



# Money, Muscles And Smiles: Inferring Personality Traits From Facial Displays

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Facial displays of emotion are typically assumed to convey information limited to providing a snapshot of the signaler's current affective state. Rather than assuming that emotion displays function primarily to provide a readout of ever changing emotional states, the current studies explore the alternative view that emotion displays function primarily to provide reliable advertisements of stable individual differences in behavioral intentions (see Ketelaar, 2004, 2005; also Fridlund, 1994; Horstmann, 2003).

In particular, we are interested in how individual differences in the tendency to exhibit certain facial displays of emotion (e.g., smiles) can identify personality traits and enduring social motives.

## Overview

This poster examines two social contexts, one context in which individuals with non-cooperative motives smile more and a second social context in which individuals with non-cooperative motives smile less.

## Study One

NCAA Division I Football is a social context in which one might expect that individuals who possess physical attributes which allow them to dominate others (e.g., relatively greater height and weight) will be less likely to signal that they intend to behave in a pro-social manner. **Thus, we hypothesized that larger football players will be less inclined to smile than smaller football players.**

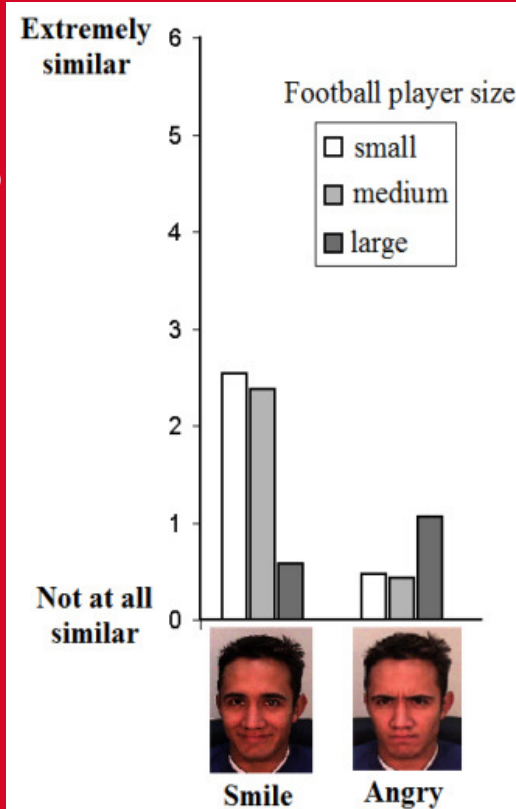
**Consistent with predictions, a large group of observers indicated that the smallest football players exhibited more smiling than the largest football players, suggesting that physical prowess is inversely related to the propensity to smile in the context of collegiate football.**

## Study Two

Study two examined the association between smiling and generosity in an economic decision task. Although research shows that smiling faces are generally rated as more trustworthy and generous (Scharlman, Eckel, Kacelnick, & Wilson, 1999), **we predicted the opposite, namely that individuals who smiled (in response to an undeserved compliment) would be less generous when distributing money that they had earned.**

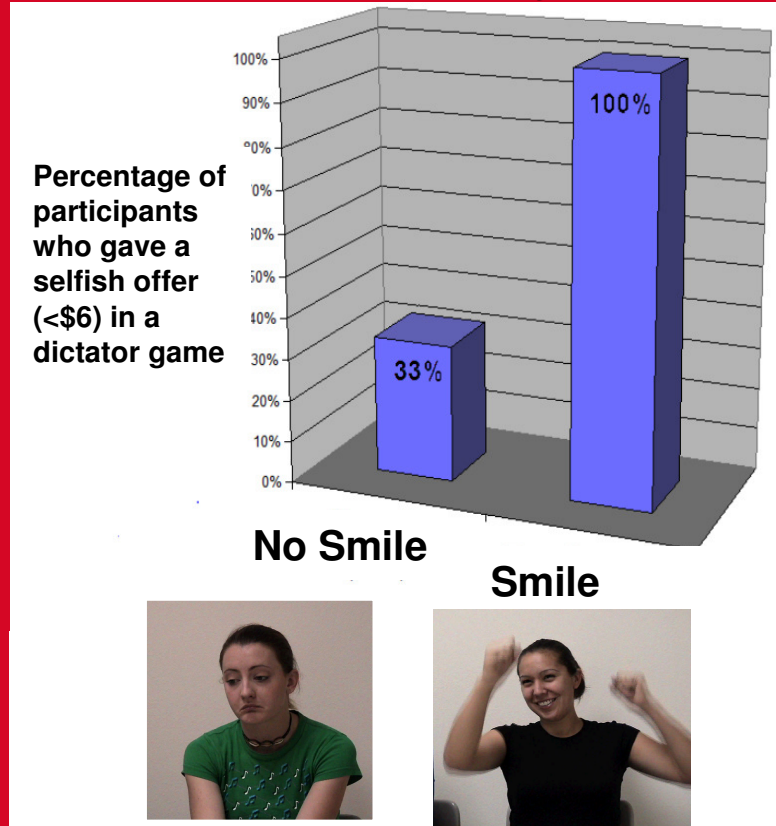
Our hypothesis was based upon findings in anthropological field research which suggests that most hunter-gatherers do not like to be complimented for hunting success when accepting such a compliment might suggest that the hunter will distribute the resource in a stingy or selfish manner (Lee, 1969).

## STUDY ONE: Smiles & Muscles



**Smaller football players exhibited more smiling than larger football players.**

## STUDY TWO: Smiles & Money



**Females who smiled in reaction to an undeserved compliment were less generous.**

To test our hypothesis, female participants were videotaped while they received positive performance feedback (a compliment) after their successful performance on a collaborative task with a partner. After videotaping participant reactions to the compliment, each participant was given \$11 as a reward for their group performance and asked to distribute the \$11 between themselves and their partner.

**Consistent with predictions,** we found that individuals who behaved as if they deserved the compliment (i.e., smiled when receiving feedback) were significantly more likely to give a selfish offer to their partner, compared to individuals who behaved as if they did not deserve the compliment (i.e., did not smile when receiving feedback).