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IMPACT OF THE BIG 5 AND SENSATION SEEKING PERSONALITY TRAITS ON EVERYDAY  
DECEPTION

BY

BAILEY MCGUFFIN

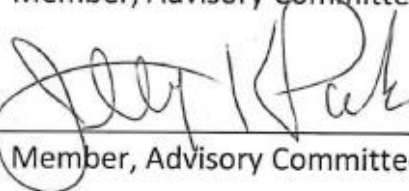
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IMPACT OF THE BIG 5 AND SENSATION SEEKING PERSONALITY TRAITS ON EVERYDAY  
DECEPTION

BY

BAILEY MICHELLE MCGUFFIN

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
Eastern Kentucky University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

2019

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Christie, and to my boyfriend, Cody, whose love and encouragement inspires me every day.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Dr. Adam Lawson, for his support and guidance over the past three years. I would also like to acknowledge my thesis committee, Dr. Sara Incera and Dr. Jerry Palmer, who have been very helpful throughout my graduate career. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my cohort, Emily Mink and Farshad Sadr. These two have been such an amazing support system over the last year and a half. I love you both and am so thankful to have become such great friends.

## ABSTRACT

Everyday Deception is an important aspect of life, yet a dearth of research has examined the influence of the Big 5 personality traits and Sensation Seeking tendencies on an individual's likelihood to engage in Everyday Deception. While previous research has investigated the relationships between the Big 5 and deception as well as Sensation Seeking and deception, no prior research has looked at the combined effects of these personality traits. The purpose of this study is to clarify and extend prior research examining personality factors that index the nature and extent of Everyday Deception. It was hypothesized that 1) Sensation Seeking tendencies would be positively correlated with Everyday Deception, 2) the Big 5 traits of Extraversion and Openness to Experience would be positively related to Everyday Deception, and 3) Sensation Seeking, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience would positively predict Everyday Deception. One hundred and seventy-three participants responded to a battery of questionnaires that measured personality and frequency of deceptive behaviors as well as attitudes toward criminally deceptive actions. Higher Sensation Seeking tendencies were correlated to Everyday Deception. There were no significant correlations regarding the Big 5. In regard to the predictive nature of personality, the only trait that significantly predicted Everyday Deception was the Sensation Seeking subscale of Disinhibition.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BS – Boredom Susceptibility

Dis - Disinhibition

ES – Experience Seeking

fMRI – function magnetic resonance imaging

OLA - optimal level of arousal

OLS - optimal level of stimulation

PATD - perceived ability to deceive

RAS - reticular activating system

SD - sensory deprivation

SS - Sensation Seeking

SSS - Sensation Seeking Scale

TAS- Thrill and Adventure Seeking

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Everyday Deception is defined as “deliberately giving information different from the truth, or omitting pertinent information, within the scope of normal daily events” (Neville & Lawson, 2019). Everyday Deception is an important aspect of life, yet a dearth of research has examined the influence of the Big 5 personality traits and Sensation Seeking tendencies on an individual’s likelihood to engage in Everyday Deception. This thesis will examine the influence of personality traits on the frequency and type of everyday deception.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Deception**

Lying is a common part of social interaction. We lie to protect the feelings of our friends, to cover up embarrassment, or to promote ourselves in social situations.

Deception can have selfish and antisocial motives or it can be altruistic and prosocial (Abe, 2011). Parents often lie to their children as a means of influencing their behaviors or emotions. Additionally, parents lie to protect their children from physical or emotional harm (Heyman, Luu, & Lee, 2009). It is common for children to start lying at a young age, sometimes beginning as early as two years old (Newton, Reddy, & Bull, 2000). Lies at this age are often influenced by the need to gain or avoid certain things but can also be as a means to protect the feelings of their peers (Newton et al., 2000; Warneken & Orlins, 2015).

While lying is seen as a predominantly behavioral act, physiological differences have been detected when someone is lying versus when they are telling the truth. Ofen et al., (2017) measured brain activity with function magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) while participants either lied or told the truth about a personal experience. Ofen and colleagues found that regions of the frontal and parietal cortices showed significantly higher activation while participants were lying. In relation to brain activity, Jiang et al. (2015) examined whether there was a difference in brain connectivity between participant's lies or truths. Overall, differences were found in the connectivity between

the fronto-parietal networks, cerebellum, and cingulo-opercular networks. Ten different strengthened connections were found when a participant was lying versus telling the truth. Specifically, a stronger connection was observed between the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex and the occipital cortex, the ventral frontal cortex and the posterior occipital cortex, and the posterior insula and the thalamus. The information gathered from this study gives us a better understanding of the specific activity occurring in the brain while we are lying.

While previous research has focused on deception in a general sense, the current study will focus on Everyday Deception. In the past, there has been no comprehensive self-report that measured for Everyday Deception. In 2019, the Everyday Deception Survey was developed by Neville & Lawson (2019). The researchers developed the scale in order to assess the relationship between Everyday Deception, Sensation Seeking, and psychopathic tendencies. It was predicted by Neville and her colleagues that Everyday Deception would be positively correlated with Sensation Seeking, impulsivity, and psychopathy. Participants responded to a battery of questionnaires that measured these personality traits as well as the Everyday Deception Survey they created. The results indicated that Everyday Deception was positively correlated with two of the Sensation Seeking subscales (Thrill and Adventure Seeking and Boredom susceptibility) as well as impulsive Sensation Seeking. In regard to psychopathy, a positive relationship was found between two of the psychopathy subscales (Meanness and Disinhibition) and Everyday Deception. The study by Neville



and her colleagues give us insight into the relationships between Sensation Seeking, psychopathic traits, and Everyday Deception.

### **Origins of the Big 5 Theory of Personality**

One of the most unique constructs of the human race is personality. Each individual has a special combination of traits that make them who they are, which influences many aspects of their lives. This is why the study of personality has contributed to a large body of research in the field of psychology. One of the biggest contributors to the study of personality was Raymond Cattell, who defined personality as “that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation” (1950). Throughout his career, Cattell focused on identifying specific personality traits and their influence on behavior, eventually developing the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire in 1961. Since then, further research has morphed the sixteen different personality types into five, creating the five-factor model (McCrae & Costa Jr., 1999; Goldberg, 1992). Eventually being coined *The Big 5*, the five major personality traits have become widely accepted by personality researchers. These five traits are *Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism*.

Those who are high in Openness to Experience are considered imaginative, independent, and enjoy variety in their everyday life. They are appreciative of nature, the arts, and generally have a liberal political view (Markowitz, Goldberg, Ashton, & Lee, 2012; Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006). Openness to Experience is associated with an

increased likelihood of participation in risky sports such as scuba diving, rock climbing, etc. (Tok, 2011). However, a higher level of Openness to Experience can put a person at risk for substance abuse as well as being overly active at their jobs (Boudreaux, Piedmont, Sherman, & Ozer, 2013; Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006).

People who are high in Conscientiousness are organized, careful, and self-disciplined. They tend to have a higher grade point average (GPA) and receive more job offers than lower Conscientious people (Caldwell & Burger, 1998). High Conscientiousness is also related to lower levels of risky behavior, psychopathology, and antisocial or criminal behavior (Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006). However, people high in Conscientiousness can sometimes become too focused on perfectionism, overly involved in their jobs, and press their personal beliefs on others (Boudreaux et al., 2013).

Extraversion is associated with being very social, fun-loving, and affectionate. It is also related to being more active, outspoken, dominant, and adventurous than those high in introversion (John & Srivastava, 1999). Highly Extraverted people are less likely to suffer from depression, have more satisfying relationships, and are more involved in their community than introverts (Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006). However, Extraverts can also be controlling, have a need to do things their way, and have a tendency to press their opinions onto others (Boudreaux et al., 2013).

Those high in Agreeableness are usually softhearted, trusting, and helpful. They are less likely to develop heart disease or engage in criminal behaviors. Furthermore,

those high in this trait are more likely to volunteer in their communities and engage in prosocial behaviors (Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006; Wertag & Bratko, 2019). However, being highly Agreeable can lead to psychological stress. High levels of this trait can result in the inability for a person to say “no” to requests from others, issues prioritizing tasks at work, and feeling frustrated by schedules, timelines, and due dates (Boudreaux et al., 2013).

Neuroticism is the personality type that is characterized by emotional instability. People who score high in the Neuroticism dimension are usually worried, insecure, and self-pitying. Neurotic personalities do not respond positively to stressful events, are very sensitive to social threats, and are more aware of cues of social inclusion (Denissen & Penke, 2008). High levels of neuroticism can also create a variety of psychological and physiological stress. Neurotic distress can cause a person to develop poor sleeping habits, a tendency to overeat, and even engage in substance abuse (Friedman, 2019).

The study of personality gives us information on which types of people tend to behave in certain ways. For example, Lackner et al. (2013) examined the different personality types with alcohol and polydrug users. The study suggests that alcohol users are higher in Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, whereas polydrug users are higher in Neuroticism. These results indicate that personality traits may have a relationship with an individual’s susceptibility to substance abuse.

Personality researchers since the late 1970’s have agreed that the Big 5 Personality traits encompass principal differences in individuals. Beyond these five

traits, researchers have also acknowledged certain traits that are neurobiologically distinct. One such trait is sensation seeking.

### **Origins of Sensation Seeking Research**

Sensation Seeking (SS) is a biologically based personality trait that reflects the extent to which individuals are willing to take physical, social, legal or financial risks to encounter varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations (Zuckerman, 1994). The idea for the SS trait stems from research on sensory deprivation (SD). This research consists of participants voluntarily spending time in an environment in which their visual and auditory senses are extremely reduced. Some of the most common reactions to SD include anxiety and auditory or visual hallucinations (Zuckerman, 1969). Other origins of SS research are the optimal level of stimulation (OLS) and optimal level of arousal (OLA) theories. The OLS theory, created by Wilhelm Wundt in 1893, suggests there is an optimal point at which a stimulus is most enjoyed by an individual. Anything above or below that point can be viewed as aversive. The OLA theory, created by Freud in 1895, suggests there is an optimal level of “intracerebral tonic excitement” that is experienced by an individual. Essentially, each person feels best at a different level of excitement. Those who enjoy lower levels of excitement were coined as “torpid types”, while those who enjoy higher levels of excitement were coined as “vivacious types”. It was not until the 1950’s that a neurological basis for OLA was discovered. Hebb (1955) describes a bell-shaped relationship between the OLA theory and the reticular activating system (RAS). Essentially, the brain contains an ascending RAS that connects the brain stem to

the cortices that sends a signal to increase alertness, interest, and positive emotion. At the top of the bell curve is an individual's optimal level of response and learning. A descending RAS attempts to weaken the state of arousal if it is too strong.

It was the OLS and OLA theories that served as the basis for Zuckerman's Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS). In 1964, Zuckerman began working on creating a scale to measure the behavioral aspects of SS. This original scale was eventually refined into the SSS-II, a set of unrotated general factors that apply to both men and women (Zuckerman et al., 1964). After several years of testing, four distinct factors or sub-types were developed from the SSS-II that would eventually lead to the SSS-IV and V. The fourth scale included 72 items that unevenly measured the subtypes and resulted in only moderate correlations. The scale was refined to only include the items with the strongest loadings among the 4 subtypes. After many years of testing and revision, the SSS-V was developed. This scale is comprised of 40 items, with 10 items representing each subtype of sensation seeking. It is this version of the SSS that has been widely used in sensation seeking research.

The SSS-V measures for 4 subtypes of Sensation Seeking: *Thrill and Adventure Seeking (TAS)*, *Experience Seeking (ES)*, *Disinhibition (Dis)*, and *Boredom Susceptibility (BS)* (Zuckerman, Eysenck, & Eysenck, 1978). TAS is defined as a desire to engage in sports and activities that may contain speed or danger. A person who scores high in this category may find pleasure in activities such as sky diving or riding on a roller coaster (Zuckerman, 2007). The ES trait is associated with searching for opportunities to

experience new sensations through the mind, senses, and travel. People high in this trait typically are non-conformists and prefer spontaneity in their lives. Interestingly, this subtype was coined the “hippie factor” in the 1970’s and the “punk factor” in the 1980’s. Dis refers to a desire for feeling “out of control”, such as social drinking, partying, and having a variety of sexual partners. People who score high in Dis are more likely to abuse mind-altering drugs such as mushrooms or marijuana. This subtype is highly correlated to biological markers such as heart rate, gonadal hormones, and cortical evoked potentials (Zuckerman, 2007). BS is the measure of one’s aversion to routine and dull people or activities. Someone high in BS likes meeting new people and becomes restless when they have limited or no stimulation (Zuckerman et al., 1978).

Sensation Seeking has been correlated with several different aspects of personality and behavior, with distinct differences between high and low sensation seekers. The typical high Sensation Seeker is more likely to engage in illegal drug use (Bardo, Donohew, & Harrington, 1996), risky sexual activity (Kalichman et al., 1996; Sheer & Cline, 1995), and exhibit aggressive, unsocialized behaviors associated with juvenile delinquency and criminality (Arnett, 1996; Lynam & Miller, 2004; Newcome & McGee, 1991; Pérez & Torrubia, 1985; Romero, Luengo, & Sobral, 2001). High Sensation Seeking is also associated risky driving such as driving at fast speeds and ignoring traffic laws (Roberti, 2004).

Demographic differences in SS tendencies have also been studied. In regard to gender, men seem to consistently score higher on the TAS, BS, and Dis subscales than

women. This can be explained by the apparent relationship between testosterone levels and SS (Zuckerman, 2007). In regard to age, scores on children's SS scales seem to increase over time. However, on adult scales, SS peaks during adolescence and begins to decline with age (Zuckerman, 2007).

While there has been extensive research conducted on the influences that SS has on behavioral outcomes, it is also important for us to understand the internal forces that are driving these behaviors. Rosenbloom (2003) evaluated the connection between SS, risk evaluation, and risk taking. Participants responded to three different scales; the Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS), the Risk Evaluation inventory, and the Risk Taking questionnaire. The Risk Evaluation inventory allows participants to rate how risky they believe a certain activity to be. The responses from this inventory gives the researchers a better understanding of how high and low sensation seekers perceive certain "dangerous" activities such as bungee jumping, smoking cigarettes or taking drugs. The Risk Taking questionnaire is designed to measure how often a participant engages in these risky activities. The researchers hypothesized that those who score higher on the SSS will score lower in the Risk Evaluation inventory, but will score higher on the Risk Taking questionnaire. Participants responded to the SSS and Risk Evaluation inventory in a classroom setting, then two weeks later responded to the Risk Taking questionnaire. Not only did high sensation seekers rate dangerous activities as less risky than low sensation seekers, they also reported engaging in high risk activities more frequently. These results can be explained by the high Sensation Seeker's desire for arousal. Those

who find joy and pleasure in activities with intense sensations typically believe the benefit of the sensation outweighs the risk for injury, which explains the internal drives that lead to risky activities (Rosenbloom, 2003).

While understanding the behavioral differences between high and low Sensation Seeking is important, we must also attempt to understand how they differ physiologically. Several studies have found distinct neurological responses in high and low sensation seekers. When exposed to high-arousal stimuli, the areas of the brain related to arousal and reinforcement, such as the insula and posterior medial orbitofrontal cortex, had stronger activation in high sensation seekers than low sensation seekers. In addition, the areas related to emotional regulation, the anterior cingulate and anterior medial orbitofrontal cortex, also showed a stronger response in high sensation seekers (Joseph, Liu, Jiang, Lynam, & Kelly, 2009).

Differences in brain activation have also been found when participants are asked to respond to a task that involves risk. When low sensation seekers respond to a risk task, they exhibit increased activation in the frontal lobe and medial orbitofrontal cortex. Low sensation seekers also have higher levels of cortisol following a risk task than their high Sensation Seeking counterparts (Freeman & Beer, 2010). Differences in cortisol levels between low and high sensation seekers have also been found when faced with a stressor (Frenkel, Heck, & Plessner, 2018). In a study by Frenkel and colleagues, participants were instructed first to climb a 12-meter rock wall, then to jump from the wall and grab onto a hanging rope. Physiological measures (heart rate and



cortisol levels) and self-reported stress levels were obtained at a resting state and then again immediately following the jump to the rope, then again at a “post-stress” state. Results indicated that high sensation seekers had similar levels of cortisol when in a resting state and when climbing a rock wall. In contrast, low sensation seekers had much higher levels of cortisol after climbing the rock wall than in a resting state. These results support the idea that Sensation Seeking elicits different physiological responses to sport-related stressors (Frenkel et al., 2018).

In addition to physiological markers of Sensation Seeking, previous research has suggested that there is a possible genetic component that influences the SS trait. Thomson et al. (2015) explored the possibility of genetic differences between high and low sensation seekers who participate in risky sports. Not only did they find a positive relationship between SS and participation in high-risk sports, but a shared genetic component was found as well. Two genes, stathmin and brain-derived neurotrophic factor, were found to be associated with high-risk sport participation. This information gives insight into the biological reasons why certain types of people are drawn to high-risk sports.

### **Relationships Between Sensation Seeking (SS) and Deception**

Sensation Seeking is often associated with impulsive behaviors, which has the potential to facilitate deceptive behaviors. Lu (2008) aimed to make a connection between SS, internet dependency, and online interpersonal deception. Participants responded to the Brief Sensation Seeking Scale (BSSS), an internet dependency scale,

and answered questions related to deceiving others online. The results indicated that high sensation seekers were more likely to engage in online interpersonal deception than low sensation seekers. The researchers explain that this relationship may be due in part by the anonymity provided by the internet. Deceiving others online may be seen as a “high-tech adventure”, therefore enticing sensation seekers to deceive in order to satisfy some psychological need.

SS has been shown to be positively associated with cheating behaviors (DeAndrea, Carpenter, Shulman, & Levine, 2009; McTernan, Love, & Rettinger, 2014). DeAndrea (2009) simulated a trivia competition between a participant and a confederate in which the participant was given the opportunity to cheat. Upon completion of the trivia competition, participants responded to the Brief Sensation Seeking Scale (Hoyle, Stephenson, Palmgreen, Lorch, & Donohew, 2002). The results indicated that high sensation seekers were more likely to cheat in the trivia competition than low sensation seekers.

Manson et al. (2017) attempted to identify relationships between Sensation Seeking tendencies, memory, and deception through behavioral and physiological methods. On day one of the experiment, participants were asked to retrieve some documents from a locked office. Inside of the filing cabinet that contained the documents were concerning papers such as missile diagrams and schematics. One group of participants were instructed to lie to an examiner about what they had seen while another group was instructed to tell the truth to the examiner. On day two of the

study, participants were asked to respond to a familiarity examination task while physiological data (blood pressure and skin conductance) was being recorded. In addition, participants responded to the Brief Sensation Seeking scale (BSSS). The researchers predicted that high sensation seekers would be related to higher rates of deception. The results indicated no relationship between deception and Sensation Seeking (Manson, Lagerroos, Janz, Lawson, & Gore, 2017).

The current thesis will contribute to the small body of research in the area of Sensation Seeking and deception in order to potentially provide insight into the relationships between Sensation Seeking traits and Everyday Deception.

### **Relationships Between Personality and Deception**

On average, Americans tell one or two lies every day (Serota, Levine, & Boster, 2010). Interestingly, the majority of people claim to rarely lie, while a small percentage claim to lie very often (Serota et al., 2010). This raises the question - which individual differences influence that small sample to lie so often? In order to understand the association between personality and lying, Eyal and colleagues (2015) had participants complete the Big 5 inventory along with a self-assessment on the ability to tell and detect lies, tell truths, and believe others. Results indicated that high levels of Extraversion and Openness to Experience were found to be significant predictors of one's ability to tell lies and truths in a convincing way, as well as to detect lies with accuracy. This relationship can be explained by the idea that Extraverts lie more than introverts due to the fact that Extraverts, on average, have more social interactions than

introverts. There was a negative relationship between Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and lying, suggesting that those who scored higher in these personality dimensions were more likely to have lower levels of lie-telling abilities. Agreeableness was found as a significant predictor of one's ability to believe others, along with low levels of lie-telling, and lie detection (Elaad & Reizer, 2015).

Several researchers have investigated how personality influences deception in practical scenarios. Hall et al. (2010) found a relationship between personality traits and the likelihood of misrepresentation online. Those high in Conscientiousness and Agreeableness were less likely to lie about themselves online than those high in Extraversion. Individuals low in Openness to Experience were less likely to lie about their relationship goals or personal interests. The researchers speculate this relationship is driven by the lack of new or exciting experiences a less open individual would participate in, therefore facilitating the need to lie about their personal lives to seem more interesting. (Hall, Park, Song, & Cody, 2010).

Buehl & Melchers (2017) looked at which personality types are more likely to fake certain behaviors during job interviews. In their study, participants responded to a battery of surveys that included the Big Five Inventory and measures of attitudes toward faking, faking in interviews, and interview success. The researchers found a significant relationship between fake interview behaviors and Neuroticism, suggesting that those higher in Neuroticism are more likely to lie or behave in a dishonest manner during a job interview (Buehl & Melchers, 2017).

Extraversion has also been linked to lying in a job interview. Weiss et al. (2006) conducted a study that made participants believe they were interviewing for a real job as a tutor. At the end of the interview, participants were told they were a part of an experiment, watched a recording on their interview, and were asked to report any and all lies that were told during the interview. Participants also responded to several behavioral and personality surveys, one of which measured for Extraversion. The results suggested that those higher in extraversion told significantly more lies during the interview.

Giammarco et al. (2012) looked at the concept of deception from a different approach. In Giammarco's study, deception was measured not by how many times a person lies, but by their perceived ability to deceive (PATD). In order to measure for PATD, participants gave ratings to how well they believed they could lie in certain scenarios (e.g. lying on a resume without getting caught). Participants responded to a Big Five inventory, a measure of the Dark Triad personality types (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy), and a measure of the PATD. The results indicated a weak positive relationship between Extraversion and PATD, indicating that Extraverts believe themselves to have better lie-telling abilities than the other Big 5 traits. In addition, it was reported that Agreeableness and Conscientiousness have a negative relationship with PATD, meaning participants who scored high in Agreeableness and Conscientiousness reported lower lie-telling abilities than the other Big 5 traits.

This body of research allows us to better understand why people lie and the underlying personality traits that influence those lies.

### **The Present Study**

The present study aims to investigate the interaction of Big Five personality traits and sensation seeking on an individual's likelihood to engage in everyday deception. The purpose of this study is to clarify and extend prior research examining personality factors that index the nature and extent of everyday deception. It is important, in a variety of settings, to understand what leads people to lie, and the underlying personality factors that drive the deceptive behavior.

While previous research has investigated the relationships between the Big 5 and deception as well as Sensation Seeking and deception, no prior research has looked at the combined effects of these personality traits. Based on previous research, the current study has developed three main hypotheses, the first involving relationship between Sensation Seeking and Everyday Deception. Previous research (DeAndrea et al., 2009; Lu, 2008) suggests high levels of Sensation Seeking lead to higher levels of deception. Therefore, it is predicted that those who score high in Sensation Seeking will report higher rates of Everyday Deception than those who score low in Sensation Seeking.

Prior research has supported the idea that there is a relationship between Big 5 personality traits and deception, specifically the Openness to Experience and Extraversion traits (e.g. Buehl & Melchers, 2017; Elaad & Reizer, 2015; Giammarco,

Atkinson, Baughman, Veselka, & Vernon, 2013; Hall, Park, Song, & Cody, 2010).

Therefore, the second hypothesis predicts those who score high in Openness to Experience Extraversion will report higher levels of Everyday Deception than any other Big 5 personality factor.

To my knowledge, no prior research has investigated the predictive nature of Sensation Seeking and the Big 5 with Everyday Deception. The third hypothesis of the current study states that Sensation Seeking, Openness to Experience, and Extraversion will significantly predict Everyday Deception.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### **Participants**

In order to determine the appropriate sample size needed to yield significant results, an a priori power analysis was conducted using the G\*Power program (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). Using the parameters of an alpha level of .05 (two-tailed), a power of .95 and a moderate effect size, the minimum sample size required was 146 participants.

One hundred seventy-three undergraduate students (143 Female, 2 other) enrolled at Eastern Kentucky University participated in this study. The average age was 23.8 years ( $SD = 7.6$ ). Eight participants were excluded from the study due to incorrectly answering any of the five attention check questions.

#### **Materials**

**Personality.** The Big 5 Personality Inventory (second edition) was used in order to identify the Big 5 Personality traits of the participants (Soto & John, 2017, Appendix A). This 60-item questionnaire asked participants to indicate the degree in which they agreed with a statement on a 5-point Likert scale. Twelve questions were asked to measure for each of the 5 personality dimensions (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism).

**Sensation Seeking.** The Sensation Seeking Scale (5<sup>th</sup> edition) is a 40-item forced response scale that was used to measure the four subtypes of sensation seeking



(Zuckerman et al., 1978, Appendix B). The scale uses ten questions to measure for each of the four subtypes (Thrill and Adventure Seeking, Experience Seeking, Disinhibition, Boredom Susceptibility). For this study, the sensation seeking total, which consists of a sum of each subscale scores, and each sub-scale was used in analysis.

**Everyday Deception.** The Everyday Deception Scale is a 56-item scale that measures how often participants engage in deception (Neville & Lawson, 2019, Appendix C). Participants responded to each statement as either “true” or “false”. The first set of 18 items were in relation to the past week, the next 19 for the past month, and the final 19 for the past year. Four questions from the original survey were omitted from the current study due to repetition of content. Two follow-up questions were asked at the end of the questionnaire that asked the participant to indicate on a scale from 1-9 how honest and how dishonest they are in comparison to their friends and family.

**Deception Vignettes.** In addition to the questionnaire, participants also read stories in three deception vignettes (mild, moderate, and extreme, appendices D, E and F) and answered related questions. Each vignette described a fiction story in which a character committed a criminal act. The average word count for the three vignettes was 418 words. After reading the stories, participants were asked to answer six follow up questions. The questions required participants to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with statements related to the morality of the behaviors of the deceivers

(Morality), how severely they should be punished for their behaviors (Punishment), and whether or not the participant empathizes with the deceiver (Empathy).

### **Procedure**

Participants responded to a battery of questionnaires via the ECU SONA system and received 1 class credit for their participation. After providing consent, participants initially completed a demographic form that asked for age and gender, then were then asked to complete the other surveys. In order to prevent fatigue and maintain the participant's attention, the questions from each survey were split into clusters.

Participants responded to one-third of the Everyday Deception Survey, one-half of the SSS-V, another third of the Everyday Deception Survey, one-half of the SSS-V, deception vignette 1, the last third of the Everyday Deception Survey, two comparison questions, deception vignette 2, the Big 5 personality inventory, and the final deception vignette. The study took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. After completing all sections of the study, the participants were given a debriefing form and thanked for their time.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Table 1 reports the bivariate correlations between Sensation Seeking and the Big 5 dimensions.

The goal of this thesis was to examine the relationships between personality traits and Everyday Deception. Pearson bivariate correlations were used to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between personality traits and Everyday Deception. Hypothesis driven correlations were further examined using linear regression.

#### **Hypothesis 1**

Bivariate correlations were used to assess the relationships between SS traits and Everyday Deception (Table 2). Total SS scores (combined scores from all four subscales; TAS, ES, Dis, BS) were not significantly correlated with the Everyday Deception Survey (combined scores of questions related to deception in the last week, month, and year). However, SS total was positively correlated with deception within the last year ( $r = .20$ ). The SS sub-trait of Disinhibition was positively correlated with the total score of the Everyday Deception Survey ( $r = .22$ ), and more specifically deception in the past month ( $r = .20$ ), and year ( $r = .30$ ).

Relationships were tested among SS and the responses to the deception vignettes (Table 3). SS total ( $r = -.23$ ) and the sub-traits of Disinhibition ( $r = -.28$ ) and Experience Seeking ( $r = -.21$ ) were negatively correlated with ratings of Morality of

deceptive behaviors in the vignettes. SS total ( $r = .17$ ) and Disinhibition ( $r = .30$ ) were positively correlated with levels of Empathy for deceivers in the stories (Table 3)

**Table 1. Correlations between Sensation Seeking and the Big 5**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. SS Total									
2. Thrill and Adventure Seeking	.75**								
3. Experience Seeking	.71**	.35**							
4. Disinhibition	.75**	.32**	.46**						
5. Boredom Susceptibility	.53**	.24**	.17*	.29**					
6. Openness to Experience	-.09	-.14	.06	-.03	-.12				
7. Conscientiousness	.14	.15	.09	.10	.02	-.07			
8. Extraversion	.11	.14	-.00	.08	.06	.07	.20**		
9. Agreeableness	-.08	-.09	.04	-.10	-.05	.20**	.14	-.03	
10. Neuroticism	-.05	-.15*	.02	.04	.01	.05	-.17*	-.40**	-.15*

Note. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

**Table 2. Correlations between Sensation Seeking and Everyday Deception**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. SS Total										
2. TAS	.75**									
3. ES	.71**	.35**								
4. DIS	.75**	.32**	.46**							
5. BS	.53**	.24**	.17*	.29**						
6. Everyday Deception Survey Total	.12	-.03	.05	.22**	.13					
7. Week	.01	-.08	-.02	.08	.07	.85**				
8. Month	.10	-.03	.04	.20**	.11	.90**	.69**			
9. Year	.20**	.04	.11	.30**	.14	.83**	.51**	.62**		
10. Honesty Comparison	-.03	.05	.02	-.10	-.06	-.24**	-.14	-.26**	-.23**	
11. Dishonesty Comparison	.04	-.02	-.01	.09	.07	.16*	.04	.19*	.18*	-.64**

Note. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

**Table 3. Correlations between Sensation Seeking and Deception Vignettes**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SS Total							
2. TAS	.75**						
3. ES	.71**	.35**					
4. DIS	.75**	.32**	.46**				
5. BS	.53**	.24**	.17*	.29**			
6. Morality	-.23**	-.09	-.21**	-.28**	-.03		
7. Punishment	-.10	-.07	-.06	-.08	-.08	.43**	
8. Empathy	.17*	.03	.12	.30**	.04	-.52**	-.37**

Note. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$

## Hypothesis 2

Bivariate correlations were used to assess the relationships between the Big 5 traits (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) and the Everyday Deception Survey (combined scores of questions related to deception in the last week, month, and year). None of the Big 5 personality traits were significantly correlated with the Everyday Deception Survey (Table 4).

Relationships were tested among the Big 5 and the responses to the deception vignettes (Table 5). Openness to Experience ( $r = .18$ ) and Agreeableness ( $r = .22$ ) were positively correlated to ratings of Morality of the deceptive behaviors in the vignettes (Table 5).

**Table 4. Correlations between the Big 5 and Everyday Deception**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Openness to Experience										
2. Conscientiousness	-.07									
3. Extraversion	.07	.20**								
4. Agreeableness	.20**	.14	-.03							
5. Neuroticism	.05	-.17*	-.40**	-.15*						
6. Everyday Deception Survey Total	.05	.01	-.00	-.01	.04					
7. Week	.02	.01	-.01	-.05	.02	.85**				
8. Month	.02	.01	-.03	-.02	.03	.90**	.69**			
9. Year	.09	.02	.04	.05	.06	.83**	.51**	.62**		
10. Honesty Comparison	.01	.03	.10	.06	-.06	-.24**	-.14	-.26**	-.23**	
11. Dishonesty Comparison	.02	.03	-.01	-.13	.02	.16*	.04	.19*	.18*	-.64**

*Note.* \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .



**Table 5. Correlations between the Big 5 and Deception Vignettes**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Openness to Experience							
2. Conscientiousness	-.07						
3. Extraversion	.07	.20**					
4. Agreeableness	.20**	.14	-.03				
5. Neuroticism	.05	-.17*	-.40**	-.15*			
6. Morality	.18*	.12	.01	.22**	.08		
7. Punishment	.06	.05	.01	.14	.12	.43**	
8. Empathy	-.07	-.12	.06	-.07	-.10	-.52**	-.37**

Note. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

### Hypothesis 3

Separate linear regressions were computed for each measurement of Everyday Deception (Everyday Deception Survey total, Morality, Punishment, Empathy). Each of the 4 sub-scales of the SSS-V (TAS, ES, Dis, BS) and Big 5 traits (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) were used as predictor variables (Table 6).

The overall regression for the Everyday Deception Survey total was significant ( $F(172) = 8.82, p = .003$ ). The only variable shown to be a significant predictor of the Everyday Deception Survey was Disinhibition.

In regard to ratings of Morality on the vignettes, the overall regression was significant ( $F(172) = 11.294, p = .00$ ). Two variables, Disinhibition (figure 1) and Agreeableness (figure 2), were shown to be significant predictors of Morality ratings of the deceptive behaviors.

With respect to ratings of Punishment, the overall regression was not significant, suggesting none of the personality traits significantly predict this variable.

In terms of Empathy levels, the overall regression was significant ( $F(172) = 8.44, p = .00$ ). Three variables, Disinhibition (figure 3), Conscientiousness (figure 4), and Neuroticism (figure 5), significantly predicted Empathy levels in regard to the vignettes.

**Table 6. Standardized regression coefficients, t-values, and p-values for Everyday Deception**

	Everyday Deception			Morality			Punishment			Empathy		
	$\beta$	t	p	$\beta$	t	p	$\beta$	t	p	$\beta$	t	p
TAS												
Survey Total												
	$\beta$	t	p	$\beta$	t	p	$\beta$	t	p	$\beta$	t	p
TAS	-.112	-1.425	.156	.010	.130	.896	-.006	-.072	.943	-.083	-1.072	.285
ES	-.064	-7.65	.446	-.121	-1.483	.140	-.047	-.521	.603	-.006	-.077	.938
Dis	.791	2.969	<b>.003**</b>	-.263	-3.635	<b>.000**</b>	-.046	-.503	.616	.320	4.423	<b>.000**</b>
BS	.066	.848	.398	.063	.840	.402	-.052	-.644	.521	-.055	-.728	.467
Openness to Experience	.059	.795	.428	.141	1.934	.055	.010	.128	.898	-.018	-.834	.406
Conscientiousness	-.009	-.125	.901	.123	1.688	.093	.057	.711	.478	-.175	-2.397	<b>.018*</b>
Extraversion	-.021	-.284	.777	.034	.466	.642	.083	.965	.336	.015	.184	.854
Agreeableness	-.012	.155	.877	.194	2.677	<b>.008**</b>	.151	1.858	.065	-.033	-.441	.660
Neuroticism	.033	.442	.659	.125	1.718	.088	.187	2.169	.032*	-.145	-1.995	<b>.048*</b>

Note. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . "Morality", "Punishment", and "Empathy" refer to responses to the deception vignettes.

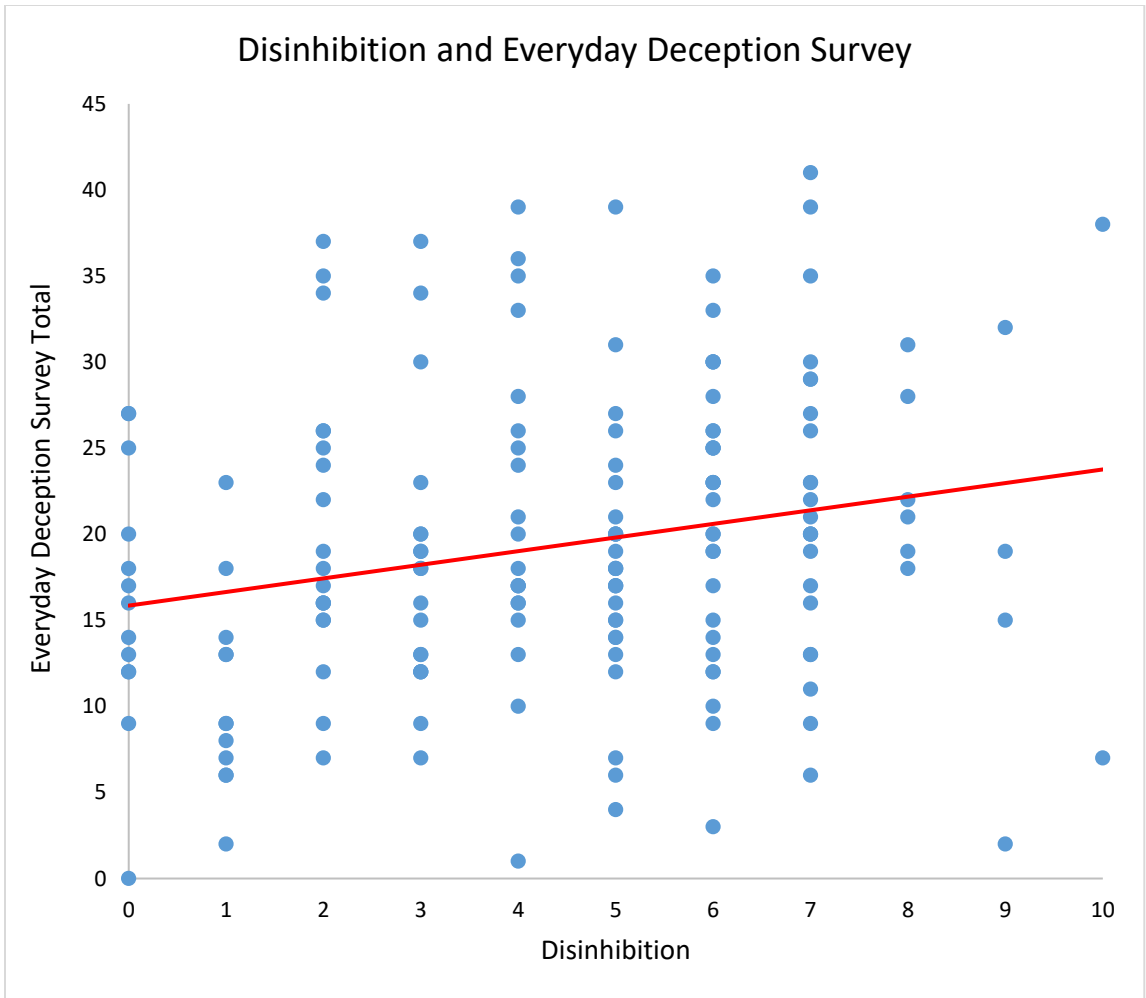


Figure 1. Scatterplot for Disinhibition and Everyday Deception Survey Scores

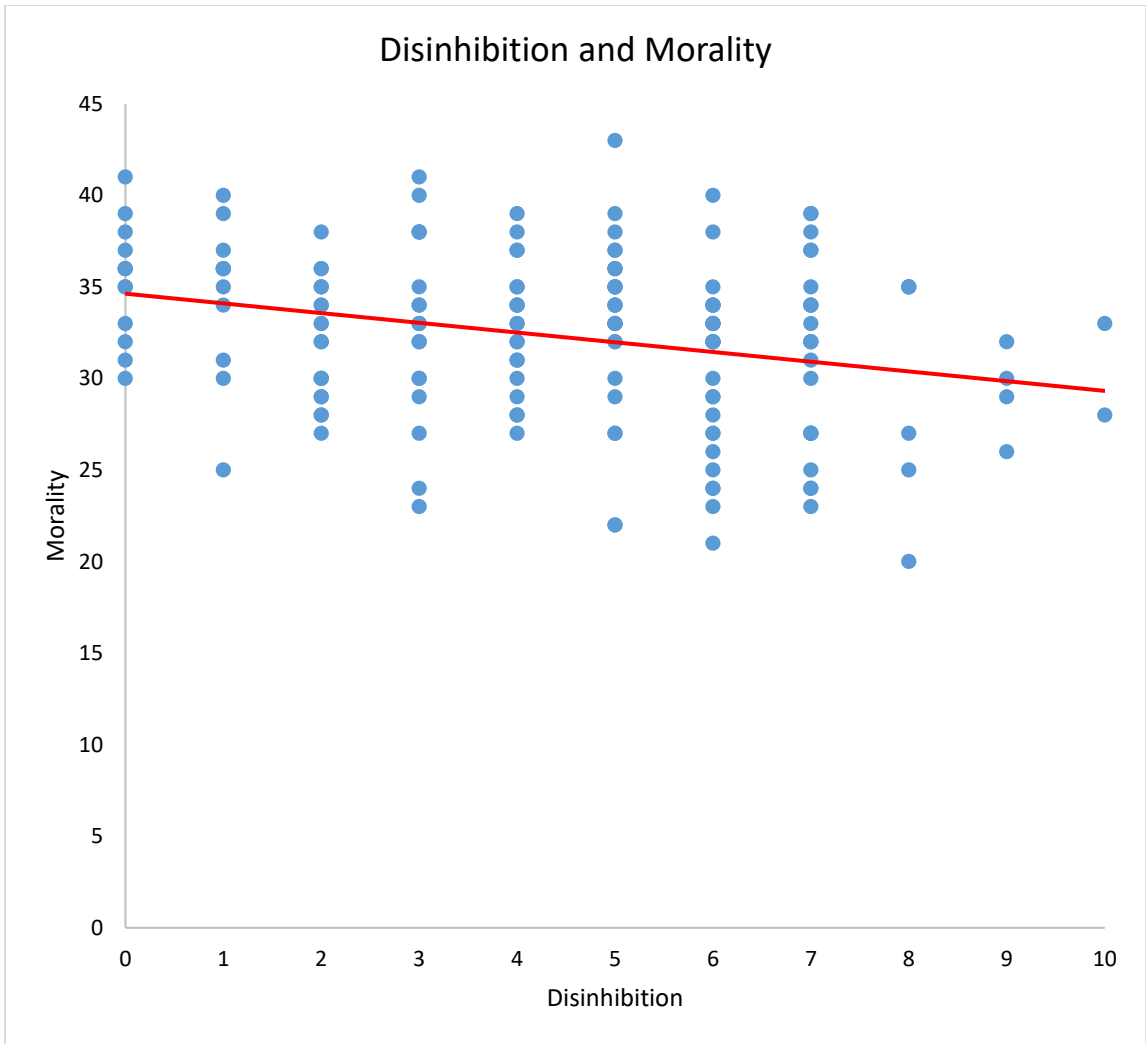
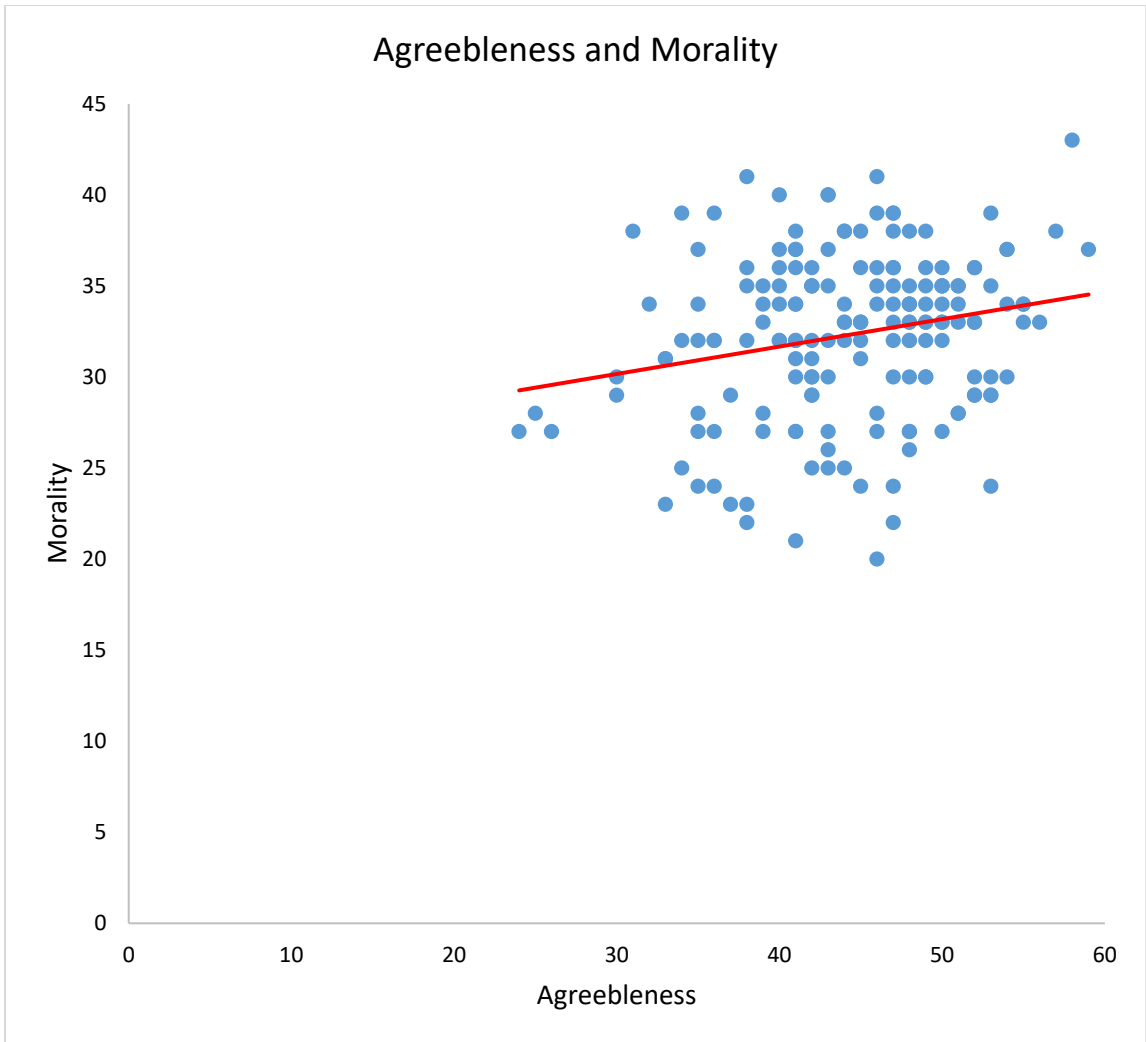


Figure 2. Scatterplot for Disinhibition and Morality Scores



**Figure 3. Scatterplot for Agreeableness and Morality Scores**

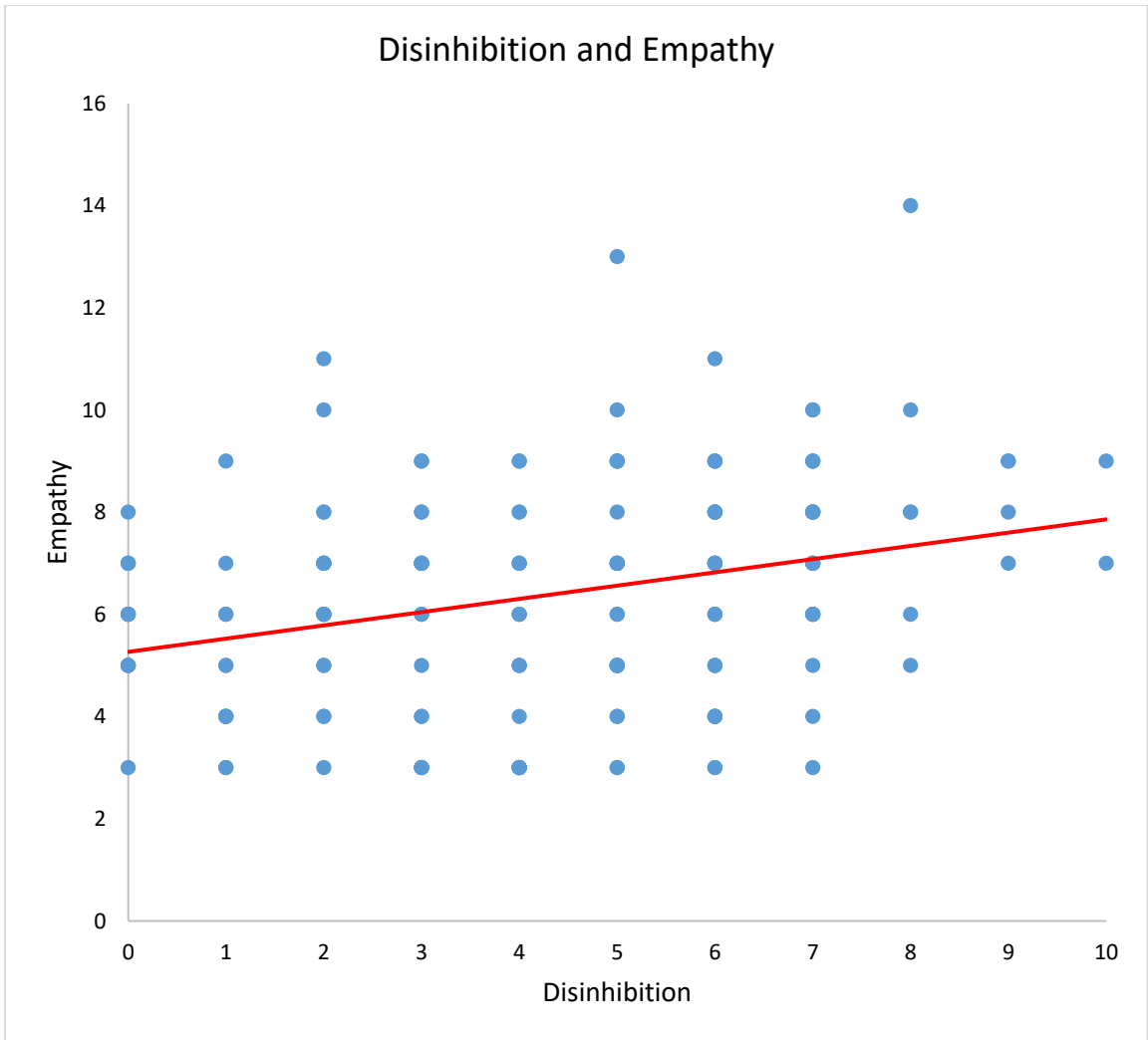


Figure 4. Scatterplot for Disinhibition and Empathy Scores

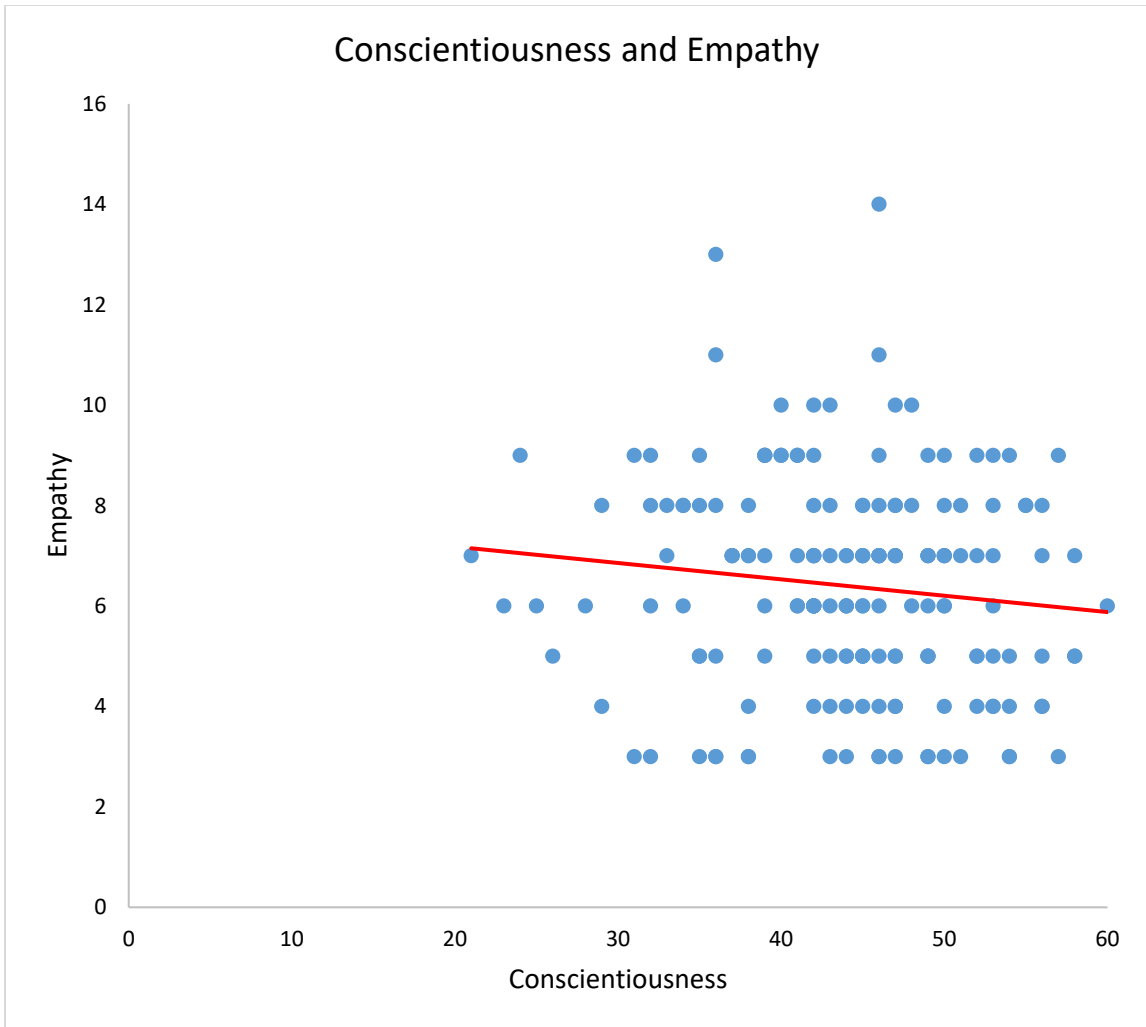


Figure 5. Scatterplot for Conscientiousness and Empathy Scores



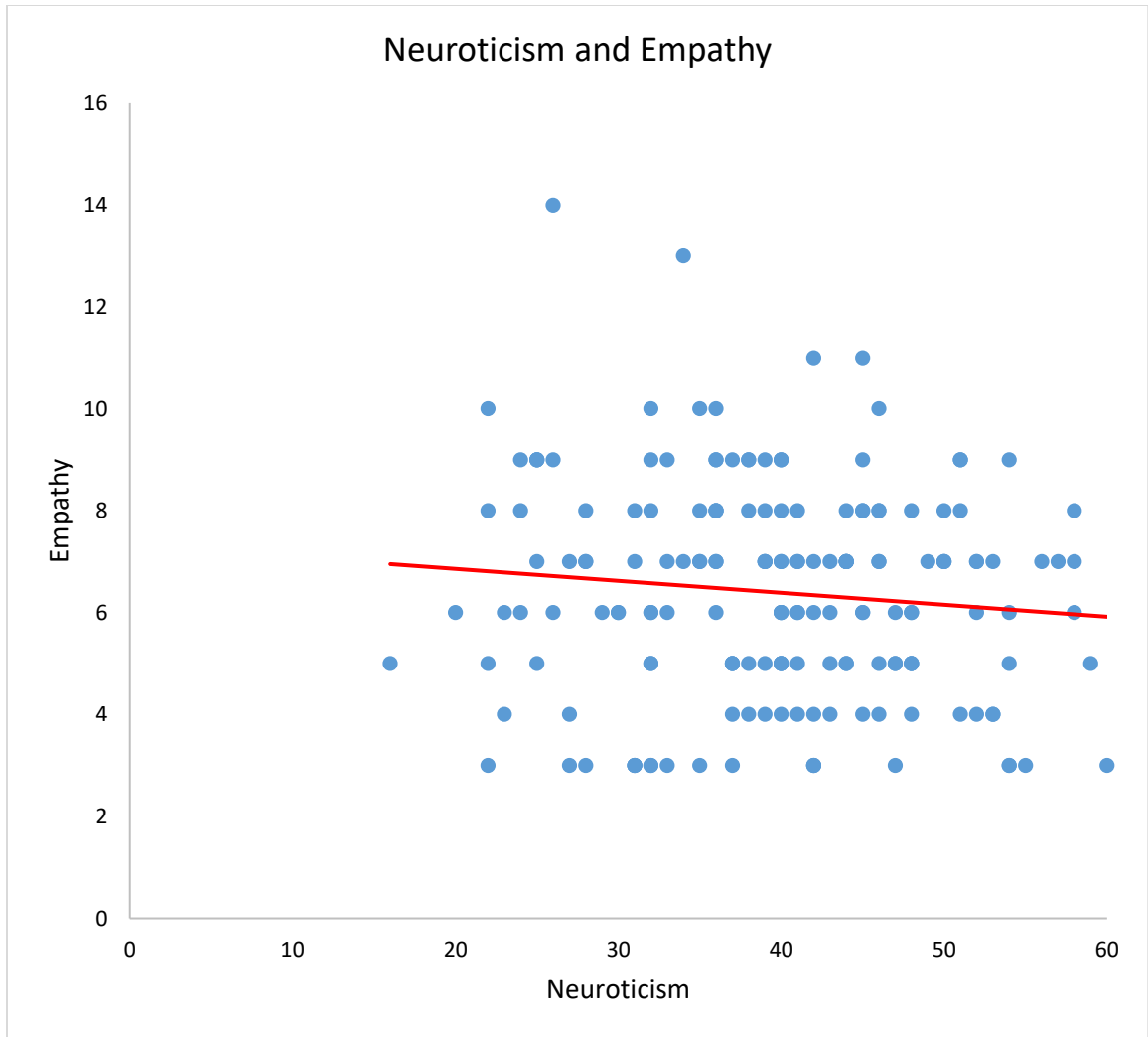


Figure 6. Scatterplot for Neuroticism and Empathy Scores

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this thesis was to clarify and extend prior research examining personality factors that index the nature and extent of Everyday Deception. The study focused on relationships between the Big 5, Sensation Seeking (SS) personality traits, and Everyday Deception. Everyday Deception was examined using an Everyday Deception Survey that asked participants questions regarding lies they had told within the last week, month or year. Everyday Deception was also captured using three deception vignettes that asked participants to read a story about people behaving in deceptive ways. Participants then responded to questions related to how moral the behaviors were, how severely the deceivers should be punished, and how strongly they empathized with the deceivers. It was predicted that there would be a positive relationship between Sensation Seeking, Openness to Experience, Extraversion, and Everyday Deception.

Relationships among SS and Big 5 traits were considered (Table 1). Previous research by Aluja et al. (2003) attempted to make a connection between the Big Five Personality traits and sensation seeking tendencies. Participants were asked to respond to the SSS-V as well as the NEO-PI-R, a 240-item scale used to measure the Big Five Personality traits. The results of this study found that Extraversion and Openness to Experience were highly correlated to Sensation Seeking. Costa and McCrae (1992) also presented a relationship between Extraversion and SS. The current study presented a

negative relationship between the SS sub-scale of TAS and Neuroticism. A likely reason for the differing results could be that different instruments were used to assess the Big 5 between studies. Past studies have used the NEO-PI, while the current study used the Big 5 Personality Inventory. Future research should further investigate the relationships between these personality traits across measures.

A primary aim of this thesis was to examine relationships between SS and Everyday Deception. Both SS total scores and SS sub-traits (TAS, ES, DIS, BS) were examined in relation to the Every Deception Survey (Table 2). The results revealed that high sensation seekers were more likely to have deceived in the last year. With the exception of Manson et al. (2017) who did not find a relationship, prior research confirms this finding that deceit is more common in high than low SS (DeAndrea, Carpenter, Shulman, & Levine, 2009; Lu, 2008; McTernan, Love, & Rettinger, 2014). Lu (2008) examined relationships between Sensation Seeking and deception, suggesting that high sensation seekers were more likely to lie about themselves online. Lying about one's personality, likes and dislikes, or physical appearance on social media relates to the first question on the Everyday Deception Survey, "I have exaggerated my abilities to another to make myself appear better than I actually am". Due to the results of the study conducted by Lu (2008), further research should be conducted regarding the interaction between online deception and other types of deception.

When the SS sub-scales were examined, those high in Disinhibition (Dis) were more likely to have deceived within the last month and year. To my knowledge, the

only study that attempted to relate the SS sub-scales to Everyday Deception is the study that initially developed the Everyday Deception Survey (Neville & Lawson, 2019). The researchers who developed the survey found that two sub-types (Thrill and Adventure Seeking and Boredom Susceptibility) were positively correlated to Everyday Deception. This finding contradicts the results of the current study in that only one sub-type (Dis) was positively correlated to the Everyday Deception Survey. Differing sample sizes could potentially be the cause for opposing results between the study by Neville and her colleagues (n = 79) and the current study (n = 173). Considering these studies are the only two to have used the Everyday Deception Survey, future research is warranted both in the reliability and utility of this survey.

Three deception vignettes were used as an additional measurement of Everyday Deception. The purpose of the vignettes was to assess how participants responded to deceptive behaviors, specifically criminal behaviors, conducted by fictional characters in a short story, and in turn, how these responses were influenced by personality. A strength of the vignettes is that participants are judging others, and thus more likely to provide truthful responses. A significant relationship was found between SS traits and responses to the deceptive behaviors of the characters in the vignette stories (Table 3). Those high in overall SS, Dis, and ES rated the deceptive behaviors in the vignettes as being lower in the Morality questions when compared to those low in these traits. The morality questions reflected the rightness/wrongness or innocence/guilt of criminal behavior, so low morality scores show less acceptance for criminal behavior. The

negative relationship between Dis and Morality is unexpected but is better understood when taking empathy into account.

Disinhibition and overall SS were positively correlated with Empathy for the deceiver, meaning disinhibited and sensation seekers overall empathized more with the liar in the stories. Thus, participants high in these traits reported the deceptive behaviors as morally wrong but felt greater empathy for the deceivers. These findings support previous research that suggests certain SS sub-traits are key in the facilitation of criminal and delinquent behaviors. Pérez and Torrubia (1985) found that ES, Dis, and BS were all related to unlawful behaviors with high school and college aged students. Antisocial behaviors have also been linked to the SS sub-scales (Pérez & Torrubia, 1985). Romero and colleagues found that all four sub-scales were positively correlated to self-reported antisocial behaviors (Romero, Luengo, & Sobral, 2001). Newcome and McGee (1991) found all four SS sub-scales to have a positive relationship to stealing behaviors with high school and college aged students, with Dis having the strongest relationship. The results from all of these studies suggests SS, Dis, are related to delinquent and deceptive behaviors. This gives us an explanation as to why these sub-scales were correlated to the responses to the deception vignettes.

Another aim of this thesis was to examine relationships between the Big 5 personality traits (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) and Everyday Deception (Table 4). It was hypothesized the Big 5 traits of Extraversion and Openness to Experience would be positively correlated

to Everyday Deception. The results did not support this prediction. None of the Big 5 personality traits had a significant relationship with the Everyday Deception Survey.

In regard to the deception vignettes, there was a positive relationship between Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Morality ratings of the deceiver in the stories (Table 5). Participants high in these traits rated the deceptive behaviors of the liars in the vignettes as being higher in Morality than those who were low in these traits. In other words, they viewed the deceptive behaviors in the stories (e.g. embezzling money from a business) as being more morally right when compared to other personality types.

Previous research has looked at this relationship in a variety of different contexts, producing very different results. Several studies looked at the degree to which people lie about themselves online. Hall et al. (2010) focused on which personality traits predicted the amount of personal misrepresentation on social media, while Buehl and Melchers (2017) and Weiss et al. (2006) focused on which traits are related to lying during a job interview. Different contexts may elicit different rates of deception, therefore suggesting the idea that everyone lies, yet some personality types may be more prone to lie in specific contexts than other personality types.

A goal of this study was to examine the predictive nature of personality on deception (Table 6). The hypothesis that Sensation Seeking, Openness to Experience, and Extraversion would significantly predict higher scores on the Everyday Deception scale was not fully supported. The only personality trait to significantly predict scores

on the Everyday Deception scale was Dis (Figure 1). As previously discussed, Dis is a key trait in deceptive and criminal behavior, therefore it is plausible that this trait is a significant predictor of scores on the Everyday Deception scale.

In regard to the deception vignettes, several personality types significantly predicted questions pertaining to the Morality, Punishment, and Empathy questions (Table 6). Specifically, Dis negatively predicted responses to the Morality questions, meaning those high in Dis believed the deceptive behaviors to be morally wrong (Figure 2). Agreeableness, however, positively predicted responses to the Morality questions, meaning those high in this trait believed the deceptive behaviors to be morally right (Figure 3). Responses to the Empathy questions were positively predicted by Dis, indicating people high in the Dis trait were more likely to empathize with the deceivers (Figure 4). Conscientiousness and Neuroticism negatively predicted levels of Empathy, meaning those high in these traits are less likely to empathize with the deceivers in the vignettes (Figure 5).

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

This study used self-report surveys for data collection. In self-report studies, people tend to lean toward socially desirable responses. It is quite possible that participants were lying about how much they lie in order to seem more socially desirable, even though the survey was completely anonymous. Therefore, it is possible that a self-report survey is not the ideal approach to assessing deception.

It is also likely that participants may not be aware of just how much they lie on a daily basis. People tend to tell white lies quite often in order to prevent offending another person or to protect themselves from embarrassment. Since this type of lying is relatively harmless, people may not accurately remember how often they engage in this behavior. This issue likely had an influence on how participants responded to the Everyday Deception Survey. Future research should look to other ways of measuring for Everyday Deception that does not require self-report responses.

Another limitation and threat to external validity is the similar background of the participants. All participants were college aged students from the same university.

Therefore, a more representative sample would provide more generalizable results.

There was a small variation in age, with the majority of participants falling between the ages of 18-24. Even though personality stays relatively stable over time, SS tendencies seem to diminish as people age (Zuckerman et al., 1978). Future research should consider age as a factor when measuring for the SS personality trait.

### **Conclusion**

This study is the first to examine whether Sensation Seeking and the Big 5 personality traits are associated with and can predict Everyday Deception. Everyday deception was measured both using a survey of weekly, monthly, and yearly deceptive acts, and with three vignettes that captured attitudes about criminal morality, punishment, and empathy towards criminal behavior. The results revealed that certain personality traits are related to and can predict deception. Specifically, SS and its sub-



scales ES and Dis are correlated with the Everyday Deception scale. Regression analyses also revealed that Dis significantly predicted responses to the Morality and Empathy questions for the vignettes. Also, the Big 5 trait of Agreeableness significantly predicted responses to the Morality questions, and Conscientiousness and Neuroticism significantly predicted levels of Empathy. Given that personality traits predicted vignette responses and not the Everyday Deception Scale, future research should further examine why the scale is not sensitive to personality differences.

Using the Everyday Deception Survey and the deception vignettes was a novel and unique measurement of deception. The survey allows for a self-reported level of daily deception, while the vignettes allow for practice application of deceptive tendencies. The current study adds to the available literature regarding personality and deception by indicating which traits are more likely to deceive. Future studies should consider the specific subscales of Sensation Seeking when investigating the origins of Everyday Deception.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: The Big Five Inventory 2

## Appendix A: The Big Five Inventory 2

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who *likes to spend time with others*? Please select a degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

### ***I am someone who . . .***

1. \_\_\_ Is outgoing, sociable
2. \_\_\_ Is compassionate, has a soft heart
3. \_\_\_ Tends to be disorganized
4. \_\_\_ Is relaxed, handles stress well
5. \_\_\_ Has few artistic interests
6. \_\_\_ Has an assertive personality
7. \_\_\_ Is respectful, treats others with respect
8. \_\_\_ Tends to be lazy
9. \_\_\_ Stays optimistic after experiencing a setback
10. \_\_\_ Is curious about many different things
11. \_\_\_ Rarely feels excited or eager
12. \_\_\_ Tends to find fault with others
13. \_\_\_ Is dependable, steady
14. \_\_\_ Is moody, has up and down mood swings
15. \_\_\_ Is inventive, finds clever ways to do things
16. \_\_\_ Tends to be quiet
17. \_\_\_ Feels little sympathy for others
18. \_\_\_ Is systematic, likes to keep things in order
19. \_\_\_ Can be tense
20. \_\_\_ Is fascinated by art, music, or literature
21. \_\_\_ Is dominant, acts as a leader
22. \_\_\_ Starts arguments with others
23. \_\_\_ Has difficulty getting started on tasks
24. \_\_\_ Feels secure, comfortable with self
25. \_\_\_ Avoids intellectual, philosophical discussions
26. \_\_\_ Is less active than other people
27. \_\_\_ Has a forgiving nature
28. \_\_\_ Can be somewhat careless
29. \_\_\_ Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
30. \_\_\_ Has little creativity
31. \_\_\_ Is sometimes shy, introverted
32. \_\_\_ Is helpful and unselfish with others
33. \_\_\_ Keeps things neat and tidy
34. \_\_\_ Worries a lot
35. \_\_\_ Values art and beauty

36. \_\_\_ Finds it hard to influence people
37. \_\_\_ Is sometimes rude to others
38. \_\_\_ Is efficient, gets things done
39. \_\_\_ Often feels sad
40. \_\_\_ Is complex, a deep thinker
41. \_\_\_ Is full of energy
42. \_\_\_ Is suspicious of others' intentions
43. \_\_\_ Is reliable, can always be counted on
44. \_\_\_ Keeps their emotions under control
45. \_\_\_ Has difficulty imagining things
46. \_\_\_ Is talkative
47. \_\_\_ Can be cold and uncaring
48. \_\_\_ Leaves a mess, doesn't clean up
49. \_\_\_ Rarely feels anxious or afraid
50. \_\_\_ Thinks poetry and plays are boring
51. \_\_\_ Prefers to have others take charge
52. \_\_\_ Is polite, courteous to others
53. \_\_\_ Is persistent, works until the task is finished
54. \_\_\_ Tends to feel depressed, blue
55. \_\_\_ Has little interest in abstract ideas
56. \_\_\_ Ideas Shows a lot of Enthusiasm
57. \_\_\_ Assumes the best about people
58. \_\_\_ Sometimes behaves irresponsibly
  
59. \_\_\_ Is temperamental, gets emotional easily
60. \_\_\_ Is original, comes up with new Ideas

Appendix B: Sensation Seeking Scale Form V

## Appendix B: Sensation Seeking Scale Form V

Each of the items below contains two choices A and B. Please indicate which of the choices most describes your likes or the way you feel and fill in the appropriate oval on the scantron. In some cases, you may find items in which both choices describe your likes or feelings. Please choose the one which best describes your likes or feelings. In some cases, you may find items in which you do not like either choice. In this case mark the choice you dislike least. Do not leave any items blank. It is important you respond to all items with only one choice, A or B. We are interested only in your likes or feelings, not in how others feel about these things or how one is supposed to feel. There are no right or wrong answers as in other kinds of tests. Be frank and give your honest appraisal of yourself.

1. A. I like "wild" uninhibited parties.  
B. I prefer quiet parties with good conversation.
2. A. There are some movies I enjoy seeing a second and even third time.  
B. I can't stand watching a movie that I've seen before.
3. A. I often wish I could be a mountain climber.  
B. I can't understand people who risk their necks climbing mountain.
4. A. I dislike all body odors  
B. I like some of the earthy body smells.
5. A. I get bored seeing the same old faces.  
B. I like the comfortable familiarity of everyday friends.
6. A. I like to explore a strange city or section of town by myself, even if it means getting lost.  
B. I prefer a guide when I am in a place I don't know well.
7. A. I dislike people who do or say things just to shock or upset others.  
B. When you can predict almost everything a person will do and say he or she must be a bore.
8. A. I usually don't enjoy a movie or play where I can predict what will happen in advance.  
B. I don't mind watch a movie or play where I can predict what will happen in advance.
9. A. I have tried marijuana or would like to.



- B. I would never smoke marijuana.
10. A. I would not like to try any drug which might produce strange and dangerous effects on me.  
B. I would like to try some of the drugs that produce hallucinations.
11. A. A sensible person avoids activities that are dangerous.  
B. I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening.
12. A. I dislike promiscuous people (people who are uninhibited and free about sex).  
B. I am not bothered by promiscuity
13. A. I find that stimulants make me uncomfortable.  
B. I often like to get high (drinking liquor or smoking marijuana).
14. A. I like to try new foods that I have never tasted before.  
B. I order the dishes with which I am familiar so as to avoid disappointment and unpleasantness.
15. A. I enjoy looking at home movies, videos, or travel slides.  
B. Looking at someone's home movies, videos, or travel slides bores me tremendously.
16. A. I would like to take up extreme sports such as water skiing or snow boarding  
B. I would not like to take up extreme sports such as water skiing or snow boarding
17. A. I would like to try surfing  
B. I would not like to try surfing
18. A. I would like to take off on a trip with not preplanned or definite routes, or timetable.  
B. When I go on a trip I like to plan my route and timetable fairly carefully.
19. A. I prefer the "down to earth" kind of people as friends.  
B. I would like to make friends in some of the "far-out" groups like artists and "punks."
20. A. I would not like to learn to fly an airplane.  
B. I would like to learn to fly an airplane.
21. A. I prefer the surface of the water to the depths.  
B. I would like to go scuba diving.

22. A. I would like to meet some persons who are homosexual (Men or women).  
B. I stay away from anyone I suspect of being "gay" or lesbian."
23. A. I would like to try sky diving.  
B. I would never want to try sky diving.
24. A. I prefer friends who are excitingly unpredictable.  
B. I prefer friends who are reliable and predictable.
25. A. I am not interested in experience for its own sake.  
B. I like to have new and exciting experiences and sensations even if they are a little frightening, unconventional, or illegal.
26. A. The essence of good art is in its clarity, symmetry of form, and harmony of colors.  
B. I often find beauty in the "clashing" colors and irregular forms of modern painting.
27. A. I enjoy spending time in the familiar surroundings of home.  
B. I get very restless if I have to stay around home for any length of time.
28. A. I like to dive off the high board.  
B. I don't like the feeling I get on the high board (or I don't go near it at all).
29. A. I like to date persons who are physically exciting.  
B. I like to date persons who share my values.
30. A. Heavy drinking usually ruins a party because some people get loud and boisterous.  
B. Keeping the drinks full is the key to a good party.
31. A. The worst social sin is to be rude.  
B. The worst social sin is to be a bore.
32. A. A person should have considerable sexual experience before marriage.  
B. It is better if two married persons begin their sexual experience with each other.
33. A. I do not value the lifestyle of rich, fame-seeking starlets (such as the Kardashians or Paris Hilton).  
B. I could conceive of myself seeking the lifestyle of rich, fame-seeking starlets.

34. A. I like people who are sharp and witty even if they do sometimes insult others.  
B. I dislike people who have their fun at the expense of hurting the feelings of others.
35. A. There is altogether too much portrayal of sex in movies.  
B. I enjoy watching many of the "sexy" scenes in movies.
36. A. I feel best after a couple of drinks.  
B. Something is wrong with people who need liquor to feel good.
37. A. People should dress according to some standard of taste, neatness, and style.  
B. People should dress in individual ways even if the effects are sometimes strange.
38. A. Sailing long distances in small sailing crafts is reckless  
B. I would like to sail a long distance in a small but seaworthy sailing craft.
39. A. I have no patience with dull or boring persons.  
B. I find something interesting in almost every person I talk to.
40. A. Skiing down a high mountain slope is a good way to end up on crutches.  
B. I think I would enjoy the sensations of skiing very fast down a high mountain slope.

Appendix C: Everyday Honesty and Deception Survey

## Appendix C: Everyday Honestly and Deception Survey

The following statements and questions refer to everyday acts of deception that are commonly performed. Please mark True or False if the statement applies to you.

### *In the past week:*

1. I have exaggerated my abilities to another to make myself appear better than I actually am.
2. I've talked about someone in a bad way even though he/she is not that bad.
3. I have lied to another person to spare his/her feelings.
4. I have lied about needing to do something to get off the phone.
5. I told a person that I liked him/her even though I really did not like him/her.
6. I have complimented a person that I do not like.
7. I have pretended to like a situation when I actually do not.
8. I pretended to understand a conversation in order to not look stupid.
9. I have told someone I will complete a task shortly when I know that it will take longer.
10. I have lied to friends about how I was feeling.
11. I have told friends or myself I was going to do something and did not.
12. I have laughed at a joke I did not think was funny.
13. I have eaten something that did not belong to me.
14. I have pretended to be impressed when I am not.
15. I have told someone that I just received their message when I received it a while ago.
16. I have lied about being busy to avoid hanging out with someone.
17. I have lied about how much I eat.
18. I have said mean things about myself when I do not truly believe them.

### *In the past month:*

19. I have pretended to be sick to get out of an obligation.
20. I have told my professor that I read the assignment when I did not.
21. I have told my family that I have cleaned my living space when I have not.
22. I pretended to have less money than I actually had.
23. I have fallen asleep in class and pretend it hadn't happened.

24. I have eaten something I did not like because a friend/family member gave it to me.
25. I have fed someone's pet something I wasn't supposed to
26. I have forgotten to do something for someone and told them they never told me to do it to avoid trouble.
27. I have lied about why I was late to avoid judgment.
28. I have told myself everything thing is fine when it is not.
29. Saying I can afford to buy an item but I actually cannot afford it.
30. I have checked the terms and condition box but I haven't actually read the
31. I have used something that wasn't mine and didn't tell the owner.
32. I have lied about my whereabouts to friends and family.
33. I have faked emotion to please those around me.
34. I have lied about how often I exercise
35. I have lied about how often I have cleaned my home.
36. I have lied about how often I drink alcohol.
37. I lie about the types of music or songs I like.

***In the past year:***

38. I have lied about the physical existence of Santa or another mythical creature.
39. I have lied to my parents about how well I am doing in school.
40. I have gone out on a date and then kept it from others.
41. I have touched something that was labelled "DO NOT TOUCH".
42. I have broken something and then tried to hide the fact.
43. I have told family members I like their gift when I do not.
44. I have kept an animal at my residence when I am not supposed to.
45. I have told a family member I need them to give me more money than what was actually required.
46. I have told someone I will pay them back the money I owe them and have not.
47. I have lied about why I can't pick up an extra shift a work.
48. When I broke something that wasn't mine, I blamed it on the person closest to me.
49. I have lied about partaking in an eating disorder behavior.
50. I have lied about how many sexual encounters I have had.
51. I have lied about the reason of an injury.
52. I have said that I have visited somewhere that I have not.
53. I have lied about having an addiction.
54. I have lied about having my addiction under control.
55. I have lied to a family member about why I need money.
56. I have hit a parked car with mine and just left.

Appendix D: Low criminal deception vignette

## **Appendix D: Low criminal deception vignette**

John and Kate Davis had been trying to have a child for years, but Kate was never able to conceive. They still had a strong desire to have a child, so they decided to look into adoption. Kate went to a seminar that described the adoption process, and to her dismay she found out that the whole process would cost at least \$8,000 for a young child from Asia, and much more for a child born in the US. John and Kate were not broke, but this much money would take years to save up, and they wanted a newborn so bad.

Over the next several months, Kate scanned different adoption websites, and one day came upon an adoption site from Russia that could arrange an adoption for three thousand dollars and guaranteed that the child would be younger than five years old. Kate was so excited that she drove to John's work and showed him the website. Over the next 2 weeks, John and Kate had three separate phone conversations to learn how to fill out the paperwork for adoption. John had also gotten approval by the bank for a 2-year miscellaneous loan for \$3,500, and purchased airline tickets to Vladivostok, Russia where they would pick up their new child.

When John and Kate met their new daughter Amy for the first time, they were overfilled with joy. Amy was everything that they ever hoped to have. Before returning to the Vladivostok airport, the adoption agency told John and Kate to use a US passport that said Amy Davis. They realized that the passport was probably a forgery, but they now had Amy and would not jeopardize the adoption by refusing to use the passport. After all, the US citizen paperwork was already turned in and no problems were found.

Two years passed, and Amy was the light of John and Kate's life. Then John received a phone call from a Russian investigator asking about their past trip to Russia and Amy in particular. John said that Amy was their daughter but could not hide his concern from Kate after the phone call. A couple months later, US immigration started an investigation, and requested a meeting with John and Kate. At the meeting, John and Kate came forward about their actions in Russia, except they withheld their realization that Amy's passport was a forgery. It was discovered that Amy had been kidnapped before placement in the adoption agency. So Amy was sent back to her real family in Vladivostok. There was not enough evidence to prosecute John and Kate of wrongdoing in the US, but they were banned from entering Russia again.

### **Do you 'agree' or 'not agree' with each of the following statements?**

Morality

- 1) John and Kate should have taken the proper avenues for adoption rather than what they did.
- 2) John and Kate may have been dishonest, but they are still good people.



3) John and Kate's dishonesty does not indicate a lack of morality.

#### Punishment

4) John and Kate should not face any legal penalties or prosecution for their actions.

5) John and Kate should serve time in jail.

#### Empathy

6) If I was in John and Kate's situation, I would also play dumb about the forgery.

Appendix E: Moderate criminal deception vignette

## Appendix E: Moderate criminal deception vignette

Jane had always expected to be part of the privileged class, but life hasn't turned out that way so far. As a consequence of deciding to focus on her husband's music career instead of college and then having children, she found herself stuck in a secretarial position at an electronics factory. She had a high status in the factory as head of Accounts Payable, but her hourly wage was little better than the workers on the factory floor.

Jane's husband was a really good musician, but the recording equipment necessary to show his talent was expensive. They could barely afford their house mortgage, let alone the thousands of dollars needed for equipment to move his career forward. Jane was tired of just getting by, but she needed a break to get out of this rut. Steve was so much better than the guitarists she heard on the radio. Once he was discovered, she and her kids wouldn't need to worry about money any more. At work, Jane noticed that Kasey, her employer, never questioned her requests for his signature to send out checks. He never even looked at who was being paid. One day Kasey was given a pile of checks to sign with a check made out to Jane in the middle of the stack. Kasey never noticed that check, nor the numerous checks that followed.

Steve couldn't believe that Jane saved up over eight thousand dollars to buy him that new mixer and studio recorder, and a four day trip to New York City for their anniversary. Jane said that her recent raise and bonus was the break they needed and thanked God for the blessing.

The corporate office of the electronics company found an odd discrepancy in Accounts Payable at the factory where Jane worked. Several checks over the last 10 months were written to Jane without adequate justification. The corporate office had a phone meeting with Kasey, who was very surprised to hear that he had authorized checks totaling twenty five thousand dollars to Jane. Corporate office told Kasey to move Jane to a different position, but not to confront her about the checks. The corporate office then contacted the local police department.

Jane was surprised when Kasey told her that she was to move from Accounts Payable to the Benefits office. When she asked why, Kasey simply told her that Benefits was under staffed and they needed her organization skills. Jane was pretty scared, but Kasey never said anything about the checks, so she told herself to calm down. She had never meant to take so much money, but the house payment and credit cards were threatening to bankrupt them.

A week after moving to Benefits, Jane was picked up by a police officer and taken to the station for questioning. During questioning, Jane broke down and admitted to stealing money from the corporation.

**Do you 'agree' or 'not agree' with each of the following statements?**

**Morality**

- 1) Jane should have worked harder on not getting caught. (rev. code)
- 2) Jane did a bad thing, but that does not mean that she is a bad person (rev. code)
- 3) If Jane really cared about her family, she would never have taken any money in the first place.

**Punishment**

- 4) Jane should pay back all that she stole, but she should not do any jail time.
- 5) Kasey should be fired for not catching Jane early on.

**Empathy**

- 6) I could see myself taking money in Jane's situation.

Appendix F: High criminal deception vignette

## Appendix F: High criminal deception vignette

Jack was a salesman of respectable merit at a relatively large company. His job required him to travel, but he had no real connections to any particular place. Jack lived a pretty normal childhood in the Midwest. He graduated from a state university and lived a typical life of a traveling salesman.

One night, while Jack was in from a long week on the road, he decided to go to a local bar. This is where he met Sara, who was a yoga instructor at a local gym. After some small talk, Jack tried to seduce Sara, but she turned him down. Not wanting to give up in defeat, Jack spiked her drink with Rohypnol that he had recently gotten from a friend. Jack put on a guise as a perfect gentleman, and when Sara started feeling disoriented, he escorted Sara back to his car and drove her back to his apartment. Once there he proceeded to take advantage of her. The next morning, Sara woke up with a terrible headache, and shocked to discover that she woke up next to a man she hardly knew. She became very heated and began yelling at Jack. Jack reacted to rape allegations from Sara in a violent manner, and this resulted in Sara being rushed to the E.R.

While at the E.R., Sara told what she could remember to the attending nurse. After hearing her story, the nurse reported it to the police. Sara then had to retell her story to the police, and pressed charges against Jack. Sara had several facial lacerations, bruises, and two broken ribs.

The police later picked up Jack on charges of rape and aggravated assault. When the police interrogated him, Jack denied all of the allegations. When asked, he claimed that their interactions were consensual and that she had fallen down the stairs. The police promptly arrested Jack after his statement. During Jack's arraignment he plead not guilty, and throughout the subsequent trial he maintained his innocence.

### Do you 'agree' or 'not agree' with each of the following statements?

#### Morality

- 1) Sara was not totally innocent of what happened to her (rev. code)
- 2) The problem with Jack was that he got caught, not that he did the crime. (rev. code)
- 3) Jack did a bad thing, but that does not mean that he is a bad person (rev. code)

#### Punishment

- 4) Jack should go to jail for several months, but he should not spend years in prison. (rev. code)
- 5) Jack should go to prison for more than a year for his actions.

#### Empathy

- 6) I understand that many circumstances can lead a person like Jake to do what he did