

DO NICE GUYS AND GALS REALLY FINISH LAST?

And Other Factors of Workplace Inequality Influencing Career Success

June 24, 2014

Timothy A. Judge
Franklin Schurz Professor



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
Mendoza College of Business

HOMO ECONOMICUS AND CAREER SUCCESS

- It is true that career success is built, in part, on “rational” factors
 - **Motivation:** Hours worked, continuous work history
 - **Investments in human capital:** Education; other forms of training
 - **Career choices:** Some people make “better” career decisions than others
- But it is equally true that career success depends, in part, on “irrational” factors
 - **But what is “irrational”?:** By irrational, I mean factors that either:
 - Do not fit within societal endorsements of legitimacy, whether legally sanctioned (e.g., success based on race, gender, age...) or not (e.g., success based on appearance)
 - Do not fit within model of man/woman as purely rational actor (*homo economicus*), wherein both individual and those making career decisions about individual are guided by principles of utility maximization

THE IRRATIONAL NATURE OF CAREER SUCCESS

- People are not only motivated by economic self-interest
 - This is why we define career success as consisting of intrinsic (how happy I am with my career) and extrinsic (earnings, job attainment) components
- Individuals' choices and motivations are not always rational
- Those who evaluate individuals (i.e., those on whom one's career success depends) are not always rational, either

WHAT IS MISSING FROM MY TALK

- From an ethical perspective, my presentation today is more descriptive (the way things are) rather than normative (the one things ought to be)
- I do not focus on sociological or economic aspects of inequality
 - A complex and contentious topic!
- I do focus on behavioral elements of career success that may be associated with socioeconomic inequality

NON-RATIONAL CAREER SUCCESS FACTORS

AT LEAST ONES I HAVE RECENTLY STUDIED

1. Personality (Agreeableness)
2. Gender
3. Ambition
4. Appearance (height, weight, attractiveness)

1. PERSONALITY

AGREEABLENESS

- Agreeableness is one of the “Big Five” personality traits (others are conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, and emotional stability)
- Agreeableness is the tendency to be cooperative, compliant, polite, kind, gentle, and trusting
- Agreeableness is not linked to job performance but it is linked to helping behaviors and liking
- I have been studying career success for 20 years, and all the studies I’ve conducted, as well as reviews of the literature, show that agreeable individuals are less successful in their careers
 - Especially in terms of extrinsic success (pay, promotions, job attainment)

AGREEABLENESS AND CAREER SUCCESS

CAREER SUCCESS ASSESSED 40 YEARS AFTER PERSONALITY

Trait Assessments	Intrinsic Career Success	Extrinsic Career Success
Childhood Intelligence	.11	.41**
Childhood Conscientiousness	.34**	.44**
Childhood Neuroticism	-.02	-.21*
Childhood Extraversion	.00	.27*
Childhood Openness	.12	-.02
Childhood Agreeableness	.05	-.32**

Numbers are regression coefficients, where strength spans from -1.00 to +1.00. In behavioral sciences, above .20 is considered moderate, above .30 relatively strong. Asterisks denote statistical significance (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$)

Intrinsic career success

Composite of satisfaction with income, coworkers, job security respect of others, supervision, chance to develop skills, work revolves around interests

Extrinsic career success

Composite of income and occupational prestige

AGREEABLENESS AND CAREER SUCCESS

- Studied 1,885 executives
- Agreeableness negatively impacted career success due to worked fewer hours worked and less ambition to advance
- Agreeableness had the strongest negative effect on salary
- Agreeableness had the weakest negative effect on career satisfaction

Effect of Agreeableness on:	
Extrinsic Success	
Salary	-.32**
Job level	-.19**
Proximity to CEO	-.17**
Employability rating	-.16**
Intrinsic Success	
Job satisfaction	-.19**
Career satisfaction	-.06
Life satisfaction	-.18**

** $p < .01$

Judge, T. A., Livingston, B. A., & Hurst, C., "Do Nice Guys – And Gals – Really Finish Last? The Joint Effects of Sex and Agreeableness on Income," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102 (2012), pp. 390-407.

WHY

ARE AGREEABLE PEOPLE LESS EXTRINSICALLY SUCCESSFUL?

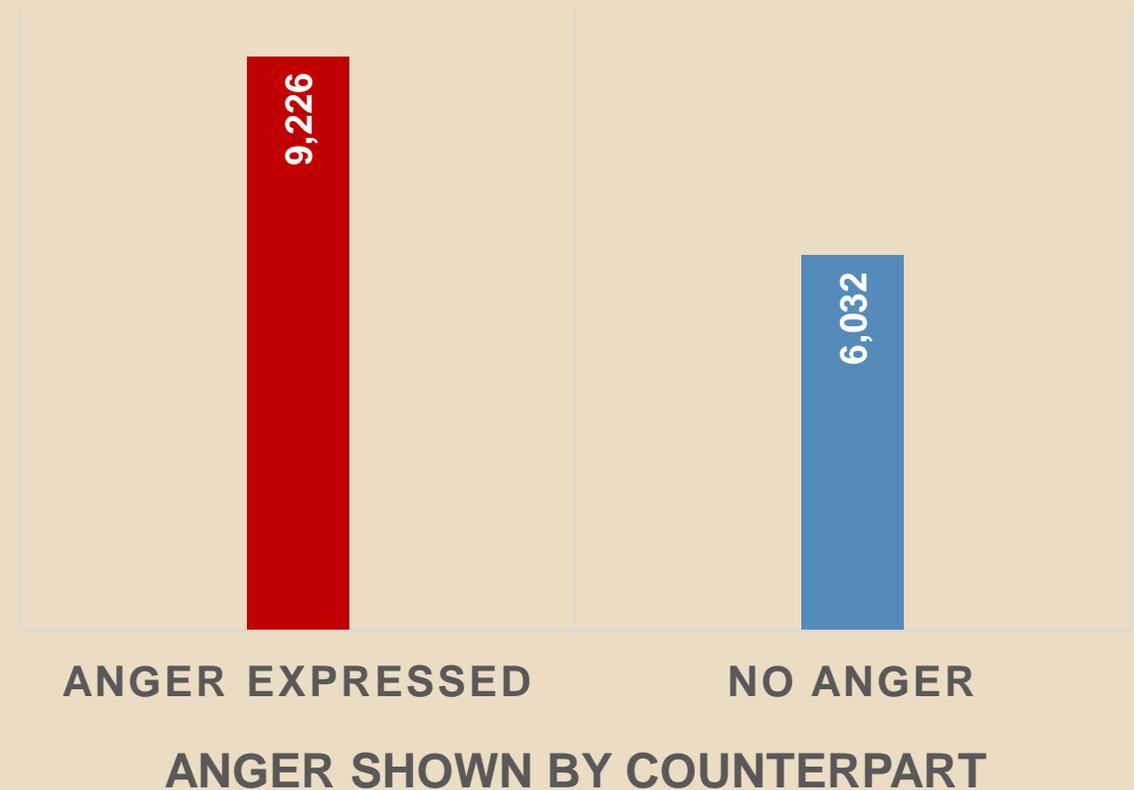
- Negotiation effectiveness
 - Career success depends on negotiating effectively; agreeable individuals tend to negotiate poorer agreements for both themselves and others
- Career choices
 - We do not have much evidence on this, but some research suggests that agreeable individuals tend to make different career choices
 - It is important to remember, however, that the negative effects of agreeableness on earnings persist even when one controls for occupation
- Decisions made by others
 - Again, there is little data here – but it is possible that others take advantage of agreeable individuals

AGREEABLENESS

NEGOTIATION

- “Expressing anger typically elicits larger concessions” (Adam & Shirako, 2013)
- Negotiators who yield easily negotiate less for themselves, but also the total for the pair
- Why?
 - Truly integrative (“win-win”) agreements require creative problem-solving; if one side yields easily or quickly, it doesn’t force the negotiating pair to be creative

VALUE OF CONCESSIONS



2. GENDER

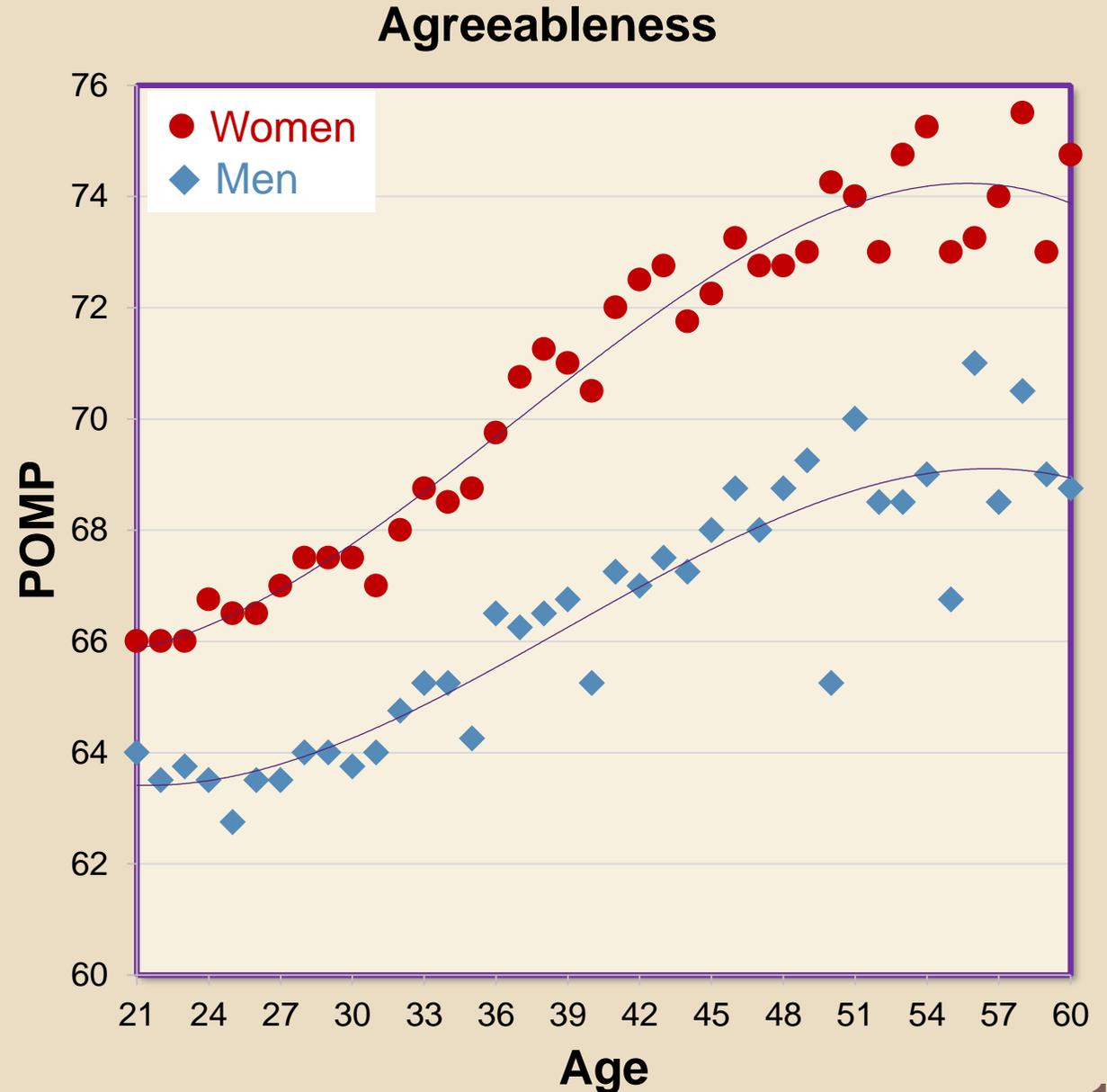
- It is well known that there is a gender wage gap
- Most – but certainly not all – of gap is due to factors that are not directly discriminatory
 - Women, on average, work fewer hours than men
 - Women have more career interruptions than men
 - Women make different occupational choices than men
- This does not mean discrimination does not exist
- What interests me are what I would call “double standard” effects – where factors that affect career success work differently for men and women

GENDER AND AGREEABLENESS

- **Women** are more agreeable than **Men**
- People are most disagreeable when **young**
- Agreeableness increases for both **men** and **women** with age
- Up to a point...

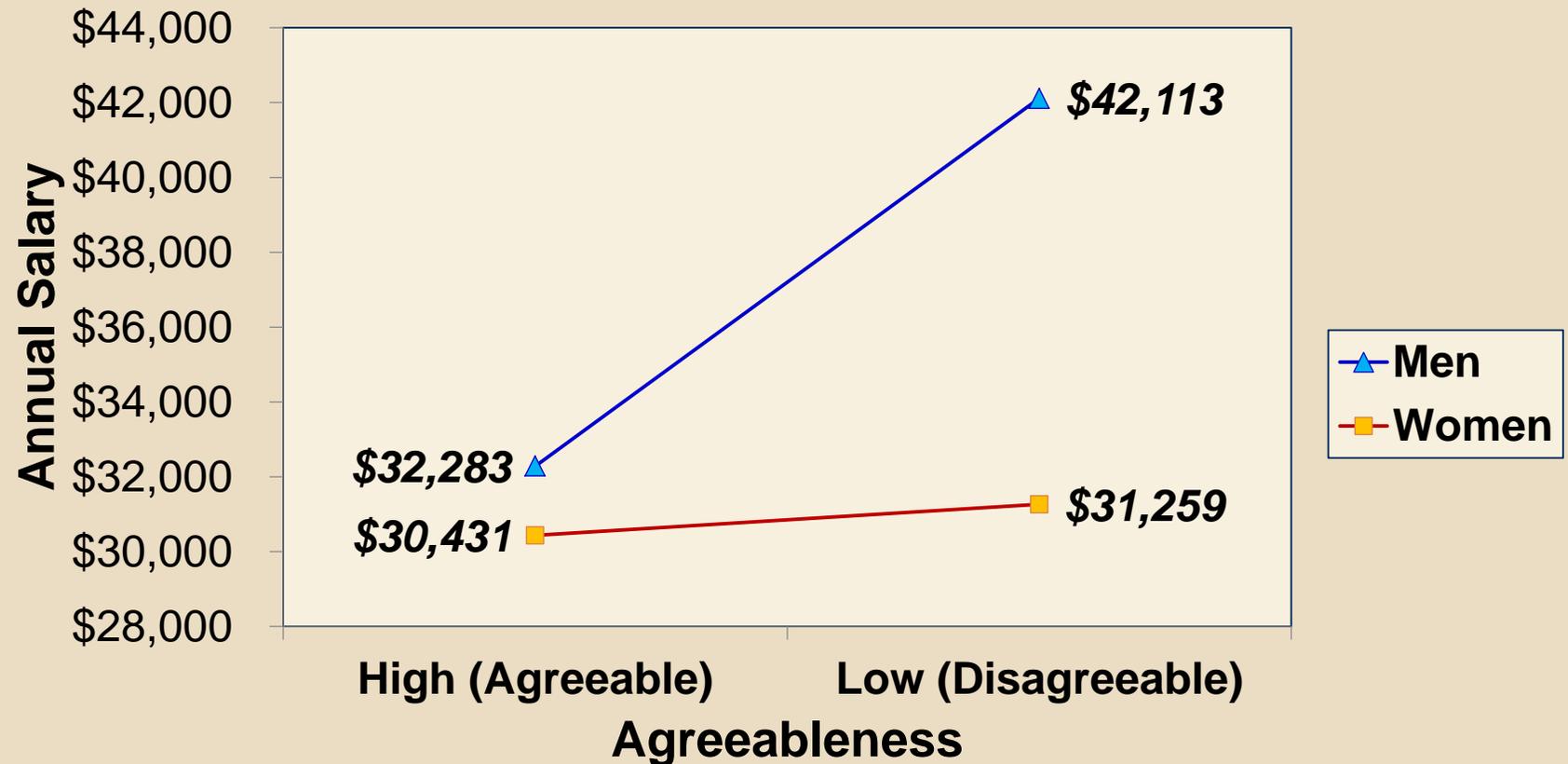
POMP

Average score for each age group as
Percentage Of Maximum Possible
Range = 0–100



GENDER AND THE “DISAGREEABLE DIVIDEND” STUDY 1

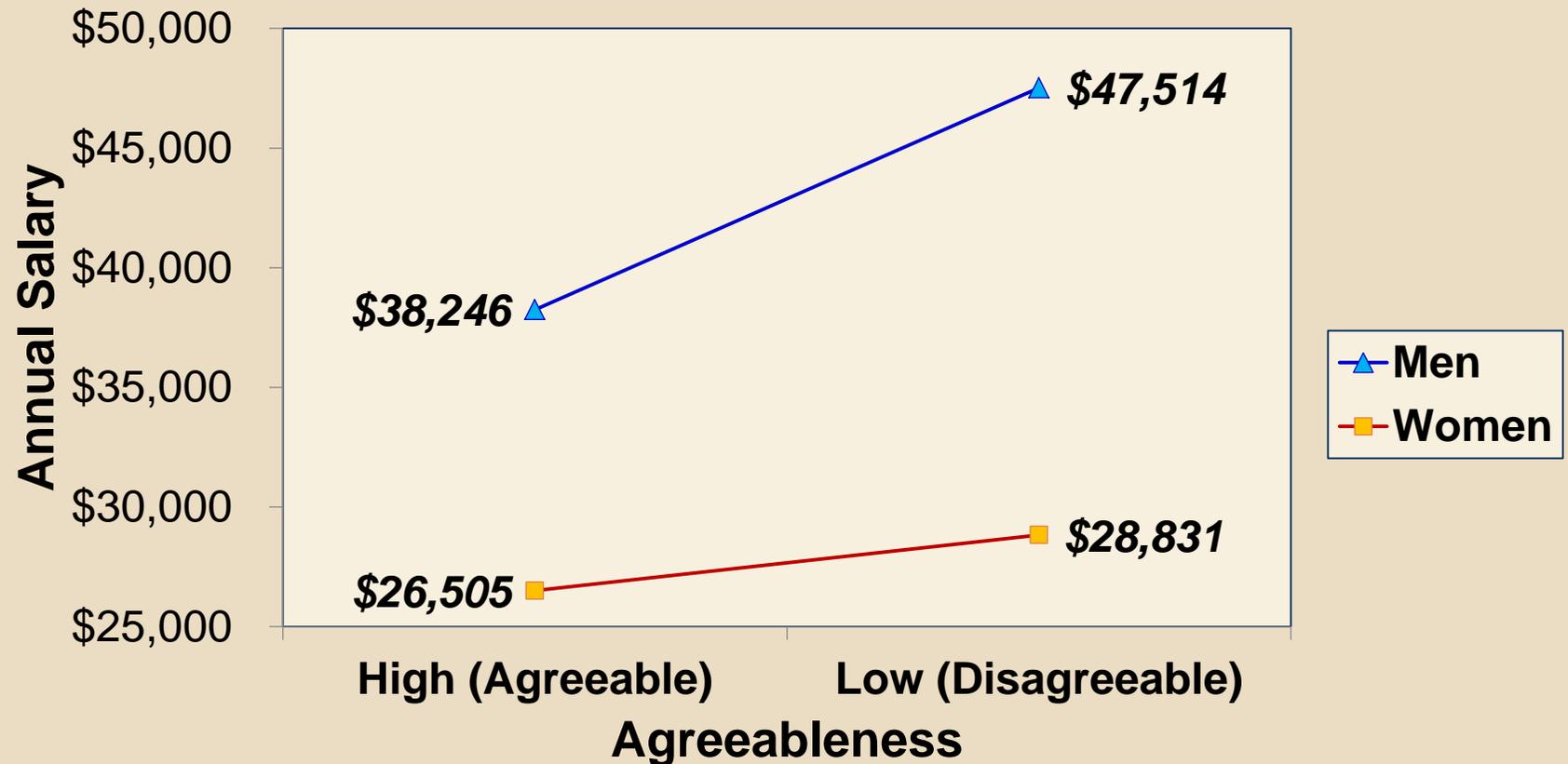
- National random sample of people employed 1,000+ hours/year
- N=560
- Agreeableness self-reported; earnings average 2004-2008
- Being disagreeable paid off much more for men than women



Judge, T. A., Livingston, B. A., & Hurst, C., “Do Nice Guys – And Gals – Really Finish Last? The Joint Effects of Sex and Agreeableness on Income,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102 (2012), pp. 390-407.

GENDER AND THE “DISAGREEABLE DIVIDEND” STUDY 2

- Participants (N=1,827) National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States
- Controlled for prior income, hours worked, marital status, education, job type
- Again, disagreeableness paid more for men than women

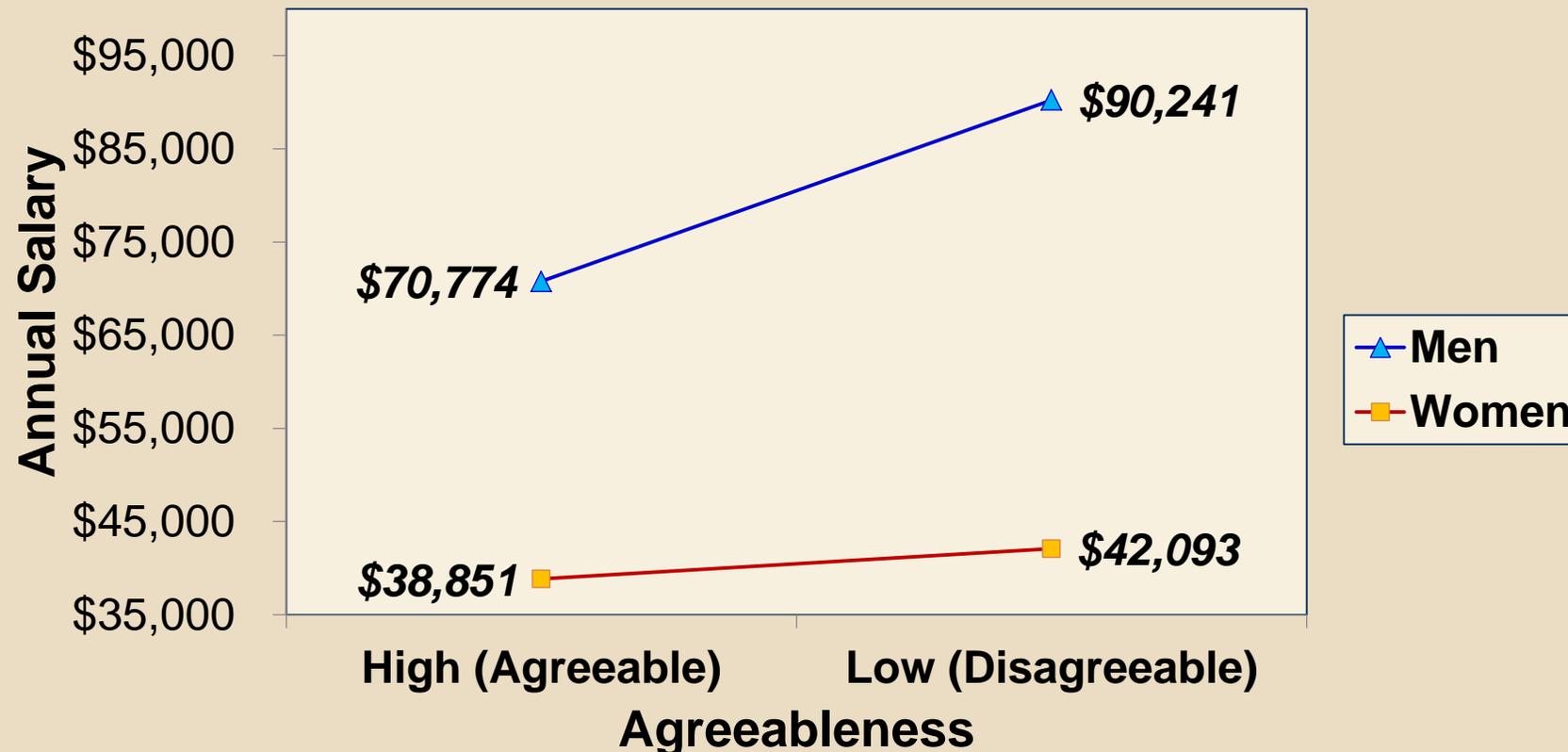


Judge, T. A., Livingston, B. A., & Hurst, C., “Do Nice Guys – And Gals – Really Finish Last? The Joint Effects of Sex and Agreeableness on Income,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102 (2012), pp. 390-407.

GENDER AND THE “DISAGREEABLE DIVIDEND”

STUDY 3

- Participants (N=1,691) in Wisconsin Longitudinal Study
- Controlled for hours worked, marital status, education, job responsibility, occupational status
- Same pattern as before...

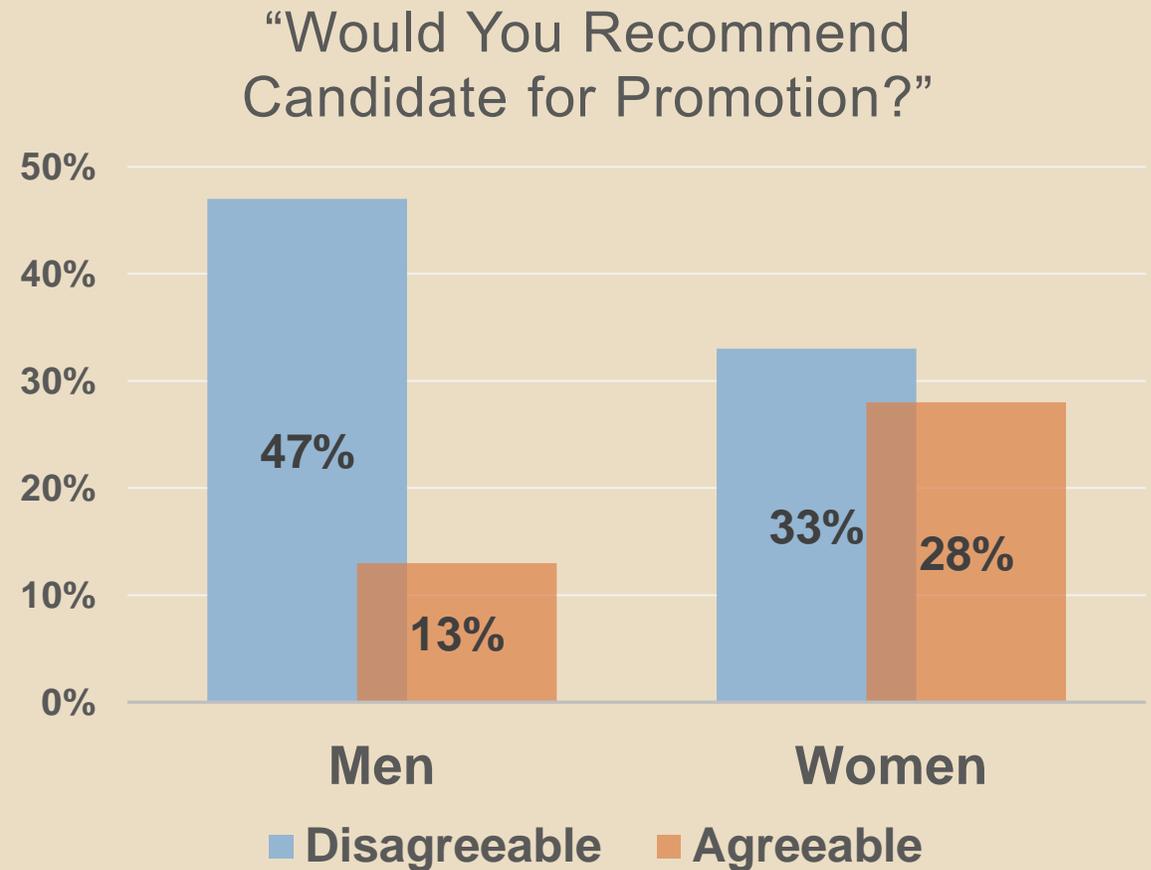


Judge, T. A., Livingston, B. A., & Hurst, C., “Do Nice Guys – And Gals – Really Finish Last? The Joint Effects of Sex and Agreeableness on Income,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102 (2012), pp. 390-407.

GENDER AND THE “DISAGREEABLE DIVIDEND”

STUDY 4 (EXPERIMENTAL STUDY)

- College students evaluated whether hypothetical candidates for a management consulting job should be recommended for promotion
- Hypothetical candidates were described by observers, which also included (dis)agreeable behaviors
- Controlled for evaluator gender and agreeableness (neither of which mattered)
- Upshot: Even college undergraduates are biased!



3. AMBITION

- Ambition has long been considered either virtue or vice – mostly the latter
- Surprisingly, little studied in psychology and organizational behavior
- Difficult to obtain a working definition
 - Defined as “one’s overarching desire to aspire toward success and improvement over one’s current condition” leading to “motivational processes at work, orienting toward the attainment of outcomes” and goal-striving performance
- We studied ambition using an unique sample of individuals born in the Bay area in the early 20th century studied over seven decades
- Ambition was measured with observer ratings

Judge, T. A., & Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., “On the Value of Aiming High: The Causes and Consequences of Ambition,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 97 (2012), pp. 758-775.

AMBITION AND CAREER SUCCESS

CAREER SUCCESS ASSESSED 40 YEARS AFTER PERSONALITY

- Ambitious children led significantly more successful lives
 - Higher and more prestigious degrees
 - Earned significantly more money
 - More prestigious occupations
- Success, however, was limited to extrinsics
 - Lived no longer and were no happier
 - Happiness and longevity only for those who translated their ambitions into success

Ambition and...	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Education Attainment	.48**	.00	.48**
Education Prestige		.23**	.23**
Occupation Prestige	.28**	.15**	.43**
Income	.28**	.06**	.34**
Life Satisfaction		.06**	.06**
Mortality		-.01*	-.01*

N=717, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Judge, T. A., & Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., "On the Value of Aiming High: The Causes and Consequences of Ambition," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 97 (2012), pp. 758-775.

AMBITION AND GENDER

- Gender negatively predicted ambition and positively predicted life satisfaction (women had less ambition and higher life satisfaction)
- The links from gender to income and mortality were both negative (women earned less but lived longer)
- Many of the gender effects were mediated by other variables (ambition and education)
- One way to look at this is that motivation is both effect and direction
 - We often say someone isn't motivated, but often what we mean is that they are motivated by things other than what we want them to be

4. APPEARANCE

HEIGHT

- Meta-analysis of all available studies in literature (N=7,691)
- Height was strongly related to social esteem
- Height was positively related to leader emergence
- Height was positively related to performance
- Height was more related to subjective than objective outcomes

Height—Success Relationship	Estimated True Correlation
Social esteem	.41
Leader emergence	.24
Performance	.18
Subjective outcomes	.31
Objective outcomes	.21

Overall height effect is somewhat stronger for men than women, but it is significant for both (i.e., being taller than average predicts career success for both men and women)

Judge, T. A., & Cable, D. M., "The Effect of Physical Height on Workplace Success and Income: Preliminary Test of a Theoretical Model," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 89 (2004), pp. 428-441.

APPEARANCE

HEIGHT AND INCOME

- Meta-analysis (N=8,590)
- Height was positively related to income after controlling for gender, age, and weight
- Over four studies, height was consistently significantly correlated with earnings
- Age also positively predicted earnings
- Gender negatively predicted earnings (women earn less than men)
- Weight negatively predicted earnings



Every inch increase in height = \$789.33 additional annual earnings.

APPEARANCE

HEIGHT AND INCOME

- Results were relatively linear (very tall people continued to earn more)
- Results did not appear to be due to self-esteem (though height does have some correlation with self-esteem)
- One piece of good news...you may be relatively taller than you think
- Average height
 - **U.S. males** **68.5 inches (5'8½")**
 - **U.S. females** **63.5 inches (5'3½")**

APPEARANCE WEIGHT

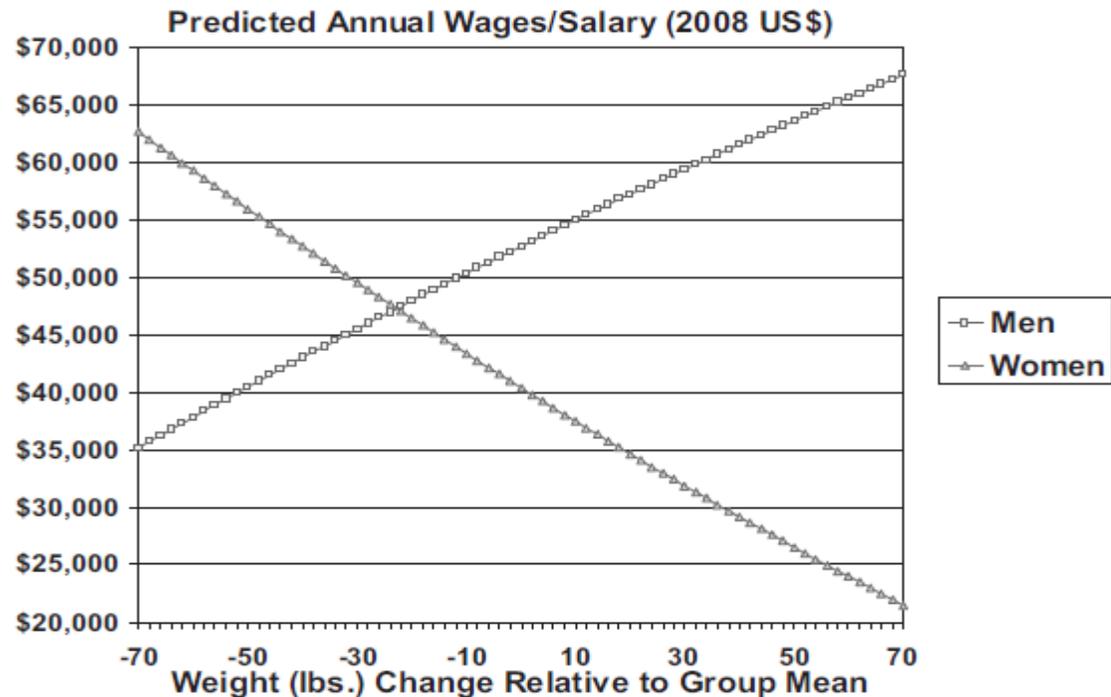


Figure 2. Multilevel effect of gender on the weight–earnings relationship (Study 2).

- Weight positively predicts earnings for men but negatively predicts earnings for women
- Found in both U.S. and German samples
- Found both between people and analyzing same people of time (change in weight)
- Weight effect for men is positive except at very high end of weight spectrum
- Results control for job type, hours worked, and other job inputs

Judge, T. A., & Cable, D. M., "When It Comes to Pay, Do the Thin Win? The Effect of Weight on Pay for Men and Women," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 96 (2010), pp. 95-112.

APPEARANCE ATTRACTIVENESS

- Active study (N=191)
- Physical attractiveness was measured by ratings of photographs
- Physical attractiveness showed both direct and indirect effects on income
- The effect was mediated by educational attainment and core self-evaluations
- Did not predict significantly differently for men and women
- General mental ability predicts income more strongly

Attractiveness Effect on Income	
Direct Effect	.13**
Indirect Effect	.08**
Total Effect	.21**

** $p < .01$

Physical attractiveness itself may not enable success as much as it helps open doors along the way.

Judge, T. A., Hurst, C., & Simon, L. S., "Does It Pay to Be Smart, Attractive, or Confident (or All Three)? Relationships Among General Mental Ability, Physical Attractiveness, Core Self-Evaluations, and Income," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 94, No. 3 (2009), pp. 742-755.

APPEARANCE ATTRACTIVENESS

- Research by Daniel Hamermesh shows that beauty predicts earnings
- He notes, “the effect of differences in looks on earnings were larger among men than among women”
- He has even found that good-looking economists have their work cited more often
- He also notes:
 - To me the crucial question is whether we should think of beauty as productive, or as reflecting discrimination. This is a very tough question, since there’s no doubt that hiring a beautiful person raises a company’s sales. I would argue that beauty’s effects reflect societal discrimination, and that it is not inherently productive.



CONCLUSIONS

- Hard work and investments in human capital matter, BUT...
- Career success is less logical than we often think
 - Questions about the value of education
 - Non-job-related factors (height, weight, attractiveness) matter
 - Personality is important
- Lest you think these biases are unimportant...
 - When have we elected as U.S. President someone who is:

■ Shorter than average	McKinley (1900)
■ Has glasses	Truman (1948)
■ Has facial hair	Taft (1908)
■ Is bald	Eisenhower (1952)
■ Is overweight	Taft (1908)
■ Is very unattractive	Lincoln (1860)
■ Is a woman	
 - Not in the past 60 years have we elected someone who has any of these qualities!

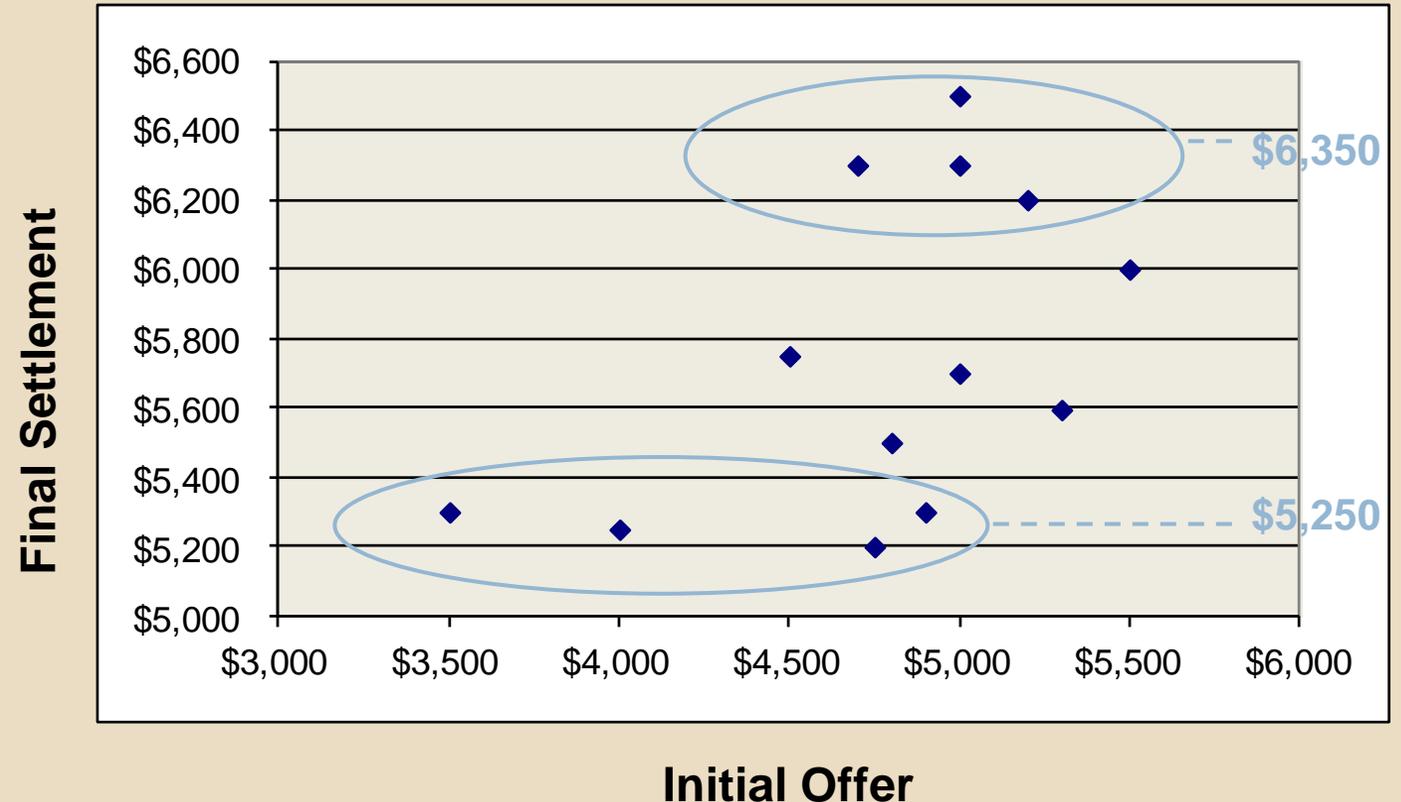
IMPLICATIONS FOR YOU

- Assess your own personality: <http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/>
- Every trait that I've studied has an upside and a downside
- Disagreeable people are not “bad” people
- There are all times when we should be more agreeable, and more disagreeable
 - Negotiators get the outcomes they expect (and are willing to ask for)
- Remember, **how** you say something is as important as **what** you say

“I disagree...”	<i>becomes</i>	“My take was...”
“My pay is not fair”	<i>becomes</i>	“I think I can show how we both win from paying me more”
“I’m entitled to more”	<i>becomes</i>	“This is how I see it; I’m interested in your reaction”

IMPLICATIONS FOR YOU

- “Used Car” exercise to negotiate the price of a fictional used car
- The effect of who makes the first offer is consistently telling
- When the buyer makes the first offer, the settlement price is lower
- When the seller makes the first offer, the settlement price is higher



MORE IMPLICATIONS FOR YOU

- Advocate for objectivity in decision-making
 - One way to do this is through testing
 - Another way is to insist on objective standards for performance
 - Or at least multidimensional (objective and subjective)
- Remember serenity prayer (Reinhold Niebuhr)
 - *God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.*
- We can change some things, but not others

THANK YOU!

For a copy of this presentation, and articles from my research: www.timothy-judge.com

June 24, 2014

Timothy A. Judge
Franklin Schurz Professor



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

Mendoza College of Business