

Testimony - the impact of personality characteristics on memory recall

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Knowledge of the relations between personality characteristics and a recall of information from long-term memory enables a more reliable deduction about the credibility of the testimony of witnesses of criminal offences. Gender, age and certain identifiable genetic characteristics have an insignificant impact on testimony. Some mental characteristics, which can be measured by appropriate psychological instruments, are more hidden, but they nevertheless have an obvious impact on memory recall. Research results draw attention to the impact of certain personality dimensions, like introversion - extraversion as well as other mental characteristics, such as: relying on experienced reality, anxiety, dependency of cognitive style and social field, suggestibility, locus of control, separated memory capacities, personal history etc. In spite of a considerable number of research studies, it is still not entirely clear how and to what extent these personality characteristics affect the reliability of testimony. Reliable prediction of the credibility of a witness is therefore not as close as we might wish.

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