



## CHANGES IN DAILY LIVES DURING THE COVID-19: WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE'S DRAWING TELL US?

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**ABSTRACT.** Covid-19 has spread all over the world shortly after it appeared. Precautions have been taken for Covid-19 virus spreading all over the world, which interrupted 'normal' daily lives. New 'normal's have developed and reshaped daily routines of everybody in any age groups. Although the pandemic has similar effects in general, the effects in daily life differ according to nature of precautions, traditional habits, religious preferences and individual characteristics. After an overview of the changes in daily lives across countries under the influence of the Covid-19, this case study presents its findings about how young people's life have changed in Izmir and Istanbul (Turkey) during the precaution of lockdown. We asked 30 people between the ages of 18-29 and they responded with their drawings of their daily life at their home. Respondents are those university students, those stopped working and those keep working during the lockdown. Overall, all these groups experience this process in positive and negative ways and related to their perception of home, sense of safety, and 'outside.' The study describes these aspects and the drawings under six themes.

**Keywords:** lockdown, daily lives, young people, home, ontological security, outside

### INTRODUCTION

Although the Covid-19 virus affects the whole world in almost the same way, the influences of the virus on daily lives in countries with different cultures, lifestyles, precautions and so show differences. During this pandemic, people's daily routines have changed or new habits have emerged. To examine the changes in daily lives with precautions during this process, we first evaluate the recent data about the countries with also examples from individuals' life.

According to recent surveys with an update in the June of 2020 [1], the changes in daily life are not the same across the countries. The survey with 2137 people over the age of 18 across Germany, England and United States reflects such differences (Table-1). The survey asked this question: "Thinking about your everyday life, since the COVID-19 / coronavirus pandemic, have you made any changes to your general lifestyle?" The findings show that each of these countries has made changes but at different degrees in lifestyle towards Covid-19. In the United Kingdom, the rate of "staying at home" (84%) and other preventive behaviours are higher than in Germany and the US, although the UK has the lowest rate of using the mask (20%). The percentage of using masks is highest in the United States, with 66%. The most dominant behaviour in the US is to stay at home. "Washing hands more" and "applying social distance" follow as the second. Germany, on the other hand, is the country with the lowest percentage of daily life changes compared to the UK and the US.

**Table 1.** Changing behaviours and new routines in Germany, the UK and the United States

	Germany	United Kingdom	United States
Stayed at home more	71%	84%	77%
Washed hands more	70%	75%	73%
Applied social distancing	61%	78%	69%
Wear protective face masks outside	52%	20%	66%
Avoided public places like bars and restaurants	58%	67%	65%
Gone to the shops less	59%	71%	62%
Travelled less	51%	69%	56%
Cancelled plans with family or friends	54%	62%	53%
Shopped online more	30%	46%	52%
Cleaned your house more	20%	40%	43%
Used less cash	35%	63%	36%
Avoided public transport	50%	60%	36%
Avoided certain shopping times	37%	43%	35%
Worked from home	22%	28%	30%
Reduced exercise regime	20%	19%	16%
I have not made any changes to my lifestyle	5%	2%	5%

**Source:** <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1105960/changes-to-the-general-lifestyle-due-to-covid-19-in-selected-countries/> [1]

Some of the Far East countries present a different picture. In South Korea, people's daily lifestyles have changed considerably during the Covid-19. They have taken the measures in this process seriously. The majority does not go outside and stay away from the crowd unless it is mandatory. Of the 1000 survey respondents, 96% stay away from crowded places, 94% do not go to restaurants and 93% stay away from meeting with people. In Japan, using a mask and hygiene has had an important place in the daily life of Japan. Therefore, in this process of the pandemic, their daily lives have not changed much like in other countries. However, they still took precautions in this process and stayed at their homes [2]. While celebrating the 'Sakura' time together in the parks before the process, the celebrations in the parks decreased during the Covid process. People have minimized their social interactions [3].

A study by the Foreign Policy website [4] examines the changing daily lives through the eyes of individuals in the process of Covid-19 and underlines the examples related to cultural differences between countries and political economic characteristics as follows:

Jess, a South Korean citizen, is a postgraduate student in London. She had to return to his country during the Covid-19 process. After returning to her country, her Covid-19 test was negative. She stayed home for 14 days self-isolation. A quarantine package was given to Byun during the self-isolation process. This package included how to protect mental health and hygiene products in the isolation process. In this process, it was followed up by the state health center whether it applied the measures required.

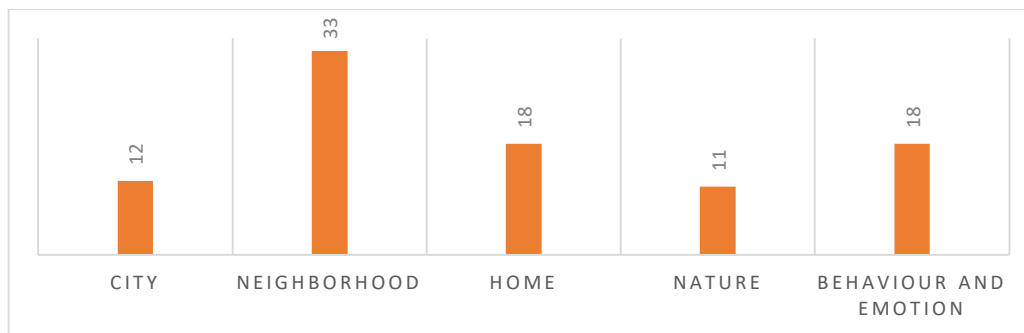
Tyali is a student at Stellenbosch University. His country, South Africa, banned the sale of alcohol and cigarettes as a Corona measure. Although Tyali does not consume alcohol, his friends do. His friends started making beer at home during this period. South

Africa takes Covid-19 very seriously because of its HIV / AIDS history. Only designated groups can use public transportation, whereas citizens go out only to buy food. Due to the alcohol ban, the people started looting and robbing their sales places. Tyali stated that the military and police interventions in the country are not the same and there are many cases or with black people in the majority. Tyali has isolated himself from this process by watching anime. He is concerned about whether her mother can make payments, as she cannot continue working during this process.

Omar Khan, who lives in India, is Muslim. He wanted to spend the month of Ramadan by visiting mosques. However, in the quarantine process, visits to mosques were banned in India, as in most countries. They had to spend this process at home. During the quarantine, seasonal workers had to flee to return to their homes. There was an internal migration in this process that caused the virus to spread in larger areas. Muslims, the largest religious minority in India, were held responsible for the spread of the virus. That is why Omar Khan feels under pressure. He said that the streets are empty in India, which is normally a crowded country, and makes it feel real. During the night, the police traveled to stop the escapers and the siren sounds interrupted their sleep [4].

In these three examples, we have seen that the places where people live are affected in different ways according to their culture. Their "normal" life changed with Covid-19. They were also psychologically affected by this process.

Another study on the effects of pandemic on daily lives is by the CityLab [5]. With a title "Your Maps of Life Under Lockdown," it asked their readers to draw maps regarding the quarantine process. The drawings were made using different materials. As we categorize all these 92 published drawings according to the subjects they focus on (Figure 1), we see the differences.



**Fig. 1.** *Focuses of the drawings at CityLab (developed by the authors)*

The majority of drawings (33 out of 92) related to the lockdown period were made about the respondents' neighborhood and routines confined there. These people visualized their relationship with the environment and the changes around them in their drawings. The number of drawings on "home" and "behavior / emotions" is same (18 out of 92). In these drawings, they visualized their activities at home and the general physical condition of their home. "Nature" and "City" images are the least mentioned (11 or 12 out of 92).

As we examine the changes in daily routines in these drawings, we overall see that instead of socializing, people walk alone in nature. There are bird sounds in the city instead of horn sounds. Even though they do not do too many things at home, they feel tired. Number of daily meals have increased. At home and surroundings, they make special efforts to get the sunshine. Normally the balcony was not used much but now it is

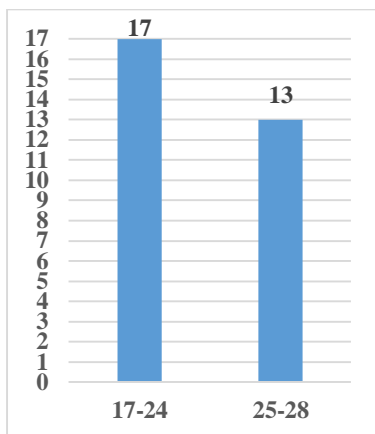
the most used place at home. They now have been working at home. The students too are at home and started to use more to socialize through social media online.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Our case study aims to identify how the daily life habits of young people in Izmir and Istanbul (Turkey) have changed and how they perceive these changes during the Covid-19 process. For this purpose, we carried out a drawing survey with 30 people between the ages of 17-28 in the May of 2020 when the lockdowns as a precaution were part of the daily life in Izmir and Istanbul. We invited these people to participate in the survey on the phone, as we have been already familiar with these groups and their age ranges and job status. We asked them: “What are your routines and feelings in the Covid-19 and lockdown process?” They sent their responses as a drawing and via cell phones.

In our analysis of the drawings, we examined how they represent their experiences at home and refer to ‘outside’ under new normalcies. When talking about home’s characteristics providing home dwellers with privacy and ontological security, Laing described the concept of ontological security as follows: “If a position of primary ontological security has been reached, the ordinary circumstances of life do not afford a perpetual threat to one’s existence” [6]. Home is a major space that encourages the development of ontological security for its inhabitants. Even if the neighbourhoods or cities they live in are not secure, they can feel safe at the houses that they live and connect with. People who developed new hobbies at home strengthened their bonds with their homes and felt safe. Even if they feel insecure in environments outside their home, that is, in their neighbourhood and cities, the feeling of isolation at home seems to make them feel safe or secure.

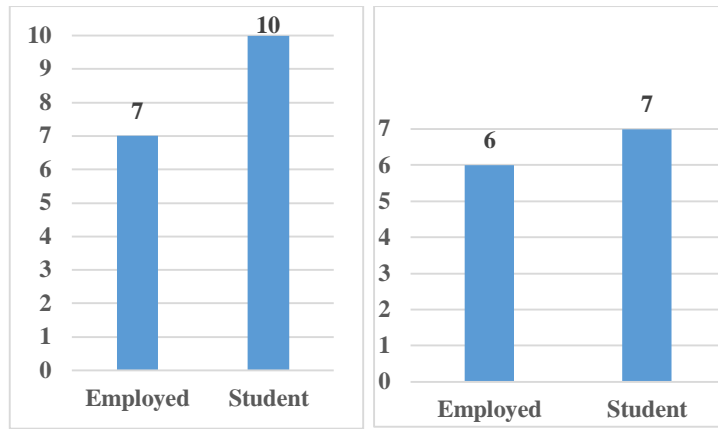
To analyse these drawings, we categorized them according to the respondents’ age and then their status as students and status of "working in paid-job." The latter is also grouped as “employed” and “unemployed” during the lockdown. We examined how the changes in these groups' lives affected their routines and emotions.



*Fig. 2. Number of respondents according to their age*

Age groups are defined as 17-24 (that is, they can be high school or university students) and 25-29 or the group that might have a post-university working life. However, this distinction is to show the potentials, not the current student and employee status. Between 17-24 years old, 17 respondents are there. In the 25-28 age range, there are 13 people.

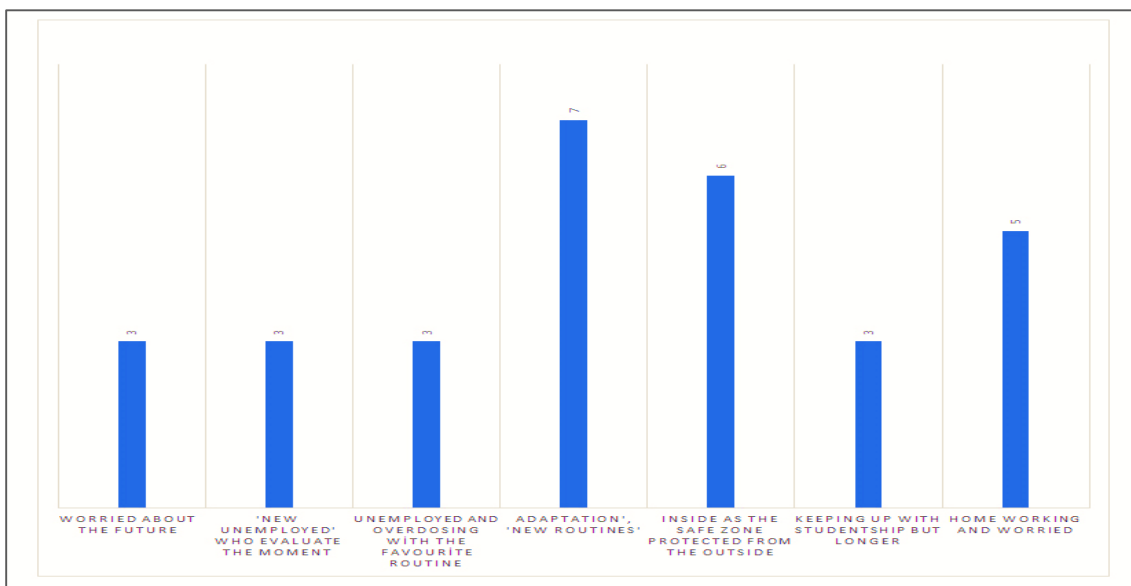
About the student status and working status of these age groups before the Covid process (Figures 3 & 4), we see that a little more than half of both groups are students.



**Fig. 3.** 17-24 age, work and student status **Fig. 4.** 25-28 age, work and student status

Seven of those between the ages of 17-24 and six of those between the ages of 24-28 were working before the Covid process. After the precautions, students had to continue their education online at their home usually with their family. Some of the employees had taken a break from work, whereas others continued their job responsibilities at home. According to age groups, only one person in the 17-24 age group and almost all employees (5 people) in the 25-28 age group continued to work from home.

While the lives of students and employees have fitted into home environment, the ordinary work hours and school hours that used to regulate everyday lives have suddenly turned upside down. Also, daily lives of other family members are stuck in the same home space at the same period. As a result, individuals' psychologies and perceptions about home or 'inside' versus 'outside' have changed more or less. The study represents and analyzes these drawings according to the respondents' age groups and status as students or employees. We suggest a group of themes with the negative or positive feelings for each groups of respondents. Ultimately, there are seven group with six themes (Figure 5).



**Fig. 5.** 17-24 age, work and student status

The majority of drawings (7 out of 30) underline the respondents' adaptation along with new routines at home. Another main group with 6 respondents talks about "inside as the safe zone protected from the outside." Those working at home and with worries are higher among the age group of 25-28. The following sections detail these and other themes according to respondents' characteristics and feelings.

### ***Drawings by the ages of 17-24 as students or paid-job holders***

When we examine the drawings of students between the ages of 17-24, the school hour seems to continue but with new study spaces at home. Those who have experienced this process positively feel ontologically safe at home and hope that this process will end. At the same time, their drawing with "before" and "after" scenes showed that they have new habits replacing the old ones. On the other hand, those with negative experiences feel overwhelmed by the online education. They seem to develop bonds with online education technology have increased.

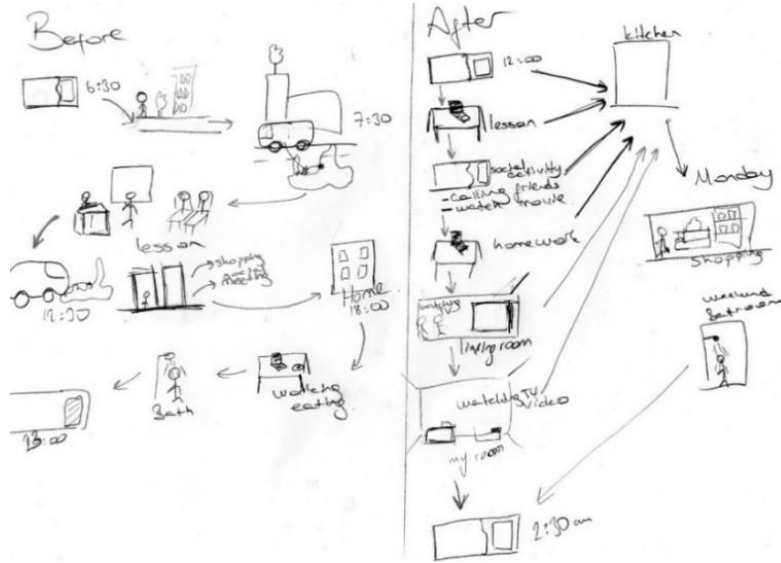
#### **Theme 1: Adaptation and new routines**

In these two drawings, students returned to their family home during the Covid-19. Their routines have changed clearly. Both students try to adapt to this process. By drawing their drawings with "before- after" scenes, they emphasize this change and adaptation.



***Dwg. 1. Nuray, 23 years old woman, student, adapted and got new routines.***

Nuray was staying at the dorm before the Covid process. Her routines have changed very sharply afterwards she returned to her family home. She stated that she tries to keep up with this process.

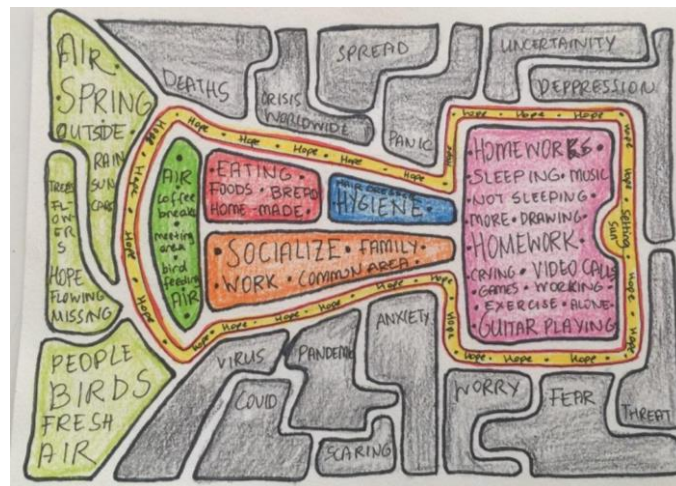


**Dwg. 2.** Pinar, 23 years old woman, student, adapted and got new routines.

Before the Covid process, Pinar was living alone. She returned to her family during the Covid process and her routines have changed. Her socialization at school life has been replaced by that at home space. She passes through this process with her focus on her online education.

Theme 2: “Inside as the Safe Zone Protected from the Outside”

These two drawings focus more on emotions. Both of them see outside as “dangerous” and have determined their home or a psychologically created area as a “safe” environment and try to remain hopeful in this environment. They express the future for them and expect to return to their old routines.



**Dwg. 3.** İpek, 24 years old woman, student, focuses more on home as her safe zone.

İpek was living far away from her family before the Covid process. In this process, she returned to her family. She stated that she sees her house as a safe place and that the areas outside the house affected her psychologically in negative ways. She continues her life at

home by holding on to hopes. She stated that she tries to see the good things outside and that she waits to meet them.

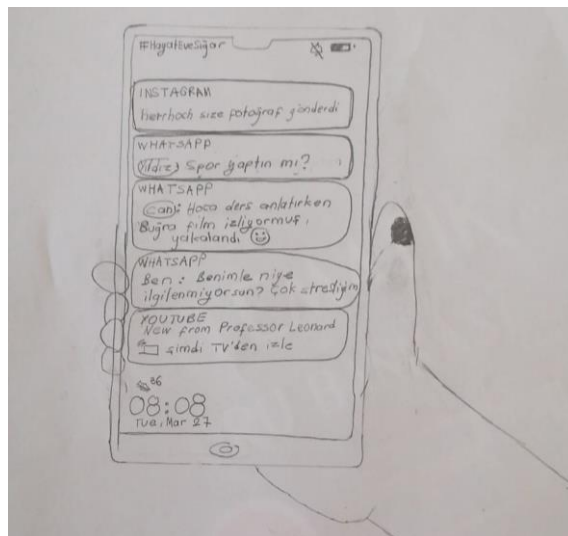


**Dwg. 4.** Asli, 24 years old woman, student, creates a safe zone “inside.”

Aslı returned to her family home, after her stay at the dorm before the Covid process. Her drawing refers to a safe area created by her. She states that this safe area is protected from the outside both with dangers and good things. Outside, she emphasized the beautiful things she missed. She hopes to return to her old life and waits for that.

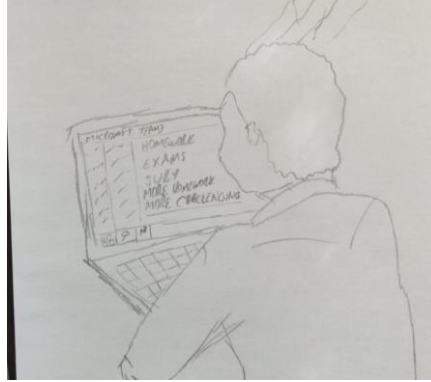
### Theme 3: Keeping up with studentship but for longer hours

These two drawings among students focus on the increasing ties with "technology," i.e., the virtual world via mobile phones and computers, and especially because of online education. It seems that the new online education process drives this process with some problems in concentrating on life.



**Dwg. 5.** İrem, 24 years old woman, student, burdened with increasing technological bonds.

İrem lives with her family before and after the Covid process. Her drawing of only her cell phone details how she manages her all life, including her school education, through the technology about virtual space.



*Dwg. 6. Osman, 24 years old man, student, felt burden by student works online.*

Osman returned to his family during the Covid process. He spends many hours of his day on the computer. In the online education process, homework and exam burdens are heavy and he spends most of his time with his lessons.

Drawings by the age group of 17-24 as new employees provide both problems and temporary adaptation process at home. These detail how this younger age group's new entrants in work life are negatively affected and interrupted by the process of pandemic. And this interruption became a source of worry for some. They are pessimistic, anxious and unhappy waiting for this process to pass. Among this group, some were successful for developing 'positive' experiences for spending time and adapted to the home environment and found new hobbies. The safe environment of the house made them feel safe, happy and peaceful. Old habits have been replaced by new habits.

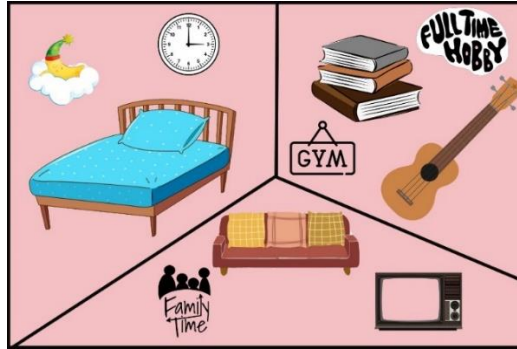
#### Theme 4: New unemployed with worries versus hobbies at home.

These two people have just graduated and started their jobs. Ayşe feels insecure about staying home because of the activities that she postponed and she had to take a break from her new job.



*Dwg. 7. Ayşe, 23 years old woman, working before Covid, now concerned about her future.*

Ayşe just graduated before the Covid process. While trying to go back to her family and do her compulsory internship, Covid-19 made her to take a break from her job. When we ask her feelings in drawing, she stated that she was concerned about her future and delaying her plans worried him.

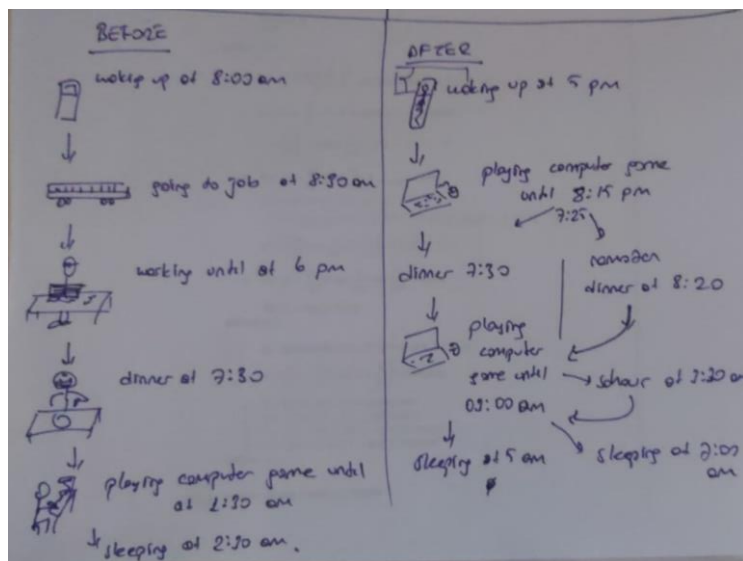


**Dwg. 8.** Fatma 23 years old woman, working before Covid, gets new hobbies)

Fatma too had to stop with her paid-job after Covid. In this process, she stated that she spent time doing the things she delayed due to her educational life and work life. She has been learning to play ‘ukulele’ for a long time. She spends time with her family she was away from during her education life. She regularly exercise and reads the books she postponed.

Theme 5: New unemployed but “overdosing” with new favorite routines

Others continued their pre-Covid routines, but by making some of these routines as their "favorite" ones at home and by taking longer time. The time they previously reserved for their paid-job is suddenly filled with these favorite actions. The new home life has focused on a single action, which becomes a way of protecting themselves psychologically from the Covid process or maybe the worries Ayse feels.



**Dwg. 9.** Ali, 23 years old man, was working before Covid, his favorite is playing games for longer hours.

Ali was living with his family and working before the Covid process. He had to take break his job with the Covid process. Normally, he used to spend his after-work hours for playing games. Now he plays game much longer. Although there were not many changes in other routines, the computer game takes his time that he was spending for his paid-job.



*Dwg. 10. Meltem, 23 years old woman, was working before Covid, her favorite is practicing her job as cook.*

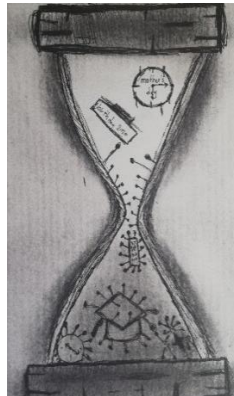
Meltem lives alone and was working at her cafe before the Covid process. With the closure of the cafes in the Covid process, she had to take a break from her job. But even if she cannot continue her work in this process, she is practicing her work at work during her life at home. This, on the one hand, takes her away from this process and distracts her attention from negative feelings.

#### ***Drawings by the ages of 25-28 as paid-job holders or students***

The Covid-19 process caused the majority of the age group of 25-28 to continue their paid-job at home. However, home-working affects some of them negatively, as they get used to work life outside. They are bored at home and find it difficult to adapt.

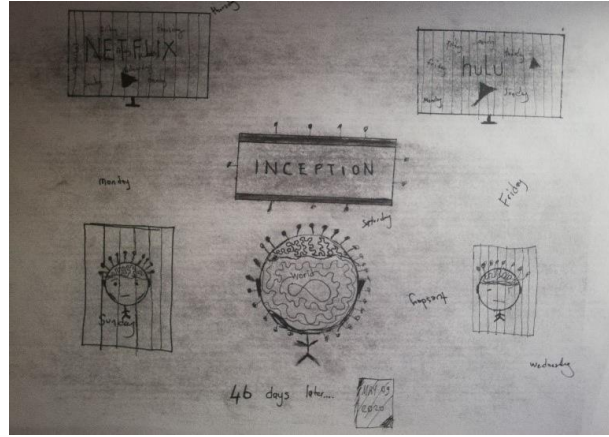
#### **Theme 6: Home-working with worries**

In these drawings, home-working during the Covid process seems to make feel people with the habits of working outside as trapped at home. Both respondents said that they were very bored at home and wanted this process to end as soon as possible.



*Dwg. 11. Mehmet, 26 years old man, home-working, felt imprisonment and boredom at home.*

Mehmet lives with his family. He normally works as a freelancer. During Covid, he continues to work at home, but finds trouble about this new work conditions. He explains that every event in his drawing ended due to the Covid process. This makes him feel stuck in a sandglass. He stated that the important things he attached (his family and friends) are still there.



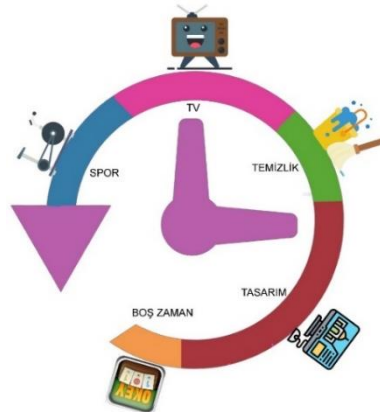
*Dwg. 12. Berkan, 25 years old man, home-working, felt imprisonment and boredom at home.*

Berkan lives with his family and continue with his job through home-working. He feels as if he is in the jail. During this period, he watches movies and series from various applications.

Of the age group of 25-28, the drawings of students talk about a more positive adaptation process. These students get used to their new places and routines more quickly. Home seems to provide their ontological security and sense of safety.

#### Theme 7: Adaptation and new routines at home

These two visualizations by students between the ages of 25-28 are focused on the time. While one visualized the time she devotes for her daily activities, the other visualizes the time she spent in the rooms of the house. Both respondents emphasize the adaptation process to their new lives with new arrangements of time and space.



*Dwg. 13. Merve, 26 years old women, student was positively affected by this process (Adapted)*

Merve returned to her family home during the Covid process. While she devotes most of her day for her online classes, the drawing hints to an adaptation process to the new time and space arrangement at home with cleaning, sports, and watching TV as well.



*Dwg. 13. Beyza, 26 years old women, student was positively affected by this process (Adapted)*

Beyza too returned to her family home and adapted to the home environment and got used to her new routines. According to her drawing, she exercises a lot and through any other activities at home. She visualized the rooms with the percentages of the time she spent at home. She spends most of her time in the living room and with all kinds of technologies to get access to online.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the respondents focus on living through this process positively. They do so by acquiring new hobbies and aiming not to be affected by this process. At their homes they feel ontologically safer and manage to ignore the negativities outside in these environments.

Those with negative experiences have an increasing tie with the communication technologies, bored with school work and working at home and their concerns about the future have increased. Besides, those who are returning to their families during this period do not feel comfortable because they do not have private spaces at their family home.

The changes in daily lives because of COVID-19 precautions differ according to the cultures and measures taken on a country basis. These changes also differ according to individuals' characteristics. As in the case of young people in this study, this process Covid-19 with the lockdown precaution has affected people positively and negatively. New habits and new hobbies have been acquired, new emotions have been experienced and the concept of normal has changed. The meanings of home as inside versus outside have changed, which seems to affect our lives in the future too.

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