

The power of facial expressions—influence on competitions

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Facial expressions influence competitions. They do so in Music and Miss/Mister elections as well as leadership assessments. Specific facial expressions, such as raising the cheeks, contribute to attractiveness ratings, as happen in the Miss World competition. However, mouth movement may result in lower ratings of attractiveness in the Mister World competitions. In addition, a computer could predict a musician winner facial expression, for instance the so-called "Lip corner pull." For leadership, expressions like nose wrinkling, dimpler and tight lids, influence the assessments of their degree of leadership. Those are four results of PhD research by Wilma Latuny, who defends her dissertation on 29th of September.

Latuny investigated whether [facial expressions](#) have an effect on the likelihood that a contestant would become the winner of a contest. She developed and used a digital method to measure facial expressions from videos of pageants, pianists, and community leaders. Subsequently, she related the measurements to the final results in the corresponding [competition](#). For female pageants (Miss World candidates) or male pageants (Mister World candidates), the main finding was that their video presentations (a dynamic presentation) were rated to be more attractive than their still images. In addition, mouth movements were negatively rated and resulted in lower ratings of attractiveness.

The main result for the pianists was that computers can predict the winner from three finalists by analysing their facial expressions. Computers can do this with an accuracy (of 43 percent) that matches

that of humans who are apparently not better. Finally, Latuny found that dynamic facial expressions may have an effect on the assessment of leadership. Certain facial expressions, such as nose wrinkling, have a positive effect on [leadership](#) ratings, whereas other expressions, such as raising the chin, have a negative effect. Overall, the studies show the power of facial expressions in explaining or predicting the outcome in a variety of contests. The results augment our understanding of how facial expressions affect our judgments of humans in competitive settings and offer specific guidelines for contestants to improve their chance of winning a contest by exhibiting the appropriate facial expressions.

Provided by Tilburg University

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