

First Date Experiences Study: Aggregate Summary of Results

The following information is related to a study that you may have participated in at some point in August of 2021. If you participated in this study, you completed an online survey about your first date experiences. The goal of this research was to understand whether self-esteem is linked to attempts to conceal self-esteem in the context of relationship initiation. Western society values high self-esteem over low self-esteem. Previous studies in our lab shows that because individuals with lower self-esteem are aware of these societal values, they often worry about being negatively viewed if others were to learn about their low self-esteem. Consequently, lower self-esteem individuals are more likely to conceal their self-esteem from others than those with higher self-esteem. The goal of the present study was to test whether the same findings would hold true during relationship initiation. We further looked at how negative and positive emotions was linked to self-esteem and concealment.

KEY FINDINGS:

Do individuals with lower self-esteem report higher levels of self-esteem concealment?

→ Yes, the lower the self-esteem, the more people reported concealing their self-esteem during relationship initiation.

Do individuals with lower self-esteem report higher negative emotions and lower positive emotions during relationship initiation?

→ Yes and No. Lower self-esteem was linked to greater negative emotions, but positive emotions were not related to self-esteem.

Is self-esteem concealment linked with negative and positive emotions during romantic relationship initiation?

→ Yes and No. The more people concealed their self-esteem, the more they reported experiencing negative emotions during relationship initiation. However, there was no link between positive emotions and concealment.

Is concealing self-esteem a good thing for people with low self-esteem?

→ The results suggest that individuals with low self-esteem who conceal their self-esteem experienced both the greatest positive and the greatest negative emotions during the relationship initiation even they recalled. Although there are many more important aspects to study, at least at an emotional level, concealing self-esteem might allow those with low self-esteem to experience more positive emotions, even if that experience is mixed with more intense negative emotions.

If you would like more information related to this study, please refer to:

Cameron, J. J., Stinson, D. A., & Wood, J. V. (2013). The Bold and the bashful: Self-esteem, gender, and relationship initiation. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4(6), 685-692.

Cameron, J. J., Stinson, D. A., Hoplock, L., Hole, C., & Schellenberg, J. (2016). The robust self-esteem proxy: Impressions of self-esteem inform judgments of personality and social value. *Self and Identity*, 15(5), 561–578. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2016.1175373>

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Thank you again for your participation!