

- **16929 | Ready to Match? College students' perception of Tinder**
Martins, Mariana, Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto, Portugal
Ferreira, Ana C., Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto, Portugal
Brandão, Catarina, Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto, Portugal

Technology has propelled significant changes in the way we establish social relationships. With the emergence of Internet and the online dating phenomenon, online relationships and intimacy were utterly redrafted to a swift and fleeting process that is predominantly envisioned as something negative, shallow and casual. Albeit dating apps have a dominant presence in young adults' social life, literature on this subject is scarce, namely in Portugal. This study aims to explore the way in which college students envision Tinder, the online dating application, motivations to use it, their experiences on dates arranged through the app, and their perceptions about Tinder based relationships. A mixed approach was adopted, using semi structured interviews (N=3) and an online survey (N=27) with close and open questions. The qualitative data was analyzed according to Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis model, with the support of NVivo11®; quantitative data was analyzed with the support of SPSS 25. Results allow differentiating a passive and active use of Tinder, and show diverse motivations to install and to use the app. Analyses also show the presence of engagement cycles that lead users to repeatedly uninstall and install the app. Participants have concerns such as security issues about the offline date and the use of the app itself. In addition, we found that participants consider Tinder useful to meet new people, believing that a Tinder based relationship is as valid as a normative one. Nevertheless, they demonstrate contradictory opinions about their usage, voicing stereotypes such as the predominance of casual relationships or not admitting they use the app. Globally, this study shows that Tinder is present on college students' lives, presenting a rich first look at this phenomenon.

Key words: Online dating, Tinder, Socialization, College students, Intimacy