INTRODUCTION

- Twenty-two percent of partners meet through online dating sites (Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2010).
- Middle aged adults (i.e. 30-50 yrs.) are the most frequent online daters (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007).
- Dating is not moderated by income or education level.
- Adults lower in dating anxiety use online dating sites more than those higher in anxiety.
- Misrepresentation of personal information online is moderated by many personality variables (e.g. self-monitoring, Big 5) (Hall, Park, Song, & Cody, 2010).
- A small proportion of online daters admit to the behavior because of negative stigma (Rosen, Cheever, Cummings, & Felt, 2007).
- Online dating stigma increases as the amount of online use and Internet favorability decreases (Anderson, 2005).
- Stigma is not affected by individuals’ romantic beliefs or perceptions of Internet realism.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Is online dating more negatively stigmatized compared to physical dating?
- Is any possible negative stigma moderated by an individual’s level of:
  - Agreeableness
  - Extraversion
  - Conscientiousness
  - Openness
  - Neuroticism

HYPOTHESES

- H1: Participants will show greater negative stigma toward online daters than physical daters.
- H2: Participants lower in agreeableness will show greater negative stigma toward online daters than participants higher in agreeableness.
- H3: Participants lower in openness will show greater negative stigma toward online daters than participants higher in openness.

METHOD

- Two hundred thirty-four introductory psychology students from Kansas State University, Manhattan participated.
- Majority were female (58%) and Caucasian (84%).
- The average age was 19 yrs. (SD = 2.15).
- IV: Type of vignette: Online or Physical.
- IV 1: Big 5 personality factors (John & Srivastava, 1999).
- DV 1: Couple closeness, commitment, relationship quality, and reaction from social networks.
- Used 7-point Likert items.
- Lower scores represented more negative stigma.

RESULTS

- Outcomes were analyzed using hierarchical regressions.
- Couple closeness
  - Closeness decreased as extraversion increased, \( B = -0.02, t(220) = -2.02, p < .05 \).
  - Closeness increased as openness increased, \( B = 0.02, t(220) = 1.99, p < .05 \).
- Couple commitment
  - Commitment increased as agreeableness increased, \( B = 0.04, t(220) = 2.27, p < .05 \).
- Social network response
  - More positive social response for physical daters than online daters, \( B = -0.53, t(220) = -2.87, p < .01 \).
  - Positive response increased agreement increased, \( B = 0.04, t(220) = 2.16, p < .05 \).
- Relationship quality
  - Greater relationship quality for physical daters than online daters (Figure 1), \( B = -0.50, t(220) = -2.71, p < .01 \).
  - Quality decreased as extraversion increased (Figure 2), \( B = -0.03, t(220) = -2.29, p < .05 \).
  - Quality increased as agreeableness increased, \( B = 0.05, t(220) = 2.49, p < .05 \).

DISCUSSION

- Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported for some but not all of the dependent variables.
- Hypotheses 3 was supported for couple closeness.
- Findings suggest that some negative stigma still exists for people who choose to date online.
  - Indicated by lower social response and relationship quality.
  - Difference was not moderated by any Big 5 factors.
- Big 5 factors did predict views of both types of daters.
  - Greater stigma for more extraverted and less agreeable individuals.

REFERENCES