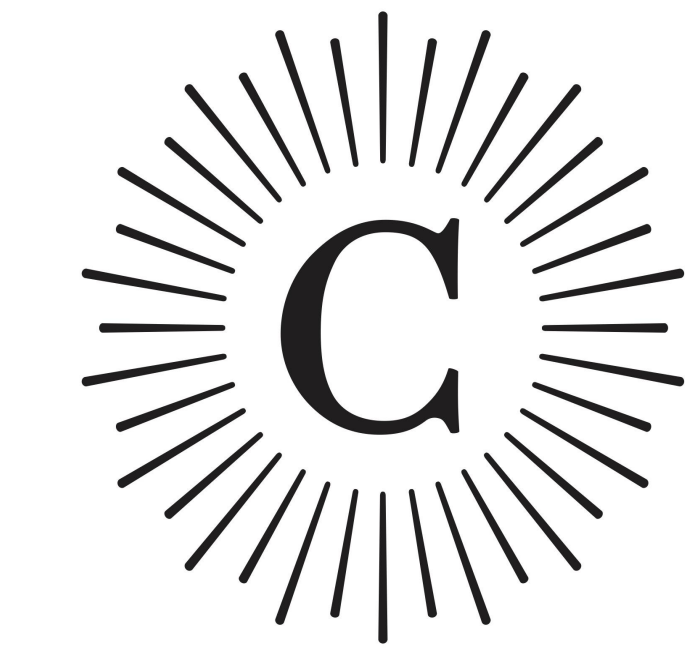


# Perception of Trait Differences Under Minimal Groups



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## Introduction

- Tajfel (1970) demonstrated that people will favor the groups to which they belong at the expense of other groups, even when these groups are randomly created.
- Otten and Epstude (2006) found that one reason we favor our own groups is that we self-anchor, or project our own traits onto our groups. We are inclined to perceive ourselves positively, and this affect attaches to our groups by self-anchoring.

**Research Question:** Do people differentiate the groups to which they belong on the basis of personality and character traits?

**Hypothesis:** The in-group will receive higher ratings than the out-group on personality and character traits. There will be no difference for arbitrary traits.

## Methods

**Participants:** 105 participants were gathered using Amazon's Mechanical Turk.

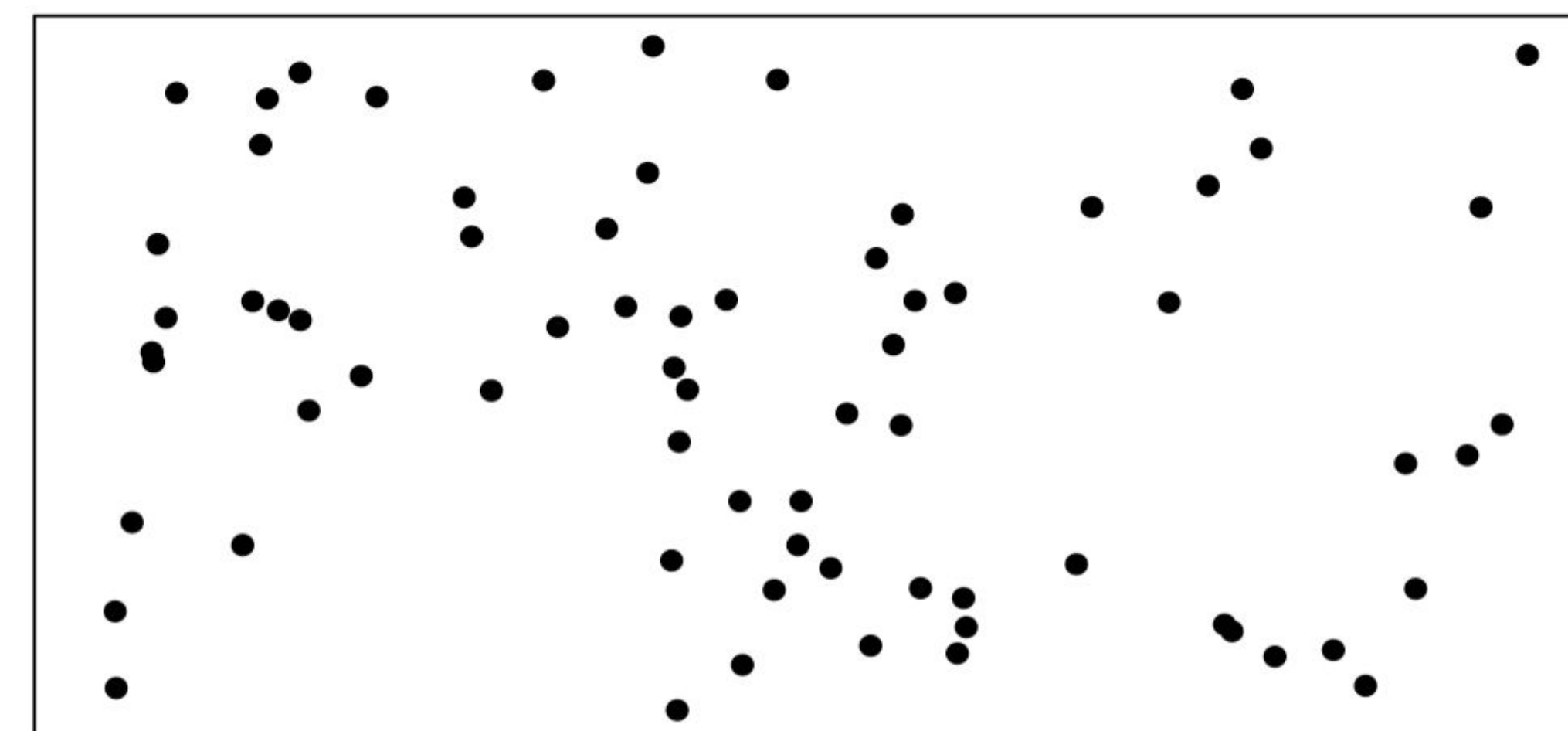
### Procedure

**Phase 1:** Random group assignment through minimal groups task

**Phase 2:** Rating of average member of either in-group or out-group on 16 traits

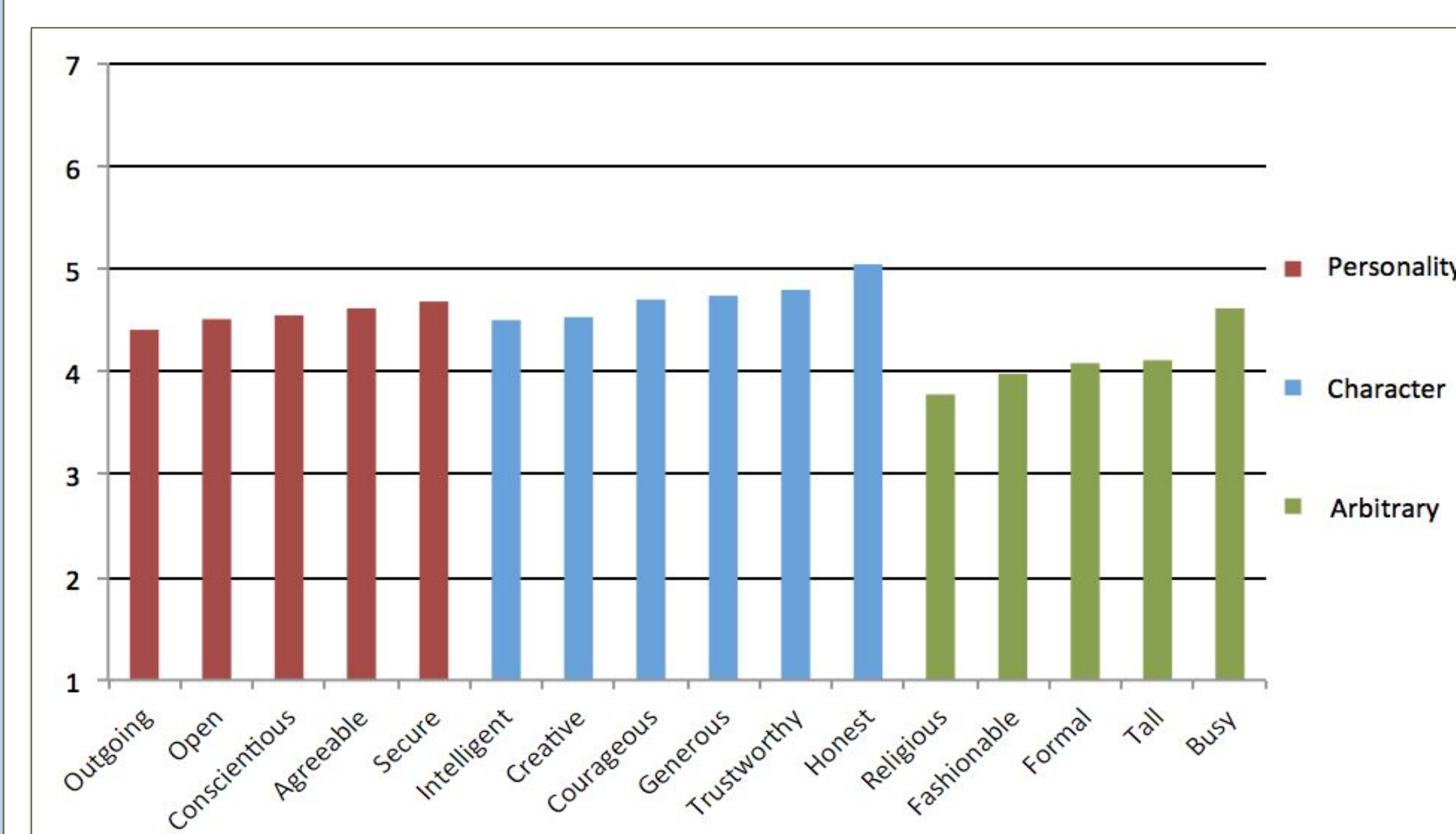
**Phase 3:** Ten Item Personality Inventory

## Minimal Groups Task



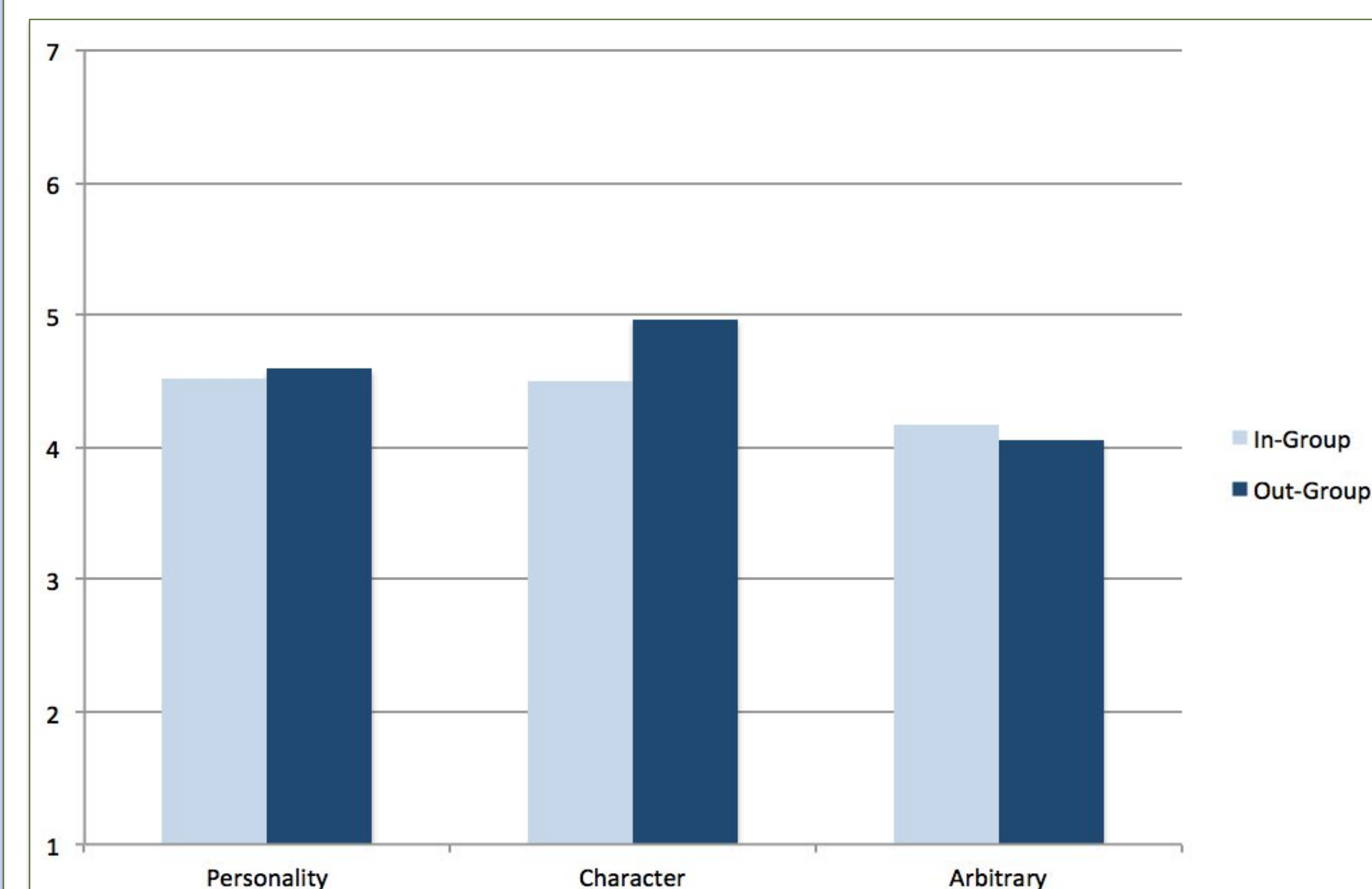
- 11 images were presented for 1 second each.
- After estimating dots for all images, participants were randomly assigned to either "Under-Estimator" or "Over-Estimator" group.

## Results



**Figure 1:** Average ratings for each of the 16 traits.

Arbitrary traits were rated significantly lower than personality and character traits ( $F(2,208) = 7.20, p < .001$ ).



**Figure 2:** Average trait ratings for the in-group and out-group, by class of trait.

The out-group was rated significantly higher than the in-group, regardless of trait class ( $F(1,104) = 4.01, p = .048$ )

There was no significant correlation between scores on the TIPI and ratings of the in-group (all  $r < .2$ ).

## Discussion

- The out-group was rated higher than the in-group, regardless of the class of trait being rated. This suggests the association between participant and in-group was not strong.
- There was no correlation between in-group ratings and TIPI scores, which suggests that no self-anchoring occurred.
- Arbitrary traits received lower ratings than personality and character traits, indicating that the social favorability of the trait influenced the rating being given.

### Limitations

- Trait questionnaire was presented as a "filler" task, which could have led to lack of attention given to the task resulting in the lack of association with the in-group.
- Study was conducted on Amazon's Mechanical Turk, which may have created a disconnect between participant and study.

## References

- Otten, S., & Epstude, K. (2006). Overlapping mental representations of self, ingroup, and outgroup: Unraveling self-stereotyping and self-anchoring. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32(7), 957-969.
- Tajfel, H. (1970). Experiments in intergroup discrimination. *Scientific American*, 223(5), 96-102.

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