Physical Attractiveness and its Effects on Social Treatment and Inequality

Physical attractiveness has long played a role in how people are treated in a society. In its extreme sense, those who are the "best looking" are provided opportunities to exploit their features, in careers like acting and modeling. But what is the extent of how much attractiveness can affect, or even hurt, everyday life, such as at our jobs and in our relationships? Numerous studies have suggested our looks can bias the way we are treated in the workplace and in school. It may even affect our well-being in romantic relationships, as psychologists have found that attractiveness may have a considerable impact on who our friends are, how much attention and respect we command within a social circle, and how we are treated in romantic relationships.

Before examining behavioral situations with which our physical attractiveness can play a role, it's important to be able to identify measures of what defines attractiveness. Many studies have extensively reviewed the effects of individual's facial and body features and how they can shape others' perceptions and judgments. There are heavy biological implications correlated with physical features, and when we scan others for attractiveness, we are inadvertently looking for genetic cues corresponding to environmental adaptation and physiological health. Because some of these studies have been extremely difficult to monitor, their results have often been disputed; concrete, irrefutable evidence has been hard to find, and this is why only a few of the most prominent studies will be discussed—certain fundamental facial and body characteristics have been agreed upon to be more attractive than others.

There will be extensive assessments past works that have studied the effects of attractiveness through various facets of life, starting as early as in elementary school, which shape our social interactions, and eventually our career opportunities. The latter portion of this paper will focus on the importance of attractiveness, gender and race, factors that have suggested

interaction in some papers, with regard to job-related outcomes, particularly in a simulated job environment or in an ultimatum game, both of which serve as proxies for bargaining power and labor opportunities in real-life work situations.

It is important to understand how strongly physical attractiveness can benefit or harm individuals' opportunities and happiness throughout life, and from a preliminary overview it seems that the more attractive a person is, the easier it will be for them to succeed, be taken seriously, be respected and have more power through many walks of life. Not only are they viewed more positively by others, but their treatment by others will influence their self-esteem and measures of capability and competence. The question of how physical features manipulate human behavior, interaction and attitude is intriguing, important and worthy of examining closely. The answers could even play a significant role in explaining inequality and discrimination in societies, but especially why inequality is so prevalent in America—could our looks serve as an inadvertent method of choosing who we work, live and interact with?

Slews of studies have been performed in attempting to determine what people consider to be "good looks". Specifically, many have studied facial symmetry, length of the nose, and in women especially, their body mass index and hip-to-waist ratio. Age, race and gender also seem to affect who someone finds attractive. From past studies, attempting to create a way to test for measures of attractiveness has been very difficult and many published articles were disputed or later disproved.

For example, a person may be rated to have attractive facial features either because they do exhibit the classic characteristics, or they could seem to be *relatively* more attractive after subjects were shown a less attractive person. A female who is only seeking short-term mating can find different male features attractive than if she were looking for long-term mating, and a

female who is menstruating will find different male features more attractive. Simple personal preferences in looks and attributes most likely play a role in confounding the causal relationships many have studied—a woman subject could simply prefer a bearded male and view him as being more attractive *because* of his beard, not because he actually exhibits attractive features. The decomposition of these factors has themselves resulted in many studies, where features have been normalized across all participants to reduce confounding variables.

Cunningham and Pike (1990) measured what women found to be attractive facial features on men. It was found that faces retaining moderate "baby" characteristics were found to be most attractive—features like big eyes and a smaller nose were considered highly desirable. A biological rationale for why women prefer these features is because they elicit a feeling of nurturance, and women may feel like caretakers. However, a more mature and rugged face was also found to be striking, with features like a square jaw and thinner lips rated most highly. From the experiments, it seemed that women preferred men who retained features of both extremes, as long as they were moderate—if they were too "babyish", like having extremely big cheeks or eyes, or too "masculine", like being extremely muscular or having too heavy of a beard, the faces were rated to be much less attractive. Men whose facial features demonstrated a sense of approachability was also highly preferred, like having a big smile, higher eyebrows, and being well-groomed and well-dressed. **Table 1** displays the correlations of facial features with a man's attractiveness. These finding are in alignment with the central limit tendency, which says that people tend to choose the features that are most common to be more attractive than features that are at extremes.

Table 1 (Cunningham, Pike, 1990)   **Table 2 (Langlois, Roggman, 1990)**

Table 1
Study 1: Correlation of Male Facialmetrics
With Attractiveness Ratings by Women

Judgment	Zero-order correlations	Curvilinear partial r
Neonate feature		
Eye area	.43***	−.32*
Eye height	.33**	−.31*
Eye width	.41***	.01
Nose area	−.33**	−.36**
Nose length	−.02	−.24
Nose tip width	−.08	−.09
Nostril width	−.09	.03
Forehead height	−.10	.16
Vertical eye placement	−.10	.17
Horizontal eye separation	−.17	−.17
Mature feature		
Cheekbone prominence	.34**	.14
Cheek width	−.09	−.05
Chin length	.41***	.11
Mustache or beard presence	−.19	.07
Expressive feature		
Smile presence	.19	—
Smile area	.25*	−.06
Smile height	.19	.01
Smile width	.31*	.16
Eyebrow height	−.05	−.08
Pupil width	−.15	.07
Grooming feature		
Coat and tie presence	.00	—
Higher status clothing style	.35*	.11
Dark hair color	.08	.17
Scalp hair length	.01	−.20

Note. N = 60.
* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Attractive Faces are Only Average

Table 1. *Attractiveness ratings for individual and composite faces*

	n	Mean	SD
Male Faces			
Individual Faces			
Set 1	32	2 60	53
Set 2	32	2.51	.54
Set 3	32	2 42	48
Sets 1–3	96	2 51	52
Composite Faces			
2-face level	3	2 34	12
4-face level	3	2 45	61
8-face level	3	2 75	57
16-face level	3	3 31	17
32-face level	3	3 27	08
Female Faces			
Individual Faces			
Set 1	32	2 38	67
Set 2	32	2 48	63
Set 3	32	2 42	66
Sets 1–3	96	2 43	64
Composite Faces			
2-face level	3	2 87	49
4-face level	3	2 84	77
8-face level	3	3 03	34
16-face level	3	3 06	18
32-face level	3	3 25	07

In alignment with Cunningham and Pike's central limit theory, the results of Langlois and Roggman's (1990) study also assert that the "average value of faces should be preferred" and that we take the average of all faces we see and that forms the basis for which we judge attractiveness; those who are within the mean are judged to be the most attractive. This was first studied by showing infants photos of faces, and it was found that prototypical faces were stared at longer than less normal ones. Langlois and Roggman used imaging software where facial photos of participants were composited, and it was found that as more faces were merged, they were judged to be more attractive (**Table 2**). Though the composite faces were predominately Caucasian, a composite Asian face is still expected to rate more attractive than an individual's.

The averageness of attractive faces may explain why very small deviations from the norm can sometimes be seen as more attractive, but strong divergence will be rated much less attractive.

Facial symmetry has long been considered a good indicator of attractiveness—many studies have focused on the effects of a more symmetrical face on how attractive an individual is. In "Facial Attractiveness", Thornhill and Gangestad (1999) studied facial symmetry, averageness and non-average sexually dimorphic features. Facial asymmetry biologically represents maladaptation due to mutations and disease, so it is perceived to be an unattractive reproductive feature. In the experiment, men favored symmetry more than women when rating for long-term mates' attractiveness—in fact, men tend to place higher importance on females' facial markers because women show more dramatic signs of age. However, Kowner (1996) questioned the attractiveness of symmetry, arguing that perhaps subtle *asymmetry* is normal, since in many forms of communication, asymmetric features are expected—when showing emotion and when speaking, asymmetry seems more "human".

In the averageness study, Thornhill and Gangestad (1999) theorized that people prefer average features because they actually represent above-average performance and biologically, they represent genetic sustainability and defense. Secondary sex characteristics are revealed on faces, and they can represent a more appealing genetic make-up. These features were also examined, and it was found that male testosterone facial markers include higher and more prominent cheekbones, lateral chin growth and eyebrow ridges that grow farther out. Higher visibility of testosterone signals strength and competitive success, another biological indicator that many find attractive. Female facial sex-hormone markers include the height of the cheeks, large lips and a smaller lower face. Different facial features signal different aspects of mate

potential—some signal dominance, some signal nurturance, and how attractive individuals rate others may indicate which quality they desire most.

Having a more average face may not be such a bad thing, especially with so many of the underlying evolutionary advantages it represents. Possessing moderate features is preferred by most, and especially attractive faces seem to only slightly deviant from the "norm", or the big composite collection of faces each of us have formed in our lives.

Aside from facial features, many have also studied what defines an attractive body. Tassinary and Hansen (1998) used line drawings of women and had subjects rate each photo's attractiveness. Specifically, they studied how attractive different waist-to-hip ratios (WHR) were—the ratio could take on values from 0 to 1, with 1 being an extremely uncurvy body, which signals a disability to bear children. It was found that higher WHRs are less attractive and less fecund, and the effect was most prominent in moderate weight category. **Table 3** shows the correlations between weight, WHR and how attractive a female was rated. Weight was discovered to be a much more potent determinant that WHR—light to moderate weights were most attractive, heavy figures were less attractive but judged to be more fecund. Relative hip size and weight are positively correlated with fecundity, and negatively associated with attractiveness; thus WHR may not be an accurate predictor of actual attractiveness, as BMI and weight seem to matter much more.

Table 3 ((Tassinary, Hansen, 1998)
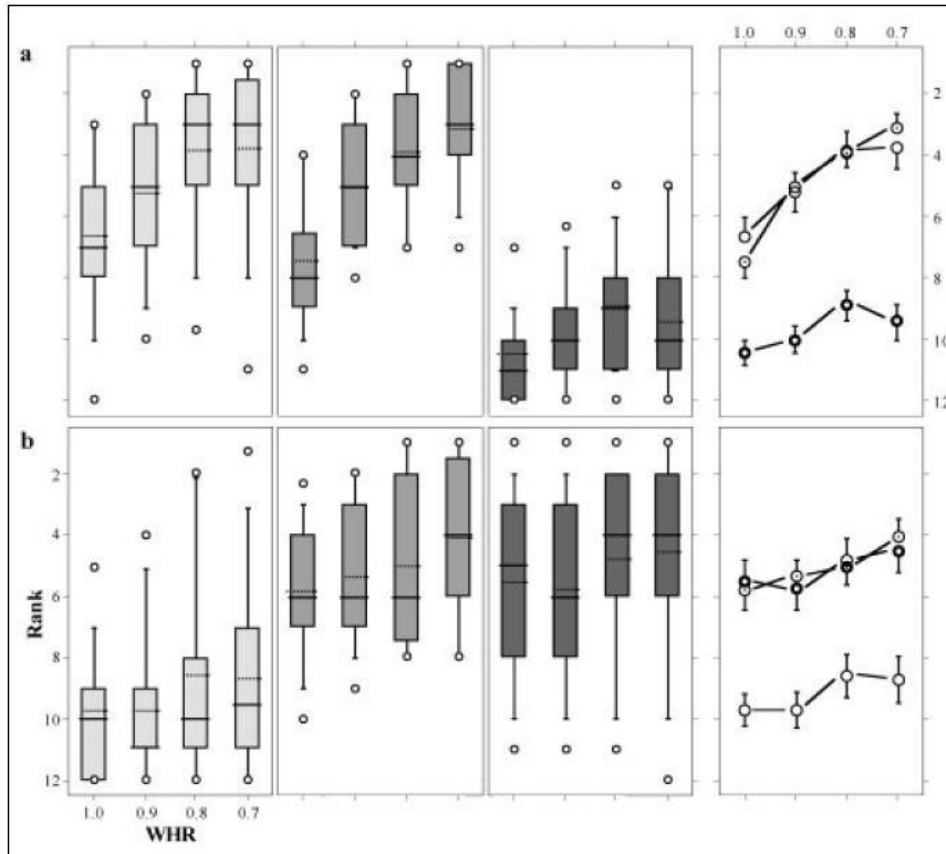
In a more updated study, Tovee and Cornelissen (2001), who criticized the inaccuracy of line drawings in past studies, used actual photos of women in their front and side profile. Though the critiques were aimed at an older study by Zaadstra, the same implications held—it was virtually impossible to hold BMI constant while varying WHR, and especially so when represented on simple drawings. The two factors interacted and thus created confounding factors, and the effect of WHR on attractiveness became difficult to prove. Tassinary and Hansen attempted to correct for this by independently measuring waist size, hip size, and weight, and having subjects rank each set twice, once by attractiveness and once by fecundity.

Once again, BMI was found to matter more in determining body attractiveness than WHR, and those within a normal, healthy BMI range were preferred most by both genders, and

increases or decreases around the 18-20 BMI range produced drastically more negative views of attractiveness. From regression analysis men and women both prefer a BMI of 19 in front-view, 20 in side-view, though women viewed a slightly lower average BMI than men did for both profiles. Though WHR mattered less, both sexes were found to prefer a curvier body (one with a lower WHR), but depending on the front and side view, subjects' rating of attractiveness of the same person changed. The findings of the study suggest both sexes use the same criteria to judge looks, and both place higher emphasis on healthy weight and having more evenly proportioned body. While BMI indicates fitness and health, WHR indicates fertility, so BMI indicates a more immediate signal of health. Though many of these studies conducted had mostly Caucasian subjects, the study may have yielded different results if the subjects were of a different race. For example, a culture where males are more valuable, a body with high WHR is more attractive.

    Having reviewed some of the most important studies of measurements of attractiveness, it's now time to evaluate precisely how our looks may provide advantages or disadvantages throughout the many phases of our lives. In terms of job prospects and the labor market, studies have suggested more attractive people not only more likely to find employment, but they also earn higher incomes and may move up the career ladder more easily. It is also theorized that attractive people are simply thought of as being more intellectually competent. Disparities between compensation of attractive and less attractive people have been studied closely, with one Solnick and Schweitzer (1999) study examining the influence of gender and attractiveness in ultimatum games.

    In a study where young children rated popularity among their peers, the unattractive kids were less popular. In a group of friends, an attractive person will have more influence on and respect from the others, and in one study, an opinion made by an attractive female was more

likely to be agreed upon than when made by a female less attractive. When making marriage choices, attractiveness and education play important roles, but the degree of their importance are different between genders. It does not only work one way—people have higher expectations of attractive individuals, perhaps because they look more competent.

Beginning at a young age, physical attractiveness heavily influences the treatment and expectations of an attractive child; a teacher forms expectations based on how attractive a child is and in turn the child's attitudes and self-perception are shaped accordingly. In a study by Clifford and Walster (1973), 5th grade teachers were selected at random to evaluate their expectations of a child's educational and social potential based on their report cards, which assessed academic performance and social behavior, and their photograph. There were 12 children's photographs, 3 attractive boys, 3 attractive girls, 3 unattractive boys and 3 unattractive girls. The teachers were subsequently asked to estimate the child's IQ, social status among peers, parental attitudes towards the school and the child's future educational accomplishments. The results, shown in **Table 4**, confirmed that physical attractiveness did affect teachers' judgments in rating intelligence and social potential—an attractive student was estimated to have higher values in all categories than an unattractive one. In fact, some teachers revealed their judgment process: "the child's clean-cut look influenced my opinion on [his IQ]", and "I found myself judging much on the photo when I wasn't too sure of my answer". These comments reveal the importance of visual cues, and more importantly, the importance of physical appearance and how it can heavily shape others' first impressions and assessments.

Table 4 (Clifford, Walster, 1973)

Means, Standard Deviations, and Relevant Significance Tests for High and Low Attractiveness

Descriptive Statistics						
Attractiveness of Student	(N)	IQ (Item 1)	Parental Interest (Item 2)	Educational Attainment (Item 3)	Educational Potential (Sums of Items 1–3)	Social Potential (Item 4)
High	(203)	3.33	4.66	3.06	11.04	3.54
		1.09	.95	.96	2.27	.74
Low	(201)	2.98	4.38	2.65	10.01	3.25
		1.10	1.03	.94	2.42	.72
Significance Test Attractiveness		F1/402 d.f.=10.53*	7.64*	18.67**	19.60**	15.04**

* $p < .01$.
** $p < .001$.
Mean over Standard Deviation.

Teachers' impressions of students haven't been the only relationships studied; Dion and Berscheid (1974) performed an extensive study of attractiveness in children and how it affects their social interactions and school popularity. Previous studies revealed that children's physical attraction affect other's initial impressions and can consequently influence how others perceive and interact with them. While many studies have already been conducted regarding these interactions, they had primarily focused on older individuals, while this study hypothesized that attractiveness shaped social affairs starting at extremely young ages, in this case at 4 to 6 years old. The attractiveness of a child may also be determined by their gender and age, suggesting that "females may develop earlier awareness of differences in physical appearance, perhaps reflecting implicit adult expectations regarding the relative importance of attractiveness for males and females." 77 children were divided into the younger (4.33-5.33 years) or older (5.34-6.83 years) group, and there were approximately an equal number of girls and boys, which was dispersed equally in both age groups. Each child was asked to identify a picture of his classmates, then to list classmates that fit different criteria, such as ones he especially liked, disliked, and ones who fit with social behavioral descriptions like "someone who fights a lot", as a way of measuring aggression. 14 adult judges unrelated to the kids ranked each child by attractiveness on a scale of 1 to 5, and this index served as the dependent measure.

The results of the experiment showed a significant gender, attractiveness and behavior interaction, and males were rated to be more aggressive than females—specifically, unattractive male children were more aggressive than attractive ones and thus were implied to more likely engage in antisocial behavior. Attractive younger males and older females were perceived to be friendlier than their counterparts, unattractive males were perceived to exhibit more nonconforming behavior, and attractive children were perceived by their peers to be more independent in behavior. Unattractive females were found to be perceived as more afraid, and unattractive children of both sexes were rated to be scarier than attractive children. Interestingly, unattractive females were more popular when they were young, but declined in popularity with age; this may be due to implicit assumptions and environmental pressures of females that intensify as girls get older.

The outcomes of this study could imply that young children also begin social biasing from mimicking adults' interactions that differ according to the attractiveness with whom they socialize with. Either way, the implications of this experiment are clear— noticing and judging attractiveness begins at very young ages, it influences the decision to socialize with or isolate peers in school, and it only becomes more powerful with age. More importantly, a child's long-term self-perception forms at a young age, so an unattractive child's isolation could have lasting detrimental effects.

There is no doubt, through studies and in daily observations, that physical attractiveness plays a big role in mate selection—regardless of whether it is for short-term or long-term, there are innately biological cues that are conveyed through physical appearance, and they can make a person look more attractive than others. In a study by Stevens, Owens, Schaefer (1990), marriage choice was evaluated based on the couples' education level and attractiveness. In exchange

theory, the two factors act as substitutes, so individuals attempt to "maximize the gain in mate selection while minimizing any costs", and is often seen in real life when one quality is offset by his spouse's disparity in another.

Education is prized more highly among women because men traditionally earn higher incomes, while men value physical attraction in women because of the biological signals of reproductive capability, and past studies have suggested that the attractiveness of wives can affect husbands' marital adjustment (Murstein, Christy, 1976). A paper by McNulty, Neff and Karney (2008) solidifies the importance of wives' physical attractiveness in new marriages—the results from their experiment showed that if the wife was more attractive, both she and her husband were happier in the relationship, but if the husband was more attractive, the relationship was worse and both were less happy.

Randomly selecting newlyweds' announcements that included their photographs from a newspaper throughout 1986, a sample of 129 couples were chosen. To conceal which bride was married to which groom, the pictures were cut in half. A panel of 4 college students was asked to rate the attractiveness of each bride and groom, and the mean of each newlywed was taken. Using independent variables like education, attractiveness and interaction variables, a few regressions were run. The results could not find a substitutability affect taking place, implying a strong homogamy effect—that is, the desire for similarity with matching a spouse's characteristics. The reality of an extremely attractive woman marrying an extremely wealthy and educated man may also be rare enough to not be significant, especially with more women obtaining higher education and rivaling men for similar salaries and career statuses.

The tests were mostly found to be insignificant or unclear, and the few shortcomings of this study could have played a role in how the results turned out. First, those who self-selected to

place their marriage announcements in the papers certainly did not represent the attractiveness and education levels for all marriages; thus, generalizability of the results to all studies is low. In addition, the photos used were printed on newspaper, and could have concealed or exaggerated flaws and attractiveness. Overall, the study tended to show that though attractiveness matters in the mating process, and more so for men than for women, in long-term relationships, whether in marriage or in friendships, physical appeal may not be of priority, and in most cases people tend to marry those who they have common interests and qualities with.

The way attractive individuals are treated may perhaps be a situation most common when socializing. A study by Horai, Naccari, Fatoullah (1974) hypothesized that physical attractiveness and expertise both affected opinion agreement, and found a significant effect of physical attractiveness and the degree to which subjects agreed with opinion newspaper articles they were reading. The subjects were asked to rate their agreement with the article, their impressions and liking of the author, and recall the content of the article. Attractive authors' photos were shown and rated to be attractive and interestingly, when no photo was shown, subjects rated the author to be more attractive than a pictured, unattractive person. The authors' attractiveness did not affect how well subjects recalled the article's content, but it did affect the extent to which they agreed with the article.

Interactions between and among genders seem to vary according to individuals' looks. Mulford, Orbell, Shatto and Stockard (1998) studied the effects of physical attractiveness and everyday exchange using simulated prisoner's dilemma environments, which also implicated the monetary benefits of beauty. 185 (usable) subjects were grouped up with 6 others, and had the choice to cooperate or defect in the game; at the end of the game, subjects had to rate their attractiveness (from 1 to 11) for both themselves and the other subjects. Interestingly, subjects

tended to rate themselves higher than they did for others (mean value of 7.7 for themselves, 6.2 for others). It was also found that there was a higher correlation between attractiveness ratings for females than for males, meaning that female attractiveness features is more agreed upon. On average, for each additional point of the attractiveness scale a female gained, they earned an additional 50 cents from the prisoner's dilemma game, controlling for self-ratings, while men who rated themselves to be very attractive earned less; this implies that the beauty premium was stronger for females than for males. In fact, women who rated themselves below the average attractiveness earned only half the amount of what women who rated themselves as very attractive did ($4.62 vs. $9.50).

From the regression analysis, both sexes were more likely to play if their partners were attractive; "48% of subjects' decisions were to cooperate when the other was regarded as highly attractive, compared to only 28% when the other was regarded as low in attractiveness." There were also interaction effects between gender and how subjects rated themselves—for example, men who rated themselves as highly attractive were more likely to cooperate than men who rated themselves to be low in attractiveness. The opposite effect was true for women; more attractive women (according to self-rating) had a lower tendency to cooperate. Subjects who rated themselves to be very attractive chose to cooperate with other people (according to rating of others) 59% of the time when their partners were attractive, compared to only 27% when they rated others to be unattractive, and this effect remained the same for those who rated *themselves* to be low in attractiveness (46% vs. 35%). Similar results were obtained in different rounds of the game.

The status generalization theory was consistent— if a subject was rated by others to be attractive, there were higher expectations for him to cooperate, and regardless of how a subject

rated himself, there was overall higher cooperation if their partner was attractive. The study asserts that attractive people are doubly advantaged, because "not only do they have more opportunities for social exchange, but those opportunities are with others who are relatively inclined to cooperate", and this finding is consistent with past studies regarding how attractive people fare in mate selection and in the labor market. Less attractive individuals will then not only be relatively disadvantaged, others, even those who are unattractive themselves, will have a lower propensity to offer or share their opportunities with them.

The social environment studies mentioned previously all study the effects of short-term behavior and perceptions towards attractive people. Anderson, John, Keltner and Kring (2001) examined the importance of status in social circles, and what exactly determined each member's status—whether it is due to personality, physical attractiveness, or both. Instead of simulated environments, these observations were performed over a 9 month period, with check-ups at the first 2 weeks, 4 months, and 9 months. The authors studied the long-term relationships in 3 social circles—a fraternity, sorority, and a mixed-sex dormitory, and evaluated the development of status, defined to be the level of respect, prominence and influence, in each circle according to the Big Five personality dimensions (the relationships between status and each aspect of personality are shown in **Table 5**). Having physical attraction has been shown to increase status and to be beneficial, but many of the past experiments were conducted in the short-term, where physical attraction was a novelty effect—how attractive subjects fare in long-term relationships such as the ones in the study, was unclear. The attraction to a subject's appearance may wane after other characteristics become more apparent and developed in the social circle. Status of each subject was determined by peer ratings and relating them to self-evaluations of the Big Five personality tests; each member's number of positions and offices they had held was also

recorded. Physical attractiveness of each subject was determined by having unrelated subjects rate attractiveness from watching a video clip of each participant.

Within the fraternity, extraverted and less neurotic members held the highest status, and physical attractiveness was correlated with status attainment—the more attractive male members tended to be more popular. Results of the sorority found similar results—extraversion played a big role in obtaining high status. Surprisingly, physical attractiveness did not play a role amongst the females in determining the social ranking. This is thought to be due to the fact that again, men value female attractiveness more, and females do not rank themselves according to physical attributes—they determine status according to others instead. In the third mixed-gender dormitory study, both sexes in the dorms again emphasized the importance of extraversion in gaining social status. For men, there was a significantly negative relationship between neuroticism and negative emotion and social ranking. Male attractiveness was also a significant factor, at both the end of 4 months and 9 months, while female attractiveness did not affect social status at either time. While neuroticism hurt men's status, attractiveness facilitated the status climbing. From the results of this experiment, relative ranking in social circles may be less important for women than for men, and surprisingly women do not place as heavy an emphasis on attractiveness as men do, when looking at same-sex social interactions.

Table 5 (Anderson, John, Keltner, Kring, 2001)

Correlations of the Big Five Dimensions and Physical Attractiveness With Social Status: Summary of Three Studies

| | Men | | | Women | | | Average | |
| | | Dormitory | | | Dormitory | | | |
Measure	Fraternity	Time 2	Time 3	Sorority	Time 2	Time 3	Men	Women
Big Five								
Extraversion	.47**	.48**	.40**	.45**	.39*	.36*	**.45**	**.40**
Agreeableness	.12	.08	.17	.24	.01	−.01	.12	.08
Neuroticism								
Self-report	−.31*	−.39*	−.46**	−.21	.08	.14	**−.39**	.00
Emotional expression		−.42**	−.39*		.19	.14	**−.41**	.17
Conscientiousness	.23	.16	.19	.03	−.20	−.31	.17	−.24
Openness to Experience	−.05	−.03	.00	.11	−.12	−.24	−.02	−.16
Physical attractiveness	.39**	.43**	.44**	−.12	.26	.16	**.42**	.10

Note. Correlations replicated across the studies are set in bold. Time 2 = 4 months into the year; Time 3 = 9 months into the year.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

We will now closely examine how heavy an emphasis is placed on physical appeal in the labor market, as it is one of the strongest sources of inequality in America. Hosoda, Stone-Romero and Coats (2003) conducted meta-analysis regarding the attractiveness bias in simulated employment environments. The formation of the independent variables was based on a few theories, biases and assumptions; the implicit personality theory states there are positive stereotypes associated with attractive people such as stronger social competence, social skills, sexual warmth, intellectual competence and mental health. There are also gender biases in the workplace, and from past studies, "attractiveness has been shown to exaggerate the perception of sex-typing", and this is known to be the lack-of-fit model. For example, attractive females will face more obstacles if they pursue stereotypically masculine jobs. This is because attractive women are viewed as possessing more feminine traits, masculine traits are assumed to be a requisite in such jobs, and feminine women are simply seen as being unsuitable for masculine jobs. This problem affects women more so than men, because attractive men are seen as being capable of succeeding in either type of jobs. Gender bias changes when presented with relevant job information, meaning that the role of attractiveness in job decisions is greatly reduced, and more relevant factors dominate.

The study used 27 previously published articles in which attractiveness was a manipulated variable and at least one of the study's dependent variables had to be a rating of the target with regards to either the access to jobs, or job related treatment. The results showed support for the hypothesis that attractive people are indeed, judged and treated more positively with regards to job-related outcomes, with a statistically significant estimate of the overall model. However, it was found that attractiveness is always beneficial, regardless of the type of stereotypical-gender roles they hold, and thus the lack-of-fit model was not supported in this study. Employers who had job-relevant information regarding employees also did not seem to change their impressions when judging attractiveness. The time periods of when past studies were published also displayed a pattern, with attractiveness as a weaker component of the job in recent studies—this may be due to the fact that more is now known about how heavily the role of attractiveness plays in organizations, so the effects are more strongly counteracted. Interestingly, attractiveness mattered most when choosing business partners and in employment potential.

The degree to which attractiveness affects job-related outcomes may be less severe in real-world settings than in experimental environments, because the focus of experiments have often implied the importance of attractiveness, rather than many other, and perhaps more important, job-related qualities. In many previous experimental settings, targets had to choose between extreme attractiveness and unattractiveness, while in reality most individuals tend towards moderate attractiveness. However, the attractiveness bias poses a big potential problem, especially working against those who are unattractive by creating disadvantages.

Table 6 (Hosoda, Stone-Romero, Coats, 2003)

The Attractiveness Bias and Primary Study Attributes

Attributes and class Between-classes effects (Q_B)	m	n	Mean weighted effect size estimate (d_i)	95% CI for d_i Lower	Upper	Homogeneity within each class (Q_{w_i})
Sex of target and sex-type of job[a]						3.56
Male target, masculine job	12		0.39	0.30	0.49	59.87***
Male target, feminine job	7		0.33	0.15	0.51	12.04
Male target, neutral job	6		0.45	0.31	0.60	8.99
Female target, masculine job	12		0.32	0.21	0.43	43.77***
Female target, feminine job	9		0.30	0.14	0.45	13.16
Female target, neutral job	5		0.41	0.25	0.57	4.47
Job-relevant information						3.49
Low	21	1,249	0.44	0.35	0.52	60.68***
High	41	1,958	0.34	0.28	0.39	111.85***
Type of research design						5.82**
Between-subjects	23	1,524	0.26	0.17	0.36	14.63
Within-subjects	39	1,683	0.40	0.34	0.45	155.58***
Type of participant[b]						3.88
College students	41	1,515	0.40	0.33	0.46	136.12***
Professionals	18	1,407	0.31	0.23	0.38	32.82*
Both	3	285	0.45	0.27	0.64	3.21
Sex of target[a]						2.80
Male	25		0.40	0.32	0.47	81.97***
Female	27		0.32	0.24	0.39	64.34***
Both	10		0.40	0.29	0.52	26.92**
Publication period						23. 31***
1975–1979	14	273	0.54	0.41	0.67	36.27***
1980–1984	11	684	0.48	0.36	0.60	15.74
1985–1989	25	1,557	0.38	0.30	0.45	96.69***
1990–1994	3	120	0.37	0.17	0.57	0.05
1995–1999	9	573	0.19	0.09	0.28	3.96
Type of job-related outcome						24.05**
Ranking	6	288	0.36	0.24	0.47	7.72
Hiring decision	31	2,012	0.39	0.31	0.46	117.99***
Promotion	6	134	0.26	0.04	0.48	19.72**
Predicted success	6	180	0.19	-0.02	0.40	1.04
Suitability	4	172	0.42	0.27	0.57	3.54
Employment potential	1	108	0.44	0.05	0.82	0.00
Choice as partner	2	133	0.67	0.49	0.84	0.74
Performance evaluation	6	180	0.16	0.01	0.30	1.21
Attractiveness manipulation						4.54
Pretested and manipulation check	28	1,490	0.33	0.26	0.40	102.38***
Pretested and no manipulation check	24	1,429	0.43	0.35	0.51	38.43*
No clear information on pretest	10	288	0.31	0.18	0.44	30.68***

m = the number of effect size estimates in a category. n = pooled sample size. CI = confidence interval.
[a] Pooled sample sizes cannot be computed because many effect sizes come from studies that used a within-subjects design.
[b] These results are the same as those for the research setting category.
*p < .05   **p < .01   ***p < .001

Briefly mentioned in Hosoda, Stone-Romero and Coats' (2003) study, intellectual competence is perceived to be higher in attractive individuals, which may actually positively impact their competence. Jackson, Hunter and Hodge (1995) studied intellectual competence and attractiveness using status generalization, implicit personality, and expectancy theories. According to status generalization, more attractive individuals are expected to be better with other tasks and have better general characteristics; males are also expected to attain higher status than females, and so attractive males should theoretically possess the highest status. Implicit personality theory, as previously mentioned, asserts that stereotypes are associated with different behaviors and abilities; in this case, the "physically attractive" category has been linked to

intellectual competence, though the correlation is doubtful. Almost all cultures have consistently portrayed attractive people to be no more, and in some cases even *less* intellectually competent than average individuals. Expectancy theory again states that an attractive person receives higher expectations for performance, which in turn influences his behavior and the attractive person will hold higher self-confidence, and his perceived competence will become real.

Using 59 past empirical reports, five predictions were tested, and the results strongly supported the 5 hypothesis. Attractive adults and children were perceived to be more intellectually competent, and this perception was stronger with males than females. However, females were perceived to be more socially competent, because the social domain is stereotypically linked with females. When explicit information about an attractive person's competence was not available, attractiveness played a stronger role in determining perceived intellectual competence. It was found, however, that actual competence was unrelated to how attractive a person was—suggesting that later on in life, a person's actual intellect establishes somewhat of a priority over their attractiveness. The practical implications of this study could be used to ascertain the importance of physical attractiveness in school and in the workplace; it seems that the prospect of the losses due to being unattractive outweigh the gains due to being attractive. Poor job performance is more detrimental to an unattractive person than to either a moderately or very attractive person; even though more is expected out of attractive people, they tend to be favored, more respected and more powerful.

In an experiment of ultimatum games, Solnick and Schweitzer (1999) studied the effects of attractiveness and gender on game decisions. Similar past studies have suggested that gender plays a significant role in bargaining power—in an job salary negotiation experiment, in which women and men had both received MBAs and were trained to negotiate similarly, men

negotiated higher salaries (4.3% for men vs. 2.7% for women). In a car dealership, black and white men and women were trained to negotiate the price of a car—white men received lower initial and final prices than women and blacks. Physical attractiveness also tends to play a favorable role for those searching for jobs, and in job promotions. A previous study also found that attractiveness was correlated with income; attractive men earned higher starting salaries, and attractive women earned the same starting salaries as less attractive women, but later on earned higher salaries. In a study by Hamermesh and Biddle (1994), "attractive people earned about 4% more than average-looking people, and that unattractive people earned about 7% less than average-looking people"; again, the prospect theory comes into play. Interestingly and in line with Hosoda, Stone-Romero, Coats (2003), unattractive women were more easily employed for stereotypically male jobs (Heilman, Saruwatari, 1979).

Ultimatum games can serve as a proxy for what happens in work environments, especially those where bargaining power is strong—for example, in salary negotiations, attractiveness and gender can play roles in determining how much an individual ultimately makes for performing the same work as less attractive individuals. From rating 70 photographs of attractive and unattractive people from one university, 24 were selected to represent the most to least attractive men and women. At a second university, 78 subjects were asked to be the proposers, and 30 were asked to be the responders. They were respectively asked to make offers and to specify minimum acceptance levels for each photograph. At the end of each round (out of 24), the proposers learned whether their offer was accepted or rejected, and responders learned what they had been offered. After all the rounds were finished, one was selected at random and subjects received payment based on the outcome of that round. From the results, seen in **Table 7**, proposers offered more to attractive subjects than unattractive ones ($4.72 vs. $4.61), and offered more to men than to women ($4.81 vs. $4.52). From ANOVA testing, offers were significantly

higher to attractive responders, and to male responders; women also made higher offers than men. When studying responder decisions, subjects required higher minimum acceptance levels for women than for men ($3.52 vs. $3.32), and higher minimum acceptance levels for unattractive people than for attractive ones ($3.53 vs. $3.32). With ANOVA results, minimum acceptance levels were significantly lower for men than for women, and higher for attractive people than unattractive people; females also required higher minimum acceptance levels than for males. The results of this experiment verifies the "beauty premium" that exists in the labor market, and the proposed reason for why attractive people and men earn more is due to the fact that they are offered more, without necessarily demanding it. In turn, however, there are higher demands from attractive people, because they are viewed to be more socially and intellectually capable.

Table 7 (Solnick, Schweitzer, 1999)

Average Ultimatum Game Offers of Phase 3 Proposers to Selected Photographed Subjects

Selected photograped subjects	Phase 3 proposers		
	Male ($n = 43$)	Female ($n = 35$)	Both ($n = 78$)
Unattractive men	$4.72	$4.70	$4.71
Attractive men	$4.79	$5.07	$4.92
All men	$4.76	$4.88	$4.81
Unattractive women	$4.44	$4.60	$4.51
Attractive women	$4.48	$4.60	$4.53
All women	$4.46	$4.60	$4.52
Unattractive subjects	$4.58	$4.65	$4.61
Attractive subjects	$4.63	$4.83	$4.72
All selected subjects	$4.61	$4.74	$4.67

Average Ultimatum Game Minimum Acceptable Levels of Phase 3 Responders for Selected Photographed Subjects

Selected photographed subjects	Phase 3 responders		
	Male ($n = 20$)	Female ($n = 10$)	Both ($n = 30$)
Unattractive men	$3.14	$3.52	$3.26
Attractive men	$3.17	$3.77	$3.37
All men	$3.15	$3.64	$3.32
Unattractive women	$3.28	$3.53	$3.37
Attractive women	$3.57	$3.92	$3.69
All women	$3.43	$3.72	$3.52
Unattractive subjects	$3.21	$3.52	$3.32
Attractive subjects	$3.37	$3.84	$3.53
All selected subjects	$3.29	$3.68	$3.42

Just as white privilege continues to be prevalent today, the issues of gender bias and beauty premiums also imply that many are treated unfairly because of factors they cannot control. Children as young as 4 years old are being isolated and labeled as "scary" because they are not attractive, and the problem only worsens as people get older, with punishments in the form of unequal incomes and fewer career opportunities, less respect from peers and coworkers, and unhappier relationships. This is especially worrisome because not only are attractive individuals expected to perform better in many aspects, there are much more negative connotations with unattractiveness, like less social and intellectual abilities, worse performance and lower expectations. People are less willing to participate with unattractive individuals, and when they do, they offer less—unattractive individuals themselves receive and expect less, both in simulated experiments and in the real world; suggesting much more serious implications. Romantic relationships are also affected by the couples' attractiveness—men value physical looks in women, and when there is an imbalance of physical appeal, it results in a more tumultuous relationship where both members are unhappier.

There is without a doubt, a big role physical attractiveness plays in determining how a person is treated; regardless of whether it's in school, with a group of friends, or in the workplace, we judge others, and unfortunately, our impressions are based on the easiest and most visible aspects—by looks and dress. These initial impressions will form our opinions of others' competence, capabilities, among many others, especially when we do not have much information about others. More recent studies on the attractiveness bias have suggested a lower impact physical looks plays, as more of us are made aware of the bias's power, but the social inequalities and consequences of attractiveness still play a big role in society, and it most likely will always affect the way we see and think of others.

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