

# Explore and Interpret the Psychology of Kim Jong-Un: Understanding the Mindset of North Korea's Leader and Its Implications for Foreign Policy in the Trump's Return

Yat Ming Chu

Independent Researcher, Hong Kong, China

Email: [yatming.chu@alumni.uts.edu.au](mailto:yatming.chu@alumni.uts.edu.au)

**How to cite this paper:** Chu, Y. M. (2025). Explore and Interpret the Psychology of Kim Jong-Un: Understanding the Mindset of North Korea's Leader and Its Implications for Foreign Policy in the Trump's Return. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 13, 590-603.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2025.137032>

**Received:** June 24, 2025

**Accepted:** July 25, 2025

**Published:** July 28, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

---

## Abstract

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has exhibited irrational and unpredictable behavior, including the bombing of a South Korean airliner in 1987, which resulted in the loss of 115 lives (Kim, 1993, 2023), and an attempted assassination of the President of South Korea in Rangoon (Jung, 2023). These actions led former U.S. President George W. Bush to label the DPRK as part of an "axis of evil" in 2002, indicating a perceived threat to global security (Glass, 2019; Kotch, 2003). Later, President Donald Trump intensified this rhetoric with terms like "fire and fury" and "rocket man" (Keneally, 2018). Despite the DPRK regime and Kim Jong-Un's involvement in kidnappings, hijackings, and assassinations, these extreme behaviors do not necessarily indicate that Kim suffers from a mental disorder. As Borum (2010) notes, "Mental illness is not a critical factor in explaining terrorist behavior, and most terrorists are not psychopaths." Therefore, it is more plausible that Kim Jong-Un's actions are driven by political and power considerations rather than mental illness. This essay explores the personality formation of Kim Jong-Un from a psychological perspective. The first part examines various psychological and diplomatic theories briefly. The second part introduces multiple examples to illustrate these theories, discussing DPRK foreign policy under the Trump 2.0 era and exploring its potential implications and consequences.

## Keywords

DPRK, North Korea, Social Learning, Leadership, Kim Jong-Un, Psychology

---

## 1. Introduction

President Donald Trump, having secured the Republican primary vote in Iowa's caucuses last year, has solidified his return to the White House. Following his victory, opponents Vivek Ramaswamy and Asa Hutchinson withdrew from the race and endorsed Trump, signaling strong consolidation of support within the party. As the "Trump Era" resumes, nations including Canada, China, the UK, and the European Union are actively preparing for the implications of his presidency (Croce, 2024; Sevastopulo, 2025).

While Trump has expressed his intention to prioritize ending the Russia-Ukraine war and establishing a cease-fire in Gaza, he must not overlook the critical relationship between the US and DPRK. Having previously referred to Kim Jong-Un as a "friend" during their historic summits, Trump's presidency could further complicate issues on the Korean Peninsula and impact international relations in unpredictable ways.

Kim Jong-Un was born into a noble family and has lived a privileged life since childhood. He attended an international school in Switzerland, where he learned German and English. His experiences in Switzerland exposed him to capitalism, human rights, and civil society—Western values. After returning to the DPRK, Kim Jong-Un entered the Kim Il Sung Military University to study. Upon graduation, he often accompanied his father on various occasions. His psychological state is characterized by conflicting emotions regarding his understanding of the West and his role within a totalitarian state (Fifield, 2019).

Kim took power in 2013, becoming the youngest national leader at that time. Despite lacking experience in governance, this third-generation Kim family member, educated abroad, has not only prevented the DPRK—a poor and isolated country—from disintegration but has also enabled it to survive and thrive.

## 2. Approach & Data

This study employs a multidisciplinary synthesis approach to analyze Kim Jong-Un's personality and its influence on DPRK's foreign policy. Theories from personality psychology, political science, and social learning theory have been carefully selected to provide a nuanced understanding of Kim's leadership style and decision-making processes. A diverse range of sources, including book chapters, academic journal articles, and contemporary news reports, were integrated. Public events and biographies were scrutinized to identify significant patterns and contextual influences shaping Kim's behavior. This comprehensive analysis reveals the complexities of Kim's personality while illustrating how these traits inform and drive DPRK's foreign policy decisions.

## 3. Key Concept

### 3.1. Inferiority and Compensation in Leadership Psychology

Adler (2009) proposed that feelings of inferiority are universal, affecting even national leaders. From infancy, individuals face physical and psychological limita-

tions, prompting compensatory efforts aimed at an imagined ideal of strength and success. This drive alleviates discomfort but does not resolve the root causes of inferiority (Adler, 1917).

When compensation fails, an inferiority complex may develop, leading individuals to avoid situations that expose their weaknesses. This avoidance reinforces a fragile self-image (Adler, 1917). Adler emphasized that such psychological defenses offer temporary relief rather than true resolution.

Lasswell (1948) expanded on Adler's ideas, suggesting that inferiority feedback is a key motivator in human behavior. Compensation becomes a strategic response to perceived inadequacies stemming from physical limitations, low social status, or adverse childhood experiences. Individuals may respond in two ways: healthy compensation, which transforms weakness into motivation, or overcompensation, which masks insecurity through exaggerated behavior. Historical figures like Napoleon, who sought military glory potentially to counter his short stature, exemplify this pattern.

In political leadership, unresolved psychological conflicts—such as paternal domination or low social origins—can fuel a powerful drive for dominance. For some leaders, the pursuit of power is not merely strategic but deeply psychological. Their authoritarian or grandiose styles may reflect a complex interplay of personal history, psychological compensation, and the demands of leadership.

### 3.2. Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1977) proposed the concept of “operant conditioning” within his social learning theory, emphasizing that behavior is learned through observation of the environment and others. Under the “stimulus-response-result” (cause-effect) model, environmental events can affect individual behavior through positive or negative reinforcement. Dictators often employ operant conditioning to influence and control elite groups effectively. For instance, dictators reward supportive elites as positive reinforcement while punishing dissenters as negative reinforcement, teaching the elite that supporting the regime is the best choice. This aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which posits that behavior can change through observational learning.

### 3.3. Dictatorship Psychology

Moghaddam (2013) pointed out that dictators often exhibit narcissistic, Machiavellian, and psychopathic personality traits. Narcissism includes ambition, pride, and a lack of empathy, while Machiavellianism is characterized by manipulation, exploitation, emotional indifference, and self-interest. Psychopathy is marked by persistent antisocial behavior, impulsivity, selfishness, callousness, and lack of remorse.

Many dictators display strong narcissistic tendencies and a need for control, often exhibiting high self-esteem and resistance to criticism while seeking public recognition. Moghaddam further discussed how various difficulties and setbacks

during their growth may shape these indicators. For instance, issues such as poor academic performance or insufficient social skills may influence their self-evaluation, potentially leading to compensatory controlling behaviors.

### 3.4. Propaganda Psychology & Prospect Theory

Bornstein (1989) found that in the process of message dissemination, simply repeating the same message increases exposure and enhances recognition and trust in that message by stimulating the same cognitive cycle. Research by Rhodes and Wood (1992) indicated that individuals with lower intelligence levels are more likely to be convinced by seemingly reasonable arguments, especially when their analytical abilities are limited.

The mere exposure effect proposed by Zajonc (1968) suggests that repeated exposure increases positive affect and reduces negative emotion. In other words, people tend to prefer familiar experiences. Additionally, Hitler (1925) emphasized that propaganda content should be continuously repeated using simple, clear slogans. This aligns with Pavlov's (1927) classical conditioning theory, which posits that repeated information can produce a familiar conditioned response.

Kahneman (2013) proposed that individuals tend to rely on fast thinking, referred to as "System 1," which allows the brain to react automatically to societal stimuli. He further explained that "System 1" tends to prefer familiar concepts as they require less cognitive effort. Furthermore, Tversky and Kahneman (1973) introduced the "availability heuristic," revealing that people favor familiar options, even when they may not be the best.

Kahneman and Tversky (1979) challenged the traditional rational view of decision-making by introducing prospect theory, which shows that individuals do not consistently exhibit risk aversion or risk-seeking behavior. Instead, they evaluate gains and losses relative to a reference point, typically the status quo. Individuals tend to be risk-averse when considering potential gains but risk-seeking when faced with losses.

In the context of Kim's leadership, this framework elucidates his calculated risk-taking behavior. For instance, Kim's missile tests and nuclear advancements can be interpreted as efforts to safeguard the regime's stability and assert DPRK's presence on the global stage. By projecting military strength, Kim aims to mitigate perceived vulnerabilities while reinforcing his position both domestically and internationally.

## 4. Foreign Policy Theory

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) posited that the core of liberalism advocates for balancing diverse interests, asserting that the positions of various interest groups should be fully considered. Bell (2014) added that liberalism is a political philosophy founded on freedom and equality. Liberals generally support concepts such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, free markets, civil rights, democratic society, and international cooperation. Most Western countries

can be classified as liberal.

In contrast, realism posits that states are the core units in international relations, with their behavior influenced by national interests and power competition. Realist theory holds that states pursue security and power while seeking to maintain their status and influence in the international system. Countries like the DPRK, Russia, and Iran operate under realism.

Kim Il-sung developed Kimism or the Juche idea, an ideology rooted in Marxism. Although Kimism emphasizes that the DPRK's survival relies on self-reliance, Kim Il-sung lacked a comprehensive understanding of *Das Kapital* and selectively adopted aspects that benefited his regime. Thus, Kimism can be characterized as a form of "Borrowingism" (Park & Snyder, 2012). Kim Jong-Il slightly adjusted the Juche idea into the Songun or "army-first" policy, which was beneficial during his era, allowing the DPRK to develop nuclear weapons while creating regional tensions with the US and neighboring countries. Both ideologies advocate for the DPRK's use of military and nuclear capabilities as a foreign policy deterrent. Under Kim Jong-Un, the "simultaneous development" policy of the economy and nuclear weapons, known as the Byungjin policy, includes space development. This can be interpreted as the DPRK's commitment to both nuclear and space missile systems. In essence, Kim Jong-Un has not only finalized his father and grandfather's missions but has advanced them significantly.

## 5. Psychological Perspective on Kim's Behavior

The DPRK has been labeled as the axis of evil (Yoo, 2020), an image that may have contributed to Kim Jong-Un's inferiority complex. An inferiority complex is a psychological state wherein an individual feels undervalued and threatened regarding their worth and status. Kim Jong-Un may perceive the global negativity towards the DPRK, particularly from the US, as exacerbating his inferiority complex.

Maslow's theory suggests that individuals are motivated to pursue basic needs such as survival before advancing to more complex needs, including security and self-actualization. The DPRK has faced UN sanctions and threats from the US and South Korea. Kim Jong-Un may feel pressured to pursue his country's survival and security; he may believe that demonstrating military strength and adopting a tough stance are essential for maintaining these aspects.

Additionally, Adler's theory of inferiority transcendence can explain Kim's decisions. Inferiority transcendence occurs when an individual compensates for their inferiority complex by seeking power, prestige, or domination. Kim Jong-Un may attempt to compensate for his inferiority complex by flexing military power and taking provocative actions, aiming to demonstrate the strength and prestige of the DPRK to gain respect and recognition from the international community.

Bernstein's cognitive consistency theory posits that individuals seek consistency in their thoughts and behaviors and actively seek information that aligns with their

existing beliefs and values. In this context, Kim Jong-Un's imitation of his grandfather's image resonates with the public, as Kim Il-Sung is portrayed in the DPRK as a strong leader and protector of the motherland (Fifield, 2019). Based on Rhodes and Wood's identity theory, an individual's identity is shaped by the consistency between their self-evaluation and external perceptions. Therefore, Kim Jong-Un's deliberate emulation of Kim Il-Sung can cultivate a grandfather-like hero image, reinforcing his power. He can exploit this resonance to garner support and recognition from his people, consequently earning their respect (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Kim Jong-Un's leadership model: Kim Il Sung.

DPRK slogans and propaganda films, which prominently feature images of Kim Il-Sung as the father and founder of the DPRK, create a sense of nostalgia for the "good old days." This familiarity may trigger emotional associations and positive evaluations of the Kim Il-Sung era, transforming such emotions into support and trust for Kim Jong-Un. This aligns with Zajonc's familiarity theory, suggesting that people tend to have favorable impressions of familiar things. Hitler (1925) asserted that "the important thing is not to make people think, but to make them feel," indicating the use of emotional manipulation to influence public opinion and behavior.

The continuous broadcast of slogans and propaganda videos positions Kim as a public persona, fostering emotional connections and resonance among the people. This dynamic increases the likelihood of public acceptance and support for the Kim Jong-Un regime (Mesquita & Smith, 2011). Additionally, Buzo (2018) argues that Kim seeks to improve civilian quality of life. The theories proposed by Tversky and Kahneman, including System 1 thinking, availability, and familiarity heuristics, further elucidate these phenomena.

Despite Jang Song-Thaek being Kim Jong-Un's uncle and often described as the No. 2 in the DPRK, Kim perceived Jang as a potential rival due to his supporters and political influence within the DPRK and his close ties to China. Although Jang was designated as "regent" to assist in Kim Jong-Un's power transition after Kim Jong-Il's passing, he was arrested and publicly executed by secret police during a politburo meeting. Jang opposed Kim's directives, advocating for economic reform and opposing nuclear testing, alongside other charges of corruption and

treason (Branigan, 2013; Austin, 2013; Choe, 2016). This incident underscored Kim's refusal to allow others to maintain power over him. Under Kim's regime, he is the sole authority (Buzo, 2018; Mesquita & Smith, 2011).

In 2017, Kim Jong-Nam, Kim's half-brother, was assassinated at a Malaysian airport, with evidence pointing to DPRK agents. Prior to this incident, Kim Jong-Nam openly criticized the DPRK regime and advocated for economic reforms, having distanced himself from central power (BBC, 2018; McCurry, 2019; Watts & Branigan, 2012; Lah, 2012; Fifield, 2019; Mesquita & Smith, 2011).

In 2017, Kim Jong-Nam, Kim's half-brother was assassinated in a Malaysian airport. Evidence shows the involvement of DPRK agents. Before the incident, since Kim Jong Nam was no longer inside the central power of DPRK and living aboard, he regularly discussed the DPRK regime in a high-profile manner with journalists that he opposed hereditary rule of the regime and advocated economic reforms (BBC, 2018; McCurry, 2019; Watts & Branigan, 2012; Lah, 2012; Fifield, 2019; Mesquita & Smith, 2011) (Figure 2, Figure 3).



**Figure 2.** Jang Song-Thaek was arrested by secret police. (Source: NBC NEWS).



**Figure 3.** Kim Jong-Nam asking for help at the Malaysia airport. (Source: TNP).

The elimination of Jang Song-Thaek and Kim Jong-Nam can be interpreted through the lenses of security needs, reward, and punishment mechanisms. Kim Jong-Un utilizes power and intimidation to maintain his authority. He likely be-

believes that eliminating potential threats ensures the stability of his rule while sending a clear message internally: failure to support Kim Jong-Un may result in severe punishment. Such actions foster an atmosphere of fear that effectively limits the activities of opposition and strengthens the leader's control. Furthermore, Kim's actions reflect antisocial personality traits, as he displayed a lack of empathy and callousness towards his kinship with Jang and Kim Jong-Nam, executing them in high-profile and brutal manners. This calculated use of fear serves to reinforce compliance among the populace.

According to the principles of realism, state relations primarily revolve around power and self-interest. Kim Jong-Un's command during the artillery battle on Yeonpyeong Island (BBC, 2010; Bermudez, 2011) and the sinking of the ROKS Cheonan (Shin, 2018) can be interpreted as actions taken by the DPRK leadership in pursuit of national interests and security, aligning with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) (Figure 4, Figure 5).



**Figure 4.** Yeonpyeong bombardment (Source: 30North).



(a)



(b)

The Cheonan, (a) before and (b) after being sunken and salvaged

**Figure 5.** Wrecks of ROKS Cheonan (Source: 30North).

Researchers (Moghaddam, 2013; Buzo, 2018; Fifield, 2019; Mesquita & Smith, 2011; Shin, 2018) argue that dictatorship cannot be sustained solely by the leader. The leader requires a loyal elite to maintain power and govern effectively. The Pareto Principle suggests that 80% of outcomes stem from 20% of causes, implying that a small percentage of elites control the majority of the regime (Figure 8). These elites, typically cadre members with the power to reward and punish, can be kept satisfied through material incentives and power (Shin, 2018). This dynamic resembles crony capitalism but is more complex, akin to Russia's oligarchic structure. This obligation and rewards system can also be explained through operant conditioning as described by Bandura (1977).

Jung (2022) suggests that Kim consolidates power and maintains regime security through strategic distribution of rents. The concept of rent-seeking, where elites and middle-class actors compete for economic advantages, plays a crucial role in this dynamic (Jung, 2022). Kim's anti-corruption initiatives serve as regulatory tools to control the distribution of economic benefits derived from state-created monopolies. This strategy reinforces his authority among the elite while managing potential threats to his power (Kim & Cho, 2023).

Recent research indicates that the regime employs a combination of repression, co-optation, coercive distribution, and containment to bolster political control. Under Kim Jong-Un, repression has intensified, particularly regarding information flows and illegal migration, evidenced by stricter border controls and harsh penalties for unauthorized crossings (Ward & Silberstein, 2023).

Additionally, coercive distribution has become more pronounced, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the state aims to stabilize the economy and ensure loyalty. Kim's leadership demonstrates a flexible approach, integrating various strategies to adapt to changing circumstances. This adaptability has allowed the regime to respond effectively to both internal and external pressures. Ultimately, Kim Jong-Un's autocratic rule is characterized by a blend of repression and strategic co-optation, aimed at consolidating power while navigating the complexities of DPRK's political and economic landscape (Figure 6).

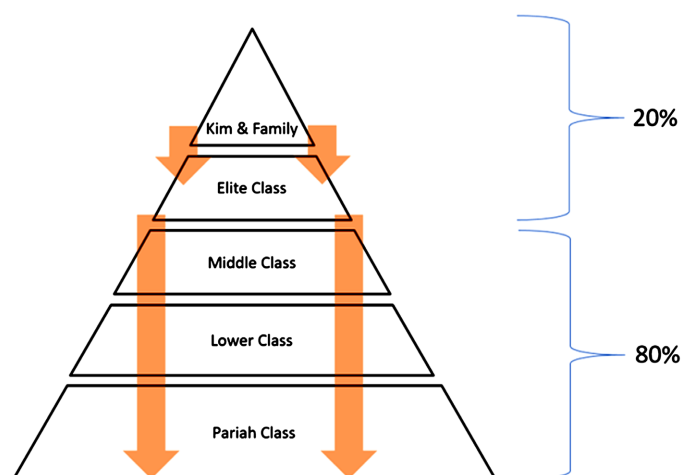


Figure 6. Kim ruled the regime under Pareto Principle.

## 6. Argument

In the words of Henry John Temple (1848), “We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and it is our duty to follow those interests.” This implies that nations are primarily driven by national interests. When there is no compromise, relations may deteriorate, as seen in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Conversely, states can form strategic alliances when mutual interests align, as demonstrated by the EU and NATO. However, states may shift between allies and enemies based on short-term and long-term foreign policy goals.

## 7. Conclusion and Discussion

Although Kim Jong-Un comes from an atypical family and governs an isolated country with personality traits including arrogance, ruthlessness, cunning, and unpredictability, his experiences in Europe have provided him with a foundational understanding of liberalism. This knowledge enables him to interact with Western countries while moderating his behavior. His primary goal is straightforward: to maintain power and rule the regime under his own authority. For Kim, the so-called enemies (the U.S.) and friends (China) are merely instrumental in achieving his objectives.

With his background as a businessman, Trump’s goals upon his return to power align closely with those of Kim. Both leaders focus on interests that benefit their respective countries; media reports suggest that Trump’s policies may also serve to advance his business interests (CREW, 2020). Although North Korean propaganda depicts the U.S. as an enemy, Kim has adopted a more nuanced approach by introducing Disney costumes in one of his concerts and inviting an NBA star to visit DPRK several times (Fifield, 2017, Fackler, 2012). These actions indicate that Kim does not view America purely as an adversary.

Should Trump be elected and he and Kim Jong-Un demonstrate a cooperative attitude, there is potential for China and Russia to seek economic aid and political support from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) to counter U.S. influence. Consequently, the DPRK stands to be the greatest beneficiary, primarily because Kim possesses a rational personality (Figure 7).

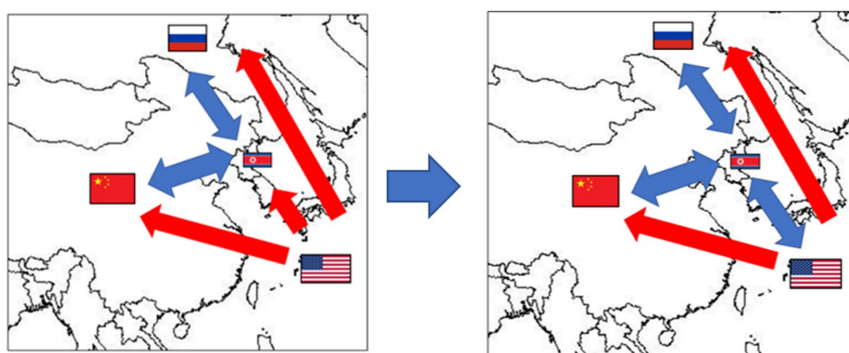
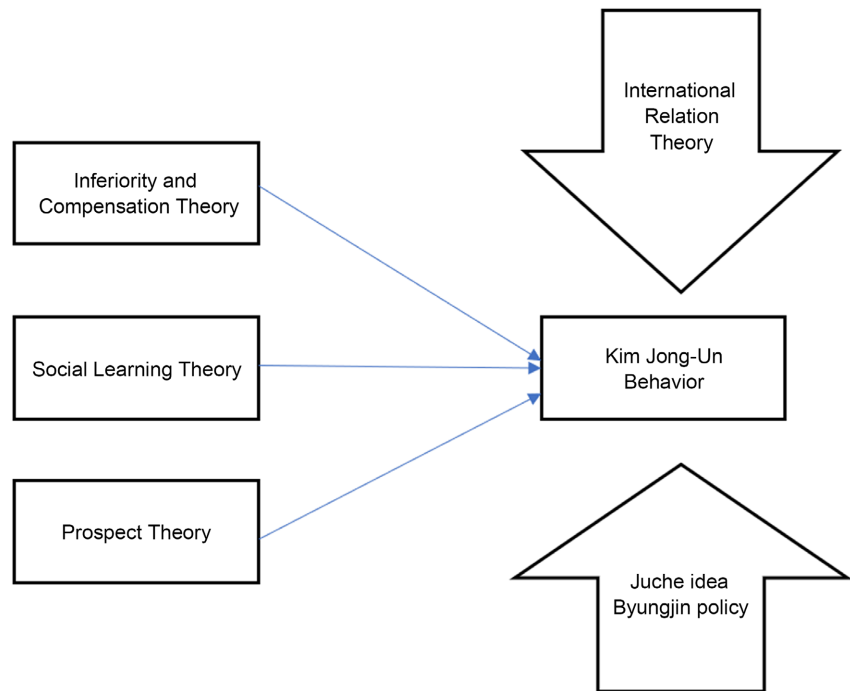


Figure 7. Beneficiary of DPRK among US, Russia and China.

In summary, despite Kim's complex personality, he has made significant strides in his policies, particularly regarding the space program. With these efforts, he is on track to establish his own identity, moving beyond the legacy of his father.

This essay reveals that Kim Jong-Un's personality exhibits multifaceted and intricate characteristics; he is astute, realistic, and pragmatically Machiavellian. As a result, his behavior and decision-making processes are calculated and strategic, reflecting a more rational approach. **Figure 8** illustrates the conceptual framework of the various influences on his behavior.



**Figure 8.** Conceptual framework of Kim Jong-Un's behavior.

Considering the insights of Henry John Temple and the principles of Donald Trump as a businessman, I conclude that Kim Jong-Un is likely to exhibit increasingly rational decision-making as he strives to enhance DPRK's status and influence on the global stage.

Overall, Kim Jong-Un's behavior can be understood through specific psychological mechanisms. By examining inferiority compensation, social learning for elite control, and prospect theory for risk-taking, it becomes evident that Kim's actions are grounded in psychological motivations rather than mere unpredictability.

### Limitations

Given that DPRK is an isolated country, the availability of reliable information is very limited. Therefore, this paper relies mainly on secondary sources. Additionally, the authors were unable to conduct a psychological assessment or interview with Kim Jong-Un, so this article is subject to certain limitations.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## References

- (2010). North Korean Torpedo Sank Cheonan, South Korea Military Source Claims. *The Guardian*.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/22/north-korea-cheonan-sinking-torpedo>
- (2024) NATO and European Union Leaders Are Preparing for a 2nd Trump Presidency. *Morning Edition*.  
<https://www.npr.org/2024/11/08/nx-s1-5182856/nato-and-european-union-leaders-are-preparing-for-a-2nd-trump-presidency>
- Adler, A. (1917). *Study of Organ Inferiority and Its Psychical Compensation*. Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10734-000>
- Adler, A. (2009). *What Life Could Mean to You: The Psychology of Personal Development*. Oneworld Publications.
- Austin, H. (2013). Kim Jong UN'S Uncle Dragged Away from Meeting, Erased from Documentary. *NBC NEWS*.  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/photo/kim-jong-uns-uncle-dragged-away-meeting-erased-documentary-flna2d11715074>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- BBC (2010). *North Korean Artillery Hits South Korean Island*.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11818005>
- BBC (2018). *North Korea Used VX Nerve Agent to Kill Leader's Brother, Says US*.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-43312052>
- Bell, D. (2014). What Is Liberalism? *Political Theory*, 42, 682-715.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591714535103>
- Bermudez, J. S. (2011). The Yeonpyeong Island Incident. *38North*.  
<https://www.38north.org/2011/01/the-yeonpyeong-island-incident/>
- Bornstein, R. F. (1989). Subliminal Techniques as Propaganda Tools: Review and Critique. *The Journal of Mind and Behavior*, 10, 234-262. <https://doi.org/10.54648/BULA1989084>
- Borum, R. (2010). *Understanding Terrorist Psychology*. University of South Florida.  
[https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/mhlp\\_facpub/576/?utm\\_source=scholarcommons.usf.edu%2Fmhlp\\_facpub%2F576&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/mhlp_facpub/576/?utm_source=scholarcommons.usf.edu%2Fmhlp_facpub%2F576&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages)
- Branigan, T. (2013). North Korea Executes Kim Jong-un's Uncle as 'Traitor'. *The Guardian*.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/13/north-korea-executes-kim-jong-un-uncle-jang-song-thaek>
- Buzo, A. (2018). *Politics and Leadership in North Korea the Guerilla Dynasty*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429496462>
- Choe, S. H. (2016). In Hail of Bullets and Fire, North Korea Killed Official Who Wanted Reform. *New York Times*.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/13/world/asia/north-korea-executions-jang-song-thaek.html>
- CREW (2020). *27 Trump Administration Policies May Benefit HIS Businesses*.  
<https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/crew-reports/trump-administration-policies-may-benefit-his-businesses/>

- Croce, B. (2024). What Changes Will a Trump Presidency Bring? Tax Cuts, Tariffs, Deregulation and ESG Policy Are All on Trump's Second-Term Docket. *Pensions & Investments*, 52, 3.  
<https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/what-changes-will-trump-presidency-bring/docview/3131507836/se-2>
- Fackler, M. (2012). On North Korean TV, a Dash of (Unapproved) Disney Magic. *The New York Times*.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/10/world/asia/kim-jong-un-appears-with-mickey-mouse-and-other-disney-characters-on-north-korean-tv.html>
- Fifield, A. (2017). Former NBA Star Dennis Rodman Heads to North Korea Hoping to Meet with Kim Jong Un. *The Florida Times-Union*.  
<https://www.jacksonville.com/story/news/nation-world/2017/06/13/former-nba-star-dennis-rodman-heads-north-korea-hoping-meet-kim-jong-un/15759264007/>
- Fifield, A. (2019). *The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un*. Public Affairs.
- Glass, A. (2019). President Bush Cites 'Axis of Evil,' Jan. 29, 2002. *POLITICO*.  
<https://www.politico.com/story/2019/01/29/bush-axis-of-evil-2002-1127725>
- Hitler, A. (1925). *Mein Kampf: Volume 1 a Reckoning*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, J. (1762). *Du Contrat Social, ou Principes du Droit Politique (Classic Reprint)*. Forgotten Books.
- Jung, M. K. (2023). Revisiting the 1983 Rangoon Bombing-North Korean Attack Kills the South's Top Economic Policymakers, but Misses Main Target President Chun Doo-Hwan. *The Korea Herald*. <https://www.koreaherald.com/article/3122743>
- Jung, S. (2022). Elite-Middle Class Competition for Rent-Seeking in North Korea and Kim Jong Un's Anti-Corruption Movement. *Asian Survey*, 62, 467-496.  
<https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2022.1553701>
- Kahneman, D (2013). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk. *Econometrica*, 47, 263-291. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1914185>
- Keneally, M. (2018). From 'Fire and Fury' to 'Rocket Man,' the Various Barbs Traded between Trump and Kim Jong Un. *ABC News*.  
<https://abcnews.go.com/International/fire-fury-rocket-man-barbs-traded-trump-kim/story?id=53634996>
- Kim, H. H. (1993). *The Tears of My Soul: The True Story of a North Korean Spy*. William Morrow and Co.
- Kim, J., & Cho, Y. (2023). The Ruling Strategy of Kim Jong-Un and North Korea's Last 10 Years: The Rational Action-Reaction about The Expected Effect of The Sanctions. *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, 21, 113-142.  
<https://doi.org/10.14731/kjis.2023.04.21.1.113>
- Kim, S. H. (2023). NK Secret Agent behind 1987 KAL Bombing Now Lives Ordinary Life in South-Korean Air Aircraft with 115 Aboard Blows up in Mid-Air in a Shocking Act of Terrorism by North. *The Korea Herald*.  
<https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20230607000697>
- Kotch, J. B. (2003). "The Axis of Evil" Revisited. *Korea Observer*, 34, 613-621.
- Lah, K. (2012). Kim Jong Il's Other Son Expects North Korean Regime to Fail, Journalist Says. *CNN*.  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/17/world/asia/north-korea-kim-other-son/index.html>
- Lasswell (1948). *Power and Personality*. W. W. Norton.

- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and Personality* (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.
- McCurry, J. (2019). Kim Jong-Nam, Half-Brother of North Korean Leader, 'Was a CIA Informant'. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/11/kim-jong-nam-half-brother-north-korea-leader-was-cia-informant>
- Mesquita, B. B., & Smith, A. (2011). *The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behavior Is Almost Always Good Politics*. Public Affairs.
- Moghaddam, F. M. (2013). *The Psychology of Dictatorship*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14138-000>
- Park, K. A., & Snyder, S. (2012). *North Korea in Transition: Politics, Economy, and Society*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Pavlov, I. P. (1927). *Conditioned Reflexes; An Investigation of the Physiological Activity of the Cerebral Cortex* (Translated and Edited by G. V. Anrep). Oxford U.P., Humphrey.
- Rhodes, N., & Wood, W. (1992). *Self-Esteem and Intelligence Affect Influenceability: The Mediating Role of Message Reception*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 111, 156-171. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.111.1.156>
- Sevastopulo, D. (2025). Xi Jinping to Send Top-Level China Envoy to Donald Trump's Inauguration. *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/68ac33bd-2b5b-4c47-9b60-3c55cc96acda>
- Shin, D. W. (2018). *Rationality in the North Korean Regime: Understanding the Kims' Strategy of Provocation*. Lexington Books. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781978725058>
- Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1973). *Availability: A Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability*. *Cognitive Psychology*, 5, 207-232. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285\(73\)90033-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(73)90033-9)
- Ward, P., & Silberstein, B. K. (2023). Strategies of Political Control under Kim Jong Un: Understanding the Changing Mix of Containment, Repression, Co-Optation, and Coercive Distribution. *Asian Survey*, 63, 557-583. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2023.1826437>
- Watts, J., & Branigan, T. (2012). North Korea's Leader Will Not Last Long, Says Kim Jong-un's Brother. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/17/north-korea-leader-not-long>
- Yoo, T. J. (2020). Kim-Chic or the Axis of Evil? : Korea and the World. In T. J. Yoo (Ed.), *The Koreas* (p. 170). University of California Press.
- Zajonc, R. B. (1968). Attitudinal Effects of Mere Exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 9, 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0025848>

## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

|      |                                       |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| DPRK | Democratic People's Republic of Korea |
| UK   | United Kingdom                        |
| US   | United States                         |