

Personality influenced college students' romantic relationships during the pandemic, study finds

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Though the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many people's social lives, new research from Michigan State University outlines some personality-

related factors that may have contributed to students either continuing to form new relationships or avoiding them. The new study by MSU researchers found that one in five college students started a new romantic relationship during the pandemic.

College [students](#) with personalities aligned with extroverted and anxiously attached behaviors accounted for the majority of the 20% of individuals who started a new relationship during the pandemic. Students who identified as avoidant and conscientious were less likely to start a relationship.

"Data and other [news reports](#) suggest that there was significant movement and socializing with others during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, even during the most stringent lockdown orders," said William Chopik, associate professor in MSU's psychology department and lead author of the study.

"Many even met and formed new romantic relationships with others," he said. "The study reveals a bit about who these people are and what they are like psychologically. It tells us about the lengths some people would go to stave off loneliness during the pandemic and why others were so conservative in their social interactions during the pandemic."

The research revealed that anxiously attached people, or those who worry a lot about relationships, and extroverted people, or those who are outgoing and socially confident, were 10% to 26% more likely to start a new relationship. Avoidantly attached people, or those who dislike intimacy, and conscientious people, or those who like to follow rules, were 15% to 17% less likely to start a new relationship.

The study, published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, collected a sample of 2,285 undergraduate [college students](#) over a seven-month period between October 2020 and April 2021.

Participants were asked whether they had started a new relationship and were required to complete a questionnaire about their personality.

More information: William J. Chopik et al, Individual difference predictors of starting a new romantic relationship during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Personality and Individual Differences* (2022). DOI: [10.1016/j.paid.2022.111919](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2022.111919)

Provided by Michigan State University

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