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**Extent to which education and religion
influence willingness to pay for art objects
from various art styles eras**

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The views stated in this thesis are those of the author and not necessarily those of the supervisor, second assessor, Erasmus School of Economics or Erasmus University Rotterdam.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Art has existed in human life since the beginning of time. Our forefathers used charcoal and plant juices to create animal silhouettes on the walls of caves. Thanks to the surviving fragments of their works, we can now imagine how the ancients obtained food and fire and what their lives were like.

The culture has evolved. Art has endured and passed through the centuries, unlike the individuals who lived. The authors of famous works are not always known, yet we hear and see their creations. Art allows people to become more aware of themselves and to enter their inner world - the world of their ideas and dreams (Hickman, 2004). Escaping from reality and entering a completely different, opposing world is beneficial. That is why the role of art in human life is priceless. In fact, art is crucial for most of human activities even for economics. According to Frey (2003), art cannot exist without a solid economic foundation, and the economy cannot grow without creative expression. The arts and economics do need each other; indeed, they are complementary (Frey, 2003). This paper aims to comprehend how modern art has evolved and to what extent education, economics and spirituality effected that evolution. On top of that it considers how these three variables effect art style preferences from different art eras and how much people are willing to pay for art objects of various art styles.

To begin the investigation, four distinct art styles were chosen based on significant shifts in artistic expression. They left the most profound imprint on human art history. These styles differ in terms of creative methods and techniques, ideologies, and social forces at the time. However, choosing the "most" significant styles is challenging due to subjectivity and the long list of artistic movements that have ever emerged. However, the emphasis is on Renaissance, Baroque, Impressionism, and Modern art styles. Their descriptions were constructed after reading art books such as Gombrich E. H. (2006), *The Story of Art*, and Gardner et al. (2016), *Art Through the Ages*. Also, *Artistic Movements and Manifestos* define the goals and main principles of art styles and artistic movements. So, now, we consider each style and create a clear timeline with distinct features.

The Renaissance (14th-17th centuries) was a pivotal time in art history and humankind's general history. Artists of that time invigorated people's interest in Roman and Greek culture. Prominent artists of that time concentrated on depicting the world as realistic as possible. Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and others created undistorted pictures with precise use of lights and shadows and almost horrifying anatomical fidelities. The use of three-dimensional space illusion helped to achieve a proper relationship between objects and spatial proximity. The development of mathematical principles allowed artists to turn to converge lines, vanishing points, and diminishing scales to reflect the depth and proportions as they are caught by the human eye in real life. As a result, most artworks of that time praise human life and the significance of one in this world.

As time passed, the Baroque style (17th-18th centuries) emerged as a response to Europe's religious and political changes. The art switched its focus toward theatrically dramatic compositions, strongly coloured light effects and an intensely detailed atmosphere. The emphasis was on highly emotional intensity to connect with viewers' "souls". Moreover, Christianity significantly influenced artists as it was a predominant drive of forces during that time. Therefore, artworks evoke religious symbolism based on biblical events. Spiritual themes were the predominant fervour of the artists. Baroque aims to capture movements and energy with high amplitude. That was achieved by implementing diagonal positions of objects, swirling forms, and chiaroscuro. All these features granted this style with pathos, elation, and grandiose, monumental scale.

The following significant art style is Impressionism (19th century). That time is characterised by a shift from radical political regimes towards social changes. The revolutionary ideas and the desire for advancements in social, economic, and political institutions spread across Europe and the world. After the Spring of Nations (1848), societies began transforming their manufacturing, agriculture, and logistic systems by introducing mechanisation. The Industrial Revolution significantly impacted the world and humanity. Education became more important as there was a need for a skilled workforce. The sudden changes led to tension and conflicts between science and religion. Artists of that time were shaped by revolutions, and they craved changes in the art world. Therefore, they rejected most of the academic art rules, techniques, and conventions. There is no need for polished and ideal forms. The approach became more direct and instant; for example, *Plaine Air* (outdoor painting) gained popularity. Subjects changed to more real compositions, such as urban and rural landscapes, breaking away from religious subjects, themes, and symbols. Momentum requires immediate portraying of visual effects; hence, light and shadows convey the atmosphere rather than highly realistic effects. Generally speaking, Impressionism is about creating a sensational experience of a transient and ephemeral atmosphere.

Modern (contemporary) (19th-20th centuries) art encompasses the entire range of trends, directions, and genres addressed by authors from the end of the twentieth century (Smith, 2009). Artists create a wide range of works in the context of globalisation and technological advancement. Since contemporary art is so individual and diverse, finding standard features and principles is challenging. Genres and cultural traditions overlap, and artists constantly look for new ways to express themselves and current issues. The evolution of modern society made artists push academic boundaries and traditional technics and conventions (Danto, 1997). For example, colour and paint take on their own life; they are not bound by form and image (Osborne, 2013). The diversification of art movements and forms is a reason for its complexity. Before the turn of the twentieth century, image integrity and its epitome were more straightforward and less abstract (Osborne, 2013). However, according to Crowther & Wünsche (2012), modern art meaning depends on one's imagination, interpretations, and subjective experiences. Sgourev, S. V. (2013) stated that modernity was the beginning of fragmentation because various methods of carrying out the task began to flourish.

Problem identification

Visual art has played a significant role in storytelling throughout history, with various stylistic forms emerging as vehicles for narratives. Understanding the origins of visual art objects is crucial for comprehending their purpose and potential to teach.

History painting holds a special place in the history of art. It originated in ancient times, was defined during the Renaissance, and was considered the highest form of art for centuries. It aimed to educate people about their responsibilities to society and God. History painting dominated until the mid-nineteenth century when the focus switched to subjects of everyday life and landscapes. This shift reflected a transition from art's moral and ethical purposes to a focus on observing and appreciating art for its own sake. By World War One, abstract art emerged as a significant milestone of artistic advancements, replacing the dominance of history painting.

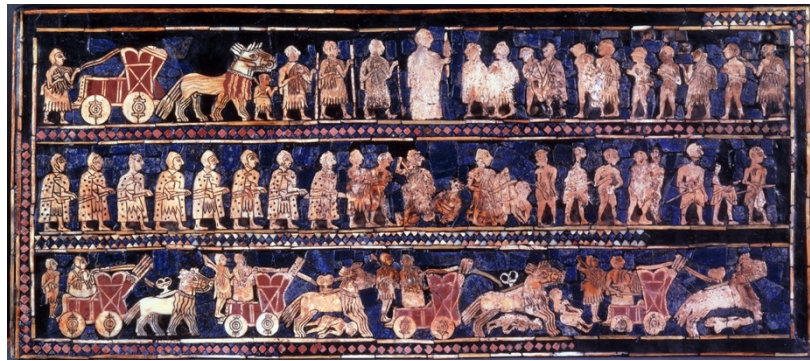
The ideas of modern art have influenced the perception of older artworks. One notion emphasises the importance of design, shape, colour, and relationships between subjects or objects in a work of art. Another idea suggests that these formal elements can directly communicate with viewers, whether they depict something recognisable. The advent of abstract art profoundly impacted the interpretation of older artworks. It allowed people to appreciate the figurative strengths of art, uncovering both simple and hidden beauty. However, this mindset unintentionally limits subsequent generations as they overlook the subject matter's significance in evaluating and enjoying older art.

Visual art has transcended mere aesthetics, serving as a conduit for narratives and expressions of profound meaning. The evolution of art forms and the influence of modern perspectives continue to shape our understanding and appreciation of contemporary and historical artworks.

Problem statement

The historical pictures originated over 4000 years ago in ancient Mesopotamia, at the same time as the first written literature. These images serve as evidence of humanity's inclination for storytelling, as they were used to convey stories of significant events that carried vital information passed through generations. Historical paintings, initially created with moral, religious, or political messages in mind, were intended for public viewing and aimed to educate and preserve shared experiences and wisdom within societies.

Image 1 Standard of Ur, 26th century BC, "War" panel.



Note: One of the earliest panes from Mesopotamia

This research explores visual art's continued existence and evolving values, examining the influences of factors such as education, religion (spirituality), and personal income. It seeks to understand whether people's taste for narrative in art diminishes due to the need for familiarity with subjects or a shift from literally represented actions within artworks. The research suggests that increased education and decreased religiosity may contribute to this trend, which may explain modern art's contemporary preference and valuation. However, history painting has not entirely vanished; it has transformed into different forms.

While some academic literature explores the intersection of art and spirituality, drawing parallels or comparing the two, such as Martland's book "Religion as Art" (1981) and Shusterman's work "Art and Religion" (2008), no substantial qualitative or quantitative research has established a definitive relationship between these variables within the realm of art.

By examining the historical context, evolving values, and potential influences on people's preferences for narrative in art, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamic relationships between education, religion, and the appreciation of various art styles.

Main research objective

The beginning of the 20th century is not only the beginning of a new style but also the beginning of the semantic basis of Modernism. During this period, the "purification" of art began (a step of artistic progress); it did not need unnecessary layers such as literature, religiosity, or figurativeness. Now art's purpose is to enjoy a painting without a need to encode hidden meanings.

Modern art aims for maximum meaning with the minimal use of objects. Consequently, the way of the academically approved methods changed in contemporary visual art

1. Space: in modern art, it becomes unrealistic.

2. Colour: the meaning of eye-catching colours became significant.
3. Line: silhouette start to prevail.

Conciseness, clarity, and conjugation of volumes and forms become predominant. Interestingly, the same methods are used in iconography for the emotional empowerment. All these methods are used to avoid the depth illusion, an unnecessary illusion of reality, because modern and religious art aims to break free from reality. There are many similarities, and it may be suggested that modern art was inspired by rejecting academic conventions and returning to the religious base.

However, this paper aims to determine the attractiveness of different art styles from a viewer's perspective. Whether people still preferer to dive deep into the stories with meaning and strict context. As mentioned before, society has become more educated and less religious. Therefore, the main objective is to understand whether our generation is moving towards a new era of sensual art due to increased education and/or spirituality. Additionally, it is crucial to understand what art styles are preferred among students and what is more valuable in terms of money.

Main research question

To summarise what has been said thus far, the purpose of this study is to determine the impact of education level on art style preferences. It also looks for a link between art styles and art preferences. Finally, it must be determined how the art style preferences influenced by these two variables affect the willingness to pay for art objects from various eras. As a result, it can be summed up in one general question:

To what extent do education and religion influence willingness to pay for art objects from various art styles eras?

Research sub-questions

Spirituality and art style preferences

A beautifully made thing will not be studied in the History of Art. People study there the peak moments of the images that were realized and embodied in a material form. Moreover, the main purpose of art is to inspire; however very often, contemporary art creates devastation. For art to acquire some form and content, there must be a spiritual history in its background. Something must feed it. In our time, society is envious in consumer philosophy and less people consider themselves as religious. Hence, in this paper we will find out what effect spirituality have on art styles attractiveness.

Hypothesis 1:

As the level of spirituality increases, the level of attractiveness for older art styles increases

Level of education and art style preferences

On the other hand, there is science and knowledge about the human world. Spirituality and education are sometimes counterintuitive as they cover two different aspects of human life. The education process captures the acquisition of knowledge and skills through all existing channels. The discussion on whether education and spirituality are complementary or substitutionary has been going on for centuries; therefore, the following hypothesis may add another point to the debate and show whether education helps deepen a person's spiritual experience or challenges it. However, the work of Powell & Tammen (2013) showed that spirituality has a positive impact on students' well-being, feeling of purpose, and academic performance.

Hypothesis 2:

More educated people tend to like more abstract and complex art styles

Spirituality and willingness to pay for art objects

The work of Koenig et al. (2001) suggests that willingness to pay for art objects may contradict values of spirituality which stresses the importance of simplicity, breakdown from material things, and a search for inner peace and fulfilment over external financial and social status. Therefore, spiritual people may be less willing to pay more for art objects and prefer aligning with spiritual values. However, art itself is a way of expressing the spiritual essence. Therefore, there are art styles which base around religious and spiritual figures, occasions, and themes, for example, the life of Buddha in Buddhist art, the crucifixion of Jesus in Christian art, or the mandalas in Hindu and Buddhist art and so on. In this way, the objects can be seen as a direct tangible representation of one's belief and spiritual connection. Hence, the following hypothesis targets this complex relationship.

Hypothesis 3:

As the level of spirituality increases, the willingness to pay of an art object increases

Level of education and willingness to pay for art objects

Another complex relationship is the one between education and willingness to pay for art objects. Even though it is known that people with higher education tend to spend more on certain objects which are associated with quality, innovations, and other intangible aspects (Lepak & Seifert, 1996). So, the following hypothesis answers whether the same logic is applicable for art objects

Hypothesis 4:

As the level of education increases the willingness to pay of an art object increases

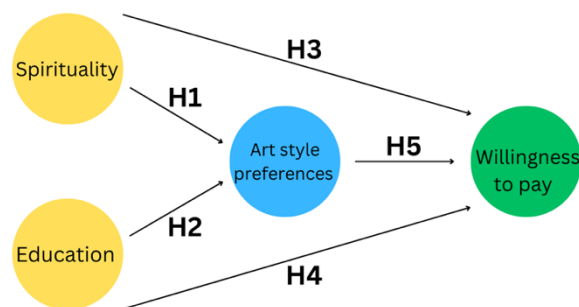
Art style preferences and willingness to pay for art objects

The relationship between willingness to pay and art style preferences is not straightforward because multiple variables affect this relationship. That is why it is crucial to test hypotheses 1-4 first. Indeed, people tend to prefer art objects which fulfil their aesthetic and emotional needs. However, according to Bourdieu (1984) those needs are formed by educational background, level of spirituality, themes, personal experiences, etc. Moreover, one's preferences may be influenced by spirituality and education levels, forming personal tastes. Looking at the art object market, the prices of different works vary even if they are made in the same style. Hence, people are willing to spend more money on specific artists. Thus, the following hypothesis discovers the relationship between the preference for art style and the willingness to pay for an object of the same style regardless of the author.

Hypothesis 5:

To what extent does the willingness to pay for an art object correlate with the person's art styles preference.

Figure 1 Theoretical framework



Significance of the research

If any correlation between education/religion and art attractiveness is found, it will incentivise the government to introduce the history of art as a subject at schools. In many counties, there have been debates about whether to make the history of art a mandatory subject at schools. For example, in Dutch schools, there is an art subject; however, in many schools in the UK and USA, art and cultural subjects are being systematically neglected and, in most cases, even removed from the curriculum. However, art subjects significantly impact academic achievements, hence, it should be an obligatory part of education system (Winner et al., 2013). Therefore, this research can significantly impact this debate and support the idea of interdisciplinary approach.

Consequently, it would be possible to assess to what extent subsidies for art institutions are needed. It would also be possible to advise art institutions on exhibitions and general concepts and ideas. Galleries, museums, and art studios are crucial in educating people and bringing them together. Turning to the National heritage unites people and it is undoubtedly relevant during times of upheaval. So, results may suggest the need to increase funding for art needs.

Moreover, pre-existing knowledge and previous visits influence a person's learning. According to Falk (1998) and Dierking (1992), visitors of art institutions do not wholly understand what they see without having any background knowledge. It is so because prior knowledge affects people's overall cultural experiences (Caru & Cova, 2005) and their engagement rate with(in) art institutions (Falk & Storksdieck, 2005). Therefore, art institutions may change their approach to acquiring new visitors by manipulated the "extent" of spirituality and education levels in the marketing campaigns.

Lastly, marketing becomes more and more critical in order to engage visitors and sustain their reputation. Marketing facilitates ticket sales, membership subscriptions, benevolence activities, sponsorships, and donations. Campaigns and visual assets reach the public and shape the perception. Marketing is the key to revenue generation for art institutions because it is a tool for enhancing the visitor experience. Information about the events, exhibitions and other activities allows people to understand and evaluate the offer, consequently leading to visits, sales, and sponsorships. Therefore, willingness to pay for art objects from different styles helps properly set pricing for tickets and various educational programs because a museum will gain immense value. On top, museums can segment people properly and adjust the ads for each segment, knowing their willingness to pay. Hence, this paper can provide empirical evidence in art/spirituality relations and base a new consumer behaviour theory on that relationship.

Structure

Chapter One serves as the introduction to the research. It begins by identifying the research problem within its context. A concise problem statement is then presented, highlighting the key elements and dimensions of the problem. The study's primary objective is stated, encompassing the overall goal and purpose. The main research question, guiding the entire paper, is introduced, accompanied by specific sub-questions. The significance and relevance of the research are discussed, highlighting the various benefits. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining the structure and organisation of the thesis.

Chapter Two dives into the literature review, extensively analysing prior research and relevant writings related to the topic. It explores essential ideas, concepts, and studies that form the theoretical foundation for the research.

Chapter Three focuses on the methodology, detailing the research design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques. The chosen quantitative method is justified. The data analysis method is explained, outlining the tools and techniques used to interpret and analyse the collected data. Additionally, potential research limitations are acknowledged and discussed.

Chapter Four presents the results and findings of the study. It shows the obtained results with their significance and magnitude. Statistical comments are provided to support the findings.

Chapter Five highlights the relevance of the findings to the research objectives. It also offers insights for future research opportunities. Practical recommendations based on the study's outcomes are provided, suggesting actionable steps that can be taken based on the research findings.

Chapter 2

Literature review

Societies have changed because various factors have changed. According to Hanushek et al. (2007), the quality of education has a powerful effect on personal income and economic growth. Quality of education is measured by what people know; therefore, it is systematically related to cognitive skills. Moreover, Hanushek et al. (2007) suggested that the quality of schooling certainly affects the level of the students and future professors. Hence, a more educated population most likely leads to a more educated generation with a cadre of top players. That all results in knowledge accumulation and more robust economic performance.

Altbach (2002) stated that in addition to equipping individuals with the required skills for economic prosperity, an education system plays a fundamental role in cultivating the foundations of society and fostering active national engagement. Education encompasses the acquisition of practical abilities and an understanding of the past, of culture, and of democratic values, among other things. These elements collectively contribute to a well-rounded education, empowering individuals to participate meaningfully in society and promoting the values necessary for sustained development.

Ozturk (2008) highlights the significance of knowledge and education correlation, emphasising the pivotal role of education in knowledge growth and development. Education speeds the process up, providing individuals with the necessary resources to expand their knowledge. By investigating the dynamic interdependence between knowledge and education, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how educational processes shape the acquisition, transfer, and application of knowledge across various domains.

The importance of science is growing because it strengthens knowledge expansion while the existing one is used as a base and context for further investigations (Fuchs, 1992). However, it may lead to neglecting creative arts as they are considered less critical. The understanding of the world comes from the development of theories and scientific solutions which contribute to humankind. Society may need help recognising the contribution of creativity, spirituality, emotional expression, and a general understanding of culture because they are not considered a priority. The current education system mainly focuses on specific testing methods that limit students' opportunities to express themselves. Due to this focus, art galleries, organisations and institutions do not get enough visits from schoolers and students because of insufficient funding (Greene et al., 2014).

On top of that limitation, according to Lanham (2010), the rise of technology and other revolutionising platforms change how art is created, observed, and traded. Now, with current sustainability trends, people are concerned about art consumption because some challenges are set for the physical presence

of an art object. Due to increase exposure to various media channels, art style preferences may vary widely. Therefore, artists should look for new ways of expression.

However, new ways of expression emerge from the concept called inspiration. Although it has multiple interpretations, it is an experience we are all familiar with. Abra (1988) underlined that the idea of inspiration has been changing throughout history. For example, at a certain point in history, inspiration was seen as a gift of Muses, which triggered an active state of creativity (Leavitt, 1997). Later inspiration had a religious background, and now it is viewed as a mode of thought which drives insights generation. Also, it is a motivational state which elicits creativity and nonstandard thinking, which broadens the concept of creativity and inspiration (Bowra, 1955). Although there are many ways to get inspired, for instance, by working on a task with a sense of necessity and excitement, by new possibilities that were not recognized before, by a sense of beauty, justice, or the divine. Inspiration makes individuals pursue goals more important than daily concerns and doubts that bombard people's minds (Harvey & Downes, 1999).

As mentioned above, initially, the idea of inspiration was strongly supported by the existence of supernatural forces which gifted the creative state. Nowadays, it is still popular to turn to high supernatural power (Ghiselin, 1985). Many modern and old artists and other creative people believe their "revolutionary" ideas and methods come from high, unknown, supernatural forces. For example: Hilma af Klint, William Blake, Piet Mondrian, and Hieronymus Bosch.

So, the idea that inspiration is a gift from God comes from the Judeo-Christian traditions. Artists of that time depicted God and His teachings. This occurred either through direct means, as explained by Aquinas (1950), or through the writer's personal experiences or interpretations of encounters with the divine, as suggested by Schleiermacher (1963).

The understanding of inspiration as a supernatural influence offers an exemplary illustration of its motivating, evocative, and transcendent qualities. Inspiration for the artworks from old times acted like a trigger to convert direct and broad "current" religious knowledge into tangible expressions such as visual art objects (Leavitt, 1997). Hence, religion shaped societies throughout the years, and art was not an exception.

Emerging of new art schools and academies, explorations of new ideas and techniques, turning to theoretical manifestos, and encouragement of critical thinking and conceptual development brought humankind to where it is now.

Even though the relationship between science and religion is complex, they have different vectors, and any conflicts that emerge have been caused by a specific historical, cultural, or social phenomenon (Ferngren, 2017). However, interpreting religious teachings metaphorically allowed people to get

insights into spiritual and modern beliefs (Ferngren, 2017). Some artists used it in their works. For example, Picasso, Salvador Dali, Marc Chagall and many others have gotten inspired by religion.

Image 2 *The Swan, 1915,*
Hilma af Klint



Image 3 *The Sun at His Eastern Gate, 1820*
William Blake

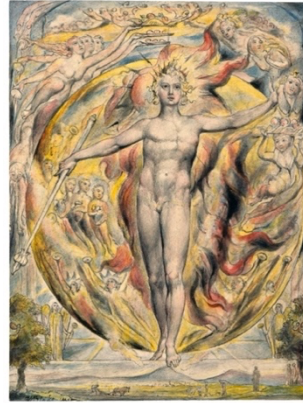


Image 4 *Tableau I, 1921,*
Piet Mondrian

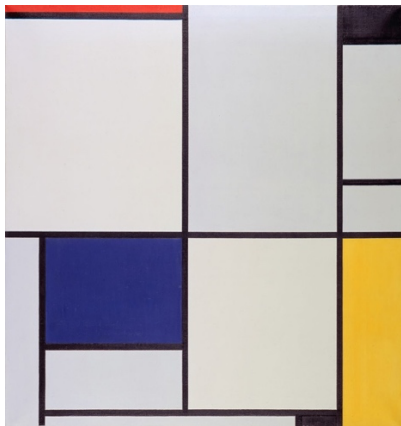


Image 5 *St. John on Patmos, 1489,*
Hieronymus Bosch



According to Elkins (2004), the opposition between religious views and science was one of the main drives of early contemporary art styles. Even though most artists reject the idea that their art is religious, people find art unescapably spiritual. For example, images 6 and 7 are examples of such resistance. Pablo Picasso painted *The Young Ladies of Avignon*; the girls from the brothel were broken into fragments of bodies that were reassembled. These girls may have similarities with Raphael's *Three Graces*. These figures' positions and paths indicate that Raphael inspired Pablo Picasso. Moreover, he was aware of the traditions he was breaking. *The Young Ladies of Avignon* destroyed the invincible human image, which was untouchable before. It happened because God was fully endowed with a human body, as in the Greek and Roman pantheons. Hence human body was a sacral object in

Renaissance and Baroque. This idealistic image was untouchable before modern art but has lost its status in Modern art (Elkins, 2004).

Image 6 *The Young Ladies of Avignon, 1907, Pablo Picasso* **Image 7** *The Three Graces, 1503-1505, Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino*



Finally, art objects, especially visual art objects, are often used to promote unrelated products in advertisements (Hetsroni & Tukachinsky, 2005). Marketers use it due to art's ability to capture attention and spark imaginative processes. According to Hoffman (2002), complaints containing fine art pieces reach more customers due to the highly cultural message. Many companies use art to create a sense of uniqueness and originality (Epstein, 1982). However, there is a contradiction from the willingness to pay for such objects perspective. Lee et al. (2015) found a strong positive correlation between the use of art objects and perceived prestige. Peluso et al. (2017) found that those who value distinction and uniqueness are more willing to pay for an object if the artwork is described as unrecognisable or unknown.

On top of that, Gupta (2023) stated that other visual tools and non-artistic designs were outperformed by artwork with colour and lines as the central visual elements. These tools create mood, evoke emotions, and leave feelings. However, there needs to be more knowledge about how certain art styles affect the willingness to pay.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The quantitative method is used to answer the main question. Quantitative research provides precise results on consumer behaviour and dynamics. Also, there are many advantages of this approach for discovering correlations. Furthermore, the nature of the collected data allows to conclude with high validity for the entire population based on a small sample. It also tests all of the hypotheses mentioned above and establishes the relationships between them.

Purpose of the research

The primary goal of this paper is to determine whether there is a relationship between education, religion, and individuals' willingness to pay for art objects from various art styles. A rigorous methodology design is implemented to answer the main question. A survey collected data on education, religion, willingness to pay, and other variables. This research considers age, income, race, previous exposure to art/religion, and various other factors that may influence the willingness to pay and preferences. The investigation aims to contribute valuable insights to art studies by clearly understanding how education and religion shape people's attitudes towards art purchases. As a result, society may gain more profound knowledge about the factors that may influence the valuation of art objects.

Research design

As it was mentioned before, this study employs a quantitative research design. The research design aims to collect empirical data and analyze it statistically. The data is collected through a survey distributed among participants representing a group of Netherlands students. The survey was distributed among 147 people whose education level varied from a Bachelor's to a PhD degree. Respondents also have a broad spectrum of religious beliefs and backgrounds. Therefore, this paper may claim the validity of the results.

The survey questionnaire included demographic questions as well as questions assessing the art preferences and willingness to pay. The questions are different by nature, for example, closed-ended, open-ended, multiple-choice questions and scales. The survey includes ten questions targeting art style preferences. The order of the questions is randomised in order to minimize biases. All factors are presented in Table 1.

Table 1**Variables and their scales of measurement**

Variable	Scale of measurement
Age	Numerical
Income	Numerical
Spirituality	Ratio
Gender	Female, Male
Ethnicity	White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Mixed or Biracial, Other
Employment	Yes, No
Religion	Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Nonreligious, Other
Family religion	Yes, No
Religion at school	Yes, No
Level of Education	Bachelor, Master, PhD
Art at school	Yes, No
Art outside school	Yes, No
Art style	Renaissance, Baroque, Impressionism, Modernism

Note: Ordinary variables directly demonstrate their categories.

Data analysis methods

This study employs linear regression analysis to explore the relationships between education, religion, and individuals' willingness to pay for art. By examining the regression coefficients, this research aims to quantify the extent to which education and religion can predict variations in art valuation. The analysis provides a precise and measurable effect of these factors on willingness to pay and art style preference. The study contains five hypotheses, leading to five different regression equations. Each equation reveals the magnitudes and statistical significance of the variables under examination. Moreover, the list of variables and their reference categories is presented in Table 2.

Table 2**Categorical variables and their reference categories.**

Categorical Variable	Reference category
Gender	Male
Ethnicity	White
Employment	No
Religion	Christianity
Family religion	No
Religion at school	No
Level of Education	Bachelor
Art at school	No
Art outside school	No

Note: In this paper categorical variables have two or more categories and one of the categories was coded as 0.

The hypotheses are concentrated around finding different effect of independent variables on the level of attractiveness of art styles and willingness to pay for art objects. The following equation associated with hypothesis respectfully.

$$(1) \text{ Art style attractiveness} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{Gender} + \beta_3 \text{ Ethnicity} + \beta_4 \text{ Income} + \beta_5 \text{ Employment} + \beta_6 \text{ Spirituality} + \beta_7 \text{ Religion} + \beta_8 \text{ Family religion} + \epsilon$$

$$(2) \text{ Art style attractiveness} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{Gender} + \beta_3 \text{ Ethnicity} + \beta_4 \text{ Income} + \beta_5 \text{ Employment} + \beta_6 \text{ Educational Level} + \beta_7 \text{ Art at School} + \beta_8 \text{ Art outside school} + \epsilon$$

$$(3) \text{ Art objects willingness to pay} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{ Gender} + \beta_3 \text{ Ethnicity} + \beta_4 \text{ Income} + \beta_5 \text{ Employment} + \beta_7 \text{ Religion} + \beta_8 \text{ Family religion} + \beta_9 \text{ Spirituality} + \epsilon$$

$$(4) \text{ Art objects willingness to pay} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{ Gender} + \beta_3 \text{ Ethnicity} + \beta_4 \text{ Income} + \beta_5 \text{ Employment} + \beta_6 \text{ Educational Level} + \beta_7 \text{ Art at School} + \beta_8 \text{ Art outside school} + \epsilon$$

$$(5) \text{ Art objects willingness to pay} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{ Gender} + \beta_3 \text{ Ethnicity} + \beta_4 \text{ Income} + \beta_5 \text{ Employment} + \beta_6 \text{ Educational Level} + \beta_7 \text{ Art at School} + \beta_8 \text{ Art outside school} + \beta_9 \text{ Religion} + \beta_{10} \text{ Family religion} + \beta_{11} \text{ Spirituality} + \epsilon$$

Research limitations

One limitation of the study is that it focused solely on visual art objects from a few art styles. All aspects of art should be considered when determining a preference for an art style. This paper does not cover architecture, sculpture, photography, cinematography, and many other forms of artistic expression. As a result, more art vectors should be considered in order to ensure the reliability of the art style preferences.

Second, the survey only included a few substyles. This study left out much information because visual narrative art is much older and more prevalent in the world's cultures than the survey includes. The chosen art style can be subdivided into several substyles. Only a few of those substyles received much attention. As a result, more sub-styles must be represented to ensure better preference representation.

Fixed monetary values are used to assess willingness to pay, which are unrealistic representations. The figures were chosen to demonstrate the difference in willingness to pay for a specific object without real-world application. Instead of making unrealistic assumptions, it would be more appropriate to take the actual prices of art objects and analyse the exciting data.

Finally, this study's sample only includes students from the University of Amsterdam and Erasmus University Rotterdam. As a result, the conclusions can only be made for Dutch students at those universities. The sample bias has a substantial impact on this study. So, it is recommended to distribute the survey across all Dutch universities to minimise bias and maximise sample representativity.

Indeed, there are other limitations that affect the results and both internal and external validity; however, their effect is being minimised by applying randomisation of the respondents.

Chapter 4

Findings and results

So, hypotheses 1 and 2 consider the effect of education/ religion variables on preferences in art styles. Data was restructured and combined into profiles based on education or religion variables. Rating-based conjoint techniques are used to assess the preferences. Therefore, the analysis showed a relative importance score, which is converted into preferences by rank.

Hypothesis 1

It aims to prove the positive effect of religious variables on the art style era. Hence, if an older art style is preferred to a younger one, then the hypothesis is accepted. However, according to our results (Table 3), the hypothesis cannot be accepted, as more spiritual individuals only sometimes prefer an older style. Even though the results do not entirely suit the hypothesis logic, the hypothesis may be accepted if the oldest style (Renaissance) is removed. The preference increased as the age of art style increased.

Returning to the definitions of the art styles in Chapter 1, Baroque and Renaissance are connected with religion. However, Baroque witnessed a resurgence of religious passion and a reaffirmation of the Catholic Church's authority. On the contrary, Renaissance focused on the human approach and the revival of Roman and Greek culture. To conclude, this hypothesis found evidence to support the claim that more religious people prefer older art styles which were inspired by religion itself.

Table 3

Relative importance of art styles using different customer profiles as clusters

Style	Relative Importance	Rank	Relative Importance	Rank
Renaissance	14.04%	4	-	-
Baroque	38.78%	1	46.93%	1
Impressionism	32.31%	2	36.78%	2
Modernism	14.87%	3	16.27%	3

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis similarly claims to find the art style preferences. However, the profiles were constructed using the education variables. The result from Table 4 makes it possible to conclude that the hypothesis cannot be accepted as the preference does not increase towards the younger art style. As in

the first hypothesis, if the Modern style is excluded then the hypothesis can be accepted because as education level increases more people prefer younger art style.

Moreover, comparing Tables 3 and 4, it is possible to conclude that more educated people prefer newer art styles. It can be derived from the percentage increase in Impressionism and Modernism. Although, the ranking does not provide enough evidence to claim the preferences over the whole art style, the results suggest the positive shift in terms of amount of people.

Table 4

Relative importance of art styles using different customer profiles as clusters

Style	Relative Importance	Rank	Relative Importance	Rank
Renaissance	11.38%	4	14.90%	3
Baroque	21.03%	2	28.78%	2
Impressionism	47.78%	1	56.32%	1
Modernism	19.81%	3	-	-

Hypothesis 3

The analysis started with checking residuals, and Breusch–Pagan/Cook–Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity for each art style was performed; the results are presented in Table 5. It indicated that the assumption of constant variance is rejected. So, heteroskedastic is present in the data, and after removing the outliers, robust standard errors are still needed for regressions to meet the homoskedasticity assumption.

Table 5

Breusch–Pagan/Cook–Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity for each art style

Art style	chi2(1)	Prob > chi2	Constant variance	Heteroscedasticity
Modernism	24.79	0.0000	Rejected	Present
Impressionism	20.47	0.0000	Rejected	Present
Baroque	3.53	0.0604	Rejected	Present
Renaissance	2.97	0.0851	Rejected	Present

Note: significance is marked with * for $p < 0.05$

Table 6**The effect of religion variables on willingness to pay for art objects from all art styles**

Variable	Renaissance		Baroque		Modernism		Impressionism	
	Coef.	P> t	Coef.	P> t	Coef.	P> t	Coef.	P> t
Age	-248.7002	0.432	-292.4844	0.209	272.3352	0.407	-174.9223	0.103
Gender	613.7283	0.306	364.0137	0.574	-68.0043	0.321	-317.8914	0.266
Black	289.8021	0.865	674.004	0.739	-326.7844	0.677	-471.4583	0.513
Latino	-363.4552	0.734	-346.1501	0.812	-482.159	0.342	389.0123	0.670
Asian	466.6735	0.633	339.6295	0.763	381.1867	0.576	742.2872	0.237
Mixed	1356.451	0.221	192.6078	0.880	-223.4778	0.494	-167.5698	0.691
Other	-1093.831	0.698	919.2222	0.746	-1503.776	0.150	-1412.763	0.288
Income	0.371865	0.875	0.414749	0.222	0.328018	0.170	0.471696	0.320
Employment	-195.0594	0.767	106.03	0.880	-1.804516	0.997	-327.1309	0.421
Spirituality	-1.492077	0.990	-72.2824	0.607	-57.5291	0.087	-173.2339	0.037*
Islam	-1638.650	0.543	-2436.1	0.258	-258.3237	0.699	-1278.677	0.118
Judaism	-2035.004	0.003*	-938.8474	0.157	-521.9884	0.039*	-565.2746	0.037*
Hinduism	748.1597	0.715	-77.9941	0.957	-347.815	0.634	327.2365	0.845
Nonreligious	-593.1106	0.350	26.7789	0.969	-50.9329	0.861	-617.1767	0.131
Parentsspirit.	674.2708	0.375	1162.18	0.058	420.9223	0.234	665.066	0.091
_cons	6844.916	0.003	8630.672	0.005	2303.957	0.000	5837.667	0.000

Note: significance is marked with * for $p < 0.05$

The third hypothesis considers the effects of religious variables on willingness to pay for objects from various art styles. There is no significant effect on age, gender, ethnicity, employment, and income. Also, most religious variables are insignificant and hence are not interpreted. However, only coefficients of Judaism have a significant negative effect in regressions on willingness to pay for Renaissance, Modernism and Impressionism. Additionally, spirituality for Impressionism has significant negative effects. According to the results, the hypothesis can be rejected because religious variables cannot significantly affect the willingness to pay for art objects. The effects of coefficients and their significance are presented in Table 6. However, based on the constant coefficients, people are willing to pay the most for art objects from the Baroque (8630.672), followed by the Renaissance (6844.916), Impressionism

(5837.667) and Modernism (2303.916). As a result, the findings do not align with the conclusions of the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4

The analysis started with checking residuals and histograms for continuous and categorical variables (Images 8-11) for all the art styles. It indicated non-normality in the residuals, which can be seen from the red (normal-density plot) and green lines (kernel density plot). Therefore, the outliers were removed, and scatter plots of residuals were drawn to check whether the assumption of homoscedasticity holds. The scatterplot results indicated robust standard errors needed for heteroskedastic presence in the data.

Image 8

Histogram of residuals Renaissance

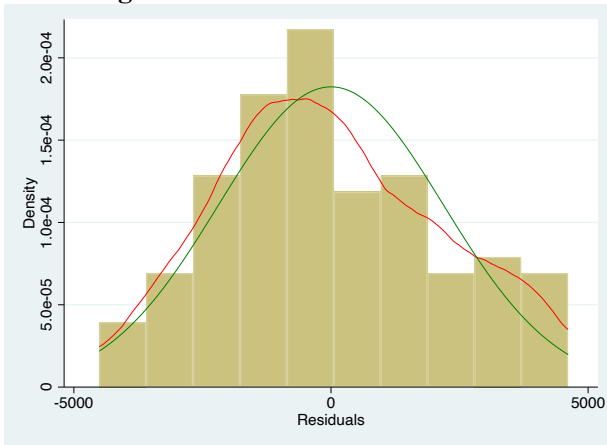


Image 9

Histogram of residuals Baroque

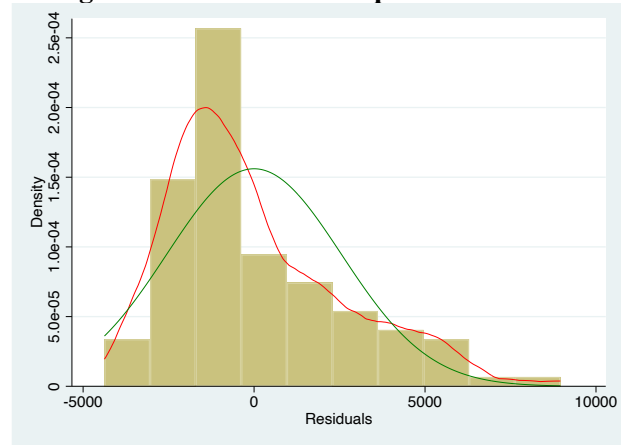


Image 10

Histogram of residuals Impressionism

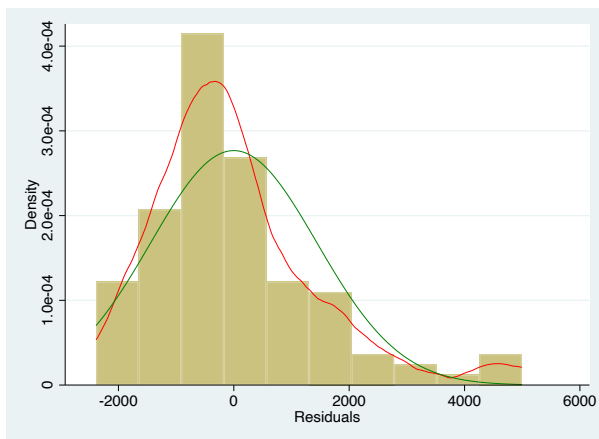
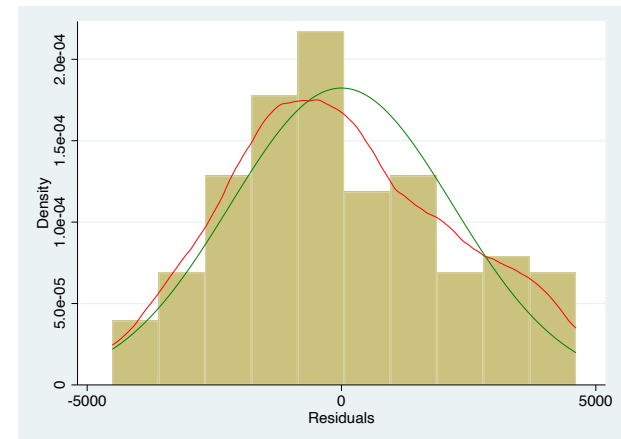


Image 11

Histogram of residuals Modernism



The results for the fourth hypothesis are mostly insignificant; consequently, they are not interpreted. However, variables of age and prior art exposure are significant for most of the styles. Also, education levels are significant for Modernism. The findings are presented in Table 7. As a result,

the hypothesis failed to be accepted as education does not affect the willingness to pay across the styles. However, prior knowledge acquired at school positively affects the willingness to pay for modern art objects. According to the results, the willingness to pay for modern art objects increases as education increases. Hence, education increases the willingness to pay for art objects from Modernism. However, other art styles may have different results. Even though the results are insignificant, the constant coefficients are also compared. So, considering the base equation, people are willing to pay the most for Renaissance (8029.664), then Baroque (7923.443), Impressionism (6310.377), and Modernism (3051.583).

Table 7

The effect of all variables on willingness to pay for art objects from all art styles

Variable	Renaissance		Baroque		Modernism		Impressionism	
	Coef.	P> t	Coef.	P> t	Coef.	P> t	Coef.	P> t
Age	-297.3274	0.002*	-282.7468	0.032*	-99.27159	0.287	-255.6453	0.000*
Gender	574.8349	0.296	415.3095	0.510	260.38	0.432	299.1444	0.340
Black	705.5074	0.483	678.6256	0.558	61.60887	0.933	318.7581	0.581
Latino	316.6632	0.700	588.6116	0.589	-552.4427	0.206	664.4459	0.342
Asian	839.6628	0.382	522.8219	0.641	404.1347	0.587	1167.794	0.086
Mixed	1063.419	0.341	-208.0422	0.869	-107.5069	0.671	-536.2663	0.211
Other	-970.1319	0.390	-397.7483	0.835	-1104.228	0.068	-1360.586	0.294
Income	0.331001	0.242	0.392363	0.246	0.226192	0.314	0.364225	0.064
Employment	115.0869	0.832	404.4693	0.544	51.29501	0.884	-102.4426	0.770
master	-543.4561	0.302	-794.0601	0.214	342.7524	0.033*	103.457	0.752
PhD	881.2404	0.625	-1144.197	0.402	1242.91	0.036*	1450.485	0.177
Artatsch.	1717.42	0.001*	793.6547	0.202	319.6167	0.044*	1319.588	0.000*
Artoutsch.	484.4432	0.288	768.9663	0.182	-18.22388	0.249	219.4357	0.488
_cons	8029.664	0.000	7923.443	0.005	3051.583	0.026	6310.377	0.000

Note: significance is marked with * for $p < 0.05$

Once again, before analysing the hypothesis, the Breusch–Pagan/Cook–Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity was performed. The results are shown in Table 6. Therefore, the data is scanned for outliers and robust standard errors are used with weighted least squares regressions.

Table 8

Breusch–Pagan/Cook–Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity for each art style

Art style	chi2(1)	Prob > chi2	Constant variance	Presence of Heteroscedasticity
Modernism	27.97	0.0000	Rejected	Present
Impressionism	24.97	0.0000	Rejected	Present
Baroque	0.95	0.3297	Rejected	Present
Renaissance	3.44	0.0636	Rejected	Present

Note: significance is marked with * for $p < 0.05$

The final hypothesis required combining all the variables and regressing them against the willingness to pay for various art styles. There is no significant effect on gender, ethnicity, employment, and income. Surprisingly, the variable of age is significant for all art styles. The educational variables are also significant for most art styles, unlike the religious variables. The significant results are presented in Table 6.

The fifth hypothesis cannot be accepted because there is an insufficient amount of significant information. However, education does increase willingness to pay according to the results. For example, having a master’s degree increases willingness to pay by 351.5454 euros for art projects from Modernism. Additionally, prior art knowledge from the school program increases the willingness to pay for all art styles. However, prior art courses at school have a small effect on objects from Modernism as it has the lowest coefficient (82.7894). Finally, any knowledge acquired outside school also increases the willingness to pay, but the results are significant only for Renaissance and Baroque.

The main question of this paper was concentrated on the effects of education and religion on art preference and willingness to pay. After analysing the results from all the sub-questions there are a few variables with significant effects. Art classes at school certainly impact art appreciation and willingness to pay. Also, people who participated in extracurricular art activities are willing to pay for older more than those who did not. Hence, this paper proves the positive effect of art education on willingness to

pay for objects from all art styles. However, there is no evidence of any effect of religious variables on willingness to pay.

Table 9

The effect of all variables on willingness to pay for art objects from all art styles

Variable	Renaissance		Baroque		Modernism		Impressionism	
	Coef.	P> t	Coef.	P> t	Coef.	P> t	Coef.	P> t
Age	-277.7624	0.004*	-286.2038	0.011*	778.046	0.045*	-234.0214	0.000*
Gender	607.9174	0.235	460.7338	0.443	214.0218	0.489	363.3575	0.272
Black	643.8061	0.605	808.994	0.580	-173.8395	0.817	-41.6285	0.959
Latino	497.0867	0.653	195.3527	0.880	-700.6329	0.296	772.4779	0.281
Asian	771.3491	0.336	503.0819	0.593	432.1802	0.373	1068.418	0.041*
Mixed	1196.093	0.193	95.0643	0.929	-107.5069	0.846	-269.6696	0.648
Other	-934.5677	0.596	723.8084	0.726	-1317.346	0.218	-1059.987	0.353
Income	0.3106	0.292	0.4149	0.232	-.2284	0.201	0.3534	0.065
Employment	-0.0466	0.998	226.4401	0.723	-49.7222	0.880	-215.8344	0.540
master	-709.8252	0.40	-480.4674	0.789	351.5454	0.049*	180.0638	0.007*
PhD	600.6752	0.026*	-1049.688	0.347	501.2883	0.036*	1059.34	0.282
Artatsch.	1500.73	0.003*	722.8923	0.021*	82.78938	0.044*	1204.496	0.000*
Artoutsch.	651.7539	0.019*	735.1285	0.011*	337.1864	0.249	303.5253	0.353
Spirituality	-7.8173	0.948	-72.2824	0.607	-1.9552	0.978	-149.1657	0.056
Islam	-1241.335	0.401	-1967.795	0.258	-225.4371	0.801	-997.579	0.297
Judaism	-3061.265	0.221	-1847.693	0.528	-1256.659	0.405	-661.6453	0.681
Hinduism	836.3798	0.543	19.4982	0.990	-322.228	0.699	242.9933	0.784
Nonreligious	-417.4631	0.450	-443.9724	0.487	3.2669	0.992	-426.0739	0.234
Parentsspirit.	367.8025	0.500	1019.151	0.113	636.4389	0.056	618.094	0.987
_cons	7597.749	0.000	8093.224	0.000	2705.698	0.026	6597.337	0.000

Note: significance is marked with * for $p < 0.05$

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Recommendations

Another study on willingness to pay for art objects is suggested in this paper. Quantitative research is recommended to discover critical characteristics of art objects. Some features influence how a person evaluates an art object, such as materials, artists, style, etc. It would be of greater interest to learn what effect they have and how significant they are. The significance of line, colour, and meaning should also be examined. Even though colour is considered the most vital so far, more academic literature on the importance of line and meaning in art preference is needed. Furthermore, several participants stated during the study that the style was chosen based on its fit in their ideal house interior. As a result, this paper suggests researching architectural styles along with tackling visual art questions.

Finally, another study is suggested, this time implementing all artistic styles and movements within the big art styles, for example, Modern including Abstract art, Futurism and the most recent NFT wave. It would be interesting to learn whether there is a link between educational background (field of study) and preferences for contemporary art movements. Also, how critical modern artists' marketing strategies are to the prices of their work. Many aspects of contemporary artistic expression need to be clarified. As a result, gaining a better understanding of the contemporary art industry.

Discussion

Even though the research aimed for high validity of the results for a specific population, the results could have been more significant. That may be caused by limitations mentioned in section 3.5; however, a few findings still deserve to be mentioned.

Firstly, only two religious variables appeared significant for three out of twelve regressions. It may suggest insufficient evidence to conclude an effect of willingness to pay. Although the variables were checked for multicollinearity, measurement errors and non-linear relationship, the results still appeared insignificant. There may be no significant impact at all. So, religion may not influence the willingness to pay. However, further research should investigate it.

Nevertheless, the age variable was significant for all the art styles in the last hypothesis. It may suggest that omitted variables cause incomplete information in previous regression models. Therefore, the religious variables contain unique information. That may be another argument for rejecting any effect of religion on art's willingness to pay.

Finally, considering the constant coefficients from hypotheses 3 and 4, the preferences ranking from Table 3 does not correspond with the regression results. However, the ranking from the fourth hypothesis suggests that people are willing to pay for Renaissance the most. A few of the most expensive objects ever sold by Christy's London come from the Renaissance era. That may suggest the relativity of the findings.

Practical implications

The main finding of this paper is that prior education has a strong positive effect on willingness to pay for older art styles. That can be caused by providing students with an understanding of the historical perspective of a painting. Each masterpiece contains a narrative which must be enhanced before analysing a painting. History, society, and cultural context allow us to encode hidden symbols and themes. Hence, prior knowledge help to build a creative vocabulary which helps interpret the art. Therefore, to keep the cultural heritage, it is essential to implement or introduce courses about art history and its interpretation, as Winner et al. (2013) indicated.

Moreover, this paper recommends broadening the art syllabus because one of the findings is that prior exposure to art during school years has a negligible effect on willingness to pay. Hence, it is advised to introduce modern artists to at curriculum as they may be disregarded due to similar historical contexts. While learning from the past, we should remember the present artistic expressions. Even though the problems current artists address now are very familiar, it is still a challenge to appreciate modern art as much as Impressionism.

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