Be CAREful:
Primary Emotional Traits Predict Preferences to Social Stimuli

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Introduction Approach–avoidance is an important motivational distinction. In approach motivation, behavior is directed by a positive/desirable event to orient the organism; in avoidance motivation, behavior is directed by a negative/undesirable event to protect the organism (Lang et al., 1990; Davidson, 1993; Gray, 1982; Elliot & Covington, 2001).

Based on Panksepp's work, six primary emotions are identified as basis of human personality: SEEKING, CARE, PLAY (positive emotions) and FEAR, ANGER, SADNESS (negative emotions) (Montag & Panksepp, 2017), and as tools for survival (Nettle, 2009).

Aims Our aim is to investigate the effect of primary emotional traits on affective stimulus preference to have a better understanding of the correspondance between personality traits and stimulus preferences?

Methods 218 Hungarian adults (158 women, 60 men) (M_{age}=28.34 years, SD: 12.1) participated in an online experiment set up with the Gorilla Experiment Builder (Anwyl-Irvine et al., 2019). We presented 106 affective pictures from the IAPS (Lang et al., 2005) and from the OASIS (Kurdi et al., 2017). A forced-choice task was conducted to measure participants' stimulus preferences in which they decided if they would see the picture again or not. Then, they filled in the Hungarian version (Deak et al., 2022) of the Affective Neuroscience Personality Scales (ANPS) (Davis & Panksepp, 2011)

Results Linear regression analysis was conducted where the number of selected pictures („Yes" aswers) served as a dependent variable, and predictor variables were the six primary emotional traits and gender.
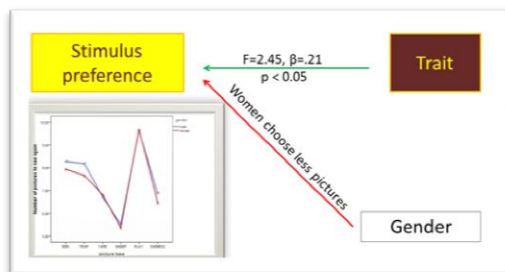

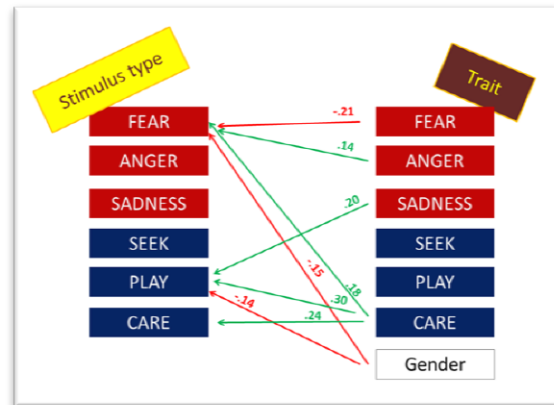**Figure 1: Primary emotional traits and gender predict stimulus preference**

Figure 2: Positive (green) and negative (red) predictors of stimulus preferences

Conclusions Primary emotional traits are predictors of both pleasant and unpleasant stimulus preferences. Negative emotional traits have multiple functions: SADNESS promotes adaptive emotion regulation strategies to increase well-being (through playful activities); ANGER may activate fight-reactions to fearful stimuli; FEAR withdraws from overwhelming fearful stimuli.

The CARE system may provide interpersonal reactions both to fearful stimuli to promote empathy, and to social stimuli to idicate the rewarding value of social bonds (e.g., caring, attachment, social interactions).

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