Difference In Opportunity Presented In Careers For Young Attractive Women Compared To Those Who Are Not Seen As So

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Introduction

Problem Statement

There is a problem in society revolving around discrimination and/or bias regarding physical appearance. Despite the pervading theory that looks do not affect one's career and non romantic relationships, discrimination based upon often uncontrollable factors in physical appearance occurs on a daily basis. This problem has negatively impacted women and is not limited to women who are viewed as unattractive. Women are constantly objectified and evaluated based upon the beauty or even their lack of it. Due to this, it is a more significant problem for women than it is for men. While the success of some women in certain professional fields is dependent on their appearance, such as for female salespersons (Marc-André Reinhard, Matthias Messner, & Siegfried Ludwig Sporer), in male dominated fields a woman's attractiveness can actually be detrimental to how others perceive her, and can lead to a lack of respect (Johnson, S., Podratz, K., Dipboye, R., & Gibbons, E.). A probable cause of this problem is internalized bias. I will be conducting a study to test whether young women who are seen as attractive are presented with significantly more opportunity in their careers compared to those who are not seen as so.

Research Question

Are young women who are seen as attractive presented with significantly more opportunity in their careers compared to those who are not seen as so?

Literature Review

See references slide for full list of sources See final slide for link to paper containing full Lit Review

Common Themes

- **Individuals who are deemed attractive consistently find more success in various areas of life**
- **Concrete evidence found for obesity discrimination**

Exceptions

- **"Bimbo Effect" for women**
- **Attractiveness was a deterrent in certain areas, specifically male dominated industries**

Research & Methodologies

Quasi Experimental Research Approach

This experiment was conducted through an online survey.

- 2 versions of the survey were created
- Each participant only took one version.

Each survey gave two potential employees.

- The resumes for each employee did not change between different survey versions, only the headshots of the employee did.
- This ensured that the variable was attractiveness (determined by individual perception of participants)

All participants consented prior to taking the surveys, and the questions were verified through the IRB process.
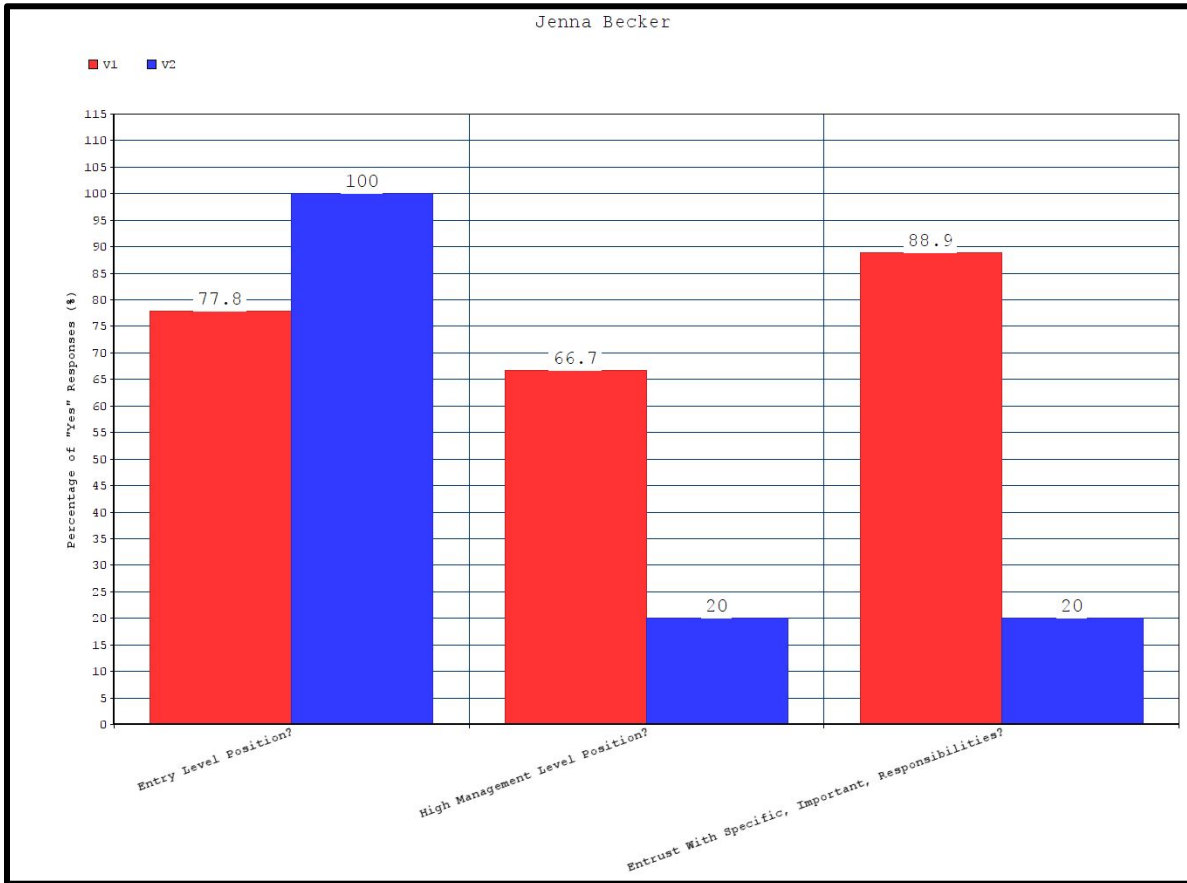
First potential employee - "Jenna Becker"
- Senior sales associate
- After viewing her resume, participants were asked whether they would hire this person for an entry level position in their field, a high management level position in their field, and whether they would entrust this person with important responsibilities in their work.

Second potential employee - "Claire Matthews"
- Same process was followed
- Difference: Claire Matthews worked in hardware engineering (male dominated industry)

- Participants were asked to explain their reasoning behind their decisions.
- After determining their responses to the questions surrounding their professional capabilities, participants would afterwards rate their attractiveness. The rating for attractiveness was asked for only following after answering the other questions so as to not affect their perception of how they believed they should answer in the survey.
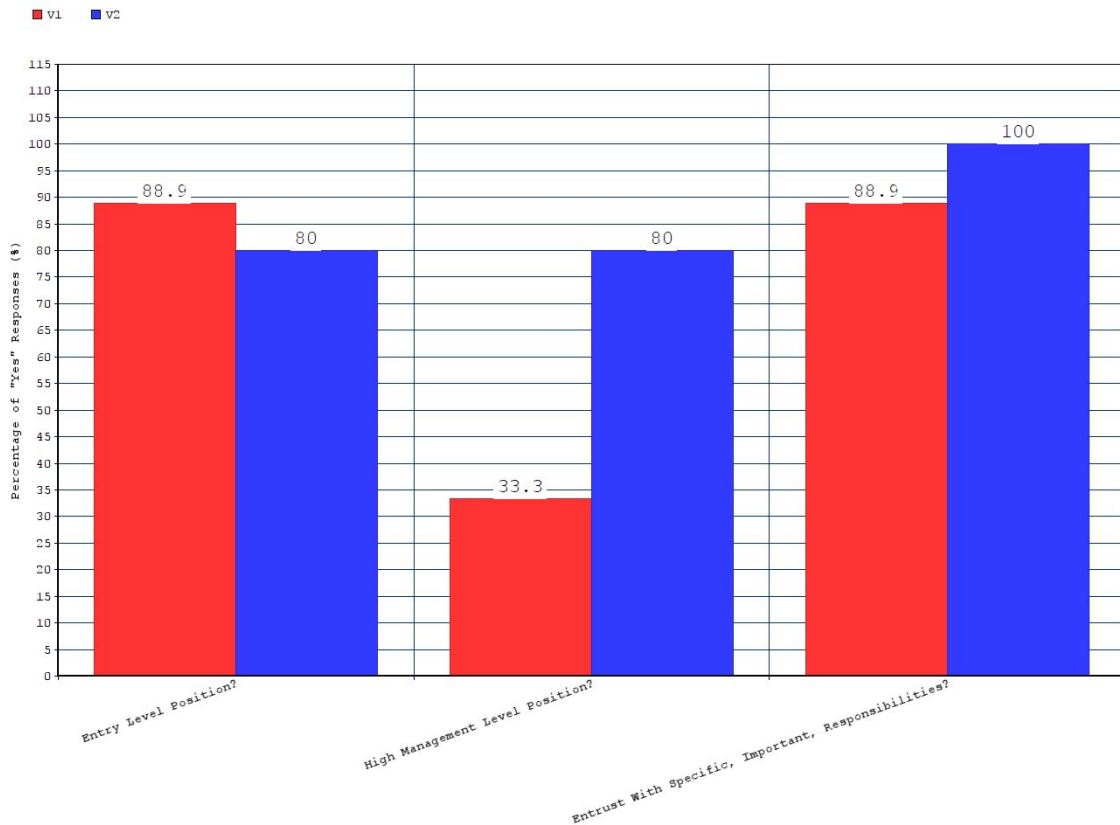
Data & Analysis

Jenna Becker

V1 ■ V2 ■

Chart data (Percentage of "yes" Responses (%)):

Question	V1	V2
Entry Level Position?	77.8	100
High Management Level Position?	66.7	20
Entrust With Specific, Important, Responsibilities?	88.9	20

Jenna Becker Data

* Though based on stats alone V2 was considered to be more qualified for an entry level position with a 100% "yes" answer rate, the 2 "no" responses for V1 can be considered redundant due to the reasoning provided for them as stated in the results.

Claire Matthews
(chart titled "Claire Matthews")

V1 V2

Percentage of "Yes" Responses (%)

- Entry Level Position? — 88.9 / 80
- High Management Level Position? — 33.3 / 80
- Entrust With Specific, Important, Responsibilities? — 88.9 / 100

Claire Matthews Data

* For both surveys, reasoning given for responding no to the 1st question was always due to overqualification, so "no" responses were redundant. Therefore, both were perceived as equally qualified for entry level positions.

Analysis & Conclusions

Jenna Becker

- the more attractive version (but otherwise identical resume wise) of Becker was considered more suitable for various professional responsibilities
- Shows bias favoring attractive women when hiring for professional jobs, in this instance for a socially oriented job such as a sales associate.

Claire Matthews

- The less attractive version (but otherwise identical resume wise) of Matthews was considered more suitable for various professional responsibilities
- Shows the bias against attractive women in male dominated fields

Although this was dealing with a fabricated situation for a social experiment, this thinking could have much larger ramifications when applied to real life situations.

Analysis & Conclusions: Future Steps

The results from these surveys both exhibited the bias present in common thinking of people. Since the number of responses was relatively small, to truly be able to confirm the results drawn from this small scale experiment, it would need to be performed on a larger scale, and from a more random sample of participants. Additionally, more versions of the survey would be beneficial, with more questions with more specificity implied in them. Furthermore, results would be more accurate if actual employers from their respective fields were participants, and this would reflect real life situations more.

References & Acknowledgements

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Thank you!

Any questions?

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Full Paper:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ue9n1oO4kLXG92ZqEGiy0UK-xRW4BkRxikBpIT61SJY/edit?usp=sharing