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Brief Research Report

Not only assholes drive Mercedes. Besides disagreeable men, also conscientious people drive high-status cars

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JEL, V-JI and SL designed the study. JEL wrote the report, V-JI prepared and analysed the data, SL and JEL collected the data.

Abstract

In a representative sample of Finnish car owners ($N = 1892$) we connected the Five-Factor Model personality dimensions to driving a high-status car. Regardless of whether income was included in the logistic model, disagreeable men and conscientious people in general were particularly likely to drive high-status cars. The results regarding agreeableness are consistent with prior work that has argued for the role of narcissism in status consumption. Regarding conscientiousness, the results can be interpreted from the perspective of self-congruity theory, according to which consumers purchase brands that best reflect their actual or ideal personalities. An important implication is that the association between driving a high-status car and unethical driving behaviour may not, as is commonly argued, be due to the corruptive effects of wealth. Rather, certain personality traits, such as low agreeableness, may be associated with both unethical driving behaviour and with driving a high-status car.

Supporting Information

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