

Darkness and light : the role of dark triad traits and empathy in understanding preferences for visual artworks

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The Role of Dark Triad Traits in Understanding Preferences for Visual Artworks

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Background



Personality and preferences for visual artworks

- Previous studies have suggested a link between personality and preferences for visual artworks
- Most research has focused on different styles of paintings (abstract, representational, etc.)
- And most have examined the 'Big Five' personality dimensions:
 - Openness to Experience
 - Extraversion
 - Neuroticism
 - Agreeableness
 - Conscientiousness



Big Five personality dimensions and preferences

- Openness and Neuroticism correlate positively with a preference for abstract paintings and pop art (Furnham & Walker, 2000)
- Agreeableness and Conscientiousness correlate positively with a preference for representational paintings and a dislike of pop art (Furnham & Walker, 2000)

Sensation Seeking and preferences

- Prior research has also found links between Sensation Seeking (SS) and preferences for paintings
- SS = a desire for novel, varied, complex and intense experiences and the willingness to take risks
- SS correlates positively with a preference for complexity, asymmetry and violent abstract paintings (Rawlings et al., 1998; Rawlings et al., 2000; Zuckerman, Neary & Brustman, 1970)



Limitations of the Big Five and Sensation Seeking

- These studies have advanced our understanding of aesthetic preference
- But the Big Five model is too broad to lead to powerful predictions of behaviour (Paunonen & Ashton, 2001)
- And Sensation Seeking is a multifaceted construct, the subscales of which relate differentially to aesthetic preferences (Furnham & Avison, 1997; Zuckerman, Ulrich, & McLaughlin, 1993)



The Big Five/SS and Dark Triad traits

- The Big Five and SS relate in different ways to 'Dark Triad' traits (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) which have not yet been examined in relation to aesthetic preference
- Machiavellianism – Cynical worldview, plan ahead, build alliances, try to maintain a positive reputation
- Narcissism – Grandiose identity, underlying insecurity, dominant
- Psychopathy – Selfish, impulsive, aggressive, abandon friends, lacks empathy, pay little attention to their reputation



Links between the Big Five/SS and Dark Triad traits

- Low Agreeableness and high Openness to Experience associated with Machiavellianism and Narcissism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002)
- Low Agreeableness and low Conscientiousness associated with Psychopathy (Miller, Lynam, Widger, & Leukefeld, 2001)
- High Sensation Seeking associated with Psychopathy (Hare, 2002)
- Given these links it is plausible that Dark Triad traits may relate to preferences for visual artworks



Aims

- To investigate associations between Dark Triad traits and preferences for visual artworks
- To also examine the potential role of demographic variables and previous experience of art



Method



Participants

- A stratified sample will be recruited from South Yorkshire to reflect:
 - Males & females
 - Different age groups
 - Different ethnic groups
 - Different educational levels

- Power analysis to determine appropriate sample size



Materials: Demographic Questionnaire

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Occupation
- Nationality



Materials: Experience of Art Questionnaire

- Based on that used by Furnham and Walker (2001)
- How much the participant has studied art/history of art
 - Never/GCSE/A-level/Degree level
- How often they visited art galleries in the previous year and how often they intend to go
 - Never, 1-2 times, Once a month, Once a fortnight, Once a week
- A 'test' of art
 - For five relatively well-known paintings, attempt to name artist, the painting and the year in which it was painted
 - Each correct response scores one point (min 0 max 15)



Materials:

Slides of paintings

40 paintings across 4 distinct styles identified by Furnham and Walker (2001):

- Representational – realistic images depicting reality
- Abstract – geometric lines and patterns/generally ambiguous
- Pop Art - an intermediate position between representational and abstract art with a distinctive style
- Japanese traditional – 18th/19th Century



Materials:

Slides of Paintings (2)

- Digital versions of paintings to be shown on Powerpoint slides
 - 10 paintings from each of the 4 styles
- To be shown in random order
 - Not sequentially in order of style
- To be shown for 30 seconds each



Materials:

Rating of Paintings Questionnaire

- Rate each painting on these scales:
 - How much would you like the painting in a gallery (0=Dislike extremely to 10=Like extremely)
 - How much would you like the painting in your home (0= Dislike extremely to 10=Like extremely)
 - How talented do you consider the artist to be (0=Not at all to 10=Very talented)
 - How much would you pay for the painting, assuming you had unlimited funds (Nothing/£1 to £50/£51 to £100/£101 to 500/£501 to £2000/£2001 to £10000/£10000+)
 - How familiar are you with the painting (0=not at all to 10=very familiar)



Materials: Dark Triad Questionnaire

- The Short Dark Triad (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2013)
- 27 items
 - 9 Machiavellianism, 9 Narcissism, 9 Psychopathy
- Items scored 1 = Disagree Strongly to 5 = Agree Strongly
- Good psychometric properties
 - e.g. Cronbach alpha coefficients .76, .78, .73



Proposed Data Analysis



Descriptives

- Means for each of the 4 styles of painting:
- Like in an art gallery
- Like in living room
- Talent of artist
- Value
- Familiarity



Independent t-tests

Comparison of males/females on:

- Like in art gallery
 - Rep, Pop, Abs, Jap
- Like in living room
 - Rep, Pop, Abs, Jap
- Talent of artist
 - Rep, Pop, Abs, Jap
- Value
 - Rep, Pop, Abs, Jap
- Familiarity
 - Rep, Pop, Abs, Jap



Pearson Correlations

- Like Representational in Gallery + Like Abstract in Gallery
- Like Representational in Gallery + Like Japanese in Gallery
- Like Pop in Gallery + Like Abstract in Gallery
- Like Pop in Gallery + Like Japanese in Gallery
- Like Abstract in Gallery + Like Japanese in Gallery

And so on for:

- Like in living room
- Talent of artist
- Value
- Familiarity

Pearson Correlations (2)

- Like Representational art in gallery + Studied Art
- Like Representational art in gallery + Visited Gallery in Past
- Like Representational art in gallery + Will Visit Gallery
- Like Representational art in gallery + Art Test Score

And so on for:

- Abstract art
- Pop art
- Japanese art

Pearson Correlations (3)

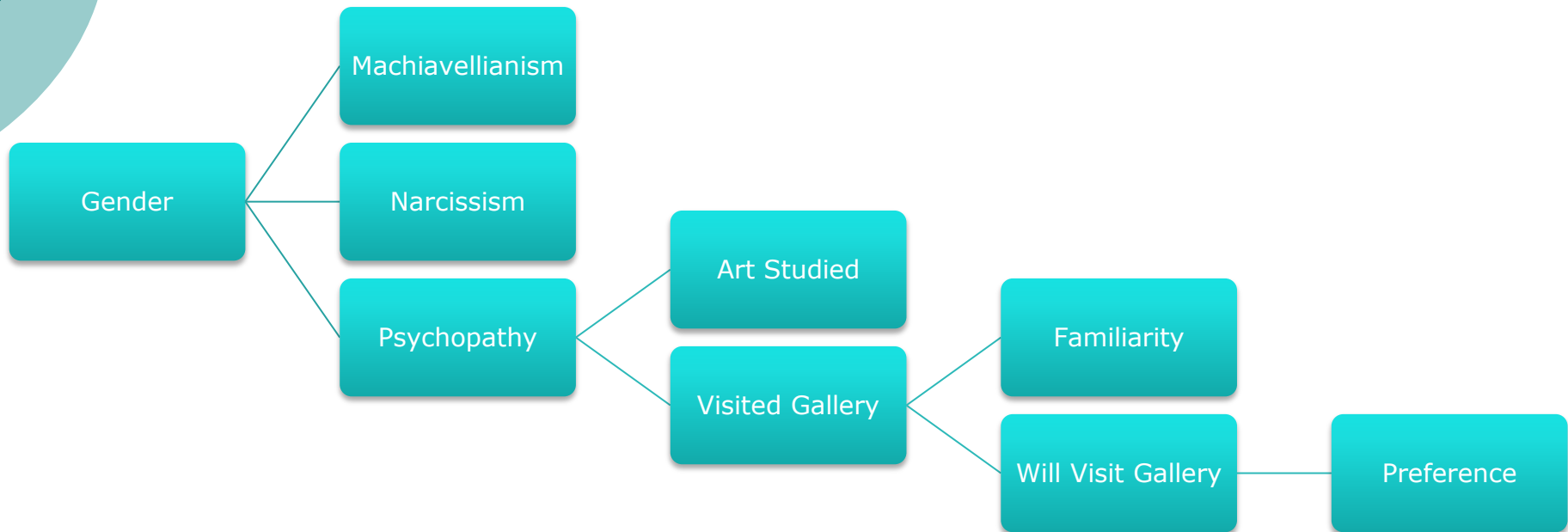
- Like Representational art in gallery + Machiavellianism
- Like Representational art in gallery + Narcissism
- Like Representational art in gallery + Psychopathy
- Like Abstract art in gallery + Machiavellianism
- Like Abstract art in gallery + Narcissism
- Like Abstract art in gallery + Psychopathy
- Like Pop art art in gallery + Machiavellianism
- Like Pop art in gallery + Narcissism
- Like Pop art in gallery + Psychopathy
- Like Japanese art in gallery + Machiavellianism
- Like Japanese art in gallery + Narcissism
- Like Japanese art in gallery + Psychopathy

And so on for like in living room, talent of artist, value and familiarity

Pearson Correlations (4)

- Studied art + Machiavellianism
- Studied art + Narcissism
- Studied art + Psychopathy
- Visited gallery in past + Machiavellianism
- Visited gallery in past + Narcissism
- Visited gallery in past + Psychopathy
- Will visit gallery + Machiavellianism
- Will visit gallery + Narcissism
- Will visit gallery + Psychopathy
- Art test score + Machiavellianism
- Art test score + Narcissism
- Art test score + Psychopathy

Hierarchical Multiple Regression





Implications

- To advance theoretical understanding of how personality relates to preferences for art



Thank you

- Any questions?

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