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Jodell Lorna Cheska

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Initial Impact of Physical Attractiveness on a
Counselor's Perceived Helpfulness and Rated Personality Traits
(TITLE)

BY

Jodell Lorna Cheska

THESIS

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YEAR

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Abstract

A total of 230 students, 122 high school and 108 junior college students viewed a taped presentation of a counselor who was presented as either attractive or unattractive in physical appearance. Another group just heard the audio portion of the attractive tape. Students then rated their impressions of the counselor on 12 personal traits and their perceived helpfulness of the counselor on 16 problems. The attractive counselor was perceived to be significantly more attractive and professional than the unattractive counselor. The attractive counselor was not seen as significantly more helpful with any of the 16 problems presented. The unattractive counselor was perceived to be significantly more helpful with a drug addiction problem than the attractive counselor. The results indicate that on overall helpfulness and personality traits there were no significant differences. These results are discussed in regard to the degree of physical attractiveness of the two counselor presentations.

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Initial Impact of Physical Attractiveness
on a Counselor's Perceived Helpfulness
and Rated Personality Traits

A great emphasis is placed on our own physical appearances from birth. The most readily observable characteristics of a person is their sex and appearance. The 'attractive' are sought out by our society. It is proven by the millions of dollars we spend each year on clothing, cosmetics, and plastic surgery. Men and women want to be attractive. A person's physical appearance definitely come to bear upon our perceptions of an individual. We 'size them up' on these factors initially.

The personal characteristic, appearance, has been under study in many facets of our interpersonal interaction. Sigall and Ostrove (1975) studied the role that attractiveness played in sentencing a female defendant for a crime which she had committed. Their results indicate that if a crime was attractiveness related (swindle) the attractive defendant received a more harsh sentence. If the crime was unrelated to attractiveness (burglary) the less severe sentence was given to the attractive defendant than the unattractive defendant. It is suggested that perhaps the attractive person was seen as taking advantage of their given attribute.

Mills & Aronson (1965) found that when a female communicator was attractive she was more effective if she announced her intention to persuade. If she was unattractive, her stated intent to

persuade the audience made no difference. Other studies on communication and attitude change have shown that the attractiveness of the communicator has significant impact upon his ability to influence his listeners (Back, 1951; Brock, 1965; Sapolsky, 1960). In 1951, Back observed the following:

The results show that an increase in cohesiveness (attraction), independent of its nature, will produce the following...in the highly cohesive group the discussion was more effective in that it produced influence, that is, group members changed more toward the partner's positions than they did in the less cohesive groups. (p.22)

Physical attractiveness has been shown to be a great determinant in the partners we seek out for a heterosexual relationship. Recent studies (Brislin & Lewis, 1968 and Tesser & Brodie, 1971) found that the single most desired characteristic of a date was physical attractiveness. It was found that initially a date's physical appearance determines how much the date is liked. Physical attractiveness correlated very highly with other ratings of personality.

Others perceptions of you may depend to a large degree on the attractiveness of your partner. Sigall and Landy (1973) found that males who were paired with beautiful women received higher ratings and gave a more favorable impression than those paired with an unattractive female. When the males were asked to predict how they would be rated they perceived themselves as receiving a higher rating when paired with an attractive female than an unattractive female. It is also suggested that being

attached to an unattractive female partner may detract from the impression a man makes.

In the Huston study (1973) males had a choice of a date at three attractiveness levels, high-medium-low. Their choice was made under either assured female acceptance or where acceptance was ambiguous. Each man was asked to rate his own physical attractiveness. The males selected more physically attractive females when the acceptance of the date was assured than when ambiguous. When the males were unassured about the acceptance of the female, they felt that the highly physically attractive female would be less likely to accept a date with him than the other two groups. This was especially true of males who rated themselves as unattractive rather than the attractive. There was no positive relationship between a male's self rating and his choice of a partner.

Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster (1971) conducted two experiments to test the matching principle which states that individuals chose to date those whose social desirability is similar to their own. The rejection possibility of the female was varied. The results appeared to indicate that males did operate on the matching principle when choosing a date. This was true for all conditions of choice, even when rejection was presumably salient.

Teams of observers went to natural dating areas (Silverman, 1971) such as theatre lobbies and bars to observe couples social desirability level. If the matching principle does occur in couples, then the observers rating of each person would be similar

to the partners rating. The men and women were rated on a scale of one to five. There were intervals of .5. Silverman found that 60% of the couples did not differ in their individual ratings by more than .5 of a scale point. The raters also observed whether the couples engaged in touching type behaviors such as holding hands. Analysis of raters observations showed that 60% of the couples did engage in some type of physical contact.

Murstein (1972) questioned whether there was a halo effect occurring when rating one person and then rating that person's romantic partner. For a basis of comparison he randomly paired 99 man and women. He also used 99 couples who were going steady or engaged. Pictures of the 198 couples were taken. The judges then rated the attractiveness of each member of a couple. The judges did not know which partners were paired when they rated the pictures. The dating or engaged couples were more closely matched on attractiveness than the randomly paired couple. Murstein (1972) stated, "Individuals with equal market value for physical attractiveness are more likely to associate in an intimate relationship such as premarital engagement than individuals with desperate values." (p.11). The study did lend support to the matching principle in terms of physical attractiveness.

Sigall, Page, and Brown (1971) found that an attractive and unattractive female rated males on their performance of a physically demanding task. The males were either given a positive or a negative rating on the task. The males then performed the task a second time. The male who was rated positively by an attractive female improved most on the second trial. A negative evaluation

by the female on the first trial of the task led to greater improvement than a positive evaluation and especially when the female was attractive.

Many investigators have used photographs in studying the attractiveness variable. Byrne, London, and Reeves (1968) found that attraction was greater to attractive pictures than unattractive pictures of strangers regardless of sex.

The effects of a female's attractiveness in relation to the quality of her written work was investigated by Landy and Sigall (1974). The objective quality of the essays were varied to include well written and poorly written. There was either no picture, an attractive picture, or an unattractive picture attached to the essay. The subjects were lead to believe that the essay was written by the person in the attached picture. The quality of the essay was then evaluated. The impact of the writer's attractiveness on the evaluation of the work was most pronounced when the objective quality of her work was relatively poor. In essence, the poor objective quality work received a higher rating when the author was believed to be attractive. It is suggested that perhaps attractive persons can get by with poorer quality work than the unattractive persons.

Miller (1970) showed men and women one of twelve photographs that were varied on attractiveness, high-medium-low, levels. These males and females rated the photographs randomly on the Adjective Preference Scale (Jackson & Minton, 1963). On 15 of the 17 dimensions tested there were significant effects for physical attractiveness. The attractive people were judged significantly more positive

and the unattractive tended to be judged more negatively on the preference scale.

Dion, Berscheid, & Walster (1972) investigated the physical attractiveness variable and found that the attractive persons were seen by others to have more socially desirable personalities than the less attractive. It was also presumed that the attractive would be more successful in life and happier. The results indicated that at least in the eyes of others, good looks imply greater potential.

Barocas & Karoly (1972) carefully constructed video tapes of a female student and presented them to males. The tapes were varied in attractiveness by the use of cosmetics to include attractive and unattractive appearances. The audio portions of these tapes were also presented as a control. The student was asked to respond to the female on the tape as though he was interacting with her. His responses were in the form of pressing a button. They were asked to press the button every time they felt like making a response to her (e.g. smile). After responding to the conditions, the males then completed a ten-step behavioral rating scale. In all but two of the ratings there was a significant difference in the positive direction to the attractive tape.

It has been demonstrated in previous research (Daily, 1952) that a person's first impression of another affects future interactions with him. It is suggested by Brock, Edelman, Edwards, & Schuck (1966) that your expectations play a major part in your choice of behavior. Strupp observed, "Therefore, unless there is a strong conscious desire to be helped and to collaborate with the

therapist, the odds against a favorable outcome may be insuperable." (p. 6) If a favorable impression does have a significant positive effect on a person's expectations, then the task of beginning the therapy session on the proper 'note' is potentially very worthwhile.

Shapiro, Struening, Barten, and Shapiro (1973) investigated the prognostic factors in psychotherapy. All patients were given some type of psychotherapy. Patients were evaluated at three, six, and twelve months or at the time of their termination. Evaluation was completed by the therapist and patient. The ratings which appeared to be the most important variables for both the therapist and client were likeable, physically attractive, and competent.

In the study by Barocas and Vance (1974), counselors rated clients as they appeared before and after treatment. They also gave each client a rating for prognosis. The results indicated that the more physically attractive the client, the more likely the counselor will state a prognosis of favorable outcome. It appeared that the attractiveness characteristic was more clearly embedded in the adjustment process of the women. Males did not appear to be so greatly influenced by their attractiveness ratings. This may possibly indicate that we have a more fixed standard for a woman's attractiveness than a man's.

Shofield (1964) conducted a survey of a large representative sample of social workers practicing psychotherapy, psychologists, and psychiatrists. Shofield (1964) made the following comment:

What is the identification of the emotionally ill person whom the psychotherapists do not expect to be able to reach

effectively through therapeutic conversation? Extreme youth (under age 15) or age (over 50) appears to be understandable. A widowed divorced status apparently does not contribute to an attractive patient. Limited education (less than high school) or too much education (postgraduate training) is equally rejected by social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists. Employment in services, agriculture, fishery, forestry, semi-skilled or unskilled labor is not associated with being a "preferred risk."

...there are pressures toward a systematic selection of patients, pressures that are perhaps subtle and unconscious in part and that, in part, reflect theoretical biases common to all psychotherapists. These selective forces tend to restrict the efforts of the bulk of social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists to clients who present the "Yavis" syndrome-young, attractive, verbal, intelligent, and successful. (p. 133)

The YAVIS-client tended to be perceived by the counselor as more introspective or has the potential to be introspective with a little help. There is in fact, at least in part, some restriction on the persons admitted to therapy.

Barah & LaCrosse (1975) investigated Strong's prediction of the existence of three dimensions of perceived counselor behavior-attractiveness, expertness, and trustworthiness. Students rated filmed interviews of Rogers, Ellis, and Perls on 36 bipolar scales. Across ratings of all counselors, the factors of attractiveness and expertness appear to be distinct from each other. This study

did not validate whether trustworthiness is separate from attractiveness and expertness.

When examining the relationship between physical attractiveness of the recipient and self disclosure, Cash (1974) found that in the opposite sex dyad a person presented themselves in a somewhat more favorable light to those who they perceived as more attractive. The targets attractiveness was slightly more influential for male subjects than for female subjects. In the same sex dyads subjects revealed more information about themselves to those persons whom they regarded as more attractive. The possible implications that these results may have upon disclosure in a clinical setting is very important.

McClerman (1973) investigated the effects of a male counselor and female client in a one-to-one relationship. There was an attempt made to determine the effects of sexual feelings between counselor and client, if they indeed do exist, and the quality of the counseling relationship. Results indicated that sexual feelings did occur. It was concluded that attractiveness in a counselor-client relationship was the single most important variable in the prediction of sexual feelings. Sexual feelings did play a very important role in the quality of the relationship.

There appears to be conflicting results regarding the influence of patient expectations on psychotherapeutic improvement. This may well be due to the many diverse problems, samples, and conditions under which the studies have been conducted. There are a considerable number of studies which support the idea that if a patient has positive expectations about therapy this will help

facilitate the relationship therapeutically (Friedman, 1963; Goldstein, 1962, Goldstein & Shipman, 1961).

Research has indicated that there is a strong relationship between the attractiveness of a person and the way in which he is perceived by others. As demonstrated by previous research, this occurs in many areas of our interpersonal behavior. More recently the question of the role physical attractiveness plays in the counselor-client relationship has been under investigation. Not only the counselor's perceptions of the client's attractiveness is important (Shofield, 1964) but how the counselor is perceived by the client in terms of attractiveness is important. The client-counselor perceptions together determine to a great extent the outcome of the therapeutic relationship. The role that physical attractiveness plays initially may be very critical and a topic of considerable research. Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster (1971) have reviewed extensively the research concerning the role that physical attractiveness plays in the many facets of our life. Research does indicate that physical attractiveness is very important. Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster (1971) do caution that most of the studies that have been done on attractiveness have been done with young adults only.

Cash, Begley, McCown, & Weise (1975) conducted a study to compare initial impact of a physically attractive male counselor with the impact of an unattractive male counselor. Video tapes were very carefully constructed so that the tapes were alike except for the physical appearance. College students then rated the counselor on a series of 12 personal characteristics. The attractive

counselor was seen as significantly more intelligent, friendlier, assertive, and competent. He also tended to be better liked and regarded as a warmer person than the unattractive counselor. The counselors were also rated as to the perceived helpfulness with 15 problems common to young college students. The college students perceived the attractive counselor as being significantly more helpful with drug addiction, unsatisfactory dating difficulties, conflicts with parents, and general anxiety. The attractive male counselor was also perceived as potentially more helpful with problems involved with making friends, depression, and shyness. An overall analysis of the traits and perceived helpfulness with problems presented indicated that the college students gave the attractive male counselor an overall significantly more favorable rating than the unattractive counselor. Cash (1975) stated that "In comparison with the less attractive counselor, the attractive counselor engendered significantly greater confidence in his overall therapeutic effectiveness." (p. 278)

The audio portion of the two tapes were also presented to two groups. This was a control to test for any difference in the audio portion of the tapes. The audio tapes were rated on the same 12 personal characteristics and the 15 personal problems as the two video groups. The ratings of the two audio tapes were essentially the same.

The present investigation is an extension of the Cash, Begley, McCown, & Weise (1975) study. The purpose of the present study is to test the initial influence of a female counselor's physical attractiveness on a client's initial impression and the expectancies

of a positive therapeutic outcome. My hypothesis is that the attractive female counselor will be given a more positive rating on the personal characteristics and be perceived as potentially more helpful than the unattractive counselor. High school students as well as college students will view the tapes.

Methods

Subjects

The subjects were 122 high school students (51 males and 71 females) and 108 junior college students (44 males and 64 females). The high school students were volunteers recruited from four high schools in the Elgin, Illinois area. The junior college students were undergraduate volunteers recruited from Elgin Community College. The mean age of the high school students was 17.4. The mean age of the college students was 24.7.

Procedure

Each classroom of students was randomly divided into three groups, one for each experimental condition. During any of the treatment conditions there were three to eleven students participating in the study. The students were greeted by the examiner. She played a standard audio recording of the instructions. There were two standard recordings of instructions used. One was used for each of the video presentations and the other was played for the group who heard only the audio portion. The only difference between the two instructions were the words 'see' and 'hear.' The students were told that they would 'see' or 'hear' a taped presentation of an experienced counselor who was very interested in helping young people. After hearing the tape they were then asked to rate their 'honest' impression of the counselor on a series of scales.

After evaluating the counselor the subjects were thanked for their cooperation and dismissed. The results of fourteen students data was randomly omitted from analysis for the purpose of having the same number of students in each experimental condition. Data from six students were omitted from analysis because they did not complete the scales correctly.

Physical Attractiveness Manipulation

A standard script was written by the female experimenter. The script was a self description of a 30-year old female Phd. level clinical psychologist. The script described schooling, training, interest, and experience of a therapist. The script did not contain any intimate self disclosure.

The script was presented by a Phd. level psychologist. She presented the script in both conditions in a sincere and personal way, as if it was her own experience. The same presentation was video taped under both the physically attractive and physically unattractive condition.

In the attractive condition she was in her normal attractive appearance--stylish medium length hair, no glasses, eye makeup and thin appearance. In the unattractive condition the same female was taped with her appearance cosmetically changed--bags under her eyes, fat face, hair pulled back in an unstylish manner, glasses, and a fat physical appearance. The same apparel was worn in both conditions.

Each tape was approximately two minutes in length. The tapes were matched closely except for the physical appearance manipulation.

Dependent Scales

Two sets of rating scales were given to the students following the counselor presentation. On the first scale the students were asked to indicate their honest impression of the counselor on 12 six-point rating scales labeled at end points: physically attractive/physically unattractive, courteous/inconsiderate, likeable/not likeable, warm person/cold person, sincere/insincere, intelligent/unintelligent, trustworthy/untrustworthy, friendly/unfriendly, interesting/uninteresting, professional/unprofessional, competent/incompetent, relaxed/tense. (See Appendix A for complete derivation.) The students then rated the counselor on a second scale to determine the degree of confidence obtained with 16 different personal problems. A six-point rating scale (Cash, Begley, McCown, & Weise, 1975) was labeled at every end point from very moderately and very confident that the counselor would be helpful. The problems selected were problems that were typically faced by young people. They included: general anxiety, alcohol problem, shyness, sexual functioning, depression, weight problem, conflicts with parents, speech anxiety, dating difficulties, career choice, insomnia, drug addiction, inferiority feelings, test anxiety, difficulties making friends, and trouble studying. (See Appendix B for complete derivation.) Approximately one-half the favorable end points were assigned to the left side of the instrument. The scores on both the personal traits and problem scales were compiled with low scores indicating positive direction.

The students were also asked to rate their own physical appearance on a six-point rating scale labeled at end points physically

attractive/physically unattractive, and to indicate their age.

Results

A mixed two between and one within factor analysis of variance was performed on both the trait and problem data. The means are presented in Tables 1 and 2. An overall analysis of variance was performed to determine the perceived overall effectiveness of the counselor on the two scales (see Table 3).

Table 1

Mean Ratings Overall of the Attractive and Unattractive Presentation of High School and College Students on Traits

	Attractive		Unattractive	
	High School	College	High School	College
1	3.71	3.34	3.88	4.08
2	2.22	2.25	2.48	2.65
3	3.05	3.00	3.31	3.05
4	3.08	3.40	3.22	3.85
5	3.00	2.74	3.17	2.94
6	2.11	2.31	1.77	2.34
7	2.65	3.17	3.20	2.88
8	2.82	2.74	2.91	3.14
9	4.25	3.51	4.08	4.08
10	3.05	2.65	2.31	2.51
11	2.77	2.74	2.45	2.40
12	4.11	3.60	4.00	3.77

Table 2

Mean Ratings Overall of the Attractive and Unattractive
Presentation of High School and College Students on Problems

	Attractive		Unattractive	
	High School	College	High School	College
1	3.02	2.91	2.82	2.94
2	3.82	3.71	3.62	3.20
3	3.45	3.17	3.42	3.42
4	4.22	3.65	4.54	4.08
5	3.22	2.91	3.25	3.14
6	3.60	3.37	3.65	3.31
7	3.57	2.88	2.80	3.37
8	3.17	3.11	2.94	3.17
9	3.91	3.05	3.82	3.77
10	2.88	2.45	2.25	2.77
11	3.48	3.14	3.14	3.37
12	4.40	3.62	3.94	3.31
13	3.51	3.20	3.08	3.22
14	2.94	2.88	2.54	2.94
15	3.31	2.91	3.20	3.45
16	3.28	2.54	2.42	2.91

Results of the analysis of the 12 traits indicate that there was a significant difference in the ratings on the traits overall. There is also a significant difference between the way each experimental group (attractive/unattractive--audio) rated the counselor

overall on the 12 traits. The analysis performed on the perceived helpfulness with the 16 problems indicate that there was an overall significant difference between the three experimental groups (attractive/unattractive--audio). There was also a significant difference in the ratings of the perceived helpfulness among the 16 problems. There was a test run for orthogonal comparisons between the three groups. The results indicate that the significant main effects for the attractive/unattractive--audio on traits and problems is due to the differences between the audio alone compared to the attractive/unattractive conditions. This is shown by the orthogonal contrast for traits ($F = 26.4$ with 1,204 df, $p < .001$) and problems ($F = 5.95$ with 1,204 df, $p < .025$). The orthogonal contrast between the attractive and the unattractive presentation was not significant for either the traits or the problems.

The results of the analysis also indicate that there is a significant interaction effect between the three experimental conditions (attractive/unattractive--audio) and the two groups of students (high school and college). The analysis revealed no other significant differences (see Table 3).

The interaction between the experimental conditions and the perceived helpfulness on the sixteen problems with the high school and college students is shown in Figure 1. The high school students perceived that the audio tape counselor was significantly more helpful with the 16 problems overall than the college student. The college students did not perceive the counselor as being significantly more helpful across any of the experimental conditions.

A multi-comparison test was performed to determine if the

Table 3
Overall Analysis of Variance of
the Three Counselor Presentations

Source			Traits			Source			Problems		
	df	ms	F		df	ms	F		df	ms	F
A	2	67.65	13.536**	A	2	55.122	4.012*				
B	1	4.71	.943	B	1	2.976	.2166				
AB	2	9.13	1.826	AB	2	57.604	4.193*				
S (BA)	204	4.99		S (BA)	204	13.73					
D	11	51.36	36.105**	E	15	28.242	21.21**				
AD	22	4.07	2.865**	AE	30	1.940	1.457				
BD	11	2.52	1.773	BE	15	1.126	.846				
ABD	22	1.32	.929	ABE	30	1.807	1.357				
SD (AB)	2244	1.42		SE (AB)	3060	1.331					

*p < .05

**p < .01

A = three video tape presentations

B = high school and college students

D = trait rating

E = problem rating

attractiveness variable made a significant difference on the rating of any of the specific 12 traits or 16 problems. The results indicate (see Table 4 and Table 5) that the attractive counselor was seen as significantly ($MS_{S/AB} = 4.99$) more attractive than the unattractive

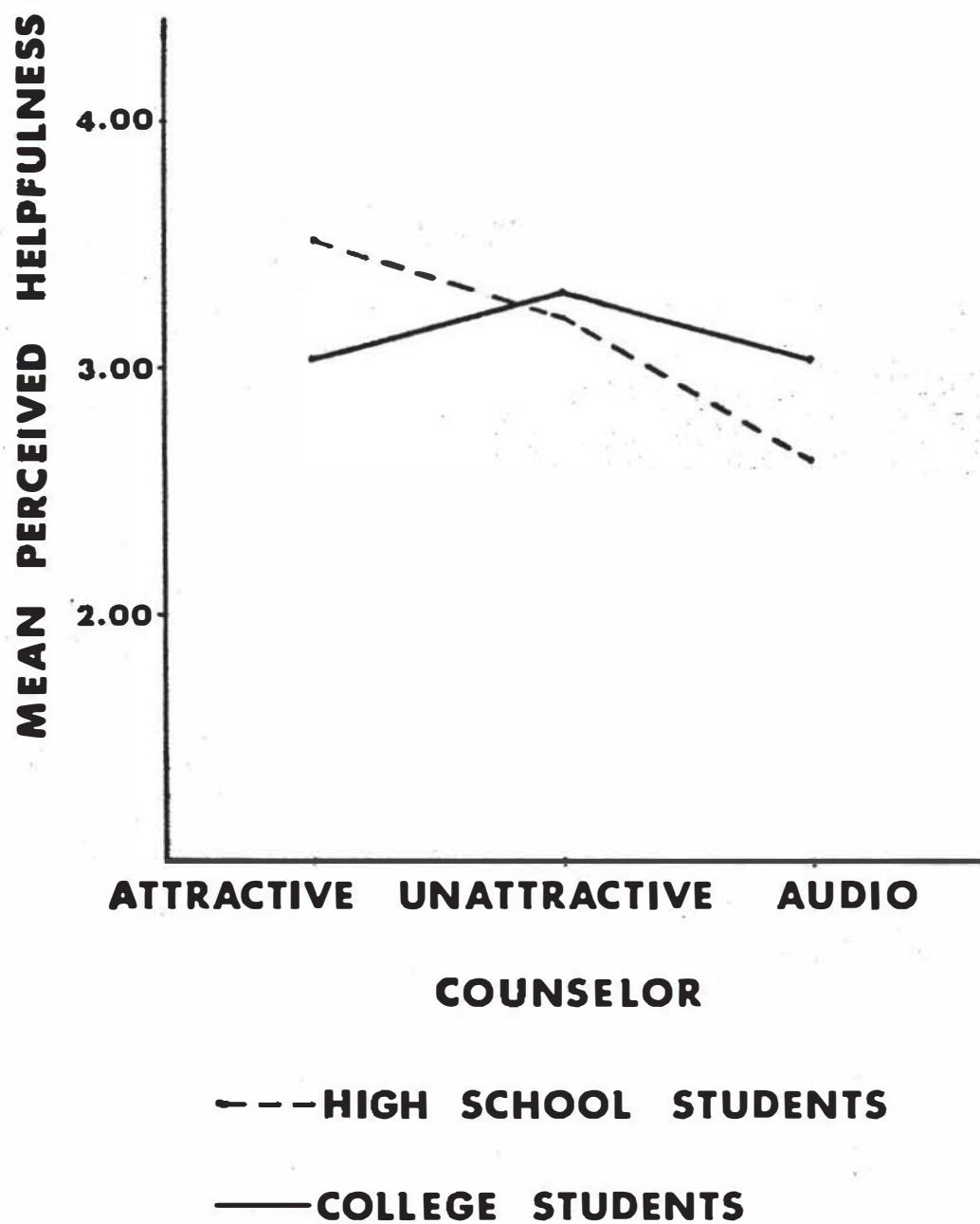


FIG. 1 PERCEIVED HELPFULNESS BY HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE FOR 3 COUNSELORS PRESENTATIONS

counselor ($p = .05$). The attractive counselor was also perceived as significantly more professional ($p = .05$). There was no significant difference in the other 10 traits between the attractive and unattractive conditions. All other traits seemed to be unaffected by the counselor's appearance.

In regard to the 16 problems (see Table 5) the attractive counselor was not perceived as significantly more helpful ($MS S/AB = 13.73$) on any of the 16 problems presented. The unattractive counselor was perceived to be significantly more helpful with a drug addiction problem. Students' perceptions of perceived helpfulness seemed to be unaffected by the counselor's appearance.

A 2 x 2 (attractive/unattractive) self rating and counselor rating of attractive or unattractive analysis of variance was performed to determine if there was a significant difference in the way a student rated the counselor on the attractiveness scale and the rating in which he gave himself. The median rating of self attractiveness across the attractive and unattractive groups (ignoring audio) was 2.8. Those students who rated themselves as 1 or 2 were classified as perceiving themselves attractive. Those who rated themselves as 4, 5, or 6 were classified as perceiving themselves unattractive. Those 69 students who rated themselves 3, the interval that contained the median, were not considered. A total of 71 students were analyzed to determine if there was a relationship between their own perceived attractiveness and their perceptions of the counselor's attractiveness. The results of the analysis (see Table 6) indicate that there was no relationship between self perceived attractiveness and a student's perception of

Table 4

A Multi Comparison Test of Difference Between the Means of the Attractive vs. Unattractive Counselor on the Traits

Trait	Att-Unatt	SS	F	P
Physically Appearance	-.457	7.314	5.14	*
Courteous	-.328	3.765	2.64	NS
Likeable	-.157	.300	.61	NS
Warm Person	-.300	3.15	2.22	NS
Sincere	-.186	1.21	.85	NS
Intelligent	.157	.862	.606	NS
Trustworthy	-.129	.581	.408	NS
Friendly	-.242	2.05	1.45	NS
Interesting	-.199	1.39	.98	NS
Professional	.443	6.869	4.83	*
Competent	.329	3.788	2.66	NS
Relaxed	-.029	.029	.02	NS

*p < .05

the counselor's attractiveness. There was no significant difference in the ratings of those students who viewed the attractive presentation and those who viewed the unattractive presentation.

A 2 x 2 x 2 (sex of subject, student--attractive unattractive presentation,--high school college) analysis was performed with the traits and the problems. The results of this analysis (see Table 7) revealed that there was no significant difference between the sex of the student, the presentation viewed, or whether he was a

Table 5

A Multi Comparison Test of Difference Between Means of
the Attractive vs. Unattractive Counselor on the Problems

Problem	Att-Unatt	SS	F	P
Anxiety	.085	.253	.19	NS
Alcohol Problem	.357	4.46	3.34	NS
Shyness	-.115	.463	.35	NS
Sexual Functioning	-.371	4.817	3.62	NS
Depression	-.129	.582	.44	NS
Weight Problem	0	0	.75	NS
Conflicts with Parents	.143	.716	.538	NS
Speech Anxiety	.086	.258	.19	NS
Dating Difficulties	-.314	3.45	2.59	NS
Career Choice	.157	.863	.65	NS
Insomnia	.057	.114	.08	NS
Drug Addiction	.385	5.207	5.19	*
Inferiority Feelings	.2	1.4	1.05	NS
Test Anxiety	.171	1.023	.769	NS
Difficulties Making Friends	-.215	1.618	1.22	NS
Trouble Studying	.243	2.067	1.55	NS

*p < .05

Table 6

A Comparison of Mean Self Rating of Attractiveness and the Mean Rating of the Counselor in the Attractive and Unattractive Presentation

Total	df	ms
Self	1	
Attractive Presentation	1	4.501
Self x Presentation	1	
S/AB	67	1.128

Table 7

A Comparison of the Sex of the Student, Attractive or Unattractive Counselor, and High School or College Student

Traits			Problems			
Total	df	ms	F	df	ms	F
A	1	44.578	NS	1	11.428	NS
B	1	1.607	NS	1	226.314	NS
AB	1	44.579	NS	1	358.400	NS
C	1	.010	NS	1	73.724	NS
AC	1	1.117	NS	1	352.274	NS
BC	1	95.44	NS	1	7.646	NS
ABC	1	56.850	NS	1	145.350	NS
S/ABC	132	61.575	NS	132	248.786	NS

A = two video tape presentations

B = high school and college students

C = sex

high school or college student. This resulted with the problems and the traits. There was no significant interactions found.

Discussion

The present results are inconsistent with previous research on initial impressions of the physically attractive (Barocas & Karoly, 1972, and Miller, 1970). It was predicted that the physically attractive counselor would be rated more favorably on personal traits and be perceived as more potentially helpful than the unattractive counselor or the audio group. The results of this study do not support this prediction.

Results of the ratings of the traits indicate that the physically attractive counselor was seen as significantly more attractive than the unattractive counselor. In addition, the attractive counselor was perceived as significantly more professional than the unattractive counselor. Cash (1975) found that an attractive male counselor was perceived as more intelligent, competent, assertive, friendly, trustworthy, warm, likeable, and attractive. The female counselor in this study did not elicit the same favorable trait ratings as the male counselor except for the attractiveness rating.

In regard to perceived helpfulness the attractive counselor was not perceived by the students to be significantly more helpful with any of the 16 problems presented. The results of the Cash (1975) study indicate that the physically attractive counselor was seen as significantly more helpful with inferiority feelings, conflicts with parents, drug addiction, dating difficulties, shyness,

depression, difficulties making friends, and general anxiety. Cash (1975) and Shapiro, Struening, Barten, & Shapiro (1973) suggest that a favorable attractive appearance contributes significantly to a favorable impression of the counselor. The present study does not support this suggestion. The unattractive counselor was perceived to be significantly more helpful with a drug addiction problem. The attractiveness variable in the present study did not seem to contribute to a favorable impression regarding perceived helpfulness.

The results indicate that there was a significant interaction between the high school and college students and the treatment conditions (see Figure 1). College students did not perceive either the attractive, unattractive, or audio counselor to be differently helpful. The high school students perceived the attractive counselor to be least helpful, and the audio most helpful. The unattractive counselor fell inbetween. The unattractive counselor was perceived very similarly by both the high school and college students (high school mean 3.21, college mean 3.27).

A possible explanation, although inconsistent with previous research on the attractiveness variable, (Sigall & Landy, 1973, and Huston, 1973) is that these high school students did not use physical attractiveness to form their initial impressions of counselors when determining how helpful they might be. Another possible explanation of the significant interaction is that the classrooms which were randomly assigned to treatment groups were not representative samples of students, although treatment order was randomly assigned to classrooms. This could have also

contributed to the overall lack of significant results of the study.

The ratings of the counselor's attractiveness by those rating themselves did not differ from those students rating themselves as unattractive. Based upon the comparison of these 71 students it is suggested that a student's self perception of himself does not influence his ratings of others on perceived attractiveness. It must be noted that in reducing the sample size to 71 the difference between the attractive and unattractive presentation is not significant, although statistically very close.

There were no sex differences between students (high school and college) and the ratings on traits and problems. Males did not differ in their perceptions from females.

Effects of physical attractiveness may be a function of the extent of attractiveness. Perhaps the present study suggests that although the attractive and unattractive counselor were perceived to be significantly different on the attractiveness variable the absolute difference was not great, that is, the counselor was not perceived at either extreme of the scale, but well within the range of average. Whether an extremely attractive and extremely unattractive counselor would have yielded significant results is certainly a topic of further research. It is suggested that only the extremely attractive are perceived as potentially more helpful and the more average in appearance are perceived somewhere between the helpful and not helpful. Judging from the students ratings, both conditions fell between the extremes in this study.

A possible weakness of this study is that only the audio of the attractive condition was heard by the students. It would have

been better to use the audio from both the attractive and unattractive conditions. Cash, Begley, McCown, & Weise (1975) controlled for audio difference by playing the audio from both the attractive and unattractive condition.

Whether an attractive person is actually more helpful to the client is a topic beyond the scope of this paper. Implications from previous research (Strupp, 1963) indicate that positive expectancies help facilitate a favorable therapeutic relationship.

This paper cannot conclude that the physical attractiveness variable does contribute to a more positive expectation in the counseling process. The overall lack of significant results of this study clearly limit any generalization beyond this population of students. Further research investigating specific attractiveness levels is suggested.

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Appendix A

Personality Traits

Below is a set of scales for rating the counselor. Each scale has two opposite descriptions with numbers in the middle. Indicate your honest opinion of the counselor by circling one number which corresponds with your perceptions of the counselor.

Physically attractive	1 2 3 4 5 6	Physically unattractive
Courteous	1 2 3 4 5 6	Inconsiderate
Not likeable	1 2 3 4 5 6	Likeable
Warm person	1 2 3 4 5 6	Cold person
Insincere	1 2 3 4 5 6	Sincere
Intelligent	1 2 3 4 5 6	Unintelligent
Untrustworthy	1 2 3 4 5 6	Trustworthy
Friendly	1 2 3 4 5 6	Unfriendly
Uninteresting	1 2 3 4 5 6	Interesting
Unprofessional	1 2 3 4 5 6	Professional
Competent	1 2 3 4 5 6	Incompetent
Relaxed	1 2 3 4 5 6	Tense

Your age _____

Your sex _____

Please rate yourself on your own physical attractiveness.

Physically attractive	1 2 3 4 5 6	Physically unattractive
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Appendix B
Problem Scale

Suppose you had to discuss the problems listed below with the counselor that was just presented on the tape. How confident would you be that the counselor would be helpful to you? Indicate your degree of confidence in this counselor by circling the number that corresponds to the statement in the key.

KEY

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. very confident | 4. slightly doubtful |
| 2. moderately confident | 5. moderately doubtful |
| 3. slightly confident | 6. very doubtful |

PROBLEMS

General Anxiety	1 2 3 4 5 6
Alcohol Problem	1 2 3 4 5 6
Shyness	1 2 3 4 5 6
Sexual Functioning	1 2 3 4 5 6
Depression	1 2 3 4 5 6
Weight Problem	1 2 3 4 5 6
Conflicts with parents	1 2 3 4 5 6
Speech Anxiety	1 2 3 4 5 6
Dating difficulties	1 2 3 4 5 6
Career choice	1 2 3 4 5 6
Insomnia	1 2 3 4 5 6
Drug addiction	1 2 3 4 5 6
Inferiority feelings	1 2 3 4 5 6
Test anxiety	1 2 3 4 5 6
Difficulties making friends	1 2 3 4 5 6
Trouble studying	1 2 3 4 5 6