

Pareidolia and Perception of Anger in Vehicle Styles: Survey Results

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Abstract : Most people see human faces in car front and back ends because of the process of pareidolia. 96 people were surveyed to see how many of them saw a face in the vehicle styling. Participants were aged 18 to 72 years. 94% of the participants saw faces in the front-end design of production models. All participants that recognized faces indicated that most styles showed some degree of an angry expression. It was found that women were more likely to see faces in inanimate objects. However, with respect to whether women were more likely to perceive anger in the vehicle design, the results need further clarification. Survey responses were correlated to the design features of vehicles to determine what cues the respondents were likely looking at when responding. Whether the features looked anthropomorphic was key to anger perception. Features such as the headlights which could represent eyes and the air intake that could represent a mouth had high correlations to trends in scores. Results are compared among models, makers, by groupings of body styles classifications for the top 12 brands sold in the US, and by year for the top 20 models sold in the US in 2016. All of the top models sold increased in perception of an angry expression over the last 20 years or since the model was introduced, but the relative change varied by body style grouping.

Keywords : aggressive driving, face recognition, road rage, vehicle styling

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