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The Big Five Personality Traits and Peer Pressure during the COVID-19 Pandemic



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Introduction

- We investigated the relationship between the Big Five Personality Traits and susceptibility to peer pressure during COVID-19.
- We hypothesized that higher conscientiousness would be associated with lower susceptibility to peer pressure and the other Big Five traits would have a non significant relationship with susceptibility to peer pressure.
- Individuals who are high in conscientiousness are less likely to partake in risky behaviors (Bogg & Roberts, 2004) and may be less likely to give into peer pressure to break regulations during COVID-19.
- Individuals with high conscientiousness feel a social responsibility to partake in healthy behaviors (Tucker, Elliot, & Klein 2006)
- Those with higher neuroticism were seen to perform worse under social pressure while agreeableness was inconclusive (Byrne, Silasi-Mansat, Worthy, 2017)

Method

Participants

- N = 78, M (age) = 19.74, SD = 1.63; 85.90% female, 10.25% male, 3.85% other, 75.64% white, 12.82% african american, 11.54% other

Measures

- Big Five Inventory-2-Short:** 30 item personality inventory that includes 6 Likert-type items for each Big Five personality trait (Extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness, and agreeableness)
 - "I am someone who tends to be quiet" (1-strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree)
- Modified Susceptibility to Peer Pressure Scale:** 22 item measure of an individual's susceptibility to peer pressure which was modified to include Likert-type items for COVID-19 pandemic scenarios and general peer pressure scenarios.
 - "Although I don't want to, I would take my mask off in a large group of people in an attempt to fit in" (1-completely false to 5-completely true)
- Attention Check:** 1 item was used to assess the participant's attention and asked the participant not to answer the question.

Procedure

- Participants completed the BFI-2-S, the modified susceptibility to peer pressure scale, and answered demographic questions on a Google Forms survey.

Discussion

- Individuals that are high in conscientiousness may be cautious enough that they avoid situations involving the threat of peer pressure.
- Peer pressure involving COVID-19 may involve different behaviors and thought processes compared to peer pressure involving behaviors like smoking.
- Agreeableness could be associated with lower susceptibility to peer pressure due to being more agreeable, more compliant with COVID-19 rules and regulations, and more cooperative (Crump, 2020).
- Future research evaluate the relationship between agreeableness and susceptibility to peer pressure.
- Limitations include participants answering COVID guideline related questions truthfully and the items modified for COVID scenarios.

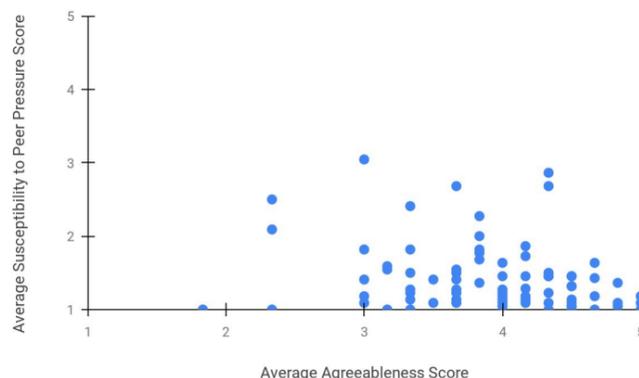
Results

- A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test our hypothesis.
- There was no statistically significant relationship between conscientiousness and peer pressure behaviors, $r(77) = -0.188, p = 0.099$, two-tailed ($M=3.59, SD=0.724$).
- There was a significant negative relationship between agreeableness $r(77) = -0.243, p = 0.032$ ($M = 3.92, SD = 0.678$), and peer pressure during COVID-19.
- The relationships between openness, $r(77) = -0.098, p = 0.392$ ($M=3.63, SD=0.696$), extraversion, $r(77) = 0.184, p = 0.107$ ($M=2.63, SD = 0.721$), neuroticism, $r(77) = 0.163, p = 0.155$ ($M = 3.31, SD = 0.847$) and peer pressure in COVID-19 were not statistically significant.

Correlation Matrix

		AVERAGE: peer pressure	AVERAGE: conscientiousness	AVERAGE: extraversion	AVERAGE: agreeableness	AVERAGE: neuroticism	AVERAGE: openness
AVERAGE: peer pressure	Pearson's r	—					
	p-value	—					
AVERAGE: conscientiousness	Pearson's r	-0.188	—				
	p-value	0.099	—				
AVERAGE: extraversion	Pearson's r	0.184	0.365**	—			
	p-value	0.107	0.001	—			
AVERAGE: agreeableness	Pearson's r	-0.243*	0.202	-0.051	—		
	p-value	0.032	0.075	0.660	—		
AVERAGE: neuroticism	Pearson's r	0.163	-0.372***	-0.336**	-0.117	—	
	p-value	0.155	<.001	0.003	0.306	—	
AVERAGE: openness	Pearson's r	-0.098	0.141	0.194	-0.003	-0.050	—
	p-value	0.392	0.219	0.089	0.977	0.666	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001



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