



METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

THE SHIDDUCH CRISES STUDY:
SINGLE MEN AND WOMEN IN
THE ORTHODOX "MARRIAGE MARKET"

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

THE SHIDDUCH CRISES STUDY: SINGLE MEN AND WOMEN IN THE ORTHODOX “MARRIAGE MARKET”

Study Overview

This study was designed to capture the experiences of single men and women actively dating throughout the Orthodox Jewish community in the United States. What are they seeking in a spouse? How do they date? How do they feel? What do they want from the Orthodox community?

Research Ethics

The Center for Communal Research prioritizes the rights and welfare of our research participants. The protocol for this study was approved by New England IRB, a WIRB-Copernicus Group Company.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three groups:

1. 41 single Orthodox Jews.
 - a. 18 men.
 - b. 23 women.
2. 26 professional and volunteer matchmakers working with the Orthodox Jewish community.
3. 21 Orthodox rabbis, rebbetzins, and community leaders who have expertise in *shidduchim* (matchmaking) or closely related areas of Jewish life.

For interviews, participants were recruited using a referral (“snowball”) sampling approach:

1. **Single Orthodox Jews.** The research team has connections to a diverse set of Orthodox subpopulations and institutions, including the Orthodox Union (our sponsor), Yeshiva University, and a variety of Orthodox Jewish synagogues and day school alumni networks across the United States. We began by recruiting 4 single Orthodox Jews through our own social networks, and 4 more were recommended by matchmakers. These 8 initial participants then recommended potential participants from their own social networks, and so forth. Ultimately, we approached 49 single men and women, and 42 participated—an 86% cooperation rate.¹
2. **Matchmakers.** An initial group of matchmakers was identified based on our expert knowledge of the American Orthodox community. These participants then, in turn, recommended other potential participants from their professional networks. Ultimately, we approached 32 matchmakers, and 26 participated—an 81% cooperation rate.
3. **Rabbis, rebbetzins, and community leaders.** An initial group of rabbis, rebbetzins, and community leaders was identified based on our expert knowledge of the American Orthodox community. These participants, in turn, recommended other potential participants from their professional networks. Ultimately, we approached 33 rabbis, rebbetzins, and community leaders, and 21 participated—a 64% cooperation rate.

¹ One of the 42 interviewees was later deemed out-of-frame and removed from the study.

To incentivize participation, single men and women who completed an interview were entered into a drawing to win one of two \$250 Amazon.com gift cards. Matchmakers who completed an interview were entered into a separate drawing to win one of two \$250 Amazon.com gift cards. Each rabbi, rebbetzin, and community leader who completed an interview received a \$50 Visa gift card.

Interviews were conducted from August 8, 2019 through April 1, 2020. Interviewers used loosely structured interview protocols (available on request), but interviews were allowed to develop organically. In most cases, interviews were conducted via telephone/VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) or video conferencing. For rabbis, rebbetzins, and community leaders living the New York metropolitan area, some face-to-face interviews were conducted. Interviews varied in length, with a mean length of 55:57 for single Orthodox Jews, 49:49 for matchmakers, and 36:21 for rabbis, rebbetzins, and community leaders.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed.² Transcripts were coded using an “open coding” approach that will allow for the emergent development of themes and trends across the interviews.³

Survey

We surveyed a group of single Orthodox Jews who were actively involved in the dating market. The survey was conducted online using the Qualtrics survey management platform. The survey instrument (available below) covered a range of topics including dating, religion, socioeconomic status, and health.

Incentives and Distribution Channels

To incentivize respondents, the first 500 respondents to complete the survey received a \$10 Amazon.com gift card (i.e., a guaranteed incentive), and all respondents who completed the survey were entered into a drawing to win one of two \$500 Amazon.com gift cards.

The survey had three distribution channels.

Distribution Channel 1

Four dating websites and organizations serving Orthodox Jews provided us with the email addresses of their current users, as consistent with their privacy policies:

- ZivugTech.org
- PartnersinShidduchim.com
- The Shidduch Center of Baltimore
- SUN (Singles Uniting Network)

The four lists of email addresses were combined and deduplicated, resulting in a total of 5,405 individuals. Email invitations with personalized survey links were sent to these individuals on February 5, 2020. Reminder emails were sent to nonrespondents on February 10, 2020, February 23, 2020, and March 2, 2020.

Distribution Channel 2

One dating website serving Orthodox Jews—SawYouatSinai.com, which encompasses YUConnects.com and JLIConnect.com—distributed email invitations with personalized survey links to their users directly. These email invitations were sent on February 5, 2020. A single reminder email was sent to all users on February 19, 2020.

Distribution Channel 3

We placed a sponsored ad on JSwipe, an online dating application targeted at Jewish singles. The ad, which was shown only to users who self-identified as Orthodox or Traditional, invited users to participate in our survey. It was shown 19,513 times to 8,288 unique users between February 5, 2020 and March 2, 2020.

² 1 participant declined to allow their interview to be recorded; this interview was analyzed based on detailed notes taken by the interviewer.

³ Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, 2nd ed, Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 151.

Response Rate

The survey was closed on March 6, 2020. The final survey dispositions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Final survey dispositions, by distribution channel

| | Distribution Channel 1 <i>ZivugTech.org, PartnersinShidduchim.com, The Shidduch Center of Baltimore, SUN (Singles Uniting Network)</i> | Distribution Channel 2 <i>SawYouatSinai.com, YUConnects.com, JLIConnect.com</i> | Distribution Channel 3 <i>JSwipe</i> | All Distribution Channels |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|---------------------------|
| Complete (I) | 599 | 1,155 | 472 | 2,226 |
| Partial (P) | 42 | 72 | 48 | 162 |
| Refusal (R) | 385 | 0 | 0 | 385 |
| Break-off (R) | 116 | 221 | 143 | 480 |
| Unknown eligibility (U) | 4,044 | 15,292 | 7,569 | 26,905 |
| Ineligible | 212 | 502 | 56 | 770 |
| Total | 5,398 | 17,242 | 8,288 | 30,928 |

For this survey, the response rate will be calculated according to the American Association for Public Opinion Research's Standard Definitions, Response Rate 4 (AAPOR RR4). AAPOR RR4 is defined as the number of interviews (complete plus partial) divided by the number of interviews (complete plus partial) plus the number of non-interviews (refusal and break-off plus non-contacts plus others) plus an estimate of the number of cases of unknown eligibility (unknown if housing unit, plus unknown, other) that are actually eligible:

$$RR4 = \frac{(I+P)}{(I+P)+(R+NC+0)+e(UH+UO)}$$

Thus, in order to calculate AAPOR RR4, we must first estimate what proportion of cases of unknown eligibility is actually eligible (e).

There were two potential sources of ineligibility among the cases with unknown eligibility:

1. **Outside the target population.** These individuals did not fit the criteria for the study. Some were living outside the United States, some were not Orthodox, and some were married or engaged.
2. **Duplicate listings.** These individuals were invited to take the survey through two or three different distribution channels.

The number of individuals who attempted to participate in the survey but were screened out because they were outside the target population is shown in Table 1. Taking the number of interviews (complete plus partial) divided by the number of ineligible cases plus the number of interviews (complete plus partial) gives a partial estimate of what proportion of cases of unknown eligibility is actually eligible.

The survey instrument asked respondents whether they used a number of dating apps or websites in the past 6 months, including each of the distribution channels: ZivugTech.org, PartnersinShidduchim.com, SUN (Singles Uniting Network), SawYouatSinai.com, YUConnects.com, JLIConnect.com, and JSwipe.⁴ Thirty-one percent reported using apps or websites in two distributions channels, and 5% reported using apps or websites in all three distribution channels. Thus, we estimate that 81% of 'non-interviews' who are in the target population represent unique listings ($64\% + \frac{31\%}{2} + \frac{5\%}{3} = 81\%$).

⁴ The Shidduch Center of Baltimore is not an app or website and was not included in this question.

Table 2. Estimated proportion of cases of unknown eligibility that is actually eligible, by distribution channel

| | Distribution Channel 1 <i>ZivugTech.org, PartnersinShidduchim.com, The Shidduch Center of Baltimore, SUN (Singles Uniting Network)</i> | Distribution Channel 2 <i>SawYouatSinai.com, YUConnects.com, JLIConnect.com</i> | Distribution Channel 3 <i>JSwipe</i> | All Distribution Channels |
|--|---|--|---|---------------------------|
| Complete (I) | 599 | 1,155 | 472 | 2,226 |
| Partial (P) | 42 | 72 | 48 | 162 |
| Ineligible (outside target population) | 212 | 502 | 56 | 770 |
| Percent eligible (in target population) | 75% | 71% | 90% | 76% |
| Percent unique listings | 81% | 81% | 81% | 81% |
| Estimated proportion of cases of unknown eligibility that is actually eligible (e) | 61% | 58% | 73% | 61% |

The overall survey response rate was 12% (AAPOR RR4). Response rates are broken down by gender and method of invitation in Table 3.

Table 3. Final survey dispositions and response rates, by gender and distribution channel

| | Distribution Channel 1 <i>ZivugTech.org, PartnersinShidduchim.com, The Shidduch Center of Baltimore, SUN (Singles Uniting Network)</i> | | | Distribution Channel 2 <i>SawYouatSinai.com, YUConnects.com, JLIConnect.com</i> | | | Distribution Channel 3 <i>JSwipe</i> | All Distribution Channels |
|---------------------------|---|-------|-------------|--|-------|-------------|---|---------------------------|
| | Men | Women | Men + Women | Men | Women | Men + Women | Men + Women | Men + Women |
| Complete | 207 | 392 | 599 | 363 | 792 | 1,155 | 472 | 2,226 |
| Partial | 14 | 28 | 42 | 17 | 55 | 72 | 48 | 162 |
| Refusal | 172 | 213 | 385 | | | | | 385 |
| Break-off | 58 | 58 | 116 | 66 | 155 | 221 | 143 | 480 |
| Unknown eligibility | 1,898 | 2,146 | 4,044 | 5,737 | 9,555 | 15,487 | 7,569 | 27,100 |
| e | 61% | 61% | 61% | 58% | 58% | 58% | 73% | 61% |
| Ineligible | 93 | 119 | 212 | 195 | 307 | 502 | 56 | 770 |
| Response rate (AAPOR RR4) | 14% | 21% | 18% | 10% | 13% | 12% | 8% | 12% |

Note: Gender-specific dispositions and response rates for JSwipe users are confidential at JSwipe's request.