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**Exploring the Impact of Social Dating Applications on Relationships During  
the Covid-19 Pandemic Among Young Adults**

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**Group 11**

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A RESEARCH PROJECT  
SUBMITTED IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF  
BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION (HONS) PUBLIC RELATIONS  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

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## Approval Form

This research paper attached hereto, entitled Exploring the Impact of Social Dating Applications on Relationships During the Covid-19 Pandemic Among Young Adults prepared and submitted by Alisya binti Yahaya, Cheow Zhi Yang, Chong Qiao Lin, Chow Qian Yu and Ho Kar Fai in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Communication (Hons) Public Relations is hereby accepted.

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- use of fabricated data claimed to be obtained by experimental work, or data copied or obtained by unfair means;

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**Exploring The Impact of Social Dating Applications on Relationships During the Covid-19 Pandemic Among Young Adults**

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# **Exploring The Impact of Social Dating Applications on Relationships During the Covid-19 Pandemic Among Young Adults**

## **Abstract**

Since 2020, the pandemic has challenged and transformed the framework of dating due to restrictions such as social distancing and stay at home order, resulting in an even higher spike of increase among the most-used dating applications all over the world. In this sense, people used social dating applications as one of the ways to conduct social interactions. In this research, researchers aim to explore the impact of dating applications on relationship, as well to analyse the intention of usage among young adults during the Covid-19 pandemic. A qualitative research approach is adopted in this study. Phenomenology is used to study the guidelines of the factors related to social interaction among young adults using Tinder and Baituljannah on relationships. Purposing sampling is used to obtain detailed data through in-depth interview. Six Malaysian young adults aged between 18 to 35 who used Tinder and Baituljannah during the pandemic were chosen to be interviewed. Based on the findings, Tinder and Baituljannah had a substantial influence on the establishment of romantic relationships, mainly due to lack of emotional well-being and absence of positive reinforcement from the immediate environment. A hook-up culture is developed where a sense of reluctance and hesitation showed despite the need of sexual encounters when in isolation. Friendship forming also was the most common activity. Furthermore, the intentions to use Tinder and Baituljannah were to seek for friendships and romantic

relationships due to boredom, loneliness and need for affection crave. Using social dating applications while already in a relationship was unfavourable due to low tolerance, and social dating applications were not trustworthy and preferable. The research's findings might useful for future researchers as a reference to emphasise the impact of social dating applications on relationships among young adults. Future studies could explore the sexual desire of social dating applications during the isolation period to further develop a new finding.

**Keywords:** social dating applications, Tinder, Baituljannah, relationships, young adults.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Online dating, often known as internet dating, is a system that allows people to use the internet to search and introduce themselves to possible dates to form personal, romantic, or sexual relationships. To attract potential partners, individuals register a user account on an online dating site, then create a profile with photos, personal information and match preference. Match.com, the first official dating service, was founded in 1993 by entrepreneurs Gary Kremen and Peng.T.Ong and launched two years later in 1995 (Matthews, 2018). More than 100,000 people had signed up for the dating site by the end of 1996. Nowadays, social dating applications are among the most popular social media platforms that allow individuals, couples, and groups to communicate with each other and search for their potential romantic partners.

According to Smith & Duggan (2013), one out of every ten people in the United States has used an online dating site or a mobile dating app.; 66% of these online daters have dated someone from a dating site or app, and 23% have found their spouse or long-term partner through these sites. The general public's attitude towards online dating has become much more positive over the last few years, and social networking sites are now playing an important role in navigating and documenting romantic relationships. The number of dating sites available is constantly increasing. Some dating sites focused on specific groups such as seniors, Muslims, fitness-oriented people, people looking for friends, and even people interested in more adult activities (Grabianowski, 2005).

Tinder, one of the most used social dating applications, has globally popularized app-based matchmaking when it was introduced in 2012. Unlike traditional dating websites, which required a complicated process to set up a profile, Tinder gamified online dating with a simple account setup and its "swipe right to like" approach (Cardona, 2019). By 2017, Tinder had grown to 57 million active users globally and billions of swipes per day. In sum, social dating applications, especially Tinder, have significantly contributed to the standardisation of romance, in which quick love and intimacy are pursued and consumed in an accelerated manner, changing socially anticipated circumstances for relationships (Stoicescu, 2020). As a result, social dating is currently a widespread phenomenon in society and has become a perfect alternative to traditional dating.

## 1.1 Social Dating Applications in Malaysia

In this technological era, it is no longer surprising to find couples who met through online dating apps; more than half of Malaysians are said to know at least one couple who met through online dating apps. Though social media has always been great at bringing people together and connecting them, it seems like the trend of social dating applications has changed how people date and love. It is safe to say that online dating is an increasingly competitive marketplace and has become mainstream in Malaysia. Among a variety of social dating applications, Tinder, Malaysia Social, and Malaysia Cupid are the clear favourites in Malaysia (YouGov, 2017). According to Vijandren (2017), Tinder leads the online dating services explicitly in Malaysia with 63% of people who have heard of this dating app.

According to a survey on mobile dating apps conducted by Rakuten Insight in 2020, approximately 33% of Malaysian respondents stated that they primarily used dating apps to meet new people, and 28% of respondents used dating apps to find a long-term romantic relationship (Müller, 2021). App Annie, a global marketing and analytics firm, reported that Malaysians spent a total amount of RM 24 million on dating apps in 2019. According to the numbers, Malaysians have been increasingly investing in social dating apps, spending some RM 7 million in 2017 and around RM13 million in 2018 (Hakim, 2020). While other intentions of using dating apps also included looking for casual hook-up, looking for a long-term sex partner and just for their entertainment.



### **1.1.1 Facebook Dating**

Besides trending online dating applications such as Tinder and Malaysia Cupid, Facebook Dating is one of the favourites among Malaysians who desire to experience online dating culture. In 2019, Facebook officially launched a new feature titled Facebook Dating in 19 countries, including Malaysia. Facebook Dating lives within the existing Facebook app, and users do not need to download it as a standalone app. As Facebook Dating takes full advantage of the social features offered by its parent company, it already has an unfathomable number of existing users and Facebook Dating would not ever need to worry about running out of potential matches (Minor, 2020). Facebook dating lives as a tab within Facebook's main menu on mobile, first-time users have to just set up a separate profile from their Facebook by providing their details such as name and age. The service will present users with potential matches based on their location (Matsakis, 2019). Unlike other social dating applications which have a prominent right-or-left swiping feature, users of Facebook Dating can start a conversation by liking the person's profile or respond directly to one of their questions. There are currently more than 200 million people who indicated that they are single in their relationship status on Facebook, the company has provided an incredible platform for people to explore meaningful romantic relationships (Justin et al., 2019).

### **1.1.2 Sugar Arrangement through Social Dating Applications**

While social dating applications do not only form to connect people with their romantic partners, some individuals also use it with alternative intentions such as sugar dating. Sugar arrangement can be defined as a beneficial relationship between a "sugar baby" and a "sugar daddy". The terms "sugar daddy" and "sugar momma" typically refers to older and wealthier men and women

lavishing gifts on younger men and women in exchange for their company or sexual favours. On the other hand, sugar baby refers to a younger individual who receives the gifts (Upadhyay, 2021). Sugar arrangement is one of the growing practices which frequently occurs through social dating applications among Malaysians. According to the most recent data from popular dating sites, Malaysia is home to 300,000 sugar babies and the majority of them are female university students (Hassandarvish, 2021). Sugarbook, Asia's largest sugar daddy dating platform, claims to have over 400,000 active members in Malaysia, including 220,000 sugar babies, 180,000 sugar daddies, and 6,000 sugar mommies. Moreover, Malaysian university students seek sugar daddies due to some of the reasons such as high cost of living, heavy student loan debts, and rising tuition fees. Since sugar dating became a widespread phenomenon in Malaysian society, more and more Malaysian students were considering sugar dating as an alternative way to fund their daily expenses and reduce their financial burden.

### **1.1.3 Intentions of Using Social Dating Applications**

The rise of social dating applications has altered the way people initiate relationships, people who use dating sites and mobile dating apps now have more access to potential romantic and sexual partners than those who meet in person (Fiore & Donath, 2004). According to Müller (2020), the main reasons Malaysians engage in mobile dating applications are convenience, boredom, not having time to meet new people, and feel comfortable making the first move online. Mobile dating apps had a good reputation and high success rate, it allows users to choose whom to meet according to their tastes and requirements. However, single users are not the only group of consumers who

intend to explore social dating applications. For non-single users, engaging in dating apps while having a partner in reality might lead to sexual infidelity and harmful influences on their existing relationship (Hobbs et al., 2017; Weiser et al., 2018). In addition, engaging in dating apps while in a committed relationship may lead to a lack of commitment and the pursuit of other romantic partners (Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). In general, non-singles users who intend to use dating apps due to several reasons such as seeking casual sexual encounters, satisfying their curiosity about the current trend and understanding their value as potential dating partners (Timmermans et al., 2018).

Social dating applications provide users with a large pool of prospective suitors, which potentially increase the possibility of one engaging in a relationship. However, can a long-term relationship be maintained by couples who met through dating apps? A study suggested that couples from dating apps have as satisfying relationships as those who met via traditional encounters and might even be keener to settle down (Davis, 2020). While dating apps can promote short-term relationships, many long-term relationships are formed because users can meet people who are motivated to engage in profound and long-lasting relationships (Faces Magazine, 2021). Furthermore, digital dating provides more time for users to discuss their ambitions. As a result, people looking for long-term relationships can find their ideal partner with similar ambitions quicker. According to a finding on the length of relationships formed on dating apps conducted by SimpleTexting, 7 percent of couples had been together for six months to a year, 15% had been together for more than a year, and 14% were engaged and married (Emery, 2017).

#### **1.1.4 Social Dating Applications during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Since early 2020, people have been forced to stay at home and practise social distancing due to the rapid spreading of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic brought negative impacts to the economy and individuals' psychological well-being such as uncertainty, anxiety, and loneliness (Ducharme, 2020). Individuals, especially single ones, gradually realise the importance of having a romantic partner and increase their desire to find love through social dating apps (Wulan, 2020). The pandemic has significantly changed people's daily habits, including finding a romantic partner (Widiyarti, 2020). Due to loneliness and anxiety that resulted from the pandemic, individuals were seeking romantic partners as well as other forms of social connections via social dating applications. According to Kartikawati (2020), the number of downloaded dating apps globally increased by 20 to 25 per cent in 2020. According to a year-end report by Tinder, 2020 brought an unprecedented number of users to dating apps. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, Tinder broke its record for the most activity in a single day, with more than 3 billion swipes (Wiederhold, 2021). Besides, Tinder also stated that its users had 11 per cent more swipes and 42 per cent more matches in 2020, making 2020 the app's busiest year (Dietzel, 2021). On the other hand, Baituljannah, one of Malaysia's top Muslim digital matchmaking platforms, had a staggering 85 per cent increase in users, with almost 1 million Muslim singles registered on the platform in 2021 (Malaysiakini, 2021).

## **1.2 Background of Study**

### **1.2.1 The Impact of Social Media before Covid-19**

Through the creation of virtual networks and communities, social media is a computer-based technology that allows the exchange of opinions, ideas and information (Dollarhide, 2021). Users can use web-based software and applications to access social media via several electronic devices, such as a smartphone, computer, or tablet. The fast growth of social media has long been the focus of debate among scholars about how these applications would impact users' social relationships (Ryan et al., 2017). With the rapid increase of social media worldwide, the degree of involvement in online communication and interaction through social media is rising through the roof. Therefore, such rapid increase of social media means that the majority of an individual offline social network can now be contacted online more than ever before. However, as public expectations grow and our society evolves, several major social media websites have made changes and improvements relatively frequently to ensure that they continue to evolve in the coming years (Baruah, 2012).

The rise in popularity of social media is due to individuals being increasingly dependent on online technology advancements, which has become an integral part of their social life. The most common social media networks that we currently use are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and Twitter (Dollarhide, 2021). One of the advantages of social media is that it provides a platform for people to interact with each other in a virtual environment, typically where they seek

and receive social and improve social satisfaction (Castillo de Mesa et al., 2019). For instance, celebrities from Korea update their status through social media to address their current social lives and to engage with their fans around the world. As a result, social media has become a means to enable individuals to meet the basic need to connect with and follow other member in their networks, and to maintain social relationships even in geographically dispersed networks (Castillo de Mesa et al., 2019; Ellison et al., 2007; Joinson, 2008; Lampe et al., 2006). Furthermore, social media also serves as a source of information on a variety of topics. These sites allow users to access, search, and download the available content such as without any charging fee such as YouTube as video sharing sites or Slideshare as slide sharing sites (Baruah, 2012).

However, Abdulahi et al. (2014) argued that security and privacy issues on social network websites had become a severe problem since various organisations and agencies gather and store massive amounts of data in databases. They also reinforced that the root of the problem is that thievery, fraud, and vandalism in the real world also occur in the virtual world. Hence, any misuse of these data could lead to negative consequences as the stored information is vital for individuals. The other disadvantage of social media is the current sextortion problem. The explanation of sextortion is someone threatening to distribute revealing, private, or embarrassing sexual pictures to social media without any agreement, generally in order to get more images, sexual acts, money, or anything else (Patchin & Hinduja, 2018). In simple terms, sextortion is a form of blackmail to reveal sexual photographs on social media to force someone do anything or for other purposes, such as revenge or humiliation (Finkelhor & Wolak, 2016). The offender is often a love partner, relative, or stranger with numerous purposes, but all with the same objective of extorting, manipulating, and using the victims for their gratification (Patchin & Hinduja, 2018).

### **1.2.2 Impact of Social Media in Relationship**

According to Flore & Cheshire (2010), although the measurement of trustworthiness and development of relations trust is just as crucial online as offline, they are far more loaded with ambiguity and uncertainty in computer-mediated communications. Relationships formed through social dating applications face various difficulties compared to those who formed their relationships through traditional ways, such as face-to-face interactions. Nonetheless, the online dating apps still provide a massive pool of possible matches while also utilising algorithms to assist users in looking for the closer match that they desire (Karantzas, 2020). It is simple to argue that users may gain a deeper understanding of a person by using video calls and messaging before committing to an actual meeting. As a result, individuals who are socially inactive and introverted may utilise online dating applications to establish a connection in a less confrontational manner while also allowing users to pick and communicate with a possible match.

In a research conducted by Anderson et al. (2020), respondents from the United States were more likely to rate their overall experience with online dating apps as positive than negative, and the vast majority of them think that online dating applications make it relatively effortless for them to find a potential partner based on physical appearance and shared common interests. It suggests that those who use online dating applications are more likely to meet a mate and are more or less successful in forming relationships. In contrast, individuals who lack confidence in themselves are

particularly more sensitive to rejection due to the potential where people may not receive any connections from their desired matches (Karantzas, 2020). Therefore, this rejection can be difficult for them, and it might hurt their mentality and cause them to doubt themselves.

### **1.2.3 The Growing Number of Downloaded Social Dating Applications during the Covid-19**

It is critical to understand that dating and forming relationships are essential in young adults and adults (Winking, 2021). Ever since the appearance of the Covid-19 pandemic, everyone has been advised to stay at home and keep social distance in order to mitigate the spread of the virus. It has changed and impacted everyone in our daily lives. In the past, people used to rely on conventional methods to find a possible partner, such as family or friend mediation or social gatherings. However, online dating applications have lately been a popular means for people to discover their ideal match, and this had gotten increasingly more popular when the Covid-19 pandemic broke out (Sagita & Irwansyah, 2021). This rising popularity of online dating applications during the pandemic period has no surprise and the reason is even though individuals are unable to leave their homes during the pandemic, they still find a method to stay in touch during the lockdown phase.

Subsequently, with the increasing amount of people using online dating applications during the pandemic period, it appears that the majority of individuals benefited from their online dating



experience since it allowed them to stay connected, keep their passion, anticipate fresh meetings and meet possible partners while being at home. Online dating may also function as a stabiliser during the pandemic, giving them more time to prepare and understand each other while avoiding the stress of premature physical intimacy (Joshi et al., 2020). Individuals who do not have a partner are particularly interested since they must find a new approach to find a suitable match. Humans are social beings, and a lack of close relationships may harm both mental and physical health (Winking, 2021; Dockterman, 2020), especially during this pandemic. As a result, to ensure social distancing while also preventing the spread of Covid-19, social dating applications are the most effective way to stay in contact while maintaining social distance (Winking, 2021).

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Dating is defined as an act of getting to know one another (Albo, 2019). In terms of sociology, dating conduct ranges from the very casual “hanging out” that is not the act of dating (Owens, 2005). On the other hand, online dating is defined as a framework that empowers individuals to discover and acquaint themselves with new memorable interactions over the Web, as a rule fully intent on creating individual, heartfelt, or sexual connections. An online dating service is an organisation that gives explicit components to internet-based dating using associated Web devices or cell phones. Such organisations offer a wide assortment of unmoderated matchmaking administrations, most of which are profile-based (Ecochunk, 2021). Online dating applications have been really convenient for individuals seeking connections beyond their friend circle and it

has also helped expand their network to people they would have otherwise never met (Ghimire, 2021).

In this era, the popularizations of dating apps have made a change in the way how people interact with one another. Initially, dating apps were developed to expand the social circle and networks of the users (Welch & Morgan, 2018). Individuals turn to dating apps for gratifications such as for attention-seeking, to boost their self-confidence and to utilise their time (Bryden, 2017). When it comes to finding partners, casual dating, and other sorts of social contacts, individuals nowadays prefer to use dating apps. As finding a spouse using online dating apps has grown more common than approaching individuals directly, dating apps are breaking down boundaries and shifting societal conventions (Azzahro et al., 2018). Hence, social experts agree that dating apps are a convenient way to find an appropriate partner. According to Lope (2020), many adults are turning to dating apps to discover a connection because they find it much more convenient to meet new people. This is especially true for those who are busy, as dating apps can be huge money savers and excellent relationship builders.

Furthermore, introverts who do not get out often might use dating apps to find partnerships and connections (Lusinski, 2016). Introverts may find it awkward to speak to others during social occasions, but they can avoid this problem by using a dating app, which allows introverts to 'meet up' with those they are interested in without having to face them. These digital natives, have enjoyed the freedom to manage their social lives and romantic entanglements that the previous generations lacked through social dating applications. Moreover, dating apps allow users to define

their overall experience with these platforms in terms that are more good than negative (Anderson et al., 2020). These apps let users build personal profiles, choose romantic or sexual preferences, communicate with potential partners, and schedule dates and hook-ups. Many users favour the apps because they give them more control over their romantic and sexual lives such as the ability to learn more about potential partners before meeting them, the fact that there are options for gender and sexually diverse users to cater to their desires, and the fact that mediated contact provides a sense of safety when comes to communication (Carlson, 2016).

Additionally, there are several dating and connecting categories available on dating applications. It is beneficial for users to locate their chosen connection, which also boosts the odds of finding the ideal companion, whether they are seeking for a serious and long-term relationship or just casual dating. (Lope, 2020). As a result, most online daters said dating apps had a lot of advantages when it comes to finding a relationship because it was relatively easy for them to locate others who were physically beautiful, shared common interests, or seemed like someone they would like to meet in person (Anderson et al., 2020). This demonstrates that when it comes to finding a partner, people utilise dating apps on a regular basis. It also shows that with the help of social dating applications, users able to find someone who easier to get along with.

When it comes to dating in Malaysia, as a survey conducted by Vase.ai in collaboration with World of Buzz shows that 1,000 nationally Malaysia's respondents had done the survey (VASE.ai, 2019), which is proof that dating does occur in Malaysia. Statistics show that Malaysians are more inclined to Tinder as an online dating application as it is the leading mobile

dating app in Malaysia as of September 2020. It shows that 49.9% of Malaysians use Tinder as a platform for meeting new people or in the new modern era of online dating (Müller, 2020). Aside from Tinder, Rakuten Insight shows that 22.96% of Malaysians are using other dating applications for them to talk to new people tending them to create new relationships (Müller, 2020). From these statistics, it has been identified that Malaysians are actively using online dating applications and the statistics have grown since the first introduction of online dating.

Another famous dating application in Malaysia is called Baituljannah. It is one of the most famous Muslim digital matchmaking platforms, which rose over 85% in registered users during the pandemic (Malaysiakini, 2021). Wan Hasifi Amin Wan Zaidon founded Baituljannah, a Forbes' 30 under 30 Asia entrepreneur with two of his co-founders, Muhammad Azrain Kamaruddin and Wan Nuradila Huda Wan Zaidon, Baituljannah is a digital matchmaking platform that matches Muslim singles based on their interest and set criteria while closely adhering to Islamic courtship and marriage practices (AWANI, 2021). The elements inside this dating application are the difference between Tinder and Baituljannah, apart from these two applications being an online dating application. Baituljannah focuses more on the Muslim aspect, such as it is Sharia-friendly characteristic, restricted security, and shields Muslim single men and women to have the way of Islamic courtship (Mmosite, 2021). Since the Baituljannah dating application is still new to the social media market of online dating, the information retrieved from the respective literatures reveals a lack of information relating to the Baituljannah's dating application, which is the gap that this research seeks to fill.

According to the founder of Baituljannah, he stated that Baituljannah technique is “taaruf” (the procedure of observing one ahead of when moving to the next phase) which is Muslim-friendly, and the system in Baituljannah are balanced and protected to its users (Mmosite, 2021). As for the elements in this application make use of a freemium design where only sign-ups are free but some properties are only available when one subscribed to their premium plan (Malaysiakini, 2021). As for Tinder it is much more straightforward, it is merely by “swiping” on the photograph of another user that will uncover a slightly longer description of another user, and it will show a collection of the user's photographs. If the user chooses to interface with another user, they will either swipe left or right. Swiping left indicates that the user is not interested, and swiping right shows that you are interested (Derk, 2016). The comparisons between these two dating application shows the difference that we tend explore since the differences is quiet wide and it relates to the topic of Muslim dating that relates back to the rules and regulation of Islam and the new normal of online dating which does not apply the rules and regulation of any specify religion. With these differences, this research allows us to compare and contrast between these two online dating applications.

In 2020, the world was introduced to a deadly virus called the Coronavirus, now known as Covid-19 that caused a global pandemic. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Coronavirus is defined as an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (WHO, 2020). Due to this ghastly virus, the world was under a pandemic. A pandemic is an illness flare-up that spreads across nations or central lands. It influences a more significant number of individuals and takes more lives than a scourge. Therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO) pronounced

COVID-19 a pandemic when unmistakably the ailment was serious and spreading rapidly over a broad region (WHO, 2020).

When the COVID-19 outbreak began, some observers initially predicted that online dating would take a hit from the pandemic as many stayed indoors and practised social distancing. However, media reports claim that dating apps are instead booming (ASEAN, 2020). Due to the pandemic, the rise in dating apps has brought new challenges and altered how most people date and connect. In addition, the physical distancing measures enforced by the stay-at-home government orders and other public health initiatives have led to online dating (Dietzel et al., 2021). Hence, the number of downloaded dating apps globally increased by 20-25% in 2020, with dating app Tinder being the top three grossing non-game apps in the world (Sagita et al., 2020). This indicates that there is an increase of users using dating applications during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the pandemic, most long-distance relationships were tested due to the travelling restriction that was implemented (Faruddin, 2021). The divorce rate had increased rapidly in the year of the pandemic, which was 1,170 more divorce cases than usual (ASEAN, 2021). Because of these relationship cases, dating applications have shown an increase in usage. According to the co-founder of Tinder and CEO of Bumble, dating apps have become great tools to meet new people. Social media is often used to keep in touch with those already in one's circle, whereas dating apps expand users' networks to various types of people at a breakneck pace (Wolfe, 2010).

As the Covid-19 infection rates are still relatively high in most countries around the world, people are encouraged to stay indoors and avoid physical contact with others. While people have fewer options to spend their leisure time during the lockdown, social dating applications are among the few options available to people who want human interaction outside of their household (Wiederhold, 2021). Besides, the pandemic poses challenges in the form of threats to safety, especially health factors and environmental factors which restrain physical contact and social connectedness between individuals. As people have fewer opportunities to meet up with their peers, the lack of human interaction causes individuals to suffer from loneliness which may further develop into an extreme level of anxiety. Nevertheless, the increased sense of loneliness has significantly affected human's mental health during the lockdown (Joshi et al., 2020). To overcome loneliness, individuals seek to form emotional bonds with people through social dating applications. In 2021, a study aimed to examine loneliness and its association with social media use within different age groups during the pandemic showed that more social media use was associated with increased emotional loneliness among younger participants (Bonsaksen et al., 2021).

While previously people could spend their leisure time hanging out with friends or going out to cafes and shopping malls, various stages of lockdown have led single people across the world to live alone with themselves for extended periods (Dorall, 2020). Fundamentally, one of the main gratifications obtained through online dating applications during the pandemic is searching for romantic or sexual partners (Ligtenberg, 2015). Due to prolonged periods of social isolation, individuals especially those who are single, are feeling the anxiety of missed opportunities in looking for potential partners. Therefore, single people turn to online dating

applications to look for meaningful relationships during the pandemic. Besides seeking romantic relationships, individuals crave friendship and social groups that they have been starved for over the past year due to isolation. As people have to obey stay-at-home orders implemented by the government, individuals have fewer opportunities to meet their friends physically and social dating applications have become an ideal platform for them to meet new friends.

As a result, dating apps such as Tinder and Bumble are launching or acquiring new services which focus entirely on making and maintaining friends. Such friendship services have experienced increased engagement from users since COVID-19 restrictions have gradually been lifted around the world (Ghosh et al., 2021). Dating apps accelerate the pursuit of similar interest partners within similar physical spaces (Miles, 2017). Most of the time, individuals tend to seek people of similar interests, mindsets and opinions when forming relationships, which for some can be easily found through online dating platforms rather than through existing physical social circles. To look for partners with similar interests, users can utilise the location-based search function from social dating applications, as a method to retrieve information with the assistance of a fixed database (Fränti et al., 2010). The improved features of social dating applications have simplified the way people look for their ideal partners and provided more opportunities for them to engage in meaningful relationship.

Online dating is regarded as one of the methods to speed up finding a partner (Sagita & Irwansyah, 2021; Fridha & Octavianti, 2016; Eka, 2018). It is especially appropriate with the current pandemic situation to avoid physical interaction in the meeting and selecting process (Joshi



et al., 2020). People can lower their chance of being infected by the virus by utilising social dating applications since users can engage with one another through the screen. Other than this factor, people who like using the internet are more receptive to the concept of forming online romantic relationships through online dating apps (Bryant & Sheldon, 2017). However, with these benefits of using online dating applications, it does raise the question of whether those online dating application users have a better chance of forming and maintaining positive relationships compared to people who still rely on traditional methods of finding partners. Its impact is still yet to be determined in Malaysian context, especially during the pandemic period. Therefore, it is essential to identify these questions in this research.

Research on the communication of dating applications has stated three main advantages of using online dating applications provided to its users (Sagita & Irwansyah, 2021). The first is access, which refers to a user's exposure to online dating applications, allowing them to meet, examine, and assess potential love partners. The second is communication, which allows users to communicate with potential partners via several computer-mediated communication ways before meeting in person. Lastly, there is matching, which refers to the employment of an algorithm to assist users in meeting possible mates. Take Tinder as an example, one study found out that the amount of Tinder meetings and the formation of a romantic connection with another Tinder user are linked (Erevik et al., 2020; Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). Therefore, this indicates that creating positive relationships through online dating apps is possible. Social dating applications provide features that assist users in finding potential partners and facilitating social connections. While for Baituljannah, one of the Muslim matchmaking platforms in Malaysia, has very little

information available regarding how it might facilitate relationships between users. As a result, this research perhaps can explore more about it.

When looking into the impact of using online dating apps, it's vital to remember that demographics, personalities, mental health, and substance use are all factors that will influence any form of relationships through these platforms (Erevik et al., 2020). These are potential personal characteristics that will impact their willingness to participate in various types of relationships. Hence, this research will consider all the above factors throughout the research process. Holtzhausen et al. (2020) indicated that Swipe-Based Dating Applications (SBDAs) which follows the concept of enabling user matches within a set geographical radius, social dating applications have played a significant role in forming long-term relationships. A survey conducted by eharmonyUK (2017) studied recently-married or engaged individuals in the United States and found that almost one in five among 14,000 individuals had met their partner via online dating. Similarly, the same research also included a significant national survey indicating that by 2040, 70% of relationships will begin online as a prediction. As a result, people in developed countries such as the United States could fully embrace social dating applications in the future to replace conventional methods of meeting their partners.

The pandemic that has happened since 2020 has challenged and changed the framework of dating to a leveraged height of the online dating wave, resulting in an even higher spike of increase among the most-used dating applications all around the world (Dietzel et al., 2021). An online survey conducted by GMO studied that online dating applications had the third highest adoption

rate in Malaysia at 32.4% among Asian countries and Malaysians respondents agreed with 43.8% that there has been a significant increase in the usage of online dating applications since the outbreak of COVID-19 (GMO Research, 2021). As a result of the pandemic-dating, Tinder is now the most popular online dating application with its in-app conversations 32% longer during the period and created 42% more matches in 2020 (Tinder, 2021).

On top of the fact that online dating trend has become the new norm, the assumption of social dating applications creating an impact in resulting long-term relationships during the pandemic is not fundamentally proven yet as the number of daters looking for ‘no particular type of relationship’ was up nearly 50% in a recent survey of Tinder members (Tinder, 2021). Regarding the success rate of meeting matches in forming relationships, limited studies were found in the country, however YouGov (2017) stated in its research that Malaysia's population of 52% know at least one couple who met online, which is equivalently high. However, the effectiveness of social dating applications creating long-term relationships among Malaysian users during the pandemic remains unclear and is yet to be explored as there is a lack of research gaps in the field.

As the activity on dating applications has surged during the pandemic with all the swift responses and strategies, it is noticeable that these applications have since then operated as public health advocates where communications about health are constantly updated by fostering a community-building in addressing feelings of isolation or fear in these trying times (Lupton & Willis, 2021). For some people who use online dating apps during the pandemic, searching for intimate relationships is vital because it plays a critical role in people’s physical and mental health. Hence, a fulfilling intimate relationship is necessary since it may help overcome loneliness, live

longer and experience better health (Finkel et al., 2012). A developed intimate relationship may foster a better lifestyle and possibly maintaining good mood. Therefore, people utilising social dating applications might not merely look for intimate partners, they also want to experience a better lifestyle through an intimate relationship.

However, similar studies on the association between mental health and dating application usage have shown a linkage of symptoms of psychological impacts such as anxiety and depression with the extent of dating application use (Yurcaba, 2020). According to Lenton-Brym et al. (2021), the study found that dating applications are used for self-worth validation of their users with social anxiety or depression. In addition, the research discovered a positive correlation between mental health issues and the thrill of excitement associated with greater dating application use especially with increased endorsement of motivations for constant usage. It is indeed proven that it can be assumed that social dating applications do have the control over resulting desired gratifications gained from different individuals according to their intention and mental state, further then shaping different impacts especially on relationship aspects. As the pandemic continue drives the new norm, constant usage of dating applications may have the tendency to affect how individuals view and form human interactions to satisfy different emotional needs. Unfortunately, the researchers failed to determine the likelihood of individuals resulting in psychological impacts due to their dating applications use (Berman, 2020). Hence, the future directions of the research suggested that it would be beneficial and open for further research about the research gap.

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

1.4.1 To explore the impact of social dating applications on relationships among Malaysian young adults.

1.4.2 To analyse the intention of Malaysian young adults using social dating applications during the pandemic.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

1.5.1 What is the impact of social dating applications on relationships among Malaysian young adults?

1.5.2 What is the intention of Malaysian young adults using social dating applications during the pandemic?

## **1.6 Significant of Study**

### **1.6.1 Applications Developer**

The researchers aim to explore the current dating market regarding the affordances of mobile dating applications and further stress the significance of studying the intention of users engaging in the apps. Affordances refers to the structural communication between an individual and object by proceeding specific actions possible based on certain materialistic criteria, thus continuing the actions of ruling out the next (Bornstein & Gibson, 1980). In this research, it refers to the user's subjective perceptions, which then enhances the spontaneity and frequency of use in dating applications during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Alexopoulos et al. (2020), individuals are studied to be generally more relied on the contextual cues for getting information about their dating market, which indicates that dating applications acts as an exposure to provide users with the development of facilitating romantic or sexual encounters to build a potential relationship. However, the data from experimental designs did not provide further support for internet use from the preference for online social interaction via dating applications. As followed by a virus-wave pandemic, factors have taken significant changes in the face of online dating while uses and gratifications via these applications might shift with a surge in the frequency of usage. Hence, this research makes assumptions and predicts an in-depth study on the users' online behaviour reflecting on the changing intentions as time goes by during the pandemic.

### **1.6.2 Family Counselling**

Previous scholars have identified and analysed most about users' characteristics and usage motives of dating applications but limited research highlights the relevance of dating applications to the practical implications for personal relationships building. The gaps in the existing research opens an extensive study in the specific topic. It is predicted to allow even more access to meet potential partners by opening new horizons within the designed organisation and critical features from the dating applications (Castro & Barrada, 2020). Interactions on social media are defined and referred to as a bridge to link individuals under possessing a lasting network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, where it relates that positive relationships could be established online through dating applications (Camic et al., 1993). In other words, an in-depth analysis on the relationship between the designed organisation of dating applications and the impacts on its users for linking external assets in relation to romance and marriage could result from the relatable dimensions of proven data from the findings.

The researchers predict that the leverage of social dating applications for a broader range of identities could be connecting users in different categories of uses and gratifications to tie and link with possible outcomes where the establishment of relationships would be normalised and enriches virtual interactions through these key factors that are studied in the findings. Research shows that matching-based applications have been popular since the mid-90s, surging and driving mainly in the internet context in 2010s onwards, the accessibility of communicating. Growing relationships are greatly accelerated with the significant surge in the accessibility and mobility of dating applications (Potarca, 2020). Hence, it is assumed that the study would contribute in finding

how dating applications change the nature of relationship and intimate ties with multitudes of partnering possibilities and a selection process.

### **1.6.3 Young Adults**

Despite how dating applications have been scientifically proven to allow individuals to engage in a variety of romantic pursuits in a setting that provides a sense of safety, comfort, and controlling variables to person-to-person contexts, relevant research has also been done to examine the possible consequences of it through the dating applications use on different platforms (Coduto et al., 2019). The social phenomenon has been changing dating practises with the widespread advances from dating applications, these are gaining particular popularity amongst young adults. According to Alam et al. (2018), a study has been conducted showing a positive correlation between the intention of using online dating sites and the determinants that influenced the intention among Malaysian youth aged between 18 to 24. In other words, it explains that the respondents perceived online dating sites as short-term affective factors which generate enjoyment that tops up intimacy and privacy.

In the research, Alam et al. (2018) stated that most respondents who are the young users of dating applications are not concerned with the “trust” variable and it is crucial to analyse the potential risks and threats that might be encountered on dating applications. Previous scholars have described and claimed that internet and mobile applications are associated with several privacy



threats such as social, psychological, or information threats (Dienlin & Trepte, 2014). Hence, an in-depth study on the exploration of privacy violation in dating applications is necessary among young adults in Malaysian context.

## **1.7 Scope of Study**

This research explores the impact of social dating applications on relationships during Covid-19 pandemic among young adults. The two dating applications being focused on this research are Tinder and Baituljannah. Tinder as defined by Handel and Shklovski is an application for location-based real-time dating (Handel & Shklovski, 2012). As for Baituljannah it is Malaysia's top Muslim digital matchmaking platform that uses the concept of "taaruf" (the procedure of observing one ahead of when moving to the next phase) which is Muslim-friendly, and the system in Baituljannah are balanced and protected to its users (Malaysiakini, 2021). It has been found that 7.86 million young adults' users in the United States (US) have been using Tinder as the online dating platform as of September 2019 making it the first ranked dating application in the US (Statista, 2019).

In Malaysia, 49.9% of Malaysians have taken a survey by Rakuten Insight in Statistica and have been found to be using Tinder which shows that Tinder has also been ranked as the top rank of dating applications by the young adults as of September 2020 (Statistica, 2020). These statistics show that Tinder is the top-ranked online dating application not just in Malaysia but in the United States as well. Baituljannah dating application is a Malaysian made dating application that the matchmaking system is more prone for the Muslims, as it features Sharia-friendly functions, tight-

fitting security and safety procedures set up to avoid instances of undesired relationship such as catfishing scams to protect Muslims singles (Prospr, 2021). The idea of Baituljannah as a dating application is to incorporate a secure room for the Muslim singles to get in touch along with the “taaruf” system said the co-creator of the application (Amin, 2021).

This research explores the impact of social dating applications among young adults during the Covid-19 pandemic however it is found that only 7% of Malaysian youth believe that Tinder is the most conducive way of meeting someone new somewhat less than the global average of 12% (The Star, 2017). Of course, this percentage occurs before the pandemic, and it has risen up to one-third of youth using the dating application during the pandemic (Yarger et al., 2021). Before the covid-19 pandemic started, it has been found that 37% of youth were either dating or is engaging in a romantic relationship and 28% of youth spent time physically with their partner, 34% of these relationships were apart due to parental restrictions due to the emergence of the Covid-19 virus. Furthermore, it has been found that youth also spent less time in person with their partners during the pandemic than before (Yarger et al., 2021). Hence, this seeks to explore the impact of social dating applications on relationships during the Covid-19 pandemic among young adults.

## **1.8 Conceptual Definition Used in Research**

### **1.8.1 Dating Applications**

Dating applications are software applications that are used to connect people who are looking for love, casual sex, or companionship. It is typically downloaded onto mobile phones and contains feature algorithms based on characteristics such as the user's age, gender, and ideal partner's gender, as well as the distance users will travel to meet. Over ninety-one million people worldwide are currently using one or more dating apps, making dating experiences mobile and ever-changing (Orchard, 2019). With the rapid multiplication of smartphones and digitalisation, people nowadays tend to use dating apps to find their soulmates (Prasad, 2020). This is because nowadays human beings depend highly on technology gadgets and cause them to be more open-minded (Lane, 2018).

Dating apps have given users a plethora of options for finding new companions who meet their needs. It offers a wide assortment of matchmaking choices based on the user's profile (Christopher et al., 2018). Instead of asking people to be set up on a date, dating apps are an alternative way for people to communicate and find their love interest or just to meet new people as it helps to simplify the process of making friends with just a few swipes on the app. Most dating apps adopt the swipe concept which allows users to swipe to accept or reject the recommendations provided by the app. In summary, dating apps are fundamentally altering sexuality and personal relationships. They can facilitate the formation of pleasant, empowering connections between people who would not have met in any other way (Orchard, 2019).

## **1.8.2 Relationship**

A relationship is defined as the ability to interact effectively with diverse others in various situations (Trask, 2011). It forms the essence of personality and contributes to the individual's wellbeing. A relationship is also a process that can be improved in times through self-knowledge. Throughout the process of interacting, individuals can improve their day-to-day relations with those people with whom they spend a considerable amount of time but who are often not acknowledged as playing an essential role in determining personal satisfaction and happiness. Every individual forms a blueprint for future relationships through human interactions. These interactions are influenced by cultural processes and norms in tangible and intangible ways (Trask, 2011).

As advancements in technology accelerate at ever-increasing speeds, access to new types of relationships are growing (Yan & Neal, 2006). For instance, now, individuals can form relationships through various platforms without even meeting in person. This new type of relationship is terrific but is also a complex process as it will likely push an individual into unfamiliar settings to encounter potential partners (Relationships, 2009). However, every relationship goes through ups and downs and they all take work, commitment, and a willingness to adapt and change with others (Robinson, 2018). Hence it is essential to share a common goal to maintain a healthy relationship.

### **1.8.3 Young Adults**

Young adults are conceived as transitory between childhood and adulthood (Weiler et al., 2021). According to the Youth Societies and Youth Development Act 688 (2019), the age for young adults is defined for those aged between 18 to 30. In human development literature, young people aged 18 to 25 are labelled as emerging adults (Porto & Xiao, 2021). However, young adults form a crucial part of society. They have to take care of the welfare of their elders and act as role models to those younger than them. The individuals in this stage of life may establish independence from parents and learn to function more autonomously and as mature adults (Kharbanda & Mohan, 2021).

Despite this change, young adulthood is still considered as the end of the growing process, and youth is described as a stage in the process of becoming an adult, which justifies unequal treatment in terms of social authority and recognition (Jones, 2009). As it is a vital phase for self-identity building, there are still people who are curious about numerous subjects. The rise of social media aids in the construction of young adults' identities. Identity exploration focuses on love, career, and worldviews in emerging adulthood, and it plays an important part in moulding their self-beliefs and perceptions (Villanti et al., 2017). As a result, during this developmental era, young people' behaviour reflects long-term decisions and ideals.

#### **1.8.4 Social Media**

The term "social media" is frequently used to describe new types of media that encourage interactive engagement (Manning, 2014). It is one kind of website that can let the users communicate, share their opinion, collect and share information with others in an invisible way (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Social media is also a communication channel for people to have a platform to communicate with each other in terms of giving their content and collaborating with people through the internet (Rouse, 2019). With the emergence of digital and mobile technologies, large-scale contact became easier than ever before for individuals; as a result, a new media age was formed, with interactivity at the centre of new media functions (Manning, 2014).

The one-time use social media for various leisure activities and news information, whereas the latter use it for communication purposes (Kim, 2015). People nowadays do not see the distinction between virtual and actual friends as long as they feel supported and part of a community of like-minded people, therefore social media platforms are valuable. Furthermore, it helps to strengthen relationships by sharing major life events in the form of status updates, images, and other media, reinforcing their in-person interactions at the same time. Social media not only facilitates human interaction, but it also influences and defines our relationships (Aichner, 2021). Hence, users can start a relationship by reducing unnecessary discomfort when facing strangers, especially introverts.

## **1.9 Summary**

Based on chapter one, researchers did mention the background of the study, which enabled a better understanding towards the research topic. With the transformation in the dating world, people start to move to online dating applications to look for their future partner instead of using the traditional face-to-face method especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. This chapter has shown that the usage of Tinder and Baituljannah are rising rapidly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence with the problem statement, research objectives, and research questions stated, this research is trying to explore the impact of social dating application on relationships during Covid-19 pandemic among young adults.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.0 Introduction**

In this literature review, the researchers will discuss the previous study of dating apps, and the evolution of dating applications in Malaysia. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the specifics of Tinder and Baituljannah, as well as the differences between them. And finally, the discussion of Uses and Gratification Theory, its application, and the conceptual framework in this research will be presented.

### **2.1 Analysis of Dating Applications: Previous Study**

As the digital era progresses, individuals are increasingly turning to online dating as a viable alternative to conventional methods of meeting people. Also, online dating apps appear to be the method to meet new people, especially during this pandemic when everyone is urged to stay at home and keep social distance. According to Chisom (2021), since social distancing and lockdowns caused loneliness and boredom due to following stay-at-home order to mitigate the spread of the virus during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a quick rise in downloaded online dating apps, particularly Tinder, which could result in good and bad effects on healthy offline relationships. He also revealed that online dating apps tend to have more bad repercussions than good ones. Furthermore, another study by Her & Timmermans (2020) found that using Tinder can be hazardous to users' well-being. The online survey they conducted found that while using Tinder



obsessively and looking for relationships might improve joviality, it can have more negative than positive consequences. It can be supported by Tran et al. (2019) where their speculation about the frequency of dating app usage and its association with body image dissatisfaction has increased, possibly detrimental to mental health (Holtzhausen et al., 2020). As such, Chisom (2021) provides future guidance on avoiding and resisting the temptations to use online dating apps, especially during the pandemic.

There is also one study that aims to undertake a systematic review of empirical investigation of psychological content on dating apps (Castro & Barrada, 2020). Their results of the research have significant implications for various groups, notably users, researchers, therapists, and health preventive specialists, as detailed information has been provided on the most frequent reasons for using them, the pros and cons that come with them, the characteristics of users and the use of dating apps. The self-presentation of men and women in online dating applications is also essential to investigate since there is a difference in how men and women show themselves online (Jacobson et al., 2016). One research conducted by Degen & Kleeberg-Niepage (2021) explored the importance of how dating app users visually display themselves in the context of online dating by examining the findings of reconstructive serial analysis of 524 online dating profile pictures. Hence, since photos are becoming increasingly important in digital worlds, such as social media, profiles, and documentation of everyday practices (Reavay, 2016), such profile pictures on online dating apps are even more crucial because a simple picture might influence a person's decision to like or dislike the person with whom he or she is matched.

The significance of profile pictures in the online dating process is undeniable. However, Van der Zanden et al. (2019) argued dating app users behave differently in their profile messages compared to daters looking for casual relationships. He further reinforced that linguistic behaviour might be especially noticeable in online dating platforms, as most individuals adjust to the limited cue environment by adopting methods, both consciously and subconsciously, for how to present themselves. Furthermore, for this reason, textual self-presentations of online dating app users may fluctuate based on profile owners' reasons and intended relationship goals (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017). Hence, online dating app users use specific terms and phrases to highlight or clarify their interpersonal relationship goals in an attempt to discover a partner online with similar romantic relationship intentions (Van der Zanden et al., 2019). With this intention, it is reasonable to conclude that information on profiles made by dating app users are done meticulously in order for them to display themselves appropriately.

On the other hand, Barrada et al. (2021) did find out that dating apps users show a more excellent short-term mating orientation than non-users, but there are no changes in long-term orientation whether they are dating apps users or non-users. They also mentioned that dating apps might be an excellent resource for individuals searching for hook-ups, but they are not a harmful alternative for establishing long-term relationships. In additions, Baltz & Velten (2016) had their attention on the effects of the new online dating society on young female maturation development and their findings was that the self-esteem issue might arise when most online dating encounters begin with external looks as the only determinant of acceptance or rejection, young girls are being led to believe that they must first appear in a specific way before what they are interested in is even considered. Potarca (2020) also found that in Switzerland couples established through dating apps

have more cohabiting desires than couples created in non-digital environments and women who met their partner on a dating application had higher reproductive intentions and desires than women who met their mate offline. Her findings also help alleviate some concerns about the short-term orientation or the lousy quality of relationships built via dating apps.

Although Jacobson et al. (2016) claimed that online dating has grown more prevalent in today's culture with more individuals using it than ever before, it was argued that in Malaysia, the degree of acceptability for dating apps is low, as is the level of effectiveness, and the level of dating app usage is likewise low (Daniel Adam et al., 2020). According to the results of their research, they reasoned that many Malaysians want to find their mates without using the internet and prefer to utilise conventional methods, and they are also not ready or believe in making use of online dating applications to meet and find their relationships. It is supported by Müller (2021), who stated according to a survey conducted in September 2020, about 38 percent of Malaysian respondents aged 25 to 34 years claimed that they did not use dating apps because they were inappropriate for their culture, and 63 percent of Malaysian respondents also indicated that they did not use dating applications.

### **2.1.1 Evolution of Dating Applications in Malaysia**

In the recent decade, the popularity of the Internet, smartphone use, and the introduction of dating apps have changed conventional ways of socialisation and encouraged new methods of meeting and interacting with possible romantic or sexual partners (Castro & Barrada, 2020). According to a research by YouGov (2017), three out of every ten Malaysians have tried internet dating, and over half of Malaysians are aware of at least one couple who met using a dating app. Also, according to Shah Alam et al. (2018), about half of the Malaysia population use social networks such as Facebook, including dating services inside it, and the number of users is increasing at a rate of roughly 23% every year. Therefore, there is so much potential to grow the market for dating apps in Malaysia. According to the study, online dating applications that offer features that cater to users' humorous attitudes, make interactions pleasurable, enable user ratings, comments, make suggestions, and are simple to use will most likely encourage young Malaysians to use the applications (Shah Alam et al., 2018). Hence, dating apps appear to be growing and can become the mainstream in Malaysia, and potentially become an increasingly competitive business.

The first-ever dating service, Match.com, which launched in 1995, was a prominent global online dating service at the time (Daniel Adam et al., 2020). Apart from pornographic websites, online dating apps have become another significant and widespread industry for paid online content, with an annual income of \$1.9 billion in just a decade (Matthews, 2018). The dating service became increasingly popular once the first location-based smartphone dating apps arrived, enabling individuals to utilise online dating at any time and from any location, making them omnipresent (Bonilla-Zorita et al., 2020). In Malaysia, users of online dating apps have access to a variety of applications, including Tantan, Paktor, Tinder, Dating.com, Bumble and others, with Tinder being the most popular app in the country as of September 2020 (Balan et al., 2021;

Nurhayati-Wolff, 2020; Statista, 2020). According to Daniel Adam et al. (2020), Tinder has been one of Malaysia's most popular dating applications since its launch in 2012 because it is straightforward to use, as users only need to swipe left for Pass and right for Like. Their study also mentioned Baboo, as one of the popular dating applications in Malaysia, with 12 percent of its members reportedly finding a significant relationship.

Aside from the mainstream dating applications that we currently have, Friendster, a Malaysian-based social networking site often used as a dating site in the country (Lukman, 2012). Back in 1992, it was one of the most popular sites for connecting with people all around the world (Johnson, 2009) and by the year 2009, MOL GlobalMOL acquired it, a subsidiary of Kuala Lumpur-based online payment business MOL AccessPortal Berhad (Van Buskirk, 2009). Friendster once had over 75 million users in countries like Malaysia (Johnson, 2009). However, due to the emergence of dating apps, it is progressively fading away from their glory days. Nevertheless, Friendster is thought to have tried to resurrect its glory days by offering new dating services, allowing individuals to search and meet up with possible partners online, in the hopes of reconnecting with many of its previous Southeast Asian users (Lukman, 2012). Before the acquisition of Meta Platforms Inc's Facebook, MySpace was also one of the most widely used social networking sites on the internet (Savov, 2021). Apart from approximately 43.2 million users visiting MySpace each month, it allows users to modify their MySpace profiles to include specific information about themselves and their interests, which was a unique feature at that time (Edosomwan, 2011). The function appeared because MySpace allowed users to include HTML in the forms that framed their profiles, which can be described as a web-based code culture of copy and paste to assist users in creating MySpace backgrounds and layouts that are one of a kind (Boyd

& Ellison, 2007). In this sense, individuals worldwide, particularly Malaysians, may use MySpace to socialise and perhaps meet their mates by customizing their detailed information about themselves and their interests.

### **2.1.2 Social Dating Application Tinder**

Since its launch in September 2012 (LeFebvre, 2017), Tinder has long been regarded as one of the most popular dating applications available today, with at least 10 million active users every day (Sumster et al., 2017; Freier, 2015; Ayers, 2014). As of September 2020, Tinder has the highest usage rate among dating app users in Malaysia (Statista, 2020). Such dating apps, like Tinder, are considered more casual and easier to use than traditional online dating applications thanks to their location-based, real-time nature (Erevik et al., 2020). In that way, Tinder makes it easier to meet people offline because of features like the location filter, which assures physical closeness (Orosz et al., 2016; Ranzini & Lutz, 2017). Furthermore, users can swiftly rate and engage several possible partners by using swiping motions on the screen. Tinder goes beyond that as its prioritising efficiency by simply integrating profile information from photo uploads or Facebook, enabling access to social network information, and such enables Tinder to use this information to find nearby local matches based on gender, sexual orientation, and age (LeFebvre, 2017; Crook, 2016).

Tinder's current success stems from the unique affordances of mobile media, such as enhanced availability, portability, image creation, and geolocation (Fowler & Both, 2020; Schrock, 2017). In additions, users can quickly ascertain their romantic partners based on their preferences and sex orientation by featuring see-and-swipe mode during the self-selection process. Men spend about 7.2 minutes while women spend 8.5 minutes during a single session (LeFebvre, 2017; Bolton, 2014) and the average amount of time spent every day per user is 35 minutes (Smith, 2021). According to Iqbal (2021), Tinder is available in 190 countries and provided in 40 languages, with 1.4 billion in revenue in 2020 and 75 million monthly active users worldwide. Tinder has attracted many users and earnings, and this figure is expected to grow in the next few years. Therefore, it is safe to say that Tinder probably is the most prominent dating app in the industry.

With all of Tinder's features, it is widely used and promotes a “hook-up culture” due to the users' ease of interacting with interested persons in their nearby neighbourhood (Sales, 2015). However, a previous research study on emerging adults' dating apps showed that users generally have a broader range of incentives for using these online dating apps than merely for hooking up (Sumter et al., 2017; Gudelunas, 2012; Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014). This phenomenon occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic when some individuals used dating apps to find new friends due to the regulations of stay-at-home order and social distancing. For instance, as Bumble chief executive Whitney Wolfe Herd noticed an increase in the number of people looking for friendship on the site, BFF has been reintroduced by Bumble that allows users to develop and build a pure friendship (Herrera, 2021). It may be explained by the fact that since there is a strong sense of isolation, dating app users utilise those same sites and apps to discover potential romantic partners and seek out other sorts of social connection (Wiederhold, 2021). Hence, it may also be applied to

Tinder, which is intentionally designed as a social discovery site rather than just a dating platform (LeFebvre, 2017) as Tinder enables a one-stop shop for the users who are looking for a one-stop-shop for social connection to meet new friends during the pandemic period.

There have been few studies on how Malaysians perceive dating applications in their daily lives as this may be related to some Malaysians' low acceptance of dating apps (Balan et al., 2021; Adam et al., 2020; Alam et al., 2018). Although Tinder is one of the most popular dating applications globally, just 7% of Malaysian adolescents consider it the best way to meet new people, which is lower than the world average of 12% (The Strait Times, 2017). However, as internet interaction has become a vital part of modern social life due human needs to socialise, people can always find their ways to meet their potential partners and social connection via social network. A research was conducted in which Muslims in Malaysia know how to manage and emphasise self-presentation strategies in online dating apps, particularly in Tinder (Abubakar et al., 2020). From their results, Muslims on Tinder tend to use nicknames and provide information about their particular interests to attract possible mates. Furthermore, they also included that Muslim users generally describe themselves, such as openly sharing their physical traits. Hence, based on this research, it is believed that there are still a significant number of Malaysians who still prioritise using dating apps, especially Tinder, to assist them in finding potential partners.

### **2.1.3 Social Dating Application Baituljannah**



Baituljannah is a Sharia-compliant dating app with strict security and safety features to ensure that the site is free of unwanted interactions such as catfishing and frauds when individuals socialise digitally (The Star, 2021). Since its inception in 2017, the app has resulted in over 10,000 weddings among its users in Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore intending to reach one million users by the end of 2021 (Forbes, 2021). The inventors and producers of Baituljannah dating app describe the functionality, features, and settings of the Muslim-friendly dating app in this article. Baituljannah was created to connect Muslim singles based on their interests and pre-determined criteria while remaining true to Islamic courting and marital customs (Zaidon et al., 2021).

Baituljannah's concept is that couples will communicate in pairs and be supervised by a 'third party' from Baituljannah to avoid any interference and comply with Islamic regulations (Kamaruddin, 2019). All actions in this digital Muslim matchmaking platform are maintained and overseen by 12 staff 24 hours a day, therefore all discussions conducted through their system and will be monitored and screened for customer comfort. Users who want to use this application can get packages for as little as RM70, with a portion of each transaction going to the Infaq fund through recognised charities. This application can be accessed and used for free by individuals who are less competent, however access is limited (Arshad, 2019).

Users of Baituljannah must be at least 18 years old in order to register (Malaysiakini, 2021). The Baituljannah team thoroughly screens each applicant to guarantee that only serious candidates are accepted. Interactions on the platform are monitored, identical to how specific Muslims' face-to-face meetings are supervised. Users cannot exchange personal information unless they have

communicated enough to fill up a Taaruf Metre. This opens up a form called "Borang Taaruf Luar" (Taaruf Meeting Agreement) which can be filled out if one of the parties wants to extend their contact beyond the platform. The Taaruf Metre helps to guarantee that both parties are comfortable and have an idea of how compatible they are before proceeding to connect outside the platform because the platform can no longer help to control their engagement once they continue their conversations externally (Teoh, 2021).

A Baituljannah user had written a review on the dating app, in which he detailed the limits of using the free account rather than the premium subscription. According to Ley (2019), users can view the listed possible matches even if they have not filled out all of their information, but the catch is that they cannot send "Hi" (similar to Facebook's poke option) or messages to them. Only when all of their information is filled out during registration can users send "Hi" to the possible matches, but it is limited to only 50 people per day (Begum, 2021).

In addition, he claimed in his review that with the free account, users are only able to send three messages to the listed matches, and that if they wish to send more messages, they must purchase "rubies," or credits (Zaini, 2019). In Baituljannah, there are no monthly subscriptions for premium accounts; instead, the monthly fee is for rubies (credits). The packages starts from RM45 for 5 rubies, RM70 for 10 rubies and RM150 for 30 rubies (Baituljannah, 2021). According to Ley (2019), the optimal package would be RM70 for 10 rubies. It is suggested by the founder of Baituljannah that the RM70 package for 10 rubies would be the best choice to purchase in the Baituljannah dating application (Arshad, 2019).

Another positive review can be seen in an article from The Star, a medical doctor by trade uses the Baituljannah dating app, saying that the app is more than just a socially-distanced way of finding a match during the pandemic, its Muslim-friendly matchmaking platform aims to help people meet others in a Halal (permissible under Islamic law), safe, and convenient way (Amin, 2021). To summarise, the Baituljannah dating application is more targeted toward Muslims, as the laws and regulations in place are aimed at helping Muslims in forming long-term relationships, as evidenced by the favourable response received from Baituljannah.

Considering Baituljannah is still a relatively new dating app, there is not that much research available. Other dating sites, such as Baitulmuslim.com, tiljannah.my, temanhidupku.com, and MyJodoh.net, are comparable to Baituljannah (Muhaf, 2019). The similarities of these websites is to engage Muslims to seek a potential partner online, which is what these websites have in common with Baituljannah. For example, MyJodoh.net was the first Malaysian online dating website created back in 2002 and was founded by Azrul Alwi. The majority of MyJodoh.net users are Malay -speaking archipelago users from Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia and 96% of MyJodoh.net users are from the group who have worked and have a source of income (Alwi, 2002). Most of them have had everything in life, except a partner.

According to Kho (2020), MyJodoh.net has been in the game for a long time and statistics has shown that the number of users has increased in between the months of April and May of 2020 which was the time where the first Covid-19 pandemic had occurred. It has also been recorded that 95,734 out of 120,000 users from the website have never been married while the rest are divorced.

Baituljannah and MyJodoh.net are similar in that the age of registration for the website must be at least 18 years old (The Star, 2021). In comparison to Baituljannah and other Muslim dating websites, it can be stated that online dating in the Muslim community is not prevalent and has been practised since 2002.

#### **2.1.4 Comparison between Tinder and Baituljannah**

When it comes to social dating apps, people create an account to meet new people and eventually find someone with whom they may form long-term partnerships. According to statistics, 23% of online daters have met a partner or long-term relationship through similar sites, up from 17% in 2005 (Smith, 2013). Tinder has become one of the world's most popular online dating applications, with an estimated 50 million users in over 190 countries, 10 million daily active users, and over 30 billion matches to date (Tinder, 2019). Meanwhile, Baituljannah is a social dating application that was founded in Malaysia that is a Sharia-compliant dating app with strict security and safety safeguards to ensure the site is free of unwanted interactions like catfishing and scams when people communicate digitally (The Star, 2021).

Tinder users are asked their gender, location, and sexual orientation when they sign up to find nearby singles. They also have the option of submitting a 240-character bio. The software compiles basic Facebook data such as name, age, location, interests, and images into a digital profile that allows users to swipe right if they are interested in someone and left if they are not. When two people swipe right, they are dubbed "matches" and can talk privately until they decide

to meet in person (Adam et al., 2020). However, the social dating app Baituljannah's notion is that couples will converse in pairs and be supervised by a 'third party' from Baituljannah. A team of 12 people manages and supervises all activities on this digital Muslim matchmaking network. 365 days a year to avoid any interference and conform to Islamic norms (Arshad, 2019).

Tinder displays the photo of prospective matches once you set up an account, but only one at a time. The user must swipe right to like the possible match. Swiping left shows that the user is not interested in the other person. Tinder considers a match and allows conversation between users only if both users like each other's photos. Users would no longer have to cope with unsolicited e-mails or unwelcome efforts to contact them, as is common on online dating sites (Timmermans & de Caluwé, 2017). Meanwhile, the Baituljannah social dating application provides a list of matches, and Baituljannah users can send messages to those on the prospected list respectively.

Baituljannah is a social dating app that uses algorithms to find matches. Each match has their own biodata, which includes their age, gender, educational background, height and weight, and marital status (Zawawi, 2018). Due to their marital status and interest in the application, married men are spotted openly utilising this social dating application to discover a potential second wife prospect, as per shariah regulations. Islam allows a Muslim man to marry four women as long as he is capable of providing for all of his wives. As for social dating applications like Tinder, its matching process emphasises physical appearance and mutual attraction over complicated algorithms based on personality, interests, and preferences. Interaction choices are solely based on the other user's picture, a short bio, mutual Facebook friends and interests, as well

as distance. As a result, Tinder users may be more inclined than online dating site users to objectify potential partners, thus jeopardising their desire to commit to one of them (Finkel et al., 2012).

Tinder's swiping interface has a limited number of technologically supported filtering options. Filtering in this scenario extended beyond appearance to include other identity elements such as perceived education level and socioeconomic status indicators. Unlike traditional dating sites, which frequently request information such as height, weight, race, and educational level (Hancock et al., 2007). When it comes to the Baituljannah dating application, it still uses the traditional dating elements of essential information from its users, the only difference is that while Tinder allows users to put in their names, Baituljannah does not (Ley, 2019). Instead, it asks for basic information such as sex, age, educational background, and marital status.

According to a study, casual sex was only one of several classes of motivations for using Tinder, with Love being the most common and while 46 per cent of users had gone on a date with a Tinder match, only 19 per cent had a one-night stand with a match (Gordon et al., 2019). By looking at the findings, we can notice the difference in terms of casual sex between the two dating apps, Tinder and Baituljannah. It is clearly stated that the dating app is sharia friendly. Therefore, casual sex will never be an issue as Zaidon (2021), Baituljannah is a more secure platform that allows its users to find long-term relationships that will eventually lead to lifelong committed relationships.

There has recently been a great deal of discussion in the non-academic press as to whether Tinder is predominantly used as a "hook-up" app or whether its users are looking for long-term

relationships (Sales & Lapowsky, 2015). Excluding the CEO of Tinder claims, no independent data has been provided to support or refute either of these arguments (Petersen, 2015). Baituljannah, on the other hand, is a more secure platform that allows its users to find long-term relationships that will eventually lead to lifelong committed relationships, particularly in the Muslim community. According to Forbes (2021), it has been mentioned that the app has resulted in over 10,000 weddings among its Malaysian, Bruneian, and Singaporean users, intending to reach one million users by the end of 2021.

According to Arshad (2019), social-dating apps like Baituljannah offer a free subscription to the dating app, but there are many limitations in using the free account, such as a time limit for you to have a conversation with your suggested match, whereas Tinder does not charge a fee, but fees are imposed to enjoy the premium version of Tinder and works in a slightly different way (Gatter & Hodkinson, 2016). A national representative survey of 4,002 adults was conducted in 2009 to look into how people met their current partners. Between 2007 and 2009, 22% of heterosexual couples met over the Internet, making it the second most common way to meet a spouse, second only to meeting through friends (Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2010). This includes social dating apps like Tinder, but it is forbidden in the Islamic religion for people of the same sex to be in a relationship.

However, today's youth, particularly those involved in the LGBTQ community, find comfort in dating applications like Tinder, Grindr, and others. Because they may not receive assistance in their daily lives, they turn to social media and dating applications for solace (Elgersm, 2019). In Baituljannah it is built following Islamic Shariah Laws. Extramarital sexual contacts are

prohibited, according to the traditional interpretation of the Sharia, and are punishable under the law. Unlawful sexual intercourse is known as “Zina”, is a serious crime and it is prohibited in the Muslim community (Rehman & Polymenopoulou, 2012). This portion of the study shows the contrast between the two dating apps, Tinder and Baituljannah.

According to Adzmi (2016), Malaysian women use tinder for fun and to meet new people, but it is not an effective approach to start a relationship considering three of the females interviewed had their own motives and are only interested in having fun. In conclusion, Tinder is more flexible and is easily accessible to everyone, whereas Baituljannah is more geared toward the Muslim community and the goal is to find long-term companionship.

## **2.2. Theoretical Background**

### **Uses and Gratification Theory**

Uses and Gratification Theory could be traced from the early 1940’s in the Lazarsfeld-Stanton collections (1942, 1944, 1949) as the explorations in the gratifications provided by media to the audiences where studies on the applied mass communication research were well represented. McQuail (2010) further pointed out that examples in the early research investigated the needs of explanation to media choices and benefits, supporting that the theory first emerged to examine, explain, and provide answers to the uses of media and gratifications gained via these media choices. In relation to justify the perspective of uses and gratification of different media, the Lazarsfeld-



Stanton collections featured Cantril & Allport (1935) on the radio audience; Waples et al. (1940) on reading; Herzog (1940, 1944) on quiz programs and the gratifications from radio daytime serials; Suchman (1941) on the motives for listening to serious music; Wolfe & Fiske (1948) on children's interest in comics; Berelson (1949) on the functions of newspaper reading; and Lazarsfeld & Stanton (1942, 1944, 1949) on different media classifications.

The research was mainly based on exploring media effects to study intentions and selection patterns of audiences through media penetration especially on the role of mass media in the propaganda and persuasion function during the era (Lule, 2012). Based on the early research conducted, it can be concluded that the attention of mass communication researchers was mostly focused on the influence of media on the audiences rather than the satisfaction with the media as mass media was expected and aimed to change the direction of people's activities (Mehrad & Tajer, 2016). Hence, it is studied that the past researchers in this theory were prioritising more on the influence of traditional media use in evaluating "what media does to individuals?" mainly due to the lack of interest in research about this theory as there were less theoretical hypotheses started from the audience's perspective.

Moving on to the 1970s, as the power of media continued to proliferate, researchers have changed the direction of the outcomes of media use and the social and psychological needs generated from media gratifications. Followed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumber, and Michael Gurevitch's work in 1973, the idea was then continued conducting in a social-psychological and audience-based framework, and idealised in-depth perspectives into the Uses and Gratification

Theory (McQuail, 1994). The researchers intentionally studied and examined audiences' motives and additional typologies of the uses audience made of the media gratifications were developed in social and psychological needs (Ruggiero, 2000). Along with the development of theory, Katz et al. (1973) mentioned that the theory is concerned with the origins of needs from the audience where uses and media exposure are connected, leading to different patterns of media exposure or engagement in other online media activities that were generated and resulted in need gratifications and other consequences.

As the theory now assumes people are conscious of the reasons for choosing media options, it then characterises media audiences based on different wants and needs. Rosengren (1974) further suggested that the needs are associated with personal characteristics and the individual's social environment behind the motives. As such, the direction of research had shifted to the newer question "what do people do with the media?" to assess the uses of media offerings depending upon how these can serve different social-psychological functions (Katz, 1959; Blumler, 1979). In this regard, the researchers believe that media influence does not only limit the penetration to the audience but also contains a user-centred approach where the audience's behaviours impact the media choices one makes and the interpretation of media messages.

As Uses and Gratification Theory was rooted in traditional mass communication research, the development to the specification of media selection in relation to the audience's needs is considered an evolution in the field. The studies of Blumber & Katz (1974) explained that people seek communication to satisfy their needs, which in turn extends from social and psychological

states and conditions. Other aspects of mass communication are defined in the hypotheses of this theory to analyse the relationship between audiences' expectational needs from the media and the possible outcomes generated by the needs with the audiences' motives (Mehrad & Tajer, 2016). In other words, the theory then emphasises the power of the individual over the power of the media and audiences' needs affect the choices of media and thus their communicative behaviours. The advancement in Uses and Gratification Theory was as well argued that the traditional effects approach primarily differs from the theory as past studies from the media effects researchers examined mass communication from the perspective of the communicator, whereas the theory researchers use the audience as a point of departure (Windahl, 1981). Likewise, Dobos (1992) also stated that the theory is proven to be applied to media satisfaction and choice through personal or audience selection within specific communication technologies. Wimmer & Dominick's (1994) study listed that media selection is initiated by the individual while expectational needs are produced based on individual dispositions, social interaction, and environmental factors. Unlike other strong media effects studies as in Hypodermic Syringe model or Magic Bullet theory, Uses and Gratification theory argues and emphasises that audience is the priority and decides on what is gratified out of the medium (Egede & Chuks-Nwosu, 2013). As mentioned before, Katz et al. (1974) considered a user-centred approach where the needs surrounding the theory to be social and psychological, defining that audiences are proven to be active and goal-oriented as audience activity "covers a range of possible orientations to the communication process, a range that varies across phases of the communication sequence" (Levy & Windahl, 1984). In this respect, a framework is assumed for understanding the correlation between media and the audiences and how the audience affects their consequences by their involvement in the media.

Prior to the industrial revolution, technology has truly revolutionised society causing a major transformation within mass communication in mass media. The widespread adoption of new media such as the appearance of computer-mediated communication which is based on social media use via the internet has provided new research perspectives (Ruggerio, 2000). Forwarding to the 21st century, the Uses and Gratification theory pointed out that people are actively involved in media usage and voluntarily interact with the media via establishing groups of related uses and associated benefits throughout. As the findings from previous scholars showed that studies have been applied in the internet and social media sites use research, Kink & Hess (2008) indicated that the theory's researchers have made the distinction between two components - gratifications obtained and gratifications sought when expanding the concept of gratifications. In the context of new media, the internet and social media have enabled two-way communication to the audiences where now delivering and receiving functions are developed between the media and its users. Hence, gratifications obtained refers to the audience's experience through the medium, whereas gratifications sought can be referred to as needs or intentions of the audience expecting to gain from a medium before they have come into contact with it (Karimi et al., 2014). In other words, the gratifications in the theory are now relying and focusing on the audience itself on choosing specific media contents according to their interests that are being altered individually.

As the new communication lies within social media sites, the technology entirely changes the individual's personal and social habits and patterns. The users' demographics are now traceable with their behaviours of consumption, media choices, attention, reaction and affordances in expanding research opportunities (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996). The emergence of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and social dating applications like Tinder and

Baituljannah creates spaces for the users to become persistently connected and interacting with one another (Ding & Zhang, 2010). In the research of Boyd & Ellison (2007), social media sites which offer individuals to: (1) create personal profiles including self-descriptions within an online community; (2) publicly show a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) within a system are examples of online spaces that establish and maintain connections with others. Hence, social dating applications that fulfil all the mentioned requirements are considered part of the online environmental network's articulation.

However, what differs social dating applications from social media sites is the distinction of gratifications regarding the user's intention of engaging in applications. Li (2005) described that people use social media to satisfy their satisfactions, including cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, integrative social needs, tension release needs, and medium appeal needs. Hence, it can be concluded that contemporary research is used in gathering and analysing the existing relationship between mass media and users. Apart from the past research have shown users from social media sites gratify their needs as mentioned above through Uses and Gratification Theory, the users' motives and intentions in using social dating applications are gratified through ease of communication, relationship, attention and validation, the thrill of excitement, and entertainment (Sumter et al., 2017). Likewise, Ranzini & Lutz's (2017) study found out similar motives for online dating, including casual hookup, relationships, self-validation, and entertainment. Similarly, Lawson & Leck (2006) discovered in their study that people use social dating applications for companionship, romantic indulgence in fantasies, and control over presentation and environment, which is likely as self-worth validation. Among all these studies, it can be concluded that the intentions of using social dating applications are primarily gratified via

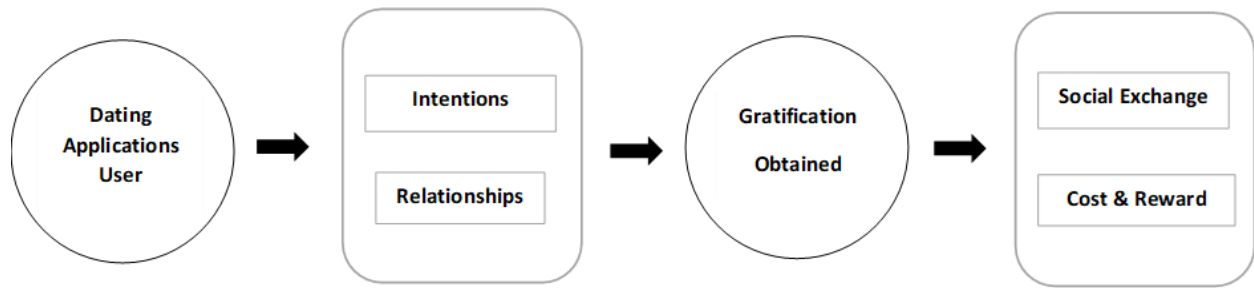
the Uses and Gratification theory in motives including opportunities for new relationships, social compensation, emotional support, love-seeking and obtaining sexual partners.

Theoretically and practically, Uses and Gratification theory has continuously been assessed by scholars in the past research on studying the media tools and the typologies from the motives generated from the audiences and users. Regardless of the theory was examining more on the traditional media and the mass-media effects in the early stage, the researchers have been developing the theory to be more predictive and comprehensive by gratifying the needs, goals, benefits, and consequences of media consumption and use along with personal factors (Egede & Chuks-Nwosu, 2013). On the involvement factor, the recent interest surrounding the theory is now linked to why particular media is used and its achieved gratifications, leading to the motivation to media selection and the affordances of the individual (Galloway & Meek, 1981). As the current theory studies are more surrounding the social and psychological aspects of media use motivations, it is then widely supported to be related to exploring the intention of users in using social dating applications (Luo, 2020). Prior to the review of related studies, it is concluded that social dating applications have become a fertile research field demonstrating the direct relevance of the Uses and Gratification theory and its respondents.

In terms of defining the relevancy of Uses and Gratification theory in social dating applications, its origins in the communication literature have justified that media use works as a communication mechanism, leading to multiple gratifications achieved. As social dating applications are created primarily to satisfy the dating needs of its users, other studies as well

suggested evidence that these applications may serve a variety of uses for adopters (Welch & Morgan, 2018; Dredge, 2014; Covarrubias, 2014; Finkel, 2015). Lariscy et al. (2011) stated the basic premise of Uses and Gratification theory from individuals in seeking out media among competitors that fulfils their needs, hence it explained that the theory can be extensively used within the study of other social media uses, including social dating applications. Hence, the theory is relevant to studying the intentions of uses in using social dating applications based on the different motives within the theory's framework to further explore the factors and how they impact the consequences (Welch & Morgan, 2018). However, the motivated behaviour behind social dating application use may have changed due to new challenges to human connection and the perceived control over these goal-oriented behaviours (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Hence, it is helpful to explore the behaviours people hold concerning dating applications by using the theory's ability to explain as a relevant theoretical approach in this study.

### **2.2.1 Conceptual Framework**



*Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study*

In this study, the researchers adopt the Uses and Gratifications theory which the model has been applied to these forms of new media and examine intentions for using social dating applications. *Figure 1* shows the study's conceptual framework, which aims to explore the impact of social dating applications through the intentions specifically on relationships during the Covid-19 pandemic. As mentioned, the basic assumptions from previous studies stating that the intentions and motives of individuals engaging in social dating sites range from affective needs in the emotional experiences and pleasures; personal identity in building self-confidence and the need for self-validation; and integration and social interaction in affiliated relations and friendship. Therefore, the researchers focus on relationships where affective needs and social interaction are gratified in this study.

### **Affective Needs**



A huge outpouring of users of social dating applications has led to a sudden surge in online dating usage during Covid-19, indicating that the pandemic opens an engagement for individuals to remain connected with the ease of being at home. However, the constant flux at this pandemic faced by individuals wherein the need for safety, need for belongingness and need for esteem is threatened, questioning the changes of relationship motives of individuals to seek solace in an online environment (Nabity-Grover et al., 2020). To overcome the need for emotional safety, individuals tend to seek emotional bonds where dating experiences serve as a pleasure in satisfying the specific need (Joshi et al., 2020). The pandemic imposes a sense of loss in interpersonal forums decreasing quality of life where individual's needs are not fulfilled (Pietromonaco & Overall, 2020). In the research, Joshi et al. (2020) claimed that the perceived loneliness during the lockdown in the pandemic has further led to a craving for affection online where the intentional behaviour changes due to social deprivation as the basic needs are threatened. Therefore, the affective needs in this study point out the individual's deprived of social contact and subjected to perceived loneliness due to global social isolation.

## **Social Interaction**

In light of the nationwide lockdown, most individuals have experienced the removal of positive reinforcement from the immediate environment, urging the individuals to look for someone to share their emotional well-being with. Odekerken-Schröder et al. (2020) pointed out that the

pandemic has indeed made individuals feel alienated without emotional support, leading to a surge in using social dating applications to address social loneliness. The search for committed relationships in increasing social dating application use is also justified in other studies regarding the dating application experience and user's intention to commit infidelity (Alexopoulos et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the pandemic also has a wide range of limitations where most people are not pleased with their connections every day during the lockdown (Kar, 2020). Hence, the pandemic rectifies the online dating framework, enhancing the urgent needs for individuals to fulfil their emotional needs and be connected in commitment (Joshi et al., 2020). The study explores the social interaction needs in building fulfilment, investment and commitment in relationships during this pandemic.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

During the process of fulfilling the needs, the formation of relationships occurs where individuals reflect on their expectations from prior motives and observation throughout online dating. Stoll (2017) stated that a social exchange framework can be used as a theoretical approach when the individuals' social or psychological perspectives are addressed in the communication exchanges between parties. Hence, Social Exchange Theory exists when there is a material (economic) or symbolic (attention, validation, advice) exchange of resources between individuals in the use of concepts followed by costs and rewards (Sprecher, 1998). As the theory emphasises on the

research of close relationships where the subjective perspective such as actions and validation seeking from another party, it includes different factors that guide the interpersonal relationship in forming (Cook & Rice, 2006). In the review of Social Exchange theory, the practicality of communication in social exchange lies within the assumption when one's emotional situation is being recognised, and thus their needs are responded (Lawler & Thye, 1999; Molm et al., 1999). Hence, the implication of social exchange in this context is that individuals communicate their wants and needs through social dating applications as part of interaction in relationships.

Different types of relationships that vary from friendship, affiliated relations, partner relationships, and even sexual relationships may be formed in terms of affective needs and social interaction. Likewise, the social exchange process results differently according to different subjective cost-benefit expectations (Tio et al., 2018). As costs in the term refer as “any factor that operates to inhibit or deter the performance of a sequence of behaviour.”, it implies that costs exist when there is a negative or conflicting impact from an action (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). In the context of online dating, the concept of costs refers to insecurities, lack of freedom and others when developing a potential relationship (Adam & Sizemore, 2013). However, the degree of satisfaction in resulting rewards and costs are likely to differ in every individual. In the research, Whitty (2008) argued that the theory explains why individuals often go into social dating applications with a “shopping list” kind of mindset to seek for other parties who fulfil their ideal positive qualities in hopes that the relationship could be rewarding more. The interpersonal qualities that are attracted to individuals are often viewed as the potential benefits of what they think they deserve by engaging in a relationship (Shtatfeld & Barak, 2009). The assumption was further discussed in the research that individuals are attracted to those who can impart

reinforcement and grant them benefits or rewards of various kinds (such as appearance, financial stability, education level, and health). In searching for the possible qualities of romantic attraction on social dating applications, the study attempts to explore the factors involved in forming a relationship during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The methodology is necessary to achieve a study's goal since it enables readers to evaluate its overall validity and reliability. The structured process of conducting research is referred to as research methodology, and it is a method of systematically solving the research topic. It comprises researching the many ways to conduct research, and tests, experiments, surveys, and critical studies. The study of methods for gaining knowledge is commonly referred to as research methodology (Goundar, 2012). As a result, research methodology aims to provide the work plan of the research.

In this chapter, the researchers focused on the methodology applied to collect the data for this study. Traditionally, research methodologies have been divided into qualitative and quantitative categories, resulting in a significant gap amongst researchers, particularly in the social sciences (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Quantitative research aims to determine how much of anything there is. It's a term that refers to items with numerical value whereas qualitative research investigates how people feel or think about a particular topic or institution. This study used qualitative research to accomplish the dissertation's objectives. It is because qualitative research allows for a detailed description and analysis of a research topic without limiting the scope of the study or the types of replies provided by participants (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

### **3.1 Research Design**

Research design is a structural framework of various research methods and techniques utilised by researchers. Researcher used it to combine the many components of the study coherently and logically, ensuring that the research challenge is effectively handled. In addition, it serves as a guide for assembly, measuring, and analysing data (Vaus, 2008). The goal of research design is to ensure that the data obtained by researchers is correct in addressing the research challenge. There are a few types of research designs in qualitative research: phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, content analysis and case studies (Mohajan & Haradhan, 2018).

Phenomenology explores the uniqueness of an individual's everyday life experience. It is employed when the research is focused on one or more people's personal experiences with a notion or phenomenon. On the other hand, grounded theory is a type of theory used to figure out what problems exist in a given social situation. According to Creswell (2009), researchers attempt to develop a broad, abstract theory of a process, activity, or interaction with grounded theory. Furthermore, ethnography is an approach where researchers engage in prolonged observations of a culture. It aims to describe a culture's characteristics. Meanwhile, the content analysis seeks to identify patterns, themes, and biases through a detailed investigation. Finally, a case study describes one person, family, groups, communities, or institution's experience (Simons, 2009).

This study focused on phenomenology, which explores the impact of social dating applications on relationships during Covid-19 pandemic among young adults. Most researchers explore the reasons that contribute to social dating applications among young adults. Consequently, researchers wish to study the guidelines of the factors related to social interaction among young adults using social dating applications on relations. Thus, phenomenology studies were more appropriate to apply in this research.

Phenomenology is qualitative research that aims to comprehend how individuals experience a phenomenon. It is to focus on the study of the individual's experiences. According to Lester (1999), individual sensations and perceptions are brought to the fore through phenomenology, which is particularly effective. It enables researchers to gain insight into viewpoints, perceptions, and understanding of those affected by the phenomenon (Alase, 2017). A phenomenon such as relationships is a psychological phenomenon that varies in different

individuals. Hence phenomenology studies are suitable for this research as they aimed to determine the impact of social dating applications on relationships during the Covid-19 pandemic among young adults.

### **3.2 Sampling**

The goal of sampling is to select a suitable demographic so that the research can reach the intended audience. It is a method selected from the sampling population to investigate the outcome and collect research data (Babikir et al., 2015). Hence, sampling in qualitative research is essential to prevent inaccurate procedures that might affect the research outcome. In qualitative research, there are two types of sampling techniques: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Random, systematic, stratified, and cluster sampling are the four types of probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is further split into convenience, purposive, snowball, and quota sampling. Random selection is used in probability sampling, which enables researchers to enhance statistical inferences about the entire group whereas non-probability sampling involves non-random selection based on convenience or other criteria, allowing researchers to acquire data quickly (McCombes, 2019). Non-probability sampling will be conducted in this research to establish an understanding among the participants.

#### **3.2.1 Research Sample**

The sampling technique used in this research is a non-probability sampling associated with qualitative research. In exploratory and qualitative research, researchers often use non-probability sampling approaches. This is because qualitative research aims to establish an initial understanding of a small community, instead of testing a theory about a large population (McCombes, 2019). Furthermore, non-probability sampling relies heavily on judgement, and instead of randomisation, participants are chosen based on their accessibility (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). Hence, the type of sample applied in this research is purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling. Purposive sampling enables researchers to obtain a wealth of information from the data that they have collected. This strategy is commonly applied in qualitative research, particularly when the researcher wants to learn more about a specific phenomenon rather than draw statistical conclusions or has a minor and distinct population. Here, researchers tend to look for certain characteristics in participants to meet the local and specialised information requirements.

In order to meet the narrow and precise data, the criteria set must be clear when the researchers are looking for the characteristics of the respondents. The criterias are shown as below:

1. Malaysian Young Adults within 18 to 35 years old
2. Any gender and ethnicity
3. User of Tinder during MCO period
4. User of Baituljannah during MCO period
5. Agree to participate in the research



Firstly, the researchers reached out to the participants through their connections who are in the targeted research sample. Researchers avoided searching for participants who are close to them to prevent data biases. Furthermore, the targeted participants were indifferent ethnic backgrounds to provide more perceptions and opinions towards the research. Furthermore, the researchers explained the purpose of the research in detail and secured permission from the participants before conducting the interview. Lastly, the interviews were conducted on the weekend from 9 am to 6 pm.

In qualitative research, the number of respondents is based on the study criteria. According to Dworkin (2012), most papers and book chapters advise that a qualitative study should have between 5 and 50 participants. Hence, for this research, six young adults who met the criteria were selected to participate in the research. Three of them were the users of Tinder, while the remaining three were the users of Baituljannah. It is because researchers estimated that six people would be needed to conduct the interview, and the saturation of qualitative research results is influenced by the number of people who participate. Saturation is a tool for ensuring that the interview has acquired sufficient and high-quality data to assist the research (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

### **3.2.2 Location**

The targeted participants of the study were young adults in Malaysia. It is because most of the researchers are based in Malaysia, and due to the pandemic, the researchers are concerned about

the health issue. Hence, the researchers should reach the target audiences online. Besides, the connections of the researchers are mainly in Malaysia. Therefore, the data will be collected through an interview, and the researchers will prepare semi-structured questions. Furthermore, the conversation between the researchers and participants was audiotaped throughout the interview for analysis and transcription, preventing the participants from concealing their message.

The interview was conducted with six young adults aged 18 to 35 years old despite their gender and ethnicity to collect their perceptions of social dating applications on relationships during the Covid-19 pandemic. The researchers monitored the conversation to make sure the interview can reach the objective of the research. In addition, English was used as the dominant language during the interview. However, researchers have adapted the participant's language preferences such as Bahasa Melayu, Chinese and Cantonese to prevent misunderstandings.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection is a systematic method of acquiring observations or measurements based on the study objectives. Data collecting is a technique for fine-tuning the research's data. A precise collection is required to maintain the research's integrity and prevent it from being misled. After the sample has been identified, the data gathering process begins. Data can be collected in two ways: directly and indirectly (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016).

Direct data includes recorded or written statements and the participants' body language, activities, and interactions. Interviews, observations, and open-ended questionnaires are examples of direct data methods. According to Issacs (2014), potential or actual data is defined as anything that can be viewed or communicated. Thus, the researchers will be conducting in-depth interviews to obtain the information for the research. According to Bengtsson (2016), the verbal and nonverbal interaction between researchers and participants will influence the research outcome. To gain a better knowledge of phenomena, the researchers must ask the right questions, either verbally or in writing. The researchers prepared different frameworks and sorts of study questions. This is due to the fact that the questions asked according to the participants' perceptions, opinions, or experiences, making it appropriate for participants to respond. Furthermore, the data was recorded in audio and video, which will be transcribed into textual form by academics. Finally, based on the participants' qualifications and educational levels, researchers assessed the data's dependability.

On the other hand, several strategies were used to acquire indirect data. These may involve conducting a systematic search of archives or perusing the internet. In this study, data were collected using both direct and indirect methods. Researchers applied indirect data from the internet, such as journals and articles, to supplement the direct data obtained through semi-structured interviews. It is because indirect data allows for a better grasp of the research problem by employing information analysed from other sources.

### **3.4 Interviewing**

According to Austin & Sutton (2015), interview is a conventional data collecting technique in qualitative analysis that is critical for eliciting individuals' perspectives and expectations. The interview is the prime method for qualitative data collection. It is used to gather information from a small group of people about various issues. The interview's objective is to provide clarity and aid with the participant if he or she is hesitant or confused. It involves a small number of participants so that researchers can explore their behaviours, attitudes, perceptions and opinions on the research. According to Jamshed (2014), the qualitative interview is a framework in which practices and standards are not only documented but also accomplished, questioned, and reinforced. As a result, qualitative interviews are an excellent way to conduct in-depth interviews and learn about a participant's backstory.

### **3.4.1 In-depth Interview**

In this research, an in-depth interview was used to gather information from the participants. In-depth interviewing is qualitative data collecting that entails one-on-one interaction with people. It is because, in an in-depth interview, participants are encouraged and promoted to discuss the issue at length. It allows researchers to obtain more detailed information and deeper understand the participants (Jamshed, 2014). Furthermore, researchers and participants have the option to investigate additional points and adjust the direction of the process as needed throughout an in-depth interview. It is a stand-alone research approach that can use various strategies depending on the study goals.

### **3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interview**

The three types of in-depth interviews are structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are vocally provided the interview questions in which a set of prepared questions is asked with no flexibility and researchers have no opportunity for follow-up questions to responses that require more detail. On the other hand, unstructured interviews are conducted with little or no organisation that do not reflect any predetermined notions or concepts. Semi-structured interviews contain a series of essential questions that assist in outlining the areas to be investigated, which allow the researchers and participants to deviate to delve deeper into an idea (Gill et al., 2008). A semi-structured interview combines organised and unstructured questions.

In this research, researchers applied semi-structured qualitative interviews for data collection. In general, questions that are drafted by researchers beforehand will be asked, and then additional investigation will be carried out by asking other connected questions in order to investigate more in-depth information and for researchers to cover study objectives related information. Furthermore, the flexibility of this approach allows for the discovery or development of material that is essential to participants but may not have been considered relevant by the researchers earlier, especially when contrasted to organised interviews (Gill et al., 2008). It is because it allows researchers to examine issues relevant to that particular applicant on an ad hoc basis (Pollock, 2019). Thus, researchers can be flexible in adjusting the structure and pace during the interview to stimulate sufficient and truthful responses from participants.

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

According to Salkind (2010), instrumentation refers to the tools or procedures used by researchers to measure variables or items of interest in the data-collection process. For example, in a study, research instruments such as questionnaires, surveys, interviews, checklists, or simple tests may be used to obtain data from the participants. Researchers will decide the most suitable research instrument to be used in the research. On the other hand, the instrumentation is a process of constructing research instruments in data collection (Bitonio, 2014). In this research, the researchers used interview protocol as the research instrument. An interview protocol is more than just a set of questions that will be asked during the interview, it also includes a script of what researchers will say before and after the interview (Jacob & Furgerson, 2015). Interview protocols can also be viewed as step-by-step guidance for a new qualitative researcher going through the interview procedure. In addition, qualitative researchers can employ the Interview Protocol Refinement Framework (IPR) to improve the reliability of the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). It helps researchers fine-tune an interview protocol and ensure that a well-developed instrument is used in the interview process.

#### **3.5.1 Interview Protocol**

In this research, the interview protocol was constructed and aligned with the research questions that the researchers had established to achieve the research objectives.

### **3.6 Data analysis process**

In qualitative research, data analysis refers to systematically categorising and organising observation notes, interview transcripts, and other non-textual materials gathered by the researchers to understand better the phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Generally, one of the most significant distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research is the data analysis procedure. In contrast to quantitative research, which focuses on statistical methodologies, qualitative research emphasises the study of the phenomenon under investigation's values, meanings, emotions, feelings, and traits (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). In qualitative research, the data analysis process involves understanding a considerable amount of data by reducing raw data, identifying relevant patterns, creating meaning from data, and constructing a logical chain of evidence (Patton, 2002).

The researchers used thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data collected from the participants in this research. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a process for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse and report repeated patterns. For example, thematic analysis is commonly used to analyse data sets such as transcripts from in-depth interviews or focus groups (Delve, 2021). Besides, thematic analysis is a good research approach when the researchers aim to find out something about people's views,

opinions, knowledge and experience from qualitative data (Caulfield, 2021). Therefore, thematic analysis is the most suitable data analysis method for this research.

### **3.6.1 Transcription**

Transcription is a process of converting research findings recorded through audio or visual means into text format for further analysis (Brady, 2021). Generally, transcription is a time-consuming and comprehensive process. It may take a long time to transcribe a recording into written text, depending on various criteria such as the skill of the transcriber, level of detail required, and the recording's complexity (Mondada, 2007). Furthermore, researchers have more options for analysing, archiving and sharing data when given a written, text-based version of recorded audio (Jacobs, 2019). In qualitative research, transcribing is more of an interpretive act than a technical method, and the attentive observation that it implies can lead to the discovery of unanticipated phenomena (Bailey, 2008). By undertaking careful transcription, enhances analytic sensibilities and helps researchers formulate findings and research reports. In this research, the researchers listened to the recording of the interviews repeatedly before converting them into written documents to enhance the accuracy and reliability of the converted data.

### **3.6.2 Data Cleaning**



According to Rahman (2019), data cleaning is detecting the pieces of data that are incorrect, incomplete, inaccurate, or missing, and then amending, replacing, or erasing them according to necessity. Incorrect or inconsistent data might cause issues, resulting in incorrect findings and misleading conclusions. Therefore, data cleaning can be a significant element in the data analysis process because it eliminates typographical errors from the collected data and improves the efficiency of data analysis (Formplus, 2021). The researchers cleaned the data collected from the interviews by eliminating the incorrect information and replacing the missing data in this research. Moreover, the researchers clarified the incomplete data obtained from the interviewee by adding additional words to increase the readability of the sentences. Furthermore, names or identifying information mentioned during the interview were removed in the data cleaning process unless the researchers received permission to attribute the quote from the participant.

### **3.6.3 Data Coding**

Data coding is the process of labelling and organising collected data to identify different themes and the relationship between them (Medelyan, 2021). Coding qualitative data to find common themes and concepts is part of thematic analysis. When data is generated from qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, qualitative coding allows the researchers to interpret, organise, and structure the observations and interpretations into meaningful theories (Delve, 2021). Besides, coding increases the validity of the data analysis process and enables the researchers to be aware of potential bias during the analysis. In this research, the data obtained from the interviews were categorised into different themes according to the research questions set by the researchers.

### **3.6.4 Data Interpretation**

Data interpretation refers to how data is reviewed to draw an informed conclusion (Lebied, 2018). The interpretation of data delivers meaning to the data that has been analysed and defines its importance and implications for the study. In qualitative research, data is described by using descriptive context rather than numerical values or patterns. Unlike quantitative data, which can be analysed immediately after collecting and sorting it, qualitative data must first be coded into numbers before being analysed. The researchers interpreted the data in this research and determined if the obtained data can answer the study's research questions. After analysing and interpreting the collected data, the researchers reported the result obtained from the data analysis process.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

According to Middleton (2019), reliability and validity are terms that describe how effective a technique, methodology, or test measures something, they are used to assess the quality of research. When handled meticulously, the validity and reliability parameters help distinguish between good and bad research and ensure that the study's conclusion is highly credible (Thakur & Chetty, 2020). According to Leung (2015), validity in qualitative research refers to the suitability of the study's tools, process, and data. As qualitative data cannot be quantified, the subject of its accuracy and

consistency is crucial. In addition, the soundness of the methodology, sampling process, data analysis process, and result of the study is significantly determined by validity. On the other hand, reliability refers to how consistently a method measures something. In qualitative research, reliability relates to the number of practical aspects of the interview process, including the wording used to construct the interview questions and establish a connection with the interviewees (Breakwell, 2000).

According to Patton (1999), triangulation refers to various methods or data sources to build a systematic and comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. In addition, triangulation has been utilised as a qualitative research approach to test validity by combining data from multiple sources and perspectives (Carter et al., 2014). There are four types of triangulation: methodological, investigator, theory, and data. In this research, the researchers employed methodological triangulation to establish validity in the finding. According to Bekhet and Zauszniewski (2012), methodological triangulation involves using more than one method to study a phenomenon. It has been proven helpful in confirming findings, more detailed data, higher validity, and a better understanding of the phenomena under study.

### **3.7.1 Interpretive Validity**

Interpretive validity refers to the qualitative researcher's ability to accurately convey the participants' perceptions of the particular research (Course Hero, 2021). It indicates that the researcher knows how the participants think and can depict their perspectives on various topics.

In this research, the researchers conveyed the collected data from audio form to written transcript. To enhance the readability of the transcript and allow the readers to go smooth through the text, the researchers eliminated the unwanted elements such as false starts, interjections from other speakers, throat clearing and run-on sentences from the original transcript. By cleaning the transcript, it can enhance the accuracy of the data and improve the quality of this research.

### **3.7.2 Member Checks**

In this research, the researchers used the member check technique to enhance the study's credibility, accuracy, transferability, and validity. Member check, also known as respondent validation, is a method of returning an interview or analysed data to a participant to explore the validity and credibility of results (Birt et al., 2016). According to Doyle (2007), member checking is used by the researchers to validate, verify, or assess the trustworthiness of qualitative results. By employing member check in the research, the researchers can ensure the accurate portrayal of participants' voices by allowing them the opportunity to confirm or deny the accuracy and interpretation of data, thus adding credibility to the qualitative study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Furthermore, returning the draft to the participants can help corroborate findings and evidence and corroborate findings and evidence and produce new evidence that the participant may not have given during the initial data collection process (Yin, 2014). If the participant disagrees with the

conclusion, the researcher may need to consider the report as unfinished until the disagreement can be settled with further evidence. After converting the data into clean transcripts, the researchers returned the transcripts for the interviewees to verify the analysed data. The interviewees were required to insert their digital signatures at the bottom of the transcripts if they agree with the data analysed by the researchers.

### **3.7.3 Descriptive validity**

According to Johnson (1997), descriptive validity refers to the account's factual accuracy as recorded by the researchers. In other words, descriptive validity can be considered as the correctness of providing description information such as the description of the event, items, people, behaviour, and circumstances. To obtain descriptive validity, researchers are suggested to employ investigator triangulation, which allows multiple observers to cross-check the observation and improve the credibility of the study. In this research, all clean transcripts were checked and reviewed by supervisor, Mr. Mohd Yusof Bin Zulkefli to ensure that the saturation point has been reached.

## **3.8 Pilot Study**

Generally, pilot studies are associated with a quantitative approach to test a particular research instrument. However, the importance of the pilot test has been expanded to qualitative inquiry where it is conducted as preparation for the major study. According to Kim (2010), pilot study can be defined as a small-scale methodological test conducted to prepare for the main study and to ensure that methods and ideas would work in practice. It can be employed to address potential practical issues or errors in the following research procedure (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). On the other hand, pilot study can strengthen the interview protocol by identifying flaws and limitations within the interview design and allowing necessary modifications to the major study (Kvale, 2007). Hence, it is distinctly important to pilot the interview questions and adjust the interview guide accordingly before embarking on a major study.

### **3.8.1 Analysis of Pilot Study**

Based on the pilot study that was conducted on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> December 2021, the researchers had to make some minor amendments to the interview protocol, so that the outcome of the actual interview can be improved and is able to meet the researchers' expectations. Besides, the researchers found out that individuals who joined the pilot study as interviewees were unlikely to reveal more about themselves and further elaborate their answers because some of the initial questions were set in closed-ended type. To collect sufficient data from the interviewees, the interview protocol was amended by replacing unwanted sub-questions and adding follow-up questions which allow the interviewees to have a better understanding of the questions and further elaborate their responses.

In the first question under RQ1, also known as RQ1.1, most of the interviewees were able to share their experience in using the social dating applications, but the answers provided by them were brief and concise. Therefore, the researchers replaced RQ1.1 with *How do you find the dating application you are/were using?* Through this question, the interviewees can share their personal experiences in a better way by providing real-life examples.

In RQ1.2, all interviewees revealed that social dating applications can lead to a long-term relationship, but they did not provide elaborations to support their statements. Hence, the researchers eliminated the sub-question and replaced it with 3 sub-questions that aimed to explore more on the user experience of the interviewees. To explore their user experience on affiliated relationships, the researchers added *RQ1.2.1 Are you currently in a relationship?* Assuming the interviewee responded yes, the researchers will follow up with *1.2.1A Where and how did you encounter your current love interest or partner?* If the interviewee responded no, the researchers will ask *1.2.1B Have you ever been in a relationship with someone you met on social dating applications?* For casual relationships, the researchers added *RQ1.2.2 Are you sexually active now?* Assuming the interviewee responded yes, the researchers will follow up with *1.2.2A Where and how did you encounter your current love interest or partner?* If the interviewee responded no, the researchers will ask *1.2.2B Have you ever been in a casual relationship with someone you met on social dating applications?* To explore the interviewees' user experience on family relationships, the researchers added *RQ1.2.3 Are you friends with someone you met on social dating applications?* Assuming the interviewee responded yes, the researchers will follow up with *1.2.3A how did you*

*become close friends with them through social dating applications?* If the interviewee responded no, the researchers will ask *1.2.3B what are the reasons that stopped you from making friendships through social dating applications?*

In RQ1.3, all interviewees agreed that social dating applications are effective in searching for a romantic partner and were able to justify their point of view. However, the interviewees were not able to further elaborate their statements. Therefore, the researchers eliminated the sub-question and replace it with 3 sub-questions that aimed to explore the user engagement of the interviewees. In terms of affiliated relationships, the researchers added *RQ1.3.1 How long did the relationship last?* For casual relationships, the researchers added *RQ1.3.2 How long did the fling last?* For family relationships, the researchers added *RQ1.3.3 How long have you been friends with them?* Besides, the researchers added *RQ1.4 As a user of social dating applications, why is it helpful for you to match and click with someone of interest compared to knowing people physically?* to examine the effectiveness of finding a partner on dating applications compared to finding one physically. Moreover, the researchers added *RQ 1.5 As a user of social dating applications, what attracts you to be engaged in the application that you find more convenient and effective compared to physical dating?* With this question being asked, the interviewee is required to explain in detail regarding the benefits provided by online dating.

Based on RQ1.4 from the first draft, most interviewees revealed that they have seen people in committed relationships using social dating applications. Due to sensitive issues, the interviewees were unwilling to elaborate more on the similar scenarios they met in real life.



Therefore, the researchers replaced the sub-question with *1.6 Do you still go on social dating applications when you are in a relationship?* to obtain more information from the perspective of the interviewee. Assuming the interviewee responded yes, the researchers will follow up with *1.6.1 In current or past relationship?* and *1.6.1.1 What if you find someone who is interesting in social dating applications but you are in a relationship? Which one would you choose and give up on?* If the interviewee responded no, the researchers will ask *1.6.2 Do any of your partners do that?* follow by *1.6.2.1 Would you still consider using it if you have got a partner?* With these questions being asked, it is able to create a scenario for the interviewees and helps them to elaborate their points in a better way.

In the first question, RQ2.1, all interviewees revealed that they used social dating applications more frequently than usual in the pandemic. However, they did not further elaborate their answer because RQ2.1 was a closed-ended question and was not able to draw more information from the interviewees. Hence, the researchers added RQ2.1.1 *How often did you use social dating applications during the pandemic?* By asking this question, the researchers can find out the exact numbers that represent the usage of social dating applications by the interviewees. Based on the data collected from RQ2.1.1, the researchers can draw a conclusion that indicates that usage of social dating applications has risen during the pandemic.

In RQ2.2, most interviewees were able to justify their intention of using social dating applications during the pandemic but their answers were similar to the one they provided in RQ1.1. To explore more on users' intentions during the pandemic, the researchers added RQ2.2.1 *Do you*

have any friends who use social dating applications during the pandemic as well? What are their intentions? By adding this follow-up question, the researchers can analyse the intentions of other social dating applications users and highlight the similarities between them. Besides, the researchers added *RQ2.2.2 Do you go on the application when you are lonely* to explore the relationship between loneliness and online dating addiction.

In RQ2.3, all interviewees were able to reveal the factors that contributed to the increased usage of social dating applications during the pandemic. As most of them disclosed that the main factors are due to loneliness, lack of social interaction, and curiosity about exploring something new. However, the researchers decided to ask in a simpler way and modified the sub-question to *RQ2.3 Why do you think your usage of social dating applications increased during the pandemic?*

In RQ2.4, all interviewees agreed that it is common for people to search for their romantic partners via social dating applications during the pandemic. To prevent the interviewees from providing short answers without elaborations, the researchers added *RQ2.4.1 Why do you think it is common for people to search for romantic relationships via social dating applications during the pandemic? Is it because it is an easier way for them to do so and has a higher chance of succeeding?* Through this question, the interviewees can further elaborate and justify their answers in RQ2.4.

In a nutshell, all researchers came to a consensus to amend the interview protocol based on the internal validation conducted by research members, namely Alisya Binti Yahaya, Cheow Zhi Yang, Chong Qiao Lin, Chow Qian Yu, and Ho Kar Fai. As the initial questions on the interview protocol were unable to draw in-depth information from the interviewees, some of the sub-questions were amended and follow-up questions were added to each sub-questions to improve the quality of data collected from the interviews.

### **3.9 Summary**

In conclusion, the researchers selected phenomenology qualitative research for this study to explore the impact of social dating applications on relationships during Covid-19 pandemic among young adults. Furthermore, the researchers used purposive sampling, also known as judgemental sampling. It enables the researchers to look for participants with certain characteristics and learn more about a specific phenomenon. In addition, semi-structured interviews were used for data collection in this research, so that the structure and pace of the interview can be flexibly adjusted to stimulate sufficient and truthful responses from participants. In addition, thematic analysis was used in the data analysis process to analyse the qualitative data collected from the participants. Last but not least, methodological triangulation was employed to establish validity in the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter is to explore and understand the possible impact of social dating applications on relationships among young adult particularly on Tinder and Baituljannah and to analyse the intention of young adults using social dating applications during the pandemic. From this chapter, it explained the analysis of data obtained from young adults in Malaysia who have used Tinder and Batuljannah. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview approach was used to collect data for this chapter. The findings were aligned with the research questions to ensure it achieved the research objectives of this research.

### **4.1 Analysis of Semi-Structured Interview**

Semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher is familiar enough with the topic to identify the domain and the important components of the topics but is unable to foresee all possible answers from the respondents (McIntosh & Morse, 2015; Morse & Field, 1995). Therefore, a semi-structured interview is conducted to explore the impact of social dating applications on relationships among Malaysian young adults and to analyse the intention of Malaysian young

adults using social dating applications during the pandemic after using Tinder or Baituljannah. Generally, the researchers will ask the questions that they have produced beforehand, and interviewees will be asked follow-up questions to reveal more detailed responses. This allowed researchers to investigate more in-depth information which are needed for the discussion later and for researchers to cover study objectives related information. This study conducted a semi-structured interview with six interviewees who ranging from 18 to 35 years old and used Tinder and Baituljannah during the pandemic. The mean age of the interviewees participated in the interview is 25. There were three Tinder users and three Baituljannah users involved in this interview. To assure the reliability of the collected data, all interviewees had at least high school education background since they can understand the questions and be able to express themselves thoroughly.

## **4.2 Demographics**

### **4.2.1 Knowledge**

In regards to the responses that the researchers have collected from the six interviewee who have used or are still using social dating application Tinder and Baituljannah, six of them stated that they were aware of the existence of social dating applications that are available in Malaysia and have engaged in at least one social dating applications such as Tinder, Baituljanah and Bumble. Tinder is a social dating application where “swiping” on the photograph of another user that will uncover a slightly longer description of another user, and it will show a collection of the user’s

photographs. If the user chooses to interface with another user, they will either swipe left or right (Derk, 2016).

Whereas, Bumble is a social dating application similar to Tinder where users create a small profile of themselves with pictures and they can swipe through, however the difference between Bumble and Tinder is that Bumble only allows the female to make the first move and she has to send the first message. If the woman does not send the first message within 24 hours after pairing, the match is lost (Kindred, 2021). On the other hand, Baituljannah is a Muslim-Friendly social dating application as it is a Sharia-friendly characteristic, restricted security, and shields Muslim single men and women to have the way of Islamic courtship (mosite, 2021).

*Yes, I have used a couple of dating applications. Mostly Bumble or Tinder. (T1 – 26/1/22)*

*Yeah, I have use Bumble and Tinder and also Baituljannah. (B1 – 27/1/22)*

*Yes, I am aware of few of them such as Tinder, Baituljannah, and Bumble. (B2 – 17/2/22)*

#### **4.2.2 Activeness**

From the previous analysis (4.2.1), all six interviewees are social dating applications users yet they were active user. Active user is a person who accesses an app for a given period of time. During this period each user is counted uniquely to provide an app developer with an accurate figure of how many people use an app, whether it be daily, weekly, or monthly (AppsFlyer, 2022). Based on this study, the researchers concluded that social dating applications were one of the go-to

applications for the informants during the pandemic and majority of them have their own reasons in using social dating applications during pandemic.

Based on the responses, majority of the informants (T1, T2, T3, B1 and B3) affirmed that they consistently used social dating applications during the pandemic. However, B2 was not consistent in using social dating application because the informant mentioned that the purpose of using social dating application was just to try it out.

*Yes, I am active during the pandemic. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

*I did use Tinder and Baituljannah during the first wave of pandemic. I used it one week twice or thrice, it wasn't that frequent. (B2 – 17/2/22)*

On the other hand, B1 mentioned that although he was an active user during the pandemic, the informant found out that the users on Tinder and Bumble were not looking for serious relationship and therefore the informant was demotivated in using the both mentioned social dating applications as the informant was looking for a serious relationship during that period. Hence, the informant moved to Baitiuljannah in order to search for a serious relationship.

*Yes, I do. So I have used it last year. Since the pandemic was very rough. You know, I felt like the girls on Tinder and Bumble, they were not very, they were very playful. And they will and and so as I was looking for a very serious relationship. (B1 – 27/1/22)*

### **4.2.3 Exposure**

Based on the previous responses, majority of the users were an active user during the pandemic. This is because due to the pandemic, most individual was isolated and they wish to seek for some social interaction. Hence, social interaction is necessary especially during the pandemic. According to Karimi et al (2014), the internet and social media have enabled two-way communication to the audiences where now delivering and receiving functions are developed between the media and its users. Hence, gratifications obtained refers to the audience's experience through the medium, whereas gratifications sought can be referred to as needs or intentions of the audience expecting to gain from a medium before they have come into contact with it.

In order to gratify the communication needs therefore social dating applications is needed at that particular time, it is an alternative way of communication for these informants to communicate with others during the pandemic. All the informants got exposed of the social dating applications from sources. The sources were social media, word of mouth and traditional media. Commonly, the informants (T2, B2 & B3) got exposed through word of mouth from friends. Since the informants intended to satisfy their communication needs, their friends have introduced social dating applications such as Tinder and Bumble.



As for Muslims, Baituljannah is a choice due to the interface setting which provides a sense of security. However, other social dating applications like Tinder and Bumble serve as other choices besides Baituljannah

*I think that's a long time, maybe it was 9GAG actually. That was long time ago (T1 – 26/1/22)*

*I discovered Tinder because I heard about it from a TV show or movie. For Bumble, I started using it recently, two years from now. It was mentioned by a friend who was using Bumble too, while Tinder is because of some shows. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

*Because in that time during MCO we had to stay at home and I was lonely. That's why I started to use Tinder to find new friends. While Baituljannah, my friend introduced it to me and he said this application requires the user's information such as IC number, basically it needs you to provide your personal details. (B3 – 12/3/22)*

By this the researchers concluded that social dating applications is starting to become a trend among young adults in Malaysia especially during the pandemic. Based on the following responses, four out of six informants (T3, B1, B2, & B3) stated that they started to use social dating applications during the pandemic.

However, the remaining two informants (T1&T2) were already exposed to social dating applications in a young age. Both of the informants found that is a common norm to start using

social dating application in a young age. This is because in this digitalised era, there are more than 200,000 secondary school kids have been groomed online (Online dating, 2020). Hence, the researchers concluded that, social dating applications will become a more common trend among young adults in Malaysia.

*I'm only started using them since the pandemic and until now. (T3 – 10/2/22)*

*Tinder from December 2020 until January 2021. Baituljannah in March last year until I met my girlfriend in October. (B3 – 12/3/22)*

#### **4.3 RQ1: What is the impact of dating applications on relationships among young adults?**

##### **4.3.1 User Experience**

Based on the responses, majority of the informants (T1, T3, B1, B2, & B3) stated that social dating applications are helpful when it comes to seeking a romantic partner. T1 mentioned that the users on social dating applications share the same intention and wish to widen their social circles. Besides, three informants (T3, B2 & B3) stated that it is easier to find an ideal romantic partner on social dating applications because the system helps to filter and narrow down people who share the similar hobbies and interests. Therefore, users of social dating applications can find someone who matches their personality in a simpler way.

*Because if you're online that means you're open to talking to me. If you're on the app means you're open to talking to people. At least that's what you tell if you're on the app, you want to talk to people, or else you won't be on or you won't be matching with me in the first place. Yeah, so online is always like that. Ways to just meet new people from different circles. (T1 – 26/1/22)*

*Because you see a lot of people actually went to social dating applications because they cannot find any potential partner in real life. Therefore, if you go to social dating applications the system will actually help narrow down people who share similar hobbies and interests that are the same with you. And from that you can further find someone who share the same hobby and maybe you guys can have more conversation compared physically meet with people. (T3 – 10/2/22)*

On the other hand, three informants (T2, B2 & B3) agreed that social dating applications provide a convenient way for the singles to seek for a romantic partner; however, they prefer to know a person physically before they develop relationship with him or her. According to the elaboration provided by T2 & B2, building relationship with someone they knew physically is more challenging and worthy because there are better stories to tell.

#### **4.3.2 Romantic Relationships**

The term relationship can be defined in various ways depending the areas that the researchers are looking at in this study. Trask (2011) described that a relationship is the ability of one to interact

with others effectively and with diverse. As the communication needs are being gratified in using social dating applications, the researchers began to explore the result forming in terms of cost and reward of establishing a relationship after social exchange was accomplished. The researchers studied on relationships where the informants were interviewed with relevant experiences involving romantic feelings during the usage of social dating applications. Based on the informants (T1, B1, & B3), they happened to connect with different people and secured an actual relationship with users they met on social dating applications during the pandemic (Tinder, Baituljannah, & Bumble). However, the informant (T1) mentioned that roughly one or two romantic relationships were formed on Tinder before the pandemic, while current relationship was formed on Bumble, instead of Tinder which the informant was also using during the same period. Two informants (T2 & T3) mentioned that there was none romantic relationship formed during the pandemic while using Tinder.

*Yeah. We met through social dating apps. Bumble. Yeah, I met her in December actually (Current GF). Through Tinder, I think two (ex)? (T1 – 26/1/22)*

*No. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

*No. (T3 – 10/2/22)*

*Yes, yes. With the lady from the application (Baituljannah). (B1 – 27/1/22)*

*On Baituljannah, I actually met my current girlfriend through the application itself. (B3 – 12/3/22)*

However, viewing the results from respective dating application, one interviewee out of the three Baituljannah users, (B2) revealed that the romantic relationship was formed physically

during the pandemic. The researchers concluded that the success rate of forming an actual relationship on social dating application Baituljannah is higher compared to Tinder when it comes to building deep connections which then turns into official romantic experiences. It is also concluded that Tinder is less effective in securing a romantic relationship as the researchers discovered social dating application Bumble has been frequently mentioned by one informant (T1) as the more preferred social dating application to be able to form a romantic relationship compared to Tinder.

#### **4.3.3 Hook-up's Concerns**

Sexual hook-ups are a common scenario that have been heard from online dating stories from different social dating applications. To fulfil the affective needs as part of satisfying the emotional experiences, most informants from Tinder users (T1 & T2) responded that they either had similar experiences before or open-minded for the opportunities if they ever encountered any. Both of the informants have expressed the point of their attitudes while using social dating application that they are acceptable towards sexual encounters; however, it is not their initial intention nor priority when going on social dating applications. Informant (T2) stated that they would prefer to invest in interpersonal communication with the other parties to build deeper connection before they take other followed-up actions into consideration. It indicated that they were looking for a connection or relationship which is beyond just sexual hook-ups on Tinder.

*Not immediately after I met that person. There are possibilities (hook-ups), but it will not happen before five or six months because you don't really know that person and it's not safe to do so. But if you ask me, yes, I have, but not immediately. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

In regards to satisfy the loss of interpersonal needs from sexual pleasures, informant (T1) as well mentioned that they were reluctant to go on sexual encounters during the pandemic until they were vaccinated, considering the health concerns during the early stage of using social dating application Tinder. It justified that besides gratifying different needs and desires, informants stopped reacting to the encounters when their basic needs were threatened such as health status and risks. Joshi et al. (2020) claimed that the perceived loneliness during the lockdown in the pandemic has further led to a craving for affection online where the intentional behaviour changes due to social deprivation as the basic needs are threatened. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the informants' deprived of social contact was subjected to change due to different circumstances, and so their behaviours.

*“Oh, yeah.” “I guess it works, you know, but I never hold myself to like that standard because I knew it could be for more but it's not really my main goal. I guess. I don't really have a main goal when doing this kind of things.” “Yeah, I think I go into dating apps with like an idea of like, okay, it's just for a while, but then when something real happens and you fall hard for someone that you just decided, maybe I changed my rules” “This was before pandemic, I went hook up before pandemic, during pandemic I didn't want any until I got vaccinated, then I felt okay to go out.” “Yeah, a couple of times. This was my ex ex, two exes ago. We had over a year of relationship together, but it didn't work out in the end.*

*And with my other ex, we had about three months before we had to do LDR. And we couldn't take any more. So, we called it quit.” (T1 – 26/1/22)*

However, the last Tinder informant (T3) expressed a different opinion in contrast with the first two Tinder informants (T1 & T2) where strong objection was projected on related question. Health concerns such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) were mentioned as the main reason of rejecting the related opportunities on Tinder. It once again justified that online behaviour on social dating applications may change when different circumstances and concerns are faced by the informants, despite that their intentional behaviours were to satisfy the specific need in affection crave. Three informants (B1, B2, & B3) have zero encounter on sexual experiences through the use of Baituljannah as it is religiously illegal to perform such act due to the restrictions of Islam.

*Because I don't need a hook-up right now and you know that having a sexual intercourse with someone barely know on internet is actually very dangerous, and there's a lot of STDs (Sexually transmitted diseases) those kinds of things out there. (T3 – 10/2/22)*

*Like for me because in Islam, sex before marriage is haram. And for me, I would like to, I would like to marry someone, who also practices the religion as strictly as me. Because I would say I am a very committed Muslim. No, because I feel also it is supervised so some people are very afraid as well. (B1 – 27/1/22)*

*No. (B2 – 17/2/22)*

*No, it never happened before. However, if it happens, I would take it slow. (B3 – 12/3/22)*

On the hand of questioning the duration of the fling they have encountered, most interviewees responded that there were none encounter for the time being when using the dating application Tinder and Baituljannah (T2, T3, B1, B2, & B3). However, informant (T3) expressed that they prefer having sexual encounters with people that they meet in real life if it compared to meeting sexual encounters on social dating applications.

#### **4.3.4 Friendship**

According to American Psychological Association, social interaction is defined as a process in which two or more people stimulate or respond to each other. The evolution of cooperation and rivalry, the influence of status and social roles, and the dynamics of group behaviour, leadership, and compliance are all aspects of social interaction (American Psychological Association, 2022). When asked about the friendship that the informants had formed while using the social dating app, these two dating apps do have similarities. This question relates to the social interaction of friendship that the informants had formed while using the both dating application. Majority of the informants had made acquaintances on said dating app and is still in contact with the acquaintances as well as became good friends in real life (T2, T3, B2, B3). For Tinder, the informants (T1, T2 & T3) express the friendship is bonded over social media especially during the pandemic. Even though, the informants did not find luck in romantic relationship but these dating application does help the informants to gain a friendship type of relationship.

*Oh, yeah many. All of them are still following me on Instagram now. (T1 – 26/1/22)*



*Yes, I met a girl on Tinder during the pandemic. We became good friends later on. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

*I think it's only 2 or 3 of them I met on Tinder and we actually proceed to become really good friends in real life. (T3 – 10/2/22)*

*I do have, I think about two friends on Tinder that I still stay in contact with. (B2 – 17/2/22)*

However, B1 was the only informant who did not have any form of friendship created in the social dating application. This was due to the fact that the user expressed from the start that he was looking for a serious relationship and that utilising the social dating application for friendship was not his desire.

When asked about the user duration of friendship that they had with the matched they have met in the social dating applications, it does happen to all the informants from Tinder (T1, T2, T3) but only two out of three of the informants from Baituljannah had a lasting friendship from the mention social dating application (B2 & B3).

However, the similarities can be seen here that the friendship was a short-term friendship as a sense of companionship when the users were lonely and went through those social dating applications due to the fact that the informants were lonely during the pandemic. Companionship is described as social participation in shared activities, whether recreational or non-recreational, that is undertaken for the intrinsic purpose of fulfilment or delight (Bromell & Cagney, 2014). Furthermore, the two informants from both Tinder and Baituljannah had a constant duration of

friendship in dating application as informants are still in contact with each other and still goes out with each other till the present day (T2, T3, B2 & B3).

*Yeah, I would say she was one of my best friends. As I said, people go on dating apps not only to look for girlfriends, relationships, and hook-ups. Most of the time, you find people that want to talk to you, you talk about the interest that you both have. Yes, we do stay in contact until today, she is still a very good friend of mine. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

*I meet a lot of people on Tinder and chat with quite an amount of people, with the only one that passed all the stages and knowing them, then eventually I will think this person will be suitable to be friend. I only ask them out and from that we can further see how we can bond well with each other. (T3 – 10/2/22)*

*So from the conversation that we had on Tinder, we felt like, maybe we can talk more on other app which is Instagram, like we can save number at some point and we just bite I guess. We became close from there and it wasn't really into the relationship part but it's more of a friendly part, which is talking about, we were talking about the let's say study, and all these things, and we had a lot of things in common. So that's how the friendship still remains until today. (B2 – 17/2/22)*

*Until now. They did know I have a girlfriend already and they feel alright about it. We still like contact with each other normally. (B3 – 12/3/22)*

As for an informant (T1) from Tinder, the friendship duration was shorter than the rest of the users as they are not talking and are merely friends on social media. The duration of friendship

is not applicable for an informant (B1) in Baituljannah as the informant did not establish any friendship kind of relationship in the dating application that the informants is using. This is also because he was serious and respected the parents of his fiancé.

#### **4.3.5 Effectiveness of Social Dating Applications**

Based on the response, one of the informants (T1) mentioned that the large number of users in Tinder provides a bigger opportunity for him to form a romantic relationship. According to Iqbal (2022), Tinder is growing bigger to become an irreducible element in the modern dating landscape, it remains the most popular dating application worldwide, with 75 million monthly active users and 6.2 million monthly subscribers. Therefore, T1 believed that the variety of selections is the main attraction of social dating applications which makes it more convenient compared to physical dating.

*I think Tinder is more like there's more people on Tinder than any other dating applications out there. So, it's quite famous I think compared to other dating applications. So, in that way, there's a lot of selection, there's a lot of people as compared to yeah. (T1 – 26/1/22)*

On the other hand, three informants (T2, B2 & T3) stated that the description function of the social dating applications is the main attraction because it helps them to know more about the person before they match. B2 mentioned it is important to focus on the person's education background which he or she put on the biography. By looking through the description, it helps her

to know the person better and know what to expect even before they start the conversation. According to the explanation provided by T3, Tinder is an easier option to find a potential partner compared to real life because the users get to know each other's hobbies and interest by just swiping right on their phone.

*For me I believe that one of the reasons or one of the characteristics as you can call is based on their educational background. I feel like that's very important because I am not sure certain accounts on Tinder, for instance, you can tell that person is not who they say they are right? From, from the pictures and so forth. So, I believe that for my part, I will be focusing on their educational background that they put on the bio and the way they present themselves. Like the description is important. (B2 – 17/2/22)*

Lastly, the remaining two informants (B1 & B3) stated that the main feature that attracts them to use social dating applications is because they feel a sense of security while using them. According to the response given by an informant who used Baituljannah (B1), in Baituljannah, there is someone to supervise everything including the conversation between the users. Therefore, the individual will get blocked from the application if he or she violates the rules and regulations. Besides, B3 mentioned that the application, Baituljannah requires its users to provide personal information such as Identity Card number. In a nutshell, the researchers concluded that Baituljannah is more legitimate compared to other social dating applications.

#### **4.4 RQ2: What is the intention of young adults using dating applications during the pandemic?**

##### **4.4.1 Intention**

As the usage rate of social dating applications has significantly increased ever since the pandemic struck, individuals may use social dating applications to gratify different needs. Based on the responses, majority of the informants (T1, B1, B2 & B3) stated that the intention of Malaysian young adults to use social dating applications during the pandemic is to kill boredom. Furthermore, three informants (B1, B2 & B3) disclosed that individuals intend to seek for friendship during the pandemic through social dating applications. Based on the elaborations provided by B1 and B2, some individuals were unemployed and social isolation had led to loneliness as well as unhealthy mental state. Therefore, going on social dating application became the only way to seek for social interaction.

*So, like people who want different ones, right, so they would want to search for maybe something casual. Because the pandemic is very stressful for a lot of people. They are basically unemployed and they need someone to talk to that they can kind of confide into the person. (B1 – 27/1/22)*

*From the pandemic itself right people use it all the time. During the pandemic there is a huge change in the number of people who uses this dating app and I can like see some of my friends using them as well throughout the pandemic. Because during the pandemic everybody was at home and it somewhat put a stop to your social engagement or if people*

*who wants to look for a partner or whatever, that is the only way to put yourself out there and discovering new people, even though the new people is not for dating purposes. (B2 – 17/2/22)*

On the other hand, T2 and T3's perspectives are not similar with the majority. They stated that the intention of Malaysian young adults to use social dating applications is to look for affiliated relationship and casual relationship. Moreover, T3 mentioned that individuals tend to realise their needs in a relationship as they are approaching adulthood. Hence, the informant was curious about it and wanted to explore more by using social dating applications. Besides, the informants were questioned regarding their own intention to use the social dating applications during the pandemic. Based on the responses, three informants (T1, T2 & B2) stated that they used social dating applications to meet new friends and kill their boredom. As people were not encouraged to have physical meet ups with their friends during the pandemic, individuals turn to social dating applications to fulfill their needs for social interaction. T2 and B2 mentioned that they did not purposely go on social dating applications to find a romantic partner, but to seek for some sort of human interaction.

*Boredom. I did not go on Tinder to find a girlfriend. I go on Tinder because I am bored. I talk to a few people there and become friends. I have a lot of very good friends who use dating apps. My intention was not to get into a relationship, but just to know people. The circle of friends that I have was just close friends and they are pretty far from me. I am from Ipoh. So, the only friends I have are from college. Most of them are my desk mates. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

*I was looking for some sort of human interaction. When I was using all these dating apps was the purely experimental, like I wanted to know how it works. And you know, what would happen from there, but I didn't really have like, high hopes for relationship or marriage or whatever. It was just was to try out. (B2 – 17/2/22)*

However, the remaining three informants (T3, B1 & B3) stated that they intend to find a romantic partner through social dating application. Unlike T2 and B2, B3 mentioned that his first intention to use social dating applications is to find a girlfriend during the pandemic. Furthermore, B1 stated that he was looking for a very serious relationship and wish to get married as soon as possible. Therefore, he used Baituljannah and he believed that the users in Baituljannah are looking for serious relationship too.

*I was looking for a very serious relationship. Because I do want to get married at the end of the day. And I am already 36 and I do not have much time. And I believe that this app, is for people who want to get serious. (B1 – 27/1/22)*

*My first intention was to find a girlfriend because it was during the MCO period, and lonely. (B3 – 12/3/22)*

As single users are not the only group of consumers who intend to explore social dating applications, there are people who still go on social dating applications even though they are in a committed relationship (Hobbs et al., 2017 and Weiser et al., 2018). To explore this issue, the informants were asked if they are in a relationship, will they still go on to social dating applications. Based on the responses, majority of the informants (T1, T2, T3 & B2) stated that they will not

continue to use it when they are in a relationship. T1 and T3 mentioned that their partner will feel insecure if they continue to talk to random people on social dating applications. Hence, deleting everything on the existing social dating application account is a sign of respect towards their partner and is an important move to build trust in the relationship.

On the other hand, two informants (B1 & B3) who used Baituljannah stated that they will still go on social dating applications as their religion allows them to have a polygamy relationship. Polygamy refers to a type of relationship that typically involves a person marrying more than one partner. According to the elaboration provided by B1, men are allowed to have three wives in Islam and are responsible to ensure that all wives are treated equally. Therefore, B1 and B3 did not denied the possibility that they might go on to social dating application in the future, even though they are in a relationship.

*Yes. Because you see, because my religion, they actually practice polygamy. And because of that, I am allowed to have three more wives. Because in Islam, right, my role as a provider, is to actually ensure that the all of my wives are treated equally in terms of financially, emotionally and their wellness in general. (B1 – 27/1/22)*

*No, I will stop using it. I didn't use both Tinder and Baituljannah anymore because I want to fully focus on my girlfriend. However it might happenes in the future, it depend on what situation. It is because if the man allows to do so (the wife agrees) and maybe if they feel bored towards their wife, then it could happen. (B3 – 12/3/22)*



#### 4.4.2 Dating Behaviour in New Normal

In times of crisis especially during the pandemic, social dating applications can be effective tools for developing relationships. Due to the implementation of Movement Control Order during the pandemic, individuals were encouraged to avoid physical contact and stay at home. As a result, the usage rate of social dating applications has significantly increased in that particular time. Based on the responses, majority of the informants (T1, T2, T3, B1 & B3) stated that they used social dating application more frequently than usual during the pandemic. T1 and T2 mentioned that they used it daily because they are bored and want to have some social interactions with the people during the pandemic.

*Everyday maybe? Because during pandemic time, I had a couple of people that I was talking to on Tinder. So, I just talked to them during pandemic even though it was kind of boring, because there was not much to talk about. (T1 – 26/1/22)*

*During the pandemic, I think I often use the dating apps. Sometimes, I used it daily; sometimes, there are two-day gaps in between. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

On the other hand, B2 used social dating applications twice or thrice a week, which is not consider as “frequently”. As a result, the researchers concluded that most of the informants used social dating application more frequently than usual during the pandemic. Due to self-isolation and living in a restricted environment with few things to keep them occupied, all the informants said that their usage of social dating applications increased during the pandemic because they were bored and needed some human interactions to satisfy their need for meaningful experiences. Based

on the responses from all the informants, boredom does not appear to deter them from engaging in seemingly worthless activities, but rather encourages them to take on more and more, especially by using social dating applications for some human interactions during the pandemic. T2 even stated that majority of users' bio on social dating applications have labelled themselves as bored and in need of human engagement. In additions, although it was to kill the boredom during the pandemic period, T3 did express an additional statement which the informant was hoping for some relationships to happen regardless it is friendships or romantic relationships.

*It was just something to pass the time from meeting people because I enjoyed meeting people when I was bored. (T1 – 26/1/22)*

*From their bio, they said that they are here because of the pandemic and wanted to kill their boredom. Literally, everyone you meet in the application during the pandemic has the same caption. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

*I'm bored and I need affection. (T3 – 10/2/22)*

*So, that time I felt like I need some sort of a human communication, human interaction and that is one of the platforms that had helped me at that point. (B2 – 17/2/22)*

Furthermore, the researchers also discovered that majority of the informants (T2, T3, B2 & B3) prefer to find a partner physically rather than through social dating applications. Despite having good features and interface settings on the social dating applications, these four informants stated that it is better to get to know a person in real life as they can physically see the person's real appearance and characteristics compared to social dating applications such as Tinder where

users can garnish their profile bio and fake profile picture. Even though Baituljannah is stricter in terms of the interface settings where users are required to provide the real personal information and supervised by third party, B2 and B3 still prefer finding partner in real life. Besides, B3 mentioned that online dating will become an ongoing trend even after the pandemic. In the end, social dating applications are definitely not the first choice for these four informants to choose their potential partners. However, T3 would use social dating applications to find a partner if there are certain circumstances happened.

*Using dating applications during the pandemic is not really a big deal. However, obviously, you just cannot date online. From my point of view, if I don't see you, you don't exist. Trust is the only key here. You have to trust the person there. The way I used to differentiate real or fake people from dating applications is to communicate with them using FaceTime. If they get on to FaceTime, they are real, you can go with it. If you can get to know them, it is better. Anyway, do not have high hopes until you meet the person in real life. (T2 – 27/1/22)*

*If I have the chance it's definitely physically because I get to know in person, I mean like easier, but if I don't have the chance to get into relationship with someone in real life then I will just use Tinder or any other social dating applications. (T3 – 10/2/22)*

On the other hand, the remaining two informants (T1 & B1) stated that it is normal for them to find a romantic partner through social dating applications during the pandemic. Moreover,

T1 mentioned that social dating applications boost his chances to find a romantic partner and will consider going back on social dating applications if he breaks up with the current girlfriend.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated the analysis and findings that conducted by the researchers. This chapter started the analysis with semi-structured interviews conducted among six young Malaysian adults aged 18 to 35 who used Tinder or Baituljannah during the pandemic period. From the analysis, it began with the demographics of the informants and three components were analysed. The three components were the informants' knowledge, activeness and exposure on social dating applications. Furthermore, as part of the research questions, the impact of social dating applications on young adult in terms of user experience, romantic relationships, hook up concerns and friendships and effectiveness of social dating applications were presented as well. Lastly, the analysis of intention and dating behaviour in the new normal was revealed.

As for the result, all informants know and aware at least two social dating applications and most of them were still an active user during the pandemic period. Also, based on the responses by the informants, the researchers have found out that the impact for both Tinder and Baituljannah users was different in some aspect on experience, romantic relationships, hook-ups, and friendships. In additions, the researchers discovered that the informants' intentions for leveraging social dating applications range from boredom to seeking human interactions and finding affiliated

and casual relationships. And finally, the researchers have found that the informants have opposing views on whether to look for a partner physically or through social dating applications.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

The rise of social dating applications in recent years has sparked significant debate, specifically about the impact that might occur and the motivations for their use during the pandemic. In this study, two research objectives explored the impact of social dating applications on relationships and analysed the intention of Malaysian young adults using social dating applications during the pandemic. This chapter was to discuss the possible impacts on relationships and the differences of adoption behaviour using social dating applications during the pandemic

## **5.1 Demographic**

### **5.1.1 The Impact of Movement Control Order**

The Malaysian government Movement Control Order (MCO) was implemented by the federal government of Malaysia in response to the Covid-19 pandemic starting from 18 March 2020 (Bunyan, 2020). To combat the spread of Covid-19 virus, the Movement Control Order measures included restrictions on movement, international travel, as well as the shutdown of business, industries, and academic institutions. Citizens were required to avoid physical social contact and follow the standard operating procedure (SOP) imposed by the Malaysian government. MCO regulations such as staying at home and social distancing have restricted individuals from socialising, dating, and developing meaningful relationships (Werner et al., 2021). Although quarantine and social isolation are vital precautions to prevent the virus from spreading; however, they also lead to elevated levels of loneliness among young adults (Hwang et al., 2020). Moreover, the lack of human interaction and absence of physical activities have resulted in individuals seeking social connections in alternative ways such as going on social dating applications.

This study shows that some individuals were unemployed during the pandemic and a long period of social isolation had led to unhealthy mental state; therefore, going on social dating applications became the only way to fulfill their needs for social interaction. Besides, some users used social dating applications to look for affiliated relationships because they were curious and wanted to explore more during the pandemic. The finding is aligned with Bonavita (2022), concluded that going on social dating applications has become a popular way for young people to deal with loneliness during the Covid-19 pandemic. In a nutshell, the pandemic has significantly

contributed to the thriving of social media applications as well as shaped people's perception of online dating culture.

### **5.1.2 Users' Knowledge of Social Dating Applications**

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the society and has led to the rise of online dating. A series of quarantine and social isolation measures have brought loneliness, depression, and boredom to most individuals, especially single ones. Due to the increased sense of loneliness, people downloaded social dating applications to seek for social interactions while some even intend to look for a romantic partner. Based on the overall responses, this study concluded that Tinder and Bumble are the favourites among Malaysian young adults, while Baituljannah is commonly used by Muslims.

In recent years, Tinder is the most downloaded social dating application in the world, with over 6.5 million monthly downloads in May 2021 (Statista, 2021). In general, Tinder offers features that is straightforward and easy to use. Tinder's users can choose to swipe left or right on someone's photo. According to Lyons (2021), signing up on Tinder is completely free of charge; however, the application does offer some subscription-based premium features which allow users to enjoy a better experience. Furthermore, Bumble is another well-known social dating application which introduced in 2014. This study shows that matches on Bumble have higher quality compared to Tinder's. Besides, Bumble requires female users to make the first move, which can be advantageous for men since it removes the burden of being responsible to initiate a conversation.

On the other hand, Baituljannah is one of Malaysia's top matchmaking platforms which is generally preferred by most Muslim users. According to Teoh (2021), Baituljannah provides Sharia-friendly features, tight security, and safety measures that allow Muslim users to find a potential life partner in a safe and Halal way. Moreover, Baituljannah can protect Muslim singles when they socialise virtually by preventing undesired encounters such as catfishing and scams. In a nutshell, social dating applications such as Tinder, Bumble, and Baituljannah are well-known and favoured by Malaysian young adults.

### **5.1.3 Users' Activeness on Social Dating Applications**

The usage of social dating application services has been proven to be widely and regularly used both globally and in Malaysia (Adam, 2020). In 2018, it was reported that 41% of online singles in the world have used social dating applications within the past month (Paisley, 2018). However, the number of users who regularly engaged in social dating applications went even higher during the pandemic as some individuals see social dating applications as their only option to obtain human interaction. This study concluded that most of the interviewees are active users of social dating applications during the pandemic. Basically, an active user can be defined as an individual who uses the product or service regularly and in a meaningful way during a specific period of time. This study found out that individuals consistently used social dating applications during the pandemic to kill boredom and utilise their time. As a result, the researchers concluded that the pandemic has brought a major impact on users' activeness on social dating applications because



most individuals have plenty of leisure time and wanted to explore something new during the pandemic.

#### **5.1.4 Users' Exposure to Social Dating Applications**

Due to the absence of face-to-face interaction during the pandemic, individuals tend to seek for alternative ways to connect with each other. As a result, social dating applications became a proven solution for young adults to gratify their social needs. This study discovered that individuals got exposed to social dating applications through various sources such as traditional media, social media, and word of mouth. Among different sources, word of mouth was commonly used to promote social dating applications because the existing user can share their personal experience with their friends which makes the conversation more persuasive. Besides, this study also found out that a minority of the users were exposed to social dating applications at a young age while the others were exposed to the application during the pandemic. Therefore, it can be concluded that young adults can be exposed to social dating applications through different sources at any time.

#### **5.1.5 The Thrive of Bumble on Online Dating Trend**

This study found a new insight related to social dating applications. Bumble, introduced in 2014, is a social dating application similar to Tinder. Like other social dating applications, Bumble users

can swipe right to someone they were interested in and swipe left on someone they were not (Hartmans & Williams, 2021). However, Bumble aims to be for longer-lasting relationships, while Tinder is more of a casual application. Based on the responses given by informants who used Bumble, the application only allows female users to make the first move by initiating a conversation with the male users. The match will be gone if the woman does not send the first message within 24 hours after pairing (Kindred, 2021). The particular feature was created to inspire women to make the first move, to give females more control over the app, and avoid being bombarded with messages from men.

Besides seeking for a romantic partner, Bumble's users can also look for friends with similar interests through the application's mode called Best Friend Forever (BFF). Bumble BFF is a matching system designed specifically for users who seek for friendship. By switching the application to BFF mode, it provides the users with people of the same sex and similar hobbies. Since 2015, Bumble has gained 100 million users worldwide and became one of the most used social dating applications. This study discovered that social dating application users prefer Bumble over Tinder because Bumble provides functions and features that are more professional compared to Tinder. Moreover, the users believed that Bumble could lead to long-lasting relationships because most of the users in the application have similar goals and wish to form a serious relationship as well.

## **5.2 Objective 1**

### **To Explore the Impact of Social Dating Applications on Relationships Among Malaysian Young Adults**

In this study, the researchers adopted Uses and Gratifications theory which then further developed a conceptual framework where the model has been applied to these forms of new media and examine intentions for using social dating applications. In the context of new media such as social dating applications, Karimi et al. (2014) mentioned that users' gratifications obtained through the experiences of using them. In this study, the researchers ascertained that the usage of social dating applications were reflecting effective and positive impacts in regards to resolve the communication need due to the lose sense of belonging during the pandemic. This study is aligned with Li (2005), concluding that the gratifications obtained regarding users' experience are able to satisfy their deprived of social contact, impinging emotional needs such as cognitive needs and affective needs. In this study, different gratifications sought out by the users of social dating applications were directing to similar motives through the ease of communication, impacting a presentation of aftermath using the social dating applications in relation to relationships, companionships, casual hook-ups, or even entertainment.

Cognitive needs in this context relates to social interaction where self-actualising needs in realising personal growth and peak experiences are able to be emerged through romantic relationships that was being analysed as a common impact of the usage of social dating

applications Baituljannah. This study justified that social dating applications are indeed predictive and comprehensive for the users to gratify the needs, goals, benefits, and consequences of media consumption and use along with personal factors. In the conceptual framework developed by the researchers in this study, cost and reward occurs only when social exchange is accomplished. In this study, the researchers concluded the cost in this finding directed to the different needs which resulted in different behaviour, such as interpersonal relationships forming while reward indicated the cost-benefit expectation. Hence, the implication of social exchange in this context is that the social dating applications' users communicated their wants and needs in building connection through social dating applications as part of interaction in relationships.

This study discovered that Baituljannah users related their relationship experiences involving romantic feelings through building deeper connections during the pandemic, which then turned into official affiliated relationships. Regardless of the lower rate of social dating application Tinder showed in impacting an actual relationship, the discovery of another social dating application Bumble in this study which contributed in securing romantic relationships during the pandemic. It indicated that social dating applications impacted heavily on shaping relationships forming especially in the constant flux at the pandemic faced by the users due to the need for safety. This justified the study of Odekerken-Schröder et al. (2020) and Alexopoulos et al. (2020) that the pandemic has led not only a surge of social dating application usage but as well the search of committed relationship due to the lack of emotional well-being sharing and the removal of positive reinforcement from the immediate environment. This study as well studied on the romantic relationships where users specified their relationship period and expression of thoughts that short-term dating was not favourable.

In the context of casual relationship, in this study, the researchers concluded that the pandemic has unconsciously impacted the social dating applications' users on the human connection. It clearly learned that the users' motivated behaviour behind the usage of applications have changed due to new challenges to the perceived control over the pandemic. This again justified the study of Joshi et al. (2020) that the pandemic rectified youth's perceptions on love and enhanced the urgent needs for individuals to build a connected commitment. In reviewing the desire to build deeper connection and thus relationship with parties met on social dating applications, thus, from this study the researchers concluded that the strong sense of isolation has enforced the social interaction needs in building fulfillment, investment and commitment in relationships during this pandemic. Social dating applications are now being viewed and used as a tool to foster a community-building in addressing feelings of isolation or fear in these trying times.

In the sense of affective needs, as mentioned in Chapter 4 that it is a common phenomenon on social dating applications. Regardless different motivations and personal factors that the users started the usage of social dating applications, this study come to know that the initial intentions were not related to experience or search for sexual encounters. In the process of seeking the emotional safety, none of the users expressed the demand of sexual pleasures from social dating applications during the pandemic. It is against the study of scholars such as Sumter et al. (2017), Ranzini and Lutz (2017), and Lawson and Leck (2006) that users often gratify their motives in searching for opportunities to obtain sexual partners. In fact, the users emphasised the necessity of building an emotional bond with parties met online before taking things into another account.

With that being said, this study perceived that the social dating applications users showed a yearning for love and affection from the adaptation of isolation in reality through social dating applications. In the research, Joshi et al. (2020) claimed that the perceived loneliness during the lockdown in the pandemic has further led to a craving for affection online where the intentional behaviour changes due to social deprivation as the basic needs are threatened. However, this study showed in the context of sexual hook-ups are opposite to the existing literature as the users were reluctant to go on sexual encounters with health concerns and potential risks that could be extended from Covid-19. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the users' deprived of social contact was subjected to change due to different circumstances, and so their behaviours. Health concerns such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) were mentioned as one of the main reasons reflecting on the disinclination of proceeding any sexual behaviour during the pandemic. The researchers again concluded that online behaviour on social dating applications may change when different circumstances and concerns are faced by the users, despite that their intentional behaviours were to satisfy the specific need in affection crave.

Meantime, this study has analysed friendship forming from the users through the usage of social dating applications as another impact on relationship during the pandemic. Aside from romantic relationships and sexual hook-ups, this study indicated that friendship forming being the most frequent activity on social dating applications. As mentioned in Chapter 4, companionship and boredom are the common motives behind the intention of making contacts with parties met online without having to romanticise or sexualise it. On the note of breaking the isolation, social dating applications showed a leveraged and significant impacts on their users trying to seek for

close relationships such as communication in the social exchange process in order to get their emotional situation and needs responded.

This study is in line with a study by Cook and Rice (2006) that actions of validation seeking from another party guides the interpersonal relationship forming. In reviewing friendship in this context, this study supported the studies of Thibaut and Kelley (1959) that the implication of rewards is formed when the degree of costs exists, in terms of satisfying their bonding needs with other parties. Hence, as a consequence of completing the social exchange process, in this study, the researchers concluded that the motivations of eagerly securing the insecurities experienced during the pandemic have resulted the motivations to communicate with people on social dating applications and then deterred the performance of a sequence of behaviour.

While physical dating is probably still the main approach to get in a relationship, this study found out the advantages that social dating applications hold compared to meet a person in real life. As analysed in Chapter 4, variety of selections and the descriptions of personal information on social dating applications have been voiced out by the informants. Personal information, hobbies and interests showed on social dating applications could determine their choice of choosing their partner, and the variety of selections enabled them to compare each selection they have made.

As such, this study proven to be consistent with the study of Van der Zanden et al. (2019) that users of social dating applications look for certain terms and phrases in profile bios to

emphasise or clarify their interpersonal relationship goals with the hopes of finding a romantic partner with similar goals. Simultaneously, some informants stated that the settings on Baituljannah was more secure and reassuring to use since the application comply with Islamic regulations, featured a third party to supervise everything between users and required personal information such as Identity Card to ensure a person's genuineness, which is aligned with Kamaruddin (2019) that all conversations will take place through the system and will be monitored and checked as part of the terms and conditions upon using the application, as well as for the sake of customer comfort.

### **5.3 Research Objective 2**

#### **To Analyse the Intention of Malaysian Young Adults Using Social Dating Applications During the Pandemic**

The intention of using social dating applications might be varied from person to person. This is due to the fact the Uses and Gratifications theory has explained the importance of the audience in determining what is gratified out from medium (Egede & Chuks-Nwosu, 2013). Typically, gratification is defined as any self-professed pleasure obtained by users following any engagement with or utilization of online media (Lin & Chen, 2017). In this research, it is vital to explore user adoption behaviour, particularly the factors that drive the use of social dating applications. In order words, it is essential to comprehend why and how people seek out social dating applications to fulfil their needs especially during the pandemic period.



Through the analysis from Chapter 2, Sales & Lapowsky (2015) argued that social dating applications such as Tinder are widely labelled as “hookup apps” as users can easily interact with interested persons in their nearby neighbourhood while Wiederhold (2021) against the statement that users use social dating applications to find potential romantic partners and other types of social interaction due to a strong sense of isolation and boredom. This is also supported by Sumter et al. (2017) that users are often motivated by more than just hooking up when they utilised these social dating applications. Hence, this study discovered that most of the Malaysian young adults used social dating applications during the pandemic was because they are bored and seek for some sort of relationships such as friendships and romantic relationships, which proven to be aligned with the studies of Wiederhold (2021) and Sumber et al. (2017). However, as explained by Sales & Lapowsky (2015), few individuals still believed that users on social dating applications are hunting for hookups during the pandemic. Therefore, the researchers have concluded that the majority of Malaysian young adults seek emotional bonds and social connections to alleviate their loneliness rather than looking for hookups that put their health at risk.

On the other hand, in regarding the informants’ own intention to use social dating applications during the pandemic, the informants have reflected their perception concerning their intention to use social dating applications based on their needs and wants. This study determined that users of social dating applications wanted to secure a romantic relationship during the pandemic since they were lonely and hoping for something serious via social dating applications. As such, it is aligned with Pietromonaco & Overall (2020) stated that the pandemic creates a sense of loss in interpersonal forums that reduce the quality of life with unmet individual needs. Hence,

according to Joshi et al. (2020) as mentioned in Chapter 2, individuals desire emotional attachments where dating encounters are a pleasant way to meet that need. Meanwhile, this study also found that users were bored and wanted to make new friends on social dating applications since they were looking for some human engagements during the pandemic. It is aligned with the studies of Odekerken-Schröder et al. (2020) and Kar (2020) as many limitations prevented to build up physical connections and felt isolated without emotional support during the lockdown, which has led to an increase in the use of social dating applications to overcome social loneliness.

Additionally, Shapiro et al. (2017) claimed that those who are in committed relationships started using social dating applications as it is not just singles who own the privileged to do so. Alexopoulos et al. (2020) as mentioned in Chapter 2 has explained that user's intention to commit infidelity where people who met their romantic partner on a social dating app will be more willing to seek for another possible relationship even if they are already in a committed relationship. While both Tinder and Baituljannah considered as social dating application, users especially married men on Baituljannah can openly find their second up to the fourth wife under Sharia regulations (Zawawi, 2018). Hence, to validate the statements of Alexopoulos et al. (2020) and Zawawi (2018), this study shown that some users will continue to use social dating applications since their faith enables them to have polyamorous marriages and it is legal and follows Sharia law. However, this study also indicated that majority of those in favour of not continue to use social dating applications while in a relationship was because to give their partner a sense of trust and also assurance to avoid their partner from overthinking, which contradicts the idea of continuing to use social dating applications while in a relationship. Therefore, the researchers may assume that tolerance of using

social dating applications while in a relationship among Malaysian young adults is low and is dependent on the user's self-control and religious background.

In regarding the usage frequency of social dating applications during the pandemic, the study noticed that users' usage on social dating applications have increased to use on a daily basis due to boredom and need for some social interactions, which against the statement by Daniel Adam et al. (2020) by claiming that the usage of social dating applications is low during the pandemic. Furthermore, the study shown that usage on social dating applications increased during the pandemic was because boredom led to desire social interactions to fulfill personal needs such friendships, romantic relationships and seeking emotional bonds, instead of looking for sexual encounters in the midst of MCO, and health concerns. Different motives in using social dating applications are important to discover the consequences behind it (Welch & Morgan, 2018). Therefore, the researchers concluded that motivated behaviour may altered as a consequence of new barriers to human connections, in which could influence the behaviour people hold concerning social dating applications.

Despite the fact that the emergence of social dating applications has drastically changed the dating scene, especially during the pandemic period, Daniel Adam et al. (2020), Balan et al. (2021) and Müller (2021) as mentioned in Chapter 2 argued that the Malaysian young adults still prefer to find their partners through traditional approaches due to low acceptance, inappropriate for their culture to use and not ready or do not believe in using online dating applications to meet and form relationships. In this study, it is consistent with the scholars mentioned above as social

dating applications were not their first choice for finding potential partners because individuals prefer to get to know someone in person so that they can learn about their true personality and appearance. They felt that users who use social dating applications can falsify their identity by uploading a fake profile picture and giving incorrect personal information, or that they just do not trust the applications.

Nevertheless, the research conducted by Abubakar et al. (2020) led researchers to assume that there is a significant number of Malaysians still prioritising using social dating applications. However, this study found an insufficient sample size to support that social dating applications will be the primary choice for finding possible partners. In this study, the number of individuals who disagreed with the notion of using social dating applications while in a relationship far outnumbered those who agreed. Among the individuals who prioritising social dating application to find the partners, the reason provided was because social dating applications increased chances of finding potential partners, and would return to social dating apps if manage to lose the current relationship or needed to find a second marriage. To summarise it, the researchers have agreed that the majority of Malaysian young adults do not trust social dating applications to help them discover possible partners because of the unknown background of the person they matchup with and potential risks of the relationship created.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

The researchers were restricted from meeting each other in order to conduct the research together, as this research is being conducted by a group of students for their Final Year Project (FYP). Even

though the researchers utilised digital resources, it was still difficult for them to conduct this research because meeting online has its own set of challenges. One of the challenges that the researchers faced was a communication barrier during online meetings, which led to miscommunication. Miscommunication would not have occurred if the meeting had been held in person rather than online, but that was one of the challenges that the researchers had to face due to the limitations that have occurred in conducting this research.

Furthermore, another limitation encountered while conducting the research was locating suitable informants to participate in this study. This study has targeted a specific demographic to be interviewed, and due to the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is difficult to find participants who are willing to discuss their dating history in an online dating application. This is due to the fact that dating apps are used for more than just finding a lifelong partner. In this day and age, online dating users use it as a hook-up culture as well. Some informants may feel awkward in answering detailed questions about their dating life. As a result, this is yet another limitation of this study.

Another limitation in terms of the specific demographic targeted are Baituljannah users. It was more difficult to find informants from Baituljannah than it was to obtain informants from Tinder. Apart from Baituljannah being a dating app that is more popular among Muslims, the interface of the app differs from Tinder in the sense that Tinder is easier to access with its swiping medium to connect with someone, whereas in Baituljannah, a set of questions and registration is required to communicate with the people in the app. Baituljannah is a more serious dating

application compared to Tinder, which limits the research when it comes to approaching informants from the Baituljannah application. In conclusion, even with the emergence of obstacles and limitations in this research, the limitations help the researchers to conduct the research more effectively and thoroughly.

## **5.5 Contributions**

This research benefits other scholars who are interested to conduct future studies related to the impacts of social dating applications among young adults. This research comprehended the users' behaviour in engaging social dating applications especially their communication needs during the pandemic. Throughout this study, the researchers found that many users of social dating applications were not aware about the existence of Baituljannah as it only serves the Muslims community. There are also limited studies related to Baituljannah as not much existing literatures had conducted similar studies related to the related topic. Hence, this contributed a new field of study whereby future researcher who are keen to conduct related interest can adopt this research and further develop research that would probe into this new finding.

The findings of this study also differ from the secondary data analysed in Chapter 2. As this research was one of the early studies on exploring the impacts of social dating applications on relationships during the Covid-19 pandemic among Malaysian young adults, it focused on Tinder

and Baituljannah where the second application is still a fresh topic in the market. In this regard, the researcher also found a new normal among social dating applications users during the pandemic in terms of the hook-up culture. In this study, as the informants expressed to have greater needs and desire of sexual encounters especially when in isolation, they still showed a sense of reluctance and hesitation due to different health concerns. In the previous chapter, despite there were informants who held open-minded attitude towards the interaction, most of them still refused to proceed further when being invited by other parties met on social dating applications. Thus, this brings out a field of interest which is to explore the sexual desire of social dating applications during the isolation period.

Aside from this, the research framework was also answered efficiently where the findings did accomplish the conceptual framework stated in Chapter 2. The researchers enhanced that this research aimed to explore the intention of social dating applications users to engage in social dating applications and seek for relationships. By adopting the Uses and Gratifications Theory, the researchers secured and analysed the gratifications obtained by the informants. The researchers found out that social dating applications did aid in fulfilling user gratifications in human interactions. This can be proven by Karimi et al (2014) as the internet and social media have enabled two-way communication to the audiences where now delivering and receiving functions are developed between the media and its users. In other words, their gratifications are obtained by using social dating applications.

## 5.6 Suggestions

The summary of results obtained has showed that various causes has been indicated by the user to use different dating applications other than Tinder and Baituljannah. However, this study did disclose a new revelation, which is a social dating application called Bumble. Due to the obvious vast range of responses, this research focuses on Tinder and Baituljannah dating applications, and the users of social dating applications' feedback resulted in a new finding, which is another dating application called Bumble. This study found that the users of this social dating application called Bumble are more likely to utilise Bumble rather than Tinder, therefore, this research can be serve as a starting point for any further research into the Bumble dating application.

This research can be a guide for future users of the dating app, particularly users of the Baituljannah dating app, to better grasp what the platform is all about. Baituljannah is a new muslim-friendly dating app for which not much research has been conducted. As a result, this research can serve to further gain a better understanding of this application, allowing Baituljannah dating app users to get a head start on starting to use this application.

Therefore, there are different grey areas for the authors to analyse deeper. Including this research suggestion on utilising the framework provided to be extended by researchers that wants to do similar research.



## 5.7 Conclusion

In response to the two research objectives in this study, several impacts on relationships and differences of intention using social dating application during the pandemic were found between Tinder and Baituljannah users. Variety of selections, the descriptions of personal information and application settings were the common answers shown in this study that affected individuals to develop a relationship. In terms of romantic relationship, this study showed the social dating applications had a significant impact on the formation of romantic relationships due to the need for safety, lacking of sharing of emotional well-being, and the absence of positive reinforcement from the immediate environment. Furthermore, result obtained showed that users of social dating applications were hesitant to engage in sexual acts due to health concerns and potential risks to be extended by Covid-19 pandemic, which indicated when various conditions and worries emerge, online behaviour on social dating apps may change, despite the fact that their behaviours were planned to fulfil a certain affection need. Also, friendship forming was the most common activity on social dating applications.

In regarding of intention using social dating applications during the pandemic, seek for some sort of relationships such as friendships and romantic relationships were the common answers due to boredom, loneliness and need for affection crave, which indirectly caused the usage of social dating application increased. In additions, the result shown that due to low tolerance and to give their partner a sense of trust to avoid their partner overthinking, using social dating applications while in a relationship was unfavourable. And finally, this study indicated that users do not trust social dating applications and prefer meet someone in person since there are numerous

possible risks, which reduces their appetite to discover potential partners through social dating application.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I

#### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hi (name), I'm (name) , your interviewer and these are my groupmates. Before we start the pilot study/interview, we'd like to inform you that the session will be recorded for data collection, however all information you provided will be kept confidential by the principal investigator and the research team and will not be made available to the public. Data and answers from the study will not identify you individually. The data and answer may be published or be reused for research purposes not detailed within this consent form.

Please be noted that your identity and name will not be disclosed.

\*The interviewee will be addressed as Mr/Ms.\*

Address the purpose of the interview

Are you aware of dating applications in Malaysia such as Tinder and Baituljannah?

Are you an active user of either two applications mentioned?

How did you come across the mentioned dating applications?

How long have you been using the mentioned dating applications?

**RQ1: What is the impact of dating applications on relationships among young adults?**

#### User Experience

Q1: How do you find the dating application you are/were using? (Tinder/Baituljannah)

**(Personal experiences - good or bad)**

### **Affiliated Relationship**

Q2: Are you currently in a relationship? Ya

(Yes - how/where did you encounter your current love interest/partner)

1. Social dating applications?
2. Physical

(No - have you ever been in a relationship with someone you met on social dating applications?)

### **Casual Relationship**

Q2: Are you sexually active now?

(Yes - how/where did you encounter your sexual partner/experience)

1. Social dating applications?
2. Physical

(No - have you ever been in a casual relationship with someone you met on social dating applications?)

### **Family Relationship**

Q2: Are you friends with someone you met on social dating applications?

(Yes - how did you become close friends with them through social dating applications?)

(No - why/what are the reasons that stopped you from making friendships through social dating applications?)

### **User Engagement (Affiliated Relationships)**

Q3. How long did the relationship last? (long-term/short-term, on-going?)

### **User Engagement (Casual Relationships)**

Q3. How long did the fling last? (on-going?)

### **User Engagement (Family Relationships)**

Q3. How long have you been friends with them? (on-going?)

### **User Accessibility (Ease of Use)**

Q4. As a user of social dating applications (Tinder/Baituljannah), why is it helpful for you to match and click with someone of interest compared to knowing people physically?

### **User Accessibility (Perceptions of Utility)**

Q5. As a user of social dating applications (Tinder/Baituljannah), what attracts you to be engaged in the application that you find more convenient and effective compared to physical dating? (provided different settings from the interface)

Q6. Do you still go on social dating applications when you are in a relationship?

Yes - the current/past relationship?

i. What if you find someone who is interesting in social dating applications but you are in

a relationship? Which one would you choose and give up on?

No - i. Do any of yours do that?

ii. Would you still consider using it if you have got a partner?

### **RQ2: What is the intention of young adults using dating applications during the pandemic?**

Q5: Do you use social dating applications more frequently than usual during the pandemic?

Q6: What is your intention/what is your reason for using social dating applications during the pandemic?

Reasons vary - Do you go on the application when you are lonely?

Q7: Why do you think your usage of social dating applications increased during the pandemic?

Q8: Is it normal for you to look for romantic partners via social dating applications during the pandemic?

i. What about people around you?

ii. What do you think about the new normal for dating during the pandemic?

## Clean Transcript

### Transcription 1

**Researcher:** Okay. So, when it comes to dating, have you ever used any dating application that are very common nowadays?

**Interviewee 1:** Yes, I have used a couple of dating applications. Mostly Bumble or Tinder.

**Researcher:** Okay Bumble and Tinder. But why? Because there are still many other dating applications right, why Tinder and Bumble?

**Interviewee 1:** (Thinking) I tend to find people on Tinder or Bumble to be around. The people that I find similar to me (thinking) as opposed to Tantan and other dating applications.

**Researcher:** Okay. I am aware that Tantan is a dating application from China. You think that the people on Tantan are not really similar as you?

**Interviewee 1:** (Thinking) Yes, the people that use Tantan (smiling) are not the people that I want to date.

**Researcher:** What do you mean by that?

**Interviewee 1:** (Deep thinking) I think the interface and the way that Tantan is structured, (sighed) it kind of dissuades me from joining because it's very Chinese based, and I'm not looking to mix with them.

**Researcher:** You mean Chinese educated people?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah. I can say that I guess.

**Researcher:** But there are also people from different backgrounds on Tantan right, even they do speak Chinese.

**Interviewee 1:** (Smiling) Yeah that's true (firmly) but I think Tantan caters towards that demographic more than other demographics (hesitating) in my experience.

**Researcher:** Which means that you also tried using Tantan but it's just not for you?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, I tried a couple times but the people I meet there is not the people that I would like (laughed).

**Researcher:** What about Tinder? Because maybe you are more English based so you'd like to find people who are coming from the same or similar background as you, but on Tinder there could also be people who match with you with similar interests but they are just like the people from Tantan? It could be that right?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah (thinking but uninterested to continue).

**Researcher:** So, what makes it different than from Tinder than Tantan?

**Interviewee 1:** (Deep thinking) I think Tinder is more like there's more people on Tinder than (thinking) any other dating applications out there. (Paused) So, it's quite famous I think compared to other dating applications. So, in that way, there's a lot of selection (smiled), there's a lot of people as compared to yeah. I think some applications cater to other demographics you know.

**Researcher:** You mean Tinder has a bigger audience selection. So, you prefer Tinder because it helps the chances of meeting more people are higher?

**Interviewee 1:** (Agreed and nodded) I mean yes, I guess.

**Researcher:** Alright, so you're actually using Tinder to meet more people?

**Interviewee 1:** I mean when I was in Sarawak, Bumble was dead there because nobody used Bumble in Kuching, and a lot of people used Tinder there. So, when I was on Bumble, (smiled) there was very few people, like 5 people. When I was on another dating application, like Tinder there was a lot more people in Kuching.

**Researcher:** It can also be concluded that because Tinder is more well-known that's why more people use it, even you were in Kuching

**Interviewee 1:** (Agreed and nodded) Yeah.

**Researcher:** Sorry don't mind me asking, how did you get to know Tinder? Is it through friends?

**Interviewee 1:** I think through popular media, if I don't remember.

**Researcher:** Advertising?

**Interviewee 1:** No, I think maybe it was, reading up online or watching video cause I'm not sure. It's been a long time.

**Researcher:** Is it like you looked through via Instagram reels or whatever and people on Tinder, was it something like that from social media?

**Interviewee 1:** I think that's a long time, maybe it was 9GAG actually. That was long time ago.

**Researcher:** Also, maybe Tinder is more international so we can see sometimes it appears on memes also. What about Tinder or Tantan?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh yeah, I have friends suggest to me Bumble and Tantan.

**Researcher:** Which means your circle of friends they're more leaning to Tantan and Bumble?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, I have friends that preferred Tantan and friends that prefer different ones.

**Researcher:** Okay, it is more of a personal preference. When did you start using Tinder?

**Interviewee 1:** (Thinking hard) I think 18 because it was like I heard about it and I downloaded it (laughed).

**Researcher:** It's like a new thing to us when we're fresh out of high school right. But then you were trying it out for? Because you know, Tinder is very commonly used for sexual hook-ups or even meeting people if you're looking for something serious, or you're not serious. So, your intention when you were 18 was that you wanted to try anything?

**Interviewee 1:** I was pretty open but like I didn't get any matches for a very long when I was on Tinder. But it was just like a thing me and my friends were like "check your Tinder", and we were just like swiped each other for fun, we were not particularly serious about, like "oh I'm going to find my wife here one day, we're going to grow old", no, we don't think anything like that.

**Researcher:** It was more like trying out the settings, the interface.

**Interviewee 1:** It was like a game... it was like a game.

**Researcher:** So, you're just trying to get reaction out of that? Just trying to know what is the big fuss about that?

**Interviewee 1:** I think it was more like you're bored, nothing to do, no entertainment, and just like pull up Tinder, and it's like "eh swipe your friends" and just checked out like it's the same person we just swiped right on (laughed).

**Researcher:** Talking about being bored, did you use it often in the pandemic? Like how often did you go there?

**Interviewee 1:** Everyday maybe (unsure)? Because during pandemic time, I had a couple of people that I was talking to on Tinder. So, I just talked to them during pandemic even though it was kind of boring, because there was not much to talk about.

**Researcher:** But why is that? Like I'm sure you have a lot of friends but why you choose to be in Tinder?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, meeting people is always fun, I enjoy meeting people.

**Researcher:** You said you were just bored when you were 18 and you downloaded tinder. It was like a game to you, you weren't really looking for anything specific. And compared to now, you're still using it right?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh no.

**Researcher:** I mean pandemic, right?

**Interviewee 1:** Pandemic, yeah.

**Researcher:** You were in Kuching and it's the same because you were also bored, so what is the difference compared to when you were bored at 18 versus in pandemic?

**Interviewee 1:** I don't think it changed that much? But it was just something to pass the time from meeting people because I enjoyed meeting people when I was bored (laughed).

**Researcher:** Which means like you were in Kuching, and you were isolated, that's why you wanted to meet new people online? And if your intention is just to build new connections, right? It has to be done online. So, what's the difference? Just talk to your friends, your actual friends online since you can do that. Also, if you're bored, right? Why? Yeah, yeah. Why do you have to go on Tinder?

**Interviewee 1:** I don't think there's a comparison to be drawn between talking to friends and talking to people on Tinder. Because one is meeting new people and one is talking to people you already know. So, it's not the same as talking to people.

**Researcher:** Okay so talking about meeting new people, have you met anyone during the pandemic, like online?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah.

**Researcher:** You mentioned that you talked to a couple of people right back. Yeah. So, it was all there, or in the same place, as you?

**Interviewee 1:** No, in the radius, I guess? Around Kuching, Kuching is not very big. So, yeah.

**Researcher:** Yeah, but what do you usually talk to them? Like, how do you classify? Yeah, initiate a friendship? Because sometimes people could approach you with other intentions, right?

**Interviewee 1:** Usually, I would comment regarding something in their bio or their picture like, "Oh, that's really nice dress" or "Wow, you look really nice". Or, you know, "Oh, you dance too I dance too and we can connect on that". I think it's nice to give compliments. But sometimes, no matter what you say, the person will not apply. So, it's fine.

**Researcher:** Okay, yeah. I do have one question. You use Tinder and Bumble. Right? Because the specs are different, right? In Tinder and Bumble. In Tinder, normally guys start first. But on Bumble, the girls have to start first, right? So, which one would you prefer? Tinder or Bumble? In terms of?

**Interviewee 1:** I prefer Bumble.

**Researcher:** You do? Cause you don't have to take the first step?

**Interviewee 1:** Yes. And second, it takes up pressure you know, if the girl doesn't want to talk to you, she just won't to talk to you, you know, it's not it's like, okay, it's gone bye-bye.

**Researcher:** You just got ghosted, like right instantly.



**Interviewee 1:** And it's fine, you know. There's nothing there's no pressure.

**Researcher:** But then what if some people you like you match with each other, and they approach you and they don't want just to be friends with you? They want more. Would you ghost them or anything?

**Interviewee 1:** I mean, it always depends on the situation, I wouldn't be like if I like the person back, then it would mean a different thing. But if I don't like that person back then I would choose to say, "Oh, I'm not looking for this". Or like, "I don't see, I don't see us being a thing in the future". I mean, communication is always there, you can always just tell the person, you know, it's better to let them down now than later.

**Researcher:** Which means that you are actually open to being more than friends if you are interested in that also?

**Interviewee 1:** Of course, of course. I don't set hardlines on myself. I don't.

**Researcher:** Yeah. Because you know why? Some people, they do go on dating apps, but they will limit themselves with these boundaries. Like, I'm not looking for anything serious. I just want to talk to people. But yeah, things will always happen. You know, it when it happens, it happens. So, what do you think about it? Like, because you use both Tinder and Bumble, back, right? So, you prefer which one more?

**Interviewee 1:** I think I prefer Bumble more. I think the demographic on Bumble somehow is more of my type compared to Tinder. Last time I use it for some reason, I don't know. The people I met on Bumble, I can talk better with than on Tinder.

**Researcher:** Is this because of the quality? Would it be?

**Interviewee 1:** It might be, it might be because it goes up to initiate conversations first, might be? I'm not sure (laughed).

**Researcher:** So, what are your criteria of matching with people? Like what can make you swipe right?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, of course nice pictures. Of course, a decent bio, you know. I mean, I don't think I have high standards to match with people. But I do think that I have like somewhat of a sense that like, yeah.

**Researcher:** What do you mean? Like pictures and bio?

**Interviewee 1:** Something that is like interesting, not something basic. Like if I know you copy a quote off somewhere. I know you copied lyrics off somewhere. It's basic or a line from a TV show (laughed), it's basic.

**Researcher:** What if the girl looking at her pictures? Like you like the pictures, but her bio is just like "I love dogs. I'm a dog person". What about that?

**Interviewee 1:** If her pictures have dogs inside then it makes sense. If pictures no dogs and I'm like... (laughed).

**Researcher:** I do have a question. This is more of a comparison between Tinder and Bumble. Would you agree in my statement, if I say that Tinder is more on hook-ups rather than a real relationship?

**Interviewee 1:** I think a lot of guys, and maybe some girls go on Tinder to specifically have hook-ups. That's what I get the impression whereas Bumble is less known, and I feel like only bad impression. If you're on Tinder, you're there to get hook-ups, you are always there to get hook-ups. So that's like, I think the general idea of Tinder, the brand, compared to Bumble.

**Researcher:** So, like I said, this is this recording is confidential, honestly speaking, are you in the application because maybe your DTF or maybe you're looking for let's say if someone, a girl is approaching you saying that okay, I'm DTF. Would you go?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah.

**Researcher:** Definitely? Alright. So, yeah, like in your perception will be more on casual hook-ups, and so on.

**Interviewee 1:** I guess it works, you know, but I never hold myself to like that standard because I knew it could be for more but it's not really my main goal. I guess. I don't really have a main goal when doing this kind of things.

**Researcher:** Alright, so definitely you're not looking for something serious creating these dating applications?

**Interviewee 1:** I guess so.

**Researcher:** But okay, but if it happens, you don't mind right if you are also interested?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, (thinking hard) I think I go into dating apps with like an idea of like, okay, it's just for a while, but then when something real happens and you fall hard for someone that you just decided, maybe I changed my rules and I want I decided to be in relationship with this person, you know? And then you kind of just tell yourself that "oh, you know what, it's okay", you know?

**Researcher:** Yeah, but did it happen before?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, a couple of times.

**Researcher:** From Tinder?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah.

**Researcher:** Okay. So how are the relationships?

**Interviewee 1:** This was with my ex, that I reconnected. No, not only my ex I met on Tinder. This was my ex ex, two exes ago. We had over a year of relationship together, but it didn't work out in

the end. And with my other ex, we had about three months before we had to do LDR. And we couldn't take any more. So, we called it quit. And now if my current girlfriend where yeah, we're still together. And we met on dating app.

**Researcher:** Oh, you met your girlfriend via social dating application?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah.

**Researcher:** Bumble?

**Interviewee 1:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So, when did you start using Bumble?

**Interviewee 1:** I don't remember. But this was a couple years after Tinder when I think one of my friends introduced me, but I don't remember when. I think maybe 2018? I think? 2019. I'm not sure.

**Researcher:** But then in the same year, or even after the year you started using Bumble, you still managed to build relationships, or romantic relationship with your exes through Bumble. Bumble wasn't a thing for you back in that time?

**Interviewee 1:** I guess back then Bumble wasn't the people that I remember. But wasn't that but then now I guess the demographic changed maybe? I'm not sure (giggled).

**Researcher:** You do have other relationships that happen in real life, right? Not meeting them on dating apps?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh yeah. But this was before I started using dating apps. I mean, once I started dating apps, I think... (hesitating).

**Researcher:** You don't meet people physically attractive to you anymore?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh no, it's just like, I find like the whole point of meeting someone that you don't know, very daunting, you know? And especially if they don't shout out to you that they are single, and they want to meet up, you know, they are looking for something. It's like, should I talk to this person, and they'll be offended if I talk to them or something? So, it's not really Malaysian culture to talk to random people, talk to strangers and be like, "Hi, are you single?" Because it's gonna be really weird. I feel, especially for me, I don't think I'm very attractive (laughed).

**Researcher:** But what if, by that, you mean like, meeting people physically? Because you are interested is not very your thing, because it's like a wrong long process to you. And you always have to do is like playing a game?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah, of course. It's like gambling. But I find my chances on Tinder better.

**Researcher:** Why is online meeting people turns out, making your relationship building much better?

**Interviewee 1:** Because if you're online that means you're open to talking to me. If you're on the app means you're open to talking to people. At least that's what you tell if you're on the app, you want to talk to people, or else you won't be on or you won't be matching with me in the first place.

**Researcher:** You want something straight to the point?

**Interviewee 1:** No, no, it's not straight to the point more like it feels like I'm not intruding on the private space. You know, when I talk to someone in your life, it's like, "who are you? Why are you talking to me?" You know, and I don't want to be that guy that like traumatises a girl because I just wanted to know her, you know? I mean, I have a lot of friends which are girls, and they get really agitated whenever random people talk to them, or like, catcalled or whatever, you know. So, it's always like, I don't want to be that guy (laughed). So, I think it's okay to have crushes on people. It's okay to talk to my if you have, you know them. But if you don't know...

**Researcher:** It's like, everything starts from zero. It's very hard.

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah (agreed). And you're going to be that guy in one of the stories where it's like, "this dude came up to me, he's such a creepy", and I don't want to be that guy.

**Researcher:** Okay, but what about during the pandemic? You were building connections on Tinder and Bumble, right? You didn't encounter any experience, like you said, some girls find you the way you talk, it's just not up to their expectations?

**Interviewee 1:** I mean, if they didn't like the way I talked they would just stop talking to me, and I would get the signal and be like, Okay, that's fine.

**Researcher:** Okay, but were you in a relationship by in the pandemic?

**Interviewee 1:** No, I was single (laughed).

**Researcher:** So, you mentioned that you were trying to talk to new people. You were isolated. So, you go on very often.

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, I think daily to check many chat messages.

**Researcher:** In that case, did you build up any rare friendship with people on Tinder?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah many (laughed). All of them are still following me on Instagram now.

**Researcher:** You guys hang out?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, not a lot. But sometimes we do meet each other (laughed). So, nothing turned out. But we still follow each other and talk to each other every now and then, like, reply to each other stories and still talk to each other.

**Researcher:** So, it's like you think the connection is good as a friend? You exchange your socials, but then you guys never hang out at all?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yes. Yeah.

**Researcher:** But this was when in during the pandemic. You know, because if you're using Tinder or Bumble, we have this distance that you would know where a person is from and everything during the pandemic. Do you swipe the people that is closer to you?

**Interviewee 1:** Based on distance because due to my situation in Sarawak, I didn't have a car. So, I didn't really care about the distance and I never met with anybody, I never decided to meet with anybody. Because you know, I'm scared. I live in a house of 10 people. And I didn't want to endanger any of them during a pandemic time.

**Researcher:** You guys were just talking why frequently on Tinder but not meeting.

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah. We were just like talking throughout the day, because I really stuck at home.

**Researcher:** You mentioned that you're currently in a relationship right.

**Interviewee 1:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Okay. So, don't mind if I ask is this current relationship is formed through the social dating app or physically?

**Interviewee 1:** We met through social dating apps, Bumble.

**Researcher:** Is that during the pandemic or?

**Interviewee 1:** I mean is now still considered as the pandemic?

**Researcher:** Yes.

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, I met her in December actually (laughed). Early December or mid-December, I'm not sure. Yeah. We just talked online.

**Researcher:** Before this current girlfriend, do you have other relationship during the pandemic?

**Interviewee 1:** Not any, I wasn't dating anybody. Situation-ships? That's what I called.

**Researcher:** It's like the talking stage.

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah. We were like warming up to each other but like it didn't form into anything serious. So, it's like, we just stopped at that point.

**Researcher:** It's a sense of comfort, right? Situation-ships.

**Interviewee 1:** What do you mean by that?

**Researcher:** Maybe you talk every day for a sense of comfort, maybe you video call every day, that kind of situation like we have nothing, but we have something.

**Interviewee 1:** Oh no. We had something but it just didn't work out at the end of the day. It didn't become like we're boyfriend and girlfriend.

**Researcher:** Do you think that affects your current relationship because of your dating experiences in the dating app?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh yeah. I think dating many people will help you realise what you like what you don't like. Are you asking my current girlfriend has any issue with me dating people in the past?

**Researcher:** No, I'm asking maybe your preference has changed because of your experience in dating applications before, for you to lead to your current girlfriend.

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, I think after meeting a bunch of people I realised the type of people that I would like to be in a relationship with.

**Researcher:** So, it is based on your experience in dating application that you have formed? Like your relationship right now is also formed through application.

**Interviewee 1:** Yes.

**Researcher:** You mentioned situation-ships, that happened before the pandemic?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah.

**Researcher:** These people you met on Tinder?

**Interviewee 1:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So, once pandemic happened, until last year you met your current girlfriend via Bumble, basically Tinder is not contributing anything to you because you met your current girlfriend on another app?

**Interviewee 1:** Yes, I think for like a stretch of time, I stopped talking to people on Tinder. (Sighed) I mean I talked to a couple of them, but they didn't turn out to be interesting.

**Researcher:** So, if your past relationships which happened through Tinder happened before the pandemic, maybe we can elaborate more on that because I'm just curious that how many relationships you've had through Tinder?

**Interviewee 1:** Through Tinder, I think two?

**Researcher:** It must be a lot?

**Interviewee 1:** No, two (laughed) because I tried to figure out whether my second ex was from there or not because that was long time ago.

**Researcher:** Is it because it was a very short period so you don't know if you should count?

**Interviewee 1:** (Thinking) It counts but like it's just a long time ago. Did we meet online? No, we didn't meet online. But we also found each other on Tinder at one point and decided to date afterwards.

**Researcher:** The longest relationship you've had on Tinder, how long did it last?

**Interviewee 1:** I think for me it was one year.

**Researcher:** What about the shortest one?

**Interviewee 1:** 3 months? But is it 3 months? I don't remember (laughed).

**Researcher:** Out of curiosity, did you go for hook-ups on Tinder?

**Interviewee 1:** On Tinder, no I would go but I don't think Tinder had any...

**Researcher:** During the pandemic?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah earlier this year... yeah, I have (laughed).

**Researcher:** Before your relationship, right?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, of course.

**Researcher:** So, it was like, you were in Kuching?

**Interviewee 1:** Yes. This was before pandemic sorry. So, I'm kind of confused now (thinking). This was before pandemic, I went hook up before pandemic, during pandemic I didn't went any until I got vaccinated, then I felt okay to go out.

**Researcher:** Because you just mentioned that you were in Kuching, you didn't want to meet with the new friends that you met on Tinder because you were worried to endanger the other people's life, right? Yeah, we thought that but then hook up is okay?

**Interviewee 1:** No! (Laughed) hook up was before the pandemic. I just realised because I was thinking did we wear masks during that time? We didn't wear masks so it wasn't in the pandemic.

**Researcher:** What about after the vaccine and all, before your relationship?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah. After I got vaccination, I was stuck in KL for the majority of my time.

**Researcher:** Don't mind me asking, like normally in the social media applications, who initiated the hook-ups first in your experience?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, usually I don't do anything (laughed) because I don't want to come off as a guy who only want... I'll usually like wait for them to drop hints. So, if like the hint is like, "oh, I need you to come fix a pipe in my house or something".

**Researcher:** Honestly?

**Interviewee 1:** That before happened a couple of times, they asked me.

**Researcher:** It sounds like some plots.

**Interviewee 1:** (Laughed) Yeah I was like, “Oh, what are you doing? Oh, you want to come fix my pipe in my house?” I’m like “huh?”, it’s so bad. But it’s okay. But others just straight up, asked me whether I want to come over and I’m like, okay.

**Researcher:** Do you filter? Like, only two people that you find okay with?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah, of course. I mean, that’s the swiping stage.

**Researcher:** What if you guys have been talking only for one week, and she asked you to come fix her whatever. You okay with that?

**Interviewee 1:** It really depends whether I want to see her or not. So, if I don’t want to see her, I’ll be like, “oh, sorry. I’m kind of busy. And I’m not feeling you”.

**Researcher:** Have you ever ghosted people on social dating applications?

**Interviewee 1:** I think I have but at that point, the conversation was really dead. So, I don’t think so.

**Researcher:** So, you don’t usually ghost people first, unless you think that they don’t really want to talk to you anymore.

**Interviewee 1:** (Sighed) I always feel like they don’t want to talk to me. So, I don’t know. And that voice in my head is like, “oh, maybe she’s bored”. Yeah, unless they’re like show enthusiasm and talking to me every day and like, I’m like, “okay, you know, this person seems interested in”.

**Researcher:** So, you’re the type that, the other party they have to take the initiative. Constantly showing you that yeah, we are very invested.

**Interviewee 1:** I mean, I don’t want to put my energy in something that’s going to fail. I’ve been through a lot of heartbreaks before, so I don’t want to (laughed) be that guy. I don’t be that guy that’s like, “why don’t you love me?” (laughed). And it’s a dating app, so I feel like there’s not much investment in the first place.

**Researcher:** But wouldn’t it be at some point maybe you find yourself are kind of invested in this particular person? Like, you know, it’s different.

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, I mean, at that point already then it wouldn’t be like ghosting or just be a breakup. I just be like, “Oh, I’m sorry. I don’t think it worked out”.

**Researcher:** Okay, because you have shared a lot of different situation-ships on dating apps to us, right? And how all this eventually are gone. But like your girlfriend, you guys met on Bumble, how is it? Was it your girlfriend who was taking the initiative all the time? Or was it you?



**Interviewee 1:** It depends. I think we kind of split 50/50 at that part. Because you kind of feel that person wants to see you and you also want to talk to them. So, there's a feeling in the chat where you both want to see each other.

**Researcher:** I feel like it isn't easy for you to feel this strong.

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah. Stuff like this. It's hard to come.

**Researcher:** So, what about the other friendships you have formed before pandemic? Is there any?

**Interviewee 1:** I mean usually is I would find them attractive and maybe interesting to talk to. But after talking to them, I feel like we have no zero chemistry or friends kind of chemistry. Like there's no initiative to do anything more than that.

**Researcher:** Okay. So, you remain friends? But because like you said, the chances are not high meeting people you find special and eventually want to go to another stage with them. Right. So probably a lot of them turn into friends. But you also mentioned there are also some good friends. How do you classify that? Because some would be like failed talking stage so we become friends instead? Some will be like, yeah, it's a really good friend. Yeah, so, how do you?

**Interviewee 1:** I mean (thinking) I'm not sure (confused). I think it's just a general feeling. When you after you have gone on a couple of like dates, or like outings with the person, and just say like, the person doesn't show interest well then just doing stuff together. You know, like, playing pool together or getting food, then you kind of can tell that she's friend-zoning you or something. So, at that point, just stop pursuing.

**Researcher:** I have another question. You know you can set the gender you're interested in on dating app. You set it both genders or only female?

**Interviewee 1:** I'm straight so I go for female. On Bumble you can do best friends which is quite cool.

**Researcher:** I feel like from talking to you, you're quite a reserved person. I don't know. You sound like it. But then was it really useful or helpful in a way for you to match and click with someone of interest compared to knowing people physically even if it's just being friends?

**Interviewee 1;** What you mean useful?

**Researcher:** Like you prefer which way?

**Interviewee 1:** I definitely prefer meeting people online.

**Researcher:** Why?

**Interviewee 1:** Because of the pandemic (laughed), but other than pandemic I don't get a lot of opportunity to always meet new people. Like the activities that I do there are always with close knit circle of people that I already know and I already know for years. If I go to school or like I don't go to school because I don't go to uni anymore or I go to work, also work is within like a

circle of people. And you don't always get the chance to meet new people. Yeah, so online always like that. Ways to just meet new people from different circles

**Researcher:** Also, because it kind of limits our social interaction during this pandemic. Okay, do you still have social dating app in your phone right now since you're in a relationship?

**Interviewee 1:** I deleted everything (laughed).

**Researcher:** Wow you're loyal person then.

**Interviewee 1:** No, I mean the bar is on the floor (laughed).

**Researcher:** I mean, there's a lot of research going on and some people just say like, "Yeah, I do still have the application, but I hide it". So, I mean, we're being honest here. It's confidential. Yeah. It's like people are still constantly looking for something better maybe.

**Interviewee 1:** No (disagreed).

**Researcher:** Maybe just curious, something like that?

**Interviewee 1:** I have a lot of friends on Tinder, I met through Tinder. So, if they ever see me on Tinder, they get screenshots and show my girlfriend.

**Researcher:** That's the reason you're not using it anymore?

**Interviewee 1:** I'm not using it because I don't feel the need to use anymore.

**Researcher:** I have this question. I know how Tinder works. And also Bumble works. So, Tinder, if you delete you have the option to pause your account. Do you delete it? Or do you pause your account?

**Interviewee 1:** You can do that? (Laughed)

**Researcher:** Yeah, you can do that now.

**Interviewee 1:** You mean like delete all your info right. I know about that one. But what's pausing?

**Researcher:** Pausing is like you want to take a break from Tinder or Bumble for a while. So, you pause your account, so people can't see your account but the matches stay.

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, no, I just I just deleted the app. And I didn't bother doing anything else.

**Researcher:** So, it means that your profile is still on, you know?

**Interviewee 1:** It is? Oh, yeah.

**Researcher:** So yeah, that's the thing. If you want to delete the app, you have to log out of the account and delete the account instead of deleting the applications. So, you're on Bumble and Tinder. Anyway, do you delete the app every time when you establish a relationship?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, yeah of course.

**Researcher:** You just established yourself as a loyal person. You deleted the application. You did not deactivate your social?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, I didn't deactivate it.

**Researcher:** Okay. But then you think it's a bare minimum to stay loyal to your girlfriend when you have one and not going on dating apps? You said there is no need to keep it.

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah.

**Researcher:** But why? What do you mean? Why you said that you don't find the need to keep it anymore? Because initially, you were using it just to talk to friends, like new friends. You could still do that right?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, but it's to make my girlfriend feel safe, I think it's worth it. Because she feels insecure if I'm out here talking to random people and like leading people on, it's not for me, so it's like for her. I feel like if I make her feel okay, then I'm okay also.

**Researcher:** Which means you guys talked about it. And you want to take care of her feelings. That's why?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah of course.

**Researcher:** Okay. random question. What if we are just making up a scenario, what if like you still keep it and one day your girlfriend finds out? Do you think what would be her reaction?

**Interviewee 1:** I think she would get mad at me, and she'll be like, "why are you still on Tinder in a relationship?" And fight will ensue as like, "why you're not loyal?" "what you're looking for?". But yeah, I think a lot of conversations about why are you still looking for new people and we have to communicate on like the terms of your relationship. Now, like what we want in a relationship.

**Researcher:** What about your past relationships? Like your exes, right? They were also insecure about it?

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah of course (laughed). they go on Tinder as well. So, they know the type of people that are on Tinder.

**Researcher:** I do have one question. So, do you think that many of the Malaysian youth, even though they are still in relationship, do you think they are still using the social dating application?

**Interviewee 1:** No. My friends? Not that I know. But I know people that use for their relationship, but mostly, it's not to meet people. It's mostly just to get more Instagram followers.

**Researcher:** Really? More Instagram followers?

**Interviewee 1:** Because I think when people are like, “Oh, I do have a boyfriend” but and then they put Instagram down there? And I'm like, I know people that they're not like together, but they are living together and doing everything together. But they are not together. And they're still on dating app. So, I think they just don't official liaise the situation.

**Researcher:** Or maybe they have not deactivated their account yet.

**Interviewee 1:** Maybe they're open (laughed)? have no idea. I don't know.

**Researcher:** When you said open, is it like if you're in a relationship and you just want to spice up your relationship and open to something new? Is that what you mean?

**Interviewee 1:** No. By open I mean polyamory, the idea of dating more than person at the same time.

**Researcher:** Yes. So, you're not a part for that.

**Interviewee 1:** I don't know why (laughed). I've never been in a situation where two people like me at the same time.

**Researcher:** Maybe you never know. If you ever, break up your current girlfriend right now, will you go back to social dating applications? Or would you just go for a physical one like someone that you already know?

**Interviewee 1:** No, I'll go back to social dating apps.

**Researcher:** You'll go back to social dating apps, because it works for you. It works better. Don't mind me asking, I can see that you're a bit self-cautious in a way. So, with this application, it just helps you to boost up your confidence.

**Interviewee 1:** (Thinking) I guess a bit yeah.

**Researcher:** Yes. A bit. Only a bit?

**Interviewee 1:** (Laughed) But I wouldn't say it's my main reason because that's kind of egotistical.

**Researcher:** Yeah. But, I mean technically, my point here is that you it boosts up your confidence in a way being on online dating application. Because you did mention just now you're not attractive. But, I mean, you're good. But the thing is, you mentioned just now, you think you're not attractive, so it's easier for you to be in dating application. Hence, that's why are you cautious? And it boosts up your confidence.

**Interviewee 1:** I mean, I'm not like stupid attractive, I'm not the kind of guy that you would like, walk into and be like, “Oh, my God, he's so hot”. I'm not that guy. I'm just like average. I can't go off to random people and be like, “Hi”. No, I can't wait for people to walk up to me as well. I think dating app is one of the ways that I can overcome that.

**Researcher:** Okay. Alright. But what if you have a girlfriend and your girlfriend says that she doesn't mind you continuing on, going on dating apps? Will you keep it? She doesn't mind at all. She said Yeah, it's fine.

**Interviewee 1:** I think being on a dating app is kind of counterintuitive (sighed), because if I'm on a dating app, people expect me to date people or at least talk to people. So, I don't want to lead the people on the dating app on as well. Yeah.

**Researcher:** Okay, okay.

**Interviewee 1:** Yeah, people had talked to me and they're like, "oh, sorry, I already have a girlfriend". It's like why are you on? If you're not looking for something new?

**Researcher:** Okay. Okay, that is like not giving any chances at all. Not to any people. I think we kind of got all the information we want. Yeah, we can wrap it up.

**Interviewee 1:** Any more questions?

**Researcher:** I yeah, I think that's all.

**Interviewee 1:** Okay.

Interviewee 1 signature:



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Date: 22/2/22

## **Transcription 2**

**Researcher:** When it comes to dating, have you ever used any social dating applications like Tinder, Bumble, or anything?

**Interviewee 2:** Yes, I have used Tinder and Bumble. (Answer calmly)

**Researcher:** Okay, Tinder and Bumble. How about other social dating applications like Tantan OK Cupid or Baituljannah, have you ever tried them before?

**Interviewee 2:** No. I tried Tantan once, but it did not work out.

**Researcher:** Why would you choose Tinder and Bumble when there are so many choices in the market?

**Interviewee 2:** Because they are the mainstream. Not many people know about OK Cupid and Tantan. When it comes to Tinder and Bumble, that's what everybody is using. You see the same people on Tinder or Bumble. They are the most widely used dating applications that everybody will go for. It is 2022, when you go through everybody's phone, there are Tinder and Bumble.

**Researcher:** Compared to those that are not very well known, You do prefer to use social dating applications that have a wider range of users right?

**Interviewee 2:** Yes. (Nodding head)

**Researcher:** May I ask how did you come across the mentioned dating applications which are Tinder and Bumble?

**Interviewee 2:** I discovered Tinder because I heard about it from a TV show or movie. For Bumble, I started using it recently, two years from now. It was mentioned by a friend who was using Bumble too, while Tinder is because of some shows.

**Researcher:** The TV shows right?

**Interviewee 2:** Yeah, from a TV show. It was surprising to see people that I know on Tinder. It was like Facebook. (Laugh while answering). In my opinion, Tinder is more like a budget option, while Bumble is more like a higher-class option.

**Researcher:** Why do you say so? What are the differences?

**Interviewee 2:** I would say Bumble's profile is more professional and looks better than Tinder's. For Tinder, you can text the girl anytime if there is a match. Even if you texted them, they might not reply to you. On the other hand, something interesting about Bumble is the guys cannot text the girls, the girls have to make the first move. I would say Bumble is more sufficient because you cannot text the girls until they do. When they send you a text, you know they actually want to talk to you.

**Researcher:** You mean Bumble is more privileged to the guys?

**Interviewee 2:** Not very privileged to the guys, I would say privileged to the girls, because they can choose whether they want to talk to you or not.

**Researcher:** Okay, that is interesting. What makes Bumble stand out from Tinder is Bumble focuses on the girls, the girls have to make the first move to contact the guys.

**Interviewee 2:** Yeah. (Agree with the **researcher**). I guess I can provide two reasons for that. First, if the girl is not comfortable, the guy will not receive any message. If she accidentally swipes on a guy, but she is not interested. In 24 hours, the match will disappear and she will not get any uncomfortable text. So, I would say it is good for women. It is beneficial to the men too because they do not need to text and wait for replies. So, there are pros for both sides.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer the girls to take the first move instead of you taking the first move?

**Interviewee 2:** Not exactly. When you get a match on Tinder, sometimes we don't talk to each other even we like each other. However, in Bumble, since the girls are the ones who make the first

move, it is easier to start a conversation. Moreover, Bumble has this feature called question text box where they can click on it and there are pre-selected questions that help in ice-breaking. Therefore, those are the things that make Bumble more professional than Tinder.

**Researcher:** Yeah. Tinder does not have those kinds of options. The only thing you do is swipe left or right. In your opinion, which one is more fun to use?

**Interviewee 2:** I would say Bumble is more fun to use. (Raising tone). I would say Tinder is like Facebook and Bumble is like Instagram.

**Researcher:** Alright, understand. Do you think that Bumble has a higher chance of forming a relationship?

**Interviewee 2:** Yeah, I made friends in Bumble and hung out with them. I made friends on Tinder too, but I don't know how to explain why Tinder is bad. Tinder is just bad. (Laugh while answering).

**Researcher:** Is this because of your personal experience? Is your friend saying the same thing?

**Interviewee 2:** Yeah, many of my friends prefer to use Bumble.

**Researcher:** What are the biggest advantages of Tinder?

**Interviewee 2:** I would say Tinder has more swipes than Bumble. There are more people in Tinder, Bumble has lesser people. Besides, Tinder is cheaper and Bumble is too expensive to get subscriptions.

**Researcher:** Before we go further, how long have you been using Tinder and Bumble? Was it during the pandemic?

**Interviewee 2:** I think I started using Tinder when I was 19. For Bumble, I started using it during the pandemic, I was 22 at that time.

**Researcher:** Did you download it during the pandemic?

**Interviewee 2:** Yes. I downloaded it in the January or February of 2020 because one of my friends mentioned it.

**Researcher:** What is the intention that urges you to download Tinder when you are 19?



**Interviewee 2:** Boredom. I did not go on Tinder to find a girlfriend. I go on Tinder because I am bored and see what Tinder is about. I talk to a few people there and become friends. I have a lot of very good friends who use dating apps. During college time, I was bored. I used it just to talk to people. My intention was not to get into a relationship, but just to know people. (Calmly). Initially, the circle of friends that I have was just close friends and they are pretty far from me. I am from Ipoh. So, the only friends I have are from college. Most of them are my desk mates.

**Researcher:** You mean dating applications are one of the ways for you to make new friends?

**Interviewee 2:** Yes. (Nod head while answering)

**Researcher:** Compare to your intention of using it in current days, did your intention change, or does it remains the same? Since you have been using it since you were 19.

**Interviewee 2:** There was a three-year gap that I did not use any dating applications because I was in a relationship. After that, I started back exactly when the pandemic hit. I think it was January or February of 2020.

**Researcher:** Was it Bumble or Tinder that you are using during the pandemic?

**Interviewee 2:** Both, I was using Tinder and Bumble. At the age of 19, I started it. Then, at the age of 20, I stopped using it. During the pandemic, I was using it. Therefore, there is a three-year gap that I didn't use any dating applications.

**Researcher:** Normally, how often do you use Tinder? Is it once a day? Once a week? Or maybe once in a while?

**Interviewee 2:** I do not use Tinder and Bumble every day. I used it once or twice a week. I have my own stuff to do every day and have my routine as well. As a student, I was busy with my assignments, final year project, productions, shootings, and other stuff. I don't really have much time to go on dating apps every day. However, once or twice a week, I click on the app and swipe

for 10 minutes. Besides, I have my notification turned off for both apps, so even if somebody texted me, I wouldn't know. I am not the kind of person who will get distracted by dating apps.

**Researcher:** During the pandemic, you mentioned that you are busy with assignments and everything. However, online learning was implemented during the pandemic. Do you go on the dating applications on a daily basis, or it still remains once or twice a week?

**Interviewee 2:** During the pandemic, I think I often use the dating apps. Sometimes, I used it daily; sometimes, there are two-day gaps in between.

**Researcher:** Okay, we can say that you are an active user.

**Interviewee 2:** Yes, I am an active user during the pandemic.

**Researcher:** How about now? Do you still use it?

**Interviewee 2:** Of course, I still go on it, but not every day. It is not an everyday thing for me.

**Researcher:** Okay I see, it is not a must to do it every day, you will do it when you are free.

**Interviewee 2:** Yeah, number one is when I am free. Number two is I often forget that I have this application on my phone. When notifications appear, I realized that I have this application on my phone and went for a swipe. Normally, you will get one or two matches. Maximum, probably like five. Out of five, maybe one will text you. It works in this way, I swipe, I get to know that person and we become friends. After five or six months, if we are still talking, there might be something more (form a relationship). It comes in stages. Most of the time, getting a reply is a two or three-day things, and then you guys stop texting with each other, then you don't feel like replying anything. When it comes to special cases, you guys just keep talking and exchange numbers, Snapchat and other stuffs. You guys become good friends. Five or six months down the road, maybe there are something promising (engage in relationship). You will probably get disappointed if you hope to gain something immediately after using the app.

**Researcher:** Would you say that the apps are more beneficial to the girls rather than the boys?

**Interviewee 2:** Definitely. It is very easy for girls, I have seen living proof of it.

**Researcher:** Does it goes for both dating applications like Tinder and Bumble?

**Interviewee 2:** Definitely, yes.

**Researcher:** If your intention is just to meet someone and talk to them on dating applications, Why don't you talk to them in real life? What are the differences between meeting someone online and in real life?

**Interviewee 2:** For instance, you do not direct message somebody all out of a sudden on Instagram. When you do it (direct message somebody) without any purpose, it will be pretty cringing. If you know someone on Bumble, that is because you both allow it to happen; but if you know somebody from Instagram, there are two completely different theories there.

**Researcher:** Talking about meeting new people, did you meet anyone online during the pandemic? If you did, how was the experience?

**Interviewee 2:** Okay, I got no professional answer for you, but I can tell you a story. I met this girl on Bumble during the pandemic. (Uncertainty)(Clear Throat). \ After we knew each other on Bumble, I did not talk to her immediately, it took us three to four weeks to begin the conversation. We began to talk about our similarities, hobbies, and stuff we like. There are a lot of similarities between us. We became good friends. After that, we finally move on to Snapchat, I got her number and we began to communicate through Facetime. For me, Bumble is effective and helped me throughout the pandemic. I guess everybody feels lonely during the pandemic. As a student, it is good to have a friend because we can do our assignments together. During the pandemic, the only friend that I have is this girl and we used to do our assignment together, that's how we got into talking. It was equivalent to hanging out with your friends and doing work together at Starbucks. Instead of Starbucks, it was Nescafe. (Laugh). However, I did not meet the girl until I got back to KL after 5 months since the pandemic started. My university reopened at that time and things go on.

**Researcher:** Anyway, are you guys still chatting with each other until now?

**Interviewee 2:** Yeah, I would say she was one of my best friends. As I said, people go on dating apps not only to look for girlfriends, relationships, and hook-ups. Most of the time, you find people that want to talk to you, you talk about the interest that you both have. Yes, we do stay in contact until today, she is still a very good friend of mine.

**Researcher:** Talking about hook-ups, have you ever encountered any of it on dating applications?

**Interviewee 2:** No, not immediately. As I said, there are possibilities (hook-ups), but it will not happen before five or six months because you don't really know that person and it's not safe to do so. But if you ask me, yes, I have, but not immediately.

**Researcher:** Normally, will the girl give you any hint for hook-ups? Or you are the one who initiate it because you wanted it?

**Interviewee 2:** As much as everyone thinks what guys want is one thing (hook-ups). For me, I want to know somebody for a period of time before anything can happen. That's my policy. But do I initiate any talk or hints? Yes, everyone will do this. Of course, you test the water first. You will be surprised if the girl gives you a hint immediately after matching each other. From that, you can imagine how many guys did the girl texted and ask the same question.

**Researcher:** Are you scared of STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)?

**Interviewee 2:** Yes, I am very freaked out about STDs. Therefore, I do not engage in anything unless I know the person personally or longer than two to three months.

**Researcher:** Are you currently in a relationship?

**Interviewee 2:** No

**Researcher:** Have you ever been in a relationship with someone you met on social dating applications?

**Interviewee 2:** Yes, there was one last year, but it wasn't serious. It was ongoing for five to six months. But again, we were stuck at home during the pandemic. Therefore, the distance between us is long and it didn't work out at the end.

**Researcher:** You did establish a relationship during the lockdown?

**Interviewee 2:** No. I did it (establish relationship) before the lockdown. I knew this person four months before the outbreak.

**Researcher:** When it comes to finding a romantic partner, which types of girls do you prefer based on their personalities and characteristics?

**Interviewee 2:** Okay. (Uncertainty). Honestly, I did not set the criteria on social dating applications. If an 18-year-old girl matches with me, who is 24, that is a mistake. However, I can accept girls who are two years younger or older than me, but not any more than that. Besides, girls who smoke or drink are fine for me. Race is not a problem as well.

**Researcher:** You are an open-minded person.

**Interviewee 2:** Yeah. As long as the conversation holds, anything shouldn't be a problem.

**Researcher:** As a user of social dating applications, what attracts you to be engaged in dating applications. Are they more convenient and effective compared to physical dating?

**Interviewee 2:** Bio in the dating applications. However, people usually look at the picture first, before they intend to discover more. You just go through the pictures like you are using Instagram. Sometimes, I will look for someone who is similar to me and to my career as well, which is photography. If I find another photographer, I will swipe on it. If I found a model who is looking for a collaboration in shooting, I will swipe on that. Sometimes, people look for creative partners, it's not specifically for dating. Usually, this kind of thing is listed in the bio. Before you match with the person, you know what they want.

**Researcher:** In your opinion, do you prefer online dating or meeting people physically?

**Interviewee 2:** I think I would prefer dating someone in person.

**Researcher:** Are you not going to rely on social dating applications to get a future girlfriend.

**Interviewee 2:** Yeah, I will try my best not to. If I can choose, I prefer to meet someone in person. For me, I don't rely on the application because I don't date straight out of the app. When I know someone from the app for more than six months, and we are still friends, it's not about the app anymore because I already know that person. Anyway, I would prefer to meet someone off the app because there is a better story to tell.

**Researcher:** Is it because you think that people in the dating applications are not looking for anything serious?

**Interviewee 2:** No one is serious in dating apps. (Disappointed)

**Researcher:** Why do you say so?

**Interviewee 2:** Because of the experience that I have encountered. In a year, there were more than six girls who texted me and their intentions were nothing to do with relationships.

**Researcher:** You are very firm that none of the people on dating applications are serious about relationships right? What do you think if you meet a couple saying that their relationship was formed through social dating applications?

**Interviewee 2:** I would say that they are lucky to find each other. They should keep dating. For me, I have not found any (serious relationship). My hypothesis and theories are no one is serious. Back when I started the dating app, even if I am serious about it, everyone that I have met is not serious. That's my conclusion.

**Researcher:** So, a couple who met each other through dating applications can be considered lucky. If you have the chance to meet someone who is serious about the dating application, would you consider going for it?

**Interviewee 2:** Why not, I would.

**Researcher:** Do you still go on social dating applications when you are in a relationship?

**Interviewee 2:** Definitely no. Imagine waiting so long for the right person and ruining it by going on to dating applications. Of course, I won't. (Determined)

**Researcher:** Studies have shown that there are people who still go on to dating applications while being in a committed relationship. Sometimes, people deleted the application but did not deactivate the account, so the account is still there.

**Interviewee 2:** As I said, I started at 19, I stopped at 20 for a reason (in a relationship), and I used it again after the breakup. So, I wasn't in the application throughout my relationship.

**Researcher:** Okay, we can say that you are a loyal person. Anyway, have you ever encountered this kind of person (using dating applications while being in a relationship) in the dating application?

**Interviewee 2:** No, I don't think so. They are usually normal people (single people).

**Researcher:** Since you are using dating apps during the pandemic, do you think that the number of users using dating apps has significantly increased?

**Interviewee 2:** Yes, there were a lot of people using dating applications during the pandemic.

**Researcher:** How do you realise that the number of people using dating applications increased during the pandemic?

**Interviewee 2:** From their bio, they said that they are here (dating application) because of the pandemic and wanted to kill their boredom. Literally, everyone you meet in the application during the pandemic has the same caption.

**Researcher:** Did your friends, especially the single ones, started to use dating applications during the pandemic?

**Interviewee 2:** Yeah. Most of my friends have Tinder and Bumble.

**Researcher:** Alright. Besides killing off boredom, what are the other intentions people might have in going on dating applications?

**Interviewee 2:** Dating, seeing how things go, hook-ups; other than that, I don't see any reason for being in dating apps.

**Researcher:** How about establishing a serious and romantic relationship?

**Interviewee 2:** I would say it is possible because I have seen people doing it. Personally, I have never done it before.

**Researcher:** Would you say they are happy until now or is there any trust issue going on?

**Interviewee 2:** I would say two out of three are fine.

**Researcher:** In your opinion, what do you think about the new normal for dating during the pandemic?

**Interviewee 2:** Using dating applications during the pandemic is not really a big deal. However, obviously, you just cannot date online. From my point of view, if I don't see you, you don't exist. Trust is the only key here. You have to trust the person there. The way I used to differentiate real or fake people from dating applications is to communicate with them using FaceTime. If they get

on to FaceTime, they are real, you can go with it. If you can get to know them, it is better. Anyway, do not have high hopes until you meet the person in real life.

**Researcher:** Okay, got it. I think that was the last question. The information collected from you is sufficient and enough. So, that's the end of the interview session. Once again, we appreciate your participation in this interview. Thank you

**Interviewee 2:** You are welcome.

Interviewee 2 Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JMS', written over a horizontal line.

Date: 20/2/2022



### **Transcriptions 3**

**Researcher:** All right. So okay. First and foremost, our research is about exploring the impact of social dating application during the pandemic for young adults. Anyways, Mr. Farhan throughout this process, this session is recorded but it will all be confidential, and it is only for our research purposes and throughout the interview session. Would you want us to call you by your name or sir or which one will you prefer?

**Interviewee 3:** Mr. Farhan (Calm)

**Researcher:** Mr. Farhan. Okay Mr. Farhan, uhm once again thank you so much for joining. So, first question. Have you ever used social dating application before?

**Interviewee 3:** Yeah, I have use Bumble and Tinder? I have used uhm one more (Thinking)

**Researcher:** Do you know about Baituljannah ?

**Interviewee 3:** Yes, I do. So I have used it last year. Since the pandemic was very rough. You know, I felt like the girls on Tinder and Bumble, they were not very, they were very playful. And they will and... so as I was looking for a very serious relationship. Because I do want to get married at the end of the day. And I am already 35 and I do not have much time. And I believe that this app, is for people who want to get serious. And yeah, and fortunately, I would say I found the one, you know. We spoke for a few months. And she was very serious. And she introduced me to her family through, you know, through the application as well, you know, but it's just that I guess, no. Like this pandemic has been quite difficult. Right? Because she, because she lives all the way Sabah, and I am all the way in Ipoh. Right. So it is two different places together. But yeah, I mean,

there was chemistry. And I will say all that I wanted was commitment. She was willing to commit and not waste my time. And I was very happy about it. (Confident)

**Researcher:** So is that is that the reason why you chose Baituljannah application rather than Tinder and Bumble and so on?

**Interviewee 3:** Yes, yes. I mean, because I am Muslim and I'm looking for a Muslim woman, I feel going through a Muslim based app is a much better option compared to using let's say, like, different races in where, whereby it is, it is an application that, you know, that has different races. (Proud)

**Researcher:** Okay, because Baituljannah not a lot of people know, especially because it is a Muslim based dating application. So what differs Baituljannah than the other dating application, like Tinder or Bumble?

**Interviewee 3:** Like for me because in Islam, sex before marriage is haram. And for me, I would like to, I would like to marry someone, who also practices the religion as strictly as me. Because I would say I am a very committed Muslim. Okay, and I feel like the people on Tinder, they are not very committed, and I feel that it is not as much as my preference. And also, most importantly, my family will not approve of them, because I do not know much about their background, because they come from strict Muslim families, I feel that I can kind of trust them and also because their families are involved. And I also realised on Bumble and Tinder, they are on the application without any supervision, or no one knows about it, you know, and, and this is very, very important. You can fake your identity on Tinder and you can fake your identity on Bumble, but you can't fake it on this application, because everything is on your IC information. (Informative)

**Researcher:** Yes, yes, yes, exactly. So, your intention in using Baituljannah application is to find the one and to find a possible wife prospect.

**Interviewee 3:** Yes, I mean, I am looking for a very committed Muslim girl. (Conservative)

**Researcher:** Yes. Okay. All right.

**Interviewee 3:** And someone who has said, you know, she takes her practice in the religion very serious as well. (Confirming)

**Researcher:** So, of course, I know that it's not easy to find the one. How often have you gone on this application? Before you find the one? Like, were you on it i on a daily basis or maybe once a week? Like how was what was your usage of the dating application?

**Interviewee 3:** You see, as as I mean, as I said, I was very strict Muslim, you know, I do not believe in having multiple options. Right. I feel that if I am talking to one of them, you know, I feel that I should commit my time and effort into looking for the one. Yeah. Because, because that is what I expected within as well. Right. So, when I spoke to her, I know, I really liked it. Because, as I said, you know, she wanted, she knew what to she knew what she wanted in life. And that is exactly what I'm looking for. Right? Because I do not want anyone to basically be close minded, whereby fickle minded, that is the word. Fickle minded in knowing what they want in life. (Strict)

**Researcher:** So, as I know, that there are several criteria that that stated in Baituljannah application right, did you went through the criteria before, you know?

**Interviewee 3:** Of course, I mean, like one thing that I really adore about the application is that there is no nudity. And you have to be the good supervision also, and everything that you're doing is supervised. You know, and there is a problem on Tinder or Bumble that is basically fake identity. Right? Where, I mean, Bumble and Tinder, they have now introduced the Bluetick. But on this application, you really have to go through a lot of like policy steps. Just to prove that you are legitimate. (Calm)

**Researcher:** Okay, like what kind of steps would you mind telling us?

**Interviewee 3:** Yeah, so when I went through the application, at first, I had to basically, I had to upload a few documents also adopted a few documents about who I am. Basically my IC, where my phone number and more like, obviously, a lot of pictures about myself and if I want to show the person who I really am, where am I? Where am I studying? What are my qualifications? And of course, I mean, I have to attach all my university papers and everything. Yeah, to kind of say that hey, I am a guy. No, I am well to do in terms of education. And I am looking for someone serious, because I am able to commit to the upcoming lifestyle. (Excited)

**Researcher:** Okay talking about this relationship. You did mention in the earlier that you establish a relationship during pandemic. Yeah. So is it because you were alone? What causes you to go into Baituljannah during the pandemic?

**Interviewee 3:** Okay, because, I mean, I just came out of a toxic relationship with a with a non-Muslim. Right. And it was very difficult for me. Because as I said, I wanted to actually marry her, but I couldn't because my family did not approve. And she did not want to convert also. Yeah, she did not convert. And it was very difficult because we were together for three years. But in the end of the day, we had to separate because she's not Muslim, you know, and my family would not approve, and she's not willing to connect for me. Right, which is why I said, it is enough. You know, I don't want to waste any more time. No, I do not want to prolong this anymore. So, I went on the application to search for the one, and I'm very happy that it didn't really take long, you know, I actually the thing is, is I had multiple options that I was very happy with, you know, I feel like the application, they, they I mean, the developers of the application they do know what they are doing. And everyone who's there, they are very serious. So that's why I felt that it would help me. (Reminiscing)

**Researcher:** So okay, so is any of my members wanted to ask anything that's related to this application? No. All right. Okay, never mind, because Baituljannah is widely used for Muslims in and my FYP mates are not Muslim, so they wouldn't know. So that's why this interview is also like to show what Baituljannah is all about. So because you are an active user of Baituljannah, and you are in a committed relationship now? Yeah.

**Interviewee 3:** Yes, yes. With the lady from the application (Baituljannah).

**Researcher:** Okay. All right. So, let us just go through your previous relationship, you said you said it was toxic, because she was non-Muslims, and you had some several problems arises because of that, your previous relationship, was it from an online? Or was it someone that you met? Physically?

**Interviewee 3:** Actually, it was, it was physically, you know, it was a surprise that, like, going through this app gave me a better match than me finding it physically. You know, like it, actually filtered all my wants for a perfect partner. Like, everything was there, right? In terms of the height, in terms of what she likes? You know, I am a filmmaker, as well, and she comes from the media industry so we can kind of relate, you know, so I don't have to waste time looking for this person, this person when I can just go on the application, and it is superfast.

**Researcher:** Yeah. So as I know, there are several differences between Tinder, Bumble and also Baituljannah. I think there's a tremendously big difference there. From Bumble, Tinder and Baituljannah so in terms of payment? Because every dating app, there are like, a premium and so on. Does that applies to Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 3:** Yes. Okay. You see, I was actually a premium user of Tinder, because, as you know, I felt that maybe using premium on Tinder would actually helped me find the one, you know. But instead I just wasted my time. And obviously, like, majority of them, they actually be seeking for sex before marriage, which is something I'm not I'm not happy with because that is not what I look forward. And not that I, I disapprove. But I mean, for me, I believe in patience, I believe in getting to know the person properly committing to such acts. So with this application, I was a bit afraid as well, because I thought it would probably be the same. But I had a free trial, whereby I can actually go on the application and I can see, these are the type of girls on the application, you know, and when I decided to settle for one, then I said, Okay, why not? I just give it another try. One last strike. And I decided to put my name and I proceed with the payment as well. And, yeah, okay. And I fill it out. (Happy)

**Researcher:** Yeah. Okay, based on our research, right, Baituljannah. We know that it is not similar like any dating application it is based on the Sharia' laws is that true?

**Interviewee 3:** Oh yes. As I said, sex before marriage is not permitted. And, and you are not supposed to cheat on your partner as well. According to the law, you know, yeah. Which is something I really, really approved because as I said, I am a Muslim and I am fully committed to my religion. And in terms of its practices as well. And this application, it actually does co align with my family's principles as well. (Resourceful)

**Researcher:** Alright, so as I know it this is based on our research because we have never been, we have never used Baituljannah. Is it true that when you talk to the person there is actually a third person monitoring your conversation? Is that true?

**Interviewee 3:** Yes. And I mean, at first, I was I was actually quite, afraid I was like, isn't this actually invasion of privacy? You know, but actually, what I realised is that this person is, is here to keep everything in check, which is good, because, you know, on Tinder, they're actually underage girls, you know, I have that I that I've actually spoken to, you know, and they didn't, and

they did not reveal the age until I met them. She put me, which has actually put me in a very in, in, in hardship, because I'm dealing with another age group, you know, and, and they don't, they only see like, obviously, like this these girls. I mean, they age very fast. Now, at the age of 16. You know, they look like they are like, a women. And that is very dangerous. So, for so on this application. If I'm meeting a girl, I do know that it's real, because they're basically documents to prove it. And also, there's someone to supervise our everything, you know, all texts and everything. So, if for example, if I would to send any deadly pictures, you know, this person is here to make sure that I am not involve anymore. And if the end if any acts like that is done, I will not get a refund. I will basically get blocked from the application. Barred from the application, I am basically blacklisted and I will not be able to get my money back. (Firm)

**Researcher:** Okay, so basically, I know that Tinder and Bumble, there's a lot of reasons of hook-ups there. The reason they go on the applications is for hook-ups. But have you encountered any hook-ups like people saying, like wanting hook-ups in Baituljannah application?

**Interviewee 3:** No, because I feel also it is supervised so some people are very afraid as well. And for me, I try not to mess it up because I have met the parents. Unless we are married then yes, then then I tried to take it elsewhere. But I tried to stick it to that. Because for my own safety as well. (Strict)

**Researcher:** Okay, Mr. Farhan, here's another question for you. So, I know that you are in a committed relationship. Yeah. Like you are searching for your wife. And you already found the one apparently. So, do you still go on the social dating application? While, you're in a relationship.

**Interviewee 3:** Yes. I just got engaged. (Happy)

**Researcher:** But do you still go on the social dating application?

**Interviewee 3:** Yes. Because you see, because my religion, they actually practice polygamy. And because of that, I am allowed to have three more wives. Because in Islam, right, my role as a provider, is to actually ensure that the all of my wives are treated equally in terms of financially, emotionally and their wellness in general. (Calm)

**Researcher:** So you just has just gotten engaged, and you still want to find another wife? While you're already in a relationship?

**Interviewee 3:** I mean, for me, because I do believe in the communication, right, you have to actually communicate with your wife. Before. I mean, like before you decide to take things on your own, you know. So yeah, I mean, like, this is something that I would have to discuss with my wife. But I, I still do have the app on my phone. (Calm)

**Researcher:** Okay, but you're not going to like search for your second wife instantly, right? You're just going to just keep it?

**Interviewee 3:** Yes, I mean, like, you have to work on one before you can actually push it to the others. (Confirming)

**Researcher:** Yeah exactly. Oh, okay. All right. Okay. That's interesting. Yeah, polygamous relationship. All right. So, here's another question for you. While you're finding someone right, in the social dating application, what actually interests you like what characteristics you actually find?

**Interviewee 3:** As I mentioned before, I know someone who is basically she's very committed to the religion. She's very committed family. Because, for me, I mean, what I feel is when a girl when she's young, right, she's very flexible. Options are very flexible. So life is very flexible. Right. But when we are ready to get married, it is different. It is a game changer. Things are very different. Yeah. Because basically your commitment is there. Family is number one. So I would say a woman who is ready to keep up with the family. (Strict)

**Researcher:** So what do you think the intention of young adults using the dating application during pandemic honestly, like, in your opinion?

**Interviewee 3:** Because as I said, you know, I am looking for a serious and like committed relationship, because I do want to make her my wife at the end of the day, right, which is why we are already engaged. So, like people who want different ones, right, so they would want to search for maybe something casual? Because why they do see as a pastime. Because the pandemic is very stressful for a lot of people because why? They have, they're basically unemployed. And they need someone to talk to that they can kind of confide into the person. (Calm)

**Researcher:** All right. Okay, so talking about casual relationship right here, there. It is a bit different in Baituljannah. Have you ever encountered like, sexual interaction in Baitulannah ?

**Interviewee 3:** Ah, no, no, because from the very beginning, I normally state my clauses, right? I basically say what I want. And if and if it does not align to what you want, then I feel that we should not be in. (Confident)

**Researcher:** And also it is because of the third person as well, right? Monitoring, that it doesn't allow those interactions to happen.

**Interviewee 3:** Also, thing is this. I think, if I'm not mistaken, there is a rapport system in the application. So, if you if you are going against the law of the application, then you then you will be marked down. When you mark down, then there are bad reviews. So, people when they check your profile, they know they kind of know your history of using that. And they will not want you of course because you will, because you actually going against the application rules. (Confuse)

**Researcher:** I think one of my members wanted to say something. Yeah?

**Researcher:** Yeah. So, I wanted to ask that, because just now you've mentioned that you say, because of religion, right? You, you will be still looking for a still using social dating applications, even though you're engaged. So, I want to ask, like, Do you have any other friends who are non-Muslim, but they are currently in a relationship? And they are still using social dating applications while in a relationship?

**Interviewee 3:** Yes, I would say, but again, I can't really talk much about it. Because, it is going against their privacy, but yes, because I also feel that this pandemic has resulted in, in unstable relationships, unstable marriages. Right. And sometimes people feel that I mean, that searching for another person is the cure. All right, in fixing the relationship for me, I feel that shouldn't be the case. If you are not Muslim, then you're not entitled. For this, I will say for this luxury, right? Yeah. (Monotone)

**Researcher:** Okay. Okay, alright. So, it is like that. So, um, do you think that is normal for people to establish online relationships during the pandemic, like what do you think?

Interviewee 3: I did not catch you. Sorry. (Unsure)

**Researcher:** Alright. So today, do you think it is normal for people to build up a new relationship, because of the pandemic. And do you think that because of the pandemic, the relationship will be serious?



**Interviewee 3:** Ah, this is a very tricky one, um. (Unsure)

**Researcher:** Maybe your friends? They have encountered, like, they just established a relationship during the pandemic because they're lonely and they want a sense of comfort.

**Interviewee 3:** Yes, yes. As I mentioned before, so, you know, these people, kind of see it as a pastime. Right? They see it as a pastime. And, when you are actually doing it through an application, where the application is the medium. Correct? You can, always run away. (Cheerful)

**Researcher:** Run away. Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewee 3:** You can, you can basically escape, because you're not looking at the person on a daily basis. But for example, in my, in my stance, right, I can, I can say that I kind of want to be because I am already engaged. But once again, I am already engaged to a person, and the family already knows about me. And I already know it is vice versa. Because once again, on the application, everything is listed about your life by your family, everything. Yeah. Because before you can do a marriage, you need to know a person in and out and everything about the person. Right. And this is something very, extremely long term. (Calm)

**Researcher:** Yeah, because you have established your relationship that you're already engaged during the pandemic. So that's why you have like more insights on this. Alright. Okay. So I think for my side basically, I'm done with the questions. How about my friends, my mates? Do you have any questions?

**Researcher 2:** For me no.

**Researcher:** Zhi yang ? Kar Fai ? Lin ? No. Okay. So, I think we basically covered everything so. Yeah. So once again, we like to say thank you to you, Mr. Farhan. Thank you so much. And congratulations on your engagement. Okay. You know, we hope we can get invited to your wedding hopefully. Anyways, really appreciate your time and your willingness to tell us everything so thank you so much.

**Interviewee 3:** Well, I see, I am only doing this because it is a sense of education for people who are going to hear this. (Respectful)

**Researcher:** Yeah. Especially because Baituljannah right? Not a lot of people know. So, you have some success in this application. So, it is good. Yeah. Alright, so once again, thank you so much. I will end recording now.

**Interviewee 3:** Thank you. (Calm)

Researcher: Okay.

Interviewee 3 Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. J. Jannah', written over a horizontal line.

Date: 22/2/22

#### **Transcription 4**

**Researcher:** Are you using any of the social dating applications now?

**Interviewee 4:** Yes, I am.

**Researcher:** What are those?

**Interviewee 4:** I'm only using Tinder and Bumble.

**Researcher:** Have you ever heard of Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 4:** Sorry, what is it? Is it an app too?

**Researcher:** Yes. For your information, Baituljannah is also a social dating application but is more Muslim-friendly. I'm telling you this just in case you might feel interested to use it in the future.

**Interviewee 4:** Oh okay.

**Researcher:** You mentioned that you using both Tinder and Bumble, do you using them during the pandemic or even before the pandemic has started?

**Interviewee 4:** I'm only started using them since the pandemic.

**Researcher:** You using them until now?

**Interviewee 4:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do your friends introduce it to you or you find out by yourself?

**Interviewee 4:** Actually no, I found out by myself because that's nothing to do during the pandemic, so I just used it.

**Researcher:** Alright, so you did find out by yourself. Any of your friends using it also?

**Interviewee 4:** Ya ya.

**Researcher:** Did your friends ever influence you to use social dating applications even before you find out by yourself?

**Interviewee 4:** Actually no, because I think using social dating applications is a really private thing so I don't think everyone will be like "hey, I'm using this and it's really good", so I don't think will share it out of nowhere unless you ask them how does it feels to use that particular app. So yeah, no one influenced me to use any social dating applications. I just found out by myself and use it by myself also.

**Researcher:** As an active user of Tinder, do you find out by using Tinder is better in forming relationships or maybe possible to find romantic partners? What do you think?

**Interviewee 4:** I think it depends on your intention actually. I think if your intention is to have a relationship, every apps on the market, whether it's dating apps or like any social apps like Facebook or whatever, you still can manage to find people who shared the same intention. But if you just use it for friends then every apps out there will also just for you to make friends. At the end of the day, it still depends on your intention. (Calmly)

**Researcher:** Is that means when you using Tinder, you feel good about it?

**Interviewee 4:** From what perspective?

**Researcher:** Your perspective.

**Interviewee 4:** I find it's easier for me to meet people with same interests because when you sign up for Tinder they will allow you to choose your interests, hobbies and all those kind of things, and they will actually filter it out from you because I think it would be more easier to find people who shared same interest with you. Then it will be better for you to click each other.

**Researcher:** Okay, from what we heard that usually users in Tinder generally do want to find hookup relationships. So, are you one of them?

**Interviewee 4:** No.

**Researcher:** Why?

**Interviewee 4:** Because I don't need a hookup right now and you know that having a sexual intercourse with someone barely know on internet is actually very dangerous, and there's a lot of STDs (Sexually transmitted diseases) those kinds of things out there. For me, no, I didn't have the sexual intention when I'm using Tinder, I'm just there to maybe make friends and meet new people. But there is decent amount of people actually aim for hook up. (Demonstratively)

**Researcher:** If you have the opportunity to do so (hookup), will you consider to do it?

**Interviewee 4:** No.

**Researcher:** But if the person is the one you really interested with, and the person ask you for hookup, will you?

**Interviewee 4:** I still think is a no because for my perspective, my intention is when I went there (Tinder) because I want to meet new people or like have a new relationship or something. But if your intention is there just for hookup and just to have bed, I think that actually not match my intention and that's why I won't do it with that person even though the person is my type. And yeah, I want to add on that if you think of it, if a person on any social dating applications and their first thing to say is just want to hook up with you, imagine the amount of people they asked to hook up with on the internet. Yeah, people might think that they're the special one that's why the

person asked for hookup, but the person could be doing it with everyone, and that's why they asked for it.

**Researcher:** May I know are you currently in relationship?

**Interviewee 4:** No.

**Researcher:** Okay you are not in relationship, so have you wanted to find a relationship through social dating application like you mentioned in Tinder?

**Interviewee 4:** Ya, I do.

**Researcher:** You do want to. Okay, so in order to find a romantic partner through social dating application like in Tinder, would you tell us what tactics would you use?

**Interviewee 4:** To find out who will be my potential partner?

**Researcher:** Yes.

**Interviewee 4:** I think we just chat like go through a really normal conversation because some people like after some chatting with each other, they will basically just ask you do you want to hook up? Yeah, they will just straight cut to the chase and be like they want to do it with you. So, this is the first stage that having a conversation with them (The stage where interviewee 4 dislikes about). Therefore, if they pass this stage without asking you to hook up, well, I guess they passed the first stage (If the person do not ask about hook up in the first stage, the interviewee 4 will accept them). Then we will proceed on and can just chat casually, and do not need to ask him what do you like, what's your horoscope or which university study in. You just have to normal chat and see how they respond to you because sometimes it's not like they don't like you, it's just that you guys don't have the right energy to match. And I think the energy of both of the person in the relationship is the fundamental of relationship because if you guys don't bond well matched together, then it will be a problem for you to have a relationship.

**Researcher:** Basically, if the person wants to develop a relationship with you, you just have to let it be to see whether success or not?

**Interviewee 4:** You cannot force someone to be in relationship with you, it has to depend how you guys bond together during the process.

**Researcher:** Do you find any friendships through Tinder?

**Interviewee 4:** Ya, I did.

**Researcher:** Is it a lot you met on Tinder?

**Interviewee 4:** Not really, I think it's only 2 or 3 of them I met on Tinder and we actually proceed to become really good friends in real life.

**Researcher:** Alright, after you guys knowing each other will you guys meet up physically?

**Interviewee 4:** Ya.

**Researcher:** How often of it?

**Interviewee 4:** Not really often. I meet a lot of people on Tinder and chat with quite amount of people, with the only one that passed all the stages and knowing them, then eventually I will think this person will be suitable to be friend. I only ask them out and from that we can further see how we can bond well with each other.

**Researcher:** Jian Rong you just mentioned that you are not in a relationship right?

**Interviewee 4:** (Nodding).

**Researcher:** If you have to say social dating application is easy to find partner compared to physically meet up with each other, what is the reason behind it?

**Interviewee 4:** (Thinking seriously about the question). Because you see a lot of people actually went to social dating applications because they cannot find any potential partner in real life. Therefore, if you go to social dating applications the system will actually help narrow down people who share a similar hobby and interests that same with you. And from that you can further find someone who share the same hobby and maybe you guys can have more conversation compared physically meet with people because sometimes when you're in a room where, let's say in our lecture hall, there's like 100 people, you won't just go and initiate a conversation with the random people or anything. But when you're on social dating applications, if you swipe the person right and then if the person also swipes you right, then it's a higher possibility that you guys can get to know each other, start a conversation and get to know each other's hobbies and interests. So, that's why I said that Tinder or any other social dating applications are easier to find potential partners

compared to real life because in real life you don't really have the initiative to get to know someone else other than yourself.

**Researcher:** What you mean is social dating applications are easily to find someone that match the same interest with you? Like hobbies?

**Interviewee 4:** Yes, it's easy.

**Researcher:** When you look at someone that you find really interested with, will you look at their appearances first or something else?

**Interviewee 4:** (Shy). This is a really honest question, because our first impression in our eyes and what we see is the appearance of the person. We cannot just say I prefer their humour or personality because you don't know their personality. It takes a lot of time to get the know the person, so of course the first thing I look into is their appearance.

**Researcher:** That means if the person is handsome or pretty, they will get a higher chance of getting attention from you?

**Interviewee 4:** I forgot to add on. By appearance I don't mean look good or ugly. I mean like the way the person portrayed themselves in person like some people post a lot of thirst trap on social media, and then there are some people who just post their selfies or daily pictures. Therefore, it just about the picture they post is the first way of how people perceive them because if you post a lot of food, so people would think you like food. And if you post a lot pictures of dog, people will view you as dog person. It's not about you look ugly or what but it's just how people will perceive you based on the picture you post on social media.

**Researcher:** Jian Rong, while you using Tinder, if you have to say the biggest advantage of Tinder, what could be the biggest advantage of it? Maybe its features are really good or it can help you find a partner easily?

**Interviewee 4:** Finding a partner is really hard to say because it still depends on whether you guys click or not. So, I would say easier to meet friends that shared same hobby and interest.

**Researcher:** This is the biggest advantage of Tinder?

**Interviewee 4:** (Nodding)

**Researcher:** Just now you mentioned that social dating applications is much more in making new friends, so do you personally feel that you are more on social dating applications when it comes to making new friends?

**Interviewee 4:** I don't limit myself when it comes to making friends, but if I were to find friends that shared same hobby and interest with me, I definitely go for social dating application because I can see from there like what's their hobby and interest. If in real life, we will just see how we bond with each other.

**Researcher:** So, it's like social dating applications help you to filter the people with same interest for you?

**Interviewee 4:** Ya.

**Researcher:** Jian Rong, if you have been in a relationship, would you still use Tinder?

**Interviewee 4:** No.

**Researcher:** Why is it?

**Interviewee 4:** I know that Tinder can be used as a friend making application, but at the end of the day the nature of the application is to get you a partner. That's why it's called a social dating application. Therefore, the point that I won't use it if I'm already in a relationship because I want to give my partner a sense of trust and also assurance to avoid my partner from overthinking. That's why I will stop using Tinder if I'm already in a relationship. (Decisively)

**Researcher:** Let's say if your partner is allowing you to use Tinder despite the relationship is still ongoing, will you still want to do so or no?

**Interviewee 4:** No.

**Researcher:** Is it because you want to give your partner the sense of security?

**Interviewee 4:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What you mean is that you do not want to betray your partner because you are loyal?



**Interviewee 4:** I do not think it's about loyal or not, it's about taking care of my partner's mental because some of them might question about why I'm still meeting new people on Tinder. What I mean is I don't want them to get overthink so it's always better to give them the assurance.

**Researcher:** Have you heard of any of your friends still using social dating applications despite they are in a relationship?

**Interviewee 4:** Yes. (Nodding)

**Researcher:** Can you tell us in a detailed way?

**Interviewee 4:** I think one of my friends, a male friend, I thought he was "straight" (heterosexual). However, I saw him on Tinder then only I realised that he is bisexual. (Hesitantly)

**Researcher:** The person is looking for same sex with him or the opposite sex?

**Interviewee 4:** I assumed is the same sex because how social dating applications work is that you can actually choose the gender you interested in. For "straight" people they will choose girl but for me I will choose guy. Do you get what I mean right?

**Researcher:** Yes. So, during the pandemic many people like you as a young adult are really getting into using social dating applications. Therefore, what is the reason behind it?

**Interviewee 4:** One of the reasons for me is because I'm bored and have nothing to do during the pandemic. And the second reason is because we are approaching adulthood since we are young adults already, then we start to realise our needs in a relationship. That's why I choose to further explore more by starting to use Tinder or any other social dating applications.

**Researcher:** Do you think that people who using Tinder or any other social dating applications are difficult in terms of finding a romantic partner during the pandemic or it's nothing different from the pre-pandemic period?

**Interviewee 4:** I think it's depends on your fate. I don't think it's based your scenario or whatever because what Tinder or any other social dating applications do is they narrow down and filter out the people with the same hobby and interest as you, which is giving you more convenient to meet new people who might match with you than people who you meet in real life. At the end of the day, it's just same as real life because if you don't have the fate to get in a relationship with

someone else, then you won't get it. However, if you have the fate then you will get into a relationship with that person. Do you get what I mean?

**Researcher:** After you guys have matching up with each other through social dating applications during the pandemic, at some point you guys would like to come out meet physically. However, due to many obstacles like we have to adhere to the SOPs such as wear a mask and so on, and because both parties never see each other before in real life, don't you think this will increase the difficulty in terms of finding romantic partner on the social media application because you don't know their background and whether they been close contacted with Covid patient or not. So, what do you think?

**Interviewee 4:** For Covid wise, I think it should be no problem because SOPs apply to everyone. It's not only for people in here or there. So, I feel like SOPs apply to everyone. Obviously, if you meet up with someone you met online they will wear a mask and you will wear a mask too. They might do a self-test kit and you will do a self-test kit. Then, it's a basic thing that everyone does so and I don't think it only limited to people who meet online. So, this belongs to everyone and not only applies to people who meet online. As for relationship, I still think that should not be a problem because even you get into relationship with someone else in real life right, instead of online dating, you still don't know their background yet. Yeah, you don't really know their background even though you guys know each other but that's just what you see. What behind like what's their background? You won't get to know yet because you haven't getting to know them well. (Answering confidently)

**Researcher:** Jian Rong you mentioned that one of the reasons to use social dating applications during the pandemic is because of you feel bored. Therefore, can I add another statement that because you feel really lonely during the pandemic, so you started to use social dating applications during the pandemic. Do you agree with it?

**Interviewee 4:** I think one of the things that reaching adulthood is not that you feel lonely, I feel like lonely is an understatement. I feel like at this age I started to realise I need affection. I need like a relationship to feel complete that's why I started to seek for relationship. It's just not about lonely, it's just more like you want to find someone you can share everything with. You know, like share with them the movie you watched, the music you listened to. That's what makes you complete as there's anything. So, that's why I said lonely is an understatement because lonely is

just you feel lonely or you can even say it's just horny. So yeah, I feel like I don't think it's lonely, I think it's part of yourself in realisation. Like you're realising yourself, you getting to know yourself better. Are you realising your needs?

**Researcher:** Just now u mentioned that you use Tinder and Bumble right during the pandemic? So, I just want to ask which one do you prefer more? Like which one do you use more?

**Interviewee 4:** I think Tinder will be better because it's easier to use.

**Researcher:** Do you found that you use it more frequently during the pandemic?

**Interviewee 4:** I think I used it more frequently in last year because this year I'm doing internship. So yeah, it's in last year more frequently.

**Researcher:** Just now you mentioned that you use Tinder more, what is the reason behind it?

**Interviewee 4:** You mean like why I prefer Tinder over Bumble?

**Researcher:** Ya.

**Interviewee 4:** Because Bumble is more complicated and active user in Bumble is not as many as Tinder. So, I choose Tinder over Bumble.

**Researcher:** Okay Jian Rong, do you prefer social dating application, I mean like dating, through social dating applications or physically?

**Interviewee 4:** If I have the chance it's definitely physically because I get to know in person, I mean like easier, but if I don't have the chance to get into relationship with someone in real life then I will just use Tinder or any other social dating applications.

**Researcher:** So, you still prefer in physical right? (Interviewee 4 nodding) If there's no choice then you use social dating applications. What about meeting new friend? Through physically as well?

**Interviewee 4:** For friends I don't mind. I feel like both platforms (Tinder and Bumble) are good enough.

**Researcher:** What about hook up? Any opinion?

**Interviewee 4:** Any opinion of hook up? What do you mean? (Smirk)

**Researcher:** Like, if you have a chance to hook up with someone, will it through physically?

**Interviewee 4:** Like hook up with person I know in real life or someone in Tinder?

**Researcher:** Yes.

**Interviewee 4:** I think I would still prefer in real life (people who interviewee 4 know) because do you know the term “Catfish”?

**Researcher:** Maybe you can explain about it?

**Interviewee 4:** One tricky thing about this dating app or we called as “Catfish” is that there are a lot of people exist in social dating applications, and you will see their selfie and you think they are really good. But then let’s say when we meet up with them to see them in real life, it’s really a disappointment because they do not look like the picture they posted. That’s why I think that whether having a relationship and hook up is good by getting them in real life than in social dating applications because they might be lying or “catfishing” you.

**Researcher:** Is it like a scam?

**Interviewee 4:** Ya, but they don’t scam for anything, they don’t scam for benefits. They just “catfish” you. (Uncertain)

**Researcher:** I want to ask that since you use social dating application for 2 years, so in that period of time you have never found the one because your intention is actually to find a partner where you can spend your whole life with, right?

**Interviewee 4:** I won’t say I found someone, it’s just that in the process there’s actually few guys who I had a deeply connection compared to just friend, but some of them just end up ghosting. One of the things on these kinds of social dating application is actually ghost people. So, one of the most recent stories that I can share is that during last year, December, I’ve met someone on Tinder for like I guess two months. And then we actually proceeded to check on Instagram and everything. So, basically we know each other already. Then, one day he just came to Kampar to surprise me, then he stayed in my place for one night. We didn’t do anything that’s why I said I do not hook up with anyone. But then after that night I thought maybe this will be a new relationship for me, however after he went back to KL right after like few days, he ghosted me.

He just disappeared. So yeah, one of the things about dating app is that some of the people will actually ghost you.

**Interviewee 4:** You said just now that you met a guy right? So, no offence or whatever, you are gay?

**Interviewee 4:** Ya, I am.

**Researcher:** But I'm sure there are other platforms for like social dating applications for gay, is that reliable?

**Interviewee 4:** Ya.

**Researcher:** Do you use it?

**Interviewee 4:** One thing about gay dating application is that the nature of the app is not even built for making friend is just plainly for hook up (Serious mood). And it's not even a place for you to conversate with other, it's just that, I mean, I've used to have that it's called Grinder. I didn't commit anything from there but I just want to share like the people there they will just like see who lives nearby you, let's say 100 meters, 200 meters. They actually come from meter which you can see who lives really near to you, and if they want to hook up with you, they will just like 'Hi, you wanna have fun?'. They will just straight cut to the chase and ask you do you want to do it? If you want then you say yes, then you guys can just do whatever you do. So, basically people there just do stuff like this and it's really dangerous because during that time I downloaded this just for fun, and because I said many times before they had the distance to see the user lives how far or next to you, one of the users I think he lives 400 meters from me which is really near from me and is a blank profile. A lot of people's profiles there are blank profile which is very sketchy. This person texted me said that 'Hi you wanna have fun?'. I ignored and I didn't reply anything. And then this person proceeds to say stuff like 'I'm driving', and I can actually tell the distance unit from 400 meter to 300 meter to 200 meter, which is very scary because the meter use in the application is actually quite accurate. They will actually change according to your real time distance so I was really scared because what if the person trying to kill me or rob me? (Laughing)

**Researcher:** That's why you use Tinder rather than Grinder?

**Interviewee 4:** Ya, because my intention is not for hook up what, so no point for me to using Grinder.

**Researcher:** Because I don't know what Grinder is obviously because I'm "straight", so that's why I need to ask you because I thought there is one specific dating application that is mainly for gay. So, it's not for them to actually to find a partner and it's mainly for hook up. That's why you try for Tinder?

**Interviewee 4:** Yes.

**Researcher:** As for Tinder right, you know there is option for you to choose looking for guys or girls. For your case, did you put for all guys or mixed?

**Interviewee 4:** I put all guys.

**Researcher:** So, you have no intention to looking for a girl at all?

**Interviewee 4:** No. (Smirk and nodding)

**Researcher:** Just to be sure u know. I think that's all for our questions. Thank you for your participation.

Interviewee 4 Signature:



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Date: 17/2/2022

### **Transcription 5**

**Researcher:** Hi Aina, I'll start the interview now. So, Anna, I would like to ask, are you aware of the dating applications in Malaysia?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes I do. I'm aware of few of them.

**Researcher:** What are those?

**Interviewee 5:** Tinder, Baituljannah, and Bumble. That's all.

**Researcher:** I see, you do use quite a few of those applications.

**Interviewee 5:** Did use at one time.

**Researcher:** When did you started to use it?

**Interviewee 5:** I start using it the first time in MCO which is the during the pandemic

**Researcher:** So you started during the first wave of the pandemic. What makes you want to start to use it?

**Interviewee 5:** I believe at that time, since university and every other thing passes, all had been postponed. So we were at a point where we didn't really do anything at home. We couldn't really go out to meet our friends and so forth. Everybody was like trying to figure everything out. So, that time I felt like I need some sort of a human communication, human interaction and that is one of the platforms that had helped me at that point.

**Researcher:** You said that you wanted to have some communications, but then instead of finding your friends you prefer to meet some new friends by using those applications?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes, I mean, not to say that my friends are always available right? Like, to focus on our subject to today which is dating applications. It shows that the dating application is used to like find someone to talk to more than friends. You know there's a limit so maybe at that point, I was like searching for something or conversations that are not, not to say not suitable to talking to a friend with, but you understand.

**Researcher:** Yes I do.

**Interviewee 5:** It's like another level.

**Researcher:** Talking to stranger right?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes, strangers. *(Nodded)*

**Researcher:** So the purpose is to talk to a stranger who you want to be more than friends?

**Interviewee 5:** To have a conversation with a person that you know nothing about gives you a safe space? *(Uncertain)* Because there'll be no judgement, because they will not know you exactly who you are, where you're from, you can even create a new identity. Not that I'm saying that you should fake an identity but a safe space.

**Researcher:** So you feel like much more comfortable to talk to them in this safe space?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes. *(Nodded)*

**Researcher:** So you said that you did use social dating applications, how long did you use it? Is it just during the pandemic or until now?

**Interviewee 5:** I'm not until only for the first few months, maybe two months? *(Recalling)*

**Researcher:** So it's like only the first wave of the pandemic. It's like during 2020.

**Interviewee 5:** Yes, during 2020.

**Researcher:** Okay. So how did you come across with the dating applications that you've mentioned just now like Tinder and Baituljannah, and also Bumble?

**Interviewee 5:** A few of my friends back then, they were active on those apps even way before the pandemic. I was not seeing anybody at that moment so I thought maybe we should just give it a try. That's way it counted all the steps.

**Researcher:** I see, so your friend introduce you to those apps.

**Interviewee 5:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Okay, mind if I ask that. Are you currently in a relationship?

**Interviewee 5:** I am. *(Answered confidently)*

**Researcher:** Did you find your partner through the applications?

**Interviewee 5:** No, I found it physically.

**Researcher:** I see, you found it through physically. So, you personally think that it's easier for you to find a relationship partner physically?

**Interviewee 5:** If you ask me whether it's easier to find a partner physically compared to online, I would say it's way easier to find a partner online, because it's literally, you know, with a simple swipe, you can find somebody who matches your personality who get your vibe or some sort. So I think physical is more challenging, but it's the challenges makes it more worthy. Like the relationship is way more worth than online.

**Researcher:** Is it because then you get to see each other more frequently? When you met each other physically, instead of online?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes, yes. *(Nodded)*

**Researcher:** So you said that you use it during the pandemic. Did you ever like been in a relationship with someone you met on social dating applications?

**Interviewee 5:** No. *(Shaking her head)*

**Researcher:** So you just mainly use it for chit chatting purpose to make friends?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes. *(Nodded)*

**Researcher:** Just now you've mentioned that you used Tinder, Baituljannah and Bumble. So, which applications do you personally prefer more?



**Interviewee 5:** Actually, I prefer Baituljannah. Because it depends on the Sharia law, where as a Muslim, I feel like it's very helpful for me to you know, it set the boundaries, and it's more secure compared to the others.

**Researcher:** So you feel more secure by using Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Because for what I've known Baituljannah, when you are like communicating with each other, there will be a third party watching through the whole process. So is it because of this reason, you feel it very secure?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes. Because whatever that happens online, basically can give you two things, which may be an advantage or disadvantage for you. But as a person who I put security as one of my top priorities whenever talking to strangers online, you won't know their intentions until you meet them and even when you meet them, they can still have bad intentions. With the third party being there whenever I communicate with a total stranger, I believe that it's more protected, and it's in accordance with Sharia law. So I believe that as you can see, it helps me a lot in things such as, for instance, hook-ups, and all those sorts can be prevented. I wouldn't have to face situations like that, which makes me uncomfortable.

**Researcher:** I see. You said that you're currently in a recent relationship, right? Will you still, look for another relationship partner if you have the chance?

**Interviewee 5:** No (*Shaking her head and answered firmly*)

**Researcher:** So you have you feel satisfied with your partner right now?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes. (*Nodded*)

**Researcher:** You said that you like making friends through social dating applications right? Are you friends with someone you've met on dating applications? Do you guys still have any contact or to still talk to each other?

**Interviewee 5:** I do have, I think about two friends that I still stay in contact with. (*Recalling*)

**Researcher:** Which dating app?

**Interviewee 5:** At the time I was using Tinder.

**Researcher:** Both of them are also Tinder users?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So Tinder users is friendlier in making friends while Baituljannah is much safer for relationship partner, would you agree with that?

**Interviewee 5:** I think those two statements isn't align, because you asked me you ask me regarding friendliness and safety. So both apps are friendly is just that when it comes to safety or secure but I believe Baituljannah has a more safety rate compared to Tinder.

**Researcher:** I see.

**Interviewee 5:** But friendliness, I believe that it's quite the same depends on who you're talking to.

**Researcher:** I see. I do want to ask, like for Baituljannah, is a sense of security and also, because we're Muslims, right. So of course, we want to find someone who is also on the same vibe and same beliefs as us. So your intention in using Baituljannah at first in the beginning is it because you are trying to pursue a relationship or because as you say, Tinder is more to friendliness. Okay, honestly, do you see yourself having a relationship based on Tinder or Baituljannah? So basically, my question here is your intention of going in Baituljannah is it for something serious? Or is it just to try out, and if is there is there?

**Interviewee 5:** Okay, since I started using all these data applications during the pandemic. So I was looking for some sort of human interaction, as I mentioned. So I feel like now that I'm in a stable relationship, the reason or my intention, when I was using all these dating apps was the purely experimental, like I wanted to know how it works. And you know, what would happen from there, but I didn't really have like, high hopes for relationship or marriage or whatever. It was just was to try out.

**Researcher:** To trying out?

**Interviewee 5:** Yeah trying it out

**Researcher:** All right. Noted on that, okay. You said that you have been friends with like those that you have made two friends through Tinder right? So mind if you say that, how did you become close friends with them through Tinder?

**Interviewee 5:** How do we become close friend? (*Recalling*) Let me think. So from the conversation that we had on Tinder, we felt like, maybe we can talk more on other app which is Instagram, like we can save number at some point and we just bite I guess. We became close from there and it wasn't really into the relationship part but it's more of a friendly part, which is talking about, we were talking about the let's say study, and all these things, and we had a lot of things in common. So that's how the friendship still remains until today.

**Researcher:** So people with similar interests will attract you more in making friends?

**Interviewee 5:** I feel like it gives me a sense of like, how to say you have something to discuss about to the person.

**Researcher:** It's like you can have like continuous talk with each other and share your interests together.

**Interviewee 5:** Right. That's right. (*Nodded*)

**Researcher:** Okay. So you said that you have stopped after two or three months. Mind if you explain that what are the reasons that you stopped making friends through social media applications?

**Interviewee 5:** My reason isn't really because of those dating apps, mainly, is my time, all my studies, my university things were starting again after the postponement. So I was focused on whatever there needs to be done for my studies, instead of like, focusing on dating apps, and so forth. So that's my personal reason and I had like, a lot of interactions with my classmates and so forth to finish our tasks and assignment and I feel like I did not have the time to focus on the usage of the dating apps.

**Researcher:** So it's basically, you're occupied with other stuffs. So you decided to stop using dating applications, right?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Besides of friends, did you met someone that you, you have feelings? Did you met someone that you are really interested in? Not in not just like friends, but like romantic partner? That you think could have a potential relationship?

**Interviewee 5:** Oh, I mean, if you ask anyone who has a dating app, I'm sure their answer I mean, when it comes to their intentions going on those apps, it must be because you want to find someone.

**Researcher:** Yes

**Interviewee 5:** You can connect with this right? (*Cracked a laugh*) So I guess at that point, it didn't really occur to me that I wanted to be in a relationship. You see, I just wanted someone to talk to and no, I did not encounter or came across a moment where I feel like you can move to something serious. I was very comfortable with the situation that I was in with my friend in dating app. Yeah, so my answer is, no, I have never gotten to that point where I feel like a relationship would be perfect.

**Researcher:** As a user of those social dating applications, what bio attracts you to engage in the relationship? Like for Tinder you're able to see the user's bio, and then you swipe left or right. So what kind of like bio, or description makes you interested in?

**Interviewee 5:** For me I believe that one of the reasons or one of the characteristics as you can call is based on their educational background. I feel like that's very important because I am not sure certain accounts on Tinder, for instance, you can tell that person is not who they say they are right? From, from the pictures and so forth. So, I believe that for my part, I will be focusing on their educational background that they put on the bio and the way they present themselves. Like the description is important.

**Researcher:** Okay. How about for Baituljannah wise? Like, for Tinder wise, it's like the description like for Baituljannah is also the same, which is also education base and also interest?

**Interviewee 5:** Sorry, I didn't get the question. (*Confused*)

**Researcher:** Just now, you said that you look more on to like their educational base when it comes to description right? So for Baituljannah, does it work the same? It is also education and similar interests?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes, it is.

**Researcher:** Because this is a research about dating applications right and also Baituljannah. Do you mind like telling me what is like the actual differences between Baituljannah and Tinder? Because I know that it's not the same and because personally, I do have the application as well. I know that they do not have the swipe function. Do you mind to tell us like the differences?

**Interviewee 5:** So the obvious differences is the one that you just stated just now Baituljannah is more Muslim friendly, I believe? Because sometimes as a Muslim, we want to look for a serious relationship, for instance, and not all situations fit our intention. So with a boundary set in the Baituljannah app, it helps us like to filter out whatever that needs to be filtered. Which makes it way easier than Tinder because it gives you, a free space to just swipe and see your luck, who you match with, based on whatever your interest is. So Baituljannah is more focused on protecting Muslims. I believe? (*Uncertain*)

**Researcher:** Okay. So I do believe that we as Muslims, there are laws that actually says that polygamous relationship is allowed right? So have you ever encountered like, someone married actually asking you for to be a second wife or you know? Because it because as far as I know what he says in your bio, like, seeking for second wife, or like, single and stuff like that, right?

**Interviewee 5:** I have been halted like, maybe three, four times? And, to be honest, I'm not really in this polygamous relationship thing. (*Disgusted expression*) I'm not even married and I've never been married or engaged. But it's something that somewhat freaks me out, because finding his second wife shouldn't be that online. That's one thing. Your intentions for finding a second or third or fourth wife should be highly pure, and also, I feel like it's quite absurd to be looking for a second partner online, which is one of the reasons why I stopped using Baituljannah. Like way before I stop using Tinder and so forth. I experimented it when I encountered situations like that I wasn't really a big fan of it.

**Researcher:** All right. Yes that is a massive differences and, yeah, I do agree as well like, why will you find another second wife in an online platform? Okay. You mentioned that you stopped using Baituljannah way earlier than you stop using Tinder right. So in comparison, you will say that you actually prefer Tinder more than Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 5:** Based on my intention at that moment, which was to look for random human interaction. I was more on to Tinder compared to Baituljannah, because when you go on the app,

you know that the only thing that they're seeking for is marriage, straight away, where I wasn't into that. So I was back on Tinder. Yes, I preferred Tinder compared to Baituljannah.

**Researcher:** So by that you mean like you were looking for casual interaction? Is like it's more leaning to friendship thing?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes.

**Researcher:** That's just to find someone to talk to?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Okay, I see. But then have you ever, like, what if you tell people you meet on Baituljannah that you are just looking for friends? Like at the moment, you're not looking for something beyond that, is not acceptable on Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 5:** I have tried that a few times. But it just ends up in like the conversation being left hanging. Because what we were just... (*Hesitating*)

**Researcher:** Lost interest?

**Interviewee 5:** Yeah, just lost interest because we weren't on the same page basically.

**Researcher:** I see. You mentioned that it generates safer for Muslims, right? What do you mean by that? Like, is Tinder not safe?

**Interviewee 5:** Well, how Baituljannah works is that it depends on your interest, and then you will get a match on that right? And there's also a third party, wherever you engage with someone, there's a third party being present to the whole conversation. So Tinder does not have that. Tinder is like a free app. I mean, it's an open app where you can literally, swipe right to a murderer, or thief or whoever you know, I'm not saying that Baituljannah does not have like those chances of us matching with those people. It's just that when compared to a sense of security, Tinder is way more dangerous compare to Baituljannah because at least with the involvement of the third party on Baituljannah, you feel like whatever happens there, you will have a proof and you will have another person being present at a time and, seeing all those things happen. But Tinder is just way too you know.

**Researcher:** So, you can conclude that you're more of an outgoing person than a conservative one because you really like the rules and limitations on Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 5:** Is not that I don't like the rules I just felt like Baituljannah has is a platform where individuals go on to look for a serious, serious relationship. Well, Tinder is just something casual, you can literally have a conversation with anyone but Baituljannah is straight forward. That is the intention of the app.

**Researcher:** So it's like you don't like the pressure that's been being put on you when you're using Baituljannah? Like people's expectation on you when you're talking to them.

**Interviewee 5:** Right. But it's not entirely their fault, because that is their intention, while mine was different and I joined the app based off like, an experimental mind-set.

**Researcher:** Free mind.

**Interviewee 5:** Yeah, right. (*Nodded*)

**Researcher:** But then on both platforms, I'm sure that you have met different types of people, different personalities that you can observe. How do you know when it's just a friendship thing or a romantic thing going on between you and the other party? Like mainly comparing these two platforms?

**Interviewee 5:** Wait I don't really quite get the question. (*Confused*)

**Researcher:** So it's like when you're talking someone, talking to someone on Tinder, how do you know that it's just a friendship? Or maybe the person is expecting more than that, like, could it be romantic experience?

**Interviewee 5:** Okay, so, individually, personally, I am a type of person, before I get into something, I would like to put my intentions like, straight and clear way before, whatever engagements we have after that. (*Determined*) So I did that, if when I was using those apps, so on Tinder, I wasn't really looking for a relationship, or at the time, I wasn't ready for anything serious. So when I put that out there, of course, I got like a few responses such as you know, like the ones that just leave you hanging like Baituljannah, for instance certain people actually was on the same page as I was so we got to be friends. I believe that is because I put my intentions first, I was not trying to get their hopes up high or something it makes it way easier when using dating apps so that, you know, anything that happens is based on one intention.

**Researcher:** So, you said you're currently in a relationship, but then you're not using social dating application right now right?

**Interviewee 5:** No

**Researcher:** Just now, you've mentioned that social media application is mainly for you to make friends. Would you still go on if your partner doesn't mind that you use social media applications to make friends? Would you still use it?

**Interviewee 5:** No. (*Shaking her head and answered firmly*) Because, I mean, it's called a dating app. Even though your intention is to make friends or whatever, it's still called a dating app. So I feel like it will be very disrespectful towards my partner, even if he's okay with it. You know, it's me disrespecting him as a person, who is who I am with at the moment. So I will not go on it.

**Researcher:** Did you like encounter people like you have met in physically they're in a relationship. But then when it comes to social dating applications, they mentioned that they are single, did you ever encounter those situations?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes, and it wasn't a pleasant feeling, because the person that he was in a relationship, he is still in a relationship with is a person that I used to know. So it wasn't a pleasant feeling to encounter such behaviour. (*Disgusted expression*)

**Researcher:** Do you think that is a common thing nowadays at dating applications? Like it was just like a one or two situations that happened?

**Interviewee 5:** I wouldn't say common because I wasn't really that long on those apps and I don't think that it happens all the time. Based on my experience, I don't think it happens all the time but it might be, so I'm not sure.

**Researcher:** So like, there's still chances that it might happen but not that often?

**Interviewee 5:** Yes, there's still a chance.

**Researcher:** So at the very beginning, you said that you use social dating applications during the pandemic. What's the frequency of you using the social dating application is like daily, or like one week, twice or thrice?

**Interviewee 5:** One week, twice or thrice. It wasn't that frequent.

**Researcher:** It's just like whenever you have free time, you feel like going on the applications to see what's going on and to talk to others?

**Interviewee 5:** Right. (*Nodded*)

**Researcher:** I see. So, do you think that the usage of the social dating applications increased during the pandemic? Not just you but also people around you, your friends and maybe your family? Do they use it more often compared to the time that's not during the pandemic.

**Interviewee 5:** Yeah, because during the pandemic everybody was at home and it somewhat put a stop to your social engagement or if people who wants to look for a partner or whatever, that is the only way to put yourself out there and discovering new people, even though the new people is not for dating purposes. But if it is, I have stories that Tinder applications help a person to find their husband or wife. 'Jodoh' basically. From the pandemic itself right people use it all the time. During the pandemic there is a huge change in the number of people who uses this dating app and I can like see some of my friends using them as well throughout the pandemic.

**Researcher:** I see. So you do agree that during the pandemic the usage of dating app increase. But, aside of the pandemic do you think that this situation is like happens a lot like people tend to use social dating applications instead of dating physically?

**Interviewee 5:** Based on my observation, I believe that the usage of dating app weren't really, not to say accepted (*thinking*), but is wasn't really a norm you know is not something you talked about, is not something you tell people, like: 'You know what I'm on Tinder, I'm on Bumble or Baituljannah'. For instance, is something that you keep to yourself, because, it some sort of feel

ashamed having to use dating app, I'm talking about way before the pandemic. But ever since this whole pandemic occurred I fell like it's a new, it opens up conversations, and is a new thing to be talking to people about and it's accepted. I mean not by all, but it is accepted and this conversation needs to happen because with the engagement of these people it can help in better usage of dating apps and people can understand what are the various what are the things they can't and can do on this dating app and it enhances their understanding on the security and the dangers of using such platforms.

**Researcher:** Okay. So, overall would you recommend your friends especially Muslim to use Baituljannah? Rather than just the sense of security, like do you have any advice to way people should Muslim especially to go for Baituljannah instead of other dating applications?

**Interviewee 5:** It all comes back to your aims and intention when it comes to using. So if those who are seeking for a serious relationship or marriage for example maybe they should try it out but generally speaking I wouldn't recommend anyone to look for a serious relationship, because I believe that it might help, I mean if you're lucky it might help you, but in most cases not the right way I believe, maybe I'm traditional minded? (*Uncertain*) I'm not sure, but that is my opinion.

**Researcher:** Alright, okay. Okay. I think you've answered all our questions. Thank you Aina.

Interviewee 5 Signature:



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Date: 23/2/22

### **Transcription 6**

**Researcher:** Talking about social dating applications, what comes in your mind?

**Interviewee 6:** What comes into my mind is the social dating applications are used to find romantic partners or friends.

**Researcher:** To find relationships and friendships, building connections?



**Interviewee 6:** Yes

**Researcher:** Do you use any? (social dating applications)

**Interviewee 6:** I have used both Tinder and Baituljannah. December 2020 until January 2021 for Tinder. I have notice there are many disadvantages happened in Tinder, so, I have switched to use Baituljannah and I feel Baituljannah is way better than Tinder.

**Researcher:** Why you say so? Why is it better than Tinder?

**Interviewee 6:** Baituljannah is more legitimate and the details from other users can be trusted. (Uncertain)

**Researcher:** You mentioned that you have been using Baituljannah and also Tinder, so you use Tinder before Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, correct.

**Researcher:** Tinder was in 2020?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, from December 2020 until January 2021.

**Researcher:** So, you used Baituljannah in last year?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, last year in early March.

**Researcher:** What is the reason you started to use Tinder first?

**Interviewee 6:** Because in that time during MCO we had to stay at home and I was lonely. That's why I started to use Tinder to find new friends. I have met many friends on Tinder, but only temporarily, and no longer in touch.

**Researcher:** What do you mean by "Temporary friends"?

**Interviewee 6:** It's like we get to know each other but there is no chemistry between us, so we just lose contact. (Confidently)

**Researcher:** Is this means the purpose of you using Tinder is just for making new friends instead of searching for relationships?

**Interviewee 6:** It is because the first intention of me being using Tinder is to find a girlfriend.

**Researcher:** Why this happened? Tinder for you is not serious? (Serious in terms of finding relationships)

**Interviewee 6:** I feel like on Tinder people can fake their identity by age and profile picture. That's why I have to stay alert because I'm afraid that I will get scammed by them. (Smirk)

**Researcher:** So, what you mean is like even when you first started using Tinder, you are already very careful because you don't fully trust the people you meet on Tinder. That's why in the end all those people u met as friends become only in temporarily because you don't trust them?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, correct. My friend even told me people on Tinder generally use the application for finding friend with benefit, and do stuffs like not serious (serious here means referring to as find partner or make new friends).

**Researcher:** By then why you switch to Baituljannah? Like how do you know Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 6:** I know Baituljannah in last year Febraury, 2021. My friend has introduced it to me and he said this application requires the user's information such as IC number, basically it needs you to provide your personal details. So, when my friend mentioned about this, I feel like Baituljannah can be trusted to find a romantic partner. That's why I started to use Baituljannah over Tinder (Confidently)

**Researcher:** So, is the experience in Baituljannah very similar to Tinder? Like you mentioned you have met friends only in temporarily or there is other experience?

**Interviewee 6:** On Baituljannah, I actually met my current girlfriend through the application itself, however, in terms of settings or whatnot, there is no difference between them like finding new friends or relationships but Baituljannah is still more trustworthy than Tinder.

**Researcher:** What about the people you met on Tinder and Baituljannah? Any differences between these people like the way they talk to you, the way they approach you?

**Interviewee 6:** There is some differences between them since Baituljannah is following the Syariah law and more to Islamic, the way they approach is different compared to Tinder.

**Researcher:** Any examples?

**Interviewee 6:** During the matchup, the process has to be slow to get the right details or information such as phone number.

**Researcher:** Is this means that compare to Tinder, you find Baituljannah is more comfortable for you because you like to take things slow? And with the rules and regulations, everything is aligned.

**Interviewee 6:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So, Baituljannah is more serious since you have to follow the rules and regulations (Syariah law) while Tinder is not, and on Baituljannah you don't even know that person's name that you matchup with at first, so, this is like the difference between Tinder and Baituljannah.

**Interviewee 6:** It is better for me to take some time to get to know that person.

**Researcher:** You are the type of person who are looking for something serious on Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, correct.

**Researcher:** You have never met someone who have the same idea with you on Tinder?

**Interviewee 6:** It is because on Tinder people can fake their identity by age and profile picture, and even young minors also using the application. This is why I stop using Tinder.

**Researcher:** How long it took you to know your current girlfriend through Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 6:** (Thinking) I have used Baituljannah for searching my potential partner for about 3 months from March until June, 2021. I have met many people through the application, but most of them were not interested in me or didn't match each other. However, for this person (current girlfriend), she wanted to find a serious relationship just like me, and therefore we matchup each other. During the process, I just like chat normally with her and got her phone number something like that.

**Researcher:** Do you guys got to hang out before you and your girlfriend are in a relationship?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes (Nodding). We did hang out for couple of times eating together before we officially become a couple.

**Researcher:** So, is this the first relationship that happened through the social dating application or you did have other experiences on social dating applications?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes. This is the first time I found my girlfriend thought social dating application. As for the friends I met in Baitujannah, I still keep in touch with them because they are just like my regular friends and we will hang out for gatherings.

**Researcher:** Your friends that got to know on Baitujannah?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Your girlfriend will not feel upset about it? Since you hang out with those friends that met on Baituljannah.

**Interviewee 6:** She did ask me who I hang out with, and me had to explain in detail and slow. Overall, she feels alright about it because I don't go out with them very often.

**Researcher:** What about people you meet on Tinder? Some of them become friends right?

**Interviewee 6:** Since I used Tinder just in a short amount of time, we did chat with each other only through Tinder and I didn't manage to get to know their social media, phone number or whatnot. That's why we didn't become friends. (Firmly)

**Researcher:** Since your friends told you that Tinder is more on casual relationship like sexual hookup, one night stand and friends with benefit, during your very short period in using Tinder, have you ever tried that?

**Interviewee 6:** I have never tried before but I notice that other users' bios or profiles did mention that they are looking for hookups or friends with benefits.

**Researcher:** So, you have no swipe for it (Means accept in Tinder)?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, because by looking at their profile picture, is not my taste. (Laugh)

**Researcher:** Is it because you didn't meet your type, so you never swipe. However, if the person is the type that you like, you would try?

**Interviewee 6:** If the person is my type, then maybe. (Laugh)

**Researcher:** Since I know Baituljannah doesn't allow friends with benefit but on Tinder you are able to meet those people. Therefore, even if you don't swipe right you still can able to see others' bio like they are looking for friends with benefits. However, what if their bio does not show

anything like looking for friends with benefit and they match up with you? And after you guys chat for a while, they started to ask to try friends with benefit. Is this happened before on Tinder?

**Interviewee 6:** No, it never happened before. However, if it happens, I would take it slow.

**Researcher:** Is this means you won't reject all opportunities? It just like depend how much you like this person?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, correct. (Nodding)

**Researcher:** Then, in a way these are the two social dating application you have used before. Besides social dating applications, do you have any friends with benefit in real life?

**Interviewee 6:** No, I never have it in real life.

**Researcher:** Okay, let's go back to friendship topic on Baituljannah. You have mentioned that you met some good friends and your current girlfriend on Baituljannah, how do you differentiate in the first place like this is just normal friend but this girl gives you different feelings?

**Interviewee 6:** (Thinking seriously) I get to know them like one by one first and in the end see which person gives me the sense of security and comfort. I will just differentiate them like that to determine which one should become friends or not. And because my girlfriend is looking for serious relationship, so I follow the flow (Choose his currently girlfriend as his partner).

**Researcher:** Follow the flow, I see. Which mean some of them are not giving you the vibe to become a serious couple, so you also friendzone them.

**Interviewee 6:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What are the activities you will do with your friends (Friends met on Baitujannah)?

**Interviewee 6:** We just like eating with each other and talk about stuff like how's your working, something like that.

**Researcher:** It comes in like a group or like usually just two of you?

**Interviewee 6:** Two of us.

**Researcher:** So, it's like this day u hang out with this friend just both of you only, and then hang out with another friend on another day, is that so? And your girlfriend is allowing it?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, sometimes she will feel worry about it, but just have to explain to her. Also, I'm not go out with them very often.

**Researcher:** Do you still doing this now? (Hang out with those friends)

**Interviewee 6:** No, not anymore because I have to respect this relationship with my girlfriend.

**Researcher:** That happened before your currently girlfriend become officially your girlfriend?

**Interviewee 6:** It's like in the meantime. (Laugh)

**Researcher:** Just want to ask how many friends you met on Baituljannah? Like the friends you hang out with. And did you hang out with them like one on one?

**Interviewee 6:** It's like three including my girlfriend. As for hang out, I did meet them like one on one because if three of them meet each other, it will become really awkward because they do not know each other.

**Researcher:** Okay. So, to exclude your girlfriend there are still two female friends that you met on Baituljannah, do you still friend with them?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes. We are still friends. They did know I have a girlfriend already and they feel alright about it. We still like contact with each other normally.

**Researcher:** Did you bring them out to meet your girlfriend in group?

**Interviewee 6:** No, maybe in the future. For now, I do not have this kind of thought.

**Researcher:** But what about your girlfriend? Has she met like guy friends on Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 6:** I did ask her about it before and she told me she had a few of guy friends still in contact but never hang out with them before.

**Researcher:** Since you are in a relationship right now, will you still use Baituljannah to search like friend?

**Interviewee 6:** No, I will stop using it.

**Researcher:** But you still feel alright to hang out with the friends you already met on Baituljannah?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So, it's like you agree to hang out with the friends that you met on social dating application before you are in a relationship, but when you are in a relationship you won't using any social dating applications or Baituljannah to meet new friends?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, correct. (Nodding)

**Researcher:** So, you have stop using both Tinder and Baituljannah, like deleted the applications?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, correct. I didn't use both Tinder and Baituljannah anymore because I want to fully focus on my girlfriend.

**Researcher:** How about your girlfriend? Is she still using?

**Interviewee 6:** She is just same as me like stop using Baituljannah. She fully focus on me also to maintain this relationship.

**Researcher:** How long is this relationship ongoing?

**Interviewee 6:** (Thinking) We started to contact each other in June, in October she became my girlfriend and we have been in a relationship ever since.

**Researcher:** Speaking of Tinder and Baituljannah, because you used both of these applications, do you think these social dating applications help you to meet people or know people more easily compared in real life?

**Interviewee 6:** I agree for Tinder and Baituljannah since during the period of MCO, we cannot meet people very often. For this question, I think it is better to use these social dating applications during the MCO. However, since now the situation is quite different from that time and many of us can go out and meet people, so it is better to know someone physically better than using social dating applications, for my opinion. (Decisively)

**Researcher:** You actually prefer more to know people in real life, however, using social dating applications is just because something happened (MCO) suddenly, right?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes. (Nodding)

**Researcher:** There are also other social dating applications other than Tinder and Baituljannah right? Why did you use only these two while there are many social dating applications exist like Bumble?

**Interviewee 6:** I use Tinder because I heard from social media that the app is for finding partners or friends. That's why I tried this application and after that I felt Tinder is not suitable for me. Then my friend has introduced me Baituljannah and I just want to try it out. (Calmly)

**Researcher:** Is your first intention is to find a girlfriend through these applications?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, my first intention was to find a girlfriend because it was during the MCO period, and lonely. (Laugh)

**Researcher:** But why did you want to find a girlfriend during the MCO period because of lonely? Before MCO you don't feel lonely at all?

**Interviewee 6:** Before MCO I can go out with my friends, yeah.

**Researcher:** This means that before MCO, you can go out with your friends because it makes your life can do so many meaningful stuffs since every day is doing different activities and meeting new people, you won't think of need to find a girlfriend?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes. And the things that I want to add on is that Tinder allows you to put locations. When you matchup with one another, it usually within your area. So, this is why I use Tinder because I can get the matchup that close to me, but I feel like Tinder is not suitable for me because I'm afraid of being scammed. That's why I switch to use Baituljannah.

**Researcher:** For now, everything is back to normal now and you can go out with your friends, doesn't that mean your girlfriend serves no purpose already?

**Interviewee 6:** No, it's not correct because she became my girlfriend and I have to take care of her as well.

**Researcher:** A lot of your friends using Tinder and Baituljannah? And your friends introduced these applications to you?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, correct. However, only Baituljannah is the application that my friend introduced to me.

**Researcher:** Since you mentioned that you have stop using social dating applications, just imagine if you girlfriend allows you to use social dating applications, will you go for it?

**Interviewee 6:** I will not. (Calmly)



**Researcher:** However, let say your girlfriend allows you to use social dating application, and you started to use it again. You have found someone who you interested with, what will you do?

**Interviewee 6:** Like I just said, I will just focus on my girlfriend and I will not have any further action with that person.

**Researcher:** Do you have any friends that still using social dating applications when they are in a relationship?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, of course.

**Researcher:** What is their situation now?

**Interviewee 6:** They will just do it quietly, like behind their girlfriend something like that.

**Researcher:** Something like get to know new people, friends with benefit?

**Interviewee 6:** Normally it just like get to know new people only. For friends with benefits I don't see it happen yet.

**Researcher:** For Muslim, friends with benefit is forbidden right?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, correct.

**Researcher:** Since Muslim is allowing polygamy relationships right, I just want to ask if you and your current girlfriend are married, would you still use Baituljannah to search for second relationship since it allows in Muslim?

**Interviewee 6:** Depend on what situation. It is because if the man allows to do so (the wife agrees) and maybe if they feel bored towards their wife, then it could happen.

**Researcher:** So, this situation might happen to you too?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, maybe. (Laugh)

**Researcher:** So, if you are going to find for second relationship, would you still use Baituljannah or through real life.

**Interviewee 6:** I will go for real life. (Decisively)

**Researcher:** Do you think many people started to use social dating applications more frequently during the pandemic period?

**Interviewee 6:** I do agree with it. Both Tinder and Baituljannah are having more active users than before. Baituljannah for me is the most obvious one.

**Researcher:** It is because the application follows the Syariah law right?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes, correct.

**Researcher:** What do you think is the reason about this sudden rise of active users in social dating applications during the MCO period?

**Interviewee 6:** I think is because they feel lonely and want to meet new friends.

**Researcher:** When you using both Tinder and Baituljannah, were you very active on them like do you go on every day or one time per week during the MCO?

**Interviewee 6:** I'm not that active. Usually, I will use it like once a day to match others. It depends on whether I got a matchup or not.

**Researcher:** So, it's like when you have notifications u will go check them and you will open once in a day at least?

**Interviewee 6:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think this online dating will become the new normal after the pandemic is over?

**Interviewee 6:** Even before the pandemic existed, I feel like this online dating is normal for everyone, but it just became so obvious during this pandemic because we cannot go out and we have to connect with each other through the internet. After this pandemic is over, this online dating method will still be ongoing.

**Researcher:** Do you think most people will have the same thought as you? Like people would still prefer back to physical dating or they will prefer online dating more now?

**Interviewee 6:** I think most people still prefer physical dates because we can get to know each other in more detail, like face to face.

**Researcher:** I think we covered all the questions already. Thank you.

Interviewee 6's signature:



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Date: 15/3/2022

## **Original Transcript**

### **Transcription 1**

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, when it comes to dating, have you ever used any dating application that are very common nowadays?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I have used a couple of dating applications. Uhm, mostly Bumble or Tinder.

**Interviewer:** Okay Bumble and Tinder. But why? Because there are still many other dating applications right, why Tinder and Bumble?

**Interviewee:** (Thinking) Uhm... I tend to find people on Tinder or Bumble to be around. Uh, the people that I, like similar to me (thinking) as opposed to Tantan and other dating applications you know.

**Interviewer:** Okay. I am aware that Tantan is a dating application from China. You think that the people on Tantan are not really similar as you?

**Interviewee:** (Thinking) Uhm yeah, the people that use Tantan (smiling) are not the people that I want to date (nodding head and laughed).

**Interviewer:** What do you mean by that?

**Interviewee:** (Deep thinking) Uhm I think, I think (sighed) the interface and the way that Tantan is structured, uh it kinda dissuades me from joining (sighed), because it's very Chinese based (hand-gesturing with a circle), and I'm not looking to mix with like... you know... erm yeah.

**Interviewer:** You mean Chinese educated people?

**Interviewee:** Yeah. I can say that I guess.

**Interviewer:** But there are also people from different backgrounds on Tantan right, even they do speak Chinese.

**Interviewee:** (Smiling) Yeah that's true that's true (firmly) but I think Tantan caters towards that demographic more than other demographics (hesitating) in my experience la.

**Interviewer:** Which means that you also tried using Tantan but it's just not for you?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I tried a couple times but the people I meet there is not the people that I would... uh... like (laughed).

**Interviewer:** What about Tinder? Because maybe you are more English based so you'd like to find people who are coming from the same or similar background as you, but on Tinder there could also be people who match with you with similar interests but they are just like the people from Tantan? It could be that right?

**Interviewee:** Yeah (thinking but uninterested to continue).

**Interviewer:** So, what makes it different than from Tinder than Tantan?

**Interviewee:** (Deep thinking) I think Tinder is more like (hand gesturing with both palms apart) like there's more people on Tinder so, (thinking) than any other dating applications out there. So, I think because I think it's quite famous I think compared to other dating applications. (Paused) So in that way, there's a lot of selections (smiled) like you know, there's a lot of people as compared to yeah. I think some applications cater to other demographics you know.

**Interviewer:** You mean Tinder has a bigger audience selection.

**Interviewee:** (Agreed and nodded) Hmm.

**Interviewer:** So, you prefer Tinder because it helps the chances of meeting more people are higher?

**Interviewee:** (Laughed) I mean (paused) yeah I guess.

**Interviewer:** Alright, so you're actually using Tinder to meet more people?

**Interviewee:** Hmm I mean when I was in Sarawak, Bumble was dead there because nobody used Bumble in Kuching, and a lot of people used Tinder there yeah. So, when I was there, like when I was on Bumble, (smiled) there was very few people, like 5 people. When I was on another dating application, like Tinder there was a lot more people in Kuching.

**Interviewer:** It can also be concluded that because Tinder is more well-known that's why more people use it, even you were in Kuching

**Interviewee:** (Agreed and nodded) Yeah, hmm.

**Interviewer:** Sorry don't mind me asking, how did you get to know Tinder? Is it through friends?

**Interviewee:** I think through popular media, if I don't remember.

**Interviewer:** Advertising?

**Interviewee:** Nooooo... eh was it... I think maybe it was, uh reading up online or watching video cause I'm not sure. It's been a long time.

**Interviewer:** Is it like you looked through via Instagram reels or whatever and people on Tinder, was it something like that from social media?

**Interviewee:** I think that's a long time, maybe it was 9GAG actually (laughed). That was long time ago.

**Interviewer:** Also, maybe Tinder is more international so we can see sometimes it appears on memes also. What about Tinder or Tantan?

**Interviewee:** Oh yeah, I have friends suggest to me Bumble and Tantan.

**Interviewer:** Which means your circle of friends they're more leaning to Tantan and Bumble?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I have friends that preferred Tantan and friends that prefer different... yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay, it is more of a personal preference. When did you start using Tinder?

**Interviewee:** (Thinking hard) Uh, I think 18 as soon as yeah. Cause it was like, uh okay. I heard about it and I downloaded it, and oh I swiped (laughed).

**Interviewer:** It's like a new thing to us when we're fresh out of high school right. But then you were trying it out for? Because you know, Tinder is very commonly used for sexual hook-ups or even meeting people if you're looking for something serious, or you're not serious. So, your intention when you were 18 was that you wanted to try anything?

**Interviewee:** Ah I was, I was pretty open but like I didn't get any matches for a very long time (shaking his head) when I was on Tinder. Yeah... (hesitating) hmm but it was just like a thing you know, me and my friends were like eh check your Tinder you know (smiled), and we were just like swiped each other for fun, we were not particularly serious about, like oh I'm gonna find my wife here one day, we're gonna grow old... nah no no (shaking head and smiling), we don't think anything like that.

**Interviewer:** It was more like trying out the settings, the interface

**Interviewee:** It was like a game... it was like a game.

**Interviewer:** So you're just trying to get reaction out of that? Just trying to know what is the big fuss about that?

**Interviewee:** Erm, I think it was more like, you know, you're bored, nothing to do, no entertainment... and just like pull up Tinder, and it's like eh swipe your friends and just checked out like eh it's the same person we just swiped right on (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Talking about being bored, did you use it often in the pandemic? Like how often did you go there?

**Interviewee:** Oh yeah, hmm everyday (unsure), maybe? Because erm during pandemic time, I had a couple of people that I was talking to on Tinder. So I just talked to them during pandemic even though it was kind of boring, cause there was not much to talk about.

**Interviewer:** But why is that? Like I'm sure you have a lot of friends but why you choose to be in Tinder?

**Interviewee:** Oh, meeting people is always fun, I enjoy meeting people.

**Interviewer:** You said you were just bored when you were 18 and you downloaded tinder. It was like a game to you, you weren't really looking for anything specific. And compared to now, you're still using it right?

**Interviewee:** Oh no no.

**Interviewer:** I mean pandemic, right?

**Interviewee:** Ah pandemic, yeah.

**Interviewer:** You were in Kuching and it's the same because you were also bored, so what is the difference compared to when you were bored at 18 versus in pandemic?

**Interviewee:** Hmmm, I don't think it changed that much? But it was just something to pass the time from meeting people because I enjoyed meeting people when I was bored (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Which means like you were in Kuching, and you were isolated, that's why you wanted to meet new people online? And if your intention is just to build new connections, right? It has to be done online. So, what's the difference? Just talk to your friends, your actual friends online since you can do that. Also, if you're bored, right? Why? Yeah, yeah. Why do you have to go on Tinder?

**Interviewee:** I don't think there's a comparison to be drawn between talking to friends and talking to people on Tinder. Because one is meeting new people and one is talking to people you already know. So, it's not the same as talking to people.

**Interviewer:** Okay so talking about meeting new people, have you met anyone during the pandemic, like online?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned that you talked to a couple of people right back. Yeah. So, it was all there, or in the same place, as you?

**Interviewee:** Ah no, in the radius, like, the radius, I guess? Around Kuching, Kuching is not very big. So, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, but what do you usually talk to them? Like, how do you classify? Yeah, initiate a friendship? Because sometimes people could approach you with other intentions, right?

**Interviewee:** Erm usually, I would comment regarding something in their bio yeah... or their picture like, Oh, that's really nice dress or Wow, you look really nice. Or, you know, or, Oh, you dance to dance to and we can connect on that. You know. I think, I think it's nice to give compliments. But you know, sometimes, no matter what you say, the person will not apply. So, it's fine.

**Interviewer:** Okay, yeah. I do have one question. Um, you use Tinder and Bumble. Right? Because the specs are different, right? In Tinder and Bumble. In Tinder, normally guys start first. But on Bumble, the girls have to start first, right? So, which one would you prefer? Tinder or Bumble? In terms of?

**Interviewee:** I prefer Bumble.

**Interviewer:** You do? Cause you don't have to take the first step?

**Interviewee:** Um, yes. And second, it takes up pressure you know, if the girl doesn't want to talk to you, she just won't to talk to you, you know, it's not it's like, okay, it's gone bye-bye.

**Interviewer:** You just got ghosted, like right instantly.

**Interviewee:** And it's fine, you know. There's no like, there's nothing there's no pressure.



**Interviewer:** But then what if some people you like you match with each other, and they approach you and they don't want just to be friends with you? They want more. Would you ghost them or anything?

**Interviewee:** I mean, it always depends on the situation, I wouldn't be like uh, if I like the person back, then it would mean a different thing. But if I don't like that person back then I would choose to say, Oh, I'm not looking for this. Or Like, I don't see, I don't see us being a thing in the future.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewee:** You know. I mean, communication is always there, you can always just tell the person, you know, it's better to let them down now than later.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Which means that you are actually open to being more than friends if you are interested in that also.

**Interviewee:** Uhm Of course, of course. I don't set hardlines on myself. I don't.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Because you know why? Some people, they do go on dating apps, but they will limit themselves with these boundaries. Like, I'm not looking for anything serious. I just want to talk to people. But yeah, things will always happen. You know, it when it happens, it happens. So, what do you think about it? Like, because you use both Tinder and Bumble, back, right? So, you prefer which one more?

**Interviewee:** Um I think I prefer Bumble more. I think the demographic on Bumble somehow is more of my type compared to Tinder. Last time I use it lah for some reason, I don't know. The people I met on Bumble, I can talk better with than on Tinder.

**Interviewer:** Is this because of the quality? Would it be?

**Interviewee:** It might be, it might be because it goes up to initiate conversations first, might be? I'm not sure (laughed). But...

**Interviewer:** So, what are your criteria of matching with people? Like what can make you swipe right?

**Interviewee:** Oh, um of course, of course nice pictures. Of course, a decent bio, you know. I mean, I don't think I have high standards (laughed) to match with people. But I do think that I have like somewhat of a sense that like, yeah.

**Interviewer:** What do you mean? Like pictures and bio?

**Interviewee:** Um something that is like interesting you know, not something basic. Like if I know you copy a quote off somewhere. I know you copied lyrics off somewhere. It's basic or a line from a TV show (laughed), it's basic.

**Interviewer:** What if the girl looking at her pictures? Like you like the pictures, but her bio is just like I love dogs. I'm a dog person. What about that?

**Interviewee:** If her pictures have dogs inside then okay lah it makes sense. You know? If pictures no dogs and I'm like... (laughed)

**Interviewer:** I do have a question. Yeah. This is more of a comparison between Tinder and Bumble. Would you agree in my statement, if I say that Tinder is more on hook-ups rather than a real relationship?

**Interviewee:** Um I think a lot of guys, and maybe some girls go on Tinder to specifically have hook-ups. That's what I get the impression of lah. Yeah um so whereas Bumble is less known, and I feel like yeah, only bad impression. If you're on Tinder, you're there to get hook-ups, you are always there to get hook-ups. So that's like, I think the general idea of Tinder, the brand, compared to Bumble.

**Interviewer:** So, like I said, this is this recording is confidential, honestly speaking, are you in the application because maybe your DTF or maybe you're looking for let's say if someone, a girl is approaching you saying that okay, I'm DTF. Would you go?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Definitely? Alright. So, yeah, like in your perception will be more on casual hook-ups, and so on.

**Interviewee:** I guess it works, you know, but I never hold myself to like that standard because I knew it could be for more but it's not really like my main goal. I guess. I don't really have a main goal when doing this kind of things.

**Interviewer:** Alright, so definitely you're not looking for something serious creating these dating applications?

**Interviewee:** Um, yeah, I guess so.

**Interviewer:** But okay, but if it happens, you don't mind right if you are also interested?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, yeah. Uh, um (thinking hard). I think I go into dating apps with like an idea of like, okay, it's just for a while, but then when something real happens and you fall hard for someone that you just decided, okay, maybe I changed my rules and I want I decided to be in relationship with this person, you know? And then you kind of just tell yourself that oh, you know what, it's okay. You know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, but did it happen before?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, a couple of times.

**Interviewer:** From Tinder?

**Interviewee:** Uh yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So how are the relationships?

**Interviewee:** Uh this was with my ex, that I reconnected. No, not only my ex. I met on Tinder. I had like a very passionate. No no, this was my ex ex, two exes ago. We had over a year of relationship together, but it didn't work out in the end lah. And with my other ex, we had about three months before we had to do LDR. And we couldn't take any more. So, we called it quit. And now if my current girlfriend where um yeah, we're still together. And we met on dating app.

**Interviewer;** Oh, you met your girlfriend via social dating application?

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Bumble?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Oh okay, yeah. So, when did you start using Bumble?

**Interviewee:** I don't remember. But this was a couple years after Tinder when I think one of my friends introduced me, but I don't remember when. I think maybe 2018? I think? 2019. I'm not sure.

**Interviewer:** But then in the same year, or even after the year you started using Bumble, you still managed to build relationships, or romantic relationship with your exes through Bumble. Bumble wasn't a thing for you back in that time?

**Interviewee:** I guess er, I guess back then Bumble wasn't the people that I remember. But wasn't that but then now I guess the demographic changed maybe? I'm not sure (giggled).

**Interviewer:** You do have other relationships that happen in real life, right? Not meeting them on dating apps?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah. But this was before I started using dating apps. I mean, once I started dating apps, I think... (hesitating).

**Interviewer;** You don't meet people physically attractive to you anymore?

**Interviewee:** Oh, no, no, it's just like, I find like the whole point of meeting someone that you don't know, very daunting, you know? And especially if they don't shout out to you that they are single, and they want to meet up, you know, they are looking for something. It's very, like, should I talk to this person, and they'll be offended if I talk to them or something? So, I'm like, Ah, and it's not really Malaysian culture to talk to random people, talk to strangers and be like, Hi, are you single? Because it's gonna be really weird. I feel, especially for me, I'm not I don't think I'm very attractive. So (laughed) when I go up to people, yeah. Okay, I'm not like, Yeah,

**Interviewer:** But what if, by that, you mean like, meeting people physically? Because you are interested is not very your thing, because it's like a wrong long process to you. And you always have to do is like playing a game?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah, of course. It's like gambling. But I find my chances on Tinder better (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Why is online meeting people turns out, making your relationship building much better?

**Interviewee:** Because if you're online that means you're open to talking to me. If you're on the app means you're open to talking to people. At least that's what you tell if you're on the app, you want to talk to people, or else you won't be on or you won't be matching with me In the first place.

**Interviewer:** You want something straight to the point?

**Interviewee:** Huh? No, no, it's not straight to the point more like it feels like I'm not intruding on the private space. You know, when I talk to someone in your life, it's like, who are you? Why are you talking to me? You know, and I don't want to be that guy that like traumatises a girl because I just wanted to know her, you know? Yeah. Some, like, yeah. I mean, I have a lot of friends, which are girls, and they always like, they get really agitated whenever random people talk to them, or like, catcalled or whatever, you know. So, it's always like, I don't want to be that guy (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Okay, okay. Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewee:** So, I think it's okay to have crushes on people. It's okay to talk to my if you have, you know them. But if you don't know, you got like,

**Interviewer:** It's like, everything starts from zero. It's very hard.

**Interviewee:** Yeah yeah (agreed). And you're gonna be that guy in one of the stories where it's like, you know, this, this, this, this dude came up to me, he's such a creepy, you know? And I'm like, I don't want to be that guy (laughed)

**Interviewer:** Okay, but what about during the pandemic? You were building connections on Tinder. And Bumble, right? You didn't encounter any experience, like you said, some girls find you the way you talk, it's just not up to their expectations?

**Interviewee:** I mean, if they, if they didn't like the way I talked they would just stop talking to me, and I would get the signal and be like, Okay, that's fine.

**Interviewer:** Okay, but were you in a relationship by in the pandemic?

**Interviewee:** No, I was single (laughed).

**Interviewer:** So, you mentioned that you were trying to talk to new people. You were isolated. So, you go on very often.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, no, I think daily to check many chat messages.

**Interviewer:** In that case, did you build up any rare friendship with people on Tinder?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah many (laughed). All of them are still following me on Instagram. Now.

**Interviewer:** You guys hang out?

**Interviewee:** Yeah. Uh not a lot. But sometimes we do meet each other and be like Oh, my God. Yeah (laughed). So, nothing turned out. But you know, we still follow each other and talk to each other every now and then, like, reply to each other stories and still talk to each other.

**Interviewer:** So, it's like you, you think the connection is good. As a friend? You exchange your socials, but then you guys never hang out at all?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** But this was when in during the pandemic. You know, because if you're using Tinder or Bumble, we have this distance that you would know where a person is from and everything during the pandemic. Do you swipe the people that is closer to you?

**Interviewee:** Based on distance lah. Erm because due to my situation in Sarawak, I didn't have a car. so, I didn't really care about the distance. So yeah, and i never met with anybody, so I never

decided to meet with anybody. Because you know, I'm scared. I live in a house of 10 people. And I didn't want to endanger any of them during a pandemic time. So...

**Interviewer:** You guys were just talking why frequently on Tinder but not meeting.

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah. We were just like talking throughout the day, because I really stuck at home.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned that you're currently in a relationship right.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, don't mind if I ask is this current relationship is formed through the social dating app or physically?

**Interviewee:** We met through social dating apps, Bumble.

**Interviewer:** Is that during the pandemic or?

**Interviewee:** Um... I mean is now still considered as the pandemic?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Interviewee:** Yeah yeah... I met her in December... actually (laughed). Early December... or mid-December, I'm not sure. Yeah. We just talked online.

**Interviewer:** Before this current girlfriend, do you have other relationship during the pandemic?

**Interviewee:** Um, not any... I wasn't dating anybody. Or was I... uh situation-ships? That's what I called.

**Interviewer:** It's like the talking stage.

**Interviewee:** Uh yeah. We were like warming up to each other but like it didn't form into anything serious. So, it's like, we just stopped at that point.

**Interviewer:** It's a sense of comfort, right? Situation-ships.

**Interviewee:** Um, what do you mean by that?

**Interviewer:** Maybe you talk every day for a sense of comfort, maybe you video call every day, that kind of situation like we have nothing, but we have something.

**Interviewee:** Oh no, no. We had something... but it just didn't work out loh at the end of the day. It didn't become like we're boyfriend girlfriend.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that affects your current relationship because of your dating experiences in the dating app?

**Interviewee:** Oh yeah. I think dating many people will help you realise what you like what you don't like. Are you asking my current girlfriend has any issue with me dating people in the past?

**Interviewer:** No, i'm asking maybe your preference has changed because of your experience in dating applications before, for you to lead to your current girlfriend.

**Interviewee:** Oh, i think, i think after meeting a bunch of people i realised the type of people that i would like to uh, be in a relationship with.

**Interviewer:** So it is based on your experience in dating application that you have formed? Like your relationship right now is also formed through application.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned situation-ships, that happened before the pandemic?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** These people you met on Tinder?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So, once pandemic happened, until last year you met your current girlfriend via Bumble, basically Tinder is not contributing anything to you because you met your current girlfriend on another app?



**Interviewee:** Hmm, yeah, I think for like a stretch of time, I stopped talking to people on Tinder. Because I just think... (sighed), I mean I talked to a couple of them, but they didn't turn out to be interesting, or like yeah.

**Interviewer:** So, if your past relationships which happened through Tinder happened before the pandemic, maybe we can elaborate more on that because I'm just curious that how many relationships you've had through Tinder?

**Interviewee:** Ah through Tinder, I think...uh, two?

**Interviewer:** It must be a lot?

**Interviewee:** No no two two (laughed) because I tried to figure out whether my second ex was from there or not because that was long time ago. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Is it because it was a very short period so you don't know if you should count?

**Interviewee:** Ah no no no (thinking). It counts but like it's just a long time ago lah. Did we meet online? No no no, we didn't meet online. But we also found each other on Tinder at one point and decided to date lah afterwards.

**Interviewer:** The longest relationship you've had on Tinder, how long did it last?

**Interviewee:** Uh I think for me it was one year.

**Interviewer:** What about the shortest one?

**Interviewee:** 3 months? But is it 3 months? I don't remember (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Out of curiosity, did you go for hook-ups on Tinder?

**Interviewee:** On Tinder ah... no I would go but uh I don't think Tinder had any...

**Interviewer:** During the pandemic?

**Interviewee:** Yeah earlier this year... yeah, I have, I have (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Before your relationship, right?

**Interviewee:** Yeah yeah yeah, of course.

**Interviewer:** So, it was like, you were in Kuching?

**Interviewee:** Yes, yes. Yes. This was um like, after everybody got... wait (thinking) no, no, this was before pandemic sorry. So, I'm kind of confused now. This was before pandemic, I went hook up before pandemic, during pandemic I didn't went any until I got vaccinated, then I felt okay to go out. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Because you just mentioned that you were in Kuching, you didn't want to meet with the new friends that you met on Tinder because you were worried to endanger the other people's life, right? Yeah, we thought that oh, but then hook up is okay?

**Interviewee:** No no! (laughed). Hook up was uh before, before. Before the pandemic. I just realised because I was thinking did we wear masks during that time? We didn't wear masks so it wasn't in the pandemic.

**Interviewer:** What about after the vaccine and all, before your relationship?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. After I got vaccination, I was stuck in KL for the majority of my time, so. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Don't mind me asking, like normally in the social media applications, who initiated the hook-ups first in your experience?

**Interviewee:** Oh, usually I don't do anything (laughed) because I don't want to.... I don't want to come off as a guy who only want...you know, but no lah I'll usually like wait for them to, you know, drop, like hints. So, if like, the hint is like, oh, I need you to come fix a pipe in my house or something (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Honestly?

**Interviewee:** That before happened a couple of times, they asked me.

**Interviewer:** It sounds like some plots.

**Interviewee:** (Laughed) Yeah yeah I was like, Oh, I was like, I was like, Oh, what are you doing? Oh, you want to come fix my pipe in my house? I'm like huh? It's so bad (laughed). But like, you know, it's okay lah. But others, others just straight up, asked me whether I want to come over and I'm like, okay.

**Interviewer:** Do you filter? Like, only two people that you find okay with?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah, of course lah. I mean, that's the swiping stage.

**Interviewer:** What if, like, you guys have been talking only for one week. And she asked you to come fix her whatever. You okay with that?

**Interviewee:** Uh, it really depends whether I want to see her or not. So, if I don't want to see her, I'll be like, oh, sorry. I'm kind of busy. And I'm not feeling you (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Have you ever ghosted people on social dating applications?

**Interviewee:** Uh I, I think I think I have but at that point, the conversation was really dead. So, I don't think so, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so you don't usually ghost people first, unless you think that they don't really want to talk to you anymore.

**Interviewee:** Uh (sighed) I always feel like they don't want to talk to me (laughed). So, I don't know. And that voice in my head is like, oh, maybe she's bored, you know? Yeah, unless they're like show enthusiasm and talking to me every day and like, I'm like, okay, you know, this person seems interested in.

**Interviewer:** So, you're the type that, the other party they have to take the initiative. Constantly showing you that yeah, we are very invested.

**Interviewee:** I mean, I don't want to put my energy in something that's gonna fail. I've been through a lot of heartbreaks before, so I don't want to (laughed) be that guy. I don't be that guy that's like,

why don't you love me? (laughed). And it's a dating app, so I feel like there's not much investment in the first place.

**Interviewer:** But would it wouldn't it be at some point maybe you find yourself are kinda invested in this particular person? Like, you know, it's different.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I mean, at that point already then it wouldn't be like ghosting or just be a breakup. I just be like, Oh, I'm sorry. I don't think it worked out.

**Interviewer:** Okay, because you have shared a lot of different situation-ships on dating apps to us, right? And how all this eventually are gone. But like your girlfriend, you guys met on Bumble, how is it? Was it your girlfriend who was taking the initiative all the time? Or was it you?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, it depends. I think we kind of split 50 50 lah at that part. Because like, you kind of feel that person wants to see you and you also want to talk to them. So that's a, there's a feeling in the chat where you both want to see each other.

**Interviewer:** I feel like it ain't easy for you to feel this strong.

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. Stuff like this. It's hard to come.

**Interviewer:** Okay, okay. So, what about the other friendships you have formed before pandemic? Is there any?

**Interviewee:** I mean, um usually is I would find them you know, attractive and maybe like, interesting to talk to. But after talking to them, I feel like, we have no zero chemistry or like, we are like, you know, friends kind of chemistry, you know? Like, there's no, there's no initiative to do anything more than that.

**Interviewer:** Okay, okay. So, you remain friends?

**Interviewee:** Hmm.

**Interviewer:** But because like you said, the chances are not high meeting people you find special and eventually want to go to another stage with them. Right. So probably a lot of them turn into friends. But you also mentioned there are also some good friends. How do you classify that?

Because some would be like failed talking stage so we become friends instead? Some will be like, yeah, it's a really good friend. Yeah, so, how do you?

**Interviewee:** I mean, there was a... (thinking) um (confused), I'm not sure. I think it's just a general feeling. When you after you have gone on a couple of like dates, or like outings with the person, and just say like, Oh, um, and the person doesn't show interest well then just doing stuff together. You know, like, playing pool together or getting food, then you kinda can tell that she's friends-zoning you or something. So, at that point, like, okay, just stop pursuing.

**Interviewer:** I have another question. I don't if it's called like this, you can set the like, which gender you're interested in, right? On dating app. You set it both genders or only female?

**Interviewee:** I'm straight so I go for female. Oh, yeah. On Bumble you can do best friends which is quite cool.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Okay. Yeah. Yeah, moving on. I feel like from talking to you, I feel like you're quite a reserved person. I don't know. You sound like it. But then was it really useful or helpful in a way for you to match and click with someone of interest compared to knowing people physically even if it's just being friends?

**Interviewee;** Oh, what you mean useful? (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Like you prefer which way?

**Interviewee:** Oh, I definitely prefer meeting people online.

**Interviewer:** Why?

**Interviewee:** Um because pandemic (laughed), but other than pandemic it's just I don't get a lot of opportunity to always meet new people. Like the activities that I do there are always with close knit circle of people that I already know and I already know for years. So, like, if I go to school or like I don't go to school because I don't go to uni anymore or I don't go to work, also work is within like a circle of people. And you don't always get the chance to meet new people. Yeah, so online always like that. Ways to just meet new people from different circles

**Interviewer:** Also, because it kinda limits our social interaction during this pandemic.

**Interviewee:** Yeah (agreed).

**Interviewer:** Okay, do you still have social dating app in your phone right now since you're in a relationship?

**Interviewee:** I deleted everything (Laughed).

**Interviewer:** Wow you're loyal person then.

**Interviewee:** No, I mean the bar is on the floor (laughed).

**Interviewer:** I mean, there's a lot of research going on and like, some people just say like, Yeah, I do still have the application, but I hide it. You know? So, I mean, we're being honest here. It's confidential. Yeah. It's like people are still constantly looking for something better maybe.

**Interviewee:** Nawww... (disagreed).

**Interviewer:** Maybe just curious, something like that?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, I have friends. I have a lot of friends on Tinder. So, like, or I met through Tinder, so if they ever see me on Tinder, they got a screenshot and show my girlfriend.

**Interviewer:** That's the reason you're not using it anymore. Right?

**Interviewee:** I'm not using it because like, I don't feel the need to use anymore.

**Interviewer:** I have this question. I know how Tinder works. And also Bumble works. So, Tinder have this, if you delete you have the option to pause your account. Do you delete it? Or do you pause your account?

**Interviewee:** You... wait, you can do that? (laughed)

**Interviewer:** Yeah, you can do that now.

**Interviewee:** Wait, oh, yeah. You mean like delete all your info right. I know about that one. But what's pausing?

**Interviewer:** Pausing is like you want to take a break from Tinder or Bumble for a while. So, you pause your account, so people can't see your account but the matches stay.

**Interviewee:** Oh, no, I just I just deleted the app. And I didn't bother doing anything else.

**Interviewer:** So, it means that your profile is still on, you know?

**Interviewee:** It is? Oh, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So yeah, that's the thing. If you want to delete the app, you have to log out of the account and delete the account instead of deleting the applications. So, you're on Bumble and Tinder. Anyway, do you delete the app every time when you establish a relationship?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah of course.

**Interviewer:** You just established yourself as a loyal person. You deleted the application.

**Interviewee:** Okay, wait, deleted. You did not deactivate your social? Yeah, I didn't deactivate it. Oh yeah, yeah I didn't deactivate that.

**Interviewer:** Okay. But then you think it's a bare minimum to stay loyal to your girlfriend when you have one and not going on? On dating apps? You said there is no need to keep it.

**Interviewee:** Uh yeah.

**Interviewer:** But why? What do you mean? Why you said that you don't find the need to keep it anymore? Because initially, you were using it just to talk to friends, like new friends. Yeah, you could still do that. Right?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, but it's to make my girlfriend feel safe, you know, I think it's worth it. Because she feels insecure if I'm like out here talking to random people (laughed). And like leading people on you know, it's not for me, so it's like for her. I feel like you know if I make her feel okay, then I'm okay also.

**Interviewer:** Which means you guys talked about it. And you want to take care of her feelings. That's why

**Interviewee:** Yeah of course.

**Interviewer:** Okay. random question. What if, like, we are just making up a scenario, what if like, you still keep it and one day your girlfriend finds out? Do you think what would be her reaction?

**Interviewee:** I think she would get mad at me, and she'll be like, why are you still on Tinder in a relationship? And fight will ensue as like, why you're not loyal and like, you know, what you're looking for. But yeah, I think a lot of conversations about why are you still looking for new people? You know, what are you looking for? And like we have to communicate on like the terms of your relationship. Now, like what we want in a relationship?

**Interviewer:** What about your past relationships? Like your exes, right? They were also insecure about it.

**Interviewee:** Yeah yeah of course (laughed). I mean, they go on Tinder, as well. So, they know the type of people that are on Tinder.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I do have one question. So, do you think that many of the Malaysian youth, even though they are still in relationship, do you think they are still using the social dating application?

**Interviewee:** No lah no. My friends? Not that I know. But I know people that use for their relationship, but mostly, it's not to meet people. It's mostly just to get more Instagram followers (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Really? More Instagram followers?

**Interviewee:** Because I think, you know, like, when people are like, Oh, do you have a boyfriend but and then they take they put Instagram down there? And I'm like hmm (laughed). I know people that are just like, they're not like, like, name, you know, they don't have like, I'm not. Yeah, together, but they are living together and doing everything together. But they are not together. And they're still on dating. So, I think they just don't official liaise the situation.



Researcher: Or maybe they have not deactivated their account yet.

**Interviewee:** Maybe they're open (laughed)? I have no idea. I don't know. I don't know.

**Interviewer:** When you said open, is it like if you're in a relationship and you just want to spice up your relationship and open to something new? Is that what you mean?

**Interviewee:** No, no. By open I mean polyamory. Polyamory, the idea of dating more than person at the same time.

**Interviewer:** Yes. So, you're not a part for that.

**Interviewee:** Hmm, I don't know why (laughed). I've never been in a situation where two people like me at the same time (laughed).

**Interviewer:** Maybe you never know. This is a sticky situation. If you ever, like break out your current girlfriend right now? Will you do back to social dating applications? Or would you like, just go for a physical one like someone that you already know?

**Interviewee:** No, no, I'll go back to social dating apps.

**Interviewer:** You'll go back to social dating apps, because it works for you. It works better. Don't mind me asking, I can see that you're a bit self-cautious in a way. So, with this application, it just helps you to boost up your confidence.

**Interviewee:** Mmhmm (thinking), I guess a bit yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yes. A bit. Only a bit?

**Interviewee:** I wouldn't say like, yeah, it was okay. I mean (laughed). But I wouldn't say it's like, my main reason be that's kind of that's kind of egotistical.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. But, I mean, with technically, like, my point here is that you It boosts up your confidence in a way in being an online dating application. Does it or like, you're just fine, because you did mention just now like, you're, you're not attractive. But, I mean, you're good, man. You're good. But the thing is, you mentioned just now like, you think you're not attractive, so it's easier

for you to be in dating application. Hence, that's why are you cautious? And it boosts up your confidence.

**Interviewee:** I mean uh, I'm not like stupid attractive, you know. So, like, I'm not the kind of guy that you would like, walk into and be like, Oh, my God, he's so hot. You know, that kind of guy. I'm not that guy. I'm just like, average. So, like, I'm, yeah, so I can't go off to random people and be like, Hi. No, I can't wait for people to walk up to me as well. I think dating app is one of the ways that I can overcome that, you know.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Alright. But what if like, you have a girlfriend and your girlfriend says that she doesn't mind you continuing on, going on dating apps? Will you keep it? She doesn't mind at all. She said Yeah, it's fine.

**Interviewee:** I think being on a dating app is kind of counterintuitive, like (sighed) because if I'm on a dating app, people expect me to date people. Or at least talk to people. So, I don't want to lead the people on the dating app on as well. Yeah.

**Researcher:** Okay, okay.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, people had talked to me and they're like, oh, sorry, I already have a girlfriend. It's like, why are you on? If you're not looking for something new? Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Okay, that is like, giving any chances at all. Not to any people. I think, you know, you're really good. I think we kinda got all the information we want. Yeah, we can wrap it up.

**Interviewee:** Any more questions?

**Researcher:** I yeah, I think that's all.

**Interviewee:** Okay.

## **Transcription 2**

Researcher: When it comes to dating right, have you ever used any social dating applications like Tinder, Bumble or anything?

Interviewee 2: Yes, I have used ehhhh Tinder and Bumble. (Answer calmly)

Researcher: Erm, Tinder and Bumble. Erm, how about others social dating applications like Tantan or maybe like Baituljannah? Have you ever tried them before? Or OK Cupid, you know?

Interviewee 2: Erm, no. I tried Tantan once. But then, it didn't work out.

Researcher: Erm, so, why would you choose erm Tinder and bumble when there are so many choices in the market?

Interviewee 2: Cause it is like mainstream. Cause they are really there. Okay like OK Cupid or Tantan or whatever, others stuff. Not many much people know. But when it comes to Tinder and Bumble, that's what everybody is using. You see the same people are on Tinder or on Bumble. Its just the same people. So, it is the most widely used application that everybody will go for. It is 2022, you go through everybody phone, there is Tinder and Bumble.

Researcher: So, you do prefer to use social dating applications that have a wider range of users right? Comparing to those applications that is not very well known.

Interviewee 2: Yes. (Nodding head)

Researcher: Erm, so. May I ask how did you come across the mentioned dating applications which are the Tinder and also Bumble? Like how did you get to know about them? Maybe from your friends or maybe from the social media?

Interviewee 2: Yeah, I think Tinder is because I heard from the TV show or movie. For Bumble, I started using it recently, two years from now. That one was mentioned by a friend who was using Bumble. So, the Tinder was because of some shows.

Researcher: The TV shows right?

Interviewee 2: Yeah, at TV show I think. It was surprising to see people that I know, around me, were on Tinder. It was like Facebook. (Laugh while answering). And then, Bumble, I would say Tinder is more like a budget option but Bumble is more like higher class. Yeah.

Researcher: Oh, why do you say so? What are the differences?

Interviewee 2: For Bumble, the profile is more professional and they look better. When you compare both, Bumble is better. There is also something about Bumble is ermmm, the guy cannot text, the funny part is the guy cannot text. The girls have to make to first move. In Tinder, if there is a match, you reply to it. In Bumble, I would say it is more sufficient because usually in Tinder, after they matched, even if you send them a text, they don't send back you any messages. But in Bumble, you cannot send them a text until they do, so you know they actually want to talk to you.

Researcher: Ah Ha. More privileged to the guys yeah.

Interviewee 2: Not very privileged to the guys, I would say privileged to the girls, because they can choose they still want to talk to you. Yeah.

Researcher: Okay okay, correct. What makes Bumble and Tinder difference is, Bumble focus on the girls la, means they focus on the girls to make the first move and contact the guy.

Interviewee 2: Yeah. (Agree with the researcher). I guess I can provide two reasons for that. One, if the girl is not comfortable, he will not receive any message. If she accidentally swipes on you, but she is not interested. In 24 hours, the match will disappear and she will not get any uncomfortable text. So, I would say its good for women. And good for men too because we don't need to text and then wait for reply you know. So, there are pros for both side la.

Researcher: Do you prefer the girls to take the first move instead of you taking the first move?

Interviewee 2: Not exactly, Its like when you get a match on Tinder, sometimes we don't talk to each other even we like each other. But in Bumble, since girls are making the first move right?

Bumble has this question text box where they can click on it and there are these pre-selected questions to start their ice-breaking thing. So, those are the things that make Bumble more professional than Tinder.

Researcher: Yeah. Tinder does not have those kinds of options. Its like swipe right, if you wanna talk, you talk.

Interviewee 2: I would say Bumble is more fun to use. (Raising tone). I think Tinder is Facebook and Bumble is Instagram.

Researcher: Alright, understand. Do you think that Bumble has a higher chance in forming a relationship?

Interviewee 2: Yeah, I have made friends in Bumble. I have gone out with people on Bumble. Tinder also got. I don't know how to explain why Tinder is bad, but Tinder is just bad. (Laugh while answering).

Researcher: Is this because of your personal experience? Is your friend saying the same thing?

Interviewee 2: Yeah, many of my friend prefer Bumble than Tinder.

Researcher: Anyway, may I ask what is the biggest advantages of Tinder? If you have to say.

Interviewee 2: I would say Tinder has more swipe than Bumble. There are more people in Tinder, Bumble a bit less. However, Tinder is cheaper and Bumble is too expensive to get subscription.

Researcher: Before we go further, how long have you been using Tinder and Bumble? Was it during the pandemic?

Interviewee 2: I mean yeah. For the pandemic, it helps. I think I started using Tinder since I was 19. On the other hand, I started using Bumble when I was 22.

Researcher: Did you download it during the pandemic?

Interviewee 2: Yes. Let's say pandemic was in March, I downloaded it in that year January or February, cause a friend mentioned it.

Researcher: What is the intention that make you start to use Tinder since the age of 19? What urge you to download it?

Interviewee 2: Boredom. I did not go on Tinder like I need a girlfriend. I go on Tinder because I am bored and see what Tinder is about. You talk to few people and you become friends. The funny story is like the way I used Tinder and Bumble, I have got a lot of very good friends from the dating apps. Cause it was college time, I was bored. I used it just to talk to people. My intention was not getting into relationship, but just get to know people. (Calmly).Initially, the circle of friends that I have was just close friend and they are pretty far from me, from Ipoh. I am from Ipoh. So, the only friends I have are from college, not much, like one or two desk mate, that's it.

Researcher: So, you mean dating apps is kind of a way for you to make new friends like you mentioned?

Interviewee 2: Yes. (Nod head while answering)

Researcher: Compare to your intention of using it in current days, did your intention changed, or it remain the same? Since you have been using it since you were 19.

Interviewee 2: Okay, there was a three-year gap that I did not use any dating applications, because I was in a relationship. After that, I actually started back exactly when the pandemic hit. Exactly like January or February of 2020.

Researcher: Was it Bumble or Tinder that you are using during the pandemic?

Interviewee 2: Both, I was using Tinder and Bumble. Okay. At the age of 19, I started it. Then, at the age of 20, I stopped, like after a year of using it. And then I didn't use it. And during the pandemic, I am using it. So, there is a three-year gap that I didn't use any dating applications.

Researcher: Normally, how often do you use Tinder? Is it once a day? Once a week? Or maybe once in a while?

Interviewee 2: Okay, I do not use Tinder and Bumble every day. I used it maybe like once or twice a week. Its like you have your stuff to do, you have your daily routine. Yeah, for me, I am a student. For example, the whole of last year, erm (cough), I was busy with my assignments, my FYP,

production, shooting, and stuffs. So, I don't really have much time. But, every week at least like once or twice, you feel like there is this app in your phone, so you just go on the app to swipe for like 10 minutes. I have my notification turned off for both apps, so even if somebody texted me, I wouldn't know. I am not that kind of person who will get distracted by dating apps. Like, ohhhh (raising tone) there is a message, I'm gonna check it and stuff like that.

Researcher: During the pandemic, you mentioned that you are busy with assignments and everything. But, of course, during the pandemic, it was online learning. Would you say that you are on that app on a daily basis or still like once a week and twice a week?

Interviewee 2: Uhhh, during the pandemic, I think I used it quite often la. Sometimes I used it daily, sometimes maybe two-day gaps in between.

Researcher: Okay, we can say that you are an active user.

Interviewee 2: Active user during Covid. Yeah

Researcher: But right now? Less? Do you still go on it?

Interviewee 2: Of course, I still go on it, but now every day. Its not an everyday thing.

Researcher: Its not a must to do it everyday la, you will do it when you are free.

Interviewee 2: Yeah, number one is when you are free. Number two is like I often forget I have this app and then DINGGG, I realise I do have this app and go for a swipe. Normally, you will get one or two match. Maximum, probably like five. Out of five, maybe one will text you. Its like this, personally, I don't swipe and OHHH there is something. Its more like, you swipe, you get to know that person and then they become your friend. After five or six months, if you guys are still talking, there will become a point where like..... It comes in stages la. Most of the time, getting a reply is a two or three-day things, and then you guys stop texting with each other, then you don't feel like replying anything. When it comes to special cases, you guys just keep talking and exchange numbers, Snapchat and other stuffs. You guys become friends and closer. And five or six months down the road, maybe there are something promising. If immediately using the app, probably not.

Researcher: Would you say that girls is more beneficial for this dating application rather than guys?

Interviewee 2: Definitely. It is very easy for girls, I have seen living proof of it.

Researcher: Does it goes for both dating applications like Tinder and Bumble?

Interviewee 2: Definitely, yes.

Researcher: If your intention is just to meet someone and talk to them on the dating applications, so what is the difference of just talk with them in real life? Why do you have to go on Tinder?

Interviewee 2: Because, like in Instagram, you don't really dm somebody, when you dm somebody, that is a total different thing. If you know someone on Bumble, that is because you both allow it to happen; but if you know somebody from Instagram, there is two completely different theories there.

Researcher: Talking about meeting new people, have you meet anyone online during the pandemic? So, how was the experience? Of course, we would like to know more about people from the dating applications, can you share some of your experience with us?

Interviewee 2: Okay, I got no professional answer for you, but I can tell you a story. Okay I met this girl urmmm on Bumble during the pandemic. (Uncertainty)(Clear Throat). We got to talking on things like similarity, hobbies, stuffs we like. It was pretty much similar, we began to talk, we became friends, very very good friends. And I did not talk to the girl immediately, it took us about three to four weeks in Bumble and finally move on to Snapchat, got her number, and then we Facetime. For me, Bumble really helps throughout the pandemic, it really helped me. I guess everybody feel lonely during the pandemic, so its good to have a friend because usually is like when you get an assignment, you do it with your friend. For me during the pandemic, the only friend that I have is this girl and we used to do our assignment together, that's how we got into talking. It was equivalent to hanging out in Starbuck and doing work. Instead of Starbuck, I was Nescafe. (Laugh). But I did not meet the girl until it was five months because I only got back to KL after five months of the pandemic, after my university reopened and things can go on.

Researcher: Anyway, is you guys still chatting with each other until now?

Interviewee 2: Yeah, I would say she was one of my best friend la. Like I said, Tinder and Bumble is not only go to look for like girlfriends, relationships, and hook ups. Most of the time, you find



people that want to talk to you, talk about the interest that you both have. And its like getting friends you know. Yes, we do stay in contact until today, she is still a very good friend of mine.

Researcher: Talking about hook ups right, have you ever encountered any of it?

Interviewee 2: No, not immediately. Like I said, its always after five, six or seven months. Because you don't really know that person and its not safe but like if you ask me, yes, I have, but not like immediately.

Researcher: Normally, would you say that the girl will give you hint for the hook up? Or you are the one who initiate it because you wanted it?

Interviewee 2: Erm, see. As much as everyone think what guys want is one thing right? I want to get to know somebody before anything can happen. That's my policy. But do I initiate any talk or hints? Yes, everyone will do this. Of course, you will test the water first, can step in or not. You will be surprised when the girl give you hint immediately after matching each other. You can imagine how many guys did the girl texted and ask the same question.

Researcher: So, you are scared of STD?

Interviewee 2: Yes, I am very freaked out about STD. So, I do not engage in anything unless I know you personally or I know you longer than two to three months.

Researcher: Are you currently in a relationship?

Interviewee 2: No

Researcher: Have you ever been in a relationship with someone you met on social dating applications?

Interviewee 2: Erm, there was one last year, but it wasn't serious. It was ongoing for five to six months. But again, last year we have lock down right? So, it was long distance because of the Covid thing. It didn't work out.

Researcher: You did establish a relationship during the lockdown?

Interviewee 2: Ehhh, No. Before lockdown. I knew this person for like four months I think, before the Covid-19 outbreak.

Researcher: When it comes to finding a romantic partner, so, what are the criteria? Which types of girls do you prefer based on their personality and characteristic?

Interviewee 2: Erm, okay. (Uncertainty). Honestly, I did not set the criteria on social dating application. There is a problem when I am 24 and a 18 years old matched with me, that is a mistake. However, my personal criteria are you can be two years younger, you can be two years older, but not anymore than that. Smoking, non-smoking, drinking, everything is fine. Races also, I swipe for all races.

Researcher: You are quite an open person.

Interviewee 2: Yeah. As long as the conversation holds, as the energy matches, anything shouldn't be a problem.

Researcher: As a user of social dating applications, what attracts you to be engaged in the application that you find more convenient and effective compared to physical dating?

Interviewee 2: Bio, all criteria that they put on. Anyway, people usually just look at the picture you know. You just go through the pictures, its like Instagram. Sometimes, I will look for someone who has similarity to my career, which is photographer. If I find another photographer, I will swipe on it. If I found a model who is looking for a collaboration in shooting, I will swipe on that. Sometimes, people look for creative partners, its not specifically for dating. Usually, this kind of thing is listed in the bio. Before you match with the person, you know what they want.

Researcher: In your opinion, do you prefer online dating or meeting people physically?

Interviewee 2: I think I would prefer dating someone in person.

Researcher: So, you are not going to rely on social dating applications to get a future girlfriend.

Interviewee 2: Yeah, I will try my best not to. If I can choose, I prefer to meet someone in person. For me, I don't rely on the application because I don't date straight out of the app. When I know someone from the app for more than six months, and we are still friends, its not about the app anymore because I already know that person. Anyway, I would prefer to meet someone off the app because that is a better story to tell.

Researcher: Is it because you think that people in the dating applications is not looking for anything serious?

Interviewee 2: No one is serious in dating app. (Disappointed)

Researcher: Why do you say so?

Interviewee 2: Because of the experience that I have encountered. In a year, there were more than six girls who texted me and their intentions were nothing to do with relationship.

Researcher: You are very firm that none of the people on dating applications are serious about relationship right? So, what do you think if you meet couple saying that relationship was formed through social dating application?

Interviewee 2: I would say that they are lucky to find that person. They should keep dating them. For me, I have not found any. My hypothesis and theories are no one is serious. Back when I started the dating app, even if I am serious on it, everyone that I have met is not serious. That's my conclusion.

Researcher: So, a couple who met each other through dating application can be considered as lucky. If you have the chance to meet someone who is serious on the dating application, would you consider going for it?

Interviewee 2: Why not, I would.

Researcher: Do you still go on social dating applications when you are in a relationship?

Interviewee 2: Definitely no. Imagine waiting so long for the right person and ruin it by going on the dating application. Of course, I won't. (Determined)

Researcher: Studies have shown that there are people who still go on to dating applications while being in a committed relationship. Sometimes, people deleted the application but did not deactivate the account, so the account is still going on.

Interviewee 2: Like I said, I started in 19, I stopped at 20 for a reason (in a relationship), and I used again after the breakup. So, I wasn't in the application throughout my relationship.

Researcher: Okay, we can say that you are a loyal person. Anyway, have you ever encountered this kind of people (using dating application while being in a relationship) in the dating application?

Interviewee 2: No, I don't think so. They are usually normal people.

Researcher: Since you are using dating apps during the pandemic right, do you think that the number of users using dating apps have significantly increased?

Interviewee 2: Yes, there were a lot of people using dating applications during the pandemic.

Researcher: How to you realised that the number of people using dating applications increased during the pandemic?

Interviewee 2: From their bio, they said that they are here (dating application) because of the pandemic and wanted to kill their boredom. Literally everyone you meet in the application during the pandemic has the same caption.

Researcher: Did your friends, especially the single ones, started to use dating application during the pandemic?

Interviewee 2: Yeah. Most of my friends do have Tinder and Bumble.

Researcher: Alright. Besides killing off boredom, what are the other intentions people might have in going on dating applications?

Interviewee 2: Dating, seeing how things go, hook ups, other than that I don't see any reason of being in dating apps.

Researcher: How about establishing a serious and romantic relationship?

Interviewee 2: I would say it is possible because I have seen people doing it. Personally, I have never did it before.

Researcher: Would you say they are happy until now or is there any trust issue going on?

Interviewee 2: I would say two out of three are fine.

Researcher: In your opinion, what do you think about the new normal for dating during the pandemic?

Interviewee 2: Using dating application during the pandemic is not really a big deal. However, obviously you just cannot date online. From my point of view, if I don't see you, you don't exist. So, that is a bit hard because it is online. Trust is the only key here. You have to trust the person there. The way I used to differentiate real or fake people from dating application is communicate with them using FaceTime. If they get on to FaceTime, they are real, you can go with it. If you can get to know them, it is better. Anyway, do not have high hopes until you meet the person in real life.

Researcher: Okay, got it. I think that was the last question. Luke, the information collected from you is sufficient and enough. So, that's the end of the interview session. Once again, we appreciate your participation in this interview. Thank you.

Interviewee 2: You are welcome.

### **Transcriptions 3**

Researcher: All right. So okay. First and foremost, our research is about exploring the impact of social dating application during the pandemic for young adults. Anyways, Mr. throughout this process, this session is recorded but it will all be confidential, and it is only for our research purposes and throughout the interview session. Would you want us to call you by your name or sir or which one will you prefer?

Interviewee 3: Mr. Farhan

Researcher: Mr. Farhan. Okay Mr. Farhan, uhm once again thank you so much for joining. So, first question. Have you ever used social dating application before?

Interviewee 3: Yeah, I have use Bumble and Tinder? I have used uhm one more

Researcher: do you know about Baituljannah ?

Interviewee 3: Yes, I do. So I have used it last year. Since the pandemic was very rough. You know, I felt like the girls on Tinder and Bumble, they were not very, they were very playful. And they will and and so as I was looking for a very serious relationship. Because I do want to get married at the end of the day. And I am already 36 and I do not have much time. And I believe that this app, is for people who want to get serious. And yeah, and fortunately, I would say I found the one, you know. We spoke for a few months. And she was very serious. And she introduced me to her family through, you know, through the application as well, you know, but it's just that I guess, no. Like this pandemic has been quite difficult. Right? Because she, because she lives all the way Sabah, and I am all the way in Ipoh. Right. So it is two different places together. But yeah, I mean, there was chemistry. And I will say all that I wanted was commitment. She was willing to commit and not waste my time. And I was very happy about it.

Researcher: So is that is that the reason why you chose Baituljannah application rather than Tinder and Bumble and so on?

Interviewee 3: Yes, yes. I mean, because I am Muslim and I'm looking for a Muslim woman, I feel going through a Muslim based app is a much better option compared to using let's say, like, different races in where, whereby it is, it is an application that, you know, that has different races.

Researcher: Okay, because Baituljannah not a lot of people know, especially because it is a Muslim based dating application. So what differs Baituljannah than the other dating application, like Tinder or Bumble?

Interviewee 3: Like for me because in Islam, sex before marriage is haram. And for me, I would like to, I would like to marry someone, who also practices the religion as strictly as me. Because I would say I am a very committed Muslim. Okay, and I feel like the people on Tinder, they are not very committed, and I feel that it is not as much as my preference. And also, most importantly, my family will not approve of them, because I do not know much about their background, because they come from strict Muslim families, I feel that I can kind of trust them and also because their families are involved. And I also realised on Bumble and Tinder, they are on the application without any supervision, or no one knows about it, you know, and, and this is very, very important. You can fake your identity on Tinder and you can fake your identity on Bumble, but you can't fake it on this application, because everything is on your IC information.

Researcher: Yes, yes, yes, exactly. So, your intention in using Baituljannah application is to find the one and to find a possible wife prospect.

Interviewee 3: Yes, I mean, I am looking for a very committed Muslim girl.

Researcher: Yes. Okay. All right.

Interviewee 3: And someone who has said, you know, she takes her practice in the religion very serious as well.

Researcher: So, of course, I know that it's not easy to find the one. How often have you gone on this application? Before you find the one? Like, were you on it i on a daily basis or maybe once a week? Like how was what was your usage of the dating application?

Interviewee 3: You see, as as I mean, as I said, I was very strict Muslim, you know, I do not believe in having multiple options. Right. I feel that if I am talking to one of them, you know, I feel that I should commit my time and effort into looking for the one. Yeah. Because, because that is what I expected within as well. Right. So, when I spoke to her, I know, I really liked it. Because, as I said, you know, she wanted, she knew what to she knew what she wanted in life. And that is exactly

what I'm looking for. Right? Because I do not want anyone to basically be close minded, whereby fickle minded, that is the word. Fickle minded in knowing what they want in life.

Researcher: So, as I know, that there are several criteria that that stated in Baituljannah application right, did you went through the criteria before, you know?

Interviewee 3: of course, I mean, like one thing that I really adore about the application is that there is no nudity. And you have to be the good supervision also, and everything that you're doing is supervised. You know, and there is a problem that happens in the I mean, on Tinder or Bumble that is basically fake identity. Right. Where, I mean, by Bumble and Tinder, they have now introduced the Bluetick. Right? Where it does where it does the by she, she is the one. Right. But on this application, I mean, you mean you really have to go through a lot of like policy steps. Just to prove that you are legitimate.

Researcher: Okay, like what kind of steps would you mind telling us?

Interviewee 3: Yeah, so when I went through the application, at first, I had to basically, I had to upload a few documents also adopted a few, few documents about who I am. You know, my, basically my IC, where my phone number and more like, obviously, a lot of pictures about myself and if I want to show the person who I really am, where am I? Where am I studying? What are my qualifications? And of course, I mean, I have to attach all my university papers and everything. Yeah, to kind of say that hey, I am a guy. No, I am I am well to do in terms of education. And I am looking for someone serious, because I am able to I am I am able to commit to the upcoming lifestyle to know that I am.

Researcher: Okay talking about this relationship. You did mention in the earlier that you establish a relationship during pandemic. Yeah. So is it because you were alone? What causes you to go into Baituljannah during the pandemic?

Interviewee 3: Okay, because, I mean, I just came out of a toxic relationship with a with a non-Muslim. Right. And it was very difficult for me. Because as I said, you know, I wanted to actually marry her, but I couldn't, my family did not approve. And she did not want to convert also. Yeah, she did not convert. And it was very difficult because we were together for two years. But in the end of the day, we had to separate because she's not Muslim, you know, and my family would not approve, and she's not willing to connect for me. Right, which is why I said, No, it is enough. You



know, I don't want to waste any more time. No, I do not want to prolong this anymore. So I went, I went on the application like to search for the one, you know, and I'm very happy that it didn't really take long, you know, I actually the thing is, is I had multiple options that I was very happy with, you know, I feel like the application, they, they I mean, the like developers of the application they do not want they're doing, you know, huh? All right, and everyone who's there, they are very serious. So that's why I felt that it would help me.

Researcher : So okay, so is any of my members wanted to ask anything that's related to this application? No. All right. Okay, never mind, because Baituljannah is widely used for Muslims in and my FYP mates are not Muslim, so they wouldn't know. So that's why this interview is also like to show what Baituljannah is all about. So because you are an active user of Baituljannah, and you are in a committed relationship now? Yeah.

Interviewee 3: Yes, yes. With the lady from the application.

Researcher: Okay. All right. So, let us just go through your previous relationship, you said you said it was toxic, because she was non-Muslims, and you had some several problems arises because of that, your previous relationship? Was it from an online? Or was it someone that you met? Physically?

Interviewee 3: Actually, it was, it was a student and it's uhm physically, you know, it was a surprise , you know, like, going through this app gave me a better match than me finding it physically. You know, like it, it actually how does it actually filtered? All my once, you know, for a, for a perfect partner, you know, and, and like, everything was there, right? In terms of the height, in terms of what she likes? You know, I am a filmmaker, as well, when she comes from the media industry is no, no, so we can kind of relate, you know, so I don't have to waste time looking for this person, this person when I can just go on the application and the superfast.

Researcher: Yeah. So as I know, there are several differences between Tinder, Bumble and also Baituljannah. I think there's a tremendously big difference there. From Bumble, Tinder and Baituljannah so in terms of payment? Because every dating app, there are like, a premium and so on. Does that applies to Baituljannah?

Interviewee 3: Yes. Okay. You see, I was actually a premium user of, of like Tinder, because, as it you know, I felt that maybe using premium on Tinder would actually helped me find the one,

you know, yes. But instead, instead, I just wasted my time. And, and, obviously, like, majority of them, they actually be seeking for sex before marriage, which is something I'm not I'm not happy with because that is not what I look forward. And not that I, I disapprove. But I mean, for me, I believe in patiences, I believe in getting to know the person properly before. I mean, like, before, like committing to such acts. So, with this, with this application, I was a bit afraid as well, because I thought it would probably be the same. But I had a free trial whereby, I can actually go on the application, and I can see, you know, okay, so. So like, these are the type of girls on the application, you know, and when I decided to settle for one, then I said, Okay, why not? I just give it another try. One last one strike. And I decided to put my name. Yes. You know, and also, as an associate with the I also proceed with the payment as well. And, yeah, okay. And I filled it out.

Researcher: Yeah. Okay, based on our research, right, Baituljannah. We know that it is not similar like any dating application it is based on the Sharia' laws is that true?

Interviewee 3: This is, as I said, you know, not to say, as I said sex before marriage is not permitted. Yeah. And, and you're not supposed to cheat on your partner as well. According to the law, you know, yeah. Which is something I really, really approved because as I said, I am a Muslim that I you know, I fully I'm fully committed to my religion. And in terms of its practices as well. And this application, it actually does co align with all with with my family's uhm principles as well

Researcher: Alright, so as I know it this is based on our research because we have never been, we have never used Baituljannah. Is it true that when you talk to the person there is actually a third person monitoring your conversation? Is that true?

Interviewee 3: Yes. And I mean, at first I was I was actually quite, I was, I was afraid I was like, this is I mean, like, isn't this actually invasion of privacy? You know, but actually, what I realised is that this person is, is here to keep everything in check, you know, then how to say everything is to check, and which is good, because, you know, on Tinder, they're actually underage girls, you know, I have that I that I've actually spoken to, you know, and they didn't, and they did not reveal the age until I met that, you know, which she put me, which has actually put me in a very in, in, in hardship, because I'm dealing with another age group, you know, and, and they don't, they only see like, obviously, like this these girls. I mean, they actually were very fast. Now, at the age of 16. You know, they look like they are like, old Yeah.

Researcher: I do agree. Yes,

Interviewee 3: yes. And that is very dangerous. So, for so on this application. If I'm meeting a girl, I do know that it's real, because they're basically documents to prove it. And also, there's someone to supervise our everything, you know, all texts and everything. So, if I if for example, if I would present any, any lead deadly pictures, you know, this person, this person is here to make sure that I am not on vacation anymore. And if the end if any acts like that is done, I will not get a refund. I will basically get blocked from the application. But from the application, I am basically blacklisted and I will not be able to get my money back.

Researcher: Okay, so basically, I know that Tinder and Bumble, there's a lot of reasons of hook-ups there. The reason they go on the applications is for hook-ups. But have you encountered any hook-ups like people saying, like wanting hook-ups in Baituljannah application?

Interviewee 3: No, because I feel also supervised because it is why some people are very afraid as well. And for me, I try not mess the application and mess it up because I've met the parents. Oh, unless we actually married then yes, then then I tried to take it elsewhere. But I tried to stick it to that. Because for my own safety as well.

Researcher: Okay, Mr. Farhan, here's another question for you. So, I know that you are in a committed relationship. Yeah. Like you are searching for your wife. And you already found the one apparently. So, do you still go on the social dating application? While, you're in a relationship.

Interviewee 3: Yea just got engaged. I just got engaged.

Researcher: But do you still go on the social dating application?

Interviewee 3: Yes. Because you see, because my religion, right? They actually practice polygamy. And because of that, I am allowed to have three more wives. Because in Islam, right, my role as a provider, is to actually is to ensure that the all of my wives are actually equally in terms of financially, emotionally. Yeah, and yeah. And they are wellness in general.

Researcher: So you just has just gotten engaged, and you still want to find another wife? While you're already in a relationship?

Interviewee 3: I mean, for me, because I do I mean, I do believe in, in the communication, right, you have to actually communicate with your wife. Yeah. Before. I mean, like before you decide

to take things on your own, you know. So yeah, I mean, like, this is something that I would have to discuss with my wife. But I, I still do have the app on my phone.

Researcher: okay, but you're not going to like search for your second wife instantly, right? You're just going to just keep it?

Interviewee 3: Yes, I mean, like, you have to work on one before you can actually push it to the others. Yeah, exactly.

Researcher: Oh, okay. All right. Okay. That's interesting. Yeah, polygamous relationship. All right. So, um, alright. So on. On on an okay, hold on. Yeah. All right. So here's another question for you. Well, you're finding someone right, in the social dating application, what actually interests you like what characteristics you actually find?

Interviewee 3: As I mentioned before, I know someone who is basically she's very committed to the religion. She's very committed family. Is he? Because, for me, I mean, I what I feel is when a woman when a girl when she's young, right, she's very flexible. Options are very flexible. So alive is very flexible. Right. But when we were ready to get married, it is different. It is a game changer. Things are very different. Yeah. Because Because basically your commitment is the right. Family is number one. Oh, she so I would say a woman who is ready to update the family. Mm hmm.

Researcher: All right. Okay. Am I lagging? All right. Nope. All right. Okay. So. So do what do you think the intention of young adults using the dating application during pandemic honestly, like, in your opinion?

Interviewee 3: Because as I said, you know, I am looking for for a serious and like committed relationship, because I do want to make her my wife at the end of the day, right, which is why we are already engaged. This is it. Right. So let people who, who basically who heard say, if they want different ones, right, then they would want to search for maybe something casual? Yeah. Oh. Because why they do see as a pastime? Yeah, because the pandemic is very stressful for a lot of people because why? They have, they're basically unemployed. And they need someone to talk to, yeah, that they can kind of confide into the person.

Research: All right. Okay, so talking about casual relationship right here, there. It is a bit different in Baituljannah. Have you ever encountered like, sexual interaction in Baitulannah ?

Interviewee 3: Ah, no, no, because from the very beginning, I normally state my clauses, right? I basically say what I want. And if and if it doesn't align to what you want, then I feel that we should not be in.

Researcher: And also it is because of the third person as well, right? Monitoring, that it doesn't allow those interactions to happen.

Interviewee 3: Also, thing is this. I think, if I'm not mistaken, there is a rapport system in the application. Right So, if you if you are going against the law of the application, then you then you will be marked down. When you mark down, then there are bad reviews. So, people when they check your profile, they know they kind of know your history of using that. And they will not want you of course because you will, because you actually going against the application rules.

Researcher: I think one of my member wanted to say something. Yeah.

Researcher 2: Yeah. So, I wanted to ask that, because just now you've mentioned that you say, because of religion, right? You, you will be still looking for a still using social dating applications, even though you're engaged. So, I want to ask, like, Do you have any other friends who are non-Muslim, but they are currently in a relationship? And they are still using social dating applications while in a relationship?

Interviewee 3: yes, I would say, but again, I can't really talk much about it. Because you know, it is going against their privacy, but yes, because I also feel that this pandemic has resulted in, in unstable relationships, unstable marriages. Right. And sometimes people feel that I mean, that searching for another person is actually the cure in fixing the relationship. For me, I feel that shouldn't be the case. Right? If you are not Muslim, then you're not entitled. For this. I will say for this luxury, right? Yeah.

Researcher: Okay. Okay, alright. So, it is like that. So, um, do you think that is normal for people to establish online relationships during the pandemic, like what do you think?

Interviewee 3: I did not catch you. Sorry. (Unsure)

Researcher: Alright. So today, do you think it is normal for people to build up a new relationship, because of the pandemic. And do you think that because of the pandemic, the relationship will be serious?

Interviewee 3: Ah, this is a very tricky one, um. (Unsure)

Researcher: Maybe your friends? They have encountered, like, they just established a relationship during the pandemic because they're lonely and they want a sense of comfort

Interviewee 3: Yes, yes. As I mentioned before, so, you know, these people, kind of see it as a pastime. Right? They see it as a pastime. And, when you are actually doing it through an application, where the application is the medium. Correct? You can, always run away.

Researcher: Run away. Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewee 3: You can, you can basically escape, because you're not looking at the person on a daily basis. But for example, in my, in my stance, right, I can, I can say that I kind of want to be because I'm because I am already engaged. But once again, I am already engaged to a person, and the family already knows about me. And I already know it is vice versa. Because once again, on the application, everything is listed about your life by your family, everything. Yeah. Because before you can do a marriage, you need to know a person in and out and everything about the person. Right. And this is this is something very, extremely long term. Right?

Yeah, because you have established your relationship that you're already engaged during the pandemic. So that's why you have like more insights on this. Alright. Okay. So I think for my side basically, I'm done with the questions. How about my friends, my mates? Do you have any questions?

Researcher 2: For me no.

Researcher: Zhi yang ? Kar Fai ? Lin ? No. Okay. So, I think we basically covered everything so. Yeah. So once again, we like to say thank you to you, Mr. Farhan. Thank you so much. And congratulations on your engagement. Okay. You know, we hope we can get invited to your wedding hopefully. Anyways, really appreciate your time and your willingness to tell us everything so thank you so much.

Interviewee 3: Well, I see, I am only doing this because it is a sense of education for people who are going to hear this.

Researcher: Yeah. Especially because Baituljannah right? Not a lot of people know. So, you have some success in this application. So, it is good. Yeah. Alright, so once again, thank you so much. I will end recording now.

Interview 3: Thank you. (Calm)

Researcher: Okay.

#### **Transcription 4**

Researcher: Are you using any of the social dating applications now?

Interviewee 4: Yes, I am.

Researcher: What are those?

Interviewee 4: I'm only using Tinder and Bumble.

Researcher: Have you ever heard of Baituljannah?

Interviewee 4: Sorry, what is it? Is it an app too?

Researcher: Yes. For your information, Baituljannah is also a social dating application but is more Muslim-friendly. I'm telling you this just in case you might feel interested to use it in the future.

Interviewee 4: Oh okay.

Researcher: You mentioned that you using both Tinder and Bumble, do you using them during the pandemic or even before the pandemic has started?

Interviewee 4: I'm only started using them since the pandemic.

Researcher: You using them until now?

Interviewee 4: Yes.

Researcher: Do your friends introduce it to you or you find out by yourself?

Interviewee 4: Actually no, I find out by myself because that's nothing to do during the pandemic, so I just used it.

Researcher: Alright, so you did find out by yourself. Any of your friends using it also?

Interviewee 4: Ya ya.

Researcher: Did your friends ever influence you to use social dating applications even before you find out by yourself?

Interviewee 4: Uh, actually no, because I think using social dating applications is a really private thing so I don't think everyone will like be like, hey, I'm using these and it's really good so I don't think will share it out of nowhere unless you ask them how does it feel to use that particular app. So yeah, no one influenced me to use any social dating applications. I just found out by myself and use it by myself also.

Researcher: As an active user of Tinder, do u find out by using Tinder does it better in forming in relationships or maybe possible to find romantic partners? What do you think?

Interviewee 4: Uhm, I think it depends on your intention actually. I think if your intention is to have a relationship, every apps on the market, whether it's dating apps or like any social apps like Facebook or whatever, you still can manage to find people who share the same intention. But if you just use it for friends then every apps out there will also just for you to make friends. At the end of the day, it still depends on your intention. (Calmly)

Researcher: Is that means that while you using Tinder, you feel good about it?

Interviewee 4: Ermm, from what perspective?

Researcher: Your perspective.

Interviewee 4: I find it's easier for me to meet people with same interests because when you sign up for Tinder they will allow you to choose your interests, hobbies and all those kind of things, and they will actually filter it out from you because I think it would be more easier to find people who share same interest in with you. Then it will be better for you to click each other.

Researcher: Okay so from what we heard that usually user in Tinder generally want to find hookup relationships. So, are you one of them?

Interviewee 4: No.

Researcher: Why?



Interviewee 4: Because I don't need a hookup right now and you know that having a sexual intercourse with someone barely know on internet is actually very dangerous, and there's a lot of STDs (Sexually transmitted diseases) those kinds of things out there. So for me, no, I didn't have the sexual intention when I'm using Tinder, Im just there to maybe make friends and just meet new people. But there is decent amount of people actually aim for hook up. (Demonstratively)

Researcher: If you have the opportunity to do so (hookup), will you do it?

Interviewee 4: No.

Researcher: But if the person is the one you really interested with, and the person ask you for hookup, will you?

Interviewee 4: Uhm, I still think a no because for my perspective, my intention is when I went there (Tinder) because I want to meet new people or like have a new relationship or something. But if your intention is there just for hookup and just to have bed, I think that actually not match my intention and so that's why I want the person even though the person is my type. And yeah, I want to add on and if you think of it, if a person on any social dating applications and their first thing to say is just want to hook up with you. Imagine the amount of people they asked to hook up with on the internet. Yeah, and you might think that I'm the special one that's why the person asked for hookup with me, but the person could be doing it with everyone, and that's why they asked for it.

Researcher: May I know that are you currently in relationship?

Interviewee 4: No.

Researcher: Okay you are not in relationship, so have you wanted to find a relationship through social dating application like you mentioned in Tinder?

Interviewee 4: Ya I do.

Researcher: You do want to. Okay, so in order to find a romantic partner through social dating application like in Tinder, would you tell us what tactics would you use?

Interviewee 4: To find out who will be my potential partner?

Researcher: Yes.

Interviewee 4: I think we just chat like go through a really normal conversation because some people are like after some chatting with each other, they will basically just ask you do you want to hook up? Yeah, they will just straight cut to the chase and be like they want to do it with you. So, this is the first stage that having a conversation with them (The stage where interviewee 4 dislikes about). Therefore, if they pass this stage without asking you to hook up, well, I guess they passed the first stage (If the person do not ask about hook up in the first stage, the interviewee 4 will accepted them). Then we will proceed on and can actually tell from the conversation since you can just chat casually, and do not need to ask him what do you like, what's your horoscope or which university study in. You just have to normal chat and see how they respond to you because sometimes it's not like they don't like you, it's just that you guys don't have the right energy to match. And I think the energy of both of the person in the relationship is the fundamental of relationship because if you guys don't bond well matched together, then it will be a problem for you to have a relationship.

Researcher: Basically, if the person wants to develop a relationship with you, you just have to let it be to see whether success of not?

Interviewee 4: You cannot force someone to be in relationship with you, it has to depend how you guys bond together during the process.

Researcher: Do you find any friendships through Tinder?

Interviewee 4: Ya, I did.

Researcher: Is it a lot you met on Tinder?

Interviewee 4: Not really, I think it's only 2 or 3 of them I met on Tinder and we actually proceed to become really good friends in real life.

Researcher: Alright, after you guys knowing each other will you guys meet up physically?

Interviewee 4: Ya.

Researcher: How often of it?

Interviewee 4: Not really often. I only erm..... because I meet a lot of people on Tinder and chat with quite amount of people, the only one that passed all the stages and knowing them that

eventually I will think this person will be suitable to be friend. I only ask them out and from that we can further to see how we can bond well with each other.

Researcher: Jian Rong you just mentioned that you are not in a relationship right?

Interviewee 4: (Nodding).

Researcher: If you have to say social dating application is easy to find partner compared to physically meet up with each other, what is the reason behind it?

Interviewee 4: Because you see a lot of people actually went to social dating applications because they cannot find any potential partner in real life. Therefore, if you go to social dating applications the system will actually helps narrowed down people who shared a similar hobby and interests that same with you. And from that you can further find someone who shared the same hobby and maybe you guys can have more conversation compared physically meet with people because sometimes when you're in a room where, let's say in our lecture hall, there's like 100 people, you won't just go and initiate a conversation with the random people or anything. But when you're on social dating applications, if you swipe the person right and then if the person also swipes you right then it's higher possibility that you guys can get to know each other, start a conversation and get to know each other hobbies and interests. So that's why I said that Tinder or any other social dating applications are easier to find potential partner compared to real life because in real life you don't really have the initiative to get to know someone else other than yourself.

Researcher: What you mean is social dating applications are easily to find someone that match the same interest with you? Like hobbies?

Interviewee 4: Yes, it's easy.

Researcher: When you look at someone that you find really interested with, will you look at their appearances first or something else?

Interviewee 4: I will look at their..... (Shy). This is a really honest question, because our first impression in our eyes and what we see is the appearance of the person. We cannot just say I prefer their humour or personality because no, you don't know their personality. It takes a lot of time to get the know the person, so of course the first thing I look into is their appearance.

Researcher: That means if the person is handsome or pretty, they will get a higher chance of getting attention from you?

Interviewee 4: I forgot to add on. By appearance I don't mean look good or ugly. I mean like the way the person portrayed themselves in person like some people post a lot of thirst trap on social media, and then there are some people who just post their selfies or daily pictures. Therefore, it just about the picture they post is the first way of how people perceive them because if you post a lot of food, so people would think you like food. And if you post a lot pictures of dog, people will view you as dog person. It's not about you look ugly or what but it's just how people will perceive you based on the picture u post on social media.

Researcher: Jian Rong, while you using Tinder, if you have to say the biggest advantage of Tinder, what could be the biggest advantage of it? Maybe its features are really good or it can help you find a partner easily?

Interviewee 4: Finding partner is really hard to say because it still depends on whether you guys click or not. So, I would say easier to meet friends that shared same hobby and interest.

Researcher: This is the biggest advantage of Tinder?

Interviewee 4: (Nodding)

Researcher: Just now you mentioned that social dating applications is much more in making new friends, so do you personally feel that you are more on social dating applications when it comes to making new friends?

Interviewee 4: Erm. I don't limit myself when it comes to making friends, but if I were to find friends that shared same hobby and interest with me, I definitely go for social media because I can see from there like what's their hobby and interest. If in real life, we will just see how we bond with each other.

Researcher: So, it's like social media help you to filter the people with same interest for you?

Interviewee 4: Ya.

Researcher: Jian Rong, if you have been in a relationship, would you still use Tinder?

Interviewee 4: No. (Decisively)

Researcher: Why is it?

Interviewee 4: I know that Tinder can be used as friend making application, but at the end of the day the nature of the application is to get you a partner. That's why it's called social dating application. Therefore, the point that I won't use it if I'm already in a relationship because I want to give my partner a sense of trust and also assurance to avoid my partner from getting overthinking. That's why I will stop using Tinder if I'm already in a relationship.

Researcher: Let's say if your partner is allowing you to use Tinder despite the relationship is still ongoing, will you still want to do so or no?

Interviewee 4: No.

Researcher: Is it because you want to give your partner the sense of security?

Interviewee 4: Yes.

Researcher: What you mean is you do not want to betray your partner because you are loyal?

Interviewee 4: I do not think it's about loyal or not, it's about taking care of my partner's mental because some of them might question about why I'm still meeting new people on Tinder. What I mean is I don't want them to get overthink so it's always better to give them the assurance.

Researcher: Have you heard of any of your friends still using social dating applications despite they are in a relationship?

Interviewee 4: Yes. (Nodding)

Researcher: Can you tell us in a detailed way?

Interviewee 4: I think one of my friends, a male friend, I thought he was "straight" (heterosexual). However, I saw him on Tinder then only I realised that he is bisexual. (Hesitantly)

Researcher: The person is looking for same sex with him or the opposite sex?

Interviewee 4: I assumed is the same sex because how social dating applications work is that you can actually choose the gender you interested in. For "straight" people they will choose girl but for me I will choose guy. Do you get what I mean right?

Researcher: Yes. So, during the pandemic many people like you as a young adult are really getting into using social dating applications. Therefore, what is the reason behind it?

Interviewee 4: One of the reasons for me is because I'm bored and nothing to do during the pandemic. And the second reason is because we approaching adulthood since we are young adult already, then we starting to realise that our needs in relationship. That's why I choose to further explore more by started to use Tinder or any other social dating applications.

Researcher: Do you think that people who using Tinder or any other social dating applications are difficult in terms of finding a romantic partner during the pandemic or it's nothing different from the pre-pandemic period?

Interviewee 4: I think it's depends on your fate. I don't think it's based your scenario or whatever because what Tinder or any other social dating applications do is they narrow down and filter out the people with the same hobby and interest as you, which is giving you more convenient to meet new people who might match with you than people who you meet in real life. At the end of the day, it's just same as real life because if you don't have the fate to get in a relationship with someone else, then you won't get it. However, if you have the fate then you will get into a relationship with that person. Do you get what I mean?

Researcher: After you guys have matching up with each other through social dating applications during the pandemic, at some point you guys would like to come out meet physically. However, due to many obstacles like we have to adhere to the SOPs such as wear a mask and so on, and because both parties never see each other before in real life, don't you think this will increase the difficulty in terms of finding romantic partner on the social media application because you don't know their background and whether they been close contacted with Covid patient or not. So, what do you think?

Interviewee 4: For Covid wise, I think it should be no problem because SOPs apply to everyone. It's not only for people in here or there. So, I feel like SOPs apply to everyone. Obviously, if you meet up with someone you met online they will wear a mask and you will wear a mask too. They might do a self-test kit and you will do a self-test kit. Then, it's a basic thing that everyone does so and I don't think it only limited to people who meet online. So, this belongs to everyone and not only applies to people who meet online. As for relationship, I still think that should not be a

problem because even you get into relationship with someone else in real life right, instead of online dating, you still don't know their background yet. Yeah, you don't really know them ermm... fully know their background even though you guys know each other but that's what you see. But what behind their.... Like, what's their background? You won't get to know yet because you haven't get to know them well.

Researcher: Jian Rong you mentioned that one of the reasons to use social dating applications during the pandemic is because of you feel bored. Therefore, can I add another statement that because you feel really lonely during the pandemic, so you started to use social dating applications during the pandemic. Do you agree with it?

Interviewee 4: I think one of the things that reaching adulthood is not that you feel lonely, I feel like lonely is an understatement. I feel like at this age I started to realise I need affection. I need ermm... like a relationship to..... I need to feel complete that's why I started to seek for relationship. It's just not about lonely, it's just more like you want to find someone you can share everything with. You know, like share with them the movie you watched, the music you listened to. That's what makes you complete as there's anything. So, that's why I said lonely is an understatement because lonely is just you feel lonely or you can even say it's just horny. So yeah, I feel like I don't think it's lonely, I think it's part of yourself in realisation. Like you're realising yourself, you getting to know yourself better. Are you realising your needs, you know.

Researcher: Just now u mentioned that you use Tinder and Bumble right during the pandemic? So, I just want to ask which one do you prefer more? Like which one do you use more?

Interviewee 4: I think Tinder will be better because it's easier to use.

Researcher: Do you found that you use it more frequently during the pandemic?

Interviewee 4: I think I use it more frequent last year because this year I'm doing internship. So yeah, it's last year more frequently.

Researcher: Just now you mentioned that you use Tinder more, what is the reason behind it?

Interviewee 4: You mean like why I prefer Tinder over Bumble?

Researcher: Ya.

Interviewee 4: Erm... Because Bumble is more complicated and active user in Bumble is not as more as Tinder. So, I choose Tinder over Bumble, yeah.

Researcher: Okay Jian Rong, do you prefer social dating application, I mean like dating, through social dating applications or physically?

Interviewee 4: If I will have the chance it's definitely physically because I get to know the person, I mean like easier, but er... if I don't have the chance to get into relationship with someone in real life then I will just use Tinder or any other social dating applications.

Researcher: So, you still prefer physically right? (Interviewee 4 nodding) If there's no choice then you use social dating applications. What about meet new friend? Through physically as well?

Interviewee 4: For friends I don't mind. I feel like both platforms (Tinder and Bumble) are good enough.

Researcher: What about hook up? Any opinion?

Interviewee 4: Any opinion of hook up? What do you mean? (Smirk)

Researcher: Like, if you have a chance to hook up with someone, will it through physically?

Interviewee 4: Like hook up with person I know in real life or someone in Tinder?

Researcher: Yes.

Interviewee 4: I think err... I would still prefer in real life (people who interviewee 4 know) because do you know the term "Catfish"?

Researcher: Maybe you can explain about it?

Interviewee 4: One tricky thing about this dating app or we called as "Catfish" is that there is a lot of people exist in social dating applications are you will see their selfie and you think they are really good. But then let's say when we meet up with them to see them in real life, it's really a disappointment because they do not look like the picture they posted. That's why I think that whether is having a relationship and hook up is good by getting them in real life than in social dating applications because they might be lying or "catfishing" you.

Researcher: Is it like a scam?



Interviewee 4: Ya, but they don't scam for anything, they don't scam for benefits. They just errr..... "catfish" you. (Uncertain)

Researcher: I want to ask that since you use social dating application for 2 years, so in that period of time you have never found the one because your intention is actually to find a partner where you can spend your whole life with, right?

Interviewee 4: I won't say I found someone, ermm... is just that in the process there's actually few guys who I had a deeply connection compare to just friend, but some of them just end up ghosting. One of the things on these kinds of social dating application is actually ghost people. So, one of the most recent stories that I can share is that during last year, December, I've met someone on Tinder for like I guess two months. And then we actually proceeded to check on Instagram and everything. So basically we know each other already. Then, one day he just came to Kampar to surprise me then we actually err... he stays in my place for one night. We didn't do anything that's why I said I didn't hook up with anyone. But then after that night I thought maybe this will be a new relationship for me, however after he went back to KL right after like few days, he ghosted me. He just disappeared. So yeah, one of the things about dating app is that they... not they but I mean like some of the people will actually ghost you.

Interviewee 4: You said just now that you met a guy right? So, no offence or whatever, you are gay?

Interviewee 4: Ya, I am.

Researcher: But I'm sure there are also other platforms for like social dating applications for gay, is that reliable?

Interviewee 4: Ya.

Researcher: Do you use it?

Interviewee 4: One thing about gay dating application is that the nature of the app is not even built for making friend is just plainly for hook up. And it's not even a place for you to conversate with other, it's just that, I mean, I've used to have that it's called Grinder. Erm... I didn't commit anything from there but I just want to share like the people there they will just like see who lives nearby you, let's say 100 meters, 200 meters. They actually come from meter which is you can see

who lives really near to you, and if they want to hook up with you they will just like ‘Hi, you wanna have fun?’. They will just straight cut to the chase and ask you do you want to do it? If you want then you say yes. Then you guys just do whatever you do. So, basically people there just do stuff like this and it’s really dangerous because during that time I downloaded this just for fun, and because I said many times before they had the distance to see the user lives how far or next to you, one of the users I think he lives 400 meters from me which is really near from me and is a blank profile. A lot of people’s profiles there are blank profile which is very sketchy. This person texted me say that ‘Hi you wanna have fun?’. I ignored and I didn’t reply anything. And then this person proceeds to say stuff like ‘I’m driving’, and I can actually tell the distance unit from 400 meter to 300 meter to 200 meter, which is very scary because the meter the application use is actually quite accurate. They will actually change according to your real time distance so I was really scared because what if the person trying to kill me or rob me?

Researcher: That’s why you use Tinder rather than Grinder?

Interviewee 4: Ya, because my intention is not for hook up what, so no point for me to using Grinder.

Researcher: Because I don’t know what Grinder is obviously because I’m “straight”, so that’s why I need to ask you because I thought there is one specific dating application that is mainly for gay. So, it’s not for them to actually to find a partner and it’s mainly for hook up. That’s why u try for Tinder?

Interviewee 4: Yes.

Researcher: As for Tinder right, you know there is option for you to choose looking for guys or girls. For your case, did you put for all guys or mix?

Interviewee 4: I put all guys.

Researcher: So, you have no intention to looking for a girl at all?

Interviewee 4: No. (Smirk and nodding)

Researcher: Just to be sure u know. I think that’s all for our questions. Thank you for your participation.

## **Transcription 5**

Researcher: Okay, so I'll start now. So, Hi Aina, I am Qian Yu and I'm your interviewer. These are my group mates, which is Alisya, Qiao Lin, Kar Fai and Zhi Yang so before we start the interview right, I would like to inform you that this session will be recorded for the data collection. However, all information you provided will be kept confidentially by the principal investigator and the research team and will not make available to the public. So, the data and answers from the study will not identify you individually. And the data and answer may be published or used for research purpose, not detail within this content. So are you okay with that?

Interviewee 5: Yes.

Researcher: So, we will also disclose your identity and your name and would you like us to address you as Miss or Aina? Which one do you prefer?

Interviewee 5: Erm Aina will be fine.

Researcher: Okay. So I'll start the interview now. So, Hi, Anna, I would like to ask, are you aware of the dating applications in Malaysia?

Interviewee 5: Yeah. A few of them.

Researcher: Oh, so you said you have a few. So what are those?

Interviewee 5: Tinder, Baituljannah, Bumble? That's all.

Researcher: Oh, you do use quite a few of those applications.

Interviewee 5: Did use at one time.

Researcher: You said you did use, so when did you started to use it?

Interviewee 5: Erm, the first time the pandemic happened during the MCO, I started using it.

Researcher: Ah okay, so you started during the first wave. What makes you want to start to use it?

Interviewee 5: I believe at that time, since universities, for instance, everything passes, and all had been postponed. So we were at a point where we didn't really do anything at home and then we could really go out to meet our friends and so forth and everybody was like trying to figure everything out. So that time I felt like I need some sort of a human communication, human interaction. And that is one of the platforms that had helped me at that point.

Researcher: Erm you said that you wanted to have some communications, but then instead of finding your friends you prefer to like meet on some new friends by using those applications?

Interviewee 5: Yes, I mean, not to say that my friends are always available or something there's like, to, what is the word, to focus on our subject to today which is dating applications, right? It shows that the dating application is used to like find someone to talk to more than friends. You know, there's a limit. So maybe at that point, I was like searching for something or conversations that are not, not to say not suitable to talking to a friend with, but you understand.

Researcher: Yeah yeah.

Interviewee 5: It's like another level.

Researcher: Talking to stranger right?

Interviewee 5: It's just strangers.

Researcher: So is it like I can understand it, the purpose is to talk to a stranger who you want to be more than friends?

Interviewee 5: To talk to strangers.... Erm okay to have a conversation with a person that you know nothing about gives you a safe space, a safe space? Because there'll be no judgement, no, nothing, because they will know you exactly who you are, where you're from, you can even create a new identity. Not that I'm saying that you should but a safe space, somewhat safe space?

Researcher: Yeah. So you feel like much more comfortable to talk to them in this safe space?

Interviewee 5: Yes.

Researcher: So you said that you did use erm how long? How long did you use it? Like, just during the pandemic or till now? No?

Interviewee 5: I'm not until only for the first few months, maybe two months?

Researcher: Owh, so it's like only the first wave of the pandemic. It's like during 2020.

Interviewee 5: Yes, during 2020.

Researcher: Okay. So how did you came across with the dating applications that you've mentioned just now like Tinder and Baituljannah, and also Bumble?

Interviewee 5: Erm a few of my friends back then, they were active on those apps even way before the pandemic. So I was not seeing anybody at that moment. So I thought maybe we should just give it a try. That's way it counted all the steps.

Researcher: So it's like oh, your friend introduce you to those apps?

Interviewee 5: Yes.

Researcher: Okay. Okay, mind if I ask that are you currently in a relationship?

Interviewee 5: I am.

Researcher: Is it like you find your partner through the applications? Or no?

Interviewee 5: No, I found it physically.

Researcher: Owh, you found it through physically. So, you personally think that through physically it's easier for you to find a relationship partner?

Interviewee 5: If you ask me whether it's easier to find a partner physically compared to online, I would say it's way easier to find a partner online, because it's literally, you know, with a, with a simple swipe, you can find somebody who matches your personality who get your vibe or some sort. So I think physical is more challenging, but it's the challenges makes it more worthy. Like the relationship is way more worth than online.

Researcher: Is it because then you get to see each other more frequently? In when you met each other physically, instead of online?

Interviewee 5: Yes, yes.

Researcher: So you said that you use it during the pandemic. So did you ever like been in a relationship with someone you met? On social dating applications?

Interviewee 5: No. No.

Researcher: So you just mainly use it for chit chatting purpose to make friends?

Interviewee 5: Yes, yes.

Researcher: So just know you have mentioned that you've used Tinder, Baituljannah and Bumble. So, which applications do you personally prefer more?

Interviewee 5: Actually, I prefer Baituljannah. Because it small, it depends on the Sharia law, which is, as a Muslim, I feel like it's very helpful for me to you know, set the boundaries, and it's more secure compared to the others.

Researcher: So you find that Baituljannah, like, give you more. You feel more secure?

Researcher: Like sense of security?

Researcher: Yes yes, you feel more secure by using Baituljannah?

Interviewee 5: Yes.

Researcher: Because for what I've known Baituljannah, when you are like communicating with each other, there will be a third party, like watching through the whole process. So is it because of this reason, you feel it very secure?

Interviewee 5: Yeah. Because whatever that happens online, basically can give you two things, which may be an advantage or disadvantage for you. But as a person who I put security as one of my top priorities whenever talking to strangers online, because you won't know their intentions until you meet them and even when you meet them, they can still have bad intentions, you know, with the third party being there. Whenever I communicate with a total stranger, I believe that it's more protected and somewhat, it's in accordance with Sharia law. So I believe that as you can see, it helps me a lot in things such as, for instance, hook-ups, and all those sorts can be prevented. I wouldn't have to face situations like that, which makes me uncomfortable, I think.

Researcher: Yeah. Understood, understood. So you said that you're currently in a recent relationship, right? So are you like still looking for, like, maybe have a chance to still like, look for another relationship partner or not? So you have you feel satisfied with your partner right now?

Interviewee 5: Yeah.

Researcher: So you said that you like making friends through social dating applications right? So are you friends with someone you've met on dating applications like till now? Do you guys still have any contact or to still talk to each other?

Interviewee 5: I do have, I think about two friends that I still stay in contact with. Yes.

Researcher: Which dating app?

Interviewee 5: At the time I was using Tinder.

Researcher: Both of them are also Tinder users.

Interviewee 5: Yes.

Researcher: Like so Tinder users is more friendly in making friends while Baituljannah is much more safer. And relationship partner. Would you agree with that? No?

Interviewee 5: I think those two statements are it isn't align because you asked me you ask me regarding friendliness and safety. So both apps are friendly is just that when it comes to safety or secure Baituljannah has a more safety rate compared to Tinder, I believe.

Researcher: Emm okay.

Interviewee 5: But friendliness, I believe that it's quite the same depends on who you're talking to.

Researcher: I see. Yeah. Alisya, you said, you have any questions?

Researcher: Oh, yeah, I do. I do want to ask, like, for Baituljannah is a sense of security and also, because we're Muslims, right. So of course, we want to find someone who is also on the same vibe and same beliefs as us. So your intention in using Baituljannah at first in the beginning? Is it because you are trying to pursue a relationship or because as you say, Tinder is like friendly, right? It's more to friendliness? You, you. Okay, honestly, do you see yourself having a relationship based on Tinder or Baituljannah? So basically, my question here is your intention of going in Baituljannah is it for something serious? Or is it just to try out and if is there is there?

Interviewee 5: Okay, since I started using all these data applications during the pandemic. So I was looking for some sort of human interaction, right, as I mentioned. So I feel like now that I'm in a stable relationship, the reason or my intention, when I was using all these dating apps was the purely experimental, like I wanted to know how it works and you know, what would happen from

there, but I didn't really have like, high hopes for relationship or marriage or whatever. It was just was to try out.

Researcher: To trying out?

Interviewee 5: Yeah trying it out

Researcher: All right. Noted on that, okay. That's my question.

Researcher: Thank you, Alisya. So erm just now, you said that you have been friends with like those that you have made two friends through Tinder right? So mind if you say that, how did you become close friends with them through Tinder?

Interviewee 5: So when you have, how do we become close friend? Hmm, so from the conversation that we had on Tinder, we felt like, you know, maybe we can talk more on other app which is Instagram every day, like save number at some point and yeah, we just bite I guess, we became close from there and it wasn't really into the relationship part but it's more of a friendly part, which is talking about, we were talking about the let's say study, and all these things, and we had a lot of things in common. So that's how the friendship still remains until today.

Researcher: So that, like, people erm with similar interests will attract you more in making friends?

Interviewee 5: Erm I feel like it gives me a sense of like, how to say you have something to discuss about to the person.

Researcher: Ah like so that you can have like continuous talk with each other and share your interests together.

Interviewee 5: Right. That's right

Researcher: Okay. So you said that you have stopped after two or three months. So mind if you explain that what are the reasons that you stopped making friends through social media applications?

Interviewee 5: Erm, maybe my reason isn't really because of those dating apps, mainly, but I feel like at that time, my, all my studies, my uni things were starting again after the postponement. So I was focused on whatever there needs to be done for my studies, instead of like, you know, focusing on dating apps, and so forth. So that's my personal reason and I had like, a lot of



interactions with my classmates and so forth to finish our tasks and assignment and I feel like I did not have the time to focus on the usage of the dating apps.

Researcher: So it's basically like, erm you're occupied with other stuffs other stuffs. So you decided to stop using dating applications, right?

Interviewee 5: Yes.

Researcher: Ah erm, so, you, besides on like, friends right? Did you met someone that you, you have feelings? Like, how do I say like, through social dating applications, like did you met someone that you are really interested in? Not in not just like friends, but like romantic partner?

Researcher: That you think could have a potential relationship?

Researcher: Ah yes yes.

Researcher: Yeah

Interviewee 5: Oh, I mean, if you ask anyone who has a dating app, I'm sure their answer I mean, when it comes to their intentions going on those apps, it must be because you want to find someone.

Researcher: Yeah

Interviewee 5: You can connect with this more than friend right? So I guess at that point, it didn't really occur to me that I wanted to be in a relationship. You see, I just wanted someone to talk to and no, I did not encounter or came across a moment where I feel like you can move to something serious. I was very comfortable with the situation that I was in with my friend in dating app. Yeah, so my answer is no, I have never gotten to that point where I feel like a relationship would be perfect. Yeah.

Researcher: Erm.... yes, sorry. Erm so as a user of those social dating applications, right? What bio attracts you to engage in the relationship like for Tinder right, you're able to see the user's bio, and then you swipe left or right. So what kind of like bio, or description like makes you interested in?

Interviewee 5: For me I believe that one of the reasons or one of the characteristics as you can call is based on their educational background. I feel like that's very important because I am not sure certain accounts on Tinder, for instance, you can tell that person is not who they say they are. Right?

From, from the pictures and so forth. So, I believe that for my part, I will be focusing on their educational background that they put on the bio and the way they present themselves. Like the description is important. Yeah.

Researcher: Okay, okay. How about for Baituljannah wise? Like, for Tinder wise, it's like the description like for Baituljannah is also the same, which is also education base and also interest?

Interviewee 5: Sorry, I didn't get the question.

Researcher: Owh. So just now, you said that you look more on to like their educational base when it comes to description right? So for Baituljannah, does it work the same? Also education and also like similar interests?

Interviewee 5: Yes, it is.

Researcher: Erm yeah, like for erm, because this is a research about dating applications right and also Baituljannah. Do you mind like telling me what is like the actual differences between Baituljannah and Tinder? Because I know that it's not the same and because personally, I do have the application as well. So I know that they do not have the swipe ermm what was that you call?

Researcher: Function.

Researcher: Ah function yeah. So do you do you mind to tell us like the differences?

Interviewee 5: Erm so the obvious differences is the one that you just stated just now and erm Baituljannah is more how to say it's, it's more Muslim friendly, I believe? Because erm sometimes as a Muslim, we want to look for a serious relationship, for instance, and not all situations fit our intention. So with a boundary set in the Baituljannah app, it helps us like to filter out whatever that needs to be filtered. Which makes it way easier than Tinder because it gives you like, a free space to just swipe and see your luck, who you match with, based on whatever your interest is. So Baituljannah is more focused on protecting Muslims right? I believe? So yeah.

Researcher: Anyways, I also, erm sorry, let me let me go first yeah. Um, okay. So I do believe that we as Muslims, there are laws that actually says that polygamous relationship is allowed right? So have you ever encountered like, someone married actually asking you for to be a second wife or you know? Because it because as far as I know what he says in your bio, like, seeking for second wife, or like, single and stuff like that, right? Yeah.

Interviewee 5: I have been halted like, maybe three, four times? And, to be honest, I'm not really in this polygamous relationship thing. I'm not even married and I've never, I've never been married or engaged. But it's something that somewhat weirded me out, because finding his second wife shouldn't be that online. That's one thing. Erm your intentions for finding a second or third or fourth wife should be highly pure, and also, I feel like it's quite absurd to be looking for a second partner online, which is one of the reasons why I stopped using Baituljannah. Like way before I stop using Tinder and so forth. I experimented it when I encountered situations like that I wasn't really a big fan of it. So I just yeah. Yes.

Researcher: Yeah, okay. All right. Yeah, that that is a massive differences and, yeah, I do agree as well like, why will you find another second wife in an online platform? Yeah. Okay. Anyways, Qiao Lin, you have questions to ask?

Researcher: Yeah, hi Aina. Can you hear me?

Interviewee 5: Yes.

Researcher: Okay. You mentioned that you stopped using Baituljannah way earlier than you stop using Tinder right. So in comparison, you will say that you actually prefer Tinder more than Baituljannah?

Interviewee 5: Erm based on my intention at that moment, which was to look for random human interaction. I was more on to Tinder compared to Baituljannah, because Baituljannah is like when you go on the app, you know that the only thing that they're seeking for is marriage, straight away, where I wasn't into that. So I was back on Tinder. Yes, I preferred Tinder compared to Baituljannah.

Researcher: So by that you mean like you were looking for casual interaction? Is like it's more leaning to friendship thing?

Interviewee 5: Yes.

Researcher: That's just to find someone to talk to.

Interviewee 5: Yes.

Researcher: Okay. okay, I see, I see. But then have you ever, like, what if you tell people you meet on Baituljannah that you are just looking for friends? Like at the moment, you're not looking for something beyond that, is not acceptable on Baituljannah?

Interviewee 5: I have tried that a few times. But it just ends up in like the conversation being left hanging. Because what we were just...

Researcher: Lost interest?

Interviewee 5: Yeah, just lost interest because we weren't on the same page basically right?

Researcher: Hmm okay, okay. And you mentioned that it generates more safer for Muslims, right? What do you mean by that? Like, is Tinder not safe?

Interviewee 5: Well, oh, it says, Okay, how Baituljannah works is that it depends on your interest, and then you will get a match on that right? And there's also a third party, wherever you engage with someone, there's a third party being present to the whole conversation. So Tinder does not have that. Tinder is like a free app. I mean, it's an open app where you can literally, I mean, not to say that... you can literally swipe right to a murderer, or thief or whoever you know, I'm not saying that Baituljannah does not have like those chances of us matching with those people. It's just that when compared to a sense of security, Tinder is way, way more dangerous compare to Baituljannah because at least with the involvement of the third party on Baituljannah, you feel like whatever happens there, you will have a proof and you will have another person being present at a time and, yeah, seeing all those things happen, you know. But Tinder is just way too you know. So yeah.

Researcher: So, so, you can conclude that you're more of an outgoing person than a conservative one because you really like the rules and limitations on Baituljannah.

Interviewee 5: Is not that I don't like the rules I just felt like Baituljannah has is a platform where individuals go on to look for a serious, serious relationship. Well, Tinder is just something casual, you can literally have a conversation with anyone but Baituljannah is straight forward. That is the intention of the app.

Researcher: So it's like you don't like the pressure that's been being put on you when you're using Baituljannah. Like people's expectation on you when you're talking to them.

Interviewee 5: Right. But it's not entirely their fault, because that is their intention, while mine was different. And I joined the app based off like, an experimental mind-set, you know?

Researcher: Free mind, free mind. Yeah.

Interviewee 5: Yeah, right.

Researcher: But then erm like on both platforms, right. I'm sure that you have met different types of people, different personalities that you can observe. How do you know when it's just a friendship thing or a romantic thing going on between you and the other party? Like mainly comparing these two platforms?

Interviewee 5: Erm, wait I don't really quite get the question.

Researcher: So it's like erm when you're talking someone, talking to someone on Tinder, how do you know that it's just a friendship? Or maybe the person is expecting more than that, like, could be romantic experience?

Interviewee 5: Okay, so, individually, personally, I am a type of person, before I get into something, I would like to put my intentions like, straight and clear way before, whatever engagements we have after that. So I did that, if when I was using those apps, so on Tinder, I wasn't really looking for a relationship, or at the time, I wasn't ready for anything serious. So when I put that out there, of course, I got like a few responses such as you know, like the ones that just leave you hanging like Baituljannah, for instance and certain people will, certain people actually was on the same page as I was so we got to be friends. I believe that is because I put my intentions first, I think the law and not trying to get their hopes up high or something makes it like way easier when using dating apps so that, you know, anything that happens is based on like one intention.

Researcher: I see, I see. Okay, I'm done. Thank you.

Researcher: So, I would like to ask that you say that you're currently in a relationship, but then you're not using social dating application right now. Right?

Interviewee 5: No no.

Researcher: So you just now, you've mentioned that you say, social media application is mainly for, like, help you to make friends? Like, would you still go on? If your partner doesn't mind that you use social media applications to make friends? Would you still use it? No or yes?

Interviewee 5: No, no. Because, I mean, it's called a dating app. Even though your intention is to make friends or whatever, it's still called a dating app. So I feel like it will be very disrespectful towards my partner, even if he's okay with it. You know, it's me disrespecting him as a person, who is who I am with at the moment. So I will not go on it.

Researcher: Erm did you like encounter people like you have met in physically they're in a relationship. But then when it comes to social dating applications, they mentioned that they are single, did you ever encounter those situations?

Interviewee 5: Yes, and it wasn't a pleasant feeling, even because the person that he was in a relationship, he is still in a relationship with is a person that I used to know. So it wasn't a pleasant feeling to encounter such behaviour.

Researcher: Do you think that is a common thing nowadays at dating applications? Like it was just like a one or two situations that happened? No?

Interviewee 5: I wouldn't say common because I wasn't really that long on those apps and I don't think that it happens all the time, like, based on my experience, I don't think it happens all the time but it might be, so I'm not sure.

Researcher: So like, there's still chances that it might happen but not that often?

Interviewee 5: Yes, there's still a chance.

Researcher: So just now, at the very beginning, you said that you use social dating applications when during the pandemic. So like, what's the frequency of you using the social dating application is like daily, or like one week, twice or thrice?

Interviewee 5: One week, twice or thrice. It wasn't that frequent.

Researcher: It's just like whenever you have free time, you will like feel to go on to the applications like to see what's going on and to talk.

Interviewee 5: Right, right.

Researcher: I see. So, do you think that the usage of the social dating applications increased during the pandemic? Like not just you but people around you, your friends and maybe your family? Do they use it more often compared to the time that's not during the pandemic?

Interviewee 5: Yeah, because during the pandemic everybody was at home and it somewhat put a stop to your social engagement or if people who wants to look for a partner or whatever, that is the only way to, you know, put yourself out there and erm discovering new people, even though the new people is not for dating purposes. Erm but if it is, I have stories that Tinder applications help a person to find their husband or wife. Jodoh basically. From the pandemic itself right people use it all the time. During the pandemic there is a huge change in the number of people who uses this dating app and I can like see some of my friends using them as well throughout the pandemic.

Researcher: I see I see. So u do agree that during the pandemic the usage of dating app increase. Erm but, aside of the pandemic like do you think that like before the pandemic right. Do you think that this situation is like happens a lot like people like to use social dating applications instead of dating physically?

Interviewee 5: Based on my observation, I believe that the usage of dating app weren't really erm not to say accepted, but is wasn't really a norm you know is not something you talked about, is not something you tell people, owh you know what I'm on Tinder, I'm on Bumble or Baituljannah, for instance, is something that you keep to yourself, because, it some sort of felling ashamed, you know, having to use dating app, I'm talking about way before the pandemic. But ever since this whole pandemic occurred I fell like it's a new, it opens up conversations, and erm is a new thing to be talking to people about and it's accepted. I mean not by all, but it is accepted and this conversation needs to happen because with the engagement of these people it can help in better usage of dating apps and people can understand what are the various what are the things they can't and can do on this dating app and it enhances their understanding on the security and the dangerous of using such platforms. The dangers sorry.

Researcher: I see I see, erm any of you had any questions would like to ask, would like to know more about?

Researcher: Okay, I do have a question. So, overall how do I say? Would you recommend your friends especially Muslim to use Baituljannah? Rather than just the sense of security, like do you

have any, how do I say? Like any advice to way people should Muslim especially to go for Baituljannah instead of other dating applications.

Interviewee 5: Erm it all comes back to your aims and intention when it comes to using, you know. So if those who are seeking for a serious relationship or marriage for example maybe they should try it out but generally speaking I wouldn't recommend anyone to look for a serious relationship, because I believe that it might help, I mean if you're lucky it might help you, but in most cases not the right way I believe, maybe I'm traditional minded? I'm not sure, but that is my opinion.

Researcher: Alright, okay. Okay, erm so far I think you've answered all our questions right? Erm, guys any other questions?

Researcher: Yeah, any of you have other questions?

Researcher: Kar Fai, Zhi Yang? The boys? No? Okay I think that's all?

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. I think we've covered all the questions. Thank you Aina. So now I'll be stopping the recording.

### **Transcription 6**

Researcher: Talking about social dating applications, what comes in your mind?

Interviewee 6: What comes into my mind is the social dating applications are used to find romantic partners or friends.

Researcher: To find relationships and friendships, building connections?

Interviewee 6: Yes

Researcher: Do you use any? (social dating applications)

Interviewee 6: I have used both Tinder and Baituljannah in 2020. December 2020 and January 2021 for Tinder. I have notice there are many disadvantages happened in Tinder, so, I have switched to use Baitujannah and I feel Baitujannah is way better than Tinder.

Researcher: Why you say so? Why is it better than Tinder?



Interviewee 6: Ermmm...Baituljannah is more legitimate and the details from other users can be trusted. (Uncertain)

Researcher: You mentioned that you have been using Baituljannah and also Tinder, so you use Tinder before Baituljannah?

Interviewee 6: Yes, correct.

Researcher: Tinder was in 2020?

Interviewee 6: Yes, on December 2020 until January 2021.

Researcher: So, you used Baituljannah in last year?

Interviewee 6: Yes, last year in early March.

Researcher: What is the reason you started to use Tinder first?

Interviewee 6: Because in that time erm.... during MCO we have to stay at home and I was lonely. That's why I started to use Tinder to find new friends. I have met many friends on Tinder, but only temporarily, and no more contact each other like that.

Researcher: What do you mean by "Temporary friends"?

Interviewee 6: It's like we get to know each other but there is no chemistry between us, so we just lose contact. (Confidently)

Researcher: Is this means the purpose of you using Tinder is just for making new friends instead of searching for relationships?

Interviewee 6: Erm... it is because the first intention of me being using Tinder is to find a girlfriend.

Researcher: Why this happened? Tinder for you is not serious? (Serious in terms of finding relationships)

Interviewee 6: Erm.... I feel like on Tinder people can fake their identity by age and profile picture. That's why I have to stay alert because I'm afraid that I will get scammed by them. (Smirk)

Researcher: So, what you mean is like even when you first started using Tinder, you are already very careful because you don't fully trust the people you meet on Tinder. That's why in the end all those people u met as friends become only in temporarily because you don't trust them?

Interviewee 6: Yes, correct. My friend even told me people on Tinder generally use the application for finding friend with benefit, and do stuffs like not serious (serious here means referring to as find partner or make new friends).

Researcher: By then why you switch to Baituljannah? Like how do you know Baituljannah?

Interviewee 6: I know Baituljannah in last year Febraury, 2021. My friend has introduced it to me and he said this application requires the user's information such as IC number, basically it needs you to provide your personal details. So, when my friend mentioned about this, I feel like Baituljannah can be trusted for finding a romantic partner. That's why I started to use Baituljannah over Tinder (Confidently)

Researcher: So, is the experience in Baituljannah very similar to Tinder? Like you mentioned you have met friends only in temporarily or there is other experience?

Interviewee 6: On Baituljannah, I actually met my current girlfriend through the application itself, however, in terms of settings or whatnot, there is no difference between them like finding new friends or relationships but Baituljannah is still more trustworthy than Tinder.

Researcher: What about the people you met on Tinder and Baituljannah? Any differences between these people like the way they talk to you, the way they approach you?

Interviewee 6: There is some differences between them since Baituljannah is following the Syariah law and more to Islamic, the way they approach is different compared to Tinder.

Researcher: Any examples?

Interviewee 6: During the matchup, the process has to be slow and umm.... to get the right details or information such as phone number.

Researcher: Is this means that compare to Tinder, you find Baituljannah is more comfortable for you because you like to take things slow? And with the rules and regulations, everything is aligned.

Interviewee 6: Yes.

Researcher: So, Baituljannah is more serious since you have to follow the rules and regulations (Syariah law) while Tinder is not, and on Baituljannah you don't even know that person's name that you match up with at first, so, this is like the difference between Tinder and Baituljannah.

Interviewee 6: It is better for me to take some time to get to know that person.

Researcher: You are the type of person who are looking for something serious on Baituljannah?

Interviewee 6: Yes, correct.

Researcher: You have never met someone who same idea with you?

Interviewee 6: It is because on Tinder people can fake their identity by age and profile picture, and even young minors also using the application. This is why I stop using Tinder.

Researcher: How long it took you to know your current girlfriend through Baituljannah?

Interviewee 6: (Thinking) I have used Baituljannah for searching my potential partner for about 3 months from March until June, 2021. I have met many people through the application, but most of them were not interested in me or didn't match each other. However, for this person (current girlfriend), she wanted to find a serious relationship just like me, and therefore we match up each other. During the process, I just like chat normally with her and got her phone number something like that.

Researcher: Do you guys got to hang out before you and your girlfriend are in a relationship?

Interviewee 6: Erm.... Yes (Nodding). We did hang out for couple of times eating together before we officially become a couple.

Researcher: So, is this the first relationship that happened through the social dating application or you did have other experiences on social dating applications?

Interviewee 6: Yes. This is the first time I found my girlfriend through social dating application. As for the friends I met in Baituljannah, I still keep in touch with them because they are just like my regular friends and we will hang out for gatherings.

Researcher: Your friends that got to know on Baituljannah?

Interviewee 6: Yes.

Researcher: Your girlfriend will not feel upset about it? Since you hang out with those friends that met on Baituljannah.

Interviewee 6: She did ask me who I hang out with, and me had to explain in detail and slow. Overall, she feels alright about it because I don't go out with them very often.

Researcher: What about people you meet on Tinder? Some of them become friends right?

Interviewee 6: Since I used Tinder just in a short amount of time, we did chat with each other only through Tinder and I didn't manage to get to know their social media, phone number or whatnot. That's why we didn't become friends. (Firmly)

Researcher: Since your friends told you that Tinder is more on casual relationship like sexual hookup, one night stand and friends with benefit, during your very short period in using Tinder, have you ever tried that?

Interviewee 6: Erm.... I have never tried before but I notice that other users' bios or profiles did mention that they are looking for hookups or friend with benefit.

Researcher: So, you have no swipe for it (Means accept in Tinder)?

Interviewee 6: Yes, because by looking at their profile picture, is not my taste. (Laugh)

Researcher: Is it because you didn't meet your type, so you never swipe. However, if the person is the type that you like, you would try?

Interviewee 6: If the person is my type, then maybe. (Laugh)

Researcher: Since I know Baituljannah doesn't allow friends with benefit but on Tinder you are able to meet those people. Therefore, even if you don't swipe right you still can able to see others' bio like they are looking for friends with benefits. However, what if their bio does not show anything like looking for friends with benefit and they matchup with you? And after you guys chat for a while, they started to ask to try friends with benefit. Is this happened before on Tinder?

Interviewee 6: No, it never happened before. However, if it happens, I would take it slow.

Researcher: Is this means you won't reject all opportunities? It just like depend how much you like this person?

Interviewee 6: Yes, correct. (Nodding)

Researcher: Then, in a way these are the two social dating application you have used before. Besides social dating applications, do you have any friends with benefit in real life?

Interviewee 6: No, I never have it in real life.

Researcher: Okay, let's go back to friendship topic on Baituljannah. You have mentioned that you met some good friends and your current girlfriend on Baituljannah, how do you differentiate in the first place like this is just normal friend but this girl gives you different feelings?

Interviewee 6: (Thinking seriously) I get to know them like one by one first and in the end see which person gives me the sense of security and comfort. I will just differentiate them like that to determine which one should become friends or not. And because my girlfriend is looking for serious relationship, so I follow the flow (Choose his currently girlfriend as his partner).

Researcher: Follow the flow, I see. Which mean some of them are not giving you the vibe to become a serious couple, so you also friendzone them.

Interviewee 6: Yes.

Researcher: What are the activities you will do with your friends (Friends met on Baitujannah)?

Interviewee 6: We just like eating with each other and talk about stuff like how's your working, something like that.

Researcher: It comes in like a group or like usually just two of you?

Interviewee 6: Two of us.

Researcher: So, it's like this day u hang out with this friend just both of you only, and then hang out with another friend on another day, is that so? And your girlfriend is allowing it?

Interviewee 6: Yes, sometimes she will feel worry about it, but just have to explain to her. Also, I'm not go out with them very often.

Researcher: Do you still doing this now? (Hang out with those friends)

Interviewee 6: No, not anymore because I have to respect this relationship with my girlfriend.

Researcher: That happened before your currently girlfriend become officially your girlfriend?

Interviewee 6: Erm..... It's like in the meantime. (Laugh)

Researcher: Just want to ask how many friends you met on Baituljannah? Like the friends you hang out with. And did you hang out with them like one on one?

Interviewee 6: It's like three including my girlfriend. As for hang out, I did meet them like one on one because if three of them meet each other, it will become really awkward because they do not know each other.

Researcher: Okay. So, to exclude your girlfriend there are still two female friends that you met on Baituljannah, do you still friend with them?

Interviewee 6: Yes. We are still friends. They did know I have girlfriend already and they feel alright about it. We still like contact with each other normally.

Researcher: Did you bring them out to meet your girlfriend in group?

Interviewee 6: No, maybe in the future. For now, I do not have this kind of thought.

Researcher: But what about your girlfriend? Has she met like guy friends on Baituljannah?

Interviewee 6: I did ask her about it before and she told me she had a few of guy friends still in contact but never hang out with them before.

Researcher: Since you are in a relationship right now, will you still use Baituljannah to search like friend?

Interviewee 6: Erm.... No, I will stop using it.

Researcher: But you still feel alright to hang out with the friends you already met on Baituljannah?

Interviewee 6: Yes.

Researcher: So, it's like you agree to hang out with the friends that you met on social dating application before you are in a relationship, but when you are in a relationship you won't using any social dating applications or Baituljannah to meet new friends?

Interviewee 6: Yes, correct. (Nodding)

Researcher: So, you have stop using both Tinder and Baituljannah, like deleted the applications?

Interviewee 6: Yes, correct. I didn't use both Tinder and Baituljannah anymore because I want to fully focus on my girlfriend.

Researcher: How about your girlfriend? Is she still using?

Interviewee 6: She is just same as me like stop using Baituljannah. She fully focus on me also to maintain this relationship.

Researcher: How long is this relationship ongoing?

Interviewee 6: (Thinking) We started to contact each other in June, in October she became my girlfriend and we have been in a relationship ever since.

Researcher: Speaking of Tinder and Baituljannah, because you used both of these applications, do you think these social dating applications help you to meet people or know people more easily compared in real life?

Interviewee 6: Erm..... I agree for Tinder and Baituljannah since during the period of MCO, we cannot meet people very often. Uhm..... For this question, I think it is better to use these social dating applications during the MCO. However, since now the situation is quite different from that time and many of us can go out and meet people, so it is better to know someone physically better than using social dating applications, for my opinion. (Decisively)

Researcher: You actually prefer more to know people in real life, however, using social dating applications is just because something happened (MCO) suddenly, right?

Interviewee 6: Yes. (Nodding)

Researcher: There are also other social dating applications other than Tinder and Baituljannah right? Why did you use only these two while there are many social dating applications exist like Bumble?

Interviewee 6: I use Tinder because I heard from social media that the app is for finding partners or friends. That's why I tried this application and after that I felt Tinder is not suitable for me. Then my friend has introduced me Baituljannah and I just want to try it out. (Calmly)

Researcher: Is your first intention is to find a girlfriend through these applications?

Interviewee 6: Yes, my first intention was to find a girlfriend because it was during the MCO period, and lonely. (Laugh)

Researcher: But why did you want to find a girlfriend during the MCO period because of lonely? Before MCO you don't feel lonely at all?

Interviewee 6: Before MCO I can go out with my friends, yeah.

Researcher: This means that before MCO, you can go out with your friends because it makes your life can do so many meaningful stuffs since every day is doing different activities and meeting new people, you won't think of need to find a girlfriend?

Interviewee 6: Yes. And the things that I want to add on is that Tinder allows you to put locations. When you matchup with one another, it usually within your area. So, this is why I use Tinder because I can get the matchup that close to me, but I feel like Tinder is not suitable for me because I'm afraid of being scammed. That's why I switch to use Baituljannah.

Researcher: For now, everything is back to normal now and you can go out with your friends, doesn't that mean your girlfriend serves no purpose already?

Interviewee 6: No, it's not correct because she became my girlfriend and I have to take care of her as well.

Researcher: A lot of your friends using Tinder and Baituljannah? And your friends introduced these applications to you?

Interviewee 6: Yes, correct. However, only Baituljannah is the application that my friend introduced to me.

Researcher: Since you mentioned that you have stop using social dating applications, just imagine if you girlfriend allows you to use social dating applications, will you go for it?

Interviewee 6: Erm..... I will not. (Calmly)



Researcher: However, let say your girlfriend allows you to use social dating application, and you started to use it again. You have found someone who you interested with, what will you do?

Interviewee 6: Like I just said, I will just focus on my girlfriend and I will not have any further action with that person.

Researcher: Do you have any friends that still using social dating applications when they are in a relationship?

Interviewee 6: Yes, of course.

Researcher: What is their situation now?

Interviewee 6: They will just do it quietly, like behind their girlfriend something like that.

Researcher: Something like get to know new people, friends with benefit?

Interviewee 6: Normally it just like get to know new people only. For friends with benefit I don't see it happen yet.

Researcher: For Muslim, friends with benefit is forbidden right?

Interviewee 6: Yes, correct.

Researcher: Since Muslim is allow to polygamy relationships right, I just want to ask if you and your current girlfriend are married, would you still use Baituljannah to search for second relationship since it allows in Muslim?

Interviewee 6: Erm..... Depend on what situation. It is because if the man allows to do so (the wife agree) and maybe if they feel bored towards their wife, then it could happen.

Researcher: So, this situation might happen to you too?

Interviewee 6: Yes, maybe. (Laugh)

Researcher: So, if you are going to find for second relationship, would you still use Baituljannah or through real life.

Interviewee 6: I will go for real life. (Decisively)

Researcher: Do you think many people started to use social dating applications more frequently during the pandemic period?

Interviewee 6: I do agree with it. Both Tinder and Baituljannah are having more active users than before. Baituljannah for me is the most obvious one.

Researcher: It is because the application follows the Syariah law right?

Interviewee 6: Yes, correct.

Researcher: What do you think is the reason about this sudden rise of active users in social dating applications during the MCO period?

Interviewee 6: I think is because they feel lonely and want to meet new friends.

Researcher: When you using both Tinder and Baituljannah, were you very active on them like do you go on every day or one time per week during the MCO?

Interviewee 6: I'm not like that active. Usually, I will use it like once a day to match other. It depends on whether I got matchup or not.

Researcher: So, it's like when you have notifications u will go check them and you will open once in a day at least?

Interviewee 6: Yes.

Researcher: Do you think this online dating will become the new normal after the pandemic is over?

Interviewee 6: Even before the pandemic exist, I feel like this online dating is normal for everyone, but it just become so obvious during this pandemic because we cannot go out and we have to connect with each other through internet. After this pandemic is over, this online dating method will still ongoing.

Researcher: Do you think most people will have the same thought as you? Like people would still prefer back to physical dating or they will prefer online dating more now?

Interviewee 6: Erm.... I think most people still prefer physical dates because we can get to know each other in more detail, like face to face.

Researcher: I think we covered all the questions already. Thank you.