Proposal Summary

Being a victim of deception is a concern for people who use online dating sites (Toma et al., 2008) however relatively little is known about what makes people misrepresent themselves online. Self-presentation is vital for initiating relationships with others online (Leary & Allen, 2011). People with low self-esteem place more importance on positive evaluations (Crocker & Park, 2004) and will likely craft a dating profile that maximizes their chances of receiving approval from others. They are pessimistic of their positive qualities (Crocker, Park, & Vohs, 2006), and might skew the information they present about themselves in a dating profile to appear more attractive. In contrast, people with high self-esteem have met their need to belong and are not as concerned with receiving approval (Crocker & Park, 2004). Instead, they are focused on establishing a long-term romantic relationship (Kim, Kwon, & Lee, 2009); by misrepresenting in a dating profile, they would be starting a new relationship on a lie. The purpose of this project is to examine the relationship between self-esteem and misrepresentation in online dating profiles. Thus, I hypothesize that self-esteem will be negatively correlated with misrepresentation. Seventy-five psychology undergraduates who are not in romantic relationships will be recruited for a study about online dating. Participants will complete an online measure of global self-esteem and construct an online dating profile. After creating the profile, they will report their perceptions of the accuracy of their dating profile. Correlation analyses will determine the association between self-esteem and profile accuracy.