Are Lawyers Really That Bad? A Qualitative Assessment of Psychological "Lawyer Traits"

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ABSTRACT

Lawyer personalities are often characterized in a negative manner in popular culture and some scholarly sources, and how and when lawyer personality traits develop remains to be fully explored. This study serves to eliminate this ambiguity by analyzing two fundamental questions: what lawyer attributes are and when they develop with respect to endeavors within the legal field. Using grounded theory and abductive methods, a qualitative strategy centralized around providing more individualistic perspectives through a linguistic focus, I surveyed 10 individuals practicing and pursuing legal careers and analyzed 20 interviews across various forms of media to clarify lawyer personality traits on the following dimensions: relating to self vs. relating to others, cognitive- vs. emotion- focused, and charac-terizing the development of these traits as happening via either attraction to – or selection by – the field of law itself. I uncovered thirteen major lawyer qualities: analytical, empathetic, money-driven, argumentative, self-aware, decep-tive, ambitious/challenge-oriented, organized/time management, competitive, confrontational, prestige-driven, arro-gant, and persistent. I also found that these attributes develop both inherently and as a product of education and expe-rience. The implications for both theory and practice include combating negative stereotypes for lawyers and gaining comprehension of human behavior in the legal profession, which may further aid aspiring lawyers in their selecting and in job matching.

Introduction

Primary Focus

In recent years, psychologists investigated the general "lawyer personality," finding a complex and slightly inconclu-sive connection between the legal career and personality psychology. In the realm of practice, Richard (2002) agrees with the assertion that "managing lawyers is like herding cats," characterizing attorneys by their high scores in skep-ticism, urgency, and autonomy as compared to the general public. These traits have implications for lawyer behavior, revealing a sense of judgment, argumentativeness, introversion, and impatience. Richard also indicates that successful lawyers exhibit elevated levels of ego drive, defined as the "desire to persuade others for the sheer sake of persuasion itself," as well as ego strength, which relates to resilience and one's capability to recover from criticism or rejection. Richard simultaneously notes that lawyers are fairly empathetic; although, this finding can be discredited due to its lack of statistical significance in comparison with the general public. This marks the beginning of slightly contradic-tory data, which later researchers also recognize.

Scholars have since added to these findings, and available evidence asserts that lawyers are generally com-petitive, aggressive, achievement-oriented, materialistic, and unemotional, causing them to make decisions and have moral judgments based upon rules and set principles (Daicoff, 2004). Furthermore, Daicoff builds upon Bogoch's (1997) study, which suggests both male and female lawyers overlook emotional aspects of their clients' issues and

concerns, ignoring any expression of these sentiments in their interactions; Daicoff attributes this to strictly logical and economically motivated analysis processes (Daicoff, 2004; Korobkin & Guthrie, 1997). Daicoff's synthesis, although slightly paradoxical with respect to some of Richard's analyses, mainly focuses on antagonistic characteristics of attorneys.

Deveson (2012) further contributed to the field's comprehension of attorney temperament by citing the later work of Richard and colleagues (2010) in order to correlate lawyer behavior with the Big Five personality types. This analysis recognized that attorneys score lower in extraverted traits, including ambition and sociability, compared to other professionals at the same level of education, supporting the notion that lawyers are more introverted. The study also found that lawyers are more "neurotic" than 56% of the general population, having placed in the 44th percentile of "adjustment," a trait associated with neuroticism (Deveson, 2012). This particular finding has additional ramifications for lawyer personas, as individuals high in neuroticism often display tenseness, criticism, anxiousness, self-consciousness, irritability, anger, fear, and distress (DeYoung et. al., 2010; Kim et. al., 2008). The work of Deveson (2012) is fairly notable due to its connections between neuroscience, personality psychology, and organizational behavior; however, a somewhat unfavorable view of the workers within the legal profession remains.

He and colleagues (2019) further expanded the dimensions of attorney personality psychology through the utilization of the following categories: warmth, meaning "encompassing tolerance, good-naturedness and likability," and competence, meaning "signaling competitiveness, intelligence and respectability or prestige" (Sussman, 2022). This workplace analysis determines that lawyers score at the top of the competence dimension, but very low in the perception of warmth, likely due to an intense focus on leadership and decision making. This result also suggests that the legal profession, because of its elevated competence, values "achievement, independence, and recognition" over relationships (He et. al., 2019; Sussman, 2022). This notion advances the reasoning behind the detached aura of the profession.

Much of the existing literature describes traits that possess a seemingly negative connotation, thereby supporting and calling for investigations in relation to the Dark Triad, a term coined by Paulhus and Williams (2002) to explain three negative personality traits: narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Narcissism is defined by the American Psychological Association (APA) as "excessive self-love or egocentrism" (American Psychological Association, n.d.). LeBreton and colleagues (2018) find that, despite various descriptions and models, narcissists generally retain feelings of superiority, a pretentious self-perception, a lack of empathy, and a need for attention. On the other hand, according to the APA, Machiavellianism is characterized by a ruthless attitude with the "belief that ends justify means" (American Psychological Association, n.d.). This definition was justified by Paulhus (2014) through the statement that "Machiavellians are master manipulators." Beyond manipulation, high Machs tend to be described by a lack of empathy, decreased emotions, a concentration on one's own goals ("often at the expense of others"), and a warped perception of morality (LeBreton et. al., 2018). Lastly, psychopathy deals with a lack of empathy and/or remorse (American Psychological Association, n.d.). LeBreton and colleagues (2018) suggest that the four-dimensional model created by Williams et. al. (2007) accurately encompasses psychopathy by including "interpersonal manipulation (e.g., grandiosity, lying, superficial charm); callous affect (e.g., lack of empathy, lack of remorse); erratic lifestyle (e.g., impulsivity, irresponsibility, sensation seeking); and criminal tendencies (e.g., antisocial or counterproductive behavior)." Some scholars argue an overlap between the three, particularly regarding organizational behavior, with James et. al. (2014) finding that the Dark Triad attributes correlate to an increased schadenfreude, or a sense of enjoyment from the pain of others, which is why counterproductive work behavior is often associated with the trio of features.

For the practice of law in particular, Kay and Saucier (2020) found their participants believed attorneys should be higher in Dark Triad traits than farmers, physicists, musicians, teachers and accountants. They argue that this notion is logical because of lawyers' behavior in the courtroom with their arguments, appetite for attention, and confidence. Similarly, Vedel and Thomsen (2017) found that Dark Triad personality traits were higher among law students than psychology students. Moreover, for psychopathy specifically, Dutton (2013) found that lawyers were the second most psychopathic profession, one position behind CEOs. The associations between the Dark Triad and

the legal profession, both empirically and anecdotally, appear compelling due to the trope of the "troublesome attorney."

However, there is no concrete argument that these inherently negative traits have significant unfavorable implications in relation to success in the legal profession. In fact, Dutton (2013) even argues that levels of "functional psychopathy" can be beneficial and rewarding in the workplace. This specification of "functional" is what Paulhus and Williams (2002) call "subclinical," detailing that the Dark Triad does indeed have clinical implications but can also be conceptualized as subclinical behavioral manifestations. These researchers argue the value of differentiating clinical and subclinical expressions of the Dark Triad, as those with clinical levels would likely not be as functional or successful in an organizational sense. Daicoff (2004) also suggests the existence of a general "lawyer stereotype" that portrays lawyers as confident, argumentative, aggressive, cunning, dramatic, argumentative, competent, ambitious, and dominant, which could provide another explanation for a more antagonistic and biased view.

In order to fully comprehend the organizational implications of these personality traits, it is important to note the difference between implicit and explicit aspects of one's persona. LeBreton and colleagues (2018) categorize implicit aspects of personality to be beyond one's conscious awareness, such as defense mechanisms, for example. However, individuals tend to be more consciously aware of explicit aspects, including "introspectively accessible thoughts, feelings, and patterns of behavior." Many of the current studies on the Dark Triad and other negative personality types delve into the explicit elements due to the measurability of their manifestations. Because Dark Triad traits tend to have subclinical behavioral expressions, this investigation will be no exception. Furthermore, because the literature overwhelmingly suggests a variety of collective lawyer qualities, this paper aims to remove ambiguity and distinguish what the most prevalent and dominant traits are, organizing these behavioral patterns into two dimensions: cognitive versus emotional and self- versus other- oriented.

Secondary Focus

In addition to a general lack of consensus on traits, there is low clarity regarding the development of these attributes. Some analysts search for a biological explanation. For instance, Dabbs and colleagues (1998) discovered that trial lawyers had higher testosterone levels than non-trial lawyers, a finding that could potentially explain lawyer's stubbornness, belligerence, and desire for competition. Further, Jang and colleagues (1996) found that the Big Five personality traits have significant genetic influences, suggesting a strong hereditary component for low extraversion and high neuroticism (Deveson, 2012). Evolutionary justifications can be found as well, with Furnham and colleagues (2013) finding many scholars who argue that those high in Dark Triad traits have fast life history strategies; this means these individuals value mating over parenting furthermore, allowing for the justification of the Dark Triad's detached and unemotional nature. Other scholars argue a developmental impairment, with Landwehr (1982) finding that an overwhelming majority of lawyers (90.3%) remain in Stage 4 of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Landwehr's results allow for the argument that attorneys are unable to make decisions beyond the typical "right and wrong" disposition of the legal practice. Despite these varied biological lenses, investigators continue to search for concrete answers on the origin of these behaviors.

Many researchers turn to a position on the person-situation debate, a personality psychology dilemma, which Epstein and O'Brien (1985) argue centers around the inquiry, "To what extent is behavior situationally specific, and to what extent are there broad generalities in behavior?" Scholars attempt to select a certain side of this debate in order to determine if lawyers simply possess certain personas or if they acquire them as a product of their environment (Roberts, 2007). For example, Daicoff (2004) argues law students arrive at law school with "preexisting traits, such as preference for dominance, leadership abilities, outgoingness, an interest in school and reading, and a deemphasis on emotional or interpersonal matters;" however, Daicoff also contends that the education process that prepares intellectuals to become attorneys is actually what alters one's personality, increasing extrinsic motivation and decreasing curiosity for abstract concepts. Nonetheless, research in this area remains scarce, highlighting opportunities for further exploration in order to gain a time frame on the progression of the typical lawyer persona.

In the case of profession and personality, Schneider's attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model helps explain how professions retain or become known for certain temperaments and cultures over time (Schneider et. al., 1998). The ASA model theorizes that particular personality traits attract people to an occupation, which, at the same time, is selecting for these attributes in its hires. This allows certain behaviors and values to remain and amplify within a particular organization, therefore creating a homogenous personality and culture of a business. Overall, this model contends that professions (e.g. law) attract people with certain attributes, while also intensifying these characteristics within the culture of these businesses and firms.

In terms of the "darker" traits within the legal realm, Kay and Saucier (2020) highlighted the relationship between the Dark Triad and organizational behavior by describing that "individuals high in Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy should seek out jobs that suit their personalities and be hired by (and not terminated from) workplaces that are receptive towards people with those personalities." Because Dark Triad individuals believe others should behave in a manner similar to them, interviewers hire potential employees high in these traits, amplifying a dark persona within a business. Legal practices are no anomaly, meaning the application of the ASA model suggests that the organization will shape their features based on their attraction and selection patterns.

Investigations exist on this connection between the ASA model and darker attorney behaviors. Vedel and Thomsen (2017) note that Dark Triad features are present at the time of law school enrollment, supporting the argument that socialization does not play a factor in the development of these negative characteristics. However, business expert Elegido (2014) argues that the academic processes of law are what forms egotistical attorneys. These viewpoints appear to conflict, highlighting the need for investigation on the timing and development of these behaviors.

Conflicts in findings on trait development within the profession explain the second aim of the study, which seeks to investigate the progression of lawyers' behaviors and apparent personality traits within the profession. In other words, this paper seeks to answer: do attorneys bring their personality traits to the profession, perhaps selecting the profession based on these pre-existing traits? Or does the profession create and reinforce behaviors over time, potentiating traits which may not have previously been dominant? There is also potential for both things to be true; this compilation of a variety of mechanisms is similar to what Roberts (2007) calls the neo-socioanalytic model of personality, which has the potential to mitigate the person-situation debate by focusing on attributes, beliefs, capabilities, and personal anecdotes. Thus, to determine the timing of lawyer personality development, a third dimension is added to the data organization: attraction versus selection.

Overall, the study proposes a potential clarification on what lawyer behaviors are – particularly in relation to their stereotypical portrayal – and when these attributes develop, therefore contributing to the literature by settling an aspect of what Roberts (2007) dubbed the "simmering division" between personality psychology and organizational behavior. Beyond the simple outcome of advancing knowledge and combating stereotypes in the psychological and legal fields, Richard (2002) proposes that a comprehension of lawyer personality traits can minimize hiring mistakes by selecting a job match. Questions now remain as to what makes an attorney a match for the profession and when this match is optimal.

Methodology and Materials

Qualitative Data, Grounded Theory, and Abductive Methods

This study employs qualitative methods to obtain and analyze data. Qualitative research – unlike quantitative investigations – does not focus upon statistics, numbers, or perceptible measurements. Instead, as Howitt and Cramer (2010) note, the defining characteristics of qualitative data include – but are not limited to – the use of descriptive data rather than structured data; an emphasis on interviews and groups; a focus upon individual perspectives; an extension beyond "normal," mathematically-based science; personal observations of real life experiences; and the contribution a more accurate view on the social world and its participants. For this investigation specifically, it is important to recognize

that qualitative researchers often prioritize a more intimate perspective through the use of language (Howitt & Cramer, 2010). More specifically, this research uses a qualitative method entitled grounded theory. Originally created by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory surrounds the principle that the data should develop the hypothesis and results on its own. Walker and Myrick (2006) put it best when they explained the investigative method as "a simple and complex, methodical and creative, rigorous and laissez-faire process in which the researcher engages to generate theory from the data." This theory is constructed through comparisons between collected data, which is organized into prevalent patterns, a process dubbed coding. Additionally, this investigation employs slightly abductive methods, something Haig (2021) describes as the "use of explanatory considerations in order to judge the worth of research hypotheses and theories;" this paper employs quotations and excerpts to assess and utilize the attraction-selection-attrition model, allowing for further connections with existing research. Overall, this combination between grounded theory and abductive methods allows the qualitative data to form its own results and justifications through the recognition of common factors, allowing the linguistic information to speak for itself.

Sample

Survey

Ten participants received a virtual, twelve-question survey: nine open-ended/free response queries and three multiple choice inquiries relating to gender, level of expertise, and personal opinion. To view the survey questions, see Table A1 in Appendix A. The final sample consisted of two male and four female lawyers; one male and one female law student; and one male and one female prospective law student. Thus, participants included those who practice law, who are currently learning to practice law, and who desire to learn the nuances of law in order to gain a more detailed perspective on the time frame of the development of lawyer temperament. For gender and professional distribution, see Figure A1 and Figure A2 respectively in Appendix A. All participants were required to provide consent upon reading a form before beginning the questions; no compensation was awarded in exchange for participation, but participants were able to stop at any time. Personal information, including name, email, and place of work, were not collected.

Online Resources

To maximize the potential of identifying diverse characteristics, behaviors, and perspectives, archival data in the form of publicly-available video and writing excerpts was selected. Despite these video clips and writing excerpts containing human subjects, these sources are public and information are de-identified and anonymized. Data was collected from eight YouTube videos (The Aspiring Boss, 2020; BuzzFeedVideo, 2019; BuzzFeedVideo, 2018; For the Time Being, 2018; LAHWF, 2019; Miller, 2022; Tohry, 2020; Tohry, 2021), seven TikTok videos (Armani, 2022; Armani, 2021; Armani, 2022; Breyer, 2022; Litigator, 2022; Stratton, 2022; Zie, 2020), and five lawyer blog pieces (Beller, 2022; Helfand, 2012; Kryder, 2022; Sanchez, 2022; Sanchez, 2022). The durations of these videos ranged from five minutes to twenty-six minutes, and blog articles were collected from three websites: Chicago's Real Law Blog, ABA Law for Students, and The Girl's Guide To Law School. These recordings featured ten female and five male lawyers; and two male and five female law students. These resources broaden the scope of this paper by incorporating a variety of media formats and perspectives. See Appendix B for more details.

Data Collection & Analysis

By employing qualitative methods, this study focused upon the inductive process of coding data, as outlined by grounded theory. Quotations were directly selected from survey responses and blog posts, and the aforementioned

videos were transcribed for uncomplicated excerpt selection. Using Microsoft Excel, a multitude of fragments were categorized and analyzed, with selections ranging from a simple, terse sentence to lengthy paragraphs.

For the primary focus of this study, discerning the most prevalent lawyer behaviors, terms were chosen based upon their cognitive or emotional focus, particularly concentrating on sentimental connections, interactions with clients, communications with and/or opinions on fellow lawyers, everyday lawyer practices, and more general lawyer descriptions. Keywords included very direct and descriptive terms, e.g. "analytical," "shyster," "arguing," "empathy," among others; more indirect statements were also incorporated, as they continued to reflect both introspection as well as interpersonal relationships, highlighting phrases such as "a methodical approach," "putting on a story," "comfortable in conflict," "in your client's shoes," and more.

For the secondary focus of this investigation, tracing the progression of these attributes, inherent traits and developed traits were differentiated by categorizing them as "attraction" (due to preexisting characters) or "selection" (by the lawyer profession). Attraction was defined by the analytical units of personal appeal, concentrating on terms like "I will," "I was," "I want," "I wanted," "I love," "I loved," "I have," and so on, as well as by introspective questions proposed by currently practicing lawyers, particularly through phrases such as "if you are trying to become a lawyer, are you *insert trait here*?" "Prospective law students are" was also considered to fall under the category of attraction. On the other hand, selection was interpreted using more descriptive terminology, for instance, "lawyers are." This also included lawyers using reflective wording, specifically highlighting how law school shaped their skill set and mindset, including "in law school, I learned," "I realized," "law school helped me," or "taught in law school," which proved particularly valuable in determining when this comportment is learned.

Throughout the data collection process, certain exclusion criteria led to the elimination of particular excerpts. Omitted fragments include references to comical law school experiences (for example, "cold calling"), mention of alcohol (for instance, "being hungover," "bartending," or "keg"), comparisons to movies, comments about grades, GPAs and LSAT scores, opinions and/or explanations of certain laws and sentencing patterns, acknowledgement of unprofessional behavior (for example, "falling asleep in class"), references to appearances (including wearing wigs, tattoos, and piercings), mentions of payment methods (for instance, "taking credit cards"), remarks with respect to drugs (specifically marijuana), and recognition of personal information (including other video clips, family members, location, sports team affiliations, and experiences being a minority). These concepts were excluded because they were not directly work-related behaviors; analysis of them would call into question the nature of whether these behaviors could conceivably speak to character traits and work, and thus were deemed outside the scope.

Results

Traits and Behaviors

I identified 13 major lawyer characteristics, six of which fall under the category of "relation to self," possessing a cognitive focus, and the other seven which fall under the category of "relation to others," retaining more emotional qualities.

In order of descending prevalence, the attributes are as follows: analytical, empathetic, money-driven, argumentative, self-aware, deceptive, ambitious/challenge-oriented, organized/time management, competitive, confrontational, prestige-driven, arrogant, and persistent (Table 1).

Table 1a. Traits and Behaviors Identified: Cognitive Focus

Trait Orientation	Traits/ Behaviors	Exemplary Quotations	Times Identified (Total)
relation to self, cognitive focus	analytical	"Lawyers tend to have a very analytical mind. And this is definitely something that you are taught to develop in school but also as you practice." - female lawyer 1, online resources (Tohry, 2020)	22
		"Most [lawyers] are intelligent and articulate and can analyze problems in a different way than others." - female lawyer 1, survey	
	argumentative	"Lawyers love to talk… And we're often told that that's what lawyers should be doing. Lawyers should be talking. They should be arguing. They should be convincing, questioning." - female lawyer 2, online resources (Tohry, 2021)	12
		"[Lawyers are] argumentative. At the base level lawyers have to be able to look at a set of facts and draw different conclusions from those facts. It's almost an ability to suspend disbelief. This is a balance between creativity and logical thinking." - male lawyer 1, survey	
	self-aware	"When people hire lawyers, or any professionals really, the main reason why they're coming to them is for their knowledge, but that doesn't mean that lawyers know everything. It doesn't mean we should act like we know everything, and it certainly doesn't mean that we should be ashamed because we don't know everything." - female lawyer 2, online resources (Tohry, 2021)	12
		"That's the thing lawyers joke about is like you can have a sort of specialty practice area and then your friends will be like "hey, [what about] speeding ?" Well, I don't know every traffic law in the world." - male lawyer 2, online resources (LAHWF, 2019)	
	ambitious/ challenge-oriented	"I enjoyed the challenge and complexity of working in a highly regulated area." - female lawyer 4, survey	6
		"[O]ne of the baseline traits is a strong sense of what you yourself can accomplish and a faith that you will get things done." - female law student 1, online resources (For the Time Being, 2018)	
	organized/ time management	"There's sort of a system you can figure out of how to not burn yourself out and manage your time. I think the biggest skill you learn in law school is time management and being able to discipline yourself..." - male lawyer 2, online resources (LAHWF, 2019)	6
		"Organization is also a really, really key component of being a good lawyer. If you are not a person who is able to handle, again, a complicated schedule with moving parts, a lot of deadlines, a lot of discrete tasks going on at once then you're probably not going to be happy as a lawyer." - female law student 1, online resources (For the Time Being, 2018)	
	persistent	"I think people that go into law tend to go into it with a frame of mind that they are willing to work hard to achieve their goals. It's a long path to follow but certainly has potential to create a better world while giving a person the opportunity to provide for their family. I think it takes a high level of commitment and some patience to defer to the 'real world' and stay in school." - male lawyer 1, survey	2
		"I think lawyers are people who are persistent and are gifted." - male prospective law student 1, survey	

Table 1b. Traits and Behaviors Identified: Emotional Focus

Trait Orientation	Traits/ Behaviors	Exemplary Quotations	Times Identified (Total)
relation to others, emotional focus	empathetic	"As a lawyer, I find that often times trying to put yourself in your client's shoes is a very interesting way to find efficient and out-of-the-box solutions for your client and a lot of times you will come up with things that you would not have thought about…" - female lawyer 2, online resources (Tohry, 2021)	19
		"[Good lawyers have] empathy, concern for the well-being of others, integrity, and strong communication and writing skills." - female law student 1, survey	
	money-driven	"I think ultimately it's both the money and opportunity that draws people into law." - male prospective law student 1, survey	15
		"I think people become lawyers because they have a calling to it or because they think they'll make a lot of money…" - female lawyer 4, survey	
	deceptive	"Growing up, I did like acting a little so I kind of thought it would be like, in a courtroom, you know, like, 'Ladies and gentlemen of the jury' type thing. So, I think once I made my decision I stuck with it." - lawyer 4, online resources (BuzzFeedVideo, 2019)	9
		"I studied literature and saw the law as an extension of storytelling." - female lawyer 3, survey	
	competitive	"… 'cause it's on a curve, right, so it's a constant competition." - female lawyer 4, online resources (BuzzFeedVideo, 2019)	5
		"If you can manage to keep your head on straight, deal with the competitiveness, and tune out the insanity, then hopefully you'll graduate, pass the bar and start doing some real lawyering." - male lawyer 1, online resources (Helfand, 2012)	
	confrontational	"If you are very shy, becoming a lawyer might not be for you simply because of the amount of people that you have to talk to on a regular basis." - female lawyer 1, online resources (Tohry, 2020)	4
		"I like being in court. That's probably the most exciting part like yeah, you get a little bit nervous. But if you've prepared enough to this point, you should before you step in the courtroom. It's kind of, like, it's nervous anticipation but you're like ready to go, like yeah. Let me present this. Let me convince the judge of this." - male lawyer 2, online resources (LAHWF, 2019)	
	prestige-driven	"Prestige and security [attract people to the law profession]." - male lawyer 2, survey	3
		"The prestige [attracts people to the law profession]." - female lawyer 1, survey	
		"...some are likely drawn to the prestige of the profession." - female lawyer 2, survey	
	arrogant	"A lot of lawyers are arrogant and condescending." - female lawyer 4, survey	2
		"I'm sure there's definitely some [lawyers] who are led by ego [instead of law]." - female lawyer 6, online resources (The Aspiring Boss, 2020)	

Development of Lawyer Temperament

In order to distinguish the timeline of the development of these traits, this research separated examples into elements of the attraction-selection portion of the ASA model created by Schneider (1998). The results presented below in Table 2 show a somewhat balanced account of both an interest in the legal profession based upon preexisting, inherent traits – with 37 participant references – and the legal profession singling out these preferable attributes – with 44 participant referencesAsi son como tarjeteros asi no son

Table 2. Development Distinguished

Development	Exemplary Quotations	Times Identified (Total)
Attraction	"I came from a business background so combining that with a legal skill set felt natural." - male law student 1, survey	37
	"I wanted to do talent rights. I have a lot of friends who are boys in bands, and growing up, I watched them sign some really not great deals, and I felt really bad for them, and I was like, 'They need someone on their side.' To some extent, that's what I'm doing." - female lawyer 7, online resources (BuzzFeedVideo, 2019)	
	"I was a philosophy major in college, so I was already used to 'thinking' like a lawyer…" - female lawyer 4 , survey	
	"I studied literature and saw the law as an extension of storytelling" - female lawyer 3, survey	
	"I first envisioned myself doing entertainment law and being an advocate for musicians that maybe, you know, weren't able to adequately represent themselves. I'm not sure what I'm doing now." - female lawyer 4, online resources (BuzzFeedVideo, 2019)	
Selection	"Law school helped develop the way I think critically. In law school, you learn how to defend the indefensible. You see every side and have to figure out the best way to represent your client even when you may not agree with their actions." - female lawyer 1, survey	44
	"When I started law school, I had a class full of wannabe environmental lawyers. When they realized that they could only get a job that helped big companies pollute the environment, they quickly gave up their passion." - male lawyer 1, online resources (Helfand, 2012)	
	"Law school helped me learn how to think to be a lawyer, how to analyze, and how to defend and see all sides of an argument." - female lawyer 3, survey	
	"[A]s I grew older, graduated from law school, passed the bar exam, started tickling, then eventually started my own practice, I realized that a lot of the skills that I think today are essential to being a good lawyer aren't exactly what I thought they were back when I was in law school." - female lawyer 1, online resources (Tohry, 2021)	
	"At the base level lawyers have to be able to look at a set of facts and draw different conclusions from those facts. It's almost an ability to suspend disbelief. This is a balance between creativity and logical thinking." - male lawyer 1, survey	

There were also four references to attrition, where four participants highlighted the possibility of discontent with one's organization, potentially causing them to switch fields or completely abandon the profession altogether. For example, one survey participant (female lawyer 4) stated, "Most lawyers are not happy being lawyers after practicing for a while. These are the people who should never have become a lawyer but did for one reason or another."

At first glance, it appears that, both attraction and selection play an equal role in the formation of the general lawyer personality due to the frequency of identification; however, it is important to take individual differences into account, because, as Howitt and Cramer (2010) explained, qualitative data relies upon personal perspectives. Furthermore, there is potential for varying perspectives to appear, which will be explored further in the analysis (IV) and discussion (V) sections.

Other Themes

Beyond the scope of the two preeminent focuses of this study, other themes that emerged include a general awareness of image as well as hesitation on selecting a singular successful lawyer behavior or education path (Table 3). The former, detailing a recognition of lawyer appearances, could potentially suggest a justification behind the formation of a lawyer stereotype, as there were various references to media (particularly television) as well as to the lucrative nature of the profession. The latter, detailing an indecision on lawyer traits and lifestyle, continues to emphasize the typical qualitative individual differences as mentioned above.

Table 3. Other Themes That Emerged

Theme	Exemplary Quotations	Times Identified (Total)
general awareness of image	"I think people become lawyers because they have a calling to it or because they think they'll make a lot of money or that it's 'cool' like they see in TV." - female lawyer 4, survey	10
	"TV shows make the practice of law look glamorous. The well timed objection or the finding of the key law that changes the game it seems exciting. It doesn't hurt that TV also makes it look like a very lucrative profession. Also there's the image of the noble crusader fighting the good fight (after I said it I realized that's actually the name of a show) working to make the world a better place which certainly should attract people as well." - male lawyer 2, survey	
	"Money [and] influence from the media [attracts people to law]." - female prospective law student 1, survey	
hesitation on selecting a singular successful lawyer behavior or education path	"There are too many types of law to have one trait. And even a miserable lawyer can be a good one." – female lawyer 4, survey	8
	"As you may have already realized, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to experiencing law school as we are all different and rarely fall into the 'traditional' law student mold." - female lawyer 8, online resources (Sanchez, 2022)	
	"I don't think there is a clear answer because everyone has a different reason for being in this profession." – male law student 1, survey	

Analysis

Analysis of Traits and Behaviors

As previously explained, thirteen major lawyer qualities appeared as a result of this inductive investigation: analytical, empathetic, money-driven, argumentative, self-aware, deceptive, ambitious/challenge-oriented, organized/time management, competitive, confrontational, prestige-driven, arrogant, and persistent. There appears to be a balance between the frequency of the two categories, where around half (51.28%) of the fragments were cognitively/internally focused, and the other half (48.71%) were emotionally/externally focused.

The traits that suggested a strong relationship to the self – analytical, argumentative, self-aware, ambitious/challenge-oriented, organized/time management, and persistent – all seem to reflect a cognitive focus. "Analytical" was the most prevalent of these six features, being identified on 22 occasions, while "persistent" was the least common of the characters, being identified a mere 2 instances. This centralized focal point appeared as a result of keywords relating to the self. For instance, proficiency in time management was often described through phrases such as "managing your time," "managing your schedule," or "respond to their clients in a timely manner," all of which suggest personal responsibility with respect to optimal lawyer behavior. These six attributes, which were mentioned 60 times out of the 117 selections relevant to this primary focus, indicate that favorable lawyers comportment is largely comprised of some level of intrinsic motivation and internal necessity for answering accurately, overcoming obstacles, coordinating/planning, and developing a tenacious determination to hold one's beliefs or perspective.

On the other hand, the qualities that suggested a strong relationship to others – empathetic, money-driven, deceptive, competitive, confrontational, prestige-driven, and arrogant – all seem to reflect an emotional focus. This focal point provided descriptions of lawyer responsibilities with respect to others, whether it be through positive, mutually beneficial relationships, such as compassion for a client, or a slightly more aggressive relationship, such as presenting oneself in a potentially false manner. Keywords for these seven traits often included direct references to others, through phrases similar to "helping people" or "protect the environment," as well as some more indirect references to the profession itself through phrases such as "want to make a difference." "Empathetic" was the most prevalent of these seven features, being identified on 19 occasions, while "arrogant" was the least common of the characters, being identified a mere 2 instances. Constituting 57 of the 117 relevant excerpts, these qualities suggest that lawyer behavior also largely relies upon relations with others, whether these interactions are positive or negative.

Analysis of Temperament Development

For the secondary focus of this study, differentiating when these traits develop, it is important to mention the relevance of Schneider's (1998) attraction-selection-attrition model, which was strengthened through the identification of attrition as an auxiliary theme. Now that its applicability is more secure, the other two halves of the model became the main focus, and upon first glance, the attraction and selection categories seem somewhat balanced similar to the two categories above, with 37 references to attraction (45.68%) and 44 references to selection (54.83%). This symmetry suggests a neo-socioanalytic perspective, as outlined by Roberts (2007), which could potentially settle the person-situation struggle by allowing for harmony between both sides.

It is valuable to note that the attraction portion of this assessment relied upon more personal reflections, highlighting sayings such as "I have" or "I love," which places a spotlight upon individuals and their unique experiences. This individualistic point of view has the potential to weaken a neo-socioanalytic perspective due to its variation between people and different fields of interest. Although, the "attraction" portion of this investigation cannot be completely refuted, as many traits that survey participants believed law students retain were very similar to the traits that they believed "good" lawyers possessed. For instance, law students were described as hard working, logical, argumentative, challenge-seekers, education fanatics, and much more, all of which seem to align with at least one of the

attributes identified in the first portion of this study; this serves as assistance for the formation of the argument that law students and prospective law students do not solely obtain lawyer traits as a product of their education, but instead inherently possess them at some point as well.

Because of the latter justification, the argument can be made that, despite individual differences, a balanced perspective on attraction and selection is logical, meaning that eventual lawyers inherently possess traits that law schools and firms are simultaneously searching for, creating an equilibrium between the two halves of the ASA model.

Analysis of Other Themes

The first auxiliary theme that surfaced was a general awareness of image. This generally focused upon the media portrayal, through television specifically, and the materialism of lawyers and how this could potentially wrongfully glorify the legal profession for prospective law students. Survey participants, vloggers, and writers alike agreed that this image provides a somewhat misconstrued, biased, and sectional perspective of the profession, which may further suggest the general lawyer stereotype as outlined by Daicoff (2004).

The second additional theme that appeared was a hesitation on the selection of solely one optimal lawyer behavior, as many can generate success in the legal field and choosing one would be a far too narrow viewpoint. This subject is mentioned in order to emphasize that qualitative data employs a variety of individual preferences and diverse contexts.

Discussion

Implications

The legal profession has long struggled with an unfavorable portrayal. This study points out this depiction through the auxiliary category of "general awareness of image" reflected in Table 3. This investigation and Daicoff (2004) were not the only ones to recognize this image. For instance, Glover (2017) argues that "[t]he connection between lawyers and avarice has plagued the profession and smeared its prestige." In fact, He and colleagues (2019) agree, asserting that this is why the Ontario Bar Association attempted to counteract the "greedy, aggressive, dishonest, and manipulative" aura of lawyers by creating a campaign to stress their problem-solving, analytical qualities.

While this investigation has a more academic focus than the aforementioned campaign, it has achieved a similar objective: combating the negative lawyer stereotype through the clarification of attorney characters and the redirection towards a more individualistic spotlight. Instead of targeting the (potentially false) malicious intent of lawyers, it is more valuable to fixate upon where lawyers seem to be placing their focus. With 51.28% of excerpts having a cognitive/internal concentration, these six traits – analytical, argumentative, self-aware, ambitious/challenge-oriented, organized/time management, and persistent – reflect an inherent desire to evaluate legal proceedings, defend one's position, obtain a well-rounded comprehension of one's own knowledge and abilities, seek intellectual provocation, and meticulously plan. With 48.71% of fragments having an emotional/external focus, these seven traits – empathetic, money-driven, deceptive, competitive, confrontational, prestige-driven, and arrogant – reflect comportment in relation to attorney interaction. These findings allow for the argument that lawyers must stick to their perspective on a certain debate or case, whether this must be through an in-depth comprehension of a client or by putting on an informed, educated performance in which they confidently argue their side against the opposing counsel. These traits simply imply what the profession finds to be most desirable or favorable, thereby disregarding the potential for malintent.

While the argument could be made that four out of the seven externally focused traits – money-driven, deceptive, competitive, and arrogant – have slightly adverse or contradictory implications, these characteristics are largely attributed to the organizations and the profession itself, meaning it is not necessarily the fault of the lawyers.

It is rational that these negative traits appear in the "relation to others" category, as this would explain the formation behind the lawyer stereotype because this is how attorneys are presenting themselves to the public. These seemingly negative features could actually be attributed to industry competitiveness, as Black and colleagues (2019) argue that organizations often struggle with how to become more competitive in both global and domestic markets, which could offer an explanation as to why successful attributes are selected for despite a somewhat unfavorable presence. For the materialistic motivations of lawyers, Black and colleagues (2019) suggest that money is fundamental to all industries, with some even identifying work as "paid employment," meaning "money-driven" is simply fundamental to the lives of the workers and is not a reflection of their individual personalities. In relation to the Dark Triad, lawyers are not as "dark" as it may appear. While LeBreton (2018) recognizes arrogance and misleading as manifestations of subclinical triad traits, the pride and deception of lawyers was not described in a narcissistic manner in this investigation, but instead a reflection of workplace necessity and not of the individual personalities of lawyers themselves. Overall, we argue that the balance between cognitive and emotional traits suggests that lawyers have intrinsic motivations as well as necessary workplace interactions that depict attorneys as versatile scholars, thereby refuting the stereotypical malevolent intent of lawyers and viewing it as a product of the profession instead of the distinctive personalities themselves.

For the secondary focus of this study, tracing the development of these behaviors, lawyer comportment was found to be a balance between the attraction and selection aspects of the ASA model. This means that prospective lawyers, which includes law students and eventual law students, retain certain qualities that attract them to the profession, which is simultaneously (and at the same level of intensity) selecting for these traits in its hires. This investigation was unable to distinguish the timeframe of each specific individual trait, meaning further investigations, likely behavioral or observational, would be necessary for that; however, this research was able to find that, through both the survey responses and online resources, lawyers and law students believe that people are interested in practicing law because they possess certain qualities – including work ethic, a logical mindset, a determined nature, and an appreciation for learning – all of which are also reflected in optimal lawyer behavior.

This serves as proof that the allure of law is not entirely random, but instead reflects an innate desire to chase a profession that matches one's own temperament; this profession is able to maintain said personality by continuing to single out these desirable behaviors. This combination between attraction and selection is somewhat a reflection of the neo-socioanalytic framework as outlined by Roberts (2007). This perspective accounts for traits, motives/values, abilities, and narratives in order to settle the person-situation debate (Roberts, 2007). This perspective is essential to this paper's argument because it allows us to disregard extreme variations in individual differences.

As previously mentioned, a majority of the fragments attributed to the "attraction" category reflected personal experiences, whether it be relating to introspective thought or previous education; for example, many of these quotations spoke about undergraduate majors, classes, or student organizations as inspiration. Because this academic undertaking is a different experience for everyone, an initial strategy was to associate a majority of the 37 fragments with individual differences, therefore causing them to lose their value, highlighting more "selection" in the legal profession. However, the neo-socioanalytic perspective allows for these varied perspectives to be included because Roberts (2007) believes roles and a hierarchical approach of all the domains of personality would allow for a positive/beneficial combination between personality psychology and organizational behavior, settling a "simmering division." By excluding personal data, it would be extremely difficult to analyze personality. So, even though, Sackett and colleagues (2017) note that knowledge, skill, ability, personality, integrity, emotional intelligence, stable motivational attributes, creativity, and vocational interests are all individual traits, they should be included in this qualitative analysis in order to form a more diverse, truly inductive argument. Therefore, without excluding any diversified viewpoint or endeavor under the "attraction" category, it may be reasoned that lawyers both possess traits that attract them to law, including an affinity for challenge, writing, research, debate, learning, and more, while also forming them over time through the process of education and practice in order to become the ideal lawyer that success in the profession requires or selects for.

Limitations

The first potential limitation of this investigation includes a selection bias, which – although not intentional – could have reflected some subconscious preferences, causing the use of certain videos or blogs over others. Additionally, because quotes from certain videos, articles, and social media posts were collected and categorized, there is potential for minor extrapolation in order to connect and equate certain interview, blogs, and survey responses to personality traits. Winship and Mare (1992) indicate this selectivity is fairly common with qualitative data in the psychology field, asserting that finding investigations "that are free from selection bias is to rule out a vast portion of fruitful social research," meaning this bias does not hold significant value.

Additionally, this investigation did not consider specific details of the legal profession. For example, gender differences can play a role in the personality psychology of organizational behavior, but this was not explored in the scope of this paper. He and colleagues (2019) highlighted a gender stereotype where professions with typically female workers were correlated with warmth. However, Zane (2022) found that 52.1% of lawyers are female, meaning this gender stereotype failed to provide warmth to an inherently competent profession. This inconsistency is exactly why further investigations should explore lawyer personality variances based upon gender, as this study only uncovered the more general traits. Research in this field may be able to discern biological causes and gender disparities, therefore eliminating the contradictory concepts that this paper overlooked.

Additionally, this study did not analyze differences based upon different fields of law. In Chicago's Real Law Blog, one of the online resources, Helfand (2012), also referred to in this paper as male lawyer 1, stated, "Your experience as a lawyer is largely determined by the path you choose." Because the selection of a particular field of law is so impactful on everyday undertakings, future research should explore whether the "attraction" factors are different depending on the area of practice and/or study. Investigations in this field may be able to equate certain qualities to different practices, particularly differentiating courtroom lawyers and others.

Finally, because this investigation relied upon personal accounts and opinions as reported through survey answers, YouTube videos, blog posts, and TikTok videos, there is potential for some sort of overcompensation for the generally negative image recognized in Table 3. This phenomenon can also be explained through the social desirability bias, which Grimm (2010) defines as "the tendency of research subjects to give socially desirable responses instead of choosing responses that are reflective of their true feelings." So, while this paper does appear to identify internally and externally focused lawyer comportment, there is a social desirability aspect that calls for future research to consider observational and/or behavioral methods to better comprehend lawyer traits. Richard (2002) suggests, surveying is an "excellent tool for coaching, development, leadership training and other internal applications, but its greatest strength is still its ability to help an employer reduce the risk of making a hiring mistake by helping to create a job match;" however, since the social desirability bias implies that humans are inherently bad at comprehending and sharing information about their personalities, organizations would benefit more from an in-depth understanding of concrete data and lists of lawyer qualities. This trait analysis began in this investigation but would be expanded upon through observational and behavioral analyses of attorneys, thereby benefiting the legal profession by constructing job matches.

Conclusion

Because existing research lacked a pronounced consensus on attorney traits, this study was able to identify what lawyers and law students believe the most prevalent attributes are, removing some ambiguity and providing suggestions for optimal, successful lawyer comportment. These findings also allow for the argument that lawyers are not as "bad" or "dark" as it may appear, therefore refuting the well-known, emotionally disconnected, careless persona that attorneys somehow acquired. Additionally, those specific timelines were not traced, general lawyer personalities are a combination of both attraction and selection, suggesting certain, individual qualities attract prospective law students

to the profession, which also shapes these ideal traits through law school and practice. Not only does this provide insight into another aspect of the person-situation debate in relation to organizational behavior, but it also strengthens the power of qualitative analyses and an emphasis on the productive use of unique viewpoints and experiences. Overall, this research brings another perspective to the literature, complicating the empirical picture to refute a negative perception of lawyers as a collective, while simultaneously implying the potential for individual differences in the development of lawyer traits.

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