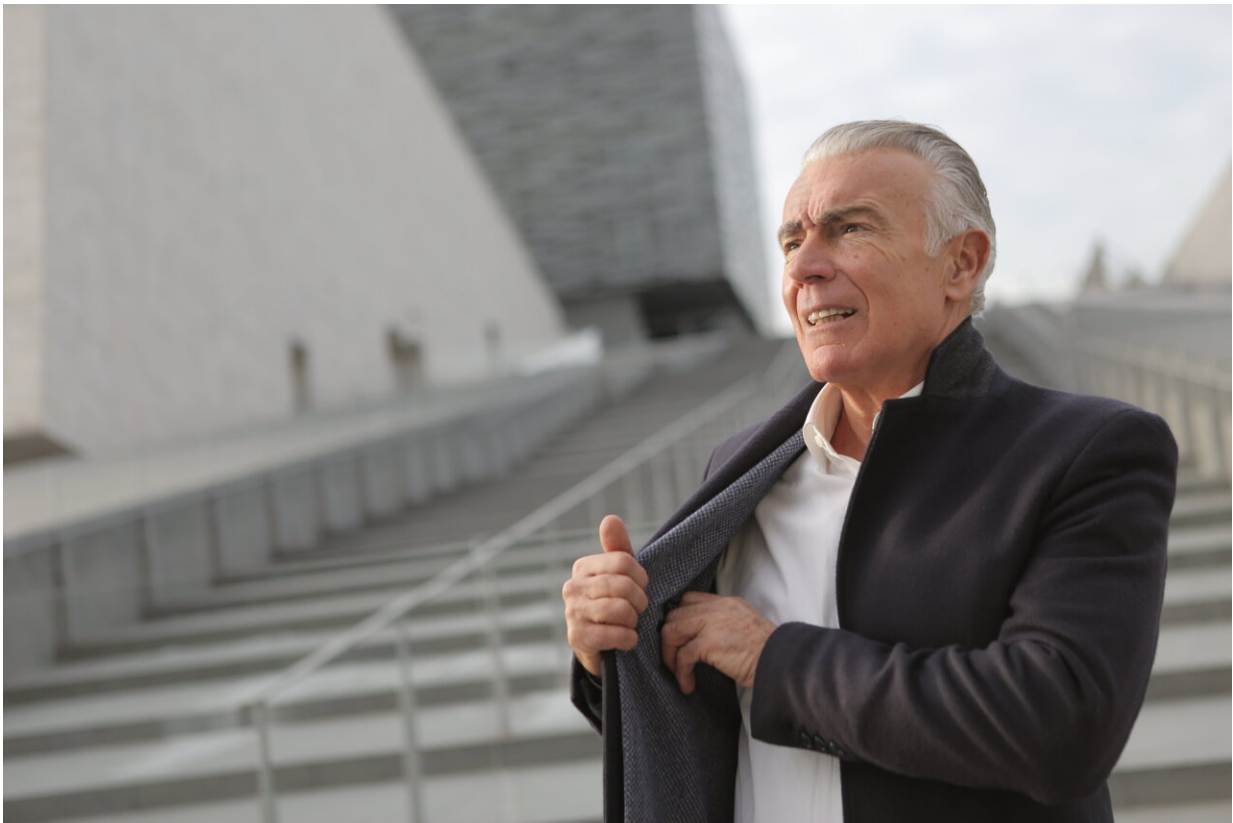


Trump's facial characteristics may predict leadership style

January 12 2017, by Amy Ripley



Credit: Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels

The research is part of an extensive literature review which examines a diverse range of fields including endocrinology, genetics, psychology and psychiatry to assess the current state of leadership research and to

identify what individual factors determine leadership success.

Researchers examined individual leadership factors including psychological (eg, personality traits, intelligence, self-regulation and family background) and physiological (eg, genetics, facial characteristics, gender, neuroscience and hormones). The leadership outcomes reviewed included concepts such as emergence and effectiveness as a leader.

Dr Oguz Ali Acar, Cass Business School, said the research confirmed that physical height, [facial structure](#) and gender can affect a person's chance of becoming a leader – as confirmed by President-Elect Trump's election.

"Trump has a masculine, older-looking face with high width-to-height ratio (fWHR). We found empirical research that links this high fWHR to various important leadership outcomes.

"Those who have higher ratio, like Trump, are more likely to be more aggressive, dominant and powerful. They are better negotiators and are financially more successful. One study we saw found a positive association between the width of a male CEO's face relative to its height and the financial performance of the firm. However, such a facial structure is also linked to darker outcomes such as [unethical behavior](#) and exploitation of trust of others,

"Trump has a masculine looking face, which is often perceived as dominant and is preferred in competitive settings, such as wartime. However, masculine faces are perceived as less trustworthy and are not preferred in cooperative settings such as peacetime. The current increased global terror threat may have contributed to his election," Dr Acar said.

Dr Acar said Trump also looks older and although this is associated with competence, older- looking leaders are not preferred in times of change.

He also said that Trump's fWHR may have an impact on his relations with other international leaders.

"The dominance associated with fWHR may be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can be an asset for the US for example by securing a better deal in international negotiations. On the other hand, it can lead to conflicts - or even a foreign policy crisis - when the other leader(s) are also dominant. In addition, trust issues associated with fWHR may inhibit forming cooperative relationships."

Dr Acar said Trump's fWHR may also be relevant to his dual role as a businessman.

"It is currently unclear what Trump plans to about his business interests. However, based on his [facial characteristics](#) alone; one could expect to Trump to keep as much control as possible over his organisation and not to compromise,

"An aggressive and dominant approach towards those who oppose this may be expected. The tendencies of unethical behavior and exploitation of trust (that are associated with high fWHR) make this conflict of interest an area of concern."

Dr Acar said our leaders can have a powerful effect on us so it is important to understand exactly what makes them tick.

"How we select, support and follow the right leader, whether it is in the workplace or on the political stage, has always been an important question because of the impact leaders have on the day-to-day lives, wellbeing and survival of our collective groups, societies and

organisations."

More information: Aybars Tuncdogan et al, Individual differences as antecedents of leader behavior: Towards an understanding of multi-level outcomes, *The Leadership Quarterly* (2016). [DOI: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2016.10.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2016.10.011)

Provided by City University London

Citation: Trump's facial characteristics may predict leadership style (2017, January 12) retrieved 13 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-01-trump-facial-characteristics-leadership-style.html>

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