



CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2015 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s) Cecilia A. Hanna	Project Number 35310
Project Title Face Value: How Facial Appearance Plays a Roll in Political Elections	
Abstract Objectives/Goals The objective of my project is to determine if, and if so, how strongly, facial appearance can affect the outcome of political elections. Methods/Materials Official portrait photos of the winners of 10 various mayoral and gubernatorial elections from states and cities across the United States of America were placed on sheets of paper next to portrait photos of their largest opponent in their election. 60 test subjects were asked whom they would vote for based entirely on the candidates' portraits for each of the 10 elections. The results of the election based on portrait photo alone were then compared to the results of the actual election. Results 58% of the time, test subjects voting purely on facial appearance would vote for the candidate that won the election. This shows an 8 point increase from the null hypothesis. As the standard deviation includes the null hypothesis, it cannot be concluded that facial appearance definitely plays a roll, but the data trends towards a fairly strong influence. In 3 of the 10 elections, the experiment showed a statistically significant increase in votes correlated to facial appeal. In these 3 elections, approximately 81% of the subjects voted for the winner based on appearance. Conclusions/Discussion The experiment showed trends towards facial appearance being a fairly strong variable in politics. Most elections are won within 1-2 points of each other, and 8 points can be an insurmountable gap. The results neither directly confirmed nor contradicted my hypothesis, as it was included in the standard deviation, but the data showed a trend towards confirming the hypothesis, the experiment suggests that people make important judgments based on appearance, and shows how frequently our subconscious judgments factor into large decisions, such as our choice of leaders.	
Summary Statement This experiment tested how strongly facial appearance factors into political elections; data showed an 8 point advantage towards candidates whom voters found more appealing, which can strongly affect and even win the election.	
Help Received Friend helped conduct survey; father helped design data analysis spreadsheet.	