

Does Engagement in Online Dating Lead to Greater Dating Success

for Rejection Sensitive Individuals

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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).

Goal

- To determine whether individuals higher in rejection sensitivity indicate having more success in meeting potential romantic partners online when compared to meeting potential partners conventionally.

Hypothesis

- Individuals higher in rejection sensitivity will report more dating success when engaging in online dating rather than when engaging in more conventional ways of meeting potential romantic partners.

Method

Participants

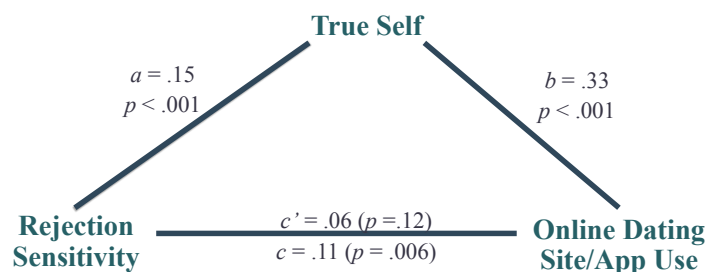
- 734 participants ($M_{age} = 20.61$, $SD = 4.98$) recruited through ETSU Sona Systems
 - 537 (73%) female; 632 (86%) white/Caucasian; 656 (89%) heterosexual

Measures

- Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire ($\alpha = .79$) (Downey & Feldman, 1996)
- Real Me Scale ($\alpha = .70$) (McKenna et al., 2002)
- Online Dating Inventory ($\alpha = .91$) (Blackhart et al., 2014)
- Preference for Conventional Dating ($\alpha = .60$)
- 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 ($\beta = -0.23$, $t = -6.38$, $p < .001$) whereas rejection sensitivity did not ($\beta = -0.02$, $t = -0.61$, $p = 0.54$).
- Dating Success:
 - A multiple regression analysis ($F(2, 659) = 8.32$, $p < .001$) also showed that true self negatively predicted a successful first date (i.e., goal was met) ($\beta = -0.15$, $t = -3.74$, $p < .001$), whereas rejection sensitivity did not ($\beta = -0.03$, $t = -0.8$, $p = 0.41$).
 - Follow-up analyses found that this was only true for those who met their most recent first date conventionally ($\beta = -0.11$, $t = -2.59$, $p = .01$) and not when participants met their most recent first date through online dating sites/apps ($\beta = -0.17$, $t = -1.72$, $p = .09$).

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

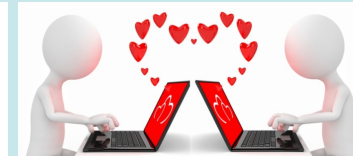
- Correlational study with cross-sectional, self-report data from a homogeneous sample.
- Fewer people met their last first date online than conventionally, which may have reduced power.

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.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Rejection Sensitivity	–					
2. True Self	0.19*	–				
3. Online Dating Site/App Use	0.10*	0.24*	–			
4. Preference for Conventional Dating	-0.07	-0.24*	-0.27*	–		
5. Number of 1 st 2 nd , & 3 rd Dates	-0.04	-0.02	-0.07	-0.04	–	
6. Goal of Most Recent 1 st Date Met	-0.06	-0.15*	-0.20*	0.15*	0.14*	–
Mean	9.72	5.45	3.87	15.40	6.16	3.51
SD	4.40	3.47	5.01	3.62	11.60	0.77

* $p < .05$



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