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Two Peas in a Pod? An Investigation of Friendship and Personality

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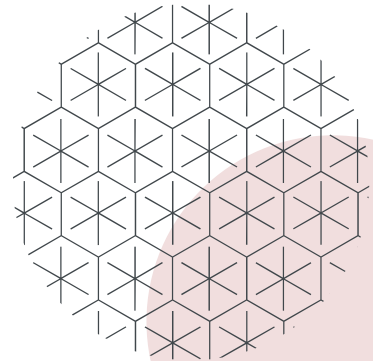
Two Peas in a Pod?

An Investigation of Friendship
and Personality Perception

Josephine Collins

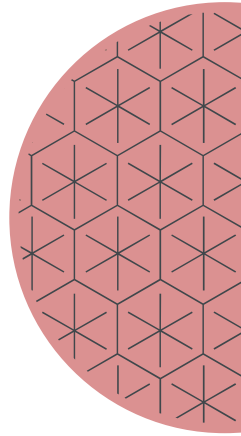
How Did I Decide On This Project?

- I have been very interested in personality psychology throughout the last several years
 - Started in Psychology of Creativity in a discussion about the relationship between personality and creativity
- In the last couple of semesters, I have also become extremely interested in relationships, particularly friendships
- Attending a social psychology PhD program to continue studying relationships with hopes of further investigating how personality influences the way we interact with each other
- Idea came through a moment I experienced



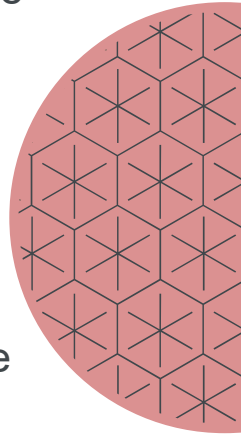
Friendship Compatibility Judgments

- “She seems like she would be friends with Jane” or “You’ll really like her!”
- It seems as though people often use phrases like these when estimating the compatibility of two people.
- It is likely that compatibility judgments are based on perceptions of people and implicit knowledge about what makes people compatible.
- Burgess and Wallin (1953)
 - Separated pictures of real life couples and had participants match the people they thought were a couple.
 - They were able to do this with some accuracy.



Friendship Compatibility Judgments

- Personality judgments and impressions are vital to the workings of society
 - Help us decide who we want to interact with, who we trust, and who we want to hire
 - Necessary to understand
- Because we use a variety of information to form judgments, and these judgments could affect compatibility ratings, it is important to investigate the relationship between different cues and these judgments.



The Big Five

Openness

Low:

Traditional
Prefers routine
Little intellectual
curiosity

High:

Aesthetically
minded
Inquisitive
Unconventional
Enjoy variety

Conscientiousness

Low:

Impulsive
Careless
Unorganized
Inefficient

High:

Disciplined
Goal oriented
Hardworking
Organized
Efficient

Extraversion

Low:

Not sociable
Low energy
Passive
Not openly friendly

High:

Assertive
Friendly
Excitement seeking
Energetic
Sociable

Agreeableness

Low:

Stubborn
Cold
Suspicious
Critical of others

High:

Cooperative
Trusting
Warm
Forgiving
Compassionate

Neuroticism

Low:

Calm
Emotionally Stable
Level-headed
Optimistic

High:

Anxious
Irritable
Self-conscious
Pessimistic

Personality Trait Observations

Accuracy - assessments of personality made by other people match the self-report personality ratings of the person in question to some degree

- Tends to be more accurate for some traits than others
 - Extraversion tends to have the highest rates of accuracy, neuroticism tend to have the lowest ^{9,19}
 - Can be explained by differences in observability

Consensus (Agreement) - indicates that judges agreed on their personality assessments of the target person

Consensus and accuracy changes depending on how much information the observer has.

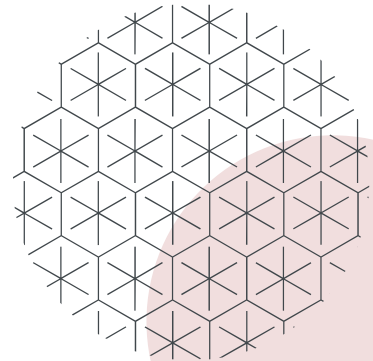
Personality Trait Observations

Some traits are more observable than others

- Extraversion is the most observable
- Openness is the least observable ¹²

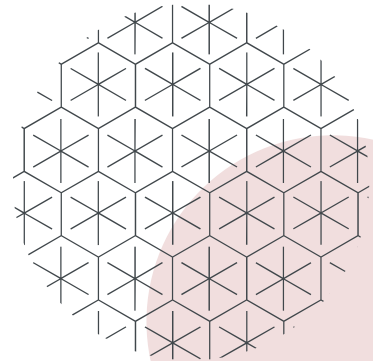
Self-Other Knowledge Asymmetry (SOKA) Model ²⁰

- There are differences in accuracy when comparing self-judgments and other judgments of personality
- Observability - the ease with which a personality trait can be seen or detected
- Evaluativeness - Evaluativeness is the level of social desirability (high or low) or neutrality of a trait ⁸



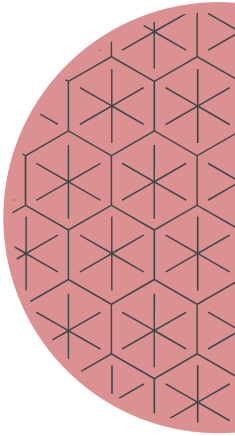
Personality Trait Observations

- Traits that are highly observable and have little evaluativeness, like extraversion, are easily judged by all people
- Traits that are low in observability and evaluativeness, like neuroticism, are most accurate when people are reporting about themselves
- Traits that are not easily observable but have high evaluativeness are best judged by reports from people that know the target well



Personality Similarity in Relationships

- Abundance of research looking at the relationship between personality similarity and relationship satisfaction
- The general consensus is that personality similarity plays some role in relationship satisfaction ²²
- If we know that similar people are more satisfied in their relationships, it is plausible that we would pair people together based on personality similarity



What do we use to form impressions?

Behavioral Residue

- Evidence of how people behaved in a certain environment
- Study judging personality based on looking at people's bedrooms and offices ¹¹
 - People predicted extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness with high levels of consensus and accuracy from offices
 - People predicted openness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness with the most accuracy from bedrooms

What do we use to form impressions?

Identity Claims

- Statements that people make within their environment either for their own benefit or to show others how they want to be seen. ¹¹
 - Self-directed - placing a picture of your family or friends on your desk, facing you to remind you about an important piece of who you are
 - Other-directed - wearing a t-shirt that has “Ouachita Baptist University Psychology” written on it to indicate that you belong to that department, or that you are studious.
- Study judging personality from laptop stickers ⁵
 - Accurate judgments for extraversion and openness

What do we use to form impressions?

Websites and Online Social Networking Sites

- Study observing personality from Facebook profiles ¹⁰
 - Able to detect extraversion and openness from observable information such as number of friends and photos

Photos

- Study judging personality from standardized and spontaneous photographs ¹⁸
 - Big five, likeability, self-esteem, loneliness, religiosity, and political liberalism
 - Standardized (posed) - rated extraversion with the most accuracy
 - Spontaneous (no pose) - rated nine out of ten characteristics with accuracy

What do we use to form impressions?

Zero-Acquaintance and Thin Slice Judgments

- Personality judgements made about people who are relative strangers ^{1, 2, 6, 13}
- People are able to make judgments quickly based on very little information
- Study judging personality from videos of a behavioral sequence ³
 - There was consensus and accuracy in these judgments

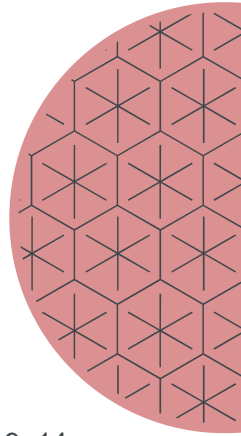
Purpose and Hypotheses

Purpose

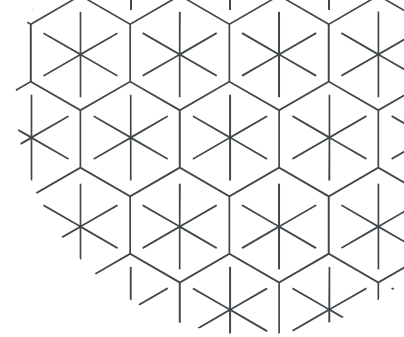
- To investigate the relationship between personality judgments, physical appearance cues, and estimations of friendship likelihood at the zero-acquaintance level

Hypotheses

- Participants would pair real friends together rather than the other images ⁴
- Real friends would have personality similarity ^{15, 17, 23}
- Real friends would show high accuracy in terms of personality judgments ^{7, 9, 14, 21}

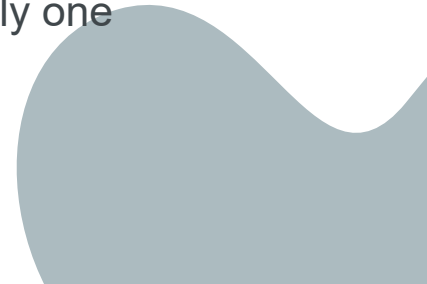
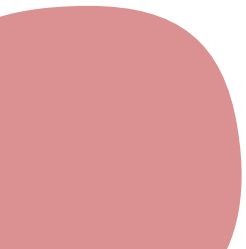


Method



Pre-Study

- Participants and one of their close friends
 - Each asked to complete a survey and submit a photo of themselves
 - Survey - Ten Item Personality Inventory, Unidimensional Relationship Closeness Scale
 - TIPI - 10 phrases with 2 personality adjectives each, rated from 1-7
 - URCS - 12 phrases designed to measure closeness of friends
- 14 participants that were recruited from Social Psychology Network and by word of mouth
 - 6 friend pairs
 - 2 participants and their friends completed the survey, but only one individual in the pair submitted a photo
 - Used as supplemental photos in the main study



Method



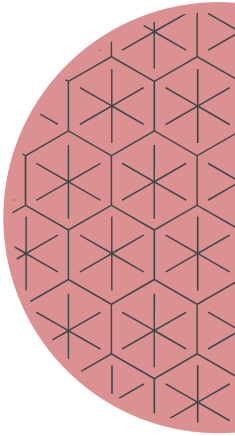
Main Study

- Participants viewed 3 sets of photos with one target person and three other people
 - One of the other people was real friends with the target person



Method

- After viewing each photo, participants completed a Ten Item Personality Inventory and a physical cues questionnaire
- Participants were also asked to rate how likely each other person is to be friends with the target person
- 82 participants recruited from psychology and sociology classes at OBU

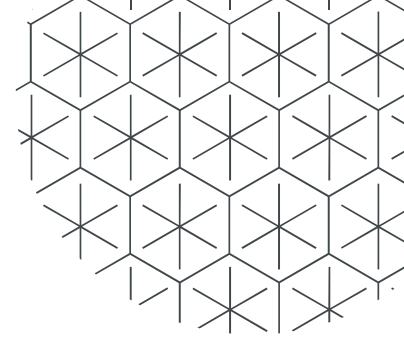


Results and Discussion

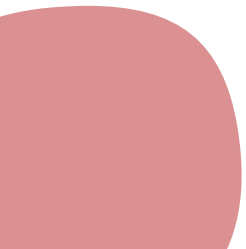
Self-Other Agreement

- Relationships between self-report personality scores and scores reported by a close friend were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient to assess for self-other agreement
- Data from pre-study
- Hypothesized that real friends would show high accuracy in personality judgments
- Hypothesis partially confirmed
- Large, positive correlations for agreeableness and openness
- Moderate, positive correlation for neuroticism

Results and Discussion



- These correlations are considered substantial ²¹
- Based on literature there should have been significant correlations for extraversion and conscientiousness.
 - Extraversion finding is especially perplexing due to the vast amount of literature that indicates people's ability to judge extraversion accurately
 - Needs to be investigated in further study that can correct for the limitations of this study



Results and Discussion

Friendship Likelihood Ratings

- A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare friendship likelihood ratings for friend pairs and pairs of people that are not friends.
- Data from main study
- Hypothesized that participants would pair real friends together rather than the other images.
- Hypothesis not confirmed
- Possible explanations:
 - Not enough information relayed through the photographs to make accurate friendship judgments ^{3, 16}
 - All the people in the pre-study were too similar
 - They were all recruited by one researcher

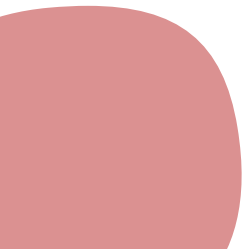
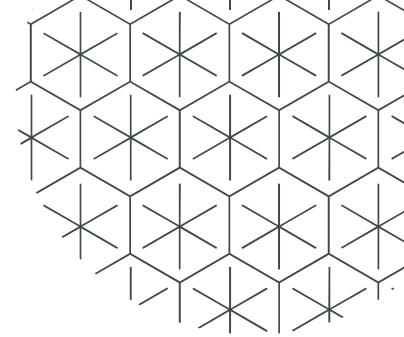
Results and Discussion

Personality Similarity

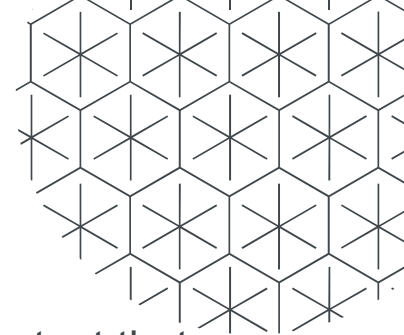
- A Pearson's correlation coefficient was run to analyze the relationship between self-reported personality scores from two members of a friendship dyad.
- Data from pre-study
- Hypothesized that real friends would show personality similarity
- Hypothesis not confirmed
- Potential explanations:
 - Small sample size ($n = 14$)
 - Difference in the role personality similarity plays in romantic relationships and friendships
 - Similarity might not work better than complementarity in friendships
 - Literature used to make predictions was from the attraction literature, which did not cover similarity in friendships

Limitations

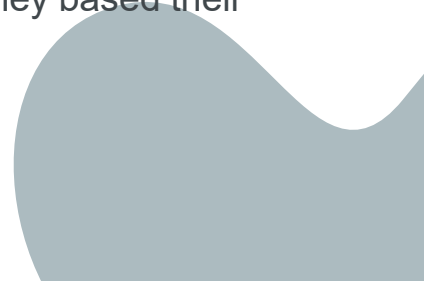
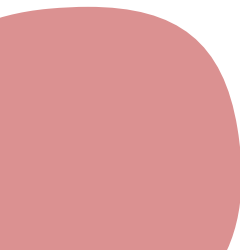
- Recruitment troubles
 - Not representative, not enough participants
- Study design was not able to answer the question at hand
 - Provided a lot of data, but it was not able to be analyzed in a manner that could make a claim about whether or not we can tell people are friends just by looking at them
- In an ideal world, a mediation analysis would have been conducted to build a model to look at the relationship between all of the variables



Future Directions



- Because of the gap in research surrounding this question, it is important that another study is conducted investigating our abilities to make compatibility judgments about friends
- This study should be broken into several studies
 - Investigating whether people can accurately judge personality from photos
 - Study asking whether physical cues can be used to predict personality
 - Looking at people's ability to match real friends together
 - Could have a qualitative component that would have the participants that matched people correctly tell the researcher what information they based their answer on
 - Responses would be coded into physical cues and personality

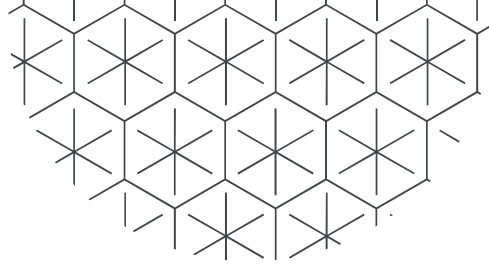


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