The Social Accuracy Model of Interpersonal Perception: Assessing Individual Differences in Perceptive and Expressive Accuracy

* The social accuracy model of interpersonal perception (SAM) is a componential model that estimates perceiver and target effects of different components of accuracy across traits simultaneously.
* Perceptive accuracy – the extent to which a particular perceiver’s impressions are more or less accurate than other perceivers’ on average across targets.
* Expressive accuracy – the extent to which a particular target is accurately perceived on average across different perceivers.
* Perceptive and expressive accuracy can be further decomposed into their constituent components of normative and distinctive accuracy.
* Thus SAM represents an integration of Cronbach’s componential approach with Kenny’s (1994) social relations model.
* Following Funder (1995, 1999), accuracy is defined as agreement between knowledgeable informants, the observer and the target, or between the observer or target and behavioural measures.
* Cronbach (1955) identified the need to try to assess a single global measure of accuracy and instead rely on correlational methods to estimate the mean level of agreement across individuals and examine potential moderators of the degree of agreement. Such an approach isolates one of Cronbach’s components – differential accuracy – to examine individual differences indirectly through the assessment of moderators. For example, levels of self-other agreement are higher for individuals who are more temporally stable (Biesanz & West, 2000; Biesanz, West & Graziano, 1998)
* See Kenny’s social relations model (SRM; Kenny, 1994; Kenny & LaVoie, 1984)
* In brief, SAM is a componential model that estimates perceiver and target effects of Cronbach’s components of accuracy. Consequently social accuracy modelling shifts the unit of analysis from the level on a trait, as in a traditional SRM, to the level of accuracy. Instead of modelling how one sees others and is seen by others on a particular trait, SAM examines how accurately one perceives others and is perceived by others *across traits*. SAM provides a third even less travelled path that offers the potential of answering questions of both how accurately we see others and how accurately we are perceived by others as well as offering an analytical framework for elucidating the process of *how* we come to understand others.
* CRONBACH’S COMPONENTS OF ACCURACY. Cronbach (1995) noted that multiple different index and argued instead for partitioning the correspondence between a set of judgements and the validation measures into four components: elevation accuracy, differential elevation accuracy, stereotype accuracy, and differential accuracy. Cronbach’s components of accuracy represent the correspondence between these componential effects across judgements and validation measures.
* SOCIAL RELATIONS MODEL. The social relations model (SRM) is an alternative componential model for examining interpersonal perceptual data that focuses on the perceiver by target data for a single measure. The major components examined within the SRM are perceiver, target, and relationship effects for a measure.
* THE SOCIAL ACCURACY MODEL. The social accuracy model (SAM; Biesanz, 2007, 2009) examines the accuracy of a perceiver’s impressions of another person (the target). This dyadic units – the perceptions and impressions that one person has of another – represents the central conceptual level of analysis in the SAM. *Impressionistic accuracy* refers to the accuracy of a perceiver’s judgement of the target’s personality. Operationally this can be defined as the profile relationship between different assessments of the target and the perceiver’s impressions.
* Common validation measures may include target self-reports, reports from close peers and parents, social consensus, and behavioural observations and measurements.
* Perceptive accuracy is an assessment of the extent to which someone is a good judge of others.
* Expressive accuracy is an assessment of the extent to which someone is a good target and has been called readable, legible, judgeable, and transparent.

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|  | Perceiver. Perceptive Accuracy | Target. Expressive Accuracy |
| Distinctive Accuracy | The extent to which one perceives the distinct, unique characteristics of others | The extent to which one’s unique and distinct characteristics are perceived by others |
| Normative Accuracy | How much one’s impressions of others corresponds to that of the average person | How similar to the average person one is generally perceived |

Definition of the four main social accuracy model random effects. Intercept and dyadic random effects may also be estimated within the model.

* The primary limitation with classic Perceivers x Targets design such as Study 1 is that estimates related to individual differences with respect to targets are limited by the constraints on the design – it is difficult to have perceivers assess a large number of different targets. Alternative designs such as round-robin design where perceivers are also targets overcomes this limitation when there are a large number of groups.
* Discussion. Across both studies, target self-reports were significantly related to perceiver impressions both distinctively and normatively. This replicates substantial previous research examining the accuracy of initial impressions of personality. One of the clear conclusions from the SAM in Studies 1 and 2 is that the classic good judge of personality – perceiver distinctive accuracy – is precisely the component of accuracy where there does not appear to be very reliable individual differences.
* SUMMARY AND CONSLUSIONS. Indeed, within the SAM the estimate of distinctive accuracy may be interpreted as the average level of distinctive accuracy across targets where this average is computed across the different traits. Thus the traditional approach examining correlations separately for each trait provides a correspondence to part of the SAM while retaining a certain analytical and conceptual simplicity.