



Presenter: Gina Dudley

Session & Time: Poster_II / 1:00 to 1:50pm

Room: Guzman Lecture Hall

Discipline: Psychology

Faculty Mentor: Benjamin Rosenberg

Digital Portfolio URL:

Title: The Hidden Verdict: Measuring Implicit Bias in Juror Decision-Making

Abstract:

This experiment examines the influence of implicit bias awareness on juror decision-making in cases involving Hispanic defendants. Research indicates that implicit bias impacts judicial outcomes despite constitutional protections. Implicit bias emerges from mental schemas developed through life experience to facilitate faster decision-making. Although these cognitive shortcuts facilitate efficient information processing, they can significantly impact judgment in ways that compromise fair legal proceedings. This experiment explicitly tests three hypotheses: (1) bias-educated jurors will demonstrate lower conviction rates for Hispanic defendants, (2) these jurors will report higher confidence in their verdicts, and (3) they will show greater awareness of how their previous experiences influence their decision-making. The investigation addresses conflicting findings in the existing literature, where some research suggests bias awareness promotes objective judgment through improved bias recognition. This experiment uses a mock jury paradigm to investigate whether bias awareness

interventions affect verdict decisions and juror confidence levels in cases with Hispanic defendants. Approximately 200 participants will be randomly assigned to receive or not receive implicit bias education before reviewing a case study with a Hispanic defendant. The experiment will then include the Social Dominance Orientation Scale to assess implicit bias levels. The Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) scale measures the degree to which individuals support group-based hierarchy and prefer inequality among social groups, with higher scores indicating a stronger endorsement of social dominance and lower scores reflecting the opposite. Following their verdict decisions, participants rated their confidence levels and reported whether prior experiences influenced their decision-making on a scale from 1-7. It is anticipated that participants who are informed of bias prior to receiving the case study will report higher confidence in their decision-making along with a lower influence from previous experiences. The experiment's findings aim to inform evidence-based practices for bias mitigation in legal proceedings, particularly concerning racial and ethnic minorities in the justice system. By examining both verdict outcomes and juror self-awareness, this research provides insights into the effectiveness of educational interventions in promoting fair judicial outcomes. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing practical strategies to enhance impartiality in legal proceedings while maintaining the efficiency of the judicial process.