

# Rejection Sensitivity and Successful Dates: Does Online Dating Play a Role?



## Introduction

- Rejection sensitive (RS) individuals are less likely to enter into a romantic relationship (Hafen et al., 2014).
- RS positively predicts use of online dating sites/apps (Blackhart et al., 2014) and true self mediates this relationship (Hance et al., 2017).
- Hypothesis:**
  - Individuals higher in RS will report more dating success when engaging in online dating rather than when engaging in more conventional ways of meeting potential romantic partners.

## Method

### Study 1

- 491 MTurk participants ( $M_{age} = 35.17, SD = 11.07$ ).
- Participants completed the following measures online:
  - Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ) ( $\alpha = .79$ ) (Downey & Feldman, 1996)
  - Online Dating Inventory (ODI) ( $\alpha = .42$ ) (Blackhart et al., 2014)
  - Preference for Conventional Dating ( $\alpha = .70$ )
  - Dating Success was operationally defined in two ways:
    - # of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> dates (with the same person) within the last month.
    - Whether participants achieved the goal they had for their most recent 1<sup>st</sup> date (e.g., to get to know the person, escalate the relationship, have sex).

### Study 2

- 734 Sona participants ( $M_{age} = 19.81, SD = 3.67$ ).
- Participants completed the RSQ ( $\alpha = .82$ ), ODI ( $\alpha = .72$ ), Real Me Scale ( $\alpha = .70$ ) (McKenna et al., 2002), Preference for Conventional Dating ( $\alpha = .60$ ), and measures of Dating Success online.



## Contact

- Elizabeth Wilson: wilsonel@etsu.edu
- Dr. Ginni Blackhart: blackhar@etsu.edu

## Acknowledgments

- This research was supported by a Student-Faculty Collaborative Grant awarded by the ETSU Honors College and Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.



## Results

### Study 1

	1	2	3	4
1. Rejection Sensitivity	-			
2. Goal of Most Recent 1 <sup>st</sup> Date Met	-0.18*	-		
3. Number of 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dates	-0.04	0.12*	-	
4. Preference for Conventional Dating	-0.10*	0.08	0.05	-
Mean	9.88	2.97	1.98	12.87
SD	4.35	.98	4.92	4.00

\* $p < .05$

- Participants who met potential dates online ( $M = 3.54, SD = 7.68$ ) reported more dating success (# of dates) than those who met conventionally ( $M = 1.57, SD = 3.14$ ),  $t(436) = 3.80, p < .001, d = .39$ .
- Those higher in RS reported less dating success (achieving goal) overall,  $\beta = -0.25, t = -3.03, p = .003$ , whether they met online or not.

### Study 2

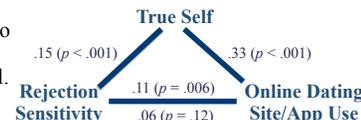
- True self negatively predicted preference for conventional dating,  $\beta = -0.23, t = -6.41, p < .001$ , whereas RS did not predict a dating preference,  $\beta = -0.02, t = -0.49, p = 0.63$ .
- Although RS did not predict dating success ( $\beta = -0.05, t = -1.30, p = 0.20$ ), true self negatively predicted whether the 1<sup>st</sup> date goal was met,  $\beta = -0.12, t = -3.14, p < .001$ . In addition, those who met their date conventionally ( $M = 3.56, SD = .90$ ) had more dating success than those who met their date online ( $M = 3.26, SD = .74$ ),  $\beta = 0.11, t = 2.86, p = .004$ . Further, younger individuals were more likely to have their goal met,  $\beta = -0.09, t = -2.32, p = .02$ .

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Rejection Sensitivity	-					
2. True Self	0.19*	-				
3. Online Dating Site/App Use	0.10*	0.25*	-			
4. Preference for Conventional Dating	-0.06	-0.24*	-0.24*	-		
5. Number of Dates	-0.06	-0.03	-0.05	0.05	-	
6. Goal of 1 <sup>st</sup> Date Met	-0.09*	-0.15*	-0.16*	0.15*	0.14*	-
Mean	9.20	5.45	4.58	15.40	5.55	3.51
SD	4.24	3.47	7.26	3.62	11.17	0.77

\* $p < .05$

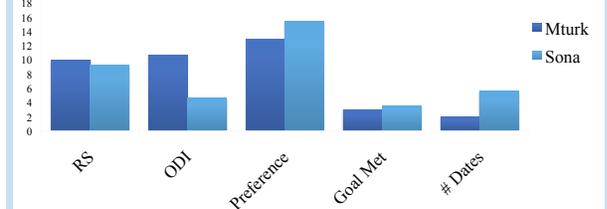


- Results also replicated Hance et al. (2017).



### Ancillary Analyses

- MTurk participants were older,  $t(1223) = 34.85, p < .001, d = 2.03$ ; reported greater RS,  $t(1223) = 2.70, p = .007, d = .16$ ; and greater engagement in online dating,  $t(1223) = 10.8, p < .001, d = .63$ ; than Sona participants.
- Sona participants reported greater preference for conventional dating,  $t(1223) = -11.48, p < .001, d = -.67$ ; and more dating success (Goals:  $t(1098) = -10.27, p < .001, d = -.63$ ; Dates:  $t(1223) = -6.68, p < .001, d = -.39$ ); than MTurk participants.



## Discussion

- Hypothesis of the current study not supported.
- Those higher in RS did not report more dating success when meeting potential dating partners online rather than conventionally.
- Supporting prior research, RS predicted less dating success in S1 (but not in S2).
- In S2, true self positively predicted preference for meeting potential dating partners online rather than conventionally. True self negatively predicted success on most recent first date in terms of meeting the individual's goal on that date.
- Whereas MTurk participants reported more dating success (# of dates) when meeting potential dating partners online, Sona participants reported the opposite (1<sup>st</sup> date goal met).

### Limitations

- Self-report, cross-sectional data from a homogeneous sample.
- Unacceptable internal consistency reliability for ODI in S1.

### Future research

- Continue to examine the relationship between RS, online dating, and dating success using other indices of dating success from a more representative sample.
- Conduct longitudinal research to establish directionality.