

MODERATING ROLE OF SELF-MONITORING  
IN THE PRESENTATION OF SELF  
THROUGH DISPLAY OF POSSESSIONS

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by

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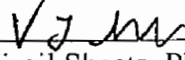
Moderating Role of Self-Monitoring in the Presentation of Self  
Through Display of Possessions


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## ABSTRACT

The literature concerning the nature and presentation of the self is briefly reviewed, and the role of self-monitoring as a moderator in the presentation of self through display of possessions is discussed. It is hypothesized that high self-monitors differ from low self-monitors in the extent to which their private and public living spaces reveal their personality. Photographs of living rooms and bedrooms of 40 homeowners of different living status were collected to serve as stimuli, and measures of the homeowners' personality and self-monitoring were taken. The photographs were presented to unacquainted observers who rated the homeowners' personality on the same scale. The correlations and discrepancy scores between the self reported personality scores and observers' ratings were calculated for high and low self-monitoring homeowners from each living status category. The results, although partially consistent with findings of previous research, failed to provide clear support for the proposed hypotheses, and many findings were contrary to the predictions. Several possible explanations are proposed and factors that could have influenced the obtained pattern of results are discussed. Lastly, limitations of the present study are acknowledged, and directions for further research are proposed.

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## INTRODUCTION

In social psychology, the self is a central feature of human consciousness and an apparent motivator of much of human behavior. It has been an important concept throughout the history of philosophical thought, and many theorists have deliberated on its nature long before psychology became a science. Despite recent advancements in understanding of the self, many questions still remain to be addressed and the self continues to be a focus of social psychological theory and research. The current paper examines some of the relevant literature concerning the nature of self, and focuses on the presentation of self to others. Also proposed is a study intended to examine potential variability in self-presentation by people of different personality types.

William James (1890) was perhaps the first psychologist who suggested that the complexity of the self and the instability of the perceptions of its various components make the distinction between what people call *me* and what they call *mine* difficult to be made. Although it is widely accepted that in its narrowest sense the empirical self refers to what people call *me*, there is little agreement and stability in what they consider a part of *me* or simply *mine*. To illustrate, James reflects on the range of meanings people assign to their bodies. Whereas some individuals consider their bodies to be a part of *me*, others regard them as “prisons of clay from which *they* should some day be glad to escape” [italics added] (James, 1890, p. 291). The latter perception of human body

postulates the existence of something beyond the body that is recognized as *me*. This is a subjective construct, often referred to as a “spirit” or a “soul,” and is an example of how a creation of human intellect becomes what some people consider *me*. James also explains how people often come to treat other creations and objects as parts of their selves. He argues that such possessions arouse the same emotions and may elicit the same acts if threatened or adored. Thus, according to James, in its widest sense, the self is all that one can call *mine*. James groups the components of this extended self into four categories: “The pure Ego, The spiritual Self, The social Self, and the material Self” (p. 292). Thus, one’s body, clothes, immediate family members, and one’s home are all parts of one’s self. Particularly relevant to this paper, James goes on to say that “home-constructing” is an instinctual behavior that assists the development and preservation of the material self.

However important the role of self might be in developing and reinforcing an individual’s identity as separate from others, it should be noted here that self often functions not in isolation from the social world, but is intimately connected with it. Much of human life takes place in the company of others, and every time one is in front of other people, he or she becomes an “actor” in the “performance” of human life (Goffman, 1959, p. 15). According to Goffman, in the social environment, an individual “...knowingly and unwittingly projects a definition of the situation, of which a conception of himself is an important part.” (p. 242). Since observers of social interactions usually possess limited information about the individual—and it is perhaps even safe to say that typically no third party possesses more detailed information about the individual than the person him- or herself—the actor is able to manipulate the impression of self he or she fosters. William James had earlier recognized that an

individual "...has as many different social selves as there are distinct *groups* of persons about whose opinion he cares" or which recognize him (James, 1890, p. 294). It often follows that these different selves may be quite discrepant from each other, as they emerge from different performances (although even the same performance can be perceived differently by different observers).

Perhaps the most important factor in determining which variant of the self is to be presented is the audience to which it will be presented (Goffman, 1959). The same person may be gentle to his or her children at home, but firm to the soldiers under his or her command in barracks. Similarly, whereas in front of the audience composed of close friends one will often behave in a more casual and relaxed manner, he or she may be more reserved and impersonal before strangers. That these inconsistencies in one's behavior are usually not perceived as disturbances of one's self, and that few find them troublesome, reinforces the notion that social interactions are performances and that much of what is to be presented and how it is to be presented remains to be determined by the performer. Goffman identified several techniques used in social interactions to aid an individual in preparing and presenting a successful show. Among them is the control over the "setting," which includes "furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items" (p. 22). Thus, careful choice and arrangement of the physical surrounding in which the social interaction occurs may constitute an important part of how one's self will be perceived by the audience.

Given this potential for manipulating the environment to support changes in self-presentation, a question may be posed as to whether the environment is perceived to provide information about the enduring characteristics of that person, independently of

the person's performance in it. Whereas some settings are only loosely related to a performance and easy to change or manipulate, others, such as one's home, are more intimately connected with the individual and relatively permanent or difficult to change. Consequently, these latter environments should be expected to be more closely related to the stable characteristics of one's self. It is also important to note that self is not only presented, but also *defined* through acknowledgment of and interactions with others (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). Although this distinction has merit primarily on a functional level, it also has theoretical implications for the relationship between the presented and actual self. If one is to form a relatively permanent aspect of the self through interactions with others, he or she must reliably present evidence for that aspect of the self. For example, if one is to consider him- or herself (and be considered by others) a person of a certain social class, he or she must provide reliable and sufficient evidence for belonging to that class. Part of this evidence must come from the display of appropriate possessions.

This symbolic role of objects was recognized by Thorstein Veblen (1899) and constitutes the key component of his theory of "leisure class." In the course of human cultural evolution, consumption of certain goods and possession of certain objects have become associated with wealth and thus social status. Consequently, ownership and proper display of these commodities have become one of the two chief means of communicating a person's social standing. As Veblen writes,

The basis on which good repute in any highly organized industrial community ultimately rests is pecuniary strength; and the means of showing pecuniary strength, and so of gaining or retaining a good name, are leisure and a conspicuous consumption of goods. (p. 84).

Whereas in earlier stages of cultural development, leisure and the consumption of goods were equally likely to fulfill this presentational goal, in contemporary society the latter serves this purpose more effectively. In modern societies, where social interactions are numerous and often involve strangers and persons who have little information about one another, the overt consumption of goods becomes imperative in ensuring that individuals of high status receive appropriate recognition among and differentiation from strangers.

More recently, social scientists have ascertained that possessions may communicate substantially more than social status. Dittmar (1991), for example, found that they may reveal information about their owner's sex. Consequently, many males will not display possessions that are traditionally associated with females, and many females will restrain from exhibiting typically male possessions (although in western societies this latter tendency seems to be more acceptable). Similarly, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) reported that in many cultures people display objects that represent traits, desirable by members of their given sex. For example, in more primitive cultures, males often surround themselves with objects that symbolize "...strength, bravery, prowess, [and] endurance..." whereas women display objects that symbolize "...seductiveness, fertility, and nurturance." (p. 26), Although the possessions may have changed, similar patterns also exist in modern societies. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) also argue that possessions can symbolize social integration: a cross, for example, indicates membership in the Christian community, while a flag signals the allegiance of the citizens of a given country. At the same time, however, these symbols also underscore the distinction between the members of a given group and members of all other groups – social differentiation and opposition. Other researchers report that

possessions can provide reliable information about the owner's attitude toward social issues (Holman, 1980) and personality (Gosling, Ko, Mannarelli, & Morris, 2002). Indeed, the symbolic value of objects to reveal individual and social identities seems to be at least a part of the motivation for acquiring and displaying them (Belk, 1988; Veblen, 1899; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1892).

From the perspective of the owner, the symbolic value of possessions can be utilized in at least two ways. On the one hand, possessions can communicate the presence of traits, characteristics, and standing of the owner that correspond to reality (Belk, 1988; Burroughs, Drews, & Hallman, 1991; Goffman, 1959; Solomon, 1983). On the other hand, a strategic display of certain possessions can be used to mislead the audience by implying the presence of traits, characteristics, and standing that are inconsistent with reality (Belk, 1988; Burroughs et al., 1991; Gosling et al., 2002; Solomon, 1983). Thus, items such as cars (Marsh & Collett, 1986; Munson & Spivey, 1981), clothing (Holman, 1980), electronic devices such as cell phones or PDAs (Sheets, Fox, McGuire, & Spindler, 2003), and homes (Sadalla & Sheets, 1993; Sadalla, Vershure, & Burroughs, 1987) can be all employed to project a desired impression about oneself to others, regardless of whether this impression is accurate, exaggerated, or even false.

However sophisticated the act of the performer may be, the presentation of self must always be nested in some environment, which is what Goffman (1959) called a setting. Among the different backgrounds that set the stage for social performances, home can be regarded as a unique place for several reasons. First, it is a relatively permanent and fixed collection of objects, many of which have symbolic meaning (Sadalla et al., 1987). Unlike many other private or semi-private spaces, home is often the environment

where much of a person's property is accumulated over time, and this is partly due to the relative durability of its relationship with the owner. Secondly, unlike other spaces, such as offices, the user of a home is typically free to modify and decorate his or her dwelling (Gosling et al., 2002). Fewer, if any, restraints are explicitly imposed by external forces (such as a company's standards and procedures), and those present are more likely to result from internal needs and goals, whether conscious or unconscious. Finally, home is also a unique expressive device due to the variation in accessibility of its different areas to the audience. Whereas the exterior of a home is publicly available at all times, only certain persons are allowed to the most private areas, typically during specified times (Belk, 1988; Sheets & Clements, in review; Tuan, 1978). Consequently, as a private place intimately related to the owner and rich in personal belongings that may carry information about him or her, home should be among the environments that provide a large amount of information about the inhabitant.

It has been said so far that people use various possessions to communicate about their self, and that this information is presented to some external audience as well as oneself. The success of this communication, however, is not only a function of what the actor presents and what he or she *believes* is presented, but is likely to depend on other factors as well. A theoretical framework that may be useful in understanding the interactions among the factors that are likely to influence the actor-audience communication process was originally presented by Brunswik (1956) and later elaborated upon by Gosling et al. (2002). Brunswik suggested that certain objects and states of the environment may be seen as parts of the *lens* through which the actor communicates corresponding constructs, and which may lead to the perception of these constructs by the

audience. The link between the actor and a cue, one that determines how well the cue represents an aspect of the actor he or she really possesses, is referred to as *cue validity*. On the other hand, the link between the cue and an observer, which defines to what degree and with what accuracy the observer makes use of the cue, is referred to as *cue utilization*. Thus, according to Brunswik, through the interplay of displaying and perceiving various cues, certain aspects of the actor's personality can be indirectly perceived. The accuracy of this perception depends not only on how well the cues represent underlying qualities, but also on how they are utilized by the observers.

Gosling et al. (2002) further elaborated on the lens model by identifying two categories of mechanisms that link an individual with the environment. Specifically, Gosling defines *identity claims* as "...symbolic statements made by occupants..." about the self, and *behavioral residue*, which consists of "...physical traces of activities..." (p. 380) that reveal information about the behavior's self. Gosling further distinguishes between *self-directed* and *other directed identity claims*, which differ in the intended audience.

Although it is generally assumed that all people need to make identity claims of various sorts, people are known to vary in strategies used when making such claims. For instance, Snyder (1979) theorized that there are reliable differences among people in the amount of effort they allocate to monitor reactions of other people to their behavior and the use of these reactions to regulate and control their own behavior. To illustrate the construct, Snyder provided the following descriptions of two extreme cases.

The prototypic *high self-monitoring individual* is one who, out of a concern for the situational and interpersonal appropriateness of his or her



social behavior, is particularly sensitive to the expression and self-presentation of relevant others in social situations and uses these cues as guidelines for monitoring (that is, regulating and controlling) his or her own verbal and nonverbal self-presentation. By contrast, the prototypic *low self-monitoring individual* is not so vigilant to social information about situationally appropriate self-presentation. (...) In comparison with their high self-monitoring counterparts, the self-presentation and expressive behavior of low self-monitoring individuals seem, in a functional sense, to be controlled from within by their affective states and attitudes (they express it as they feel it) rather than molded and tailored to fit the situation. (p. 89).

Furthermore, Snyder proposed that high and low self-monitors (SM) also differ in their capacity to foster a desirable self-image. Whereas the former are skillful impression managers, the latter are not only less interested in it, but also less capable in this matter.

In the context of Brunswik's (1956) and Gosling et al.'s (2002) lens model, self-monitoring can be conceptualized as a moderator in the process of presentation of self through the display of possessions. One has direct influence on shaping the lens through which observers indirectly perceive his or her underlying traits in spaces over which an individual has substantial control, such as one's home. Therefore, high self-monitors are thought of as being more concerned with, and involved in the process of creating the environment that will suit their presentational goals, as well as more competent at this task. In addition, high self-monitors are also more concerned with how the observers

perceive and interpret presented cues, and are more skilled at modeling and adjusting them to fulfill their presentational goals, thus extending their control to cue utilization.

Empirical research supports these theoretical postulates, by showing that high self-monitors vary their behavior across different situations to a greater extent than do low self-monitors (Lippa & Donaldson, 1990; Snyder & Monson, 1975). Other research points to another interesting and relevant difference between high and low self-monitors. After reviewing research on self-monitoring and consumer behavior, Gangestad and Snyder (2000) concluded that whereas “high self-monitors value consumer products for their strategic value in cultivating social images and public appearances (...), low self-monitors judge consumer products in terms of the quality of the products stripped of their image-creating and status enhancing veneer” (p. 532).

Considering the literature on self-monitoring and the presentation of self through the display of possessions, Sheets and Clements (in review) speculated that self-monitoring may be a significant moderating factor in this presentational behavior. Specifically, they proposed that although both public and private areas of low self-monitors' homes should be equally informative of their personalities, public areas of high self-monitors should be less revealing of their selves than their private spaces. Observers should be able to form equally accurate impressions of low self-monitoring homeowners' personality regardless of the type of room; in contrast, observers should be more accurate in forming impressions of high self-monitoring individuals when viewing their private rather than public spaces. Thus, Sheets and Clements hypothesized that the observers would be more accurate at matching the representations of public and private spaces for low self-monitoring homeowners than high self-monitoring ones. This postulate was

consistent with the greater need for flexibility of public vs. private behavior of high self-monitors, who, by creating a neutral context, are more free to adjust their manners to the changing needs of a situation, including different audiences. In a series of four studies, Sheets and Clements obtained confirming evidence for their hypotheses. In the first study, participants were asked to match self-revealing possessions of low and high self-monitors displayed in living rooms and bedrooms. The results showed that participants were able to match the possessions of low self-monitors significantly more accurately than those of high self-monitors; this pattern held true for homeowners of both sexes. In another study, a content analysis of favored possessions suggested that high self-monitors made less distinctive and informative self displays in their public vs. private spaces (relative to low self-monitors). Consistent with this, in a final study participants were asked to match photographs of others' living rooms and bedrooms as well as their favored objects displayed there. Sheets and Clements found that the "audience" of participants was better able to match public and private spaces and possessions of low self-monitors than of high self-monitors. Although this result would seem to rest on the greater consistency or validity of identity claims made by low self-monitors than those of high self-monitors, no direct measures of personality were taken that might further elucidate the processes involved in participants' judgments.

The present study draws on the previous research in that similar hypotheses are proposed; however, a direct measure of personality will provide a standard for comparing the perceptions formed by audience members upon viewing homeowners' public and private spaces and the homeowners' self-claims. Following the previous research, it was hypothesized that observers would be more accurate at inferring personalities of high

self-monitors from their bedrooms (more private spaces) than their living rooms (more public spaces), but equally accurate when inferring personalities of low self-monitors regardless of the type of room.

## METHODS

### *Stimulus Development*

*Volunteers.* Forty upper level undergraduates and graduate students at a Midwestern public university and local community members volunteered to provide stimuli (photographs of their homes) for the study. They ranged in age from 18 to 48 years (Mdn = 23.5). They were primarily Caucasian (87.5%), with Blacks (5%) and others (7.5%) represented. They had lived in their residencies from 6 months to 11 years (Mdn = 1 yr). These volunteers equally represented three living status groups to compose the following four sex/living status categories: (a) singly living males, (b) singly living females, (c) cohabiting males, and (d) cohabiting females. Homeowners in groups (a) and (b) were required to have their own bedroom and living room. Those in groups (c) and (d) were individuals who lived with either their romantic partner or a spouse, and shared both bedroom and living room; all couples were heterosexual and both parties of each couple, upon agreement, were included in the study. Although only 25% of stimulus volunteers owned their home, the term homeowner will be used throughout this paper.

*Questionnaires.* Each homeowner completed a questionnaire consisting of three parts. First, they completed a self-rating version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999, see Appendix A). The BFI is a standard measure of personality composed of 44 items answered on a 5-point Likert scale, and represents five personality

factors: Agreeableness (9 items), Conscientiousness (9 items), Extraversion (8 items), Neuroticism (8 items), and Openness (10 items). The scale shows high convergent validity with other self-report personality scales and with peer ratings of the Five Factor Model. In this study, alpha reliabilities for Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness were .83, .83, .85, .80, and .83 respectively. Second, the homeowners completed the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984, see Appendix B), consisting of 13 items answered on a 5-point Likert scale, and which provide a person's self-monitoring score. Past research showed that this is a reliable measure of self-monitoring, and in this study its reliability was .84. Finally, the homeowners completed a homeowner background questionnaire (see Appendix C), which included 10 questions relating to their demographic information, aspects of their homes, and their living characteristics and behaviors.

*Procedures.* Homeowners first met with the researcher in his office to receive questionnaires and to schedule a home visit. In case of cohabiting couples, the presence of only one party was required during this initial meeting. All homeowners were asked to complete the questionnaires prior to the home visit.

A male and female researcher arrived at each home at a scheduled time. In case of cohabiting couples, the presence of both persons was required during the visit. After collecting completed questionnaires, the researcher took a photograph of a living room while standing in the (main) entrance to the room, trying to include as much of the room as possible (for sample stimuli, see Appendix D). The researcher then asked each homeowner to indicate one of his or her possessions that was kept in that room, and which he or she believed most accurately represented his or her personality. The same

procedure was then repeated in the bedroom. To minimize the researcher's influence, interactions with participants were minimized until all stimuli were collected. After the collection of stimuli, the researcher answered any questions the homeowners might have.

### *Study Participants and Procedures*

Two hundred and twenty-six introductory psychology students from a Midwestern public university volunteered to participate in the study, for which they received a one-hour research participation form that could be exchanged for class or extra credit. Two of the participants were excluded from the data analyses because of the failure to provide all the necessary information. Of the remaining 224 participants, 30.8% were male and 69.2% female, and they ranged in age from 18 to 55 years ( $Mdn = 19$ ). The majority of the participants were Caucasian (80.4%), 13.4% were Black, 1.8% were Asian, and 3.1% consisted of Americans of other races. The remaining 1.3% of participants were not American citizens.

Participants were tested in a classroom environment in groups of up to twelve persons. Each participant was given a folder with color photographs (see Stimulus Development section) of homes and a questionnaire. Each folder contained a set of ten photographs of either bedrooms or living rooms of ten different homeowners from the same social-living category (i.e., singly living males, singly living females, etc.). The folders were distributed among the participants in an approximately even fashion such that each was seen by about 37 participants. Within a folder, each photograph was placed on a separate page, so that only one could be viewed at a time. Participants were instructed to examine each photograph and to rate the homeowner by responding on the

other-rating Big Five Inventory scale (see Appendix E). Afterwards, participants rated themselves on the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (see Appendix B) and completed a brief participant background questionnaire (see Appendix F).



## RESULTS

### *Overview*

The data in the study can be divided into two major sets: the self-ratings of the homeowners, and the perceptions of the participants. Homeowner's self-monitoring scores ranged from 30 to 60, with a median of 43. Within each homeowner category (single males, single females, cohabiting couples), homeowners were classified as low- vs. high-self-monitors using a median split (The resulting self-monitoring means for these two groups were 38.25 and 48.50;  $SD = 4.31$  and  $4.57$ , respectively). Two sets of dependent variables were constructed to test the hypothesis that high-self-monitors make less consistent displays in public vs. private rooms than low self-monitors. First, the absolute accuracy of each participant's perception was calculated as the absolute value of the difference between the participants' rating of a homeowner and the homeowner's self-ratings on each of the five factors of the BFI. The average of each participants' "accuracy scores" for ratings of low and high self-monitoring homeowners (for each of the five factors separately) were the measures included in the analyses below. Second, the within-participant variability ( $SD$ ) in the accuracy of participants' ratings of the five high and five low self-monitoring homeowners was also examined for patterns consistent with the hypothesis. A third approach used to examine this hypothesis was to correlate

the average of all participants' ratings for each homeowner with the homeowners' self-ratings (i.e., using homeowners rather than "participants" as the unit of analysis).

Additional analyses were also conducted to test for potential roles of participant sex, participant self-monitoring and semester of data collection, although no *a priori* hypotheses had been proposed relating to these variables.

### *Primary Analyses*

*Discrepancy analyses.* In this first set of analyses, the average discrepancies between participants' ratings of low and high self-monitoring homeowners on each of the five personality factors and the homeowners' self-ratings served as the dependent measure. These data were subjected to a series of 2 (bedroom vs. living room) x 2 (low vs. high self-monitoring homeowners) mixed factor ANOVAs (where stimulus room was a between-subjects factor and self-monitoring of the homeowners a within-subjects factor). The results are summarized in Table 1. Significant interactions for Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Openness, were probed with simple effects that tested the difference in discrepancies between living rooms and bedrooms for high and low self-monitors separately; the results of these follow-up analyses are summarized in Table 2. Although not of primary interest, it is worth noting that the main effect of homeowners' self-monitoring was significant for four of the five factors: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Openness (see Table 1). This reflected a tendency for the discrepancies between homeowners' self-ratings and participants' perceptions of the homeowners to be greater for high self-monitoring homeowners on Extraversion, Agreeableness, and

Table 1

*Mean Discrepancies and Significance Levels in Perception of Low and High Self-Monitoring Homeowners*

Trait	<u>Low Self-Monitoring</u>		<u>High Self-Monitoring</u>		<i>F</i>	Interaction	
	Bedroom	Living Room	Bedroom	Living Room			
Extraversion	5.98	7.33	11.11	9.05	183.34 **	1.93	45.45 **
Agreeableness	6.92	6.94	8.05	7.03	9.32 **	2.85	6.72 *
Conscientiousness	9.04	9.10	9.63	8.87	0.33	1.83	1.67
Neuroticism	6.28	6.91	5.61	5.38	50.85 **	1.00	7.75 **
Openness	7.87	8.64	11.78	10.17	80.21 **	1.58	15.58 **

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Openness, and smaller for Neuroticism. No main effect for room was significant on any of the traits (see Table 1).

Table 2

*Simple Effects of Room Type at Each Level of Self-Monitoring for Absolute Discrepancy Approach*

Trait	<i>F</i> Room Type	
	Low SM	High SM
Extraversion	20.49 **	25.82 **
Agreeableness	0.00	8.46 **
Neuroticism	6.39 *	0.80
Openness	4.11 *	10.07 **

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

As seen in Tables 1 and 2, the difference in discrepancies of participants' ratings for homeowners' extraversion from viewing the living rooms vs. bedrooms was significant for both high and low self-monitoring homeowners. However, the direction of the means was contrary to expectations. Discrepancies were lower when participants rated a high self-monitor's extraversion based on a photograph from their living room than their bedroom. The difference in discrepancies for homeowners' agreeableness as rated from living room vs. bedroom photographs was not significant for low self-monitoring homeowners, but achieved significance for high self-monitors. However, this

effect was also contrary to expectations, with smaller discrepancies in perceptions based on high self-monitors' living rooms than bedrooms. The difference in discrepancies for homeowners' neuroticism as perceived from photographs of living rooms vs. bedrooms was significant for low, but not high self-monitors, which was also contrary to predictions.

Finally, differences in discrepancies for perceived openness based on living room vs. bedroom photographs was significant for both high and low self-monitoring homeowners, but again the means reveal a pattern that is contrary to the prediction. Whereas discrepancies in perceived openness for low self-monitoring homeowners were greater in living rooms versus bedrooms, discrepancies in perceived openness for high self-monitoring homeowners were greater for living rooms than bedrooms.

*Variability analyses.* A second approach to testing the hypothesis that high self-monitors provide clearer representations of their personality through bedrooms than living rooms and that no such difference exists for low self-monitors used standard deviations of the absolute discrepancies as a dependent variable. These data were also subjected to a series of 2 (bedroom vs. living room) x 2 (low vs. high self-monitoring homeowner) mixed factor ANOVAs, for each of the five personality traits. The data from these analyses are summarized in Table 3. Significant interactions for Extraversion and Neuroticism were probed with simple effects, and the results of these follow-up analyses are summarized in Table 4.

The findings from these analyses partially parallel those from the absolute discrepancy tests; the main effect of homeowners self-monitoring was significant for the

Table 3

*Mean Variance and Significance Levels in Perception of Low and High Self-Monitoring Homeowners*

Trait	<u>Low Self-Monitoring</u>		<u>High Self-Monitoring</u>		F	Interaction
	Bedroom	Living Room	Bedroom	Living Room		
Extraversion	4.00	5.17	6.19	5.79	4.33 *	21.91 **
Agreeableness	4.68	4.60	5.26	5.14	0.20	0.02
Conscientiousness	6.62	5.77	6.29	5.38	15.89 **	0.01
Neuroticism	4.66	5.47	4.12	3.98	4.12 *	9.73 **
Openness	6.19	5.71	7.70	6.52	12.06 **	2.54

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

same traits of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Openness (see Table 3). Also in line with the findings from the discrepancy tests were the directions of these differences, as the variability in participants' perceptions was greater for ratings of high self-monitoring homeowners for Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness, and lower for Neuroticism. No significant homeowner self-monitoring main effect was found for Conscientiousness. Unlike in the discrepancy analyses, the main effect of room type was significant for Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness. Here, the variability was greater for ratings based on living rooms for Extraversion and Neuroticism, and lower for Conscientiousness and Openness (see Table 3).

Table 4

*Simple Effects of Room Type at Each Level of Self-Monitoring for Variability Approach*

Trait	<i>F</i> Room Type	
	Low SM	High SM
Extraversion	25.33 **	2.29
Neuroticism	12.15 **	0.36

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

As mentioned above, significant interactions on extraversion and neuroticism were probed with simple effects. As can be seen from Tables 3 and 4, the difference in variability in participants' ratings for homeowners' extraversion from viewing the living

rooms vs. bedrooms was significant for low self-monitors, but not different for high self-monitors. Both of these findings are inconsistent with the proposed hypotheses, as no difference was expected for low self-monitors, and variability was expected to be greater for ratings based on living rooms of high self-monitors. The same pattern was observed in ratings of neuroticism, where the difference in variability from viewing the living rooms vs. bedrooms was significant for low self-monitors, but not for high self-monitors. Again, both of these findings are inconsistent with the proposed hypotheses. In sum, none of the proposed hypotheses received support through the variability approach.

*Correlational analyses.* In the final attempt to explore whether high self-monitoring homeowners provide clearer impressions of their personality in bedrooms vs. living rooms, and whether no such a difference exists for low self-monitors, a series of rank order correlations were computed between homeowners' self-reported scores on the five personality traits and the "average" perception of our participants who saw the homeowners' living rooms versus bedrooms. Note that the "homeowner" was the "unit of analysis" in these computations. Correlations were computed separately for high and low self-monitoring homeowners. The data from these analyses are summarized in Table 5.

As seen in Table 5, the only significant correlation was for neuroticism. However, the negative sign of this correlation implies an inverse correlation between participants' perceptions and homeowners' self-ratings. In other words, among low self-monitoring homeowners, perceived neuroticism was negatively correlated with self-reported neuroticism by those who viewed their living rooms.

More generally, although there seems to be a tendency for low self monitoring homeowners to be perceived more accurately than high self monitoring homeowners on



the traits of extraversion and agreeableness (regardless of the room type), none of these correlations reached significance (with a small sample of homeowners). In addition, no clear patterns could be identified for ratings on other traits. The relative dearth of significant positive correlations may suggest that the participants were generally unable to infer the personality of the homeowners from the photographs of their living spaces.

Table 5

*Rank Order Correlations Between Self-Reported and Perceived Personality Ratings*

Trait	Low Self-Monitoring		High Self-Monitoring	
	Bedroom	Living Room	Bedroom	Living Room
Extraversion	0.33	0.09	-0.26	-0.05
Agreeableness	0.39	0.24	-0.44	-0.36
Conscientiousness	0.18	-0.09	0.21	0.45
Neuroticism	0.22	-0.56 *	0.01	-0.19
Openness	0.06	-0.12	0.28	0.16

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

*Additional Analyses*

Additional analyses were performed to test the potential roles of other factors in accounting for study results, though no specific *a priori* hypotheses were proposed. Specifically, participants' self-monitoring (determined by median split and classifying

participants as low and high self-monitors) and sex were examined as potential factors in the perception of low and high self-monitoring homeowners' personality through their bedrooms and living rooms. A series of 2 (low vs. high self-monitoring homeowner) x 2 (bedroom vs. living room) x 2 (low vs. high self-monitoring participant) mixed factor ANOVAs were performed (where room and participant self-monitoring were between-subjects factors and homeowner self-monitoring a within-subjects factor) and a series of 2 (low vs. high self-monitoring homeowner) x 2 (bedroom vs. living room) x 2 (male vs. female participant) mixed factor ANOVAs were performed (where room and participant sex were between-subjects factors and homeowner self-monitoring a within-subjects factor). These analyses used both discrepancy and variability-based dependent variables.

Two main effects and four interactions were significant in the analysis involving participants' self-monitoring as the additional variable. The main effect of participant self-monitoring in the absolute discrepancy approach for Neuroticism,  $F(1, 220) = 8.10$ ,  $p < .01$ , showed that low self-monitoring participants ( $M = 5.79$ ) made lower discrepancies in perceiving homeowners on the trait of neuroticism than did high self-monitoring participants ( $M = 6.34$ ). Similarly, the main effect of participant self-monitoring in the variability approach for Neuroticism,  $F(1, 220) = 4.48$ ,  $p < .05$ , showed that low self-monitoring participants ( $M = 4.39$ ) had lower variability in discrepancies in perceptions of homeowners on the trait of neuroticism than did high self-monitoring participants ( $M = 4.75$ ). The interaction between room type and participant self-monitoring in the absolute discrepancy approach for Neuroticism,  $F(1, 220) = 4.88$ ,  $p < .05$ , seemed to indicate that high self-monitoring participants were less accurate when making their ratings based on living rooms ( $M = 6.69$ ) than bedrooms ( $M = 6.00$ ), and

that the former discrepancy was higher also from those made by low self-monitoring participants in bedrooms ( $M = 5.88$ ) and living rooms ( $M = 5.70$ ). The interaction between room type and participant self-monitoring in the absolute discrepancy approach for Openness,  $F(1, 220) = 5.31, p < .05$ , seemed to indicate less accuracy in perceptions of homeowners by low self-monitoring participants forming impressions from participants' bedrooms ( $M = 10.13$ ) than living rooms ( $M = 8.98$ ), but was not substantially different for high self-monitoring participants ( $M = 9.53$ ) for bedrooms and ( $M = 9.92$ ) for living rooms.

The interaction between room type and participant self-monitoring in the variability approach for Openness,  $F(1, 220) = 5.31, p < .05$ , again seemed to indicate that lower accuracy of low self-monitors' ratings of homeowners made based on bedrooms ( $M = 7.18$ ) than living rooms ( $M = 5.89$ ), but was not substantially different for high self-monitoring participants ( $M = 6.72$ ) for bedrooms and ( $M = 6.40$ ) for living rooms. The 3-way interaction between room type, homeowner's self-monitoring, and participants' self-monitoring using absolute discrepancies in perceived Agreeableness,  $F(1, 220) = 4.01, p < .05$ , shows that the greatest difference in accuracy of perceptions as formed from living rooms versus bedrooms occurs for low self-monitoring participants viewing rooms of high self-monitoring homeowners ( $M = 8.26$  for bedrooms and  $M = 6.69$  for living rooms). In fact, the means suggest that low self-monitoring participants were least accurate when perceiving high self-monitoring homeowners based on their bedrooms ( $M = 8.26$ ), and most accurate when perceiving HS homeowners based on their living rooms ( $M = 6.69$ ).

In an ANOVA adding participant sex as a factor, only the interaction between room type and participant sex in the absolute discrepancy approach for Openness was significant,  $F(1, 220) = 6.74, p = .01$ . Whereas males showed greater accuracy of perceptions when making ratings based on living rooms ( $M = 8.73$ ) than bedrooms ( $M = 10.43$ ), no such differences existed for females ( $M = 9.70$  for living rooms and  $9.55$  for bedrooms).

Tests for differences in data collected in different semesters were also performed. Using absolute discrepancy and variability-based dependent variables the data were subjected to a series of 2 (bedroom vs. living room) x 2 (low vs. high self-monitoring homeowner) x 2 semester (spring vs. fall) mixed factor ANOVAs (where room and semester were between-subjects factors and homeowner self-monitoring a within-subjects factor). Of thirty possible interactions, only two reached significance: the interaction between room type and semester in the discrepancy approach for Neuroticism,  $F(1, 203) = 4.39, p < .05$ , and the interaction among room type, self-monitoring, and semester also in discrepancy approach for Neuroticism,  $F(1, 203) = 4.52, p < .05$ . Of ten possible main effects of semester, the only significant one was found in the variability approach for Openness,  $F(1, 203) = 6.21, p < .05$ . These patterns were not hypothesized and not substantially more than expected by chance; therefore, no distinction between the data sets was made in our primary analyses.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study are partially consistent with previous research (Sheets & Clements, in review) in that the directions of main effects of homeowners' self-monitoring for extraversion, agreeableness, and openness in both discrepancy and variability approaches showed that low self-monitoring homeowners were rated more accurately than high self-monitoring homeowners. However, the specific hypotheses proposed in this study received only very limited support and many findings ran contrary to expectations. It was hypothesized that high self-monitors would provide a clearer presentation of their personality through the display of possessions in private spaces than in public spaces. No difference in bedroom vs. living room displays was hypothesized for low self-monitors. As expected, there were no differences in accuracy of perceptions of low self-monitors from the two rooms for two traits (Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) regardless of the dependent measure (discrepancy or variability); there were also no differences in perceptions of low self-monitors for Openness when using variability scores. However, there was no evidence of the hypothesized pattern for high self-monitors in analyses of discrepancies or variability of perceptions on any of the traits studied. In fact, on at least one measure (Openness), the results were opposite the predicted direction. Nor did the correlational analyses provide any support for the

predictions, with the only significant correlation suggesting that participants were inaccurate in rating homeowners on neuroticism.

Possible explanations for the present findings and their theoretical implications, as well as limitations of the current study and directions for further research are discussed below.

### *Explanations for the Current Results*

The core assumption motivating this study was that people actively display objects in their homes to communicate aspects of their personality to themselves and others and that uninformed observers are able to decode these presentations. Past research revealing a correspondence between homeowners' self-reported personality and ratings of observers (Burroughs, et al., 1991; Gosling, et al., 2002; Sadalla, et al., 1987; Sheets & Clements, in review) supports this conclusion. The current study, however, raises questions about this assertion as very little evidence was found to indicate that perceivers formed "accurate" perceptions of homeowners' personality characteristics. Some evidence for this claim comes from the correlational analyses which seem to indicate that participants' ratings of the homeowners' personality did not reflect the homeowners' self reports. One possible explanation for this rests in the measures used. The BFI may not represent the dimensions that are displayed or inferred from someone's personal possessions. Perhaps only certain or more narrowly defined facets of traits are inferred from objects, and the BFI may be the wrong "band-width" for assessing the inferences that people draw from others' object displays. This would explain why other researchers (Sadalla & Sheets, 1993; Sadalla, et al., 1987; Sheets et al., 2003;) have found a

correspondence between homeowners' self-reported personality and ratings of observers when using other measures of personality (as identified in factor-analyses that indicate specific "dimensions" of variability in perceptions formed from a particular sets of possessions).

Another possibility is that personality traits are not automatically "encoded" and "decoded" from someone's personal effects at all; rather, personality inferences may be secondary to social category or status (e.g., sex, social class, etc.) inferences. For instance, perceivers may initially form an impression of a target's social status, which then provides a basis for inferring the target's personality as necessary (e.g., based on a researcher's request or in an effort to resolve discrepancies in perceptions formed from the target's behavior). This would explain the results obtained by Sheets and Clements (in review), where observers were able to *match* accurately possessions and rooms of corresponding homeowners. Although "secondary" personality inferences may still be drawn from the observation of personal display, since it is subsidiary to the primary inferences drawn from the possessions, it may be highly error-prone. If true, the expected effect sizes should be small and a study would require large Ns to detect the expected patterns. In addition, the true accuracy of these perceptions may be further obscured by other factors in the current study, such as low participant "involvement" or mundane realism. Consistent with this claim are the results of a similar study by Gosling et al. (2002), where many correlations were small, and reached significance due to large sample size.

There are also other differences between the current study and prior research that might have influenced the obtained pattern of results. Although socioeconomic status was

not of interest to the researchers and no measures were taken on this dimension in the present study, the homeowners included in Sadalla et al.'s (1987) study represented a higher social class. Such a selection was motivated by the belief that those individuals have a greater potential to express themselves through the display of possessions. Another characteristic of the sample of homeowners included in the present study that might have obscured the anticipated effects is the ownership of the dwellings. Of thirty homes used in the study, only five were owned by the residents, and the remaining twenty five were rented. Thus, it is suspected that the great majority of homeowners might have had limited ability and motivation to decorate their dwellings. A factor that could have additionally magnified this effect is the duration that the homeowners had inhabited their dwellings. The median of one year may suggest that many of the residents were not strongly and permanently attached to their homes, and perhaps had relatively little time and motivation to accumulate and display a significant amount of self-related possessions.

The lack of support for the proposed hypotheses from the absolute discrepancy and variability approaches could also be accounted for by the restricted range of homeowners' scores of self-monitoring. Whereas the possible scores on the scale range from 0 to 65, self monitoring of the homeowners used in this study ranged from 30 to 60. Because of this under-representation of true low self-monitors, the median split into low and high self-monitors could have been somewhat misleading. Somewhat contrary to this explanation, however, is finding the main effect of self-monitoring that was both significant and consistent with expectations (i.e., that high self-monitors make less clear personal displays) for the traits of extraversion, agreeableness, and openness in both



discrepancy and variability approaches. The means suggest that participants rated low self-monitoring homeowners more accurately than they did high self-monitoring homeowners. This effect was reversed for neuroticism, and non-significant for conscientiousness. Although limited, these findings nevertheless suggest that homeowner self-monitoring played a role in the data, even though little support was found for the specific hypotheses proposed.

Note that although these findings did not fully support the hypotheses, and several were even contrary to the hypotheses, there is at least one theoretically intriguing explanation. Whereas high self-monitors are known to show greater variance in their behavior across social settings than are low self-monitors, it seems likely that their possessions will provide at least some tangible evidence of this inconsistency. Motivated to “represent” themselves in a “flexible” fashion, high self-monitors may tend to “hide” objects or possessions that would generate specific (or contradictory) images in their most private spaces: their bedrooms. As a result, it would be expected that identity displays in the bedrooms of high self-monitors would be especially confusing to an audience, which is exactly the pattern observed in the measures.

### *Limitations and Directions for Further Research*

As mentioned above, there are several limitations to the present study (in addition to small sample size and restricted range on homeowners’ self-monitoring scores). One obvious limitation is the use of self report data as a standard against which the participants’ accuracy was assessed. Although this may have had minimal influence on the overall pattern of results in this study, it may have impacted the sizes of observed

discrepancies between the sources of data, thereby minimizing estimates of the true “accuracy” of impressions formed from someone’s possessions. In future research, reports of persons acquainted with the homeowners could be used in addition to the homeowners’ self-reports, and both compared with the scores provided by unacquainted observers.

Another limitation of this study is the use of photographs of rooms in place of having observers inspect the rooms directly, as it was done in Gosling et al.’s (2002) study. The latter procedure, in addition to allowing for a more in depth inspection of the dwellings, would likely produce greater engagement or effort by participants. However, researchers frequently use photographs (as done here), and it has been successfully employed in previous research in this area (Burroughs et al., 1991; Sadalla et al., 1987; Sheets & Clements, in review).

Finally, a necessary limitation to this study was in the forewarning of stimulus participants had prior to taking photographs in their home. Although instructed not to “clean up” the rooms for the researchers’ arrival, it is likely that many participants did so, and high self-monitors, in particular, may have removed specific “evidence” of their personality from their bedrooms, resulting in an especially generic presentation, which could have accounted for the current results. Although numerous prior researchers have successfully obtained photographic stimuli (presumably with advance warning given to the stimulus target), since these researchers did not explore the potentially moderating role of self-monitoring in displays within the home, such behavior may not have affected their results. Although it would be inappropriate to take photographs without someone’s permission, it would perhaps be possible to request permission upon arrival at a

participants' house (with a personality questionnaire) that would limit the volunteer's ability to alter their personal display in various rooms.

### *Conclusions*

The current study failed to provide clear evidence that high self-monitors create clearer impressions of their personality in private living spaces than in more public areas; it also revealed numerous unexpected differences in the clarity of personal displays of low self-monitors across different rooms of the home. Moreover, the results of the correlational analyses may be taken to suggest that observers were completely unable to reliably decode the personality of homeowners from the photographs of their rooms. Although some results, such as the main effect of self-monitoring (collapsed across room time) was significant in the direction consistent with prior research on several variables, overall the results raise more questions than they begin to answer, and more extensive research is clearly needed.

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APPENDIXES



## APPENDIX A

## Self-Rating Version of the Big Five Inventory

**Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who *likes to spend time with others*? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.**

1. Disagree strongly
2. Disagree a little
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree a little
5. Agree strongly

*I see myself as someone who...*

- \_\_\_ 1. ...is talkative
- \_\_\_ 2. ...tends to find fault with others
- \_\_\_ 3. ...does a thorough job
- \_\_\_ 4. ...is depressed, blue
- \_\_\_ 5. ...is original, comes up with new ideas
- \_\_\_ 6. ...is reserved
- \_\_\_ 7. ...is helpful and unselfish with others
- \_\_\_ 8. ...can be somewhat careless
- \_\_\_ 9. ...is relaxed, handles stress well
- \_\_\_ 10. ...is curious about many different things
- \_\_\_ 11. ...is full of energy
- \_\_\_ 12. ...starts quarrels with others
- \_\_\_ 13. ...is a reliable worker
- \_\_\_ 14. ...can be tense
- \_\_\_ 15. ...is ingenious, a deep thinker
- \_\_\_ 16. ...generates a lot of enthusiasm
- \_\_\_ 17. ...has a forgiving nature
- \_\_\_ 18. ...tends to be disorganized
- \_\_\_ 19. ...worries a lot
- \_\_\_ 20. ...has an active imagination
- \_\_\_ 21. ...tends to be quiet
- \_\_\_ 22. ...is generally trusting

Remember, meaning of the numbers that you assign to the statements is as follows:

1. Disagree strongly
2. Disagree a little
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree a little
5. Agree strongly

*I see myself as someone who...*

- \_\_\_23. ...tends to be lazy
- \_\_\_24. ...is emotionally stable, not easily upset
- \_\_\_25. ...is inventive
- \_\_\_26. ...has an assertive personality
- \_\_\_27. ...can be cold and aloof
- \_\_\_28. ...perseveres until the task is finished
- \_\_\_29. ...can be moody
- \_\_\_30. ...values artistic, aesthetic experiences
- \_\_\_31. ...is sometimes shy, inhibited
- \_\_\_32. ...is considerate and kind to almost everyone
- \_\_\_33. ...does things efficiently
- \_\_\_34. ...remains calm in tense situations
- \_\_\_35. ...prefers work that is routine
- \_\_\_36. ...is outgoing, sociable
- \_\_\_37. ...is sometimes rude to others
- \_\_\_38. ...makes plans and follows through with them
- \_\_\_39. ...gets nervous easily
- \_\_\_40. ...likes to reflect, play with ideas
- \_\_\_41. ...has few artistic interests
- \_\_\_42. ...likes to cooperate with others
- \_\_\_43. ...is easily distracted
- \_\_\_44. ...is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

## APPENDIX B

## Revised Self-Monitoring Scale

**Please circle the number that best represents your level of agreement with each of the statements below.**

1. In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behavior if I feel that something else is called for.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

2. I am often able to read people's true emotions correctly through their eyes.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

3. I have the ability to control the way I come across to people, depending on the impression I wish to give them.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

4. In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I'm conversing with.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

5. My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding others' emotions and motives.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

6. I can usually tell when others consider a joke to be in bad taste, even though they may laugh convincingly.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

7. When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change it to something that does.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

8. I can usually tell when I've said something inappropriate by reading it in the listener's eyes.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

9. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

10. I have found that I can adjust my behavior to meet the requirements of any situation I find myself in.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

11. If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person's manner of expression.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

12. Even when it might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a good front.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

13. Once I know what the situation calls for, it's easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Agree		Strongly Agree

## APPENDIX C

## Homeowner Background Questionnaire

**Background Characteristics**

1. Sex: M F
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ yrs
3. Year in school: Freshmen  
Sophomore  
Junior  
Senior  
Other
4. Race/Ethnicity: Caucasian-American  
African-American  
Asian-American  
Other-American  
Not an American Citizen
5. What is your current relationship status?: single  
romantically involved  
cohabiting  
married
6. Do you live in a house or an apartment?: house apartment
7. Do you own or rent?: own rent
8. How many years have you lived there?: \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many people live with you?: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Please think about all the visitors you had last month. Sometimes, a group of friends may have stopped by. Other times, a friend may have come by on their own. Perhaps your parents came by. Below, we'd like you to report how many people in each relationship category below came by your house or apartment in the last month.
  - Family members: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Close friends: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Acquaintances: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Co-workers or classmates: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Strangers: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

## Sample Stimulus Photographs

*Figure 1.* Photograph of a bedroom of a singly living female.



*Figure 2.* Photograph of a living room of a singly living female.



## APPENDIX E

## Other-Rating Big Five Inventory

**Homeowner 1**

**Please write a number next to each statement to indicate how the homeowner would rate him/her-self.**

1. Disagree strongly
2. Disagree a little
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree a little
5. Agree strongly

*The homeowner sees him/her-self as someone who...*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. ...is talkative                            | <input type="checkbox"/> 23. ...tends to be lazy                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. ...tends to find fault with others         | <input type="checkbox"/> 24. ...is emotionally stable, not easily upset       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. ...does a thorough job                     | <input type="checkbox"/> 25. ...is inventive                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. ...is depressed, blue                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 26. ...has an assertive personality                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. ...is original, comes up with new ideas    | <input type="checkbox"/> 27. ...can be cold and aloof                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. ...is reserved                             | <input type="checkbox"/> 28. ...perseveres until the task is finished         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. ...is helpful and unselfish with others    | <input type="checkbox"/> 29. ...can be moody                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. ...can be somewhat careless                | <input type="checkbox"/> 30. ...values artistic, aesthetic experiences        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. ...is relaxed, handles stress well         | <input type="checkbox"/> 31. ...is sometimes shy, inhibited                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. ...is curious about many different things | <input type="checkbox"/> 32. ...is considerate and kind to almost everyone    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. ...is full of energy                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 33. ...does things efficiently                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12. ...starts quarrels with others            | <input type="checkbox"/> 34. ...remains calm in tense situations              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. ...is a reliable worker                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 35. ...prefers work that is routine                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14. ...can be tense                           | <input type="checkbox"/> 36. ...is outgoing, sociable                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15. ...is ingenious, a deep thinker           | <input type="checkbox"/> 37. ...is sometimes rude to others                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16. ...generates a lot of enthusiasm          | <input type="checkbox"/> 38. ...makes plans and follows through with them     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. ...has a forgiving nature                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 39. ...gets nervous easily                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18. ...tends to be disorganized               | <input type="checkbox"/> 40. ...likes to reflect, play with ideas             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19. ...worries a lot                          | <input type="checkbox"/> 41. ...has few artistic interests                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20. ...has an active imagination              | <input type="checkbox"/> 42. ...likes to cooperate with others                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21. ...tends to be quiet                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 43. ...is easily distracted                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 22. ...is generally trusting                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 44. ...is sophisticated in art, music, or literature |



## APPENDIX F

## Participant Background Questionnaire

**Background Characteristics**

1. Sex: M F
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years
3. Year in school: Freshmen  
Sophomore  
Junior  
Senior  
Other
4. Race/Ethnicity: Caucasian-American  
African-American  
Asian-American  
Other-American  
Not an American Citizen
5. Do you know any of the homeowners, whose home was presented (did you recognize any of the presented homes)? Yes No