

VISUAL DETECTION OF SEX OFFENDERS AND CONSEQUENTIAL BIASES AMONG CHRISTIANS

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This pilot study investigated whether biases influenced respondents' perceptions of a subject's history of sex offense convictions. Biased perceptions of subjects' religion, culture, ethnicity, or race may influence whether respondents believe that a subject has perpetrated a sex offense. Potential negative impacts for offenders include: hampered social dynamics, community coalescence, and rehabilitative aims. Biases may also affect criminal justice through witness bias or false conviction. Community members and potential victims may be negatively impacted by misperceptions of criminal history. Potential victims may be unable to identify sex offenders, causing them to misplace their trust in people who, to them, appear to be unthreatening. In addition, these potential victims may be biased against individuals who are less likely to perpetrate sex crimes. Communities and potential mating

populations could suffer from a lack of diversity due to unconscious bias. This knowledge is critical for communities, offenders, and potential victims.

This Article explains the foundation for this investigation and pilot study, which considered whether physical appearance evidences sex crime perpetration. Section II discusses facial features associated with non-traditional sexual preferences, sexual aggression, and sexual dominance. Section III, Methods, explains sampling and data collection strategies used to investigate relationships among race, bias, and perception of sex-offending. Section IV presents the data collected from surveying and Section V analyzes this data. Finally, Section VI, the Discussion Section, concludes that perception of sex offense perpetration may correlate with perception that a person is unlikely to be Christians. Methodological limitations of this pilot study, which may be improved for future studies, are described in Section VII.