

Perception of personal identity at home

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This study aims to discover whether observers with the same cultural background as the inhabitant of a bedroom perceive common characteristics among the inhabitants. The study was carried out with 107 females who were asked to assess the inhabitants of eight bedrooms. Several slides of each bedroom were shown to participants and they had to choose from a list of seventy-six characteristics those that defined the resident of each bedroom. Results revealed that socio-demographic variables thus attributed coincided with the profiles of the inhabitants. A correspondence analysis brought to light a dimension linked to affective aspects, which was more prominent among women; whereas among men the characteristics thus attributed were more linked to practical aspects and to difficulties for social interaction. A second study was conducted to determine whether gender stereotype had any influence on the result of the previous study. The outcomes showed that this stereotype did not have any effect on the participants' judgments.

Percepción de la identidad personal en el hogar. Este estudio tiene como objetivo descubrir si observadores con el mismo background cultural que el habitante de un dormitorio perciben características comunes entre los habitantes de dichos dormitorios. El estudio se llevó a cabo con 107 mujeres, a las que se les pidió que evaluaran a los habitantes de ocho habitaciones. Varias diapositivas de cada habitación se mostraron a los participantes y éstos tenían que elegir de una lista de 76 adjetivos aquellos que mejor definían a los residentes de cada habitación. Los resultados revelaron que las variables socio-demográficas que se les atribuía coincidían con los perfiles de los habitantes. Además, un análisis de correspondencias permitió observar que a las mujeres residentes se les atribuía en mayor medida una dimensión vinculada a los aspectos afectivos, mientras que a los hombres residentes se les atribuía características relacionadas con los aspectos prácticos y las dificultades de interacción. En un segundo estudio llevado a cabo con 132 estudiantes mujeres se muestra que el estereotipo de género no resulta relevante para a la hora de considerar los resultados del primer estudio.

A dwelling is not simply a place in which to live. As Cooper (1974) pointed out, a dwelling has a deep psychological meaning that goes beyond the purely instrumental function of providing shelter and of being a place where domestic behavior takes place. Numerous aspirations, motivations and personal values associated with the resident's lifestyle are satisfied in a dwelling, or through it (Zwarts & Coolen, 2006).

The dwelling and its transformation into a home have been studied from a multidisciplinary standpoint (Moore, 2000). Numerous variables pertaining to anthropological, sociological and psychosocial levels of reality have been used to find out how human beings behave in their homes, as well as how they perceive them and make them their own. One of the recurring themes in Environmental Psychology focuses on the personalization of home as an expression of identity. Classical studies like the ones authored by Cooper (1974) and Sadalla, Vershure, and Burroughs (1987) can be seen as the starting point for a lot of the research in

recent years that has been conducted on the home as an expression of the self (Aragonés, 2002).

Residents organize their houses according to their needs and personal tastes. They adapt their houses to themselves through decoration and personalization. This allows them to imprint their own personality on their dwellings, and the interior and its contents become a mirror of the self (Cooper, 1995). Alternatively, as Werner, Altman, and Oxley (1985) stated, this idea reflects links with the places when residents fill them with meaning. In this way, the place as a physical space is converted into a psychosocial space. In other words, the dwelling becomes a home through an active process in which people transform their surroundings, creating links to the place they have chosen in order to satisfy their needs and wishes (Tognoli, 1987; 2002). Decoration plays an essential role in this process (Aragonés & Sukhwani 1994).

One of the aims pursued by many of the above mentioned studies was to ascertain how identity is reflected through decoration and/or to discover to what extent the resident's identity is perceived by a person observing the room or home, who, however, has no other details about the inhabitant of the room or home in question.

The notion that homes and everything they contain are objects that symbolically express their occupants' social class, personality, aesthetic preferences and personal background is supported in studies conducted by Sadalla, Burroughs, and Quaid (1980) and

by Sadalla, Vershure, and Burroughs (1987). The source of these studies is the notion that the attributes of a home are chosen to communicate its occupants' social identity. The home is conceived as an affirmation of identity through a common symbolic language and as a vehicle to express identity through the manipulation of its outward appearance. These authors empirically confirmed that residents of several homes leave their own imprint in the living rooms in such a way so that some features of their identities could be «read» by strangers.

Along the same lines of research, attention has been placed on studying to what extent a home's decoration expresses personality traits. Smith and Gates (1998) showed photographs of the inside and outside of homes and obtained positive significant correlations in three of the Big Five — neuroticism, openness to experience and conscientiousness — among the responses homeowners gave about the NEO and the ones from a sample of students about the homes' supposed owners.

Another study that reinforced this approach was the study by Gosling, Ko, Mannarelli, and Morris (2002), which looked into the extent by which environmental cues in the rooms of students reflect aspects of their personality. They showed how certain environmental cues in the rooms correlated with the scores attributed to the resident for the Big Five, measured through John and Srivastava's (1999) BFI. This study's results showed correlations among the traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience with certain cues in the room. Along with the above-mentioned results of Smith and Gates, which also focused on the Big Five, these results should be taken into consideration when studying how identity is projected onto the residential atmosphere.

Other studies place greater attention on socio-demographic characteristics, such as the one by Wilson and Mackenzie (2000). Their research showed how people were categorized by age, socio-economic status or family situation groups through decoration. Nonetheless, their study does not allow one to delve further into how these judgments fit in with the residents' real data due to the fact that the interiors used in it were chosen from several magazines.

As was mentioned above, although homes reflect the identity of all their residents to a greater or lesser extent, not all areas of a home are shared equally by all family members. However, certain areas tend to be «marked» by means of symbolic objects by their regular users. These objects indicate that a certain space has an owner in addition to providing clues about the owner's identity (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

Rochberg-Halton (1984) studied the rooms in a home where the different family members had imprinted their identities. Among the results obtained, it is worth highlighting that the living room allows adults to create a social space to externalize themselves. It is the place where parents show their social identity and that of the family to visitors and strangers. Furthermore, children and adolescents project themselves in their bedrooms. Bedrooms are therefore the area of the house where they exteriorize themselves, they can personalize a bedroom and enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in it. Similar results were obtained by Sebba and Churchman (1986) when they showed how family members living in the same home are sensitive to aspects of territoriality in individual, shared or public areas and how children having a room of their own feel that it represents them. It is easy to imagine that these results are always influenced by the cultures to which the participants in each study belong. Omata's study (1995) is an example of this, showing

how Japanese mothers are less aware than American mothers that their children's bedrooms are exclusively their own.

STUDY 1

The underlying idea throughout this discourse is that the different areas of a home are somehow invested with their inhabitants' self and that decoration, along with the personal layout of objects contained in it, could well have a communicative function as regards some features of the self. Nonetheless, before broaching this question empirically, it is necessary to know to what extent a room's decoration and layout of objects give rise to observers who belong to the same culture as the resident can perceive personal traits that they have in common with the resident. This precisely is the aim of this study, which employs the bedrooms of university students living with their families in an exclusive fashion.

Method

Participants

The participants who assessed the bedrooms used as stimuli were 107 female psychology students from the Complutense University in Madrid with an average age of 20.6 years and a *SD* 1.7. Only women were selected to avoid bias in the perception of residential environments (Amérgo, 1992). Eighty-six percent of those participants had their own bedroom and 14% of them shared bedrooms. More than three-fourths — 78.5% — lived in the family home and the rest outside it, for different reasons. In many cases, this was because the family home was located in a different city from where they were studying.

Moreover, the inhabitants of the eight bedrooms assessed were also students from the same University, but in different year. Four of them were male and four were female. Their average age was 22.88 years. All of them lived in the family home and had their own bedroom.

Instrument

A questionnaire was compiled with eight identical lists containing seventy-eight characteristics that could be attributed to a person. These were obtained from a previous normative study (Aragónés & Rodríguez, 2005). Together with personality traits, the questionnaire also took into consideration socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age (young, old), marital status (married, single) and whether it was possible to detect if the resident of the bedroom was a student. The adjectives were placed at random on the list.

Procedure

The following instructions were given to the participants:

«You will be shown some slides. Please study them carefully and mark with an X the adjectives that you consider best define the PERSON to whom this bedroom belongs».

The questionnaire was completed in a classroom where volunteer psychology students were asked to attend one of the sessions arranged at pre-established times during the department's teaching hours. Two senior year collaborators, who had been previously trained, were present at the test.

The session consisted of an eight-slide PowerPoint presentation of eight bedrooms belonging to eight students. The bedrooms were always shown in the same order, beginning with a woman's bedroom and subsequently alternating genders. Each bedroom was shown for one minute — three slides per bedroom, twenty seconds per slide.

After this three-slide viewing, the three slides were then shown simultaneously on the screen (see Figure 1). At this point, the participants were asked to start answering the list concerning the inhabitant of the bedroom. When all the participants had finished, the next bedroom was shown. This pattern was followed until the eight residents had been assessed. The participants then answered the question on socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, sex, whether they lived in the family home and whether the bedroom was shared with a family member.

The photographs shown on the slides were taken by the bedroom residents themselves with their own digital cameras, and all of them followed the same criteria. If the bedroom door was in a corner or near one, a photograph was taken from the door diagonally focusing on the furthest point. If the door was in the center of one of the walls, the photo was taken focusing on the furthest point opposite the door. Once the door was closed, the second photograph was taken from the corner furthest away from the door, without moving any furniture. Then a third photo was taken of the view best representing the bedroom, not taken in the previous two shots.

Data analysis

Firstly, a frequency analysis on the variables attributed to the residents was conducted. Then a difference of means was

calculated, considering the room residents' gender, along with the frequency of the traits attributed to them. Subsequently, a simple factor correspondence analysis was conducted with the SPAD program using (residents \times frequency of adjectives attributed) as a data matrix.

Results

Participants correctly attributed the socio-demographic variables in keeping with the residents' background, as is revealed in Figure 2, these attributions reached very high percentages of correct answers. Moreover, the percentages that did not correspond to the bedroom residents' profiles —old, married, rich— were very low.

Regarding the personal traits, a total of 16,083 adjectives were given by the 107 participants to the eight bedrooms shown. Each participant gave an average of 18.78 adjectives on the list for each bedroom.

Table 1 shows the average obtained for each set of participants in each bedroom, as well as the standard deviation. These data show that bedrooms belonging to males obtained lower average values than bedrooms belonging to females. There was therefore greater richness in the number of adjectives chosen for females. Considering the average score of adjectives obtained for the set of four bedrooms belonging to males ($M= 17.67$, $SD= 6.69$) and for the set of four bedrooms belonging to females ($M= 19.9$, $SD= 7.5$), it can be seen that this difference is significant ($t(106)= -6.39$, $p<.001$).

In order to choose the adjectives that best defined each resident, the frequency with which adjectives were selected for each room was calculated. The mean and the standard deviation of this percentage were calculated (see Table 1), and a criterion



Figure 1. Joint presentation of the first female bedroom shown to participants

was established taking these data into consideration. Hence, it was considered that only the adjectives whose percentage was higher than the sum of the mean plus one standard deviation would be chosen.

The percentages ranged from 39.6 to 46.7 in the case of rooms belonging to females, whereas for rooms belonging to males these values varied from 36.2 to 43.9. The number of different adjectives was similar for males (35) and females (27), giving a total of forty-five different adjectives for the set comprising both groups. Table 2 shows the list of 45 adjectives selected, that means those adjectives that reached a level of agreement according to the criterion that was explained above, and the percentage of participants that marked each characteristic for each room. In addition, it also shows that certain attributions were more consistent according to gender and that some attributions were further removed from one gender than from the other.

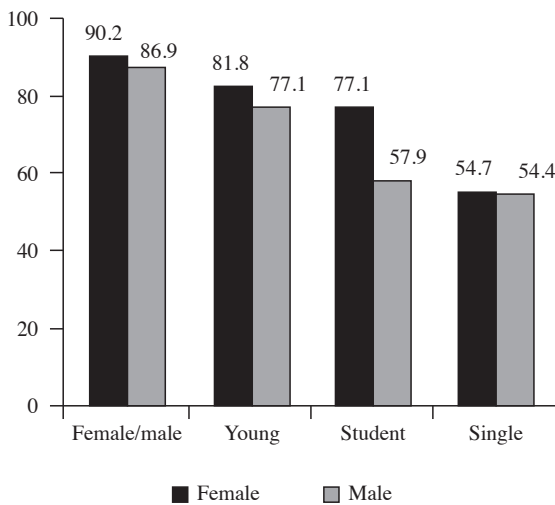


Figure 2. Percentage of participants who attributed these socio-demographic characteristics depending on whether the bedroom belonged to female or male

	Number of adjectives chosen for each room		Percentage frequency of adjectives chosen for each room	
	M	SD	M	SD
Male				
Bedroom 2	18.56	7.81	23.69	20.20
Bedroom 4	16.26	6.63	19.99	17.39
Bedroom 6	18.70	8.32	23.71	18.71
Bedroom 8	17.20	7.88	20.93	15.29
Female				
Bedroom 1	22.00	9.17	27.28	19.49
Bedroom 3	20.79	9.16	26.62	12.98
Bedroom 5	19.67	8.13	23.90	16.51
Bedroom 7	17.14	7.5	20.69	19.51

The criterion for choosing the adjectives used in Study 2 resulted from the sum of the mean percentage plus a standard deviation

In order to observe the degree to which the attribution of different adjectives depends on the residents' gender, a correspondence factor analysis was conducted. An explained variance of 80.45% was obtained with the first two axes, as was a set of adjectives that were clearly associated with bedrooms belonging to women and another set linked to bedrooms belonging to men (see Figure 3). The layout of one kind of bedroom or another suggests dependent dimensions. That is, the adjectives more closely associated with men are, to a certain degree, also associated to women. However, the adjectives more related to women do not appear related to men.

To observe the nuances arising from the participants' attributions, the different adjectives were assembled in Figure 4 depending on the proximity offered by the correspondence factor analysis. The adjectives were grouped together depending on whether they were associated with any of the Big Five in Saucier and Goldberg's (1996) study. When an adjective did not appear on these authors' list, that adjective was attributed to the trait that corresponded to its synonym or to the most similar adjectives. The resulting grouping allows one to observe how three traits —extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness— are over-represented compared to the other two. Focusing on the adjectives' polarity, it can be seen that women are associated with a greater number of positive adjectives than men. Female bedroom residents are linked to the traits of extraversion and agreeableness, while males are associated to introversion and conscientiousness. In view of the groupings, we could conclude that women's bedrooms give rise to dimensions related to affective aspects associated with facilitating human interaction and men's bedrooms are related to practical aspects. However there are also adjectives concerned with facilitating human interaction, but in this case they are negative.

STUDY 2

The high level of consensus reached when attributing the residents' gender led to a second study being conducted in order to observe whether a perception bias that attributes the bedroom to a male or a female had influenced the participants' responses by favoring the appearance of gender stereotypes or an implicit theory of personality, similar to the effects that Asch (1946) had already discovered when there are central elements like «warm» vs. «cold».

Hence, this second study's objective was aimed at contrasting the male and female stereotypes with the resulting adjectives from the previous study. The influence of the bias could be accepted, in as much as there is a concordance between the adjectives chosen to describe the male/female residents of the bedrooms with the male/female stereotypes.

Method

Participants

This study's set of participants amounted to 143 female Psychology students from the same university, who had taken part in the previous study. Their average age was 20.70 years with a SD= 1.77. Half of them responded to the questionnaire to portray a man's image, and the other half had to answer the same questionnaire but describing a woman's picture.

Instrument

The participants were given a list with the forty-five adjectives

that resulted from the previous study. Each participant then had to choose the adjectives that s/he associated with, to their mind, the characteristics of a man or a woman.

Table 2
Percentages of participants who attributed the adjective to each of the eight bedrooms in Study 1 (N= 107) and stereotypes attributed to females and males in Study 2 (N= 143)

Adjectives	Males				Females				Stereotype (Study 2)	
	M1	M2	M3	M4	F1	F2	F3	F4	M	F
Active	7.5	56.1	15.0	44.9	50.5	33.6	48.6	57.0	67.2	76.0
Adventurous	4.7	37.4	12.2	31.8	15.0	11.2	16.8	19.6	70.1	29.3
Affectionate	1.9	23.4	2.8	12.2	46.7	38.3	31.8	31.8	20.9	85.3
Agreeable	9.4	42.1	18.7	43.9	54.2	43.0	38.3	43.9	46.3	64.0
Amusing	4.7	65.4	9.4	50.5	61.7	26.2	51.4	50.5	67.2	54.7
Calm	43.9	13.1	35.5	37.4	23.4	34.6	23.4	11.2	40.3	33.3
Carefree	19.6	43.9	10.3	40.2	23.4	15.0	54.2	65.4	70.1	5.3
Careless	7.5	27.1	3.7	32.7	11.2	13.1	55.1	66.4	61.2	5.3
Cheerful	4.7	63.6	7.5	40.2	65.4	38.3	38.3	46.7	43.3	60.0
Classical	39.3	5.6	33.6	13.1	14.0	52.3	11.2	9.4	19.4	8.0
Clean	72.9	15.0	63.6	35.5	50.5	44.9	15.0	5.6	19.4	69.3
Cold	57.9	3.7	32.7	14.0	2.8	3.7	5.6	1.9	26.9	2.7
Cultured	20.6	4.7	43.0	14.0	19.6	21.5	15.0	7.5	25.4	57.3
Dreamy	4.7	45.8	13.1	24.3	46.7	39.3	45.8	32.7	17.9	74.7
Dull	44.9	5.6	19.6	8.4	2.8	9.4	7.5	8.4	11.9	2.7
Dynamic	3.7	52.3	20.6	32.7	39.3	28.0	33.6	41.1	49.3	60.0
Extroverted	7.5	43.0	8.4	42.1	43.0	31.8	46.7	50.5	67.2	54.7
Family	15.0	24.3	7.5	13.1	43.0	61.7	27.1	23.4	28.4	78.7
Feminine	2.8	1.9	–	4.7	47.7	35.5	36.5	18.7	1.5	74.7
Friendly	7.5	50.5	15.0	36.5	65.4	37.4	46.7	52.3	65.7	72.0
Fussy	20.6	8.4	49.5	1.9	1.9	12.2	0.9	2.8	6.0	38.7
Happy	6.5	57.9	14.0	28.0	52.3	36.5	45.8	44.9	55.2	46.7
Humble	44.9	18.7	22.4	22.4	36.5	22.4	21.5	29.0	19.4	41.3
Independent	54.2	18.7	69.2	53.3	27.1	22.4	46.7	24.3	76.1	62.7
Intelligent	25.2	15.0	55.1	36.5	32.7	29.9	30.8	16.8	44.8	74.7
Introverted	44.9	10.3	38.3	16.8	15.0	14.0	15.0	5.6	7.5	6.7
Meticulous	1.9	32.7	18.7	6.5	31.8	47.7	15.9	13.1	17.9	78.7
Nervous	3.7	22.4	7.5	9.4	7.5	16.8	25.2	41.1	19.4	34.7
Open	7.5	48.6	15.0	54.2	56.1	43.9	56.1	57.9	68.7	57.3
Organized	47.7	17.8	76.6	17.8	47.7	29.0	8.4	3.7	14.9	68.0
Perfectionist	26.2	14.0	61.7	4.7	15.9	25.2	3.7	–	13.4	49.3
Pleasant	2.8	51.4	12.2	39.3	55.1	31.8	43.0	49.5	64.2	61.3
Practical	40.2	20.6	34.6	43.9	34.6	23.4	35.5	27.1	68.7	62.7
Responsible	49.5	12.2	60.8	31.8	52.3	51.4	36.5	13.1	16.4	77.3
Romantic	0.9	3.7	5.6	5.6	43.0	44.9	34.6	12.2	17.9	68.0
Serious	57.0	1.9	44.9	13.1	5.6	21.5	16.8	3.7	22.4	12.0
Simple	61.7	12.2	24.3	35.5	17.8	8.4	12.2	14.0	55.2	8.0
Sober	51.4	1.9	29.9	12.2	6.5	16.8	7.5	1.9	10.4	9.3
Solitary	63.6	6.5	43.9	15.9	6.5	16.8	12.2	4.7	13.4	6.7
Studious	28.0	10.3	29.9	11.2	61.7	30.8	51.4	29.9	13.4	65.3
Tidy	56.1	14.0	73.8	16.8	45.8	29.0	6.5	0.9	7.5	57.3
Traditional	43.9	9.4	18.7	3.7	14.0	36.5	12.2	7.5	19.4	9.3
Unassuming	60.8	15.9	32.7	52.3	38.3	16.8	25.2	23.4	68.7	41.3
Untidy	3.7	31.8	0.9	36.5	14.0	21.5	63.6	77.6	70.1	8.0
Welcoming	3.7	22.4	15.9	24.3	52.3	45.8	30.8	22.4	14.9	78.7

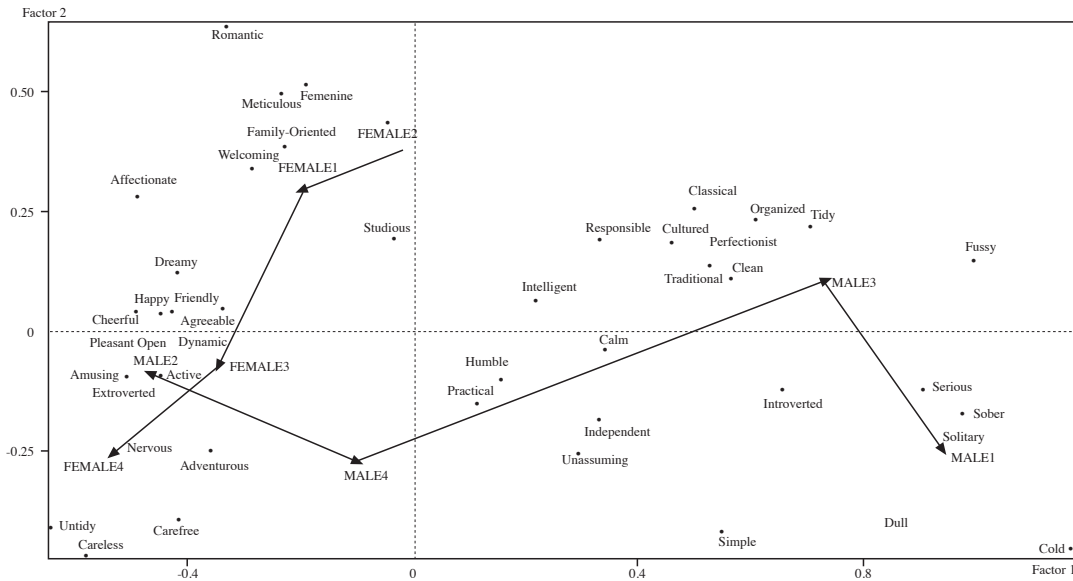


Figure 3. Distribution of adjectives attributed to the residents of the eight bedrooms in accordance with a Correspondence Factor Analysis

MALE (22 adjectives)	FEMALE (23 adjectives)
I. EXTRAVERSION Dull - Introverted - Serious - Sober - Solitary -	I. EXTRAVERSION Active + Amusing + Carefree + Dynamic + Extroverted + Family-oriented + Friendly + Adventurous
II. AGREEABLENESS Classical + Cold - Humble	II. AGREEABLENESS Affectionate + Agreeable + Feminine + Pleasant Romantic + Welcoming +
III. CONSCIENTIOUSNESS Clean + Cultured + Organized + Perfectionist + Practical + Responsible + Tidy +	III. CONSCIENTIOUSNESS Careless - Cheerful + Meticulous + Untidy -
IV. EMOTIONAL STABILITY Calm + Fussy - Unassuming +	IV. EMOTIONAL STABILITY Happy + Nervous -
V. OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE Independent + Intelligent + Simple - Traditional -	V. OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE Dreamy + Open + Studious +

Figure 4. Adjective grouping depending on whether the characteristics were more related to Males or Females

Data analysis

A frequency analysis on the traits attributed to gender stereotypes was conducted.

Results

The number of adjectives assigned to males ($M= 16.2, SD= 6.4$) was significantly lower ($t(134,75)= -3.66, p<.05$) than the

number assigned to females ($M= 20.9, SD= 8.7$). The percentage with which they were signaled out by the relevant samples appears in Table 2.

To know the adjectives which best reflect the image that participants had about males and females, the criterion explained in the first study (the mean plus one standard deviation) was followed.

From the list of forty-five adjectives, it was observed that twenty adjectives were attributed to the male category and twenty-three to the female category, and ten adjectives were shared by both categories (see Table 2). The adjectives attributed to male residents in the previous study were compared to the stereotype obtained from this study and it can be seen that only six adjectives coincided while the remaining fourteen belonged to the female resident category. Likewise, in the case of the adjectives attributed to female residents, it can be observed that eight of the twenty-three adjectives obtained from the previous study were not attributed to the female stereotype. In addition, eight adjectives attributed to the stereotype were associated to male residents.

These results reveal that the gender stereotype revealed by participants is not in keeping with the traits attributed to each bedroom as belonging to either a male or a female in the previous study.

Discussion

In accordance with the aims of these studies, the results show that the socio-demographic variables were attributed quite clearly, especially those relating to gender and age.

Regarding the personal traits attributed, it should be emphasized that each bedroom clearly identified its resident. Almost all the residents were perceived differently, as the correspondence factor analysis shows. However, shared attributions were observed for females and males, although these attributions were not independent or orthogonal relationships of the adjectives. The fact that two discourses were configured —one for males and another for females— does not ensure that gender was a real influencing factor. In order to control this effect, it would be necessary

to manipulate the gender attributed to the rooms' residents in subsequent studies.

In light of these results various questions have yet to be resolved. Many of the adjectives included on the list in the questionnaire could well be attributed to people or to the bedroom itself, as is the case of adjectives such as «clean», «ordered», «humble», etc. It would therefore be convenient to take this effect into account and control it in future research in order to avoid interferences which might contaminate the response.

A second methodological issue which proved evident and should be avoided in future studies, particularly in such long tests, is the fact that the bedrooms were always shown in the same order. For example, we do not know if the number of resultant adjectives for each bedroom is due to the order in which the stimuli were shown or to whether the bedroom produced more or less consensual information. Nonetheless, in this piece of research, the analysis of the average production of adjectives for each resident seems sufficiently high, leading one to suppose that their order did not produce a significant effect in this particular case. As has just been mentioned, this does not mean that it should not be avoided in future research.

The results obtained through this study are satisfactory when verifying how certain socio-demographic characteristics and personality traits are attributed by consensus when a room that has been appropriated by its resident is observed. Nonetheless, and following on from the methodological considerations, at this point it is important to highlight some constraints in the sample used. In this regard, it may be necessary to check the degree to which this process of attribution may be influenced by people who belong to the same cultural context but who, nevertheless, have different socio-demographic characteristics like gender, age and socio-economic status.

From a more conceptual standpoint, this area of study has been linked to the Big Five model, as put forward by Gosling, et al. (2002). In their study, the conclusion was reached that the traits attributed to the residents are agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience. However, in this study, most of the adjectives that reached a frequency above that of the criterion set could be included within the traits of extraversion (active, amusing, extroverted, etc.), conscientiousness (tidy, organized, responsible, etc.) and agreeableness (affectionate, agreeable, welcoming, etc.) and it is somewhat more difficult to find adjectives associated with emotional stability and openness to experience. Additionally, the results showed in Smith and Gates' work (1998) share with Gosling's et al., research and this piece of research only one of the Big Five: conscientiousness. The discrepancies between these

results could be due to a variety of reasons. On the one hand, as regards methodology, the BFI was used in the case of Gosling et al. (2002) to measure the traits and Smith and Gates (1998) employed the NEO. While a list of adjectives in which the Big Five were unequally represented was used in this piece of research. Furthermore, cultural reasons that could facilitate exteriorizing one trait over another could be pointed out.

This lack of agreement could be understood in as much as the empirical research in this field is still rather scarce, but it appears that this approach could be fruitful to study how residents appropriate their own homes and how they project their personal and social identities onto them if the methodological aspects are improved and the responses are repeated within different cultural contexts.

Another field with which this work could be linked is the field developed by Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu (2002), which states that the construction of the perception of the other is structured around two dimensions that normally have positive connotations. They called the first of those dimensions *warmth*, which is related to the style or way of interacting. This dimension is more clearly associated with the women of the bedrooms studied. The second dimension, known as *competence*, highlights aspects related to efficiency or ways of situating oneself in the face of production in general terms. In the case of this piece of research, this dimension is more related to the group of men from the Study 1.

Going back to the empirical research, as a final reflection on the process of interaction broached, it could be said that these studies have not proved that home decoration is really a language and, even less, which shared codes in the sub-culture under study generate a correspondence between the reality expressed and what is understood. Nonetheless, the idea that underlies this work, that decoration manages to convey identity, is still plausible in the light of the results obtained. However, the path to empirical verification is still a long way off.

Both conceptual basics and methodological developments are still very far from the final goal, which aims to understand the keys that convert home decoration into a language. Nonetheless, the increasing presence of home decoration as a subject of psycho-environmental research allows us to augur that interesting studies will soon be conducted to shed more light on some of the currently unresolved problems.

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