

## ERGO II Ethics application form – FELS Committee

### 1. Applicant Details

<b>1.1 Applicant name</b>	Natalie Berry
<b>1.2 Supervisor</b>	Dr Claire Hart, Dr Sylwia Cisek & Prof Constantine Sedikides
<b>1.3 Other researchers / collaborators (if applicable):</b> <i>Name, address, email</i>	N/A

### 2. Study Details

<b>2.1 Title of study</b>	Personality and Consumerism
<b>2.2 Type of project</b> (e.g. undergraduate, Masters, Doctorate, staff)	Doctorate
<b>2.4 Proposed start date</b> (must match date stated in ERGO)	30/08/21
<b>2.5 Proposed end date</b> (must match date stated in ERGO)	30/09/22

#### **2.6 Briefly describe the rationale for carrying out this project and its specific aims and objectives.**

The aim of this project is to establish how narcissism is implicated in the meaning that individuals derive from conspicuous consumption. I propose that narcissists will derive Meaning in life (MIL) from conspicuous consumption. Symbolic purchases imply material wealth and are likely to attract rewards or positive evaluation from others (i.e., fame). Narcissists are self-centred, have an exalted sense of self-importance, and desire to establish their superiority over others. Therefore, purchasing symbolic products that align with their desire for superiority and status will afford them MIL. Utilitarian purchases, on the other hand, satisfy practicality, similarity to others, and maintaining social bonds or belongingness. A communal orientation though is not considered important by narcissists. Thus, the purchase of utilitarian products will misalign with the narcissistic desire for superiority and status, and will theoretically fail to increase MIL. This study will examine

whether preferences for symbolic (vs. utilitarian) products serve to imbue the narcissist with MIL.

**2.7 Provide a brief outline of the basic study design. Outline what approach is being used and why.**

This study will be completed online. Participants will be asked to fill in some demographic and personality measures (Narcissistic Personality Inventory, Raskin & Terry, 1988, The Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire, NARQ; Back et al., 2013, The Hypersensitivity Narcissism Scale, Hendin & Cheek, 2013) and then a measure of social desirability (The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding Short Form – BIDR-16, Hart, Ritchie, Hepper & Gebauer, 2015).

They will then be asked to complete the consumer decision task (see section 4.1), where they will be asked to pick their preferred product from two possible options and will be asked how much they would be willing to spend on their favoured item.

They will be asked to complete a state version of the meaning in life questionnaire (The Meaning in Life Questionnaire; Steger, Frazier, Oishi & Kaler, 2006). This will be followed by questions that will ask if the participant was aware of the studies aims.

We want to understand the relationship between the personality trait of narcissism and consumer preferences and how this is related to participants' sense of meaning in life.

**2.8 What are the key research question(s)? Specify hypotheses if applicable.**

**Hypothesis 1:**

(Main effect) Those scoring higher in narcissism will select more symbolic/flashy products than utilitarian/practical products in the consumer decision task (replication).

**Hypothesis 2:**

(Main effect) Those scoring higher in narcissism will willing to spend more on flashy products and more on their chosen product.

**Hypothesis 3:**

(Mediation) Those scoring higher in narcissism will have enhanced presence of meaning in life as mediated by their symbolic preference.

### 3. Sample and setting

<b>3.1 Who are the proposed participants and where are they from (e.g. fellow students, club members)? List inclusion / exclusion criteria if applicable.</b>
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Volunteers aged 18 or over with access to the internet. As well as this fellow students from the University of Southampton.
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<b>3.2. How will the participants be identified and approached? Provide an indication of your sample size. If participants are under the responsibility of others (e.g., parents/carers, teachers) state if you have permission or how you will obtain permission from the third party).</b>
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The study will be advertised on various online platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, AddPublic, CallforParticipants, and so on. We will also place posters around the University of Southampton campus and so on.
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The study will also be advertised on the website eFolio for fellow students.
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We are seeking to recruit 400 participants.
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All participants who have completed previous versions of this study will be excluded from this one.
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<b>3.3 Describe the relationship between researcher and sample. Describe any relationship e.g., teacher, friend, boss, clinician, etc.</b>
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N/A
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<b>3.4 How will you obtain the consent of participants? (please upload a copy of the consent form if obtaining written consent) NB. Consent form is not needed for studies collecting data online.</b>
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All participants will read the information and consent form and will have to indicate their agreement to take part in the study.
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<b>3.5 Is there any reason to believe participants may not be able to give full informed consent? If yes, what steps do you propose to take to safeguard their interests?</b>
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N/A

#### 4. Research procedures, interventions and measurements

**4.1 Give a brief account of the procedure as experienced by the participant. Make it clear who does what, how many times and in what order. Make clear the role of all assistants and collaborators. Make clear the total demands made on participants, including time and travel. Upload copies of questionnaires and interview schedules to ERGO.**

All participants will first read an informed consent form. Participants will complete an online survey where they will be asked to complete demographic information and measures of personality, including the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Terry, 1988), The Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ; Back et al., 2013), The Hypersensitivity Narcissism Scale (Hendin & Cheek, 2013) and then a measure of social desirability (The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding Short Form – BIDR-16, Hart, Ritchie, Hepper & Gebauer, 2015). These are all attached.

Participants will be shown a range of different products. They will be asked to pick their preferred product from two possible options and will be asked how much they would be willing to spend on their favoured item. There are 12 products, where the flashy look is paired with a non-practical description and less exciting look is paired with superior practicality (conflict of symbolic vs utilitarian motives).

There are also 4 filler products where a flashy look is paired with higher practical description (i.e., no conflict of motives, one product is better on both dimensions). These filler products will be fixed after every few non-filler products. The order in which the description and image is placed for each product will be randomised (i.e., some with the description above the image and others with the image above the description).

Participants will then complete a measure of state meaning in life (The Meaning in Life Questionnaire; Steger, Frazier, Oishi & Kaler, 2006). Finally participants will complete some questions which ask if the participant was at all suspicious of the study aims. The whole survey is expected to take approximately 20 minutes.

**4.2 Will the procedure involve deception of any sort? If yes, what is your justification?**

The descriptions of the products may not accurately describe the products shown, however, participants will be debriefed afterwards of this issue.

**4.3. Detail any possible (psychological or physical) discomfort, inconvenience, or distress that participants may experience, including after the study, and what precautions will be taken to minimise these risks.**

The risk of creating distress is not bigger than in everyday life. Due to the personal nature of some of the questions, participants are informed that they may leave these questions blank if they prefer not the answer. If completing the questionnaires raises any issues, we provide links to counselling services: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**4.4 Detail any possible (psychological or physical) discomfort, inconvenience, or distress that YOU as a researcher may experience, including after the study, and what precautions will be taken to minimise these risks.**

Discomfort should not be bigger than what participants should encounter in everyday life.

**4.5 Explain how you will care for any participants in 'special groups' e.g., those in a dependent relationship, are vulnerable or are lacking mental capacity), if applicable:**

N/A

**4.6 Please give details of any payments or incentives being used to recruit participants, if applicable:**

Participants will have the option at the end of the study to be entered into a prize draw to win £25 (or equivalent).

For students participating from eFolio they will have the incentive of 4 research credits.

## 5. Access and storage of data

**5.1 How will participant confidentiality be maintained? Confidentiality is defined as non-disclosure of research information except to another authorised person. Confidential information can be shared with those already party to it and may also be disclosed where the person providing the information provides explicit consent. Consider whether it is truly possible to maintain a participant's involvement in the study confidential, e.g. can people observe the participant taking part in the study?**

Personal information of the participants will be stored separately from the survey data. All data files will be kept in a password protected computer and anonymised.

**5.2 How will personal data and study results be stored securely during and after the study. Who will have access to these data?**

The data stored from this study (which has been programmed by the researcher in **Qualtrics**) is password protected. Participants will be redirected to another questionnaire where they can enter their email address to enter the prize draw, if they wish.

**5.3 How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate? Please note that anonymous data (e.g. anonymous questionnaires) cannot be withdrawn after they have been submitted. If there is a point up to which data can be withdrawn/destroyed e.g., up to interview data being transcribed please state this here.**

The information/consent form will explicitly state this.

## 6. Additional Ethical considerations

**6.1. Are there any additional ethical considerations or other information you feel may be relevant to this study?**

No.