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Big Five Personality Traits: Dating Apps



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Synonyms

[Dating Applications](#); [Individual Differences](#); [Online Dating](#); [Personality](#)

Definition

The big five personality traits (Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extrovertedness, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) are in relation with different attitudes, behaviors, and constructs, including dating apps. The big five has shown to be related to being a user of dating apps, dating app use motivations, and to different behaviors related to dating app use.

Introduction

Online dating is becoming the most popular way to meet partners and the advent use of dating apps is one of the reasons for this popularity (Rosenfeld et al., 2019). Dating apps (e.g., Tinder, Bumble) are smartphone applications that help users to connect with others who are also looking for

romance, casual sex, or friendship (Orchard, 2019). These applications involve the creation of a profile by posting several photos, disclosing brief information about self, and selecting several criteria for the app to generate possible matches. Once the matches are generated the users review the potential matches and choose if they like (right swipe) or dislike (left swipe) the potential matches (Orchard, 2019). With the increase in the use of these applications, there have been many studies that examined the factors related to the use of these applications.

The big five personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extrovertedness, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism; John et al., 2008) have been one of the most examined constructs that are shown to be associated with dating app use (Bonilla-Zorita et al., 2021; Castro & Barrada, 2020). The big five may be one of the most studied topics with dating apps. Yet, just like the exponential increase in the use and the technological advancements in dating apps, the studies on dating apps are increasing exponentially. The readers should be aware that this is a growing field and there is new literature that is emerging day by day. A good depiction of this growing literature would be the focus of this entry on “dating apps.” Online dating has been around since the 1990s, yet the applications started to emerge and raise their popularity only after 2009 with the adoption of smartphones (Pamanian, 2022; Rosenfeld et al., 2019). There have been prior literature that examined the relationship of the big five and online

dating sites (e.g., Clemens et al., 2015; Hall et al., 2010), yet considering the differences between the mediums, there may be differences between dating websites and dating applications. This entry focuses on the connection between the big five and dating applications.

Dating App Use

Differences Between Users and Non-users

The first place where the relationship of dating apps and the big five are seen is in the levels of being a user or not. Several studies have identified certain traits to show differences between users and non-users. Within the studies of dating apps, some studies have focused on specific dating apps, rather than general dating applications use. Studies that focused on Tinder users reported significant differences between users and non-users. Fowler and Booth (2020) studied students and social media users and reported that dating app users showed higher levels of extroversion and lower levels of conscientiousness. Erevik et al. (2020) used a Norwegian student sample and reported that users scored higher on extroversion and agreeableness and lower on openness. Timmermans and De Caluwé (2017) used a Belgian sample and reported that users scored higher on extroversion and openness, while they reported lower levels of conscientiousness. Another study compared differences between current users, non-users, and part-users with a student sample Castro et al. (2020) and did not focus on a particular application. It was reported that there was a significant difference between the groups for all big five traits except extroversion, and the highest association was for openness (higher for current users) and conscientiousness (higher for non-users; Castro et al., 2020).

The findings showed that although there are some discrepancies between studies, dating app users do tend to show differences in certain personality traits compared to non-users. However, some studies don't report any differences. Using an online panel Freyth and Batinic (2021) examined differences in the big five personality

traits of dating app users and non-users and did not find any significant differences.

App Use Motivations

Another aspect of dating app use that the big five are related to are the motivations to use dating apps. Dating app users can show differences between the motivations they have to use the apps (e.g., love, sex). Two studies examined the relationships between the big five and motivations to use Tinder. One study focused on four motivations (Tinder Use Motivation Scale; Orosz et al., 2018) and the other focused on 13 motivations (Tinder Motives Scale; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017). Both studies showed that although not all personality traits were related to all motivations, the big five personality traits showed relations with the motivations to use Tinder.

Dating apps are resources to find dates and partners, in some cases, dating apps can be used to find extradyadic partners. One study examined non-single Tinder users to examine their motivations to use the app. As for examinations with that used all Tinder users (i.e., Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017), the big five again was related to different motivations for Tinder. When focused on sexual motives it was seen that higher agreeableness and neuroticism was related to lower sexual motive to use Tinder (Timmermans et al., 2018). These findings show support that the big five traits are related to being a user of dating apps and the motivations to use them.

Frequency

Other than being a user or not and why you are using dating apps, another aspect where the big five shows relations with dating apps are certain behaviors users engage in during the use of dating apps. One of the first behaviors that come to mind is the frequency of dating app use. It is shown that higher extroversion and higher conscientiousness are associated with increased use of dating apps, while higher emotional stability (lower neuroticism) is associated with decreased use of online dating apps (Burtäverde et al., 2021).

Choice Behaviors

The choices users make during swiping for potential mates is another behavior that has been examined about the big five traits. Through several laboratory studies how the big five are related to swiping behavior (mate choice) was examined with a Tinder-like Task (Chopik & Johnson, 2021). It was seen that more extroverted and more neurotic individuals were less likely to choose targets and show interest, while more agreeable individuals were more likely to choose targets and show interest toward potential partners (Chopik & Johnson, 2021). Other than the personality traits of the user, the compatibility and similarity of the personality traits between two potential partners also show an association with choice and matching. Using data from Tinder profile evaluations Neyt et al. (2020) showed that Tinder users preferred potential partners that they perceived to have similar levels of agreeableness and openness to experience.

Conclusion

The literature shows an evident relationship between the big five personality traits and dating app use. As can be seen from the reviewed literature many aspects of dating apps show relationships with the big five personality traits and there are possibly many other parts related to dating apps that will be studied in the future. However, during exponential increase in the use and research of dating apps, one thing that should not be forgotten is replications of the current evidence and testing of the reliability of evidence.

Especially in the variables that have been studied multiple times like differences in big five personality traits between users and non-users, discrepancies can be seen between studies. Some of these discrepancies may be due to the differences between used samples, while some may be due to focusing on a particular application. More studies with replication attempts are needed to provide robust findings between the big five personality traits and dating apps. These reliable findings will especially be important for building base literature for future studies that will be

studying dating apps, a medium that will possibly be used even more widely in the future.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Big Five Personality Traits](#)
- ▶ [Internet: Online Dating](#)

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