The Pretty Problem: A Look at The Presence and Effects of Attractiveness Bias

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While studies have been conducted to investigate bias by such factors as race, gender, or sexual orientation, the literature indicates that fewer studies have looked at bias based on physical appearance, or what has been referred to as “physical attractiveness bias (Patry, 2008). Some researchers have found that perception of attractiveness can lead to a greater likelihood of being hired (Hosoda Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003), being judged as more talented (Ryan), more positive male reactions to uninvited sexual advances by females (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1994), or being judged innocent in a court of law (Patry, 2008). This study will investigate how people perceive the likelihood of an attractive person to perform certain actions or be in certain situations versus an average looking person.

Volunteers will be asked to view six sets of facial photographs containing two photos side by side. There will be three sets of males and three sets of females, each set of three containing a pair of White, African Americans and Asian people of similar age in appearance. Volunteers will be shown the same pair of photos in the same sequence. For each pair, the volunteer will be asked to choose which person would be the most likely to succeed in college, employment/career, and as a leader. Our hypothesis is that the attractive people are more likely to be selected.
Citations:


