Juror Personality on Sexual Assault Verdicts Utilizing the Big Five Model

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence of sexual assault and the low number of sexual assault convictions makes it imperative to research such judicial matters. The key element or constant in each trial would be the jury. The jury decides whether or not to convict the defendant. In order to increase the rightful convictions, a study on jurors was done; specifically a study on juror personality. By reviewing previous studies done on juror personality, there appears to be a connection between juror personality and bias toward sexual assault (Clark et al., 2007). To study this, a survey was sent out to willing participants who are eligible to be jurors. The survey included a personality test portion and a sexual assault prompt portion. The personality test portion included questions pertaining to the Agreeableness facet and the sexual assault case prompts made the participants vote guilty or not guilty for the defendant charged. The results showed that there was no correlation between the specific Agreeableness facet and bias toward sexual assault; however, there was evidence showing that the 31-40 Agreeableness score range (from 10-50), yielded the highest bias against the defendant. The implications of this study have applications in various legal fields to convict sexual assaulters to a higher extent.

Introduction

Kimberly A. Lonsway, Ph.D. in Psychology, and Sergeant Joanne Archambault, a retired member of the San Diego Police Department, found that in the United States, approximately 5% to 20% of all rapes are reported to law enforcement, 7% to 27% of these rapists are prosecuted, and then only 3% to 26% of these rapists are convicted, (2012). These statistics, combined, show that only “6% of rapists will ever spend a day in jail” (“Facts About Sexual”, 2021).

The low number of convictions compared to a large number of rapists makes researching sexual assault trials critical to understand how to increase the number of rightful convictions of criminals. While every part of the judicial system holds great power, there is one part of judicial trials that determines the outcome of the trial: the jurors. In trials, both civil and criminal, the jury had the obligation to consider both the facts presented by evidence and the law to rule in favor of the truth. (“Serving the United”, n.d.). The jury’s decision finds the convicted either guilty or not guilty and is the deciding factor in convicting a criminal.

One of the things that researchers can use to analyze jurors and their decision-making is their personality. Due to the relevance of personality to understanding humans in the modern day, psychologists developed the Five-Factor Model, which categorizes each participant’s personality into varying scores of personality factors. The late Ernest Tupes and Raymond Christal were the first to do a study and begin creating the Five-Factor Model. The Five-Factor Model can be split into five categories or factors, 1) Extroversion, 2) Agreeableness, 3) Dependability, 4)
Emotional Stability, and 5) Culture. Throughout the development of the method, at least four sets of researchers\(^1\) have worked independently within the lexical hypothesis\(^2\); however, they have each reached the same five factors to determine human personality. The International Personality Item Pool was developed by Paul Costa Jr. and Robert R. McCrae, Ph. Ds in Psychology, to measure the factors. It is one of the only psychometric tests to measure the different facets of the Five-Factor Model. Further analysis of juror personality reveals that there could be a correlation between certain facets of personality and a juror’s bias towards or against the defense (Clark et. al, 2007). To further research sexual assault trials in specific, a question is proposed: what is the ideal Agreeableness score range for a juror’s personal verdict to favor the sexually assaulted in a sexual assault trial?

**Literature Review**

A review of the literature on the three main aspects of the question was done: the Five-Factor Model, the Five-Factor model in the judicial system, and juror’s verdicts on sexual assault trials. The following information was gathered and shown below.

**Five-Factor Model**

After the basis of the Five-Factor Method was completed, Colin G. DeYoung, an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Minnesota, attributed two similar yet different words to each category to accurately define the factors. Each factor can be described by certain adjectives. The factors are defined as follows: Extraversion: assertiveness and enthusiasm; Agreeableness: compassion and politeness; Conscientiousness: industriousness and orderliness; Neuroticism: volatility and withdrawal; and Openness to Experience: intellect and openness (DeYoung et al., 2007). While the Five-Factor Model is split into five categories or factors with distinct names; some factors could go by different names in various studies and other personality domains. The table below explains the different names for each category used by each of the standard measures of the Five-Factor Model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Factors of the 16PF questionnaire (Cattell)</th>
<th>Domain scales of the NEO PI-R (Costa &amp; McCrae)</th>
<th>Personality factors of the Big Five Model (Goldberg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion/Introversion</td>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Surgency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Anxiety/High Anxiety</td>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough-Mindedness/Receptivity</td>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>Intellect or Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence/Accommodation</td>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Control/Lack of Restraint</td>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Conscientiousness or Dependability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DeYoung’s definition of the five factors can be applied to their corresponding factors in Cattell’s 16PF Global Factors and Goldberg’s Big Five Model, further defining these categories. Jérôme Rossier, a professor of Psychology at the University of Lausanne, compared the 16PF and NEO PI-R domain scales. He concluded that the 16PF model assesses participants in a bottom-up hierarchical structure. This system started with various lower-level dimensions,

\(^1\) Ernest Tupes and Raymond Christal; Lewis R. Goldberg, a senior scientist at the Oregon Research Institute; Raymond B. Cattell, a research professor at the University of Illinois; Paul Costa Jr., Ph.D. in Psychology, and Robert R. McCrae, Ph.D. in Psychology

\(^2\) A thesis in early personality psychology, and subsequently continued by later efforts in that subfield

\(^3\) Table amended from Cattell & Mead, 2008.
or personality traits, and grouped similar ones together until the traits were subsumed into 5 distinctive groups. The 
NEO PI-R model assesses participants in a top-down hierarchical structure. This system starts with the distinct groups 
on the top and then divides them repeatedly until they reach lower-level dimensions. The 16PF and NEO PI-R scales 
showed cohesion in 4 out of 5 dimensions, the only one that was not cohesive was the dimension of Agreeableness/In- 
dependence. Since this specific dimension was the outlier, it was the dimension of study for this research survey. The 
Big Five Model aims to account for the differences of the 16PF questionnaire and the NEO PI-R scales, to act as an 
overarching definition encompassing both.

Five-Factor Model in the Judicial System

Although there is no prior research on the effect of juror’s Agreeableness score on their verdicts in sexual assault 
cases, tests have been done on the effect of juror personality as a whole on their verdicts for the prosecution and the 
defense. John Clark, a Professor of Criminology at Troy University, researched the Five-Factor model personality 
traits on jury selection and case outcomes in civil and criminal cases. The methodology that Clark employs in his 
study, at the end of juror orientation sessions, collected personality and demographic information. Once the preemp- 
tive data was collected, the trial commenced, including the jury selection process. The procedure allowed the prose- 
cution and the defense to strike potential jury members they did not want on the official jury. The personality infor-
mation collected was “used to examine differences in personality traits between jurors who served on cases and those 
who were struck for cause, struck by the plaintiff/prosecution, or struck by the defense” (Clark et al., 2007, p. 649). The Big Five Model domain scales assessed the individual’s personality.

The International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) was created based on three fundamental needs to accurately 
assess personality: (1) a taxonomic framework for organizing the nearly infinite variety of individual differences that 
might be measured, (2) a common item format, one that is amenable to faithful translation across diverse languages, 
and (3) a mode of communication–an effective logistical procedure for investigators to quickly obtain the items and the 
findings from previous studies, as well as the data for reanalysis (IPIP). It assesses its participants with the Big 
Five Model with the exception of referring to “Surgency” as “Extraversion.” An IPIP test uses a 5-point Likert scale 
to evaluate participants. The test consists of statements that can be answered with agree or disagree, such as “I pay 
attention to detail”. The question would then be answered on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being “Strongly Agree” and five 
being “Strongly Disagree.” Each question is keyed with the factor number pertaining to and a “+” or a “-.” A “+” 
indicates that an answer with Agree matches the personality trait, and a “-” indicates that the answer with Agree 
matches the inverse of the personality trait. To score the IPIP test, each answer would be assigned a value. For (+) 
keyed items, the response “Strongly Disagree” is assigned a value of 1, “Somewhat Disagree” a value of 2, “Neither 
Agree nor Disagree” a 3, “Somewhat Agree” a 4, and “Strongly Agree” a value of 5. For (-) keyed items, the response 
“Strongly Disagree” is assigned a value of 5, “Somewhat Disagree” a value of 4, “Neither Agree nor Disagree” a 3, 
“Somewhat Agree” a 2, and “Strongly Agree” a value of 1.

Clark’s study explains the correlation between selected/struck jury members to their personalities, noting 
that selected jury members tended to have a higher Agreeableness score. While there does seem to be a correlation 
between juror’s Agreeableness in civil and criminal cases in that jurors with a lower Agreeableness tended to be struck 
from the jury.

Juror’s Verdicts on Sexual Assault Cases

In previous years, there has been a shockingly low number of sexual assaulters convicted, and as a result, much fewer 
crimes have been reported (Meier). Since a conviction requires a trial through the judicial system, an analysis of the 
very judicial system must be done to understand the convictions of sexual assault trials accurately.
As the jury makes the final decision in sexual assault trials, it is imperative to study jurors. Gary LaFree, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland and the former Chair of the Sociology and Criminology department at the University of New Mexico, found that “jurors in the consent-no sex [defined as sexual assault without sexual intercourse] cases were influenced by testimony about a victim’s lifestyle. Any evidence of drinking, drug use, or sexual activity outside marriage led jurors to doubt the defendant’s guilt, as did any prior acquaintance between the victim and defendant” (1985, p. 400). The perception of jurors could be compared to authoritarianism as their verdicts show “a tendency to hold to conventional values; to submit to strong leadership” (Narby et al., 1993, p. 34). To understand the context of this, one must define authoritarian(ism). Douglas J. Narby defines an “authoritarian personality” as such, “a tendency to hold to conventional values; to submit to strong leadership (provided the leader’s values are authoritarian and acceptable); to act aggressively toward deviants and out-group members; and to believe in the Tightness of power and control, whether personal or societal” (1993, p. 34). The authoritarian personality mirrors some sub-facets for each Factor, sub-facets meaning certain adjectives used to describe each Factor. Due to the limited literature on the Five-Factor Model in juries, research on the topic would help further the knowledge of personality on bias and court verdicts. Dennis J. Devine, an associate professor of Psychology at Indiana University, wrote a paper titled Jury decision making: 45 years of empirical research on deliberating groups. In his paper, he explains that jury deliberations are split up into four ways: “(a) procedural characteristics, (b) participant characteristics, (c) case characteristics, and (d) deliberation characteristics” (Devine et al., 2001, p. 622). When specifying deliberation characteristics, or the characteristics that go into making the verdict, “jury-level authoritarianism... has been linked consistently to jury outcomes. Specifically, juries containing a high proportion of authoritarian/dogmatic jurors have tended to convict more often” (Devine et. al, 2001, p. 674). There appears to be a connection between personality and juror verdicts.

Rationale

The research done on this topic is minuscule. Many papers aim to test all five factors in civil and criminal cases; however, there is no research that separates these two. Even more specifically, very little research is done on how each of the various facets of personality influences sexual assault trials. It has also been explained that “few efforts have measured personality traits associated with the Big Five [Personality Traits]” in correlation with juries (Devine et al., 2001, p. 674). Thus, one cannot know for sure whether there is a strong correlation between a juror’s personality and their verdicts in criminal/civil cases. The gap in judicial personality research done on sexual assault trials remains explicitly constant. Clark’s study was the only research found on this topic; however, the article explores all five personality factors rather than focusing on each one individually. Without discussing each factor individually, there is no way to know if certain factors have a disproportionate impact on jury rulings than others. Different methodologies were also analyzed in this process. Clark employed a methodology of in-person meetings to evaluate his participants cognitively. Although this method would be beneficial for getting responses, in-person meetings would not have been feasible due to the nature of the survey. John A. Tripodi, affiliated with Boston Strategies International, established a research survey that utilized a “prompt” methodology to evaluate participants and measure sponsorship awareness cognitively (Tripodi et al., 2003). Since this survey would also cognitively evaluate its participants’ personalities, its methodology could also be applied. Tripodi’s example of a prompt methodology to measure corporate sponsorship “would involve a question of the form: ‘When you think of [Category Y, e.g., banks], what sponsorships come to mind?’” (Tripodi et al., 2003). This type of question could then be tweaked to measure one’s bias on sexual assault cases.
Methodology

Materials

Creating a survey would require the analysis of various potential materials. The two main options were offering a paper survey which would allow for accurate results due to the participant being spectated while taking the survey. This method; however, would have limited the scope of the research to a limited geographical area. This method would also have infringed in the privacy of the participant due to spectating. In order to combat this, a digital method was utilized. The digital method would yield less accurate results due to no observer incentivizing the participant to accurately respond; however, it would not limit the geographical location of the survey. The simplest form of digital survey accessible was a Google Form, thus it was employed in creating the survey.

International Personality Item Pool (IPIP)

Due to the similarity between the researcher’s area of study (juror personality on jury selection) and the proposed research idea (juror personality on sexual assault verdicts), Clark’s methodology about personality and demographics could be applied to this research project. Since Clark used a personality test that assessed participants based on the domain scales of the Big 5 Model, a similar test was also needed to assess participants in the proposed research project. Many personality tests surrounding the Big Five Model were copyrighted by their creators, except for the IPIP. On the IPIP website, one 50-question sample questionnaire was given to use in the public domain. Thus, the questions on that 50-sample questionnaire were utilized in making the personality test portion of the survey. Since there are five personality facets and fifty questions, ten questions were keyed to each facet, five statements in each facet were marked with a “+,” and the other five statements were marked with a “-.” Because the aim of this project is to test the Agreeableness facet, all ten questions that dealt with the Agreeableness facet were used. However, to reduce the possibility of participants realizing their agreeableness was being tested, something that could lead to biased answers, one question from each other facet was used to blend the test. Two questions from the other four facets were marked with a “+,” while the other two were marked with a “-.” This resulted in fourteen questions for the personality test: ten questions dealing with the Agreeableness facet, one with the Extraversion facet, one with the Emotional Stability facet, one with the Conscientiousness, and one question dealing with the Intellect facet. Only data from participant answers on the ten questions measuring agreeableness were analyzed in this paper; their answers to the other questions were disregarded.

Sexual Assault Case Prompts

Utilizing the question format of Tripodi’s prompt methodology, the questions were revised to mirror the nature of the research. It used “case prompts,” or paragraph-long prompts based on real-life sexual assault trials in which the participant would vote guilty or not guilty based on which side they most likely would vote in favor of. In order to implement this methodology, there would need to have been an extensive review of various court manuscripts from sexual assault trials. To ensure the least amount of bias, the search parameters for these court manuscripts were reduced to ones with a hung jury. Barbara Luppi, an Adjunct Professor of International Economics at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and Francesco Parisi, a Professor of Law at the University of Minnesota, define a hung jury as “a jury cannot reach consensus on a given verdict after an extended period of deliberation” (Luppi & Parisi, 2013, p. 400). Using cases that had a hung jury presents a strong side for both the defense and the prosecution. Since there is a strong case for both sides in the trial, it would show which inherent bias they portray when participants vote on a verdict for these cases.
The cases used to make the prompts were People v. Weiss, State v. Lamphere, State v. Cannon, Garcia v. State, and State v. Haldemann. These cases all involved the defendant sexually assaulting someone, and many involved a hung jury. The components of these cases involved unwanted touching, drug/alcohol use, and non-consensual/consensual intercourse (Giovanni Garcia v. the State of Texas, 2010; People of the State of Colorado v. Thomas Robert Weiss, 2006; The State of New Hampshire v. Michael Cannon, 2001; State of Wisconsin v. Herbert M. Haldemann, Jr., 2009; State v. David Lamphere, 1995). To emulate cases like this, the prompts must also include, to some degree, some components in these cases. The components utilized were drug/alcohol usage, and unwanted touching, as those were the components in cases that resulted in a hung jury.

To increase the readability of the survey, three case prompts were used. Two dealt with drug/alcohol use, and one dealt with unwanted touching. Since there were only three case prompts, based on whether the participant voted more towards guilty or not guilty would be easy to see. The prompts would also need to be under two paragraphs to limit the time participants would spend taking the survey, thus increasing the number of responses.

Procedure and Sample Size Collection

In order to account for a sample collection that mirrored the U.S. population, four demographic questions that mirrored the U.S. Census Bureau were asked: age, sex, race, and highest level of education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021b). The final survey consisting of an informed consent document along with a consent box, fourteen personality questions (ten Agreeableness questions), three sexual assault case prompts, and demographic questions were sent to participants. Multiple ways of finding participants were needed to cover a sample size with a diversity similar to that of the United States. One method of collecting participants that was used, to send the survey out to as many people who are 18+ and citizens of the United States, was through personal connections. This method, while somewhat effective, severely limited the sample in terms of diversity due to the geographical area of the research being predominantly two races (United Census Bureau, 2021a). To overcome this limitation, social media sites such as Instagram, Facebook, and Reddit were also utilized to find participants from across the country. Aside from social media sites, many survey websites were also utilized. Survey websites are ones where a researcher can put their survey with participant restrictions (ex: certain age, race) and would garner more participants if they complete other researcher’s surveys. This method would serve as a higher level of protection for anyone who partakes in the survey as it would be completely anonymous. It would also increase the geographical location and reach people who are not bound by the area where the research was conducted. All these methods were used to yield the participant pool which this study is based upon.

The data collection took place within the span of ≈ 1.5 months from January 6, 2023, to February 22, 2023. Due to the time limitation of a year coupled with needing IRB approval, data collection could only occur in early January. The time span of ≈ 1.5 months aimed to garner as many responses as possible to increase the sample size which would yield more accurate results.

Data Analysis Plan

The quantitative nature of this methodology allows for reasonable statistical analysis to accurately correlate the Agreeableness score to the bias toward sexual assault. Prior to conducting the survey, the $H_0$ or null hypothesis was that there was no correlation between one’s Agreeableness score and their bias toward sexual assault. Alternatively, the $H_a$ or alternative hypothesis was a correlation between one’s Agreeableness score and their bias toward sexual assault. To measure the personality portion of the survey, each participant is scored between 10-50. Then to measure the participant’s bias toward sexual assault, the number of guilty verdicts assigned lands between 0-3. To observe conditional distribution data, the Agreeableness score is split into four categories: those who score from 10-20, 21-30, 31-40, or 41-50. After the data is collected, it is entered into two conditional distribution charts, one of the observed counts for both the number of guilty verdicts and the number of participants in each category and another for expected counts per category. The $\chi^2$ value, used to measure the difference between the observed and expected outcomes, was
calculated using $\sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$, with O being the observed count and E being the expected count to determine if there was homogeneity between the data sets. The homogeneity factor determines whether the observed counts match the expected counts and whether the sample size is accurate. The $\chi^2$ for association was also calculated using $\sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$ and an $\alpha = 0.05$ to establish a baseline. Since the sample size failed to meet the large sample size conditional, a Fisher’s exact test was also used to examine the data further. The p-value that was calculated varies from the regular p-value calculation due to the small sample size. The following values below indicate which variables correspond with which data point from the observed count:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verdicts</th>
<th>10-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>(a+b+c+d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>(e+f+g+h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>(j+k+l+m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>(q+r+s+t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(a+e+j+q)</td>
<td>(b+f+k+r)</td>
<td>(c+g+l+s)</td>
<td>(d+h+m+t)</td>
<td>n = ((a+b+c+d)+(e+f+g+h)+(j+k+l+m)+(q+r+s+t))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

There were 62 participants in the study, noting that no participant had a 10-20 Agreeableness score; thus, the 10-20 category data could not be used. One participant yielded an incomplete response to the personality portion of the survey by leaving one question unanswered. The participant was then allotted a score of 0 for that particular question. The conditional distribution chart for the findings is presented below:

Table 2: Observed Count from the Research Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verdicts</th>
<th>10-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the data in the table above, an expected counts table was also created, which is shown below:

Table 3: Expected Count from the Research Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verdicts</th>
<th>10-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.387</td>
<td>2.032</td>
<td>3.581</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.968</td>
<td>5.081</td>
<td>8.951</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.806</td>
<td>9.484</td>
<td>16.71</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>4.403</td>
<td>7.758</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The variance in size between the observed and expected count produced a 0.96 in the goodness of fit, indicating that the observed data corresponds with the expected count. Since the goodness of fit is close to 1.00, the result was significantly accurate. The two charts above visually represent the data, demonstrating the percentages of guilty verdicts taken in each of the four categories. The graphs are shown below:

**Figure 1.** Observed Counts by percentage of participants who voted guilty by number done through a stacked bar chart

**Figure 2.** Expected Counts by percentage of participants who voted guilty by number done through a stacked bar chart

The 9 degrees of freedom produced a $\chi^2$ for association value of 4.024 with a p-value of 0.9098. A more significant number of data points would yield a $\chi^2$ of $>5$, although there were significantly fewer data points that decreased the $\chi^2$ value. After the $\chi^2$ test, the Fisher’s exact test yielded a different p-value of 0.7487 using the observed counts chart. Since the p-value is more significant than 0.05, the study still failed to reject $H_0$. 
The survey demographics are shown below:

**Figure 3.** Age of Participants done through a pie chart

**Figure 4.** Biological Sex of Participants done through a pie chart
Figure 5. Race of Participants done through a bar chart

Figure 6. Highest Level of Education obtained by Participants done through a pie chart
Conclusion

The data signifies that the research was not statistically significant, thus failing to reject the null hypothesis. However, according to the observed counts, the 31-40 Agreeableness category yielded the highest number of favorable verdicts (2 and 3) as opposed to unfavorable verdicts (0 and 1). While the expected count displayed that there was a higher percentage of people who delivered favorable verdicts, the observed percentage of participants who delivered negative results in the 31-40 category was significantly lower than expected. However, in the 31-40 category, there was a higher percentage of participants who voted guilty 0 times than in the other three categories, potentially proving that there is a higher bias towards innocent verdicts 100% of the time rather than a minuscule percentage of the time.

It is critical to note that the number of participants who voted guilty either 1, 2, or 3 times in the 41-50 Agreeableness category and the number of participants who voted guilty two times in the 31-40 Agreeableness category were significant factors in the data, totaling ≈ 67.29% of the data collected.

Discussion

Limitations

The research provided above was conclusive with limitations. First, the experiment was conducted for a month, producing only 62 responses. Since there were only 62 responses, the survey failed to meet the large sample size conditional of the significance test. In response to the sample size, the chi-squared analysis was conducted cautiously. With the Fisher’s Exact test for correlation, there was a lower p-value, yet it still failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Secondly, one participant did not have a completed response for the personality test portion and was thus allotted a score of 0 for each question the participant had not answered. The participant scored a 32 on the personality portion of the survey and voted guilty 0 times. However, this would not skew results as the participant would have scored 33-37 had they voted.

A further limitation is that due to the short stature of time that the survey was done, there was only one independent variable which was the participant’s Agreeableness score. If more variables had been tested, the readability of the survey would have decreased, further dissuading participants from taking the survey. The previous studies on this topic have examined the other facets of the Big 5 Model rather than simply focusing on one.

The fourth limitation is that there were no participants whose Agreeableness score was in the 10-20. Thus, no conclusion could have been drawn from the lack of data points. The $\chi^2$ would have been slightly different had the 10-20 category.

Validity

There is much controversy surrounding whether personality is an accurate measure of a person due to the variance and ever-changing aspects of the human mind. This research aimed to establish a link between personality and inherent bias toward sexual assault. A vital factor to consider is the small sample size in this research. Since the research provided does not match the literature review done on the topic, there could potentially be an error in the research. However, this research’s validity increased since a Fisher’s test was used which accounted for the small sample size. The literature on this topic does not go into depth about the specific Agreeableness facet. There could be a correlation between other facets of the Big Five Model and bias towards sexual assault.
Further Research

Further research should be conducted to look at the correlation between agreeableness and jury verdicts with a larger sample size to increase accuracy. A specific extension of the research would be to comprehensively analyze bias toward sexual assault, assessing each of the five facets of the Big Five Model. Factor I: Extraversion and Factor IV: Neuroticism directly correlated to the foreperson. Thus, there could be a stronger connection between those two factors which could only be proven with further research.

Applications

The area of legal studies is rapidly growing, with new information being revealed frequently. A potential application of this research is the legal profession of jury consultants. The profession aims to find proper jurors to help the counsel that hires them. This research could help narrow down selected jurors by introducing various questions to figure out one’s personality. The questions could quantify an agreeableness score which could fit into the 31-40 category. Another way that personality research is applicable to sexual assault is by convicting suspects and using profile evidence such as age, sex, gender, and other factors is becoming increasingly common to arrest criminals (Edelstein, 2016). Personality factors could soon become a profile area once further research is established. Alongside arresting sexual assaulters, profiles for serious offenders could also be established. Narcissism remains common among criminals, such as serial killers, which is a crucial adjective that describes Factor IV: Neuroticism (Hansen, 2006). Further research done on this topic could potentially draw a direct correlation between Factor IV and sexual assaulters.

References


State v. David Lamphere (June 1, 1995). https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=15271227251023268133&q=%22sexual+assault+trial+%22+hung+jury&hl=en&as_sdt=6,47

