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### **Faster to Love, Slower to Reject: Behavioral Dynamics of Beauty and Ugliness Judgments**

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**Background and Aim :** The perception of beauty and ugliness plays a crucial role in human interaction, social decision-making, and emotional experience. However, temporal and individual differences in the accurate judgment of these visual categories—collectively reflecting aesthetic sensitivity—remain underexplored, especially in the context of ugliness. This study investigated the behavioural dynamics of aesthetic judgments. Sixty adult participants (aged 18–55) viewed 54 beautiful and 58 ugly images generated by artificial intelligence. Reaction times (RTs) and accuracy of categorizing each image as beautiful or ugly were recorded. Results showed that beautiful images were processed significantly faster than ugly ones ( $t(59) = 3.923, p < .001$ ), and with higher judgment accuracy ( $t(59) = 2.38, p = .020$ ). A significant positive correlation was found between aesthetic judgment accuracy and reaction time for beautiful images ( $r = .329, p = .010$ ). No significant effects were observed for age, gender, or most psychological traits, except for a negative correlation between paranoid tendencies and accuracy in judging ugly stimuli. These findings suggest that beauty and ugliness may be processed not only perceptually but also behaviorally in distinct ways. The results have implications for cognitive intervention design, the analysis of social biases, and interdisciplinary research bridging psychology and social neuroscience. The interplay between beauty and ugliness in social judgments highlights the importance of aesthetic sensitivity in shaping human interactions and decisions.

**Methods :** Sixty adult participants (22 females, 38 males, aged 18–55) evaluated 112 AI-generated images (54 beautiful, 58 ugly) across categories including faces, animals, flowers, food, and objects. Reaction times and judgment accuracy were recorded. Psychological traits were assessed using the SCL-90-R questionnaire.

**Results :** Participants responded significantly faster to beautiful images ( $M = 65.37$  ms) than to ugly ones ( $M = 80.53$  ms),  $t(59) = 3.92, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.51$ . Accuracy was also

higher for beautiful images ( $M = 20.07$  vs.  $19.32$ ),  $t(59) = 2.38$ ,  $p = .020$ ,  $d = 0.31$ . A significant positive correlation was found between reaction time and accuracy for beautiful stimuli ( $r = .329$ ,  $p = .010$ ), suggesting more deliberate processing. No significant correlations were found for ugly images. Age and gender showed limited effects, while a negative correlation emerged between paranoia (SCL-90) and judgment accuracy for ugliness ( $r = -.266$ ,  $p = .040$ ).

**Conclusion :** These findings reveal distinct behavioral dynamics in the processing of beauty versus ugliness. Beauty is processed faster and more accurately, whereas ugliness may involve more cognitive hesitation and emotional ambiguity. Such asymmetries offer insights into neural and psychological mechanisms of aesthetic experience and may inform future interventions in social cognition and affective neuroscience.

**Keywords :** Aesthetic Judgment, Reaction Time, Beauty and Ugliness, Cognitive Processing

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