

Face perception- Facial Age and Anger Expression

A.A. Udayangani

*Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy, Pallekele, 20168, Sri Lanka
anushkaud@yahoo.com*

Different facial features affect the perception of human faces. For example, gender, age, and visual identity of a human can be promptly extracted from cranial and facial features of the face. Older faces are processed differently than younger ones and faces expressing diverse emotions are processed differently. Research shows that angry faces are more attended to compared to neutral or other expressive faces, which is known as the ‘threat advantage’. The literature has indicated that older faces can be perceived as more threatening than young angry faces. The current experiment investigated subjective ratings in response to neutral and angry faces of young and old individuals, to examine how facial age influences the perception of anger. Participants who were free of neurological or psychiatric disorders and dyslexia were presented with facial stimuli consisting of eight different male facial images, with all possible combinations of neutral versus angry faces and young versus old faces. A questionnaire was given to test the participants’ subjective interpretation of the eight faces. It presented each facial stimulus in a pseudo-randomized order, asking the participant to rate each one on a nine-point rating scale about threat rate (1 = least threatening, 9 = most threatening). The results showed that both young and old angry faces were rated as threatening, while old neutral faces were indicated to be more threatening than young neutral faces. This data, in combination, suggests a higher emotional salience of old angry faces compared to young either angry or (young or old) neutral faces.

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