

William J. Chopik investigated whether people accurately judge how cynical their friends are. Cynicism is the belief that people are generally dishonest, selfish or do things for personal gain. The aim of the study was to see if people underestimate their friends cynicism and if they project their own attitudes to their friends. Chopik recruited 173 pairs of friends. Pairs completed questionnaires that measured their own cynicism and estimated their friends level of cynicism. Chopik used the Truth and Bias Model to examine tracking accuracy, directional bias and assumed similarity. Tracking accuracy means how accurately people judge others, and assumed similarity is the tendency to believe other people have similar views to ourselves. The results showed that participants were partly accurate when judging their friends but did underestimate how cynical their friends actually were, which suggests a positivity bias. They also projected their own cynicism onto their friends. Newer friendships showed a stronger tendency to underestimate cynicism, while friends who had been friends longer showed a bit more accuracy. Trust and closeness did not effect on most results. Chopik concluded that even though people can judge their friends cynicism to some degree, they tend to view friends more positively.