Accurate Social Perception at Zero Acquaintance: The Affordances of a Gibsonian Approach

* We review research on accurate social perception at zero acquaintance and apply a Gibsonian ecological approach to redress several shortcomings.
* This article has five purposes:
  + We briefly review current evidence on the accuracy of trait perceptions #
  + We consider relationships between physical and psychological qualities that have been shown using Brunswik’s lens model ad we advocate a more theoretical and configural approach
  + We provide a developmental model that illustrates how physical and psychological qualities may come to be related
  + This model and tenets of the ecological theory of social perception lead us to propose various configurations of physical qualities that may produce accurate social perceptions
  + We advocate the value of studying not only the accuracy of perceived traits but also the accuracy of perceived affordances that highlight contextual influences on social perception accuracy
* “Consensus at zero acquaintance” in strangers’ social perceptions could reflect shared physical stereotypes rather than revealing perceivers’ accurate perceptions of people’s traits. However, evidence for the accuracy of strangers’ consensual perceptions has been provided by their convergence with perceptions of friends or acquaintances, with personality measures, with actual behaviours, and with self-reports whose validity has often been shown by convergence with behavioural measures.