Judging a Book by its Cover: 
Assumptions about Personality Based on Appearance 
Alone

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Fifth, I thank my wonderful dog, Spunky; without his constant demands to play ball and go for walks, I might have gotten my work done in a more timely manner... or not.
Abstract

The present study examined the effects of manipulations to a female model’s skin clarity, eye size, and lip size. Photo-manipulation software was used to remove blemishes and excess shine from skin, increase eye size, and plump lips in half of the photographs of the model, and these features were left unaltered in the other half. Data analysis was performed to determine whether manipulations to these features affected participants’ ratings of the model’s perceived attractiveness, competence, and social standing. While the manipulations did not affect perceptions of social standing, clear skin was related to higher ratings of attractiveness, but participants deemed the model with unaltered skin as more attractive when her eyes were enlarged. Finally, unaltered eyes and unaltered lips were related to higher ratings of competence.
Judging a book by its cover:

Assumptions about personality based on appearance alone

Though it's common and heartening to hear people say that “it’s what’s on the inside that counts,” this comforting statement might be more indicative of what we’d like to be true rather than what’s actually true. Over 8.7 million Americans had at least one cosmetic surgery in 2003, an increase of 33 percent since 2002, and 2003’s surgeries bear the hefty price tag of $9.4 billion (Shute, 2004). Cosmetic surgery is expensive, can require a lengthy amount of recuperation time, and poses serious, health risks, but more and more Americans of all ages, races, and genders are going under the knife in a quest to become more beautiful. Less permanent beauty aids, such as cosmetics, hair dye, jewelry, and trendy clothing and accessories, are even more popular among the masses.

Clearly, beauty is a big industry. However, beauty remains somewhat mysterious and elusive; it is a quality that is difficult to precisely define or explain, but we seem to consistently recognize it when we see it. How do we decide what is beautiful? Are we born with an innate sense of beauty? Is beauty a cross-cultural standard, or is it something that varies from society to society? Is beauty advantageous? Why do we prefer beautiful faces? Would we be treated differently by others if only we were more beautiful? Do a person's looks reveal anything about his or her personality? These are just a few of the questions psychologists studying beauty have attempted to answer.

What is beautiful? Averageness and symmetry

Research on both facial and body attractiveness has shown people find average most attractive. Averageness is defined as “proximity to a norm or average face” (Rhodes & Tremewan, 1996, p. 125). Langlois and Roggman (1990) photographed 16 males and 16 females
and digitally created a composite male face and a composite female face. Participants rated these composites as significantly more attractive than nearly all of the individual component faces (Langlois & Roggman, 1990). These findings were replicated by Rubenstein, Kalakanis, and Langois (1999).

Rhodes and Tremewan (1996) took photographs of individuals and used caricature-generating software to create an undistorted line drawing, a caricature (a 50% distortion of features away from averageness), and an anti-caricature (a 50% distortion of features nearer to averageness) of each individual. Participants rated anti-caricatures as significantly more attractive than the undistorted line drawings, and the undistorted line drawings were rated as significantly more attractive than the caricatures (Rhodes & Tremewan, 1996). In other words, in all of these studies, the pictures in which features were arranged most similarly to the configuration of an average face were considered most attractive.

A person’s preference for the average is not limited to human faces. Halberstadt and Rhodes (2000) asked research participants to examine drawings of dogs and birds before rating them on averageness and attractiveness. They found a strong correlation between high attractiveness and averageness ratings for both dogs and birds (Halberstadt & Rhodes, 2000).

Changing social trends, such as hairstyles, body shape, tattoos, clothing, and piercings lead many to believe that what’s beautiful is merely what’s beautiful now. It’s common to assume the media and popular culture shape our notions of beauty, so we assume infants, new individuals who have yet to be influenced by culture, lack a standard of beauty until it’s impressed upon them by the outside world as they age. However, research has shown infants consistently demonstrate the same preference for attractive faces as adults. After successfully replicating Langlois & Roggman’s 1990 study, Rubenstein, Kalakanis, and Langlois (1999)
repeated the experiment using infant raters. Composite faces and individual faces were shown to infants between the ages of 26 and 27 weeks old, and infants looked at the composite faces significantly longer than they looked at the individual faces, a recognized indication of preference (Rubenstein, Kalakanis, & Langlois, 1999). This finding suggests the preference for beauty is something that's either innate or develops at the beginning of one's life.

Other studies of attractiveness focus on the symmetry of beautiful faces. Grammer and Thornhill (1994) compared composite photographs to photographs of individuals and determined that composites are more symmetrical than individual photographs; the symmetry of these composites might be what makes them more attractive than their components. Researchers have also indicated that increased body symmetry is positively correlated with increased ratings of facial attractiveness (Grammer & Thornhill, 1994) and that, in comparison to less symmetric individuals, symmetric individuals begin having sex earlier and with more partners (Rhodes, Hickford, & Jeffery, 2000).

Theories of attractiveness preferences

Cognitive psychology posits one theory as to why averageness is so appealing: it is like a prototype. A prototype is an idealized mental representation of a category and possesses the attributes of an average category (Langlois & Roggman, 1990). Some cognitive psychologists claim we store prototypes of all sorts of objects and constructs, including a prototype of the human face. Theoretically, faces closest to the prototype should be most attractive. As studies have shown, composite faces, those created by averaging a series of different individual faces, are consistently rated as more attractive than the individual component faces; this supports the hypothesized link between averageness, prototypes, and attractiveness (Langlois & Roggmann, 1990; Langlois, Roggmann, & Musselman, 1994; Rubenstein et al., 1999; Halberstadt & Rhodes,
The sense that average faces are familiar may impact judgments of facial attractiveness as well. Prototypes, including composite faces, are repeatedly rated as familiar even when raters have never been exposed to them before, and the well-established mere-exposure effect indicates people like that which is familiar (Halberstadt & Rhodes, 2000).

Evolutionary psychologists take a different perspective, suggesting attractiveness, specifically averageness and symmetry, is biologically advantageous and, consequently, preferred to unattractiveness, extremes, and asymmetry. Rhodes and Tremewan (1996) showed how faces can be manipulated to become more or less attractive by making them more or less similar to an average face, and evolutionary psychologists are quick to point out that “genetic and developmental abnormalities may be reflected in deviations from averageness” (Halberstadt & Rhodes, 2000, p. 285). Faces that derive from the average, then, might indicate inferior genes, thus explaining the universal human preference for averageness. As with averageness, symmetry may be a signal of genetic health since deviations from symmetry are the result of stress during development; those who prefer symmetric mates, then, will most likely have greater reproductive success (Rhodes et al., 2000).

There is a caveat regarding the preference for averageness over extremes: in some cases, the unusual might be preferable. Evolutionary psychologists are fond of pointing to “the peahens’ preference for extravagant peacock tails” (Rhodes et al., 2000, p. 126), and celebrities like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Marilyn Monroe became famous because of their arguably non-average bodies (Rhodes & Tremewan, 1996, p. 105). Similarly, men prefer females with low waist to hip ratios, most likely because low waist to hip ratios are indicative of reproductive health (Rhodes et al., 2000). Judging by the popularity of liposuction and other cosmetic procedures (Shute, 2004), many of today’s American women may prefer to have this “extreme”
Appearance and Personality

waist to hip ratio. It may seem paradoxical that average is beautiful since many people conceptualize beauty as extreme and average as simply ordinary, but this is a misconception. An average face is not average because it is commonplace; it is average because it is a blending of individual faces—the mean facial configuration of many individuals—and thus closer to the ideal face.

What is beautiful? Specific facial characteristics

Males and females look relatively similar from infancy until puberty. Youths usually possess what are known as neonate features, specifically large eyes, smooth skin, and small noses; these characteristics are usually associated with exuberance, agreeableness, and openness (Cunningham, Roberts, Barbee, Druen, & Wu, 1995). During puberty, cheeks become thinner in both genders, cheekbones also become more prominent, and males develop facial hair, thicker eyebrows, and more pronounced brow ridges (Cunningham et al.) Where personality is concerned, these features of sexual maturity are often interpreted as indicating strength, status, dominance, and competency; where evolutionary theory is concerned, "prominent secondary sexual characteristics may suggest an effective immune system and healthy resistance to parasites... and effective functional adaptation to the environment" (Cunningham et al., p. 263).

A combination of neonate and sexual maturity features has been shown to be most romantically attractive, so a woman with "neonate features in the center of the face, such as large eyes, and sexual maturity features at the periphery, such as prominent cheekbones" is likely to be considered very attractive and sexually desirable (Cunningham et al., 1995, p. 263-264). Also, expressive features (e.g., a larger than average smile, highly arched eyebrows, vivid lips, etc.) are thought to suggest personality traits like happiness, congeniality, social approachability, and enthusiasm (Cunningham et al.).
Though people across the globe tend to express similar ideas of what is and is not attractive, culture does have some impact on which traits are valued. In Asian countries, like Japan, men tend to find women who smile frequently or display sexual maturity less attractive than judges from Western cultures and instead display a preference for soft, youthful faces, small and inexpressive mouths, and preternaturally pale skin; this is most likely because some Asian cultures prize submissive females and frown upon expressiveness and sexual maturity cues (Cunningham et al., 1995). In general, however, studies of attractiveness discover a high degree of agreement about attractiveness; the inter-rater reliability of attractiveness judgments across cultures has been reported to be approximately .88 (Rubenstein et al., 1999).

**Cosmetics and beauty**

A large number of women use cosmetics for beauty enhancement purposes, and the changes they make are designed to reduce extremes and create symmetry (Grammer & Thornhill, 1994). The prized wide-eyed look of youth and openness can be achieved through the use of mascara and eyeliner, the larger-than-average smile with vivid lips can be attained with carefully applied lipstick, and cheekbones can be made more prominent with blush. Essentially, women who lack natural symmetry and averageness of features can achieve these qualities artificially with a little makeup and a steady hand. It might be less of a hassle for a woman to skip the application of cosmetics and dare to go bare, but research has shown cosmetics use may provide benefits.

Cash, Dawson, Davis, Bowen, and Galumbeck (2001) investigated whether attractiveness is a static or dynamic trait, focusing on how cosmetics impact one’s appearance and self-perception. Female college students who regularly used makeup were photographed without makeup and with their self-applied everyday makeup (Cash et al., 2001). The women reported
significantly higher levels of satisfaction with their own faces and bodies while wearing makeup, and male judges rated the cosmetics-free pictures as significantly less attractive than the pictures in which women were wearing makeup (Cash et al.). Interestingly, the women displayed a "tendency to overestimate their own attractiveness with makeup and an even greater tendency to underestimate their attractiveness without makeup" (Cash et al., p. 353).

Social advantages and disadvantages of beauty

Anderson, John, Keltner, and Kring (2001) explored how attractiveness and personality affected the social status of men in a fraternity, women in a sorority, and men and women in a mixed-gender dormitory. Highly extraverted men and women were most likely to attain higher levels of status within their living environments, and highly neurotic males were most likely to wind up with a lower status (Anderson et al., 2001). Greater physical attractiveness was indeed strongly correlated with higher status, but, surprisingly, this was only true for men; Anderson et al. (2001) found no evidence to suggest a woman's attractiveness impacted her level of status in a sorority or mixed-gender dorm. Other research takes the idea that beauty might not be all-important even further, suggesting highly attractive women may be at a disadvantage among other women in certain situations.

Bower (2001) and Bower and Landreth (2001) investigated the ways in which beautiful women in advertisements are perceived by average female consumers. Research indicates beautiful people are often imagined to have more positive life outcomes (e.g., more successful careers, better marriages) and not suffer from the problems of 'normal' people (Bower & Landreth, 2001). Bower and Landreth (2001) found consumers were less likely to see highly attractive models (HAMs) as effective spokespersons for products designed to solve everyday
difficulties. A less attractive model's more down-to-earth appearance might lead consumers to view her as a more credible spokesperson than a HAM (Bower & Landreth, 2001).

Bower (2001) found that some women become hostile when faced with an advertisement featuring a highly attractive model. Some women experience social comparison jealousy when comparing themselves with HAMs; social comparison jealousy is the term describing the feelings of depression, helplessness, envy, jealousy, anger, anxiety, frustration and the desire for revenge someone experiences when he or she feels his or her status or worth is threatened by someone perceived to be “superior” (Bower, 2001). Women in Bower's (2001) study were shown ads featuring HAMs, and many of them responded in ways that indicated they were experiencing social jealousy: they attempted to disparage, denigrate, and belittle the models, most likely out of a motivation “to inflate, maintain, or even maximize their own self-evaluation and regain positive feelings that may have been injured in an unfavorable comparison” (p. 53).

While some experience strong feelings of jealousy and resentment when observing someone beautiful, there also seems to be a “halo effect of attractiveness” that causes most people to assume attractive individuals are “more sensitive, kind, sociable, interesting, outgoing, strong, poised, and exciting than less attractive people” (Perlini, Bertolissi, & Lind, 1999, p. 343).

The present study

Paunonen, Ewan, Earthy, Lefave, and Goldberg (1999) conducted a study in which facial features were manipulated to determine whether such changes would impact perceptions of the model's personality. Paunonen et al. used computer software to manipulate the eye size, eye spacing, and mouth fullness of men and women in photographs. They found no significant effect
of eye spacing or mouth fullness on personality ratings, but they did find a strong effect of eye size on personality ratings (Paunonen et al.). Individuals with larger than average eyes were perceived as more honest, innocent, attractive, popular, intelligent, and extraverted than individuals with average-sized or smaller than average eyes (Paunonen et al.).

In the present study, I chose to explore how manipulations to a female model’s facial features affect how others rate her personality. The three facial features I decided to manipulate via photo manipulation software were skin clarity, eye size, and lip size; the dependent variables measured were attractiveness, competence, and social standing. Though I was unable to find research examining skin clarity and its effects on perceived personality traits, I chose to investigate this variable because television, magazine, and radio advertisements constantly bombard consumers like me with ads for facial scrubs, blemish-fighting gels, oil-neutralizing wipes, blackhead-removing creams, and a whole host of other products designed to improve one’s skin clarity. I assumed that surely with all the emphasis American culture places on clear skin, one’s skin clarity would have some effect on how others perceive him or her. Based on what I learned from previous research of attractiveness, I generated several hypotheses.

First, I hypothesized eye size, lip size, and skin clarity would significantly affect ratings of attractiveness. Consistent with the findings of previous research, I predicted enlarged eyes would be rated as more attractive than unaltered eyes. Because of trends in cosmetic surgery and makeup application, I predicted plumped lips would be rated as more attractive than unaltered lips, and I also hypothesized that skin retouched to remove blemishes and excess shine would be rated as more attractive than unaltered skin. Second, I hypothesized that eye size, lip size, and skin clarity would have main effects on several personality attributes. I predicted large eyes and lips would produce lower ratings of competence and maturity, but higher social standing. I also
predicted skin clarity would be positively correlated with positive ratings for all personality
traits.

Method

Participants

Eighty-six undergraduate students from a Midwest liberal arts college participated in this
study for introductory psychology course credit. Of these 86 participants, 39 were male and 47
were female. Sixty-eight participants were freshmen, ten were sophomores, six were juniors,
and two were seniors. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 33 years old, and the mean age of
participants was 19.05 years.

Design

I chose to examine in what ways manipulations to three key facial features (skin clarity,
eye size, and lip size) of a college-age woman affect how other people perceive her personality.
The study used a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ design; skin clarity was either unaltered or clear, eye size was either
unaltered or enlarged, and lip size was either unaltered or enlarged.

Stimulus creation

To examine the effects of facial attractiveness on perceived personality traits, I first
needed to find a suitable model for participants to scrutinize. I went to a suburban mall in the
Midwest and approached six attractive young female shoppers and mall employees individually,
asking each for her assistance in the current study. I briefly explained to each woman the
purpose of my research and how her image, unaltered as well as manipulated, would essentially
be the focal point of the study. None of the women objected to these conditions or declined to
participate, so each filled out a consent form and was photographed with a digital camera.
Several pictures were taken of each potential model; each shot consisted of a frontal view of the model smiling as naturally as possible. After taking several pictures of each woman, I provided each with contact information if questions about the study and its findings arose. I also gave each model individually-wrapped pieces of candy and allowed her the opportunity to view her pictures on the digital camera’s preview screen if she desired to do so. Though several pictures of six different models were taken, only one was ultimately necessary and would be selected from the sample of pictures.

The photographs were examined according to two specific criteria: overall attractiveness of the female model and how easily her features could be digitally manipulated. Two individuals unfamiliar with my study independently pointed out which models and photographs they found most attractive, and their choices were similar to my own. I then personally chose one photograph out of the preferred based on how easily I could manipulate the model’s facial features with photo-manipulation software.

The chosen photo was transferred to a computer and edited using Roxio Photosuite. I saved the original photo to eight different files and began manipulating these photographs to create eight experimental conditions. The model’s skin was airbrushed in one picture to create the illusion of flawless skin, and this picture was saved over four of the eight files; this ensured half of the pictures had identically flawless skin and half had identically unaltered skin. Next, the model’s eyes were digitally enlarged in one picture, and these eyes were copied and pasted onto three more pictures; this ensured half of the pictures had identically enlarged eyes while the other half had identically unaltered eyes. Similarly, the model’s lips were digitally plumped in one picture, and these lips were transferred to three other pictures. The eight experimental conditions are noted in Table 1, and pictures from each condition are available in Appendix A.
Packet construction

Four-page packets were created for data collection purposes. All pages had warnings in the headers and footers instructing users not to open the packet or turn pages until given permission. The first page of each packet was a cover sheet. The second page bore the title “Prospective Student” and randomly contained one of the eight experimental photographs. The photograph was below the following narrative, included to mask the purpose of the study:

Alex is currently a senior in high school and is trying to decide where she wants to go to college. [Your college] is one of Alex’s options, and she has scheduled a meeting with one of our Admissions counselors. If you were the Admissions counselor and saw this picture of Alex before you were about to meet her, what kind of person would you guess she is?

The third page contained pairs of characteristics participants used to rate “Alex’s” personality. All characteristics were placed on scales ranging from 1 to 7, these endpoints being either positive or negative anchors for each trait. Negative anchors were sometimes on the left and sometimes on the right to reduce response bias; items were reverse-scored where appropriate. Participants indicated Alex’s personality on the following continuums: intelligent/unintelligent, friendly/unfriendly, polite/snobby, outgoing/shy, athletic/unathletic, popular/unpopular, funny/serious, honest/dishonest, mature/immature, industrious/lazy, reliable/unreliable, attractive/unattractive, competent/incompetent, and well-behaved/wild. These continuums, as they appeared to participants, can be viewed in Appendix B.

The characteristics important to the study were perceived intelligence, outgoingness, popularity, honesty, maturity, reliability, and competence; the remaining characteristics were included only as filler questions. A capital letter, ranging from A through H, was placed at the bottom of the second, third, and fourth pages; this designated the condition of the photograph.
that had appeared on the second page. The last page of each packet requested demographic information (the participant's age, gender, major, and year in school).

Procedure

In one of several rooms with writing surfaces and individual chairs, between two and twelve participants took part in each trial of the current study. Each participant signed a consent form and subsequently received a packet that they were asked to keep closed until further instructions were given. I briefly read the following set of verbal instructions:

Thank you for participating in this study. At this time, each of you has been given a packet. There are four pages to each packet: the cover page, which is visible now, and three other pages. When I say, "You may begin," please open your packet to the second page and read the instructions. After you've done this, continue examining this page until I say, "Flip to the next page." At that time, you may flip to the third page. You may not go back to the second page, but, when you finish with the third page, you may go on to the fourth page. Reminders about when you may and may not flip pages are located at the bottom of each page. When you are finished with the fourth page, please close your packet and turn it over so it is face down. Once everyone is finished, the packets will be collected and the debriefing process will begin.

Participants viewed the photograph of Alex and its accompanying paragraph for 45 seconds and then were instructed flip to the third page and complete the questionnaire. When all participants completed this task, the packets were collected, and debriefing took place. Participants were debriefed orally and given written debriefing information sheets to take with them. Those who were interested in viewing pictures from all eight conditions were permitted to do so, and all participants were thanked for their participation in the study.

Results

Three dependent variables were of interest: attractiveness, competence, and social standing. Attractiveness was operationally defined as a participant's rating on the attractiveness continuum, and possible values ranged from 1 to 7 (1 signifying unattractiveness and 7 signifying attractiveness). Competence and social standing, however, were composites of
multiple personality traits. Competence was operationally defined as the average of the scores of intelligence, honesty, maturity, reliability, and competence; possible values again ranged from 1 to 7, 1 indicating incompetence and 7 indicating competence. Social standing was operationally defined as the average of the scores of outgoingness and popularity, and this construct also ranged from 1 to 7 (1 suggesting low social standing and 7 suggesting high social standing). Mean ratings of each dependent variable by condition and number of participants per condition are listed in Table 2.

A $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ANOVA was used to analyze the effects of manipulations to skin clarity, eye size, and lip size on each dependent variable.

**Attractiveness**

A significant main effect of skin clarity on attractiveness was found; clear skin was rated as significantly more attractive ($M=5.62$) than natural skin ($M=4.94$, $F(1,78)=6.76$, $p<.05$). A marginally significant interaction between skin clarity and eye size on attractiveness was revealed; natural skin was rated as more attractive when eyes were enlarged ($M=5.25$) than when eyes were natural ($M=4.63$, $F(1,78)=3.37$, $p<.10$). Mean ratings of each dependent variable by condition and number of participants per condition are listed in Table 3. Figure 1 is the graphical representation of this interaction effect.

**Competence and social standing**

A significant main effect of eye size on competence was found; natural eyes received significantly higher ratings of competence ($M=4.58$) compared to enlarged eyes ($M=4.22$, $F(1,78)=4.79$, $p<.05$). Similarly, a significant main effect of lip size on competence was revealed; natural lips received significantly higher ratings of competence ($M=4.56$) compared to enlarged lips ($M=4.22$, $F(1,78)=4.94$, $p<.05$). Skin clarity did not predict competence, and
there were also no significant interactions for competence. As for social standing, no significant main effects or interaction effects were found for any of the independent variables.

Discussion

Though past research (Paunonen et al., 1999; Cash et al., 2001; Rhodes et al., 2000; Cunningham et al., 1995) indicates that large eyes and plumped lips are generally considered more attractive than small eyes and thin lips, no main effect of either eye size or lip size on attractiveness ratings was discovered in the present study. However, a main effect of skin clarity on attractiveness was revealed; consistent with one of the hypotheses, clear skin was rated as significantly more attractive than unaltered skin. An interaction effect of skin clarity by eye size on attractiveness was also found; when skin was clear, eye size did not affect ratings of attractiveness. This result seems to indicate that skin clarity is a very important factor in evaluating attractiveness. Only when skin is natural do we focus on secondary characteristics such as eye size.

Results of manipulations on competence were also not in line with expectation. There was no main effect of skin clarity on competence, and both naturally sized eyes and lips were associated with greater competence in comparison to enlarged eyes and lips. In hindsight, these results could have been anticipated; lower ratings of competence logically can be correlated with enlarged eyes due because of the common association between large eyes and youthful innocence (Cunningham et al., 1995). In contrast, small eyes could be expected to correlate positively with higher ratings of intelligence and maturity.

Most surprisingly, I found no significant effects whatsoever for social standing, a variable combining the mean ratings of outgoingness and popularity. I expected large eyes and plumped lips to give off signals of social approachability, exuberance, and openness, but no such effect
was revealed. I had also guessed that clear skin would be correlated with higher social standing since our culture seems to place a great deal of emphasis on the importance of skin clarity, but, again, I found no evidence to support this assumption.

I can think of several design flaws that may have been responsible for these results. First, enlarging the eyes of the female model made her purple eye shadow somewhat more noticeable. Several participants who chose to review photos from all the conditions after completing their trial commented on this. Second, enlarging the eyes of the female model made her eyes appear to point slightly in opposite directions, sort of an "east-west eyes" appearance. Third, plumping the female model's lips inevitably affected her teeth since she posed smiling with teeth exposed. When I successfully enlarged her lips, one or two teeth in the right corner of her mouth (the left side of the picture) became slightly crooked, and I couldn't control this unfortunate side effect with the technology available. This undoubtedly negatively impacted the model's symmetry, hampering the expected positive correlation between plumped lips and attractiveness. Given the importance of symmetry, the seemingly crooked teeth may have had an unintended detrimental effect.

Methodological issues aside, some of my results can be explained with respect to previous research. Large eyes, typically associated with youth and openness, were considered more attractive than eyes of natural size when skin was left unaltered. All mean attractiveness and personality ratings except one were above 4.00, the mathematical average of the positive and negative anchors; this might indicate that the participants judging the attractive young woman may have been under the influence of the halo effect during the assessment of her personality.

To replicate this study, several things would need to be changed. First and foremost, more professional photo manipulation software would be a great help. I would ideally have liked
to use software that would have allowed me to mathematically alter facial features to be closer to or farther away from the average as Rhodes and Tremewan (1996) did. Perhaps asking the female model to pose with a more neutral facial expression would be helpful as well; judgments about the model’s perceived outgoingness and agreeableness would then be based on facial features alone rather than inferred from a big smile. It also might have been interesting to see if the gender of the individual making the judgment about the model affects how he or she will rate her personality; I attempted to do this, but there were not enough males available in the participant pool.

Future research should explore in greater depth how our appearance affects not only how others perceive us, but how we perceive ourselves. A study comparing self-image and judgments about the personalities of others among women hospitalized for body image-related mental disorders (e.g., anorexia, bulimia) and non-clinical populations of women would be fascinating, as would a study comparing the judgments of older men and women on younger men and women and vice versa. For better or for worse, beauty does have an impact on how others feel about and treat us; it’s up to future researchers to further the exploration into all that is beautiful.
Table 1
Experimental conditions created through the manipulation process

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<th>Condition Attributes</th>
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Table 2
Mean Ratings of Perceived Personality Traits by Condition

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<th>Condition Attributes</th>
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Total N 86

Notes. Means are on a 7-point scale, with higher numbers indicating greater possession of the given trait.
* Competence is a variable combining average ratings of maturity, honesty, reliability, competence, and intelligence.
** Social standing is a variable combining average ratings of outgoingness and popularity.
Table 3
Estimated Significant Marginal Means: Attractiveness

a. Skin clarity: \( F(1,78) = 6.76, p < .05 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skin Clarity</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
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<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
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</table>

b. Skin clarity * eye size: \( F(1,78) = 3.37, p < .10 \)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Skin Clarity</th>
<th>Lip Size</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Natural</td>
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<td>0.27</td>
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Table 4
Estimated Significant Marginal Means: Competence

a. Eye size: \( F(1,78) = 4.79, p < .05 \)

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b. Lip size: \( F(1,78) = 4.94, p < .05 \)

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<td>5.623</td>
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Figure 1
Marginally significant interaction effect of skin clarity and eye size on attractiveness

Mean attractiveness rating

---

Clear skin
Natural skin

Eye size

Natural  Enlarged
References


Appendix A

Photographs:
The eight experimental conditions
Photographs:
The eight experimental conditions (continued)
## Scales utilized by participants

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