

# Approachability and Mask-wearing During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Literature Review



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# Abstract | Summary

**Hypothesis 1:** If mask-wearing, perceived attractiveness will increase

**Hypothesis 2:** If mask-wearing, communication and sociability will decrease

## Findings:

- Averaged appearances and increased perceived attractiveness
  - Low baseline individuals
- Negatively impacted verbal and nonverbal communication
  - Deterrent to approachability

# Introductory Information

- CDC mask recommendation: April 2020
- Mask mandates: January 2021 – March 2022
- Sanitary–mask effect (Miyazaki & Kawahara, 2016)
- Approachability = Physical attractiveness & Communication

# Methods

- **Information Source:** Western Michigan University's Library database
- **Keywords:** "Mask" + "Approachability" + "Attractiveness" or "Communication"
- **Study Selection:** Inclusion/exclusion criteria
- **Total Selected Sample:** 23 articles

# Results



Results divided into 4 themes:

1. Masks' Effect on Perceived Physical Attractiveness
2. Masks' Effect on Communication and Emotional Perception
3. Masks' Effect on Relevant Factors
4. Moderators of Perceived Attractiveness and Communication

# Results: Theme One

## Masks' Effect on Perceived Physical Attractiveness

- Regression to Mean
- Averaging of Appearances

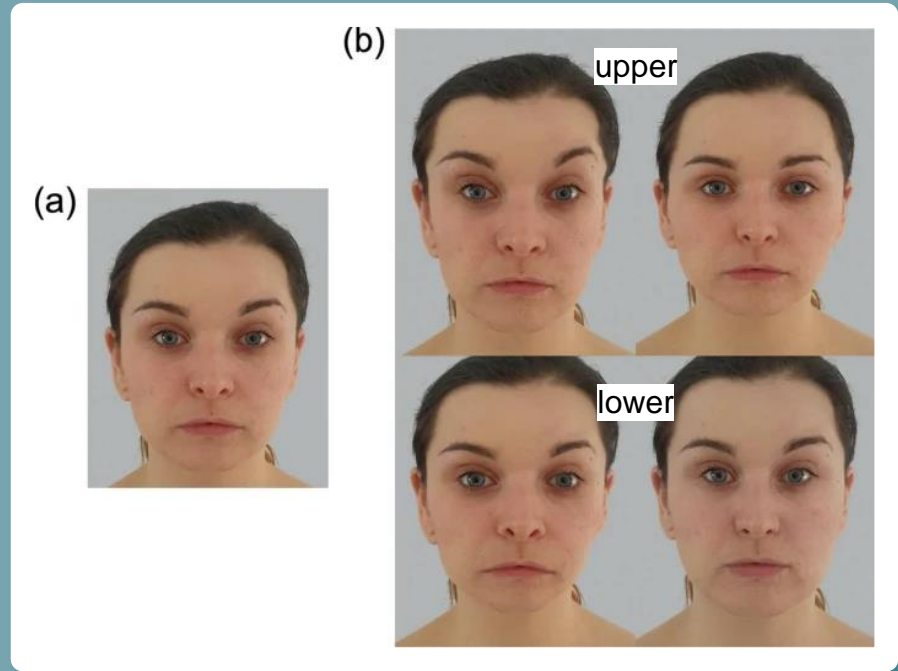


Fig. 1 -50% and +50% on continuum (Kramer & Jones, 2022)

# Results: Theme Two

## Masks' Effect on Communication and Emotional Perception

- Decreased communication capabilities
  - Deaf/Hard of Hearing communities
- Decreased emotion recognition



Fig. 1 Facial Comparison (Parada-Fernández et al., 2022)

# Results: Theme Three

## Masks' Effect on Relevant Factors:

- Trustworthiness
- Dominance
- First impressions
- Body size





# Results: Theme Four

## Moderators

- Race
- Masking Ideology
- Social Anxiety
- Gender
- Mode of Perception
- Degree of Hearing Loss



Fig. 1 Control vs. Experimental (Bassiri-Tehrani et al., 2022)

# Future Directions for Research

## Recommendations:

- Masking perceptions for immunocompromised individuals
- Comparison to post-pandemic masking perceptions



# Conclusion

Masking affected approachability during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Averaged appearances & increased attractiveness
- Inhibited communication and emotion recognition
- Impacted trustworthiness and first impression
  - The degree of impact was influenced by moderators

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Introduction

Methods

Results

Future

Conclusion

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