

# Privacy Perceptions and Behaviors of LGBTQ+ Community in Türkiye

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**Abstract**—This research delves into the distinctive privacy challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community, arising from a toxic environment and potential discrimination. By studying the privacy perceptions and behaviors in online social networks and dating applications, the study aims to inform the design of more inclusive technological solutions, with a particular focus on the LGBTQ+ community in Türkiye.

**1. Introduction.** LGBTQ+ community has discrepant concerns compared to heterosexuals due to the (toxic) environment, social denial, possible discrimination from their family members, their colleagues, their government, etc. Therefore, studying LGBTQ+ individuals' privacy perception and behaviors is fundamentally important to design safer and inclusive technological products. The Privacy International Network [1], in emphasizing why issues related to gender and privacy are so important, noted, “[e]very human being is to a degree subject to corporate and government surveillance. But...there is a uniqueness to the surveillance faced by women, trans and gender queer people.” The usable security and privacy research community, adapting methodologies from the CHI community, has recently focused on at-risk population [2] and even suggested how to conduct studies for vulnerable populations [3], [4]. A plethora of research investigated the privacy perceptions and concerns of LGBTQ+ users.

One line of studies has focused on privacy of LGBTQ+ individuals due to their presence in online social networks (OSN), e.g., TikTok [5]. OSNs are intriguing for research because the LGBTQ+ community engages not only with its LGBTQ+ community bubble but also with broader social groups such as family, co-workers, and friends. However, this engagement may cause LGBTQ+ individuals to feel threatened due to their gender identity and sexual orientation [6], e.g. fear of being outed [7]–[9]. In addition to OSNs, the privacy of LGBTQ+ individuals is affected by their presence on more restricted and community-specific platforms, i.e., dating applications (Dating Apps). Dating Apps, unsafe by design [10], could potentially put users' information at risk by disclosing their personal information to third parties without consent [11]–[13]. However, data privacy and data security challenges in dating apps for queer community are still unsolved [6], [14], [15]. While existing studies significantly extended our understanding of LGBTQ+ users' privacy perception and behavior, the vast

majority of previous studies are skewed to WEIRD populations, i.e. people from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic societies [16]. Such geographic and linguistic barriers could hinder the replication of the study.

In this work, to close this research gap and enable more diverse and inclusive studies, we propose to study privacy perceptions and behaviors of the LGBTQ+ community in Türkiye. Although homosexuality and asexuality have been both legalized in Türkiye since 1858 by the Ottoman Empire, Türkiye continues to remain as the second most restrictive country in Europe for LGBTQ+ equality policies and laws [17]. The LGBTQ+ community in Türkiye endures cultural and political challenges [18], [19], discrimination in places such as a workplace [20], a hospital [21], and negative attitudes from their family members [22]. To comprehensively understand the privacy perceptions and behaviors of LGBTQ+ community in Türkiye, we analyze two online worlds the community engages with: 1) *Online Social Networks*; and 2) *Dating Applications*.

**2. Research Questions.** **RQ1:** Do LGBTQ+ individuals in Türkiye exhibit consistent privacy behaviors aligned with their perceptions within OSNs? **RQ2:** Do LGBTQ+ individuals in Türkiye exhibit consistent privacy behaviors aligned with their perceptions within Dating Apps? **RQ3:** Are there divergent privacy behaviors and perceptions among LGBTQ+ individuals in Türkiye when comparing OSNs and Dating Apps? **RQ4:** What factors- like city progressiveness, outness- contribute to the observed differences, similarities, or inconsistencies in privacy behaviors and perceptions?

**3. Methodology.** We piloted our IRB-approved study with 5 participants, and also Turkish translations of the questions are reviewed. We are currently recruiting a representative sample of Türkiye-based adult LGBTQ+ respondents via an online survey platform, i.e. Qualtrics. The survey is designed with a blend of multiple-choice, matrix, and free-response questions. To answer the aforementioned research questions, we employ the following metrics from the literature or self-developed: 1) *Global information privacy concern* [23]; 2) *Perceived privacy risk and control over OSNs/Dating Apps* [24]; 3) *Trust on platforms and members of platforms* [25], [26]; 4) *Self-disclosure* [27]; 5) *Personal information share* [28]; and 6) *Freedom of self-expression* (self-developed).

**Analysis.** We plan to analyze the results of the survey using both qualitative (e.g., based on open-ended questions) and quantitative methods (e.g., *t*-test analysis).

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