Pretty Privilege at Work: The Influence of Physical Attractiveness on Hiring Decisions,

Mediated by Perceived Efficacy

By

Madeline J. Chance

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Industrial-

Organizational Psychology

Middle Tennessee State University

December 2023

Thesis Committee:

Alexander T. Jackson, Chair

Mark Frame

**Dedication**

This work is dedicated to all those who have been judged on their outward appearance,

whether it be by their skin color, stature, or attractiveness, before having the opportunity to speak

for themselves.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would, first, like to acknowledge my family, friends, and Luke. Without you all, I would not

even be in this position. Your support and love make me courageous and encourage me to keep

reaching. Next, I would like to acknowledge my cohort. All 11 of you have sharpened me and

helped me grow in more ways than simply academics. Thank you for toughing it out alongside

me on the good days and the bad. To Dr. Jackson, my advisor, thank you for your continuous,

unwavering support. Throughout this process, you have consistently made me feel that I am

conquering and have pushed me to be my best, even on the days I wanted to give up. To my

committee, Dr. Frame, thank you for being committed to this project and always readily

available to jump in headfirst. Finally, to the other I/O faculty members as well as previous

professors, thank you for your support and the time you have spent pouring into me.

**ABSTRACT**

Physical attractiveness impacts many parts of life, including the workplace. This study examined whether physical attractiveness influences hiring and firing decision-making processes, along with whether perceived efficacy mediated the relationships. Participants viewed the resume and photo of an applicant. Participants rated the applicant attractiveness and efficacy and made a hiring decision. Participants then viewed the photo, performance review, and misconduct report of an employee. Participants rated the employee attractiveness and made a firing choice. All photos were either a man or woman and altered to be attractive or unattractive. Perceived efficacy mediated 28.2% of the total relationship between attractiveness, perceived efficacy, and hiring choice. Although the effect was not statistically significant. Attractiveness did not affect firing choice.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Literature Review**

**Introduction**

Physical attractiveness has become a driving force in how decisions are made for much of society. Much of the recent influence of attractiveness can be attributed to the influence of social media and online dating apps (Gao et al., 2021). Judging another individual has been reduced to a seeing a photograph for a moment and either swiping left to reject someone or swiping right to indicate interest in someone.

In today's world, many aspects of life revolve around one's physical appearance and attractiveness. To make themselves more attractive, people are easily influenced to buy the best clothes, have the best skin, have the best hair, lose weight, or gain muscle, *et* (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Etcoff, 2011; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986). An individual's quest to appear attractive can become a lifestyle whereby they consistently exercise, repetitively make trips to salons, or even seek plastic surgery. While some of these behaviors may seem extreme, physical attractiveness does matter in today's society. For example, individuals who are more attractive tend to be more popular, with a higher quantity of friends. Similarly, those who are more physically attractive are regarded higher than those who are less physically attractive. Attractiveness and appearance may matter due to the perception of popularity and importance of social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, etc., or it may be due to a bias that people hold that attractive individuals are perceived as better (Seidman & Miller, 2013).

This focus on attractiveness in today's world not only has an impact for everyday life, but also has implications for other areas in one's life, especially the workplace (Nault et al., 2020). Indeed, attractiveness can impact one's academic success (Talamas et al., 2016), dating life (Rhodes et al., 2005), and health perceptions (Kalick et al., 1998). With the prevalence of social

media, there is a much greater opportunity for applicant screening through social media, such as LinkedIn, Instagram, or TikTok. In fact, many organizations are already using these platforms to aid in the recruitment and selection process (Collmus et al., 2016; Koch et al., 2018). This could lead to bias, based on appearance alone, before even having spoken to the applicant. For instance, if a hiring manager has a list of prospective employees and their resumes, they could easily look them up on social media to gain a different perspective on them. Although by doing this the hiring manager would likely see photographs of the applicant, which may result in a bias based on their attractiveness. They could associate their outward appearance with some notion of work (Nault et al., 2020), thus potentially influencing the outcome of the hiring process. The applicant could get hired due to them being physically attractive, conversely, their application could get passed on due to them being less physically attractive (Commisso & Finkelstein, 2012). Either way would be unfair to not only the applicant at hand, but also the other applicants. This is the issue that I am studying: bias related to hiring decisions based on an applicant's physical attractiveness. Although there is an argument in some rare cases that physical appearance and/or attractiveness could be job relevant, in most cases, hiring an employee should be based on job relevant factors, not based on their physical appearance or attractiveness.

**Definition**

Approximately 50 years ago, Dion, Berscheid, and Walster (1972) introduced the idea that physically attractive individuals are perceived as possessing more positive attributes than less attractive individuals. In other words, those who are more physically attractive tend to be perceived as holding more desirable qualities, such as being more sociable (Feingold, 1992). This idea is termed the attractiveness bias (Dion et al., 1972).

Interpersonal attraction is innate within humans, beginning with evolution and mate selection (Fink & Penton-Voak, 2002; Rhodes, Simmons, & Peters, 2005). As proposed by evolutionary psychologists, individuals would choose mates based on likelihood of survival and reproduction (Rhodes & Zebrowitz, 2002; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1999). Men looked for physical cues in women identifying youthfulness, good health, and fertility for the purpose of reproduction (Fitness et al., 2007). Likewise, women looked for physical cues in men suggesting attributes, such as strength and dominance (Sadalla et al., 1987). Over time, however, the notion of attraction has changed and become much more complex than simply choosing a mate based on survival needs. According to evolutionary theory and social psychology, the psychological mechanisms (e.g., including desire and feelings) have evolved and contributed to the notion of romantic love (Fitness et al., 2007). For many, especially those within individualistic cultures, this pursuit of physical attraction has evolved into dating, love, and forming relationships (Fitness et al., 2007). One exception to this change seems to reside within cultures that use arranged marriages. For these cultures, individuals are still placed together based on some aspect of their physical attractiveness for reproduction and health purposes (Grammer & Thornhill, 1994).

People hold beliefs and attitudes that apply to the general population in terms of both intimate and nonintimate relationships (Fitness et al., 2007). One example of these beliefs and attitudes is a social psychological model called attribution theory. Fletcher (1983) describes attribution theory as the rules or beliefs people use to assign, or attribute, their own and others' behavior. People, sometimes unintentionally, use attributions to help understand the behaviors of others, especially in the context of relationships (Fletcher & Fincham, 1993). For example, if an individual was out to lunch and had a server that was rude, they may attribute the rudeness to the

server being a bad person. However, the individual may not consider that the server could be having a bad day. This is an example of how people use attributions to help explain the behaviors of others. Attribution theory can be used to explain the origin of the attractiveness bias. Specifically, an individual might see someone perform a task well and notice that the individual is, also, attractive. The individual may attribute the person being attractive for the reason they were able to perform the task well. This understanding is where the idea that positive qualities are attributed to physical attractiveness came from. The motives behind the attractiveness bias can be explained by mate selection preferences (Agthe et al., 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016), a generalized preference for the attractive (Eagly et al., 1991), and a belief in the greater instrumentality of attractive individuals (Converse et al., 2016).

Attractiveness has been defined in a variety of ways throughout the years. In the past, the construct has been defined by the desirability of the body and its parts, facial features (e.g., teeth, lips, eyes, etc.), or physical fitness (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986). Attractiveness has also been defined through the lens of self-perception or body image, and whether one finds themselves attractive (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986). Along these lines, researchers have attempted to objectively identify what defines attractiveness. Some have argued that what people find attractive is symmetry, specifically symmetric faces (Fitness et al., 2007). Because attractiveness has been viewed from a variety of viewpoints, we adopt the perceived attractiveness viewpoint as the factor that is important for the biasing effects.

Most studies have operationalized the attractiveness bias by examining differences in ratings on some variable (i.e., hireability) between an attractive individual and a less attractive individual (Frieze et al., 1991). Researchers have manipulated attractiveness by using photographs of the face and/or body, where the candidate is centered in the frame with a neutral

expression (Nault et al., 2020). Researchers have manipulated attractiveness of job candidates by altering the candidates' attire (e.g., glasses, accessories, etc., Johnson et al. 2010), race, and gender (Baker & Allen, 2022). While most studies use photographs as facial stimuli for participants, some have used videos, interviews, self-ratings, or live interactions to assess physical attractiveness (Feingold, 1992). Other researchers have controlled for ethnicity in attractiveness preferences (Talamus et al., 2016). For example, in Talamus et al.'s (2016) study of the attractiveness bias and perceptions of academic performance, the researchers excluded those who reported their ethnicity as different from 'white Caucasian' when calculating the average ratings of their variables. Their reasoning behind this was that the stimuli presented to participants were Caucasian, so judgements of other ethnicities may be more subject to biases (Talamas et al., 2016).

Although much of the research has shown support that the attractiveness bias is beneficial for those who are perceived as attractive (e.g., Dion et al., 1972; Eagly et al., 1991; Feingold, 1982), several researchers have questioned whether attractiveness is actually disadvantageous, especially in the hiring process (e.g.,Heilman & Saruwatari, 1979; Heilman & Stopeck, 1985; Johnson, Podratz, Dipboye, & Gibbons, 2010). This is called the "beauty is beastly" effect (Heilman & Saruwatari, 1979; Heilman & Stopeck, 1985). The beauty is beastly effect occurs when an attractive woman is negatively affected in a work context, due to their attractiveness. Women are affected by this beauty is beastly effect when applying for managerial or traditionally masculine jobs (Heilman & Stopeck, 1985). In some cases, this can have an effect on men as well (Turner et al., 2016). In this case, attractiveness tends to work against female applicants, whereas the attractiveness continues to help male applicants. Specifically, an attractive female could apply for the job of a car mechanic—a job that most perceive as masculine. The beauty is

beastly effect claims that because the woman is attractive, she is less likely to be picked for the job compared to a less attractive female or a man. Heilman and Saruwatari (1979) studied the ratings of qualifications, recommendations for hiring, suggested starting salary, and rankings of hiring preference for men and women seeking both managerial and nonmanagerial jobs. The resulting ratings showed attractiveness worked against females for all ratings (Heilman & Saruwatari, 1979).

Heilman's (1983) Lack of Fit Model explains the beauty is beastly effect as an "incongruity between one's perceived skills and attributes, which are associated with gender, and the perceived nature of the job's requirements" (Heilman & Saruwatari, 1979). With this idea, a poor fit would result in an assumption of failure about the candidate regarding the candidate, whereas a good fit would result in an assumption of success (Johnson et al., 2010). As the lack of fit between the individual and the job requirements increases, the assumption of failure does as well (Heilman, 1983). The support for the findings of the beauty is beastly effect has been inconsistent. Additionally, most of the research on the attractiveness bias shows support for the "what is beautiful is good" effect rather than the "beauty is beastly" effect (Hosoda et al., 2003). Although the beauty is beastly effect beyond the scope of this paper, it is being reviewed to convey what has been studied.

**Theory**

Nault, Pitesa, and Thau (2020) created a framework for the continuous study of the attractiveness advantage. In this framework, the authors describe the attractiveness bias as a two-fold process. The supply-side process occurs before the outcome of the bias, and the demand-side process occur during the outcome. The supply-side process shows attractiveness is correlated to work-related functions, whereas the demand-side is the actions of individuals who

affect work processes, such as deciding the hireability or promotability. The supply-side displays that physical attractiveness, through a mix of social (Coleman, 1988) and human (Coff, 2002) capital, leads to positive competence beliefs about the attractive individual. The authors describe social capital as personality characteristics such as sociability or popularity, as well as one's social connections, networks, and influence. In organizations, social capital promotes information exchange and focuses on guidance, control, and encourages unity (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Human capital is described as characteristics concerning one's intelligence, mental and physical health, as well as one's technical knowledge and skills regarding work performance. The following model (see Appendix A) is offered to aid the illustration of the attractiveness advantage.

The first path indicates that those varying in physical attractiveness also vary in their human and social capital, in other words, their work-relevant resources. Typically, those who are more attractive tend to possess more human capital and a slight advantage in social capital than those who are less attractive (Nault et al., 2020). Path two indicates that social and human have a nature of reinforcing each other, creating a promising cycle of capital for those who obtain and sustain the tools. Path three shows that through this combination of social and human capital, observers have more positive competence beliefs about individuals they perceive to be physically attractive. For example, an observer may think because someone is both attractive and popular, they are, in general, more skilled and capable than another less attractive individual.

On the demand side, path four continues the illustration of the attractiveness advantage through an organizational context. This is typically driven by influential motives within the organization, like maximizing future performance or from employee's personal motives. This biased perception of physical attractiveness can have implications for work-related decision

making, including unfair treatment of employees regarding compensation, performance evaluations, or other work-related outcomes (Heilman & Stopeck, 1985; Hosoda et al., 2003).When there is a preference for attractive individuals in the workplace path five shows that it can lead to statistical discrimination, which is the belief that attractive people are more competent and productive due are mean differences in some outcome (e.g., performance ratings). Statistical discrimination can lead to the formation of socioeconomic achievement gaps (Ng et al., 2005). Different from paths 2, 3, 4 and 5, path 7 shows a generalized preference for the attractive. This preference leads to path 8, which shows a taste-based discrimination, where the physically attractive are viewed positively regardless of the situation. Both organizational (path 6) and generalized contexts (path 9) lead to an attractiveness advantage or an attractiveness disadvantage. Whether the bias leads to an advantage or a disadvantage depends on the decision maker and their motives or preferences.

The practical implication of this viewpoint is that decision makers' favoritism of attractive workers establish discrimination through positive competence beliefs, which needs to be regulated to alleviate unfair treatment. Although these implications and the potential solutions for them are not within the scope of this paper, they are included to review the literature and attractiveness bias framework.

**History/When & Where**

The existence of an attractiveness bias has been studied for several decades in a variety of settings. The bias emerges in many elements of life, including success in everyday social interactions (Mobius & Rosenblat, 2006; Rhodes et al., 2005; Rowe, et al., 1987), academia (Clifford & Walster, 1973; Ritts, Patterson, & Tubbs, 1992; Shahani et al., 1993), health and wellness (Hadjistavropulos et al, 1990; Kalick et al., 1998), the workplace (Dipboye, Arvey, &

Terpstra, 1977; Heilman & Saruwarti, 1979; Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003), and criminal and legal situations (Ahola et al., 2009; Frevert & Walker, 2014; Wiley, 1995). The bias between attractive and unattractive individuals most frequently manifests itself as preferential treatment towards the attractive.

Work is where we spend a large majority of our time and is somewhere that has the power to greatly affect our lives, so it is no surprise that the attractiveness bias plays a role in the workplace. Selection and hiring are areas of work where we see the bias repeatedly occur. Attractive job applicants tend to be perceived as more qualified for jobs (Quereshi & Kay, 1986), and seem to obtain higher recommendations (Gilmore et al., 1986). For example, Dipboye et al. (1975) asked college students and professionals to rate the suitability of applicants for a managerial position based on a résumé including the applicant's sex, physical attractiveness, and scholastic standing. The results revealed that participants rated those physically attractive applicants as more suitable for the manager position and rated those unattractive applicants negatively. In a similar study, Grant & Mizzi (2014) explored the impact of body weight in hiring through the mediators of obesity and physical attractiveness bias on employability ratings. The results showed that overweight applicants were rated lower on the physical attractiveness and received lower overall employability ratings.

Earning a higher wage can shape one's life outcome. Compensation is another area where we see physical attractiveness leads to more positive outcomes. Frieze, Olson & Russell (1991) measured whether physical attractiveness is related to one's salary, and whether the impact is greater at the time of hiring or later in one's career. In this study, they used sex of the candidate, type of job, and height and weight to predict salary effects. From this, they found that there were different results for men and women. For men, facial attractiveness had a significant positive

effect on a male's inflation-adjusted starting salary, but there was a small non-significant effect for women. Although, attractiveness had a significant positive effect on women's later salaries. Indeed, attractive workers earn 10-15% more than less-attractive workers (Hamermesh (2011). Thus, those who are attractive and earning higher wages than less attractive individuals, are causing an economically significant gap in earning in the labor market (Hamermesh, 2011).

The attractiveness bias can also affect performance ratings of employees. Heilman & Stopeck (1985) studied whether physical attractiveness affects the performance evaluations and subsequent personnel recommendations for men and women holding managerial and non-managerial positions. The participants were asked to evaluate employees based on performance data, then recommend the appropriate personnel actions for four employees whom each worked in a different department. Attractiveness generally benefited females in non-managerial positions but negatively impacted the likelihood of obtaining a managerial position. For males, the participants made no differentiation between the attractive and unattractive stimuli, regardless of job type. Hence, the attractiveness bias did not seem to affect males. The findings from this study extend the research of the double-edged reality of attractiveness for women. It can be limiting for women during employment decisions but can help them prevail during performance evaluations and rewards compensation. In a replication study, Drogosz & Levy (1996) attempted to extend Heilman & Stopeck's (1985) study. Drogosz & Levy (1996) reviewed the effects of appearance, gender, and job-type on performance-based decisions and found a main effect of attractiveness. The results showed that, regardless of job type, more attractive employees were rated higher.

The literature has repeatedly questioned whether job type is a moderator of the relationship between attractiveness and some outcome (e.g., the attractiveness bias). Pingitore et

al. (1994) examined the moderating effect of public contact on the relationship with the applicant's weight and a hiring decision. They hypothesized that because physical appearance can be argued as relevant for jobs in the public eye, discrimination would be greater for those jobs with public contact. Findings revealed that applicant weight (i.e., physical appearance) was the strongest predictor of a hiring decision. However, the public contact of a job (face-to-face versus telephone sales) did not impact the bias. Similarly, Grant & Mizzi (2014) used job type as a moderator to study whether weight bias may be greater for certain jobs, such as those that are physical or visible, on the basis that overweight individuals are perceived as less fit and less attractive. The results indicated that there were significant effects for applicant weight and job type, but the hypothesized interaction was not significant. The overweight applicant had low employability ratings regardless of job type.

Beyond the workplace, the attractiveness bias has also been studied in academic settings (Clifford & Walster, 1973; Ritts, Patterson, & Tubbs, 1992; Shahani et al., 1993). In a meta-analytic review, Ritts et al. (1992) showed that attractive students were judged more positively than less attractive students regarding several aspects (e.g., intelligence, academic potential, grades, and social skills). Because of this bias, attractive students receive higher performance reviews resulting in even more benefits that carry on throughout students' lives (Frevert & Walker, 2014; Jaeger, 2011). Shahani et al. (1993) found that attractiveness was significantly correlated with admission interview scores and the admissions decision. Also, attractiveness was statistically significantly correlated with intended major; attractiveness was higher for those who intended to major in liberal arts. This attractiveness bias is bidirectional, as well: as teachers use it to judge students, students use it to judge teachers. Brosious & Smith (1990) found a significant main effect among seventh graders evaluating their teachers' performance.

Furthermore, within higher education, it has been found that college student's perception of professor attractiveness was highly correlated with their attribution of expertise, resulting in higher performance evaluations of their professors (Liu et al., 2013). Similarly, college students who perceive their professors as attractive correlate the professor's quality (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2007).

The attractiveness bias also manifests in social interactions. Mulford et al. (1998) found that self-ratings of subject's attractiveness were positively correlated with the probability to cooperate with those the participants ranked as highly attractive. In general, if someone perceives another person to be attractive, then they are more likely to cooperate with that person. Along with this the person expects that attractive person to be cooperative as well. Other studies have produced similar results regarding the functions of everyday social exchange. In an experimental lab study that simulated the workplace for participants, Mobius & Rosenblat (2006) found that attractiveness of the employee, which was piloted beforehand, influenced their productivity estimates (e.g., completing tasks) for both workers and employers. The authors also found that physically attractive workers were substantially more confident, and 15 to 20% of the attractiveness bias is conveyed through confidence (Mobius & Rosenblat, 2006).

Popularity has been another social variable that is affected by the attractiveness bias (Nault et al., 2020). Walster et al., 1966 conducted a study to see whether an individual's romantic aspirations are influenced by the same factors that affect one's aspirations in other areas. They tested this through a fake dance set up, where participants filled out a questionnaire with expectations to be set up with individuals who have the same expressed interests as themselves. The results from their study revealed a statistically significant positive correlation

between physical attractiveness and popularity for both men and women (Walster et al., 1966). In a similar study, Guise, Pollans & Turkat (1982) found that physically attractive individuals were perceived as more socially skilled than less attractive individuals.

Beyond daily social interactions, the attractiveness bias also transpires within dating and sexual behaviors (Adams, 1977; Buss, 2003; Rhodes et al., 2005). It has been shown that both men and women prioritize physical attractiveness within short-term mating (Buss, 2016). Rhodes et al. (2005) hypothesized that if attractiveness was an important cue for mate choice, then attractive individuals should have greater mating success. They found that attractive males had significantly more success with short-term mating, with no cost to their long-term success, whereas women had more long-term mating success. Overall, they found that attractiveness enhanced mating success for both men and women, suggesting that the attractiveness bias occurs in mate selection. Similarly, Feingold's (1990) meta-analysis on the influence of physical attractiveness on mate selection showed that men consistently selected mates based on attractiveness, but women did not.

Researchers have also reviewed the relationship between physical attractiveness and health and overall wellness. Kalick et al. (1998) found that participants attributed higher health to the attractive stimuli. Additionally, when controlling for attractiveness, the correlation between perceived health and actual health increased (Kalick et al., 1998). Specifically, if someone thinks another individual is attractive, they may believe the person to have better health than someone who they think is less attractive. This finding suggests that attractiveness suppresses the reality of one's actual health (Frevert, 2014). Along with this finding, Hadjistavropoulos et al. (1990) found that physicians were stereotyping physically attractive patients as healthy and those who were physically unattractive as less healthy. This implication affected those attractive individuals

worse—if an attractive patient complained about pain, then physicians viewed this less seriously than the complaints from unattractive patients (Hadjistavropoulos et al., 1990). Similarly, from a national sample, Umberson and Hughes (1987) studied the effects of attractiveness on actual mental health and found that an individual's attractiveness is significantly connected to one's psychological well-being, as rated by the patient.

Physical attractiveness has a role within the criminal justice system too (Wiley, 1995). Many researchers have studied whether attractiveness impacts prison sentences. Stewart (1980) found that defendants perceived as unattractive receive longer prison sentences. More recently, when studying the effects of gender and facial characteristics of criminal offenders' attributions of crime relevant traits, Ahola et al. (2009) found that there was no evidence for the general effects of attractiveness. When it comes to winning a legal case, however, Kulka & Kessler (1978) found that the physical attractiveness of plaintiffs and defendants influenced jury member judgements in a mock trial study. A physical attractiveness bias was found for both the direction of the subject verdicts (plaintiff vs. defendant), as well as the size of the penalty given to the plaintiff. The beneficiary of the bias was typically the individual who was more physically attractive, regardless of their position in the trial. The authors believe that the relationship was likely mediated by the seriousness of the charge itself.

**Mediator**

Self-efficacy is the perceived belief that one is competent enough and able to successfully complete what is intended (Bandura & Wessels, 1994). Thus, the perceived efficacy of another individual is the belief that the individual is competent enough to complete whatever is asked of them. In the workplace, perceived efficacy is the belief that an employee can successfully perform and complete the tasks asked of them. An organization's selection system is typically

designed to detect someone's competence, so the organization can hire the best fit for the role (Dipboye, 2018). Regarding the attractiveness bias, the perceived attractiveness of an individual will influence the perceived efficacy of an individual, which leads to a higher likelihood of being hired. The reasoning behind this stems from Nault et al., (2020), statistical discrimination occurs when employers believe that attractive individuals are more competent, thus more preferred. In other words, if an individual is more attractive, they are perceived to be more competent at work. More specifically, this could look like getting their work done without guidance, completing tasks on time, or reaching higher performance goals.

**Hypotheses and Research Question**

The attractiveness bias has been studied and manipulated in a variety of settings with diverse variables and outcomes. Studies have repeatedly shown that physical attractiveness influences several entities of social and human capital, including confidence, social skills, and grades (Nault et al., 2020). However, one limitation of previous research is that it is outdated, so the effect of physical attractiveness on perceived efficacy of a job applicant has yet to be studied. Therefore, I suggest that physical attractiveness will influence an employer's perceived efficacy of an applicant, which in turn will affect the hiring decision. Furthermore, researchers have yet to examine the attractiveness bias in a termination context. Therefore, I explore whether the attractiveness bias will influence termination decisions.

> *Hypothesis 1: Physical attractiveness positively influences hiring choice.*
>
> *Hypothesis 2: Physical attractiveness positively influences perceived efficacy.*
>
> *Hypothesis 3: Perceived efficacy positively influences hiring choice.*
>
> *Hypothesis 4: Perceived efficacy will mediate the relationship between physical attractiveness and hiring choice.*

*Research Question: Does physical attractiveness negatively influence termination*

*choices?*

**Figure 1.** Hypotheses model
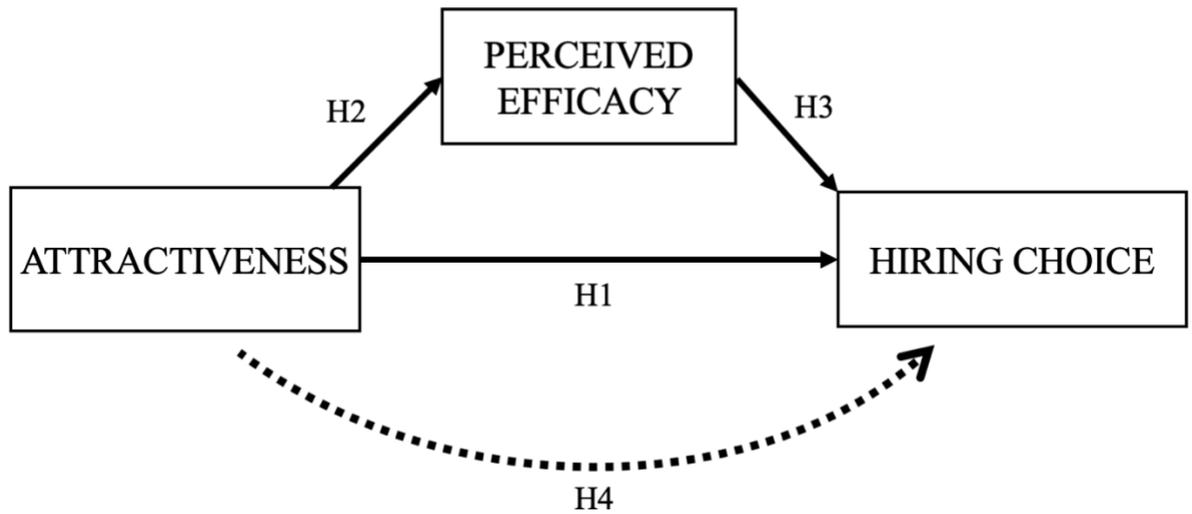


*Note.* Figure 1 displays the hypothesized model for hypotheses 1-4 only.

**Methods**

**Participants**

Using the G*Power software, I determined that 130 participants were needed for a medium size effect. Participants were collected using the software Prolific (www.prolific.com) [2023]. Each participant was paid $2.00, based on the Prolific cost calculator. To be eligible to participate, participants must have had **experience in making hiring decisions.** Prior to gathering the full sample, this study was piloted with a group of 10 participants to ensure the survey as well as the manipulation worked as intended.

**Materials**

*Decision Task*

In this study, the attractiveness bias was operationalized as differences in hiring and termination between an attractive individual and a less attractive individual. Therefore, participants were asked to make hiring choices for job applicants and termination choices for employees who engaged in misconduct that is ambiguous regarding whether it is a terminable offense.

*Hiring Choice*

The participants were asked to make a sequence of hiring decisions regarding one applicant. Participants were presented with the applicant's resume and photograph. They were asked to rate their perceived efficacy of the applicant, along with a series of questions and whether they would like to hire them. The participants responded using yes or no response choices. Additionally, the participant was asked to rate their confidence in this decision (0-100) for exploratory purposes.

While the participant was making their hiring decision, they were presented with the applicant's resume (Appendix B) and the photograph for their corresponding condition. The resume was curated by the researcher, and it was the same resume for each of the conditions. Because the participant will only be seeing one applicant, there is only a need for one resume.

*Efficacy Ratings*

To measure the participants' perceived efficacy of the applicants, we used a modified version of the Pepe et al. (2010) Work Self-Efficacy Scale. The modified scale focuses on the participant's perception of another's work efficacy. This modified version of the scale was referred to as the Perceived Work Efficacy Scale (PWES). The only modification of this scale involves changing the stem of the scale. In the original scale, the stem read "Thinking of future work, how well can *you*..." and asked participants to respond to different work-related items. However, the modified version said, "Thinking of future work, how well can *the applicant...*". Changing the pronoun "you" to "the applicant," pivots the focus of perceived self-efficacy towards that of another's efficacy.

There were 10 items on the PWES. For each item, the participants were asked to evaluate how capable they felt the applicant could carry out the described action or behavior on a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (*Not well at all*) to 5 (*Very well*). Example items include, "…finish assigned work" or "…work with people of diverse experiences and ages" (Pepe et al., 2010). For each subscale, a high score means that the participant perceives high efficacy in the applicant. The modified PWES can be found in Appendix C. The internal consistency reliability of the PWES was $\alpha = .94$. It should be noted that the original WSES's Cronbach Alpha coefficients were .85 for the first factor and .84 for the second.

*Termination Choice*

After the participant evaluated their perceived efficacy of the applicant and made the hiring decision, they were informed that a different employee had engaged in misconduct. Participants were given a vague description of misconduct that the individual has engaged in (Appendix E), a photograph of the employee, and their performance ratings from the previous quarter (Appendix F). Participants were, then, asked to rate the employee on a series of questions and whether they would like to terminate them (yes or no). The participant was also asked to rate their confidence in this decision (0-100). The description and question were purposefully ambiguous.

*Attractiveness Manipulation*

To determine whether the attractiveness bias is present in hiring and termination decisions, participants were randomly assigned to view applicant photos that are either attractive or unattractive. Photographs (Appendix G) used to represent the attractive and unattractive conditions were gathered from Canvas. Two photos were obtained: one white male and one white female. Each photo was manipulated using the app Facetune to create a photograph for the unattractive condition. Using Facetune, one of the eyes of the individual's face was manipulated. Specifically, the eye position on the face of the individual was lowered giving them unsymmetrical features (Lightricks Ltd., 2023). Based on the pilot test, the manipulations were noticeable, but slight enough so that the participants could not detect obvious influence. However, it was obvious enough to get a reaction. Manipulating the photograph in that way made the face unsymmetrical, thus less attractive (Rhodes et al., 2005).

The photographs used during this were piloted beforehand to ensure each photograph is appropriately matched to the proper attractiveness condition. Specifically, all the photographs

were presented to 10 graduate students who were asked to rate the attractiveness of the individual in each photo. They rated attractiveness of the photographs using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very unattractive) to 5 (very attractive). During this stage, the alterations made to the photographs were deemed satisfactory for the desired outcome, which is unattractiveness.

### *Manipulation Check*

To determine that the manipulation of the photographs worked as intended, we asked the participants to rate the attractiveness of the photograph in their assigned condition using Nedelec and Beavers' (2011) scale, which uses a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*very unattractive*) to 5 (*very attractive*). We asked participants this after they made the hiring decision, rated the applicant on perceived efficacy, and made the termination decision.

### *Demographic Questions*

For the present study, participants were asked demographic questions regarding their gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, industry, whether they work remotely or face to face, how many years of hiring and/or recruiting experience.

### **Procedure**

Participants were recruited from Prolific. The recruitment information contained the link to participate in the study. Only participants who met the inclusion requirements for the study (e.g., fluent in English, were 18 years or older and had experience making hiring decisions or selecting individuals to be a part of a team or group) were able to sign up for the study on Prolific. Upon entering Prolific, participants were presented with a brief overview of the purpose of the study, the compensation, and the conditions for participation. If participants chose to move forward and complete the study, they were presented with the study Qualtrics link**.**

After consenting to participate, participants were presented with a brief case study explaining their role as the hiring manager and the decisions they would be making. Participants were randomly assigned to either the attractive or the unattractive condition and randomly assigned to the man or woman condition. After viewing the case study information, participants were presented with the applicant information and photograph and asked to rate the applicant's attractiveness and rate them using the PWES. The participant was, then, asked to rate the applicant on a series of questions and whether they wanted to hire them.

Next, participants were informed that another employee was under termination review for disciplinary reasons. A brief description of a misconduct incident with the employee, a photograph and performance evaluation were presented, and participants were asked whether they would terminate the employee. Once the participant has made their decisions, they were prompted with demographic questions to gather data on the individual. Finally, the participant was debriefed.

**Results**

**Manipulation Check**

There was an even split of participants in each condition, with 65 in the attractive condition and 65 in the unattractive condition. An ANOVA was conducted to ensure that manipulation of the photographs for the unattractive condition worked as intended. Specifically, the main effect of condition on attractiveness ratings was tested. The results show that the overall model was statistically significant ($F(3, 126) = 15.07$, $p < .001$). Those assigned to the attractive condition ($M = 4.15$, $SE = .12$) rated the applicant as more attractive than the unattractive condition ($M = 3.1$, $SE = .12$). The manipulation worked as intended.

**Test of Hypotheses**

An initial sample of 146 participants was gathered using Prolific. The data were cleaned within Jamovi to ensure that data was producing representative and accurate results (The jamovi project, 2023). Thirteen participants were removed due to them not giving their full consent to participate in the study, and three were removed for having incomplete answers. This left the study with 130 participants. Mean, standard deviations, and correlations are displayed in Table 1.
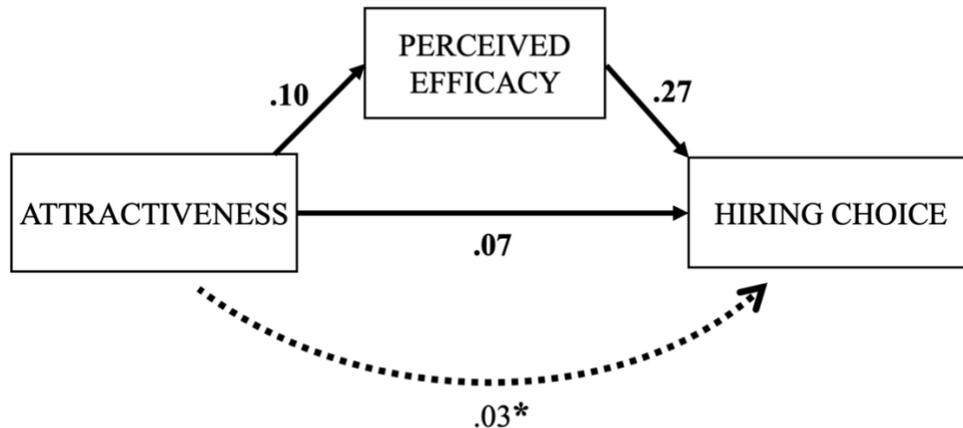
Table 1

*Intercorrelations of variables*

|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Attractiveness Condition | | | | | | |
| 2. Gender Condition | .25* | | | | | |
| 3. Attractiveness (Hiring) | .51* | .15 | | | | |
| 4. Perceived Efficacy Rating | < .01 | -.03 | .19* | | | |
| 5. Hiring Choice | .10 | -.03 | .24* | .41* | | |
| 6. Attractiveness (Termination) | .42* | -.06 | .63* | .09 | .16 | |
| 7. Termination Choice | < .01 | .05 | -.17 | -.01 | < .01 | -.12 |

*Note.* * $p < .05$.

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 were tested with Jamovi, utilizing the medmod module (Selker, 2017). Hypothesis 1 stated that hiring choice was positively influenced by physical attractiveness. Results showed that the direct effect of attractiveness on hiring choice was statistically significant, estimate = .07, $z$ = -2.19, $p$ = .028. Candidates who were rated as more attractive were more likely to be hired. Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported. Hypothesis 2 stated that perceived efficacy was positively influenced by physical attractiveness. Results showed that the effect of attractiveness on perceived efficacy was statistically significant, estimate .10, $z$ = 2.11, $p$ = .035. Thus, attractiveness does have an effect on perceived efficacy and hypothesis 2 was supported. Hypothesis 3 stated that hiring choice was positively influenced by perceived efficacy. Results showed that the effect of perceived efficacy on hiring choice was statistically significant, estimate = .27, $z$ = 4.73, $p$ < .001. Thus, perceived efficacy does have an effect on hiring choice, and hypothesis 3 was supported. Hypothesis 4 stated that perceived efficacy would mediate the relationship between physical attractiveness and hiring choice. Results showed that the indirect effect was not statistically significant, estimate = .03, $z$ = 1.93, $p$ = .054. However,

the indirect effect indicated that perceived efficacy explained 28.2% of the total relationship

between attractiveness, perceived efficacy, and hiring choice. While the effect was not

statistically significant, the effect itself was quite large. Despite this, perceived efficacy does not

significantly mediate the relationship between attractiveness and hiring choice, and hypothesis 4

was not supported. To conclude, hypotheses 1,2, and 3 were supported and statistically

significant, while hypothesis 4 was not supported (Figure 1).

**Figure 2.** Mediation model



*Note.* Bolded values are significant at $p < .05$. * indicates $p = .054$.

Correlations were used to help answer the research question of whether physical

attractiveness had a negative effect on termination choice. As seen in Table 1, the relationship

between attractiveness and firing choice was not significant. Therefore, it seems that

attractiveness does not bias termination decisions in the same way as hiring decisions.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine whether physical attractiveness influenced hiring decisions, as well as whether perceived efficacy mediated this relationship. The results suggest that both physical attractiveness and perceived efficacy are positively related to hiring choice, but perceived efficacy did not mediate the relationship between attractiveness and hiring choice. These results confirm previous research that the attractiveness plays a role in the hiring process (Johnson et al., 2010). Decisions that potentially affect peoples' lives are being made based on how they are perceived from the outside. Whether the subject is perceived as physically attractive, or not, can determine if they are rated as competent. And not only this, but an applicant's attractiveness also can influence the decision processes of the individual making the hiring evaluation.

In recent years, the attractiveness bias has become even larger due to the frequent use of social media for both personal and business reasons (Seidman & Miller, 2013). The access to applicants' social media, such as their LinkedIn page, turns curiosity of someone into a reality whereby hiring managers can explore their page and their pictures. The bias likely happens before the hiring manager even meets the applicant. This issue is detrimental because there is almost nothing the applicant can do about it; the hiring decision is influenced the bias.

A question asked in this study was whether termination decisions are affected by attractiveness. It could be argued that because attractiveness affects various aspects of work, such as hiring, pay, and performance, that it would affect termination as well. Previous research has not extensively explored this question, but results from this study show that there is no relationship between the two variables. Although the attractiveness bias affects hiring, it is comforting to know that it did not have a significant effect on termination. This is likely due to

managers getting to know employees beyond their physical exterior, or rather their attractiveness. The bias may fade and not have as strong an effect once managers get to know the individual. However, the lack of an effect could be due to certain limitations that will be discussed further.

**Practical Implications**

This study contributes to multiple facets of the attractiveness bias literature. These findings reveal that one's physical attractiveness can affect whether they are hired or not. This has a direct effect on employees and organizations everywhere. Furthermore, the finding that one's perceived efficacy of someone also has an effect on hiring adds to this issue. These biases, combined or separate, are a disadvantage to both the individual and the workplace. While we cannot remove or eliminate the bias, recruiters and hiring managers can be made aware of it. Accordingly, organizations should take steps to reduce the risk of the bias impacting hiring decisions. For example, an organization can adopt a hiring policy whereby only the text-based content is reviewed from social media pages. This study helps bring awareness to the ongoing attractive bias that occurs in our world and in our workplaces. Managers can become more self-aware and check themselves of their biases. Additionally, they can work to have unbiased selection procedures.

**Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions**

There are many strengths of this study. First, the study was designed to be realistic. It was intended to simulate real situations, such as screening applicant profiles via LinkedIn. The manipulations worked as intended, and the scenarios used in the study were convincing enough that participants were able to make decisions they felt confident about. This study was also among the first to look at the effect attractiveness has on termination decisions. Additionally,

there did not seem to be confusion about the decision tasks and participants were able to make these decisions with ease. This is supported by their self-report of confidence in their decisions.

There are a few limitations within this study. First, due to the study being a self-report measure, participants could have rushed, lied about their answers, or chosen randomly. Quality control items at the end of the survey asked participants to indicate whether their data should be omitted for any of these reasons. All participants who indicated their data should be removed were removed. Additionally, because this study was regarding attractiveness and bias, the social desirability bias may have played a part in participant answers. For instance, participants may not have been as willing to terminate the unattractive employees due to how they might be judged for their decisions. However, the results showed variability in hiring and firing choices suggesting this is not the case.

Another limitation is that the photographs used on resumes for hiring, only included white applicants. Previous research has shown that we are more likely to favor those that look similar to us (Rhodes et al., 2005). Thus, results including those from diverse races may have resulted in a different outcome. Participant demographics showed that most participants were Caucasian (80% of participants) and straight or heterosexual (81%). Because of these results, the effects may not be as generalizable. Future studies should explore using other races as the subjects.

An additional limitation is that the termination description may have been too vague, and the scenario may have been too weak. It is worth noting, however, that the offense was intentionally ambiguous to allow for the bias to take effect. If the situation was too strong, it could overcome the bias. Given the ambiguity and opportunity for bias to come into play, this may suggest the bias is not present or as strong in termination decisions. Furthermore,

participants may have felt like they did not have enough information to make as big a decision as firing someone. Along with this, a criterion for participation in this study was hiring experience, but not firing experience. Not having a requirement of firing experience may have led to these results.

Future research should explore the attractiveness bias in hiring and termination choices in other occupations. This study used marketing as the occupation of the job in the scenario, which is typically a hands-on, in-person job that tends to be at a corporate level. Other research could study hiring and attractiveness with perceived efficacy with remote jobs or other "behind-the-scenes" careers, such as computer analysts, information technology professionals, or audio and visual personnel. Conversely, future studies could investigate fields where interaction with customers is necessary and impactful, including sales representatives, servers, or attendants.

Because previous research and literature show that being attracted to someone is subjective other studies could explore whether sexual orientation moderates the relationship between physical attractiveness and hiring or perceived efficacy. It can be inferred that who one is attracted to, or their sexual orientation, would have an effect on the decisions they are making. Thus, studying whether sexual orientation is a moderator between physical attractiveness and hiring or perceived efficacy would help us make more informed decisions for the workplace.

The photographs used for the study were intentionally, severely edited for the unattractive conditions. The photographs were edited so that participants would notice the deformities, however a more subtle manipulation may be better for future studies. Artificial intelligence programs could even be used in further studies to edit, manipulate, or create photographs for attractive and unattractive subjects.

Although it is impossible to rid society of bias, there are various ways future studies could aim at de-biasing or fixing these effects of the attractiveness bias. Training employees and hiring managers on recognition of bias would help bring awareness to the topic as well as the biases we take part in. Additionally, awareness of résumés and how to curate them (e.g., no pictures) could be shared through seminars, trainings, and websites such as LinkedIn, SHRM, and Indeed. Interventions and prevention methods ought to be explored in order to minimize or even eliminate the unfairness of the bias.

**Conclusion**

This study investigated the impact of physical attractiveness on hiring decisions, while exploring whether perceived efficacy mediated the relationship. The results indicated a positive correlation among physical attractiveness, perceived efficacy, and hiring choices. Additionally, results showed that perceived efficacy did not mediate the relationship between attractiveness and hiring choice ($p = .054$). Although perceived efficacy did account for 28.2% of the total relationship between attractiveness, perceived efficacy, and hiring choice. This study confirmed existing research on the role attractiveness plays in the hiring process. For exploratory purposes, this study also examined the influence of attractiveness on firing decisions, finding no significant relationship.

This study makes a unique contribution to the literature on the attractiveness bias, emphasizing its effect on hiring outcomes. Bias, influenced by attractiveness and perceived efficacy, impact hiring and can be disadvantageous to both applicants and the workplace. This is especially important today due to the overwhelming amount of social media presence utilized for both social and professional purposes. Hiring managers and selection teams are encouraged to increase self-awareness with debiasing trainings to help ensure fair selection procedures.

Strengths of the study include the realistic design for participants, successful manipulations, and explorations on the attractiveness bias research with perceived efficacy and termination decisions. Although, limitations include a potential for self-report bias, a lack in diversity in applicants, and the vague termination scenario. Future researchers are recommended to explore the attractiveness bias across various occupations, such as blue-collar positions or the service industry. Additionally, future research should address other demographic factors, such as sexual orientation, and employing other photo manipulations. To help mitigate this bias and its

impact on hiring, organizations should employ interventions, training, and other preventative methods. After all, while beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, hiring choices should be made without bias towards those gifted with greater attractiveness.

**REFERENCES**

Adler, P. S., & Kwon, S. W. (2002). Social capital: Prospects for a new concept. *Academy of management review*, *27*(1), 17-40.

Adams, G. R. (1977). Physical attractiveness research. *Human development*, *20*(4), 217-239.

Ahola, A. S., Christianson, S. Å., & Hellström, Å. (2009). Justice needs a blindfold: Effects of gender and attractiveness on prison sentences and attributions of personal characteristics in a judicial process. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, *16*(sup1), S90-S100.

Agthe, M., Spörrle, M., & Försterling, F. (2008). Success attributions and more: Multidimensional extensions of the sexual attribution bias to failure attributions, social emotions, and the desire for social interaction. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *34*(12), 1627-1638.

Agthe, M., Spörrle, M., & Maner, J. K. (2010). Don't hate me because I'm beautiful: Anti-attractiveness bias in organizational evaluation and decision making. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 46(6), 1151-1154.

Agthe, M., Spörrle, M., Frey, D., & Maner, J. K. (2014). Looking up versus looking down: Attractiveness-based organizational biases are moderated by social comparison direction. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *44*(1), 40-45.

Agthe, M., Strobel, M., Spörrle, M., Pfundmair, M., & Maner, J. K. (2016). On the borders of harmful and helpful beauty biases: The biasing effects of physical attractiveness depend on sex and ethnicity. *Evolutionary Psychology*, *14*(2), 1474704916653968.

Baker, G., & Allen, M. S. (2022). Perceptions of candidate strength in job recruitment: Does candidate race moderate the attractiveness bias in White women? International Journal of Selection and Assessment.

Bandura, A., & Wessels, S. (1994). *Self-efficacy* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81).

Bonds-Raacke, J., & Raacke, J. D. (2007). The relationship between physical attractiveness of

professors and students' ratings of professor quality. *Journal of Psychiatry, Psychology*

*and Mental Health*, *1*(2), 1-7.

Brosious, J. A., & Smith, L. R. (1990). The Impact of Teachers' Attractiveness and Gender on

Students' Perception of the Teachers' Ability.

Buss, D. M. (2016). *The evolution of desire: Strategies of human mating*. Hachette UK.

Clifford, M. M., & Walster, E. (1973). The effect of physical attractiveness on teacher

expectations. Sociology of education, 248-258.

Coff, R. W. (2002). Human capital, shared expertise, and the likelihood of impasse in corporate

acquisitions. *Journal of Management*, *28*(1), 107-128.

Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. American journal of

sociology, 94, S95-S120.

Collmus, A. B., Armstrong, M. B., & Landers, R. N. (2016). Game-thinking within social media

to recruit and select job candidates. *Social media in employee selection and recruitment:*

*Theory, practice, and current challenges*, 103-124.

Commisso, M., & Finkelstein, L. (2012). Physical attractiveness bias in employee

termination. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *42*(12), 2968-2987.

Converse, P. D., Thackray, M., Piccone, K., Sudduth, M. M., Tocci, M. C., & Miloslavic, S. A.

(2016). Integrating self-control with physical attractiveness and cognitive ability to

examine pathways to career success. Journal of Occupational and Organizational

Psychology, 89(1), 73-91.

Dion, K., Berscheid, E., & Walster, E. (1972). What is beautiful is good. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *24*(3), 285.

Dipboye, R. L. (2018). Principles of Employee Selection. In *The Emerald Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (pp. 625-673). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Dipboye, R. L., Fromkin, H. L., & Wiback, K. (1975). Relative importance of applicant sex, attractiveness, and scholastic standing in evaluation of job applicant resumes. Journal of Applied Psychology, 60(1), 39.

Dipboye, R. L., Arvey, R. D., & Terpstra, D. E. (1977). Sex and physical attractiveness of raters and applicants as determinants of resume evaluations. Journal of Applied Psychology, 62(3), 288.

Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2017). Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Computers in human behavior*, *68*, 1-7.

Drogosz, L. M., & Levy, P. E. (1996). Another look at the effects of appearance, gender, and job type on performance-based decisions. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 20(3), 437-445.

Eagly, A. H., Ashmore, R. D., Makhijani, M. G., & Longo, L. C. (1991). What is beautiful is good, but…: A meta-analytic review of research on the physical attractiveness stereotype. *Psychological bulletin*, *110*(1), 109.

Etcoff, N. (2011). *Survival of the prettiest: The science of beauty*. Anchor.

Feingold, A. (1990). Gender differences in effects of physical attractiveness on romantic attraction: A comparison across five research paradigms. *Journal of Personality and social psychology*, *59*(5), 981.

Feingold, A. (1992). Good-looking people are not what we think. *Psychological bulletin*, *111*(2), 304.

Fink, B., & Penton-Voak, I. (2002). Evolutionary psychology of facial attractiveness. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 11(5), 154-158.

Fitness, J., Fletcher, G., & Overall, N. (2007). In M. A. Hogg & J. Cooper (Eds.), The sage handbook of social psychology: Concise student edition (pp. 219–240). essay, SAGE.

Fletcher, G. J. (1983). The Analysis of Verbal Explanations for Marital Separation: Implications for Attribution Theory 1. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *13*(3), 245-258.

Fletcher, G. J., & Fincham, F. D. (1993). Cognition in close relationships. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, *22*, 69-69.

Fox, J., & Weisberg, S. (2020). *car: Companion to Applied Regression*. [R package]. Retrieved from https://cran.r-project.org/package=car.

Frevert, T. K., & Walker, L. S. (2014). Physical attractiveness and social status. Sociology Compass, 8(3), 313-323.

Frieze, I. H., Olson, J. E., & Russell, J. (1991). Attractiveness and income for men and women in management 1. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 21(13), 1039-1057.

Gao, P., Wang, X., Chen, H., Dai, W., & Ling, H. (2021). What is beautiful is not always good: Influence of machine learning-derived photo attractiveness on intention to initiate social interactions in mobile dating applications. *Connection Science*, *33*(2), 321-340.

Gilmore, D. C., Beehr, T. A., & Love, K. G. (1986). Effects of applicant sex, applicant physical attractiveness, type of rater and type of job on interview decisions. Journal of occupational psychology, 59(2), 103-109.

Grammer, K., & Thornhill, R. (1994). Human (Homo sapiens) facial attractiveness and sexual selection: the role of symmetry and averageness. Journal of comparative psychology, 108(3), 233.

Grant, S., & Mizzi, T. (2014). Body weight bias in hiring decisions: Identifying explanatory mechanisms. Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal, 42(3), 353-370.

Guise, B. J., Pollans, C. H., & Turkat, I. D. (1982). Effects of physical attractiveness on perception of social skill. Perceptual and motor skills, 54(3_suppl), 1039-1042.

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Ross, M. A., & Von Baeyer, C. L. (1990). Are physicians' ratings of pain affected by patients' physical attractiveness? Social Science & Medicine, 31(1), 69-72.

Hamermesh, D. S. (2011). Beauty pays. In Beauty Pays. Princeton University Press.

Hatfield, E., & Sprecher, S. (1986). *Mirror, mirror: The importance of looks in everyday life*. Suny Press.

Heilman, M. E. (1983). Sex bias in work settings: The lack of fit model. Research in organizational behavior.

Heilman, M. E., & Saruwatari, L. R. (1979). When beauty is beastly: The effects of appearance and sex on evaluations of job applicants for managerial and nonmanagerial jobs. Organizational behavior and human performance, 23(3), 360-372.

Heilman, M. E., & Stopeck, M. H. (1985). Being attractive, advantage or disadvantage? Performance-based evaluations and recommended personnel actions as a function of appearance, sex, and job type. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 35(2), 202-215.

Hosoda, M., Stone-Romero, E. F., & Coats, G. (2003). The effects of physical attractiveness on job-related outcomes: A meta-analysis of experimental studies. Personnel psychology, 56(2), 431-462.

Jæger, M. M. (2011). "A thing of beauty is a joy forever"? Returns to physical attractiveness over the life course. Social Forces, 89(3), 983-1003.

Johnson, S. K., Podratz, K. E., Dipboye, R. L., & Gibbons, E. (2010). Physical attractiveness biases in ratings of employment suitability: Tracking down the "beauty is beastly" effect. The Journal of social psychology, 150(3), 301-318.

Kalick, S. M., Zebrowitz, L. A., Langlois, J. H., & Johnson, R. M. (1998). Does human facial attractiveness honestly advertise health? Longitudinal data on an evolutionary question. Psychological science, 9(1), 8-13.

Koch, T., Gerber, C., & De Klerk, J. J. (2018). The impact of social media on recruitment: Are you LinkedIn? *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, *16*(1), 1-14.

Kulka, R. A., & Kessler, J. B. (1978). Is Justice Really Blind?–The Influence of Litigant Physical Attractiveness on Juridical Judgment 1. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 8(4), 366-381.

Lenth, R. (2023). *emmeans: Estimated Marginal Means, aka Least-Squares Means*. [R package]. Retrieved from https://cran.r-project.org/package=emmeans.

Lightricks Ltd. (2023). Facetune (Version 3.41.1) [Mobile application software]. https://www.facetuneapp.com

Liu, J., Hu, J., & Furutan, O. (2013). The influence of student perceived professors'"hotness" on expertise, motivation, learning outcomes, and course satisfaction. Journal of Education for Business, 88(2), 94-100.

Mobius, M. M., & Rosenblat, T. S. (2006). Why beauty matters. American Economic Review, 96(1), 222-235.

Mulford, M., Orbell, J., Shatto, C., & Stockard, J. (1998). Physical attractiveness, opportunity, and success in everyday exchange. American journal of sociology, 103(6), 1565-1592.

Nault, K. A., Pitesa, M., & Thau, S. (2020). The attractiveness advantage at work: A cross-disciplinary integrative review. Academy of Management Annals, 14(2), 1103-1139.

Nedelec, J. L., & Beaver, K. M. (2011). Beauty is in the sex of the beholder: An examination of the effects of interviewer characteristics on assessments of respondent attractiveness. Personality and Individual Differences, 51(8), 930-934.

Ng, T. W., Eby, L. T., Sorensen, K. L., & Feldman, D. C. (2005). Predictors of objective and subjective career success: A meta-analysis. Personnel psychology, 58(2), 367-408.

Pepe, S. J., Farnese, M. L., Avalone, F., & Vecchione, M. (2010). Work Self-efficacy Scale and Search for Work Self-efficacy Scale: A validation study in Spanish and Italian cultural contexts. *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones*, *26*(3), 201-210.

Pingitore, R., Dugoni, B. L., Tindale, R. S., & Spring, B. (1994). Bias against overweight job applicants in a simulated employment interview. Journal of applied psychology, 79(6), 909.

Prolific - quickly find research participants you can trust. Prolific. Quickly find research participants you can trust. (2023) http://www.prolific.com/

Quereshi, M. Y., & Kay, J. P. (1986). Physical attractiveness, age, and sex as determinants of

      reactions to resumes. Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal, 14(1),

      103-112.

R Core Team (2022). *R: A Language and environment for statistical computing*. (Version 4.1)

      [Computer software]. Retrieved from https://cran.r-project.org. (R packages retrieved

      from CRAN snapshot 2023-04-07).

Revelle, W. (2023). *psych: Procedures for Psychological, Psychometric, and Personality*

      *Research*. [R package]. Retrieved from https://cran.r-project.org/package=psych.

Rhodes, G., Simmons, L. W., & Peters, M. (2005). Attractiveness and sexual behavior: Does

      attractiveness enhance mating success?. *Evolution and human behavior*, *26*(2), 186-201.

Rhodes, G. E., & Zebrowitz, L. A. (2002). *Facial attractiveness: Evolutionary, cognitive, and*

      *social perspectives*. Ablex Publishing.

Ritts, V., Patterson, M. L., & Tubbs, M. E. (1992). Expectations, impressions, and judgments of

      physically attractive students: A review. Review of educational research, 62(4), 413-426.

Rowe, D. C., Clapp, M., & Wallis, J. (1987). Physical attractiveness and the personality

      resemblance of identical twins. Behavior Genetics, 17, 191-201.

Sackett, P. R. (2005). Principles for the validation and use of personnel selection procedures.

Sadalla, E. K., Kenrick, D. T., & Vershure, B. (1987). Dominance and heterosexual attraction.

      Journal of personality and social psychology, 52(4), 730.

Seidman, G., & Miller, O. S. (2013). Effects of gender and physical attractiveness on visual attention to Facebook profiles. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *16*(1), 20-24.

Selker, R. (2017). medmod: Simple Mediation and Moderation AnalysisVersion (1.0.0). Retrieved 2023, from http://cran.nexr.com/web/packages/medmod/index.html.

Shahani, C., Dipboye, R. L., & Gehrlein, T. M. (1993). Attractiveness bias in the interview: Exploring the boundaries of an effect. Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 14(3), 317-328.

Stewart, J. E. (1985). Appearance and punishment: The attraction-leniency effect in the courtroom. The Journal of social psychology, 125(3), 373-378.

Talamas, S. N., Mavor, K. I., & Perrett, D. I. (2016). Blinded by beauty: Attractiveness bias and accurate perceptions of academic performance. PloS one, 11(2), e0148284.

The jamovi project (2023). *jamovi*. (Version 2.4) [Computer Software]. Retrieved from https://www.jamovi.org.

Thornhill, R., & Gangestad, S. W. (1999). Facial attractiveness. Trends in cognitive sciences, 3(12), 452-460.

Turner, S. L., Willman, S. C., & Wright, R. R. (2016). The beautiful and the damned: Exploring the negative side of masculine attractiveness in hiring situations. *Undergraduate Research Journal for the Human Sciences*, *15*(1).

Umberson, D., & Hughes, M. (1987). The impact of physical attractiveness on achievement and psychological well-being. Social Psychology Quarterly, 227-236.

Walster, E., Aronson, V., Abrahams, D., & Rottman, L. (1966). Importance of physical attractiveness in dating behavior. Journal of personality and social psychology, 4(5), 508.

Wiley, D. L. (1995). Beauty and the beast: Physical appearance discrimination in American criminal trials. . Mary's LJ, 27, 193.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A**
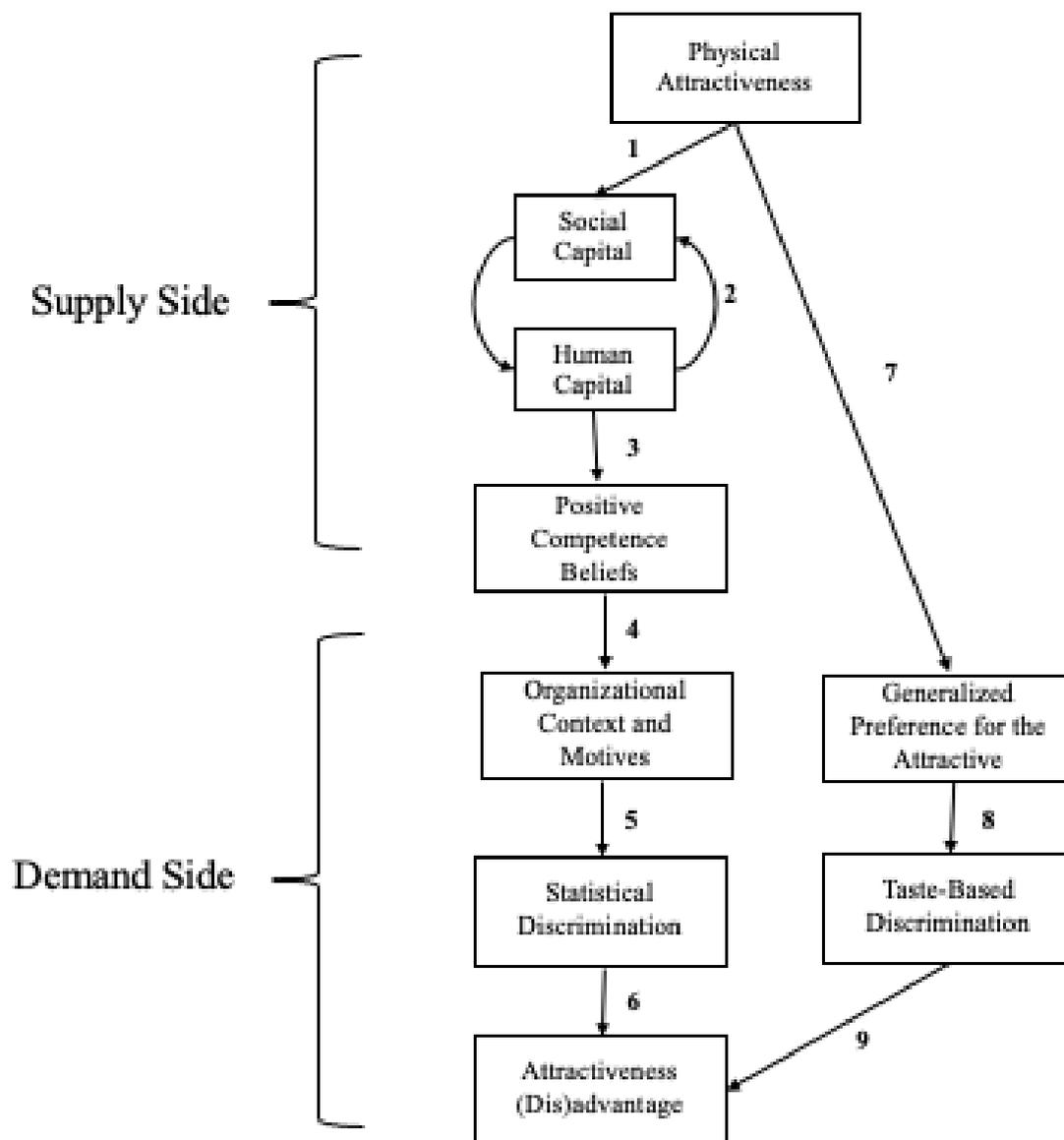
**Appendix B**

# Bailey Cooper

## Marketing Manager

412-300-5170
bcoop@gmail.com
www.BCooperportfolio.com
@BCooper on LinkedIn

PHOTO
GOES
HERE

A results-oriented Marketing Executive with experience in using effective marketing solutions to drive sales growth and boost client brand equity. Plans and supervises overall marketing strategy across various platforms. Specializes in project implementation and management.

## EDUCATION

**Bachelor's Degree in Marketing Management**
University of Paris, 2014
Marketing for Good Club

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**Marketing Executive**
Savoir Branding
May 2018 — Present
Oversees the company's digital marketing strategies and manages day-to-day admin operations.

**Lead Digital Marketer**
Silver Paper & Co.
Dec. 2016 — May 2018
Planned and executed digital marketing strategies that raised organic website traffic by 150%.

## VOLUNTEER WORK & CERTIFICATION

**Digital Marketing Manager**
Mindy River Children's Foundation
January 2019 — August 2019
Volunteered to run the foundation's social media accounts and spearhead its digital marketing efforts.

**Appendix C**

Thinking of future work, how well can the applicant...:

| **Not well at all** | **Not well** | **Neutral** | **Well** | **Very well** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1. ... achieve goals that will be assigned

2. ... respect schedules and working deadlines

3. ... learn new working methods

4. ... concentrate all energy on work

5. ... finish assigned work

6. ... collaborate with other colleagues

7. ... work with people of diverse experiences and ages

8. ... have good relationships with direct superiors

9. ...  behave in an efficacious way with clients

10. ... work in a team

**Appendix D**

      Imagine that you are the hiring manager at a medium-sized marketing agency, with about 425 employees. You just had an employee leave the company for another job, so you are looking to hire. The job you are hiring for is a Marketing Manager, and you are looking for someone with adequate experience in that role.

      The marketing manager is primarily responsible for developing and implementing marketing campaigns that advertise a company's products or services. They may also promote events or a campaign for the organization. This role's responsibilities also include planning, participating in public relations, developing products, and performing research. The marketing manager works for the company as part of the marketing department.

      Your task is to review the following application and resume, then rate each candidate on the following questions. After you have done this, you will decide whether you would like to hire the individual.

How likely are you to recommend hiring this candidate?
| **Very unlikely** | **Unlikely** | **Neither** | **Likely** | **Very likely** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

How qualified do you think this candidate is for the position?
| **Very qualified** | **Unqualified** | **Neither** | **Qualified** | **Very qualified** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

How would you expect this candidate to perform on the job?
| **Poorly** | **Below Average** | **Neither** | **Average** | **Exceptional** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

How likely would the candidate be to communicate and interact well with customers?
| **Very unlikely** | **Unlikely** | **Neither** | **Likely** | **Very likely** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

How likely would the candidate get along with coworkers?
| **Very unlikely** | **Unlikely** | **Neither** | **Likely** | **Very likely** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**Appendix E**

As the hiring manager, you are also responsible for termination of employees. Recently, you have heard that Kris Brown's, a sales representative, employment status is under review after an incident of verbal misconduct, regarding repetitive gossiping about another employee. This gossiping consisted of spreading negative information about their coworker with other employees. After several warnings the gossiping continued, so the sales representative is now under review. The employee who was the target of the gossip claims that this constitutes harassment. However, the sales representative claims to have done nothing wrong, especially not anything worth getting fired over. You must make the decision on whether or not to terminate them.

Your task is to review the following resume and performance evaluation, then rate each candidate on the following questions. After you have done this, you will decide whether you would like to terminate the individual.

How likely are you to recommend firing this candidate?

**Very unlikely**          **Unlikely**          **Neither**          **Likely**          **Very likely**

How would you expect this candidate to perform on the job?

**Poorly**          **Below Average**          **Neither**          **Average**          **Exceptional**

This offense worth firing.

**Strongly disagree**          **Disagree**          **Neither**          **Agree**          **Strongly Agree**

**Appendix F**

# Timmer Industries

➕ **EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW – SUPERVISOR REVIEW**

| EMPLOYEE INFORMATION | | |
|---|---|---|

| Name Of Employee Being Reviewed: | **Kris Brown** | |
|---|---|---|
| Date: **05/01/2023** | Review Period: | **January to April 2023** |

| REVIEW GUIDELINES |
|---|

Complete this peer review, using the following scale:

**NA** = *Not Applicable*
**1** = *Unsatisfactory*
**2** = *Marginal*
**3** = *Meets Requirements*
**4** = *Exceeds Requirements*
**5** = *Exceptional*

| EVALUATION | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (5) = Exceptional | (4) = Exceeds Requirements | (3) = Meets Requirements | (2) = Marginal | (1) = Unsatisfactory |
| **Demonstrates Required Job Skills And Knowledge** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Has The Ability To Learn And Use New Skills** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Uses Resources Available In An Effective Manner** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Responds Effectively To Assigned Responsibilities** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Meets Attendance Requirements** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Listens To Direction From Management** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Takes Responsibility For Actions** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Honors Commitments** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Demonstrates Problem Solving Skills** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Offers Constructive Suggestions For Improvement** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Generates Creative Ideas And Solutions** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Meets Challenges Head On** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Demonstrates Innovative Thinking** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Additional Comments:**

☐

Provided By HR.com

**Appendix G**

Attractive Condition                                    Unattractive Condition

**Appendix H**

**Office of Research Compliance**

2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd.

Sam H. Ingram Bldg (ING) Room 010A

Box 124

Murfreesboro, TN 37132

www.mtsu.edu/irb

Date: June 8, 2023
PI: Madeline Chance
Department: Middle Tennessee State University, Psychology
Re: Initial - IRB-FY2023-202
Title: Hiring and Firing Decisions

The Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for the above referenced study.

Decision: Exempt
Category: Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

**Please note that even though your proposed study is deemed exempt from further IRB review, the following apply to your approved study**:

1. Any modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through Cayuse IRB, any relevant changes to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB for approval before implementing this change, and any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported immediately to the Office of Compliance.
2. According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol and needs to complete the required training. If you add researchers to an approved project, please add the researchers to the project within Cayuse IRB **before** they begin to work on the project.
3. All research materials must be retained by the PI or faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for at least three (3) years after study completion and then destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity.
4. You must submit an end-of-project form to the Office of Compliance in Cauyse IRB upon completion of your research. Completed research means that you have finished collecting data.
5. All approval letters and study documents are located within the Study Details in Cayuse IRB.

We wish you a successful research project.

*The Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board*