

Journal Article Presentation
By
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Introduction:

Title:

Facial symmetry and judgements of apparent health-Support for a “good genes” explanation of the attractiveness-symmetry relationship
B.C. Jones, A.C. Little, I.S. Penton-Voak, B.P. Tiddeman, D.M. Burt, D. I. Perrett
School of Psychology, University of St. Andrews
Evolution and Human Behavior 22 (2001) 417-429

Theory:

Increasing facial symmetry improves ratings of apparent health

Hypothesis:

Creating a more symmetrical version of the human face by averaging the height and lateral position of corresponding pairs of feature markers on the left and right sides of the face improves ratings of apparent health

Theoretical Construct I:

Apparent general medical health

Corresponding Operation Definition:

1-7 Likert-type scale (1=very low, 4=neutral, 7=very high)

Design:

Study:

Experimental

Subjects:

Thirteen male (20-30 years old) and 13 female (20-30 years old)

Independent Variable I:

Facial symmetry

Scale of Measurement:

Quantitative

Independent Variable II:

Sex of face

Scale of Measurement:

Qualitative

Levels of Independents Variable II:

Own-sex, opposite-sex

Dependent Variable II:

Rating of apparent health

Scale of Measurement:

Ratio

Results:

Main Effect I (Of First IV):

Increasing facial symmetry increased rating of apparent health
 $p < .001$

Main Effect II (Of Second IV):

No main effect for sex of face
 $p > 0.05$

Interaction (If more than one IV):

There was a significant interaction effect between facial symmetry and sex of face $p < 0.05$

Further analysis showed that manipulating facial symmetry had a significant impact on health ratings for both opposite-sex and own-sex conditions $p < .001$

The difference between ratings of the original faces and ratings of the symmetrical faces was significantly more pronounced when rating opposite-sex faces than own-sex faces $p < 0.05$

Discussion:

Did the Operational Definitions correspond well to the Theoretical Constructs?

Yes, I think that the Likert-type scale was adequate in assessing apparent health

If the results were significant, did they have a big effect?

Yes, subjects were much more likely to give the morphed faces a higher number on the Likert-type scale for apparent health

What are the potential confounds?

All of the faces that were shown and then morphed were employees at a UK industrial research center-this indicates that the majority of the faces shown were probably from the UK-people from this are might have similar facial features

Do you agree with the authors?

Yes, I think that they controlled for most potential confounds and their findings were also consistent with previous studies

How would you have done the study differently?

I would have used a more diverse population in the picture they used. I also would have used a more specific scale for rating apparent health. I think that the Likert-type scale they used was efficient, but I think a more specific rating system would be more accurate. Rating someone a 2, 3, 5, or 6 may be vague, but if you give each number specific guidelines or criteria that they have to meet for each number would make the rating system more accurate

Even if you are completely happy with the study, what would you do next?

I would repeat the study with a more diverse age in subjects and see if there was a significant difference in the way they rated the faces. I would also repeat the study and use a variety of different races and ethnic groups for the faces that were morphed