

Why beauty works?

[Health & Medicine](#), [Beauty](#)



Physical beauty involves more than good looks. 16 Abstract It is disconcerting to find that the workplace is a beauty contest. Studies suggest that candidates who have the same qualifications and credentials are selected on their physical attractiveness over unattractive ones. This study shows the analysis in many areas where the beauty factors have helped individuals not only get a job, but also advance in their careers because of a beauty premium.

Based on their confidence levels and oral communications skills employers wrongly consider physically attractive workers more able and productive. In many circumstances, positive attributes are assigned to an attractive individual, which has no bearing on their job performance. Why Beauty Works This paper will examine the economic effects on physical appearance in the workplace. Many studies have consistently found significant affects of physical appearance on the wage levels, job growth and bargaining power in male and female workers.

Beauty plays a non-trivial role in people's lives. For example, in 2004 in the United States, 9.2 million cosmetic surgery procedures were performed, representing a 5 percent increase over the previous year ("Advertising Age," 2006, n. P.) and an approximate 118 percent increase since 1997 (Greeters, 2005, n. P.). Researchers have identified that beauty plays a large part in all forms of discrimination, whether it is employer, employee, or customer discrimination.

All the interest diverted into appearance is not just a sign of the times, but it is consistent with standards of tatty across cultures (Hammerers and Fiddle,

1994, p. 1175). Women have always used extreme measures to attain beauty, for instance, medieval women would apply arsenic to whiten their complexion. This discussion begs the question why all this attention to beauty and appearance. One explanation is that beauty and physical appearance attract a premium in the labor market.

A more difficult question to answer is whether it is possible that beautiful, pleasant looking people do better in the workplace because interviewers enjoy their physical beauty or because of their tatty, good looking people always have had extra help from their teachers, co-workers and now enjoy a higher wage because their skill level has been obtained. Purpose of Study The purpose of this study is to determine how attractive individuals, who have beauty premium, benefit from higher job wages, rapid job advancements and greater bargaining power.

Limitations of Study Since different researchers have used different methods in assigning a beauty scale, it presents some limitations on how the results are analyzed. According to LOL (1993), data on height and weight does not depend on subjective ratings. Other studies have taken height, weight, symmetry of facial features, hair color, dress, level of grooming, gender, and age into account (Larking and Pines, 1979). Some analysts have surveyed data that includes both the economic factors and non-economic factors and have used a scale of below average, average, and above average.

However, Prescribed and Walter (1974), and Morrow (1990) are of the view that no matter how attractiveness is measured its impact or effect is big. In one study by Shania-Denying (2003) the sample size was not large enough.

Only one applicant was reviewed by a participant. In reality numbers could be higher which could have an effect on the hiring process. Blunt-Nuns et. Al (2006) documents the effects attire can have on an individual in the job market.

These researchers report, "because employability depends so heavily upon attractiveness and attractiveness depends so heavily upon attire," the wrong type of clothing can cost an individual the acquisition of a job. Hammerers and Parker (2003) pointed out some flaws in an academic study. The participants who were used in the surveys were younger college students and do not represent the society as a whole. Also, some of the studies used photographs only and hence are not actual practical instances. Definitions of Terms Beauty premium is defined by the level of attractiveness an individual has on their peers.

Plainness penalty is defined as punishing an individual who is found by society to be deemed unattractive. Review of Literature E. Hatfield. And S. Speech, : Mirror, Mirror: The Importance of Looks in Everyday Life.

Economists have researched and analyzed several aspects of discrimination in the labor market. Even though the anti-discrimination legislation in the United States removes and prevents employers from discriminatory employment opportunities on the basis of "height, weight and personal appearance," the reality in its implementation is clearly lacking.

There is evidence that beauty has helped women secure higher level professional and managerial jobs. T. S. Rosenthal: Why Good Looks Matter. Rosenthal (2001) examines the origins of discrimination on the basis of

beauty in the labor market whether: a) good-looking people do better because interviewers and clients enjoy their physical appearance, and/or b) good-looking people are in fact more qualified because their physical appearance has previously helped them obtain better skills through the utilization of more extended social networks. P. L) Hatfield and Speeches (1986) and Number's and Hughes (1987) have documented that the expectations of higher productivity placed on attractive individuals are ultimately fulfilled due to the preferential treatment and greater opportunities they had received. E. LOL: The Economic Effects of Physical Appearance LOL (1993) analyzed the effects of the wages due to physical characteristics including height and weight and that wage effects represent worker productivity.

In this study, LOL (1993) found that men who are 10 percent taller receive a 6.6 percent higher hourly wage rate. Results also show that a person who weighs 10 percent more than the ideal weight is paid 1.4 percent more. In women, height had a significant effect on wages, though not as much as men. Women who are 10 percent taller received a 4.2 percent increase in their hourly wages. Contrary to belief as in other occupations, like flight attendants, where weekly weigh-ins are required (Williams, 1992, n. P. Relative weight in female workers even above the obesity threshold did not significantly impact their wages. D. S. Hammerers & A. M. Parker: Beauty in the Classroom Hammerers and Parker (2003) found that better looking university instructors or teachers received a higher instructional rating. In this, the impact is larger for the male teachers as compared to the female ones. The issue however whether higher instructional rating means that the

faculty member is a better teacher- is more productive in stimulating students' learning.

Professors at all levels of academic experience were chosen and students had to evaluate their professor in a rating scale from (1) unsatisfactory to (5) excellent. In another survey, picture of professors, three women and three men were rated on scale of 1 to 10 based on their physical appearance. This study also analyzed the effect of attire of the professors. Pictures of male professors with neckties and those of female professors with a Jacket and blouse were used to evaluate their teaching.

Instructional ratings play a key role in determining teachers' salaries, promotions, and reorganization of these performances like teaching awards. Therefore, Hammerers and Parker (2003) maintain that even though instructional ratings are not indicative to teaching radioactivity, it definitely has an affect on the economic dynamics in universities. Adams and lavabo (1974) and Clifford and Walter (1973) have analyzed that effects of beauty for that population sitting on the other side of the desk in the classroom.

They found that, " teachers provide physically attractive children with more information, better evaluations, and more opportunities to perform and support to their education endeavours. " Teachers expect better looking children, " to outperform in school and devote more attention to children who are perceived to have a greater potential" (Hatfield and Speeches, 1986 n. .). And here is where even Mother Nature fails, Longish et al (1995) found that attractive and not so attractive infants got biased treatments from their mothers.

To make matters more astounding even infants as small as two or three months showed preferences to more attractive faces (Longish et. Al 1987).

D. Reilly, K. Steele, C. Patterson, P. Mils, & P. Heart: Might how you look influence how well you are looked after. Take healthcare for example; one might expect that keeping the nobility of the profession in high esteem patients may not be treated differently based on looks. But the sad reality is that even doctors considered affluent patients more attractive and gave them preferential treatment (Reilly et al 2006).

D. S. Hammerers, & J. E. Fiddle: Beauty and the Labor Market. As Hammerers and Fiddle (1994) astutely point out, that physically attractive individuals in the above average scale of beauty reaped 10 to 15 percent of higher wages. As beauty is rewarded, so ugliness is penalized. Hammerers and Fiddle (1994) imposed a " plainness penalty' for ugly women, who earn about 5 percent less than other women, and ugly men earn about 10 percent less than other men.

Niobium and Rosenthal (2005) identified three channels which influenced the employer's perception to the workers' capability, " confidence channel and the visual and oral stereo type channels. " They reported that, " for the given level of confidence, physically attractive workers are, (wrongly) considered more able by employers," Hammerers and Fiddle (1994) also found that " unattractive women have more labor force participation rates and married man with less human capital. " H. R. Varian: Beauty and the Fattened Wallet.

When hiring was based on the credentials laid out in the resume, there is no question that physical beauty had any effect. But the perception of

productivity in the face to face interviews versus a telephone interview was alarmingly higher. Varian (2006) reported in the Economic Scene that, " It appears that, confidence that beautiful people have in themselves comes across over the phone as well as in person. " This lies with the fact that they have good communication skills. T. S. Rosenthal, & M. M. Niobium: Why Beauty Matters.

Rosenthal and Niobium (2005) found the effects of physical appearance are significant on the wage levels, job growth and bargaining power in male and female workers. Researchers have identified that beauty plays a large part during the hiring process. A more difficult question to answer is whether it is possible that beautiful, pleasant looking people do better in the workplace because interviewers enjoy their physical beauty or because of their beauty, the good looking people always have had extra help from their teachers, co-workers and now enjoy a higher wage because their skill level has been obtained.

It is important to note a point by Rosenthal and Niobium (2005): Hammerers and Fiddle endeavour to distinguish between three possible explanations for the existence of an ugliness penalty in the labor market: pure employer discrimination, customer discrimination associated with perceived higher productivity of good- looking people, and occupational crowding. Under pure employer discrimination, more attractive workers receive higher compensation purely because employers exhibit tastes for good-looking employees. At least in some occupations it is not unreasonable to assume that looks enhance productivity. P. 4) J. E. Fiddle, & D. S. Hammerers:

Beauty, Productivity, and Discrimination: Lawyers' Looks and Lucre In another study by Fiddle and Hammerers (1998), the researchers focused on the beauty effect on the wages of lawyers. They discovered evidence of a beauty premium for the attorneys. A male lawyer who ranked above average in attractiveness had approximately 10 percent higher earning than the below average counterparts. The researchers also discovered that the beauty premium for private lawyers was three times that for public lawyers (Fiddle and Hammerers, 1998).

Discussion While test scores based on academic aptitude are considered to be of utmost importance in one's success in a career, it is marred by the beauty factor when reality hits. Appearance may seem to be totally unrelated to an individual's job performance, based on just mental aptitude; there are differentials in wages, selection process, promotions and the popularity ratings of an individual. Attractiveness endows candidates with a beauty premium and penalizes the plain looking individuals. The penalty paid by males is much more where their height, weight, and looks give them the wrongful benefit of being more productive.

In a world where we talk about fairness and equality, and a legislation exists to avoid such discrimination, we are met with discrimination at all levels. There is employer discrimination, employee discrimination, and customer discrimination in areas where there is direct interaction. It seems that the confidence levels in more attractive people work in their favor during the hiring process as these individuals have better oral communication skills. This gives them an edge over the not so tall or not so beautiful faces that

could not only have much better credentials, but also possibly a much better job productivity.

Beauty and success in the workplace has been studied in different walks of life. Researchers have studied lawyers, university professors, deiced professionals, administrators, labor market, students, and sales agents. It appears from these studies that success and beauty are so intertwined that society just accepts the way things are. Better looking candidates seem to do better in the interview process because of their high confidence levels. Economist Rosenthal (2001) examines as to why these people do better.

Is it because everyone, employers and customers, enjoy the appearance or because they are better qualifies since they have had that extra help and perks right from their schooling and have achieved a higher aptitude. In some sectors, such as the legal profession, they need to maintain an image through looks, height, and attire in order to acquire and keep more clients. The impact on the economic dynamics are seen when university professors are rated by students and their ratings help them acquire more salaries, promotions, and rewards which further boosts their careers.

One may be led to think that the beauty premium helps individuals in occupations where there is interpersonal contact and customers prefer one person over another based on their appearance. But this is not true. Obesity has a strong negative impact on employability of male workers where request interpersonal interaction is not required. Sad, but true, in one of the noblest of all professions-the medical field, doctors discriminate and give preferential treatment to more attractive, and affluent patients. Plainness

penalty in this case is untoward and should not be accepted, or allowed, or tolerated.

With all these findings it is true that discrimination based on beauty is prevalent in our society, and that it is not just isolated in one sector. In spite of having legislations that do not allow discrimination based on age, gender, and race, one big factor by which society is swayed has been ignored.

Review of Findings Interpretation/Analysis of Findings For men and women various studies in the past have revealed that the likelihood of being hired greatly increases if you are a facially attractive person and not overweight.

In conjunction, the studies have also repeatedly shown that your salary will be higher than those who are unattractive as judged by our society. For instance, it could be argued that beauty is very important in the workplace, but however, women who possess extreme beauty are often subjected to unfair judgments. Many studies have shown that women with extreme beauty are taken less seriously at their jobs even though they may be equally educated and qualified as the men. For this reason many women will make themselves more masculine and therefore less attractive had been what allowed them to build successful careers.

Summary and Conclusions It seems to conclude that there is evidence of beauty discrimination. Attractive people are treated differently because we live in a culture that places a high premium on external appearance. There are so many forces that make us think that this is important. A multi-billion-dollar global industry exists that centers on appearance (the fitness industry, the cosmetic industry, the fashion industry). These industries are all built on

notions of attractiveness. Most employers will hire better than average looking people and possibly pay higher given the choice of two equally productive and qualified people.

Taller, healthier, more attractive looking individuals may be perceived as to be more productive and therefore more likely to be hired and paid well. Even though having good looks does have its advantages, it can have some drawbacks as well. Some people who are found very attractive can stir up jealousies in other people who then may reject them. Occasionally if a woman is very attractive and co-workers feel that she is really accentuating her beauty, she may not be seen as being too intelligent and this in turn may not help her get a promotion.

Perhaps future studies can be done on what types of physical features are found to be the most appealing in different industries. Parameters like body size, facial attractiveness, attire, and oral communication skills along with educational background can be studied in the Journalism, medical, and law enforcement. References Advertising Age. (2006). -? Snapshot (Plastic Surgeries Statistics), March 6, 2005. Fiddle, J. E. , & Hammerers, D. S. (1998). Beauty, productivity, and discrimination: lawyers' looks and lucre. Journal of Labor Economics, 16, 1, 172-201. Retrieved November 2, 2007, from http://deeds.Nevi.It/esp./documents/Papers/BE/BE_2.PDF Cyprian, G. P. , & Ago, A. (n. D). Productivity or discrimination? Beauty and the Exams Retrieved October 14, 2007, from: http://deeds.Unify.It/esp./documents/Papers/BE/BE_2.PDF Varian, H. R. (2006). Beauty and the fattened wallet. Economic Scene. Frieze, 1. , Olson, J. , & Russell, J. (1991).

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