



Do introverts and extraverts differ in the mind perception strategies they prefer others would use to understand them?

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Introduction

We examined whether introverts and extraverts differ in the strategy they prefer others would apply for understanding their feelings, and whether different motivations underlie these preferences. The most effective mind-perception strategy is directly asking (i.e., perspective getting; PG). Less effective strategies include imagining the other's perspective (perspective taking, PT), projection (PJ), using prior knowledge (PK), and observing behavior (OB) (Epley & Eyal, 2019). The motivations we examined were responsiveness (i.e., increasing accuracy, feeling cared for, feeling accepted; Reis et al, 1997), perceiving the others' effort, avoiding self-effort, and avoiding embarrassment. Because extraverts tend to be more socially outgoing and uninhibited (e.g., John & Srivastava, 1999), we expected them to be more receptive to overt questioning, and therefore prefer PG, more than introverts.

Method

Participants. 119 individuals, recruited mostly on social media, participated in the study (82 women, 36 men, and 1 other gender), ages 19 to 78 ($M = 34.82$, $SD = 15.58$).

Procedure. Participants rated the extent to which they wanted a close other (e.g., partner, friend) to use different strategies when trying to accurately understand their feelings (1 = not at all, 7 = very much): PT, PG, PJ, PK and OB. They then selected their most preferred strategy. Participants also selected the primary motivation for their choice. Participants then rated their introversion/extraversion via 21 questions (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.9$) (John & Srivastava, 1999) and how similar and familiar they are with the other person (1 = not at all, 7 = very much).

Results

Introversion/extraversion as a function of rating preference for strategies:

A linear regression analysis predicting extraversion by the ratings of preference for the five strategies did not yield a significant effect, $F(5,113) = 0.12$, $p = 0.988$, $R^2 = 0.005$ (Figure 1).

	B	SE	t	p
(Intercept)	3.50	0.34	10.16	< .001
PT	-0.007	0.040	-0.19	.853
PK	-0.012	0.037	-0.33	.741
PJ	-0.012	0.032	-0.36	.720
PG	-0.017	0.054	-0.31	.756
OB	0.015	0.043	0.35	.729

Figure 1— Linear regression predicting introversion/extraversion with rating preference for strategies

Introversion/extraversion as a function of the most preferred strategy chosen:

A one-way ANOVA predicting extraversion from participants' most preferred strategy, did not yield a significant effect, $F(4,114) = 0.30$, $p = 0.876$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$ (Figure 2).

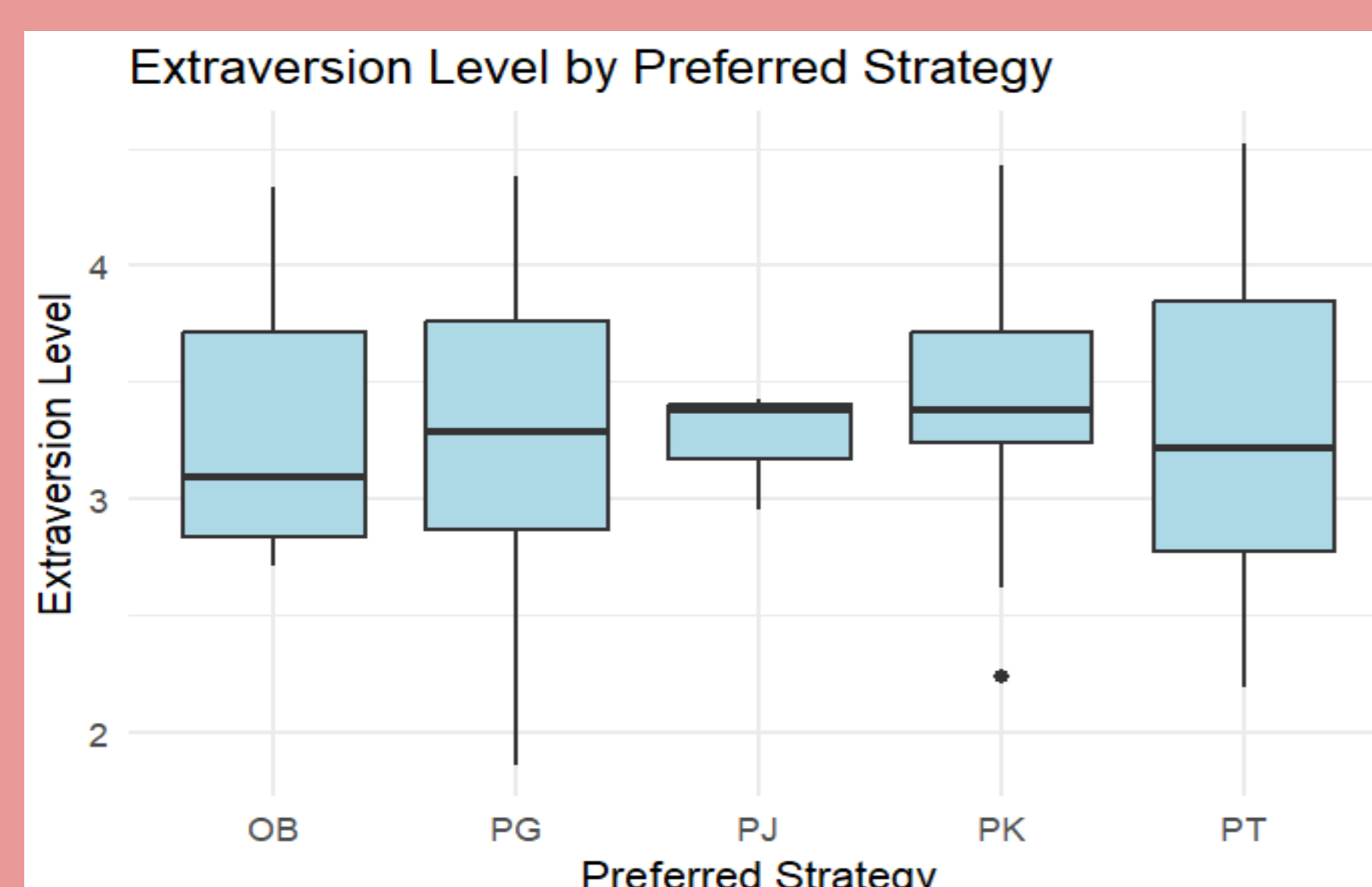


Figure 2— extraversion level by preferred strategy

Introversion/extraversion as a function of the primary motivation chosen:

An ANOVA predicting extraversion from participants' primary motivation did not yield a significant effect, $F(5,113) = 0.59$, $p = 0.706$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$ (Figure 3).

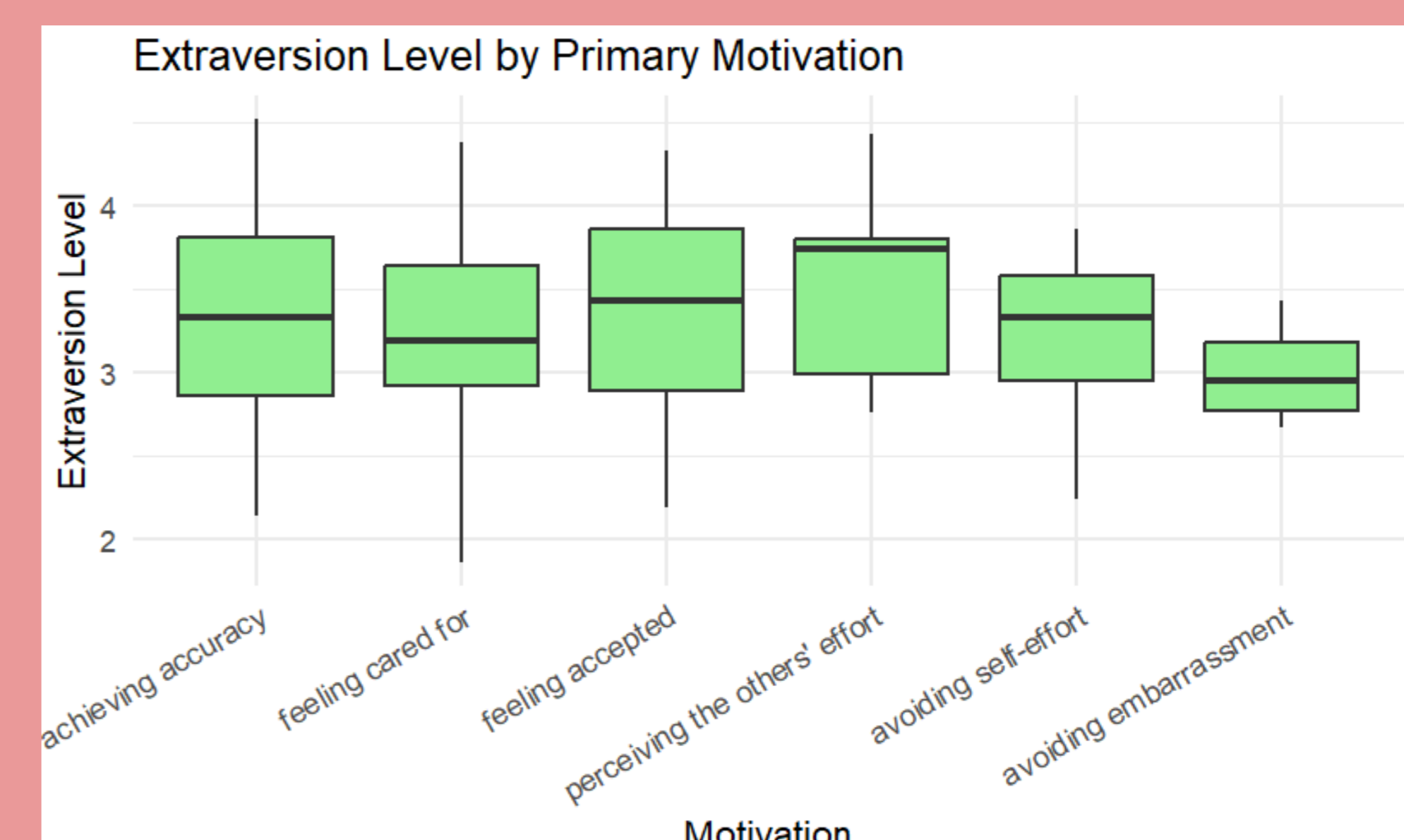


Figure 3- extraversion level by primary motivation

Discussion

We did not find relationships between extraversion and participants' preferred strategy and their primary motivation for their preferences. These findings might suggest that extraversion does not play a central role in preferences of mind perception strategy. It is also possible that such personality traits are related to strategy choice in more complex or indirect ways, or that other variables - such as situational factors or cognitive styles - better explain individual differences in strategy choice.

References:

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