

Personalities judged by physical appearance alone

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Observers were able to accurately judge some aspects of a stranger's personality from looking at photographs, according to a study in the current issue of *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (PSBP), the official monthly journal of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology. Self-esteem, ratings of extraversion and religiosity were correctly judged from physical appearance.

Researchers asked participants to assess the personalities of strangers based first on a photograph posed to the researchers' specifications and then on a photograph posed the way the subject chose. Those judgments were then compared with how the person and acquaintances rated that individual's personality. They found that while both poses provided participants with accurate cues about personality, the spontaneous pose showed more insight, including about the subject's agreeableness, emotional stability, openness, likability, and loneliness.

The study suggested that [physical appearance](#) alone can send signals about their true personality.

"As we predicted, physical appearance serves as a channel through which personality is manifested," write authors Laura P. Naumann, University of California, Berkeley, Simine Vazire, Washington University in St. Louis, Peter J. Rentfrow, University of Cambridge, Samuel D. Gosling, University of Texas at Austin. "By using full-body photographs and examining a broad range of traits, we identified domains of accuracy that have been overlooked, leading to the conclusion that physical

appearance may play a more important role in personality judgment than previously thought."

More information: "Personality Judgments Based on Physical Appearance" published by SAGE in [Personality](#) and [Social Psychology Bulletin \(PSPB\)](#) is available free of charge for a limited time at psp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/35/12/1661

Source: SAGE Publications

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