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Personality Differences in Peer Review

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The present study investigated the relationship between personality traits, grades, and rater leniency during an introductory to psychology course peer-review assignment. Results revealed the personality factor that had the strongest relationship with grades was academic entitlement, which is the belief that one deserves good grades regardless of personal effort. Students higher in this trait received lower grades on the peer review. The second most influential personality trait was conscientiousness: a trait characterized by achievement-orientation, responsibility, self-discipline, organization, and attention to detail. Students high in this trait earned higher grades on the assignment and tended to give lower grades to their peers.

In addition to the average grade students received, we also considered the influence of personality on how much variability was in the grades their peers assigned them. Higher variability in grades was related to openness (creativity, originality, and insightfulness) and narcissism (overconfidence, entitlement, and self-obsession). In contrast, more agreeable students (kind, compliant, trusting, and sympathetic) have lower variability in their grades. A possible explanation for these findings is that students communicate their personality through their writing style with the effects of arrogance and controversial topics varying in the graders.

Lastly, we considered the influence of personality in students' rater leniency: the tendency to give higher grades than the assignment deserves. The personality factor with the biggest influence on rater leniency was learning orientation attitude (approaching school as an opportunity to gain knowledge and insight), where students higher in learning orientation gave more accurate and less lenient grades. Additionally, students high in conscientiousness and grade orientation (high motivation for academic success) also gave more accurate and less lenient grades. In summary, this study provided more insight on how personality influences the grades students receive, the variability in their grades, and their grading tendencies during peer reviews.