Assessing The Impact Of Gender And Personality On Film Preferences

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Abstract

In this paper, the impact of gender and Big Five personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism) on visual media preferences (for comedy, horror, action, romance and fantasy film genres) was examined. The analyses were carried out using data collected by Stillwell's (2007) myPersonality application on Facebook; and focused on a sub-sample of British residents aged 16-25 (n=29,197). It was confirmed that females prefer romantic films, whereas males favour action films. As predicted, there was also a marked interaction between gender and personality characteristics: females score higher on Neuroticism and Agreeableness than males. Individuals scoring high on the dimension of Openness were more likely to prefer comedy and fantasy films than romantic films. Conscientious individuals were more inclined to enjoy action and romance genres. Individuals scoring high on Neuroticism tended to prefer romantic films. Finally, significant interactions were noted between gender and Openness with regard to preferences for comedy, action and romance genres. Overall, it is certain that the combination of gender and Big Five personality factors contributes substantially to an understanding of people's film preferences.

Assessing the impact of Gender and Personality on Film Preferences

Do comedies have a sexually differentiated public? Are males and females who enjoy horror films similar in terms of personality? Regardless of gender, do personality characteristics influence preference for the fantasy genre?

In the present study, we have attempted to provide a meaningful answer to the aforementioned set of questions, based on the analysis of gender and personality interactions with regard to film preferences. In an attempt to complement previous research findings, we focused our analysis on the role of sex and personality in film preferences for British Facebook users aged 16-25. We paid attention to their scores on online Big Five personality questionnaires and their stated gender, using both single and multivariate measures to relate the two variables to film preferences, also listed on their profiles.
The following hypotheses were tested:

- 1. Females and males differ with regard to film preferences.
- 2. Personality characteristics differ according to gender.
- 3. Film preferences vary in accordance with personality characteristics.
- 4. There is a significant interaction between gender and personality with regard to film preferences.

the explanatory potential of online social networks

Online social networks are mass repositories of valuable social and psychological information for researchers. Facebook, ranked as the most popular social network by worldwide monthly users, hosts for instance more than 400 million user profiles, in which individuals' number of friends, media content preferences and socio-demographic background– amongst other things - are displayed. Their systematic use for data collection purposes is a relatively recent trend in social psychological research; Stillwell's creation of the myPersonality application (2007) on Facebook is a striking exemplar of the considerable explanatory potential of those online social networks. With myPersonality, users can take an online version of the Big Five personality questionnaire and agree to share their profile information for research purposes. As such, users' personalities can be matched to any other single or collection of individual information available on Facebook, opening up an array of possible areas of investigation.

the predominance of visual media

The appeal of visual media is easily demonstrated in terms of the importance it has in the lives of most individuals. Data from the National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport (2007) indicates that watching television is the most common leisure activity for over eight out of ten men and women in England, taking precedence over spending time with friends and family, sport, etc. Another intriguing finding relates to TV and movie watching online: the number of Britons visiting such websites reached 21 million in 2007. Although it is clear that many people enjoy visual media offerings, it is much more difficult to pinpoint the specific viewer characteristics that predict genre enjoyment. In other words, who prefers which type of content?

visual media content: an explanation of viewer preferences

Initially the domain of inquiry of communication theorists, media preferences and their determinants are increasingly studied from the vantage point of a variety of disciplines, amongst which psychology and sociology feature predominantly (Kraaykamp et al, 2005). Their combined explanatory potential finds its articulation in the uses and gratification approach (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Rosengreen & Windhal, 1989), according to which preferences for specific media and/or specific content result from an individual's psychological and social attributes.

gender differences in media content preferences

Research on media preferences has paid notable attention to sex differences in responses to different types of film. It has been established that various movie genres elicit differentiated affective responses between the two sexes. Rather interestingly, the widespread gender – stereotyping running through entertainment products seems to correspond to actual viewer preferences. Males indeed prefer action/adventure genres typically associated with the masculine sex, whilst females have a soft spot for romance/drama. Oliver et al. (2000) point to the explanatory potential of differential gender-linked expectations, which can be conceptualized along two dimensions: (1) communality, typically associated with females and (2) agency, often associated with males (Eagly, 1987). Depending on whether they are communal or agency-consistent, the themes preponderant in each genre make up for a sexually differentiated public. A number of studies highlighted the importance of sex in social affiliation with media characters: viewers tend to affiliate more strongly with and

experience more intense emotional responses to same-sex characters (e.g. Deutsch, 1975; Hoffner & Cantor, 1991). Another potential explanation is that of sex differences in mean personality levels, which remain fairly constant across the lifespan (Feingold, 1994; McCrae & Costa, 1984).

personality differences in media preferences

Theorists have also focused considerable attention on the role of personality characteristics in modern mass communication theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Wober, 1986). In most personality/media use models, personality is conceptualized as the nexus of attitudes, beliefs and values that guide one's cognitive and affective interactions with the social environment (Weaver et al, 1993). Personality characteristics are thus believed to influence media preferences, which are essentially evaluative judgements pertaining to the gratifications consumers anticipate from their interaction with the media (Palmgreen, 1984).

The Big Five framework of personality is most frequently employed by researchers seeking to demonstrate empirical connections between media gratifications and their psychological roots (e.g. Kraaykamp, 2001; Kraaykamp et al, 2005). It includes the following domains: Openness (traits like *originality* and *open-mindedness*), Conscientiousness (traits like *hard-working* and *orderly*), Extraversion (traits like *energetic* and *sociable*), Agreeableness (traits like *affectionate* and *considerate*) and Neuroticism (traits like *nervous* and *tense*) (Donellan & Lucas, 2008). With regard to media preferences, individuals scoring high on the dimension of Openness seem to prefer original and serious media content, whilst conscientious individuals like predictable and structured formats (Kraaykamp et al, 2005). The findings for extroverts are less straightforward: they seemingly favour sensory stimulation because of relatively high arousal levels (Costa & McCrae, 1988). Agreeableness appears to be the second most important personality trait, after Openness, in predicting visual preferences. Friendly individuals tend to watch popular content, devoid of upsetting and unconventional images (Kraykaamp, 2001). Finally, emotionally unstable individuals are thought to find easy means of escape from feelings of tension and stress in watching TV (Conway & Rubin, 1991).

Most studies on personality effects in media preferences tend to either overlook or control for participants' gender (e.g. Weaver et al, 1993; Kraaykamp, 2001). As a result, it is difficult to tell in the former case whether the differentiated association between media

preferences and personality characteristics is partially caused by the fact that personality traits differ systematically between people of different sexes (Kraaykamp & Van Eijck, 2005). The latter design precludes the possibility of assessing the interaction between gender and personality when it comes to predicting media taste. It seemed to us as though no one has investigated gendered differences in personality in the context of similar genre preferences.

Method

Participants

To test our hypotheses, we used the dataset collected by Stillwell's myPersonality application between January 2008 and January 2009**1**. The amount of data available allowed us to conduct analyses on a considerably larger scale than most of the previous studies on personality and film preferences. Moreover, the real world setting in which the data was collected lends considerable validity to our subsequent results. The sub-sample we focused on consists of 29,197 UK Facebook users aged 16-25.

Procedure

The personality measures used in study were the IPIP 100-item, 60-item, 40-item and 20-item Big Five personality questionnaires (Goldberg et al, 2006). IPIP Big Five scales represent Costa and McCrae's Five Factor Model employed in the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 2007). The participants completed the personality test between 1st of January 2008 and 1st of January 2009 on Facebook.com, a popular social networking website.
In designing our research, we paid attention to three potentially confounding variables for which previous research has shown that they matter in explaining differentiation in media preferences (Van Eijck et al, 2000; Kraaykamp & Djikstra 1999). Country of residence was identified, alongside gender. The latter was coded 0= females, 1= males. Age was provided in numerical form by number of years.

Facebook users listed their film preferences on their profiles, under the heading: 'Info/favourite films'. There were no restrictions applying to the number of neither films listed nor their type. It thus seemed safe to assume that the films titles included reflected

1 It has more than 4 million user profiles worldwide, and around 700,000 monthly users (My Personality).

spontaneous articulations of viewing preferences. We sought to examine the interaction between gender and personality with regard to enjoyment of comedy, horror, action, romance and fantasy. Beforehand, it was necessary to discriminate between the variety of titles on offer; we selected the following, based on their recurrence in the dataset and their 'fit' within the five genres. Comedy: *Superbad, Monty Python* and *Anchorman*. Horror: *Saw, The Shining* and *Alien*. Action: *300, James Bond* and *Gladiator*. Romance: *Pride and Prejudice, Dirty Dancing* and *Titanic*. Fantasy: *Lord of the Rings, Star Wars* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Participants who listed one or more of the above scored 1 in the corresponding category, those who didn't scored 0. It was assumed that listing a film as a favourite denoted a preference for the corresponding genre. More details regarding the film selection procedure and each film's characteristics can be found in Appendix A.

Hypothesis 1, pertaining to gender differences in film preferences, was tested with cross-tabulations and chi-square, whilst independent t-tests were employed to assess the extent of sex differences in personality. We then conducted multivariate analyses, using a 2x2 MANOVA design for each of the film genres, in order to measure the strength of the relationship between personality characteristics and film preferences. Such a design was also utilized to examine the relationship between gender and personality interactions and film preferences. All three types of test enabled us to detect statistically significant relationships.

Results

Gender differences in film preferences

The results from the cross-tabulations are summarized in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Gender differences in taste for each of the five film genres.

Film Genre	Percentage		Chi-squared $X^2(1)$	Odds ratio
	Male	Female		
Comedy	9.2%	5.0%	196.939***	2:1
Horror	9.3%	8.5%	5.224***	11:10
Action	13.7%	5.1%	641.330***	3:1
Romance	1.4%	14.0%	1548.902***	1:11
Fantasy	14.0%	10.1%	107.219***	3:2

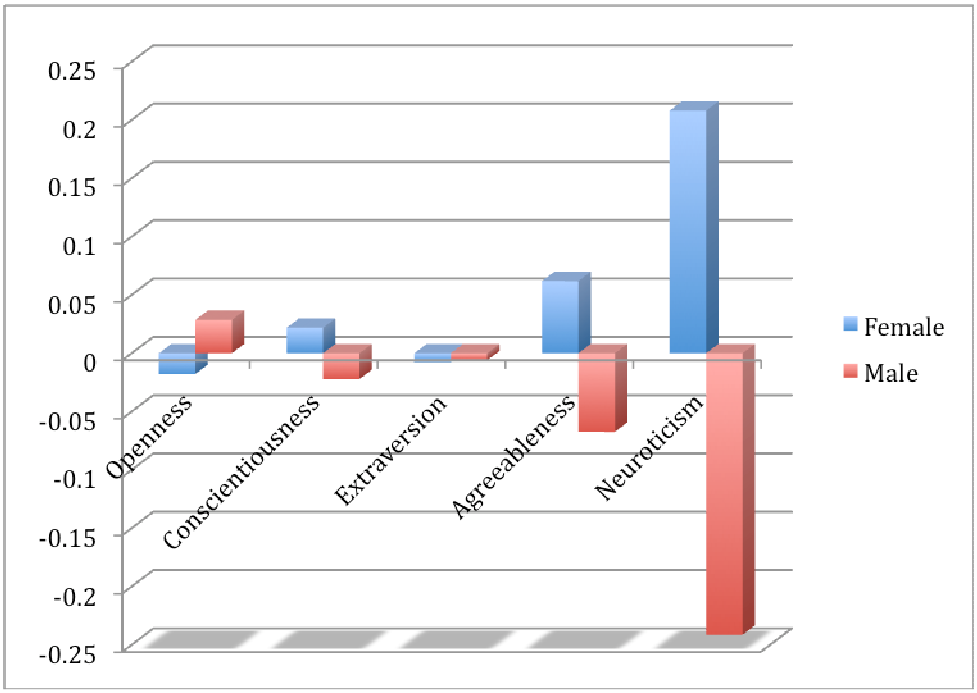
Note: Female (N=15526); Male (N=13671) *** p<.001.

A rapid glance at **Table 1** warrants the widespread claim that men and women have differential viewing preferences (Tamborini et al, 1987; Richards & Sheridan, 1987; Oliver et al, 2000). The most striking differences pertain to the romance category; action is the next most sexually differentiated category, taste-wise. Comedy and romance follow: sex differences in preferences for either genre are noticeable, albeit less remarkable. Rather interestingly, the sex difference in taste for horror movies is quasi-inexistent.

Sex differences in personality characteristics

Sex differences in personality characteristics are displayed in Figure 1[2].

Figure 1. Deviation from the mean score for standardized personality traits regarding sex



The independent t-tests ran to assess the extent of gender differences in personality were statistically significant ($p<.001$) for all personality dimensions but one, that of Extraversion. When we look at Figure 1, the deviation for Neuroticism is especially noteworthy: females are considerably more neurotic than males; - there is a medium effect size in the deviation from the mean score for Neuroticism for both females and males, albeit in diverging directions -. The effect size with regard to the sexes' respective scores on Agreeableness is also noteworthy: females tend to be more agreeable than males. Deviations on the dimensions of Conscientiousness and Openness fall below the 0.02 mark and are thus less important. It is nonetheless visible that males are generally more open and less conscientious than females.

[2] See Appendix B I for further details.

Personality differences in film preferences

Prior to examining the interaction between sex and personality with regard to film preferences, several analyses were conducted to examine personality differences to film preferences in general. A 2 (Participant sex) x 2 (Taste for specific film genre) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was employed. It used the standardized scores on the five dimensions of personality as dependant variables, and was run for the five film genres cited above.[3]

comedy genre

The analysis revealed a significant multivariate main effect on taste for comedy, $F(5,29189)=16.730$, $p<.001$. This main effect reflected important differences on the dimensions of Openness, $F(1,29193)=72.628$, $p<.001$, and Conscientiousness, $F(1, 29193)=4.876$, $p<.05$, with comedy fans reporting higher scores on Openness and lower scores on Conscientiousness. Table 2.1 reports the means for these personality effects.

Table 2.1 Mean standardized scores on personality dimensions of fans and non-fans of comedy.

Personality Dimension	Fans *N* = 2034	Non-fans *N* = 27163
Openness	.173***	-.009***
Conscientiousness	-.055*	.005*
Extraversion	-.005	-.007
Agreeableness	.007	.001
Neuroticism	-.098	.005

*** p <.001; * p <.05

[3] See Appendix B II for more information.

horror genre

The analysis revealed a significant multivariate main effect for taste for horror, F(5,29189)=10.183, p<.001. This main effect reflected important differences on the dimensions of Agreeableness, F 1,29193)=21.503, p<.001, Extraversion, F(1,29193)=16.356, p<.001 and Neuroticism, F(1,29193)=29.133, p<.001. Horror fans reported less Extraversion and Agreeableness, and more Neuroticism than non-fans. Table 2.2 reports the means for these effects.

Table 2.2 Mean standardized scores on personality dimensions of fans and non-fans of horror.

Personality dimension	Fans *N*= 2596	Non-fans *N*= 26601
Openness	.046*	-.0001*
Conscientiousness	-.037	.005
Extraversion	-.082***	.0006***
Agreeableness	-.089***	.01***
Neuroticism	.089***	-.011***

*** p <.001; * p <.05

action genre

The analysis revealed a significant multivariate main effect for taste for action, F(5,29189)=20.769, p<.001. This main effect revealed important differences on the dimension of Openness, F(1,29193)=41.304, p<.001; Conscientiousness, F(1,29193)=38.752, p<.001 and Neuroticism. F(1,29193)=12.980, p<.001. Action fans were more open and conscientious, and less neurotic than non-fans. Table 2.3 reports the means for these effects.

Table 2.3 Mean standardized scores on personality dimensions of fans and non-fans of action.

Personality Dimension	Fans	Non-fans
	N= 2669	*N*=26528
Openness	.107***	-.006***
Conscientiousness	.114***	-.01***
Extraversion	-.04	-.003
Agreeableness	-.025	.004
Neuroticism	-.178***	.015***
*** p <.001		

romance genre

The analysis revealed a significant multivariate main effect for taste for romance, F(5,29189)=7.644, p<.001. This main effect revealed important differences on the dimensions of Conscientiousness, F(1,29193)=12.550, p<.001 and Neuroticism, F(1,29193)=5.663, p<.05. Romance fans were more conscientious and neurotic than non-fans. Table 2.4 reports the means for these effects.

Table 2.4 Mean standardized scores on personality dimensions of fans and non-fans of romance.

Personality Dimension	Fans	Non-fans
	N= 2369	*N*= 26828
Openness	-.088	.012
Conscientiousness	.137***	-.011***
Extraversion	.058**	-.012**
Agreeableness	.001	-.005
Neuroticism	.237**	-.023**
*** p <.001; ** p <.02		

fantasy genre

The analysis revealed a significant multivariate main effect for fantasy, F(5,29189)=83.068, p<.001. This main effect revealed important differences on the dimensions of Openness, F(1,29193)=191.541, p<.001 and Extraversion, F(1,29193)=142.738, p<.001. Fantasy fans

were more open and less extroverted than non-fans. Table 2.5 reports the means for these effects.

Table 2.5 Mean standardized scores on personality dimensions of fans and non-fans of fantasy.

Personality Dimension	Fans *N*=3477	Non-fans *N*=25720
Openness	.225***	-.026***
Conscientiousness	.02	-.001
Extraversion	-.195***	.019***
Agreeableness	.054***	-.006***
Neuroticism	-.002	-.001

*** p <.001

Interaction between sex and personality with regard to film preferences

The second section of the 2 (Participant sex) x 2 (Taste for specific film genre) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) enabled us to examine the interaction between gender and personality with regard to film preferences[4].

comedy genre

The analysis revealed a significant multivariate main effect for the interaction of gender and personality on comedy preferences, $F(5, 29189) = 5.767$ $p < .001$. This main effect reflected important differences on the dimension of Openness, $F(1, 29193) = 23.973$, $p <. 001$. Females who listed films belonging to the comedy genre were more open than males who also reported an enjoyment of those films. Table 3.1 reports the means for these interactions effects.

[4] See Appendix B II for further information.

Table 3.1 Mean standardized scores on personality dimensions of female and male fans of comedy

Personality Dimension	Females *N*= 777	Males *N*=1257
Openness	.282***	106***
Conscientiousness	-.02	-.077
Extraversion	.029	-.027
Agreeableness	.059	-.025
Neuroticism	.211	-.289

*** p< .001

horror genre

There was no significant multivariate main effect for the interaction of gender and personality on horror preferences, F(5,29189)=1.046 p>.05[5].

action genre

The analysis revealed a significant main effect of the interaction of gender and personality on action preferences, F(5,29189)=4,596 p<.001. This main effect reflected important differences on the dimension of Openness, F(1,29193)=21,584, p<.001. Females who listed films belonging to the action genre were more open than males who also reported an enjoyment of those films. Table 3.2 reports the means for these interaction effects.

Table 3.2 Mean standardized scores on personality dimensions of female and male fans of action.

Personality Dimension	Females *N*=797	Males *N*=1872
Openness	.213***	.062***
Conscientiousness	.149	.099
Extraversion	-.047	-.038
Agreeableness	.092	-.075
Neuroticism	.141	-.314

*** p< .001

[5] See Appendix B II.ii for further information.

romance genre

The analysis revealed a significant main effect of the interaction of gender and personality on romance preferences, F(5,29189)=4.083 p<.001. This main effect reflected important differences on the dimension of Openness, F(1,29193)=19.708, p<.001. Males who listed films belonging to the romance genre were more open than females who also reported an enjoyment of those films. Table 3.3 reports the means for these interaction effects.

Table 3.3 Mean standardized scores on personality dimensions of female and male fans of romance.

Personality Dimension	Female *N*=2176	Male *N*=193
Openness	-.117***	.247***
Conscientiousness	.14	.1097
Extraversion	.053	.117
Agreeableness	.092	-.054
Neuroticism	.271	-.139

*** p< .001

fantasy genre

There was no significant multivariate main effect of the interaction of gender and personality on fantasy preferences, F(5,29189)=1.121, p>0.05[6].

Discussion

The above findings warrant the conclusion that our four hypotheses are supported.

Females and males differ with regard to film preferences

The argument for sexually differentiated viewing preferences is strongly supported by our results pertaining to romantic films; it is also verified – albeit less strikingly – in the case of action movies. Oliver et al (2000)'s claim that females appreciate romance/ drama themes whilst males prefer action/crime scenarios is supported here. Likewise, the rather trivial size of the odd ratios for comedy and fantasy genres can be explained by the fact that such genres

[6] See Appendix B II.v for further information.

– or at least the films chosen to exemplify them – are hybrids, theme-wise, focusing on neither violence nor relationships. Our investigation yielded one puzzling finding, pertaining to horror films: whilst most theorists insist upon males' alleged partiality to violent films as opposed to females' inherent dislike of them (Oliver et al, 1998), the odds ratio for that category is extremely close to 1:1, indicating that the likelihood of sexually differentiated viewing preferences is null. How can that be explained? It is important to point out here that the films selected for this genre include a plethora of extremely violent, sadistic and paranormal elements, and cannot be dismissed as poorly representative for the horror category.

Personality characteristics differ according to gender

The above results point to sexual differentiation in personality dimension scores. Neuroticism is the strongest sexually differentiated personality dimension, on which females on average score especially high and males relatively low. The same pattern is found with regard to Agreeableness, albeit less strikingly. Gender differences in Conscientiousness and Openness are less important, but suggest that females are less open and more conscientious than their male counterparts. There is no relationship between gender and personality in Extraversion scores. Explanations for such differences can be sought in the realms of evolutionary biology and sociology. According to the former, personality traits are genetically determined by up to 60% (Riemann et al, 1997), and correspond to the distinct functions assigned to members of the two sexes in primitive societies (Marlowe, 2003). Moreover, it may be that socialization into specific gender-roles reinforces such dispositions by rewarding males for assertive behaviour and females for obedience and empathy (Schmitt et al, 2004). Although these considerations do not seem directly related to the subject of our investigation, they are necessary stepping-stones to understanding the joint mediation of gender and personality characteristics in film preferences.

Film preferences vary in accordance with personality characteristics

There are noticeable differences in film preferences with regard to personality characteristics. Firstly, our results indicate that people who list our selected comedy titles amongst their preferences are significantly more open than those who don't; they are also slightly less conscientious. Following Kraaykamp et al's (2005) line of thought, this can be explained by the fact that comic films generally include humour and originality –challenging conventional thinking-, and do not have predictable plot-lines. Tied to the finding that males tend to be

slightly more open and less conscientious than females, this contributes to an explanation of why males are more likely to prefer comedy than females.

Participants who mentioned film titles belonging to our horror category tended to be less extroverted and agreeable than those who didn't. They were also more neurotic. With regard to Agreeableness, our findings fit neatly with the prevailing paradigm: agreeable people are deemed to dislike any film displaying unconventional and brutal images, since these are at odds with the attributes of warmth and kindness such individuals possess. Results for Extroversion and Neuroticism are intriguing: extroverts supposedly favour sensory arousal that arises in the context of horror films. Could Finn's (1997) assertion that extroverts prefer social interaction and are, as a result, less prone to visual media consumption serve as a valid explanation? Neurotic individuals' motivation for watching violent and disturbing movies is rather impenetrable. Indeed, it could – and most often is – assumed that such people would shy away from potentially damaging images, seeking refuge and alleviation of tension and stress in light-hearted genres instead.

Turning our attention to the action genre, we find that respondents who listed film titles belonging to that category were generally more conscientious than those who didn't. It is plausible that it is the relatively predictable plot-line present in most action movies that appeals to conscientious individuals' preference for familiarity. They were also less neurotic; a finding that supports Conway and Rubin's (1991) claim that neurotic individuals favour light-hearted genres as a means for escape form tension and anxiety. Finally – and very strikingly – fans of action films scored higher on the dimension of Openness too. There was no instance of compatibility between high scores on the dimensions of Openness and Conscientiousness in the previous studies we were acquainted with. A possible explanation for such compatibility might be that action films combine a familiar, predictable format – appealing to conscientiousness viewers - with serious or original content – enjoyed by rather open viewers-. This key finding appears to merit further attention in subsequent research.

In the realm of romance, people who listed films belonging to that category were most often more conscientious and neurotic than those who didn't. This phenomenon is easily explainable: romantic films often have a rather similar characters and predictable endings; they also offer comfort in the sense that they carry the message that love always blossoms, even in the most

unlikely situation. Both sexes' relative scores on Conscientiousness and Neuroticism scales contribute to explain females' striking partiality for such stories, as opposed to males'.

Finally, our results indicate that fans of fantasy films are more open and less extroverted than non-fans. Their scores on the first trait may derive from the fact that the fantasy genre often involves original, intellectually stimulating plots and characters. Fantasy fans' low scores on the second trait are harder to interpret. It is possible that fantasy films are closely connected to the realm of the imagination, which introverts cultivate more than extroverts do.[7]

There is a significant interaction between gender and personality with regard to film preferences

Do males and females who enjoy the same films have similar personalities? According to our findings, this seems to be the case with regard to the all dimensions of personality, Openness excepted. Scores on the latter vary importantly between male and female fans of comedy, action and romance. Females who cited films belonging to our comedy and action categories were more open than males who liked the same films. The reverse was true for romance, for which Openness scores were strikingly higher for male fans than for female fans. Such findings support our aforementioned results pertaining to gender differences in film genre and personality. Females aren't generally prone to liking action films; a higher degree of Openness (to new experiences) is likely to facilitate enjoyment of them. The same line of argument is valid for males in the case of romantic films. Moreover, a small effect was observed for comedy fans: females who listed comedy films amongst their favourites were slightly more open than male fans of comedy. This could potentially be due to the fact that in the comedies selected, the main protagonists were males and that may have impeded self-identification processes for female viewers.

Evaluation

Successful findings notwithstanding, our research design may be challenged from a variety of vantage points. To begin with, the source of our data may be rather problematic: it originates from Facebook user-profiles, and like any public content, may be distorted by social desirability biases. Despite these risks, research on the topic of online self-presentation suggests that online social networking website are in fact a relevant and valid means of communicating personality [and presumably film preferences] (Gosling et al, 2007).

[7] Introverts might have a richer inner life compared to the latter, which spontaneously exteriorize their feelings.

With regard to the personality questionnaires administered, it could be argued that the difference in item numbers could have adversely affected the accuracy of trait measurement. Our failure to find significant interaction effects between gender and personality with regard to taste for horror or fantasy might be attributed to the fact that only broad personality traits were assessed. Narrower constructs tapping into more specific features of personality – such as personality facets – (Donellan & Lucas, 2008) weren't included. It is also useful to note that whilst there may be a widespread emerging consensus pertaining to the validity of the Big Five factor structure, it is by no means synonymous with universal acceptance. Perhaps following Helson & Kwan (2000) 's suggestion pertaining to the two-fold nature of Extraversion[8]might have enabled us to find more than a quasi-inexistent differential impact for that personality dimension with regard to film preferences.

Our methodology with regard to film classifications may also be amenable to criticism. Indeed, we chose three representative films in each of the five categories based on their recurrence in the dataset as well as their clear fit in our five-genre scheme. At the very most, such titles were cited by 6.5% of the respondents. Many participants listed films that undoubtedly belonged to comedy, horror, action, romance and fantasy genres, but were overlooked in our research design, due to time and space limitations. Our generalizations from those three films to entire categories may seem questionable, but previous to that, we ascertained the homogeneity of each genre. Moreover, our findings, mostly consistent with previous lines of research, were explainable, and our hypotheses verified.

An additional caveat pertaining to the generalizability of our findings ought to be mentioned. Our study focuses solely on British residents aged 16 to 25. Previous research suggests that (1) personality may vary across the lifespan (Terraccino et al, 2005) and (2) culture can act as a powerful mediator between personality and film preferences, and sex and personality (Weaver et al, 2000).

Suggestions for further research

The limitations of our study are by no means insurmountable. More time and information can help us supplement our findings. Adding more films to our five categories can benefit the

[8] They distinguish between traits related to independence and dominance (labeled *social dominance*) versus traits related to positive affect and activity level (labelled s*ocial vitality*).

validity of our analyses whilst extending our sample to wider samples and other populations will allow informed cross-cultural comparisons and potential generalizations.

Running a series of further studies can also help produce a fine-grained analysis of the impact of sex and personality in film preferences. Other Facebook applications can be created to measure user preferences for a pre-selection of film titles. As we noted in our evaluation section, references to full-length films are likely to introduce numerous confounds (main actor, setting, historical period, etc). They can presumably be supplemented by written descriptions of films modelled after the type usually found on DVD rental boxes (Oliver et al, 2000). A multi-dimensional approach to film categorization – including the aforementioned confounds can strengthen our grasp of the workings of film preferences with regard to individual characteristics. Finally, longitudinal studies can serve to reduce uncertainty pertaining to the stability of personality and film preferences over time.

For advertising and marketing purposes notably, stable relationships between individual differences and consumer preferences have unparalleled importance. As we have seen, sex and personality interact to mediate interest in specific film genres. Knowledge of such interaction effects could increase the efficiency of advertising strategies (Plummer, 2000; Bosjnak et al, 2007). For instance, TV adverts targeting a particular type of customer could be aired in commercial breaks between films of the relevant type. Advertising campaigns for specific brands may reproduce key scenes or soundtracks from famous movies belong to the specific genre(s) that appeal to their client population. Also, advertising for products within films could be matched with the typical viewer's individual characteristics, thus increasing chances of success. The impetus for further research on the topic derives partly from its fruitful applications in the realm of publicity and market research.

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Appendix A

1. Frequency listings for selected films

Film	Frequency listings		
	Male	Female	Total
Superbad	458	287	745
Monty Python	361	254	615
Anchorman	577	299	876
Saw	789	1119	1908
The Shining	132	120	252
Alien	447	141	588
300	874	276	1150
James Bond	641	290	931
Gladiator	643	300	943
Pride and Prejudice	16	245	261
Dirty Dancing	29	1131	1160
Titanic	154	769	923
Lord of the Rings	1053	726	1779
Star Wars	866	266	1132
Pirates of the Caribbean	487	885	1372

2. Plot summaries (IMBD)

Superbad (2007). Two co-dependent high school seniors are forced to deal with separation anxiety after their plan to stage a booze-soaked party goes awry.

Monty Python[9]:
The Holy Grail (1975). King Arthur and his knights embark on a low-budget search for the Grail, encountering many very silly obstacles.
The Life of Brian (1979) Brian is born on the original Christmas, in the stable next door. He spends his life being mistaken for a messiah
The Meaning of Life (1983). The comedy team takes a look at life in all its stages in their own unique way.

Anchorman (2004). Ron Burgundy is San Diego's top rated newsman in the male dominated broadcasting of the 1970's, but that's all about to change when a new female employee with ambition to burn arrives in his office.

Saw[10]*(*2004). With a dead body laying between them, two men wake up in the secure lair of a serial killer who's been nicknamed "Jigsaw" by the police because of his unusual calling card.

The Shining (1980) A family heads to an isolated hotel for the winter where an evil and spiritual presence influences the father into violence, while his psychic son sees horrific forebodings from the past and of the future.

Alien (1979). A mining ship, investigating a suspected SOS, lands on a distant planet. The crew discovers some strange creatures and investigates.

300 (2006). King Leonidas and a force of 300 men fight the Persians at Thermopylae in 480 B.C.

James Bond[11].A series of espionage movies based on Ian Fleming's novels:

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[9] For Monty Python films, we selected the answers which included one or more of the following: '*monty python'*, '*holy grail'*, '*life of Brian'*, and '*meaning of life'*.
[10] We did not discriminate between the first 'Saw' and its sequels in our selection procedure.
[11] For James Bond films, we selected the answers which included one or more of the following: 'Bond', "Casino Royale' and 'Casino Royal'.

Casino Royale (2006). In his first mission, James Bond must stop Le Chiffre, a banker to the world's terrorist organizations, from winning a high-stakes poker tournament at Casino Royale in Montenegro

Gladiator (2000). When a Roman general is betrayed and his family murdered by a corrupt prince, he comes to Rome as a gladiator to seek revenge.

Pride and Prejudice (2005). The story is based on Jane Austen's novel about five sisters in Georgian England. Their lives are turned upside down when a wealthy young man and his best friend arrive in their neighborhood.

Titanic (1997). Fictional romantic tale of a rich girl and poor boy who meet on the ill-fated voyage of the 'unsinkable' ship.

Dirty Dancing (1987). Spending the summer in a holiday camp with her family, Frances falls in love with the camp's dancing teacher.

Lord of the Rings[12](2001): The Fellowship of the Ring.
In a small village in the Shire a young Hobbit named Frodo has been entrusted with an ancient Ring. Now he must embark on an Epic quest to the Cracks of Doom in order to destroy it.

Star Wars[13](1977). A sequel narrating the adventures of Luke Skywalker who leaves his home planet, teams up with other rebels, and tries to save Princess Leia from the evil clutches of Darth Vader.

Pirates of the Caribbean[14](2003). A trilogy narrating the adventures of the eccentric pirate 'Captain' Jack Sparrow, who teams up with blacksmith Will Turner to save his beloved from Jack's former pirates allies.

Appendix B

1. Independent t-test results

T-test for equality of means		
Personality Trait	t	df
Openness	-3.964***	28735.430
Conscientiousness	3.748***	29195
Extraversion	-.132	29195
Agreeableness	11.065***	29195
Neuroticism	39.285***	29195

N*ote*: N=29,197.

*** p<0.001

[12] We did not discriminate between the first 'Lord of the Rings' and its sequels in our selection procedure.
[13] We did not discriminate between the first 'Star Wars' and its sequels in our selection procedure.
[14] We did not discriminate between the first 'Pirates of the Caribbean' and its sequels in our selection procedure.

	Mean standardized scores		
Personality Trait	Female	Male	Effect size r
Openness	0.0177544***	0.0286428***	0.023
Conscientiousness	0.0219118***	0.0221131***	0.022
Extraversion	0.0075385	0.0059854	0.001
Agreeableness	0.0619258***	-0.067338***	0.065
Neuroticism	0.2080384***	0.2413674***	0.224

Note: Female (N=15526); Male (N=13671).

*** p<0.001

2. MANOVA output by film genre

2.1 Comedy genre

Effect			Hypothesis		
	Wilks' Lambda	F	df	Error df	Sig.
Gender	.976	142.024[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Comedy	.997	16.730[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Gender*Comedy	.999	5.767[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000

a. Exact statistic

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Zscore(ope)	6.647	1	6.647	6.692	.010
	Zscore(con)	4.267	1	4.267	4.256	.039
	Zscore(ext)	1.163	1	1.163	1.159	.282
	Zscore(agr)	21.333	1	21.333	21.503	.000
	Zscore(neu)	400.183	1	400.183	420.668	.000
Comedy	Zscore(ope)	72.143	1	72.143	72.628	.000
	Zscore(con)	4.876	1	4.876	4.863	.027
	Zscore(ext)	.114	1	.114	.113	.736
	Zscore(agr)	.832	1	.832	.839	.360
	Zscore(neu)	1.111	1	1.111	1.168	.280
Gender * Comedy	Zscore(ope)	23.813	1	23.813	23.973	.000
	Zscore(con)	.117	1	.117	.117	.732
	Zscore(ext)	1.735	1	1.735	1.729	.189
	Zscore(agr)	1.083	1	1.083	1.092	.296
	Zscore(neu)	1.411	1	1.411	1.483	.223
Error	Zscore(ope)	28997.915	29193	.993		
	Zscore(con)	29271.748	29193	1.003		
	Zscore(ext)	29296.807	29193	1.004		
	Zscore(agr)	28963.091	29193	.992		
	Zscore(neu)	27771.380	29193	.951		
Total	Zscore(ope)	29095.966	29197			
	Zscore(con)	29291.463	29197			
	Zscore(ext)	29299.917	29197			
	Zscore(agr)	29087.054	29197			
	Zscore(neu)	29243.000	29197			

2.2 *Horror genre*

Effect	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Gender	.971	172.111[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Horror	.998	10.183[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Gender* Horror	1.000	1.046[a]	5.000	29189.000	.388

a. Exact statistic

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Zscore(ope)	1.490	1	1.490	1.496	.221
	Zscore(con)	2.132	1	2.132	2.126	.145
	Zscore(ext)	.026	1	.026	.026	.873
	Zscore(agr)	23.917	1	23.917	24.125	.000
	Zscore(neu)	505.835	1	505.835	532.240	.000
Horror	Zscore(ope)	4.634	1	4.634	4.653	.031
	Zscore(con)	3.844	1	3.844	3.834	.050
	Zscore(ext)	16.356	1	16.356	16.306	.000
	Zscore(agr)	21.503	1	21.503	21.690	.000
	Zscore(neu)	29.133	1	29.133	30.654	.000
Gender * Horror	Zscore(ope)	1.537	1	1.537	1.543	.214
	Zscore(con)	.655	1	.655	.653	.419
	Zscore(ext)	.105	1	.105	.105	.746
	Zscore(agr)	2.732	1	2.732	2.756	.097
	Zscore(neu)	.537	1	.537	.565	.452
Error	Zscore(ope)	29073.548	29193	.996		
	Zscore(con)	29272.742	29193	1.003		
	Zscore(ext)	29282.140	29193	1.003		
	Zscore(agr)	28940.893	29193	.991		
	Zscore(neu)	27744.701	29193	.950		
Total	Zscore(ope)	29095.966	29197			
	Zscore(con)	29291.463	29197			
	Zscore(ext)	29299.917	29197			
	Zscore(agr)	29087.054	29197			
	Zscore(neu)	29243.000	29197			

Personality Dimension	Female *N*=1325	Male *N*=1271
Openness	.046	.457
Conscientiousness	-.030	-.043
Extraversion	-.077	-.087
Agreeableness	-.056	-.123
Neuroticism	.323	-.154

2.3 Action genre

Effect	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Gender	.996	20.769[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Action	.974	153.839[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Action*Gender	.999	4.596[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000

a. Exact statistic

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Action	Zscore(ope)	41.077	1	41.077	41.304	.000
	Zscore(con)	38.804	1	38.804	38.752	.000
	Zscore(ext)	3.170	1	3.170	3.159	.076
	Zscore(agr)	.265	1	.265	.267	.605
	Zscore(neu)	12.342	1	12.342	12.980	.000
Gender	Zscore(ope)	4.855	1	4.855	4.882	.027
	Zscore(con)	5.861	1	5.861	5.853	.016
	Zscore(ext)	.101	1	.101	.101	.751
	Zscore(agr)	44.543	1	44.543	44.894	.000
	Zscore(neu)	414.788	1	414.788	436.211	.000
Action * Gender	Zscore(ope)	21.465	1	21.465	21.584	.000
	Zscore(con)	.019	1	.019	.019	.892
	Zscore(ext)	.014	1	.014	.014	.907
	Zscore(agr)	.883	1	.883	.890	.345
	Zscore(neu)	.110	1	.110	.115	.734
Error	Zscore(ope)	29032.635	29193	.995		
	Zscore(con)	29231.922	29193	1.001		
	Zscore(ext)	29295.054	29193	1.003		
	Zscore(agr)	28964.608	29193	.992		
	Zscore(neu)	27759.283	29193	.951		
Total	Zscore(ope)	29095.966	29197			
	Zscore(con)	29291.463	29197			
	Zscore(ext)	29299.917	29197			
	Zscore(agr)	29087.054	29197			
	Zscore(neu)	29243.000	29197			

2.4 Romance genre

Effect	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Gender	.991	50.764[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Romance	.999	7.644[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Gender* Romance	.999	4.083[a]	5.000	29189.000	.001

a. Exact statistic

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Zscore(ope)	26.410	1	26.410	26.545	.000
	Zscore(con)	.570	1	.570	.569	.451
	Zscore(ext)	.948	1	.948	.945	.331
	Zscore(agr)	12.677	1	12.677	12.777	.000
	Zscore(neu)	124.985	1	124.985	131.424	.000
Romance	Zscore(ope)	1.919	1	1.919	1.929	.165
	Zscore(con)	12.570	1	12.570	12.550	.000
	Zscore(ext)	6.626	1	6.626	6.604	.010
	Zscore(agr)	.403	1	.403	.406	.524
	Zscore(neu)	5.385	1	5.385	5.663	.017
Gender * Romance	Zscore(ope)	19.609	1	19.609	19.708	.000
	Zscore(con)	.003	1	.003	.003	.958
	Zscore(ext)	.517	1	.517	.516	.473
	Zscore(agr)	.082	1	.082	.083	.773
	Zscore(neu)	.162	1	.162	.170	.680
Error	Zscore(ope)	29045.470	29193	.995		
	Zscore(con)	29238.896	29193	1.002		
	Zscore(ext)	29286.241	29193	1.003		
	Zscore(agr)	28963.190	29193	.992		
	Zscore(neu)	27762.577	29193	.951		
Total	Zscore(ope)	29095.966	29197			
	Zscore(con)	29291.463	29197			
	Zscore(ext)	29299.917	29197			
	Zscore(agr)	29087.054	29197			

	Zscore(neu)	29243.000	29197

2.5 Fantasy genre

Effect	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Gender	.990	226.523[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Fantasy	.986	83.068[a]	5.000	29189.000	.000
Gender* Fantasy	1	1.121[a]	5.000	29189.000	.347

a. Exact statistic

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Zscore(ope)	1.050	1	1.050	1.061	.303
	Zscore(con)	10.281	1	10.281	10.252	.001
	Zscore(ext)	2.434	1	2.434	2.437	.118
	Zscore(agr)	59.027	1	59.027	59.524	.000
	Zscore(neu)	628.871	1	628.871	661.050	.000
Fantasy	Zscore(ope)	189.554	1	189.554	191.541	.000
	Zscore(con)	2.230	1	2.230	2.224	.136
	Zscore(ext)	142.556	1	142.556	142.738	.000
	Zscore(agr)	16.248	1	16.248	16.384	.000
	Zscore(neu)	2.631	1	2.631	2.766	.096
Gender * Fantasy	Zscore(ope)	1.696	1	1.696	1.713	.191
	Zscore(con)	.907	1	.907	.904	.342
	Zscore(ext)	1.752	1	1.752	1.754	.185
	Zscore(agr)	.286	1	.286	.288	.592
	Zscore(neu)	.121	1	.121	.128	.721
Error	Zscore(ope)	28890.254	29193	.990		
	Zscore(con)	29274.392	29193	1.003		
	Zscore(ext)	29155.841	29193	.999		
	Zscore(agr)	28949.231	29193	.992		
	Zscore(neu)	27771.908	29193	.951		
Total	Zscore(ope)	29095.966	29197			
	Zscore(con)	29291.463	29197			
	Zscore(ext)	29299.917	29197			

Zscore(agr)	29087.054	29197
Zscore(neu)	29243.000	29197

Personality Dimension	Female *N*=1563	Male *N*=1914
Openness	.228	.223
Conscientiousness	.062	-.014
Extraversion	-.224	-.172
Agreeableness	.136	-.013
Neuroticism	.24	-.221