Introduction

• Rejection sensitivity positively predicts engagement in online dating (Blackhart, Fitzpatrick, & Williamson, 2014).
• True self mediates rejection sensitivity and online dating use in adults (Hance, Blackhart, & Dew, 2017).
• Rejection sensitivity predicts less involvement in close relationships and a greater likelihood of avoiding social situations (Leary, 2001).
• Additionally, rejection sensitive individuals are predicted to have lower probability of being in a romantic relationship (Hafen et al., 2014).

Participants

• 734 participants (M_{age} = 20.61, SD = 4.98) recruited through ETSU Sona Systems
• 537 (73%) female; 632 (86%) white/Caucasian; 656 (89%) heterosexual

Measures

• Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (α = .79) (Downey & Feldman, 1996)
• Real Me Scale (α = .70) (McKenna et al., 2002)
• Online Dating Inventory (α = .91) (Blackhart et al., 2014)
• Preference for Conventional Dating (α = .60)
• Dating Success was operationally defined in two ways:
  - Number of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd dates within the last month
  - Whether participants achieved the goal they had going into their most recent first date (e.g., to get to know the person, escalate a relationship, have sex).

Results

• Results of Hance et al. (2017) were replicated, showing that true self mediated the relationship between rejection sensitivity and online dating site/app use (95% CI = .03,.08).

• Preference for conventional dating over online dating:
  - A multiple regression analysis (F(2, 731) = 22.01, p < .001) showed that true self negatively predicted a preference for conventional dating (β = -0.23, t = -6.38, p < .001) whereas rejection sensitivity did not (β = -0.02, t = -0.61, p = .54).
  - Follow-up analyses found that this was only true for those who met their most recent first date conventionally (β = -0.11, t = -2.59, p = .01) and not when participants met their most recent first date through online dating sites/apps (β = -0.17, t = -1.72, p = .09).

Discussion

• Current study replicated prior research (Hance et al., 2017).
• Hypothesis of the current study not supported.
  - Rejection sensitivity did not predict a preference for online dating or conventional dating, nor did it predict dating success in either scenario.
  - We did find, however, that true self positively predicted a preference for engaging in online dating over meeting potential dating partners conventionally.
  - Unexpectedly, we found that true self negatively predicted success on the most recent first date in terms of meeting the individual’s goal on that date.
• Results suggest that for individuals who feel they are better able to express their true selves through online mediums over face-to-face interactions, it may be beneficial for these individuals to get to know people online before meeting in person.

Limitations

• Correlational study with cross-sectional, self-report data from a homogeneous sample.
• Fewer people met their last first date online than conventionally, which may have reduced power.

Future research

• Conduct experimental research to examine successful dating between online and face-to-face environments.
• Investigate the prevalence of dating success for those who meet potential dates online.

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