MOOD AND PERSONALITY PREDICTORS OF ART PREFERENCE

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

CHANDLER BOWERSOX

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Research Advisor: Dr. Arnold LeUnes

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ABSTRACT

Mood and Personality Predictors of Art Preference

Chandler Bowersox
Department of Psychology
Texas A&M University

Research Advisor: Dr. Arnold LeUnes
Department of Psychology

Research indicates that aesthetic stimuli may improve our understanding of individual differences in artistic preferences. Those findings were exploratory and more comprehensive measures of individual differences in art preferences should be employed. Our study further investigated whether a person's personality could determine their art preference. Additionally, we explored mood and life orientation (optimism or pessimism) as predictors. The significance of this research project is that if certain moods and personalities favor a particular genre of art, thus providing a better understanding of artistic styles. It can also display the way people express themselves through aesthetical choices. Five surveys were administered to 160 participants (males=43, females=122) enrolled in undergraduate classes at a large Southwestern public university. These surveys included the Costa & McCrae (NEO-PI) Big Five Test, the Profile of Mood States Survey, and two measures of art preference. Both art preferences surveys were administered electronically via URL link prior to the mood and personality surveys, which were garnered within a classroom. SAS procedures were employed to conduct a MANOVA. Thus, the six art genres (Impressionism, Abstract, Cubism, Japanese, Northern Renaissance, and Secular Islamic) were compared on the Big Five (NEO-PI), and Profile of Mood States (POMS). A significant Wilks' λ {$F_{(70,608)}$ = 1.66, p<. 001 was noted. Specifically, there were significant

differences between genres on the POMS Tension scale ($F_{5, 140)} = 2.44$, $p < .04$), Depression scale ($F_{5, 140)} = 4.46$, $p < .0008$), Anger scale ($F_{5, 140)} = 3.54$, $p < .005$), Confusion scale ($F_{5, 140)} = 3.35$, $p < .007$), and Total Mood Disturbance composite score ($F_{5, 140)} = 3.50$, $p < .005$). The Masculine-Feminine construct was also found to be highly significant ($F_{5, 140)} = 8.62$, $p < .0001$) between genres. Finally, the Abstract-Realism construct ($F_{5, 140)} = 3.90$, $p < .002$) also found specific differences between genres. Depression held the highest significance of the POMS measures, suggesting that variances in mood between genres can be most identified through depression. Additionally, the Big Five (NEO-PI) reveals that Openness has a relationship with art genre preference. The relationship between mood and art preference might suggest inclusion of artistic material in a therapy regimen.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Aesthetic choices and those of the senses are often understood as unpredictable. The response, "I just like what I like" seems like the only reasonable solution. One may ask: can you even study why people prefer this color to another, or that painting to the other? Research suggests that aesthetic stimuli may improve our understanding of individual differences in art preferences. However, those findings were exploratory and more comprehensive measures of individual differences in art preferences should be employed. This research project investigated the extent to which an individual's mood and personality influence art genre preference. The significance of this research project is that a better understanding of artistic styles might be achieved if certain mood states and personality constructs favor a particular genre of art. The results may also shed light on the manner in which people express themselves through aesthetical choices. Six art genres (Impressionism, Abstract, Cubism, Japanese, Northern Renaissance, Secular Islamic) were compared on the Big Five (NEO-PI), and Profile of Mood States (POMS). In addition, two measures of art preference were employed; one that measures art genre preference and another that measures preference for masculine/feminine and abstract/real subject matter. SAS procedures were employed to conduct a MANOVA and significant findings were produced.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

To achieve the objective of this study, five surveys were administered to 160 participants (males=43, females=122) enrolled in undergraduate classes at a large Southwestern public university. These surveys included the Costa & McCrae (NEO-PI) Big Five Test, the Profile of Mood States Survey (POMS) (1995), and two measures of art preference. The Costa & McCrae (NEO-PI) (1991) contains 60 items measuring openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism within a person. Lastly, the profile of mood states survey is 30 items, measuring tension, depression, anger, vigor, fatigue, and confusion. The Big Five and POMS raw scores were converted into T-scores (M = 50, SD = 10). T-scores for the Masculine/Feminine scale and Abstract/real scale were unavailable. The first art preference contains a series of photos from different genres of art that measures participant's preference between masculine or feminine art, and abstract or real art. There are 56 pairs of photos included. "The Masculine/Feminine scale consisted of items that were selected on the basis of significant gender differences (e.g. on pair shows a painting of flowers versus a painting of war). The abstract/realistic scale was developed through factor analysis and items typically were picture pairs where one of the paintings was non stylized (attempting to be like a photograph almost) versus paintings that are more impressionistic or lack a definable subject matter at all." The second art survey determines an individual's preference between Impressionism, Abstract, Cubism, Japanese, Northern Renaissance, and Secular Islamic art genres. Both art preferences surveys were administered electronically via URL link (http://personality-testing.info/tests/APS/,http://www.poll-maker.com/QEU3IR) prior to the mood and personality

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surveys, which were garnered within a classroom. After the students completed the surveys, Wylbur Statistical Analysis Software procedures were employed to conduct a MANOVA. Thus, the six art genres (Impressionism, Abstract, Cubism, Japanese, Northern Renaissance, and Secular Islamic) were compared on the Big Five (NEO-PI) (see fig.1), the two artistic preferences scales, and Profile of Mood States (POMS). No exclusion criterion was adopted, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before the experiment. Participants were allowed to decline participation or withdraw from the experiment before completion without penalty. The participants must have completed all five surveys and the cover sheet for their entries to be considered useable.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

SAS procedures were employed in order to conduct Multiple Analyses of Variance (MANOVA). Thus, the six art genres were compared on the BF, POMS, and LOT-R constructs. A significant Wilks' λ {F $_{(70,608)}$ = 1.66, p< .001 was noted. Specifically, there were significant differences between genres on the POMS Tension scale (see Fig.1) ($F_{5, 140}$) = 2.44, p< .04) with the Impressionism genre (M=6.31, SD= 3.73) significantly lower than the Japanese genre. On the POMS Depression scale ($F_{5, 140}$) = 4.46, p< .0008) the Impressionism (M= 3.04, SD= 2.82) genre was significantly lower than the Abstract (M= 5.34, SD= 4.70) genre, the Japanese genre (M= 8.11, SD= 5.51), and the Northern Renaissance genre (M=8.67, SD= 7.31). The Cubism (M=4.68, SD=4.04) genre was significantly lower than the Japanese genre in depression. Lastly, the Japanese genre was significantly higher than the Secular Islamic (M= 3.00, SD=2.83) genre in depression. On the POMS Anger scale ($F_{5, 140}$) = 3.54, p< .005), the Impressionism (M=3.33, SD= 2.98) genre was significantly lower than Japanese (M= 6.22, SD= 4.97) and Northern Renaissance (M= 8.00, SD= 6.66) genre. Also, Cubism (M=4.60, SD=4.19) was significantly higher than Secular Islamic (M= 1.25, SD= 1.26); Northern Renaissance was significantly lower than Secular Islamic in anger. On the POMS Confusion scale ($F_{5, 140}$) = 3.35, p< .007), the Impressionism genre (M=4.31, SD= 2.30) was significantly lower than Abstract (M= 5.29, SD=2.38), Cubism (M=5.64, SD=2.87), Japanese(M= 7.22, 4.76), and Secular Islamic (M= 4.25, SD=2.22) genres. Also, the Abstract genre was significantly lower than the Japanese genre in confusion. Finally, the Cubism genre was significantly lower than the Japanese genre in confusion. The POMS Total Mood Disturbance composite score ($F_{5,140}$) = 3.50, p<.005)

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indicated that the Impressionism (M= 16.01, SD= 14.03) genre was significantly lower than the Abstract (M= 22.58, SD=18.21), Cubism (M= 20.04, SD=16.99), and Northern Renaissance (M= 35.50, SD=30.27) genres. The Abstract genre was significantly lower than the Cubism genre in Total Mood Disturbance, and the Cubism genre was significantly lower than the Japanese genre. Lastly, the Japanese genre was significantly higher than the Northern Renaissance genre in Total Mood Disturbance. The Masculine-Feminine construct (see fig.4) was also found to be highly significant ($F_{5,\ 140}$) = 8.62, p< .0001) with the Impressionism (M= 3.22, SD= 1.11) genre significantly lower than the Cubism (M= 5.16, SD=1.37), Japanese (M= 4.17, SD=1.56), Northern Renaissance (M=5.02, SD=1.24), and Secular Islamic (M=4.50, SD=1.85) genres. The Abstract (M=4.92, SD=1.65) genre was significantly lower than the Cubism and Northern Renaissance genres. The Japanese genre was significantly lower than Northern Renaissance genre. The Abstract-Realism construct (see fig.3) ($F_{5,\ 140}$) = 3.90, p< .002) indicated the Impressionism (M= 4.76, SD=1.55) genre was significantly higher than the Cubism (M= 4.02, SD=1.51) and Secular Islamic (M= 2.82, SD=2.51) genres, but significantly lower than Northern Renaissance genres (M= 2.75, SD=1.42). The Abstract (M= 4.92, SD=1.65) genre was significantly higher than the Cubism, Japanese (M=3.51, SD=1.79), Northern Renaissance and Secular Islamic genres.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Current study

The objective of this research project is to investigate the extent to which an individual's mood and personality predict their art preference. The significance of this research project is that if certain moods and personalities favor a particular genre of art, thus providing a better understanding of artistic styles. It can also display the way people express themselves through aesthetical choices. Five surveys were administered to 160 participants (males=43, females=122) enrolled in undergraduate classes at a large Southwestern public university: the Costa & McCrae (NEO-PI) Big Five Test, the Profile of Mood States Survey, and two measures of art preference. Both art preferences surveys were administered electronically via URL link prior to the mood and personality surveys, which were garnered within a classroom. SAS procedures were employed to conduct a MANOVA. Thus, the six art genres (Impressionism, Abstract, Cubism, Japanese, Northern Renaissance, Secular Islamic) were compared on the Big Five (NEO-PI), and Profile of Mood States (POMS). A significant Wilks' λ {F $_{(70,608)}$ = 1.66, p<0.001 was noted. Specifically, there were significant differences between genres on the POMS Tension scale ($F_{5, 140}$ = 2.44, p< 0.04), Depression scale ($F_{5, 140}$ = 4.46, p<0.0008), Anger scale ($F_{5, 140}$ = 3.54, p< .005), Confusion scale ($F_{5, 140}$ = 3.35, p< 0.007), and Total Mood Disturbance composite score ($F_{5, 140}$ = 3.50, p< .005). The Masculine-Feminine construct was also found to be highly significant ($F_{5, 140}$ = 8.62, p< 0.0001) between genres. Finally, the Abstract-Realism construct ($F_{5, 140}$ = 3.90, p< 0.002) also found specific differences between genres. It is intriguing that mood was so strongly related to art genre preference. This would suggest research to further

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investigate this relationship. Specifically, observing the relationship between art genres and POMS indices of Tension, Depression, Anger, and Confusion. Depression was the most significant of the POMS measures, suggesting that variances in mood between genres can be most identified through depression. Additionally, the Big Five (NEO-PI) reveals that Openness has a relationship with art genre preference. This dimension was initially hypothesized as a predictor because people low on Openness tend to be conventional, un-artistic, and un-analytical while people high on Openness tend to be curious, creative, and untraditional. These characteristics logically seem relevant in relation to artistic preference. In Chamorro-Premuzic's (2008) study comparing the Big Five to cubism, renaissance, impressionism, and Japanese "openness to experience was the strongest and only consistent personality correlate," which is consistent with our results. The relationship between mood and art preference might suggest inclusion of artistic material in a therapy regimen.

Future research

In the future, I would like to investigate a broader range of artistic genres. These include Abstract Expressionism, Ancient/Classical, Art Nouveau, Baroque, Classicism, Cubism, Dada, Expressionism, Impressionism, Oriental, Secular Islamic, Photorealism, Pop Art, Renaissance, and Surrealism. This future study would include a randomized sequence of 45 photos that represent each art genre. Each art genre may have a unique relationship with one or more of the psychometric measures intended for use. I would also like to change the response design to require reactions to choices presented in a Likert-like format ranging from 1- strongly dislike, 2- dislike, 3-neutral, 4- like, and 5- strongly like. This method is preferred since the response is represented in a continuum that allows a more detailed measure of artistic preference.

In addition, two new psychometric measures will be included. The Sensation Seeking Scale-From V (SSS-V) will be used in order to determine whether individuals who prefer a certain genre of art, tend to seek excitement and other sense eliciting experiences, or tend to be more cautious and less sensationally driven. The SSS-V has good internal consistency across age and sex variations (Stephenson 2003). Mastandrea (2009) investigated the differences between individuals who prefer modern art or ancient art in museums and found that "modern art museum visitors attained higher scores as compared to ancient art museum visitors." Secondly, a measure of aesthetic appreciation in participants will be used to allow comparisons associated with the various artistic genres. For example, does a participant actively appreciate beauty in their surroundings? Or, do they simply absorb the world without heavy importance placed on aesthetics? "Aesthetic appreciation has many determinants ranging from evolutionary, anatomical or physiological constraints to influences of culture, history and individual

differences. There are a vast number of dynamically configured neural networks underlying

these multifaceted processes of aesthetic appreciation" (Jacobsen 2009). I would like to replace

the Profile of Mood States (POMS-SF) with the Manual for the Positive and Negative Affect

Schedule (PANAS-X). Watson, Clark & Tellegen's PANAS-X "studies of the structure of

affect, [and found that] positive and negative affect have consistently emerged as two dominant

and relatively independent dimensions" (1988/6). This survey has equal positive and negative

affect measures, which is more beneficial for this particular study than the POMS-SF. The

POMS-SF does not have equal measures of positive and negative affects; it only has one positive

affect, which is vigor. I would also like to replace the Masculine-Feminine measure with the

Bem Sex-Role Inventory. Bishop and Lester's (1993) survey "contains a 10-item masculinity

scale, 10-item femininity scale, and 10 gender-neutral items" that measure androgyny (p. 273).

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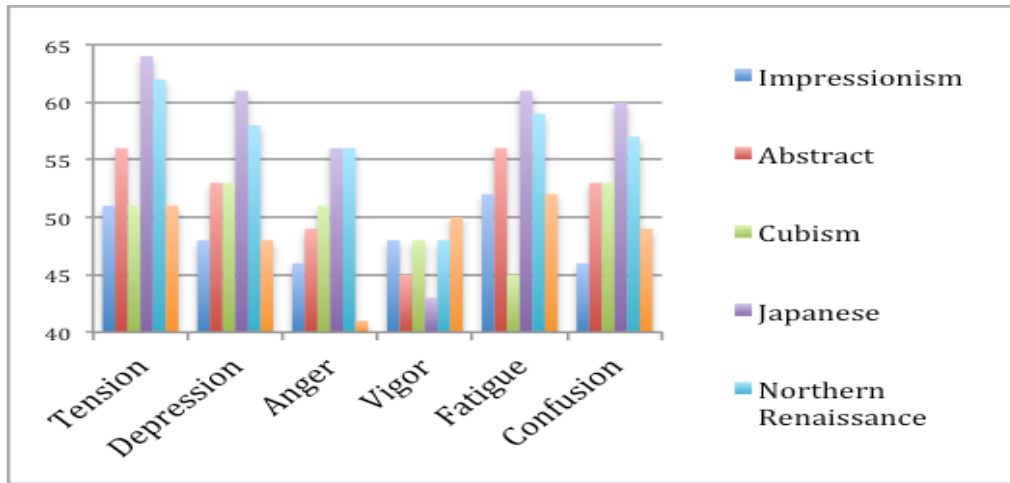
APPENDIX A

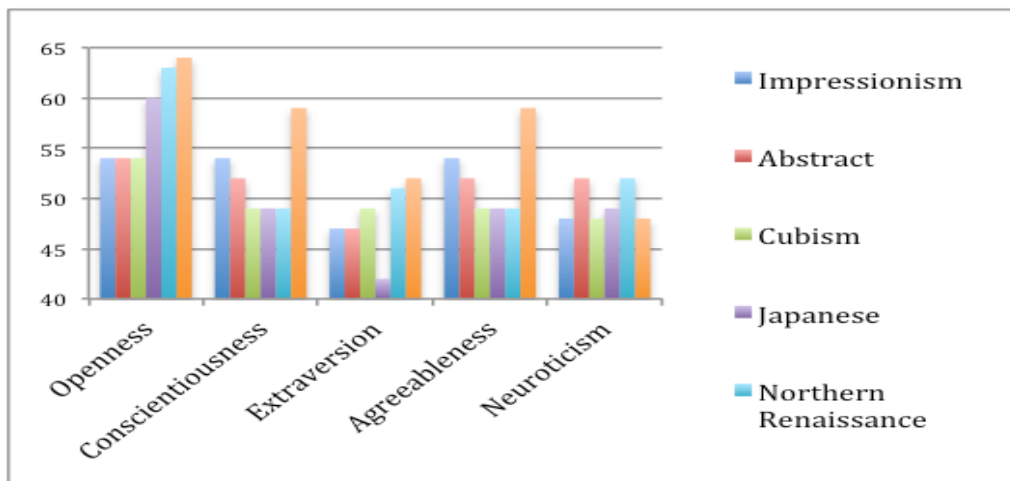Fig.1- POMS associated with Art Genres
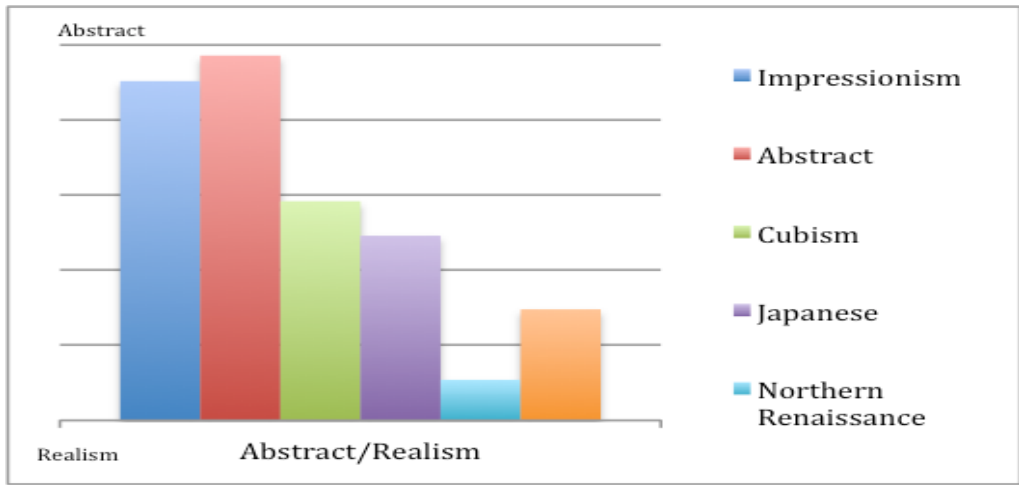

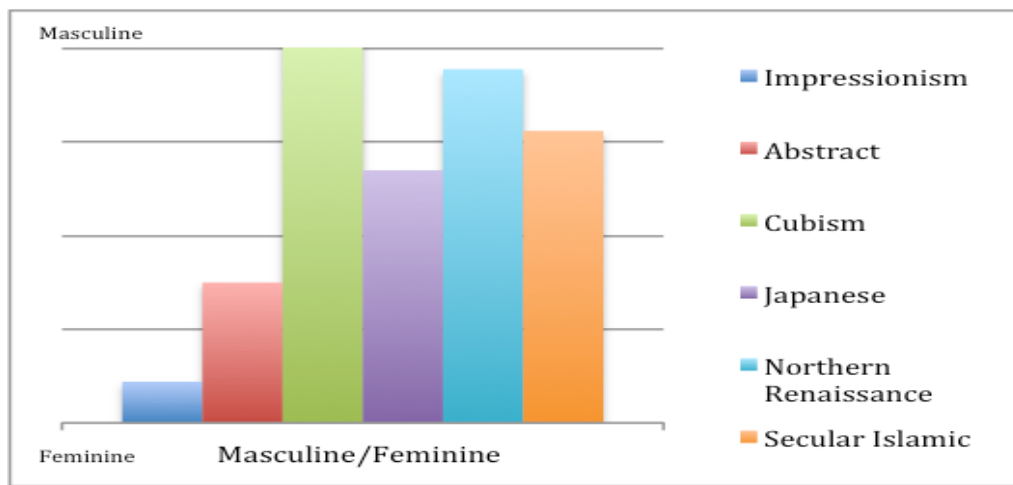Fig.2- Big Five associated with Art Genres

Fig.3- Abstract/Realism associated with Art Genres

Fig.4- Masculine/Feminine associated with Art Genres