Is Beauty Only Skin Deep?

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This study was done to determine if a person's idea of attractiveness is based on more than just looks. This could be beneficial to know when meeting people and having a better understanding of why you surround yourself with the people you do. Twenty-four undergraduate students were recruited to rate models on a scale of attractiveness in a packet. There were 12 variations of the packets. Six of the packets just showed pictures of three men and three women. The other six packets showed the same pictures but also included income and job information. The ratings of the attractiveness of the models were compared to see if the models with high income jobs were considered more attractive. The results revealed that there were no differences in attractiveness ratings of the models based on income information. This may mean that when rating attractiveness on a piece of paper, people may only look at the picture.

Can money change your perspective of a person? Are there factors besides your physical appearance that can affect your perceived attractiveness? Evidence has shown that there are many other things that can affect someone's idea of you. Everyone automatically judges people when meeting them for the first time. Moreover, our

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perceptions of others could be swayed by any little bit of information we learn about

them. We readily make conclusions and judgments based on little information. This study

was meant to show if people will come to conclusions based on information given about

a presented model. This could account for divorce rates, lost friendships, and problems

with anyone that, after getting to know the person, you changed your mind about.

Research evidence suggests that when you are not the best candidate for a job, your

attractiveness may help you get ahead. Researchers found that highly attractive women

with less than average qualifications for a job were picked for the job more than the

women who are of average attractiveness (Watkins & Johnston, 2000). They gave

participants a fake application that had an attractive photo attached, an average photo

attached, or no photo at all. The participants rated the applicant to be of higher quality

when an attractive photo was attached than the identical application with no photo. The

participants were also more likely to offer the interview to the person with the less than

average application with an attractive photo attached than the control with no photo

attached (Watkins & Johnston, 2000).

Evidence has shown that outside information about a person influences their

attractiveness. A large group of college-aged men were asked to rate women's body sizes

for attractiveness (Swami, et al., 2010). There were groups that were also given

personality information for the female models that was either considered positive or

negative. The men considered a larger range of women's body sizes to be attractive when

the women had positive personality traits and they found a smaller range of women's

body sizes as attractive when the women had negative personality traits, as compared to

the control group (Swami, et al, 2010). Other researchers have found that women tend to

rate men as being more attractive when they are thought to have a lot of money (Dunn &

Searle, 2010). In one study, they found that women rated men that were seen driving a

sliver Bentley Continental GT than the men that were seen driving a red Ford Fiesta ST

(Dunn & Searle, 2010).

A person's status may influence a person's decision to engage in any romantic

type of actions with a person. In a study, participants were given different scenarios of

partners. Each participant had a hypothetical partner and then a second offer from a

person they just met. The participants were asked different degrees of romantic

interaction, such as: would you go on a date with this person, or would you have sex with

this person, with the second model. The women were more prone to accept an offer of

romantic interaction when the model had a high socioeconomic status. The male

participants, however, were more likely to engage in a romantic interaction when the

model was attractive regardless of status (Greitemeyer, 2005). More evidence for this was

shown in a study that had models dressed as if they were of a certain socioeconomic

status. Participants were asked to rate each model of the opposite sex for attractiveness.

Then they were asked if they would engage in certain relationships with the models.

Reportedly, women rated the men that were considered unattractive as being more

attractive when they were associated with a high economic status (Townsend & Levy,

2001).

Method

Participants

The researcher recruited participants using the Lindenwood Participant Pool,

which is an opportunity for students at Lindenwood University to earn extra credit by

participating in students' studies. Each time a student participates, they are given ten

extra credit points. The participants consisted of 9 women and 13 men from Lindenwood

University. The majority of the participants were 19 years old and were in their freshman

year at the University.

Materials

The participants were given two consent forms that were borrowed from the LPP

and modified to fit the present study (see Appendix A). A packet containing six pictures

of models and a survey was constructed. The models consisted of three men and three

women. The pictures for the packets were found using Google search engine. There

were 12 variations of the packet. Even though there were 12 variations of the packet,

each contained the same cover which consisted of a sheet of paper that had the title of the

project, "Skin Deep" about a quarter of the way down the page in Times New Roman,

size 16 font. Under the title was the word "Packet" and a number that followed (see

Appendix B). The next six pages were the pictures of the models. In packets 1 through 6,

there was only pictures of the models and an attractiveness rating scale (see Appendix C),

in packets seven through 12 there were pictures of the models and occupation

information, high income (see Appendix D) or low income (see Appendix E), made with

a text box in Microsoft Word in Times New Roman, font size 12, as well as the rating

scale. The occupations were found by searching for highest and lowest paid jobs using

Google search engine. The remaining packets included pictures of the models along with

their occupational information and annual income (see Appendices A and B). All of the

rating scales were in Times New Roman font, size 12. All of the models' pictures were

found using Google Search Engine under Images. Three of the models were women and

three of the models were men. The order of the models were counterbalanced and their

income was alternated on the packets that had this information. Each model was

associated with high income information and low income information and no income

information but each participant will only see one version of the same model. The

seventh page on all of the packets was a short survey asking for some demographic

information (see Appendix F). Lastly, the participants were given a feedback letter (see

Appendix G) separate from the packet that was borrowed from the LPP and modified to

fit the present study.

Procedure

The researcher used a 2 (sex of model) X 3 (income status) ANOVA design.

Rooms were requested through the Lindenwood Participant Pool (LPP) that had one or

two desks in the room. Each participant was given two informed consent forms.   After

completing the consent forms they were given a packet. The ratings were compared

between each model separately; model A's, no occupation information, was compared to

model A's, occupation information provided, to see if the participants rated the models

that had higher income as more attractive. After the participants completed the survey

they were told to turn them in. Each participant was then debriefed and given a feedback

letter, and a receipt to turn in to get extra credit.

<div align="center">

Results

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The researcher hypothesized that when comparing the same model, a picture with

high income shown would be rated higher than a picture of the same model with no

income or low income shown. The participants were asked to rate each model on a scale

of 1 to 10, one being not attractive and ten being extremely attractive. A one-way

ANOVA was done to compare the means of the attractiveness ratings of the pictures of

the same models against each other. The independent variable being the attractiveness

ratings of the pictures with no income shown and my dependent variables were the

attractiveness ratings of the pictures with high and low income shown. The results of a

one-way ANOVA examining the attractiveness ratings of Model A based on income

information revealed no significant main effect of Income, $F(2,19) = 2.716$, $p > .05$.

The results of a MANOVA examining attractiveness ratings of the female models as

rated by men and women revealed a significant main effect of Model $(2, 19) = 8.188$, $p <$

.05. Model D was rated higher overall

An independent samples t-test was done to determine if there was a difference in ratings

of the models between the men and women. What was found was the men and women

generally rated each model about the same; however, the female models were rated

higher (Model D$t_{df} = 7.86$, SD=1.83, Model E, $t_{df} = 6.41$, SD=1.99, Model F, $t_{df} = 6.73$,

SD=2.05) than the male models overall (Model A, $t_{df} = 5.45$, SD=2.22, Model B, $t_{df} =$

5.45, SD=2.58, Model C, $t_{df} = 4.77$, SD=2.00).

Discussion

The results of the present study did not support my hypothesis that the models

with higher income will be rated higher on a scale of attractiveness. There was a very

small sample of participants that lead to there not being much data. There were a few

male participants who felt discouraged about rating the attractiveness of other males. This

could account for the overall lower rating of the male models. The female models were

all considered attractive and this may have caused a ceiling effect for their attractiveness

ratings. Many of the participants, while being debriefed, admitted that they did not notice

the income information given. A few even said that they believed that it had nothing to

do with attractiveness.

Model D was rated higher, overall by both men and women. This model was the

only blonde model. My participants may have had a preference for her hair. In the

future, it may be essential to ask what color hair the participants preferred.

The pictures shown were found using Google search engine. It was difficult to find

pictures of models that did not look posed. Many of the pictures found had to be

purchased in order to use them. Grants were not given for this study, so they were

unavailable for use.

In the future, it may be easier to personally take pictures of models so the

researcher can manipulate how the models look. It may be better to only show three or

four pictures instead of six. It may be better to also use models that look more similar,

that way the blonde model may not be rated higher.

References

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influences men's ratings of the attractiveness of women's body sizes. *The Journal*

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Townsend, J. & Levy, G. (2001). Effects of potential partners' costume and physical

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

I, _____ (print name), understand that I will be taking part in a research project that requires me to complete a short questionnaire asking me about my opinion of the appearance of models presented. I understand that I should be able to complete this project within10 minutes. I am aware that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or prejudice. I should not incur any penalty or prejudice because I cannot complete the study. I understand that the information obtained from my responses will be analyzed only as part of aggregate data and that all identifying information will be absent from the data in order to ensure anonymity. I am also aware that my responses will be kept confidential and that data obtained from this study will only be available for research and educational purposes. I understand that my informed consent form will be kept separate from my questionnaire. I understand that any questions I may have regarding this study shall be answered by the researcher(s) involved to my satisfaction. Finally, I verify that I am at least 18 years of age and am legally able to give consent or that I am under the age of 18 but have on file with the LPP office, a completed parental consent form that allows me to give consent as a minor.

_____Date: _____

(Signature of participant)

_____Date: _____

(Signature of researcher obtaining consent)

Student Researcher's Name and Number   Supervisor: Course Instructor

Amber Fetsch: Dr. Michiko Nohara-LeClair:

314 -853-2802   (636)-949-4371
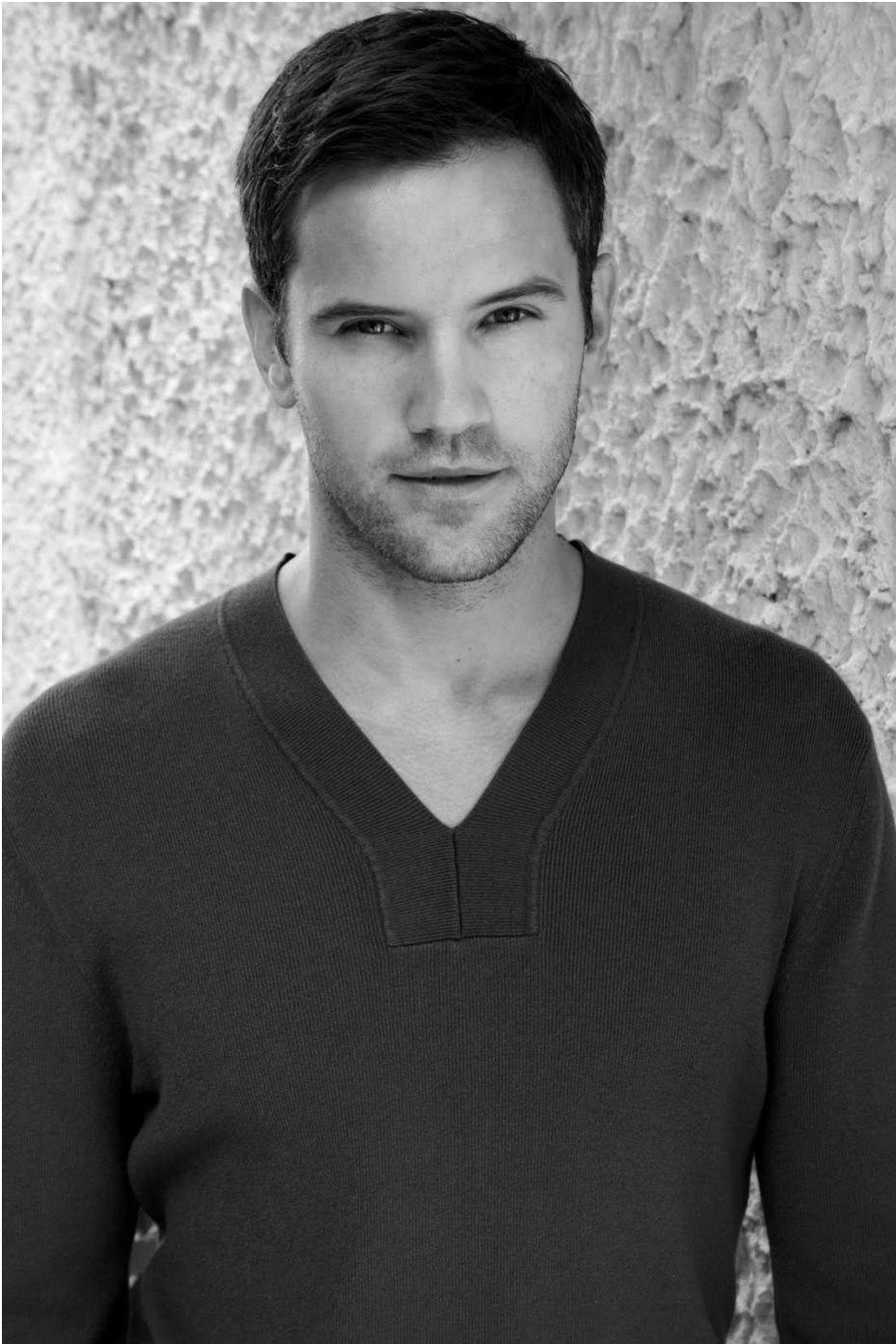
Ajf646@lionmail.lindenwood.edu   mnohara-leclair@lindenwood.edu
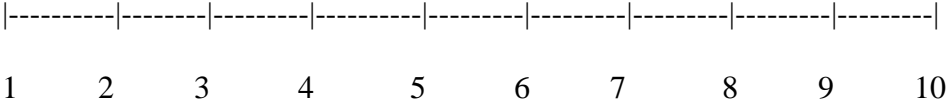
Appendix B

Skin Deep

Packet # 1

Appendix C

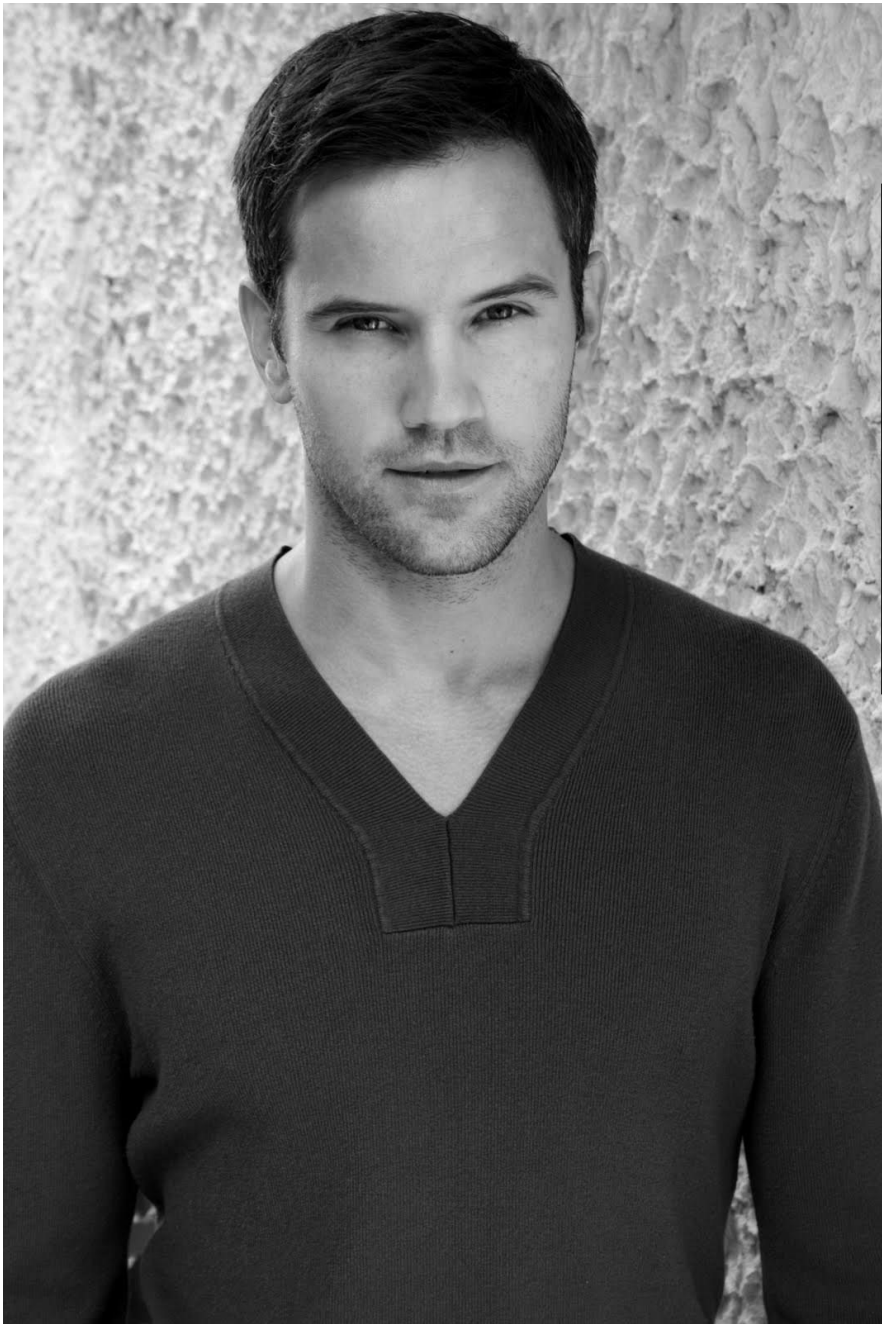

Please rate the model's attractiveness on the following scale, 1 being not attractive and 10 being very attractive.

Model A

|----------|--------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|

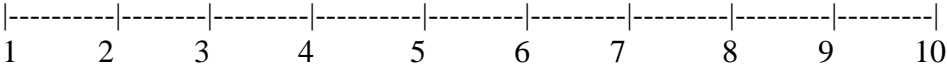1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Appendix D
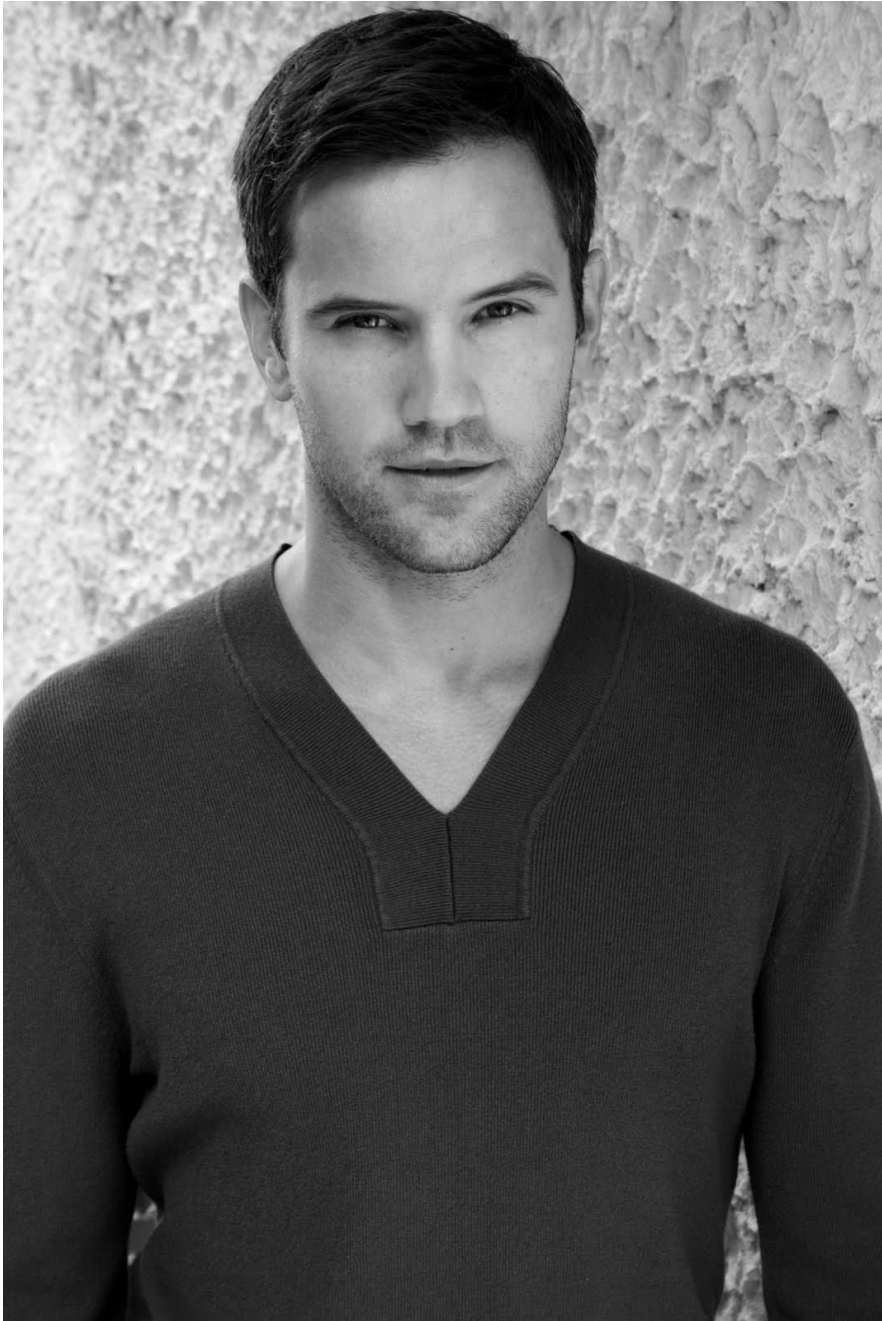

Occupation:

Account Executive
of Advertising

Income:

$120,000 a year

Please rate the model's attractiveness on the following scale, 1 being not attractive and 10 being very attractive.

Model A

|----------|--------|---------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
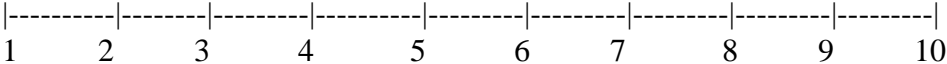
Appendix E

Occupation:

Elementary
School Teacher

Income:

$45,000 a year

Please rate the model's attractiveness on the following scale, 1 being not attractive and 10 being very attractive.

Model A

|----------|--------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Appendix F

Survey

1. What is your Gender?

Male   Female   Other

2. How old are you? (in years)

3. What class are you in school?

Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior   Other

4. What Country are you from?

5. Are you in a romantic relationship?

Yes   No   Unknown   No Answer

5a. If yes, How long? (In years and months)

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Appendix G

Feedback Letter

Thank you for participating in my study. The questionnaire was used in order to determine if people became more attractive based on their income. I want to know if the ratings of the models that were given jobs and incomes will be higher than the models by themselves, specifically the models with high incomes. This will give me an idea of if attraction is only skin deep or if there is more to it. This can account for how we meet people and why we choose to associate ourselves with the people we associate ourselves with.

Please note that I am not interested in your individual results; rather, I am only interested in the results of a large group of consumers, of which you are now a part of. No identifying information about you will be associated with any of the findings.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any portion of this study, please do not hesitate to bring them up now or in the future. My contact information is found at the bottom of this letter. If you are interested in obtaining a summary of the findings of this study at a later date, please contact us and we will make it available to you at the completion of this project.

Thank you again for your valuable contribution to this study.

Sincerely,

Principal Investigator: Supervisor:

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