

The Effects of Personality on Roommate Satisfaction

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Introduction

Our personality also influences our daily interactions and interpersonal relationships, including those of roommates. Wiltz (2002) introduces the impact that a roommate can have on one's overall happiness and life satisfaction.

Gonzaga, G. C., Campos, B., & Bradbury, T. (2007) suggested that similarities in personality and experience encourage higher relationship satisfaction.

Cuperman and Ickes (2009) found pairs of individuals similar in Extraversion (introvert with introvert, extravert with extravert) had better interactions than those dissimilar personalities.

However, other studies suggest that satisfaction is due complementarity based on the Interpersonal Circumplex model (Horowitz, 2004; Kiesler, 1996; Markey, Funder, & Ozer, 2003; Orford, 1986; Sadler & Woody, 2003; Strong et al., 1988; Tiedens & Fragale, 2003; Tracey, 2004)

Purpose and Questions

To investigate the effects of personality on roommate satisfaction.

What leads to roommate satisfaction?

- Do "opposites attract"?
- OR
- Do "birds of a feather flock together"?
- OR
- Do personalities complement each other?

Hypothesis

Roommates similar in nurturance but opposite in dominance will have higher levels of roommate satisfaction.

Method

Survey Participants (n=)

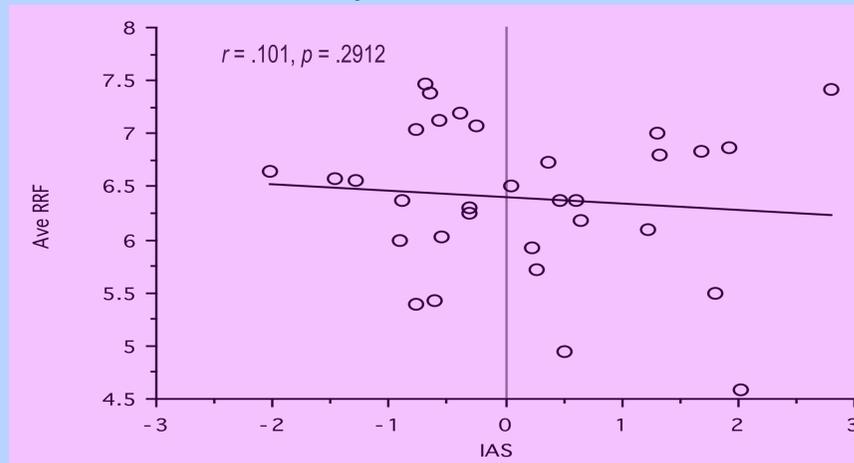
- Midwestern college students
- 20 male, 44 female
- Age: M = 20.66 years (18-31 years)
- Living Situation: dorms, fraternities, sororities, off-campus

Measures

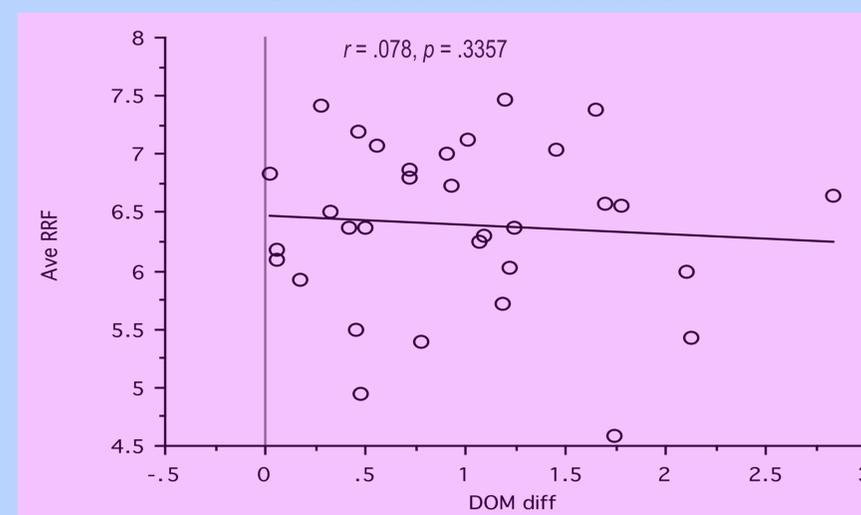
- Surveys
 - Interpersonal Adjective Scale (Wiggins, 1995)
 - 64 item survey assessing 2 dimensions of personality:
 - Dominance
 - Nurturance
 - 8-point likert scale of adjectives
 - "Please rate how accurately each of the words describes you as a person."
 - Relationship Rating Form (Davis, 1996)
 - 45 item survey assessing interpersonal satisfaction
 - 9-point likert scale of roommate satisfaction
 - "Write the number between 1 and 9 that best reflects your feeling about your relationship with that person."

Results

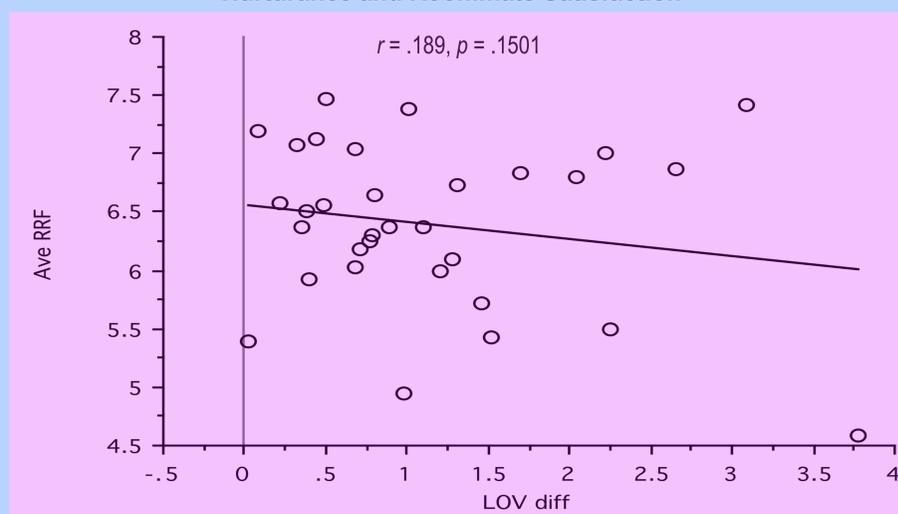
Personality and Roommate Satisfaction



Dominance and Roommate Satisfaction



Nurturance and Roommate Satisfaction



Discussion

IAS and Roommate Satisfaction

Both personality dimensions (nurturance and dominance) and roommate satisfaction were correlated within each roommate couple. According to the data, it appears that more satisfied roommates who scored opposite in dominance and similar in warmth also scored. Results, however, were not significant and more research is needed.

Dominance and Roommate Satisfaction

Difference in dominance between roommates was correlated with roommate satisfaction. The results were not significant, but suggest future research could be done to produce better findings.

Nurturance and Roommate Satisfaction

Difference in nurturance between roommates was correlated with roommate satisfaction. According to the data, differences in nurturance scores tend to cluster between 0 and 1. The majority of the high satisfaction scores also fall between 0 and 1, suggesting that similar nurturance within roommates could be related to higher roommate satisfaction. However, there was no significant interaction between difference in nurturance and roommate satisfaction.

Future Research

In order to reach a potential significance between personality and roommate satisfaction, it would be necessary to survey more participants, with an even number being male and female.

A future study could also collect the same information from a more concentrated area. For example, mid-western students between the ages of 18 and 20 from the dorms to ensure students have similar roommate experiences. It would also be interesting to investigate co-ed roommates, oppose to same-sex roommates, like this study did.

It may also be worthwhile to compare correlations between personality and roommate satisfaction through a longitudinal study. Nurturance and dominance scores and satisfaction ratings could be compared by semester or overtime with roommates that live together for more than one year.

Future research could also control for that amount of time roommates have known each other, as some roommates have chosen their roommates while others are matched by dorm staff.

Future Research

Special thanks to the Residential staff of Washburn's Living Learning Center for sponsoring this research!

