

DEVELOPMENTAL STABILITY OF PERCEIVED PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS FROM INFANCY TO YOUNG ADULTHOOD

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We predicted that physical attractiveness ratings of individuals at birth, 6, 12, and 18 years of age would be relatively stable and females would rate babies as more attractive than would males, due to their socialization to care for infants (Berman, 1980).

One hundred and twenty-seven college-aged participants (92 = women) viewed 32 facial photographs of eight different models (four male, four female) at ages 0 (newborn), 6, 12, and 18 years. Photographs were presented in a random order and participants rated the attractiveness of each photograph using a 10-point Likert scale, unaware that the photographs were of the same individuals at different ages.

Overall, the ratings of the different aged models were significantly correlated, all $r_s > .54$, $p_s < .001$, with high internal consistency, $\alpha = .89$, demonstrating uniformity between attractiveness ratings at different ages. Also females rated the newborns as more attractive compared to the ratings by males, $t(125) = 3.75$, $p < .001$, $d = .67$.

These results suggest that the perception of physical attractiveness is relatively stable in ratings of infants through to young adults, and females perceive infants to be more attractive than do males. These areas of investigation are important since physical appearance influences personal perceptions, social interactions, and general life outcomes (Langlois et al., 2000).

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Appreciation is due to anonymous reviewers.

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Keywords: physical attractiveness, attractiveness rating, perception of attractiveness, attractiveness and social interaction.

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