly seen in men, and the relationship of dark traits with short-term mating strategy is only confirmed for men (Jonason et al., 2009). Substantiating the literature, in the current study, men's psychopathy level (Mdn= 70,35) was higher than women's psychopathy level as well (Mdn= 57,88).

The literature finds inconsistent results for Machiavellism and narcissism traits as predictor variables for casual sexual relationships. Jonason et al. (2009) suggest that all dark traits, regardless of gender are highly associated with sociosexuality -which refers to unrestricted sexual practices- and a higher number of sexual partners. Similarly, some studies confirm the association between Machiavellism and short-term mating (Holtzman & Strube, 2013; McHoskey, 2001), yet others find no relationship between short-term relationships and Machiavellism (Apostolou et al., 2019; Lyons et al., 2020). The present study could not find any significant association between casual sexual relationships and Machiavellism either for male or female participants. Presumably, one explanation for that could be the Machiavellism trait is highly associated with a utilitarian approach to relationships (Ináncsi et al., 2015; Jonason et al., 2012; Wastell & Booth, 2003), meaning if a relationship seems to serve Machiavellistic individuals' benefits, they might prefer maintaining that relationship. For instance, Ináncsi, Láng, and Bereczkei (2015) find that Machiavellistic individuals prioritize their partner's possessions, wealth and status rather than their warmth, openness or agreeableness. That might be one reason why Machiavellistic individuals do not exclusively look for short-term relationships. They may be willing to maintain the relationships as long as their interests or goals are met.

In terms of narcissism traits, although a significant relationship between narcissism and short-term mating (Jonason et al., 2012; Schmitt et al., 2017) is found in some empirical studies, there are also other studies which found no relationship between narcissism trait and short-term relationships (Apostolou et al., 2019; Tsoukas & March 2018) In the current study, narcissism trait is not related to the motivation of having casual sex, contrary to the hypothesis. People high in narcissism are preoccupied with their self-presentation and their need for more visible approval from others (Yakeley, 2018). Thus, these people might depreciate casual sex and perceive having casual sex through OD platforms as a threat to their fragile self-esteem

(Sunbay-Bilgen, 2020). Short-term relationships might be seen as failures of not being able to keep the relationships (Apostolou et al., 2019; Tsoukas & March 2018;). Also, casual sex with anyone might be incompatible with their grandiosity (Sunbay-Bilgen, 2020). Because they perceive themselves as superior, they do not have casual sexual relationships with everyone they encounter. There is also Jonason et al.'s (2011) finding that depending on a partner's status or physical appearance narcissistic individuals might tend to form long-term relationships similar to Machiavellistic individuals. However, in the current study partner's status has not been explored, so no such conclusion can be confirmed. Downey et al. (2000) infer that individuals high in RS avoid or invest less in intimate relationships as a strategy to prevent rejection or breaking up. In OD platforms, rejection, and short-lived relationships are prevalent. Individuals high in RS are alerted to rejection in these platforms as they do in offline interactions. Thus, in these applications, they look for casual relationships and, in that way, even if they get rejected, their emotional investment would be less, and they would not disclose themselves. However, contrary to the hypothesized association, rejection sensitivity is not associated with casual sexual relationship motivation, either. It is argued that rejection-sensitive individuals tend to use social media platforms because they experience high anxiety in face-to-face communications (Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2018). Hance et al. (2018) find that these individuals feel less nervous in online interactions so they can express their true selves. This may be why the current study could not find any association between short-term relationships and RS. It is possible to conclude that individuals high in RS do not prioritize forming short- or long-term relationships through these applications. These applications may create a space to express themselves so people high in RS reveal the intimate aspects of their selves without feeling tense and without any particular preference for a short-term relationship.

Interactions of forming romantic relationships with social modeling, soothing, and perspective-taking were significant among male participants in the current study. Although there is no study that directly links long-term relationships with IER strategies, previous research shows that people regulate their emotions through social interactions (Hofmann & Doan, 2018), especially through romantic ones during emerging adulthood (Rimé, 2009). Romantic relationships are interactional spaces in which one utilizes his/her partner to be comforted. In the present study, men look for

romance through OD applications in addition to looking for casual sexual relationships, and IER strategies are associated with romantic relationship motivation for them. It may be said that men who regulate themselves through interactions with others when experiencing negative emotions tend to adopt OD applications to form more committed relationships. Hofmann (2016) stresses that a high inclination to IER strategies implies an inability to regulate one's emotions; in other words, one's inability to self-regulation may cause him/her to lean on others. It could be said that men who have difficulty with intrapersonal emotion regulation need to make sure that their partners are available in the long-term. Or they may perceive causal relationships as not good enough or sufficient for them to regulate themselves. One reason for this can be a lack of space in casual sexual relationships for talking about their feelings or being soothed.

Contrary to the hypothesis, although women tend to talk about and share their emotions (Williams et al., 2018), this study did not find any correlation between interpersonal emotion regulation and the motivation to form romantic relationships for women. One explanation for this result could be that both men and women prefer sharing their emotional experiences with women (Liu et al., 2021), thus for heterosexual men, romantic relationships may provide meaningful relatedness for sharing emotional experiences with the opposite sex, on the other hand, women may prefer sharing their emotions with the same sex even when they have a male partner. Therefore, as heterosexual women, they do not need partners whom they have met on the OD platforms to regulate their emotions.

Although not initially hypothesized, the current study found that women high in RS are more likely to adopt OD applications for avoiding negative emotions. Demircioğlu and Göncü-Köse (2018) conclude that high levels of RS may motivate individuals to be active on online platforms because they experience anxiety and tension during face-to-face interactions. However, it is not known if individuals high in RS experience less anxiety during online interactions than face-to-face ones. On the other hand, this study shows that they might be avoiding their negative emotions through engaging with others on online platforms. Therefore, it may indirectly be argued that individuals high in RS feel less anxiety during online conversations than face-to-face ones. However, this conclusion needs to be tested more directly by comparing anxiety levels in online and face-to-face interactions. It is also possible that

having some contact and feeling accepted before going out for a face-to-face date make them feel less anxious in a face-to-face interaction, as this implies ruling out some form of rejection beforehand. Another issue regarding rejection sensitivity is Blackhart et al.'s (2014) argument that individuals high in RS tend to use online platforms because these platforms make rejection less salient. RS alerts individuals to perceive rejection even in uncertain situations (Downey et al., 1999). For example, one perceives it as a rejection when his/her message is not responded. However, rejection in online dating platforms is more prevalent and acceptable relative to face-to-face dating (LeFebvre, 2017).

Enhancing positive affect from IER was also related to the motivation of not feeling alone for women. IER studies are limited, and it is impossible to compare with the previous findings in the literature. However, Ranzini and Lutz (2017) can be noted; authors found that one's feeling of loneliness was associated with Tinder usage for the motives of self-validation and entertainment. They argued that lonely individuals do not use Tinder to make friends, yet they also use Tinder to distract themselves from their loneliness so that they might feel good about themselves. Considering these, women may adopt these applications to compensate for their emotional needs, such as not feeling alone or enhancing their affect.

5.2 The Theoretical and Clinical Implications of the Current Study

The current study has some theoretical and clinical implications. Results indicate that men adopt OD applications with various motivations. First, they tend to use these applications to have casual sexual relationships, and the psychopathy trait was significantly related to casual sex motivation via OD applications in the current study. This might imply that men on OD applications who look for casual sex might be impulsive and make emotionally detached choices regarding mating (Jonason et al., 2009). If female users tend to accept casual sexual relationships with a hope that this would open a way to a long-term one, they may be frustrated and disappointed with these encounters, and their emotional needs may not be met. Therefore, this only leads up to what Field (2011) stated as bereavement-like symptoms that accompany frequent romantic break-ups.

Secondly, men also adopt these applications to form romantic relationships and interpersonal emotion regulation strategies are related to this motivation to use these applications. Although this association might seem innocent at first, a relatively high

inclination to rely on others for emotion regulation might be problematic in the long run. Hofmann (2016) argues that the inability to self-regulate leads individuals to look for others with the aim of regulating their emotions. These men might not be able to learn how to regulate their inner states without another person's existence. This situation may cause them to depend on their romantic partners all the time so that they are not able to develop a capacity to be alone.

Moreover, in the present study, women utilize these applications to avoid their negative emotions. Similar to the utilization of social media platforms (Demircioğlu & Göncü-Köse, 2018), OD applications might be turning into addictions that some individuals adopt when they cannot cope with their unwanted emotions. Also, these women might make connections through these applications. In the short term, they might evade the negativity without acknowledging their genuine feelings, which might be sadness or loneliness, etc. But the repercussions might be harsh. They might become inattentive to the individuals they match on these platforms and become vulnerable to the dangers of these applications i.e., sexual assault because their focus is on one goal: fending off negative emotions.

As mentioned earlier, the number of OD application users increases daily due to the many advantages these applications provide. Since individuals meet their potential partners through online platforms more than earlier, clinicians may encounter more clients who date online. Therefore, psychotherapists may need to know how these applications work, their users' profiles, motivations, etc. This study highlights some aspects of users who adopt OD applications and provides insights into motivations to use these applications to help clinicians understand their clients.

5.3 Limitations and Future Directions

The current study has some limitations. The general profile of OD application users has yet to be discovered but in the current study the sample consists of highly educated individuals who mostly graduated from or still studying at university. Since these applications can be used by anyone who has a smartphone, individuals who have a lower education degree are able to adopt these applications. For these individuals, the results of the current analyses may change. Also, the sample size is limited, and it is collected through a convenient sampling method. All these limitations make the generalizability of the results problematic. Future studies can be conducted with a large sample.

Moreover, self-report measures might be misleading because they are based on individuals' subjective opinions about themselves. The participants might bias their responses to choose the option that make them look better because of the social desirability effect (Christensen, 2006). For example, in the current study, there are few women who indicate their usage of OD applications for having casual sex. There might be female participants in the study adopting the applications for that purpose but could not report it due to a bad reputation for women who live their sexuality without much constraints (Farvid, Braun & Rowney, 2017).

The current study acquires the data from self-report measures in an online platform (Qualtrics). Online data collection is not the most reliable way to collect data since the researcher is not able to control the process. For instance, participants might enter the website and fill out the survey multiple times (Christensen, 2006) and the researcher cannot identify such multiple entries. Also, this study is cross-sectional, so it is not possible to make causal inferences from the current findings.

In this study, there are women who prefer having casual sex as well as forming romantic relationships via OD applications. However, the current study cannot identify any of the study variables as being associated with these motivations. Qualitative studies can be conducted in the future so that in a secure context, women might be more willing to explain the factors leading them to have casual sex or form romantic relationships through these applications.

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