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THE EFFECTS OF THE PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS  
STEREOTYPE ON THERAPISTS' PERCEPTIONS  
OF CLIENTS

by

Todd Scott Larsen

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

1979

Suprase

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Todd S. Larsen

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Abstract

The Effects of the Physical Attractiveness  
Stereotype on Therapists' Perceptions  
of Clients

by

Todd S. Larsen, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1979

Major Professor: Dr. E. Wayne Wright  
Department: Psychology

The purpose of the present study was two-fold: (1) to determine whether the ratings a client receives on measures of likeableness, psychological effectiveness, and prognostic outcome differ as a result of the client's perceived level of physical attractiveness (high or low) and, (2) to determine whether the level of professional training in clinical/counseling psychology possessed by the raters mediates these effects.

To achieve these purposes, four groups of subjects (varying in level of training in clinical/counseling psychology) listened to the same 12-minute audio-tape excerpt of an actual initial interview with a client. Half the subjects in each group viewed a photograph of a woman previously determined to be of a high physical attractiveness level and

half the subjects in each group viewed a photograph of a woman previously determined to be low in physical attractiveness level. The subjects were told that the photograph was of the client to whom they were listening. Following the presentation of these stimulus materials, the subjects responded to questionnaires designed to determine the subjects' perceptions of the client's likeableness, psychological effectiveness, and prognosis.

Analysis of variance techniques were used for statistical comparisons of the data. The results showed: (1) the physical attractiveness level of the client (high or low) resulted in no systematic biasing of the subjects' judgements of the client's likeableness, psychological effectiveness, or prognosis, and (2) the four groups (representing different levels of training in counseling/clinical psychology) did not differ significantly from one another in the ratings they gave the client. Therefore, the results of the present study did not support previous research on this topic. Possible implications of the findings of the present study, with consideration of the apparent contradiction with earlier research and suggestions for further investigation of this topic are discussed.

(104 pages)



## Chapter I

### Introduction

When a client and a psychotherapist agree to meet, the unwritten assumption is that the relationship will be psychologically beneficial for the client. However, research literature on therapy outcomes shows that some clients seem to improve while others do not. Reasons for this difference in outcome may theoretically be traced to a number of factors, including qualities of the client and therapist, type of treatment, or an interaction among these variables. In order to continuously improve the quality of the psychotherapeutic relationship it appears important to identify variables that influence this relationship and to translate this knowledge into appropriate therapeutic skills that will help practitioners avoid pitfalls to which the untrained or novice may fall prey.

One variable which has been shown to affect interpersonal relationships, and which may, therefore, play an important role in the therapeutic relationship is that of the client's physical attractiveness. Many studies reported in the social psychological literature have indicated the importance of physical attractiveness in dyadic and group relationships. In general, research has shown that physically attractive persons are viewed by others as possessing more "socially desirable"

attributes than less attractive persons, and on the basis of this general research finding, several authors have proposed the existence of a "physical attractiveness stereotype." Stereotypes are simplistic, broad generalizations that are widely accepted and based on some prominent and distinctive personal characteristic. The physical attractiveness stereotype, in particular, has been characterized by what has been called the "what-is-beautiful-is-good" hypothesis. That is, physically attractive persons are generally assumed to be more likely to possess socially desirable personality traits and are expected to lead more successful and better adjusted lives than are unattractive persons (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972).

By far, the largest number of studies concerned with physical attractiveness have been devoted to determining the existence of the stereotype. A "first-impression" format has been utilized in nearly all of the investigations of the stereotype. The typical methodology of this type of research format has been to show an individual's photograph (previously rated high or low in physical attractiveness) to a volunteer research participant. The participant is asked to rate the individual depicted in the photograph on a number of personal and/or social dimensions. The accumulated evidence reported by a number of researchers in this area of investigation (e.g. Miller, 1970a, b; Dion, Berscheid, & Walsher, 1972; Dermer & Thiel, 1975) has strongly and consistently supported the existence of a physical attractiveness stereotype and has indicated that the stereotype is indeed consistent with the "beautiful-is-

good" hypothesis. A variety of additional investigations have attempted to identify the content of typical stereotypes, i. e. the kinds of stereotypic attributions made on the basis of physical attractiveness. Several studies have shown physical attractiveness to be associated with interpersonal and occupational success, (Dion, et al., 1972), socially desirable personality characteristics (Dion, et al., 1972), likeability (Mathes, 1975), talent (Landy & Sigall, 1974) and psychological adjustment (Cash, Kehr, Polyson & Freeman, 1977).

In extensive reviews of literature on the topic of attractiveness, Adams (1977b) and Huston and Levinger (1978) concur about the existence of the physical attractiveness stereotype and report that it seems to exist across a variety of situational contexts (e. g. school, family, legal experience, dating and marriage). Adams (1977b) concludes that:

Integratively, the evidence suggests the stereotype is seldom mediated by environmental contexts, and that physically attractive persons are differentiated from their less attractive peers across a variety of experiences which are typical of various stages in the life cycle. (p. 219)

Given that a physical attractiveness stereotype does exist and that it exists across a variety of situational settings, one may wonder what the implications are within to the context of psychotherapy.

Three attributes, as noted earlier, that are reportedly associated with an individual's physical attractiveness include success, psychological adjustment, and likeability. It seems plausible, therefore, that because of these socially desirable attributions, physically attractive individuals may be viewed as more successful candidates for therapy

(or if unattractive, as potentially unsuccessful candidates). Evidence of an anecdotal nature (Goldstein, 1971; Schofield, 1964) has emphasized the degree to which psychotherapists prefer to work with "YAVIS" clients. That is, clients who are perceived as young, physically attractive, verbal, intelligent, and successful.

The present study purports to examine the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype upon psychotherapists' perceptions of clients. In particular, the judgements of male psychotherapists about female clients are examined. The reasons for limiting the present investigation to the study of this particular sex combination are two-fold. First, the perceptions of males about females have received the most attention in the physical attractiveness literature. Therefore, more evidence exists regarding the influences of women's attractiveness on male subjects. Secondly, the limited availability of female psychotherapists makes an adequate sample size of these individuals difficult to obtain. Within this framework, the present study concerns the effects of the client's physical attractiveness on the therapists' judgements of that client's likeability, degree of psychological disturbance, and favorableness of prognosis. In general, the available literature suggests that individuals who are untrained in psychotherapeutic skills are biased by the stereotype in these particular judgements (e. g. Cash, et al., 1977). A question that remains unanswered at this point is whether the specialized training received by professional psychotherapists reduces the types and/or degrees of biasing stereotypes found in research with untrained

subjects. It seems apparent (and desirable) that if training in human relationship skills and/or psychotherapy techniques does, in fact, reduce stereotype-based bias, it should also result in greater accuracy of perceptions and clinical judgements made by therapists in patient-therapist relationships.

### Need for the Study

If psychotherapists are biased by the stereotyping effect discussed in the previous section, its influences may be manifest in the therapist/client relationship in at least two ways. First, the stereotype expectations may become active through the process of the so-called self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal, 1968, 1974). Secondly, the effects of the stereotype may lead the therapist to "premature conclusions" about the client (Dailey, 1952). Each of these potentially "contaminating" are briefly discussed below to emphasize the important implications of the present research to the therapeutic process.

Self-fulfilling prophecy. The self-fulfilling prophecy is the process by which one person's expectation about another person's behavior becomes, through the expectation itself, a moving factor in determining the behavior of the other person. The phenomenon of the self-fulfilling prophecy has been widely recognized for a number of years in such contexts as research, education and the healing professions (Rosenthal, 1968). It is not surprising that this phenomenon of interpersonal influence, and particularly its aspects of non-verbalized expectations

and perceptions of others as influencing factors themselves, have also been noted by researchers and practitioners in the areas of counseling and psychotherapy.

Frieda Fromm-Reichman (1950), among other clinicians, has spoken of the fact that a therapist's beliefs with regard to a patient's prognosis may become a determinant of that prognosis. Strupp and Luborsky (1962) and Shapiro (1964) have reported similar observations. These observations have also been supported by a variety of empirical evidence (Goldstein, 1962; Martin and Sterne, 1975). These data imply that the psychotherapist's expectancy is somehow related to the actual outcomes in therapy. Although the causal reasons for this relationship are still unclear, it seems apparent that these expectations functions, at least in part, in a self-fulfilling manner. It seems plausible, also, that expectations based upon stereotypic information may likewise become self-fulfilling. If so, the stereotype-based inferences unwittingly made by therapists about their clients could have important implications and consequences upon the therapeutic encounter and therapy outcomes.

Snyder, Berscheid, and Tanke (1977) have recently provided evidence that the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype can indeed become self-fulfilling. Based upon their research, in a context other than psychotherapy, these investigators reported that:

Targets who were perceived (unbeknownst to them) to be physically attractive actually became to behave in a friendly, likable, and sociable manner. The perceivers' attributions about their

targets based upon their stereotyped intuitions about the world had initiated a process that produced behavioral confirmation of those attributions. The initially erroneous attributions of the perceivers had become real: The stereotype had truly functioned as a self-fulfilling prophecy. (p. 663)

Taken together, all of the above evidence suggests that if stereotype effects are operative upon therapists, the expectations based on the stereotype, are to some extent, likely to become self-fulfilling.

Premature conclusions. The second way in which the influences of stereotype-based attributions may have a biasing effect upon the therapist's perceptions of the client is through what Dailey (1952) termed the "premature conclusion." Dailey defined the premature conclusion as "any statement made by an observer before he has observed the optimal amount of the person's behavior" (p. 133). As an illustration, Dailey cited the example of a clinician who decided after a five-minute interview that a patient is "psychopathic," has no feelings of guilt and is therefore a poor treatment prospect. Dailey's assumption is that such a determination is more accurately made by extended observation. The hypothesis Dailey makes is that such a premature conclusion hampers the clinician's ability to perceive and integrate further data into his impression. As a result of the clinician's resistance to the perception of further information, subsequent impressions and understanding of the client becomes distorted. Following a series of studies designed to test this hypothesis, Dailey (1952) concluded that an observer is affected by his own judgements about the person under

observation. Further, that this effect has an adverse influence upon the accuracy of the observer's judgments.

In speaking about the processes involved in accurately understanding another individual, Dailey (1952) stated:

It is the bias of the author that these processes must be thoroughly understood before the really fundamental variables in Clinical Psychology--the variables of clinician-patient interaction--can be meaningfully studied.

It seems scarcely necessary to add that the root problems of Social Psychology concern the direct interpersonal situation, a situation involving intricate maneuvers by each participant person, predicated on degrees of understanding by each of "The Other." The author regards Stereotypes, for example, as a kind of "permanent premature decision," hampering the acquisition of personal understanding. (p. 151)

It appears that if clinicians are swayed by the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype, the resulting expectations may influence the clinician's relationship with the client in at least two ways: (1) the perceptions of the client generated by the stereotype (e. g. a poor prognosis) may become self-fulfilling, and (2) premature conclusions based upon stereotypic information may interfere with the integration of other important data into the clinician's overall impressions and responses.

In summary, the research conclusions presented in the present chapter suggest that a physical attractiveness stereotype exists in social interactions and that it exists among a variety of societal groups and across different social contexts. In addition, two avenues through which stereotype-based inferences may affect the clinician client relationship have been offered. Based upon this information, it is felt that



there exists sufficient justification to warrant the present investigation of the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype on therapists' perceptions of clients.

### Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the present research were two-fold: (1) to determine whether the ratings a client receives on likeableness, psychological disturbance, and favorableness of prognosis differ when the client is seen in an attractive versus an unattractive condition, and (2) if such a stereotype effect exists, to determine whether the level of training in human relations skills the raters possess mediates the effects of the stereotype.

### Hypotheses

The present study attempted to answer the following questions: (1) do ratings of a client's likeableness, level of psychological disturbance and favorableness of prognosis differ with varying levels of physical attractiveness of the client? (2) do individuals at different levels of training with regard to psychotherapeutic skills differ in the degree to which they are biased by the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype?

Statistical tests for these questions were conducted in terms of the following null hypotheses:

- I. There is no difference in ratings of attractive and unattractive clients on Huston's Likeableness Scale.

- II. There are no differences between individuals who are trained, intraining, and untrained in psychotherapeutic skills with respect to their ratings of clients on Huston's Likeableness Scale.
- III. There is no interaction effect between training level of the raters and attractiveness level of the client with regard to ratings on Huston's Likeableness Scale.
- IV. There is no difference in ratings of attractive and unattractive clients on Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale.
- V. There are no differences between individuals who are trained, intraining and untrained in psychotherapeutic skills with respect to their ratings of clients on Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale.
- VI. There is no interaction effect between training level of the raters and attractiveness level of the client with regard to ratings on Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale.
- VII. There is no difference in ratings of attractive and unattractive clients with regard to the prognostic index.
- VIII. There are no differences between individuals who are trained, intraining, and untrained in psychotherapeutic skills with respect to their ratings of clients on the prognostic index.
- IX. There is no interaction effect between training level of the raters and attractiveness level of the client with regard to ratings on the prognostic index.

### Definition of Terms

Physical Attractiveness. Without exception, researchers in the area of physical attractiveness have used the "truth by consensus" method in the determination of the physical attractiveness level of stimulus persons. This method typically requires "judges" to rate a number of photographs of stimulus persons along a continuum of physical attractiveness. The attractiveness continuum is usually represented by a Likert-type scale. In most instances, both the mean and standard deviation obtained for each photograph is used in the selection of the required level of attractiveness. That is, those photographs with the most consistent ratings among the judges are selected.

Despite the commonly held belief that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," the data reported in the literature on the subject generally indicates that there is a high degree of agreement about who is attractive or unattractive (e. g. Kopera, Maier, and Johnson, 1971; Murstein, 1972). This "truth by consensus" definition of physical attractiveness was adopted for the purposes of the present investigation.

Stereotype. Stereotypes are simplistic, broad generalizations that are widely accepted and based on some prominent and distinctive personal characteristic. To illustrate, the notion that redheads have fiery tempers is an example of a stereotype because it is widespread and oversimplified. Because of these characteristics, stereotypes are very often inaccurate. Physical attractiveness can serve as a stereotyping stimulus since an individual's attractiveness level may be a

prominent and readily accessible personal characteristic. In addition, the literature indicates that physically attractive individuals are generally attributed more socially desirable characteristics than are physically unattractive individuals.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

The previous chapter presented the basic theoretical and empirical foundations upon which this study was based. It was shown that the evidence strongly supports the existence of a physical attractiveness stereotype. Further, it was shown that this stereotype seems to exist in accordance with the "what-is-beautiful-is-good" hypothesis. The evidence presented also supports the existence of the stereotype across a variety of interpersonal contexts. In addition to the discussion of the existence and nature of the physical attractiveness stereotype, two possible mechanisms concerning ways in which the stereotype may become influential in the context of psychotherapy were postulated. The introductory information presented in Chapter I leads one to the plausible expectation that psychotherapists, like other people, may be influenced by the physical attractiveness of other persons. However, very few investigators have adequately examined specifically how psychotherapists are influenced by the physical attractiveness of their clients.

In the present chapter, more detailed research data are presented concerning the relationships between physical attractiveness, likeability and personality trait attribution. Additionally, consideration is given to research evidence that the judgements of professionals in general, and

the judgements of psychotherapists in particular, are influenced by physical attractiveness.

### Physical Attractiveness and Likeability

In the area of interpersonal attraction, one of the most consistent findings reported by investigators is that liking is, in part, a function of physical attractiveness (Aronson, 1972; Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Miller, 1970a). Physically attractive individuals have been reported to be better liked, both in laboratory experiments utilizing photographs as stimuli and in studies employing "real life" encounters. Most of these investigations have been conducted within a heterosexual dating context.

One of the initial studies examining the relationship between physical attractiveness and liking was conducted by Walster, Aronson, Abrahams and Rottman (1966). The effects of physical attractiveness, personality, and aptitude on liking were investigated. The subjects in this study were male and female college freshmen who attended a "computer dance" arranged by the experimenters. Each subject was secretly rated on attractiveness by four judges when buying the ticket to the dance. The subjects believed that they would be matched by a computer to a partner based upon questionnaires filled out at the time the tickets were purchased. In fact, the subjects were paired randomly. Questionnaires which were administered at the intermission of the dance, contained questions relating to how much the subject liked

his/her date and whether he/she would like to date the partner again. How much the partners actually dated subsequent to the dance, was determined in a four to six month follow up interview. The results revealed that the single most important factor related to the subject's liking for his/her date and willingness to date again was simply how attractive the partner was. The investigators concluded that "The only important determinant is S's liking for his date was the date's physical attractiveness" (p. 508). A series of subsequent studies (Brislin & Lewis, 1968; Byrne, Ervin & Lamberth, 1970; Tesser & Brodie, 1971) employing essentially the same "computer dance" approach have strongly substantiated the importance of physical attractiveness as a determinant of liking. Walster, et al. (1966) have suggested that these results may be limited only to a first date situation. They suggested also that on a more conventional single date, the date's personality and other personal characteristics may have become more important. That is, the effects due to physical attractiveness would weaken as more information became available to the dating partner.

To test the premis set forth by Walster, et al (1966), Mathes (1975) examined the effects of physical attractiveness on liking over a series of five "encounters." Subjects, rated on attractiveness and anxiety level, were paired in male-female dyads and asked to go on a series of five 40-minute encounters. After each encounter, the subjects rated their partners on likeability. Mathes (1975) found that the influence of physical attractiveness on liking did not diminish over a

series of encounters. He concluded that "Both physical attractiveness and personality information are available on the first encounter and have a continuing and undiminishing effect on liking (at least over a series of five encounters)" (p. 769).

Further evidence for the lasting influences of physical attractiveness on liking in a non-dating context is reported by Kleck and Rubenstein (1975). These investigators examined the effects of physical appearance (attractive-unattractive) and perceived attitude similarity (high-low) on self-report and non-verbal measures of interpersonal attraction. In this laboratory study, confederates (female) were used as the stimulus persons. The attractiveness of the confederates was manipulated through the use of make-up. The male subjects in the study participated in an interview-like situation in which the confederate appeared highly attractive or unattractive and displayed attitudes either dissimilar or similar to the subject. During the interview, the male subjects were monitored via audio and video recording equipment. The physical attractiveness of the confederates, but not their perceived degree of similarity, resulted in a number of significant effects. First, measures of liking for the confederate, completed by the male subjects, indicated that the confederate in the attractive condition was like significantly more than the confederate in the unattractive condition. Second, the subjects displayed significantly more positive non-verbal behaviors (e. g. smiling at, looking at, etc.) toward the attractive than the unattractive confederates. Finally, self-report measures taken two to four weeks



subsequent to the laboratory interaction revealed that subjects had thought more about their partner in the interim and continued to feel they liked her more if she was attractive rather than unattractive.

Other investigators exploring the impact of both physical attractiveness and attitude similarity on liking have also reported positive relationships. Byrne, London and Reeves (1968) for example, gave college student subjects (male and female) an attitude questionnaire (supposedly filled out by a stranger) with instructions to form an opinion of that person based upon his/her own attitudinal responses. The scales actually varied with respect to the similarity or dissimilarity of the strangers attitudes to the subject's own. To each scale was attached a picture of an attractive or unattractive male or female. One of the major findings reported by these investigators is that interpersonal attraction was significantly greater toward attractive than toward unattractive strangers (regardless of sex). In other words, physical attractiveness did not significantly interact with the subject's sex, or the stranger's sex in producing liking for the stranger. Again, physical attractiveness was found to be an important determinant of liking. Using highly similar designs, Stroebe, Insko, Thompson and Layton (1971) and McKelvie and Matthews (1976) have corroborated these findings with regard to physical attractiveness and liking.

The foregoing evidence perhaps has important implications for psychotherapeutic relationships. It may be that physically attractive clients are better liked and that therapists are therefore more readily

able to feel compassionate and optimistic, while with less attractive individuals, therapists may feel less personally moved and more discouraged about being helpful. Indeed, there is some evidence to support the contention that client likeability is an important variable in psychotherapeutic treatment and outcome.

Shapiro, Struening, Shapiro, and Barten (1976), examined the followup data of psychiatric out patients treated in a community mental health clinic. The dependent variables in the study consisted of ratings of clinical course (i. e. progress in therapy) by both the patients and the therapists. These ratings were made on a 7-point scale that ranged from marked worsening to marked improvement. Seventy three independent variables (including pretreatment and concurrent-with-treatment variables) were categorized into 10 groups. The independent variables were introduced within each group in a stepwise multiple regression analysis. The purpose of this analysis was to select the variables most highly associated with the evaluation of clinical course by patients and therapists. The strongest confirmed hypothesis in this study was the relationship between therapist and patient ratings of improvement and therapist and patient evaluations of each other as likeable, physically attractive, and either a good patient for treatment or a competent therapist. With respect to the effects of likeability on patient and therapist ratings of patient improvement, the authors stated that:

If patient and therapist liked each other, their respective ratings of improvement varied between 77% and 96%. However, if the therapist did not like the patient, the improvement reported by the therapist varied between 52% and 62%. (p. 807)

In a study also related to outcome in psychotherapy and client likeability, Stoler (1963) found that more successful clients received significantly higher mean likeability ratings than less successful clients.

Stoler concluded:

It is possible that the therapist may be unable to provide effective therapy to a client he cannot like and the client who has had little experience in life being liked may be unable to perceive that the therapist really cares for him.  
(p. 178)

Finally, Ehrlich and Bauer (1967) documented a relationship between likeability of the client and the treatment that he/she receives. These investigators found that hospitalized psychiatric patients who received low likeability ratings were three times more likely to receive multiple-drug treatment than patients rated high on likeability. It was also found in this investigation that the therapist's ratings of patient change were positively correlated with the therapist's ratings of the patient's likeability.

It may be seen from the preceding evidence that physically attractive individuals (of either sex) are typically better liked than are unattractive individuals. It may be also seen that the likeability of clients may have a powerful impact upon their treatment and outcomes in psychotherapy. The following section explores the relationship between an individual's physical attractiveness and the personality traits that may be attributed to that individual based upon attractiveness.

Physical Attractiveness and  
Personality Trait Attribution

Substantial evidence is provided in the social psychological literature to suggest that physically attractive individuals are attributed more socially desirable personality traits than are unattractive persons. That is, the attractiveness of an individual seems to act as a stimulus that triggers a set of expectancies which lead, through a process of trait inference, to a number of expectations about that individual's personality traits. A number of investigators have verified this relationship between attractiveness level and differential personality trait attribution.

Miller (1970a), for example, asked male and female college students to record their impressions of persons depicted in photographs (previously rated as high, moderate, or low in physical attractiveness) on the Jackson and Minton (1963) Adjective Preference Scale. This scale consists of 17 dimensions, each of which contains 10 pairs of bipolar adjectives in a forced choice format (e. g. rigid versus flexible, unsure versus confident, submissive versus assertive). Miller found significant effects for physical attractiveness on 15 of the 17 dimensions. Photographs which had been prerated as attractive were consistently associated with the positive poles (e. g. more sensitive, confident, happy, assertive) while the unattractive photographs were associated with the negative, undesirable poles. Thus, physical attractiveness was seen by Miller to be a potentially strong determinant of others'

impressions of an individual's personality characteristics. Miller has concluded: "The effect is pervasive, occurring in a large array of impression responses and with respect to male and female stimulus persons" (p. 242). Miller, (1970b) also found that persons low in physical attractiveness were perceived by others to be more externally controlled along Rotter's internal-external control dimension, while those of either moderate or high attractiveness levels were perceived as more internally controlled. These findings suggest, quoting Miller,

physically attractive individuals are likely to be perceived as masters of their fate, as individuals who behave with a sense of purpose and out of their own volition, whereas unattractive individuals are more likely to be seen as coerced and generally influenced by others or by environmental conditions. (p. 108)

A study conducted by Dion, Berscheid and Walster (1972) corroborated and extended Miller's findings. In a study by Dion, Berscheid and Walster, male and female college undergraduates were asked to rate three photographs along a number of dimensions. Half the subjects viewed photographs of women varying in physical attractiveness level and half the subjects viewed photographs of men varying in attractiveness level. The subjects were told that their perceptions of the individuals in the photographs would be scored for accuracy. The results revealed that attractive persons of both sexes were expected by subjects to possess almost every trait which the authors had determined as socially desirable in a previous study. For example, physically attractive persons were perceived more likely than less attractive persons to be "sexually warm and responsive, sensitive, kind,

interesting, strong, poised, modest, sociable, and outgoing" (p. 169). The subjects were not only asked to judge the personality characteristics of the persons depicted in the photographs, but also to predict how positive and future life experiences were likely to be for these individuals. In this latter regard, the results showed that the subjects expected that physically attractive individuals would be more prestigious, experience happier marriages, become better parents, and enjoy more fulfilling social and occupational lives in general. The findings of the above studies have received additional support in research reported by Dermer and Thiel (1975), who employed essentially the same approach.

In a study highly relevant to the present research, Cash, Kehr, Polyson, and Freeman (1977) examined the role of physical attractiveness in the attribution of psychological disturbance among peers. The importance of their study stems from the fact that it was conducted in a context beyond the usual, initial impressions format typically utilized in attractiveness research. Unlike previous investigations, the subjects in this study received highly intimate personal information from the attractive or unattractive stimulus persons via taped interviews. Thus a good deal more information, beyond photographic information, was available to the subjects about the persons they were being asked to rate. In this study, male and female college students were asked to listen to interview audiotapes constructed to reflect low and high levels of adjustment of a female interviewee. The interview tapes were presented with a photograph of either an attractive individual, an unattractive individual,

or with no photograph at all. Following the interview, the subjects were asked to complete Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale (1973) (used to assess perceived mental health), and two 9-point scales to assess perceived adjustment and direction of prognosis. The results revealed that the attractive interviewee was judged as less disturbed and with a better prognosis than the unattractive interviewee. Also, the interviewee in the high adjustment condition was judged to have greater disturbance and a poorer prognosis if she was unattractive than if no picture was presented. Conversely, identification of the maladjusted interviewee as attractive produced more favorable judgements of adjustment and prognoses.

The preceding studies clearly indicate that a physical attractiveness stereotype influences the process of personality trait attribution. The Cash, et al. (1977) findings also imply that the effect of the stereotype may reach into areas of clinical assessment. With regard to their results, Cash, et al. have stated:

These findings are clinically meaningful in view of the widespread use of peer counselors in mental health agencies. Whether professional's judgements are similarly influenced is a issue worthy of experimental inquiry. (p. 992)

Indeed, whether clinicians' judgements are so biased remains to be seen. However, some data do suggest that even professionals are swayed by a pretty face with regard to their judgements about others.

Physical Attractiveness and the  
Judgements of Professionals

The question as to whether, or to what extent, professionals (who possess specialized training in dealing with others and should therefore be more able to avoid bias) are influenced by stereotypic information based upon an individual's physical attractiveness is an important one. Therefore, this section is devoted to the examination of the literature related to the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype on the professional's judgements about others. Specifically, the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype have been documented in educational assessment, in the area of employment decision making, and to some extent, on therapists' judgements and client outcomes in psychotherapy.

Auffrey (1975) studied the effects of the physical attractiveness level of mentally retarded program candidates on evaluators' judgements of the candidate's diagnosis, prognosis and program placement. Ninety-four subjects from three "professional" groups served as subjects for this study. The three professional groups from which the subjects were chosen were: work study coordinators, speech therapists and counseling trainees. The subjects were asked to evaluate program candidates when given a set of standard simulated materials, including the photograph of a candidate that had previously been rated for attractiveness. The analysis revealed significant differences in evaluation of candidates as a function of physical attractiveness. The evaluators had assigned



the most physically attractive retardates higher recommendations for program placement and higher scores on a projective diagnostic statement. Differences in evaluations were also found on the basis of the training level of the evaluators. The more highly trained evaluators were generally influenced less by physical attractiveness, suggesting that training and experience may play an important role in the assessment process.

Investigating attractiveness effects in an employment context, Dipboye, Fromkin and Wilback (1975) found that the decisions of both professional and non-professional interviewers were influenced by the physical attractiveness of job applicants. Thirty male undergraduate students participated in the study as the untrained interviewers. Additionally, thirty male professional interviewers (representing a wide range of companies) participated individually while they were interviewing actual job applicants on a university campus. The subjects received 12 resumés, each containing a wallet-sized photograph of the applicant. The resumés were systematically varied with respect to three dimensions of information: the applicant's sex, physical attractiveness (high or low), and scholastic standing (high, average, and low). Other information in the resumés was held constant. The subjects were asked to rate the resumés on suitability for a managerial position. The results revealed that both the professional and non-professional interviewers preferred males to females, attractive applicants to unattractive applicants, and applicants of high scholastic standing. The investigators

concluded that "the training and experience of professional interviewers did not give them immunity from the tendency to discriminate on the basis of sex and physical attractiveness" (p. 42).

In a highly similar study, Cash, Gillen and Burns (1977) examined the effects of the physical attractiveness of job applicants on decision making among professional personnel consultants. Professional personnel consultants rated the suitability of one bogus applicant for selected masculine, feminine, and sex neutral jobs. Each resumé was identical except for the inclusion of a photograph depicting the applicant as either attractive or unattractive. The investigators found that personnel decisions strongly reflected the operation of a physical attractiveness stereotype. The effects were such that attractive persons of both sexes were perceived to have significantly greater employment potential than unattractive persons. These investigators concluded that "physical attractiveness affects personnel decisions to the general advantage of good-looking applicants..." (p. 309).

In light of the foregoing, it seems reasonable to conclude that trained professionals, in positions to make judgements about others, are influenced in meaningful ways by the physical attractiveness of the person under consideration. One may wonder whether psychotherapists are similarly influenced in clinical judgement by the attractiveness of their clients. The evidence available in the context of psychotherapy tends to indicate they are, and further, that this influence has an impact upon both process and outcome in the psychotherapeutic encounter.

Cavior and Glowgower (1973) conducted one of the initial investigations designed to examine the general importance of physical attractiveness in a psychotherapeutic context. These investigators tested the hypothesis that the interaction of the physical attractiveness of the therapist and the client significantly affects the duration of psychotherapy (i. e. the number of sessions). The results of this study revealed a significant positive relationship between client and therapist attractiveness and the number of psychotherapy sessions. That is, attractive clients and therapists had a significantly greater number of therapy sessions than less attractive clients and therapists. These investigators concluded:

It is assumed that the number of sessions in some complex way reflects upon the therapeutic process or outcome. For example, it may reflect how well the therapist and client get along, how successful the therapist is with his client, and/or how serious the client's problem is perceived to be" (p. 1070)

In a correlational study previously cited, Shapiro, et al. (1976) reported that their strongest confirmed hypotheses were the relationships between therapist and patient ratings of improvement and therapist and patient evaluations of each other as likeable, physically attractive, and either a good patient for treatment or a competent therapist. Other investigators have corroborated the relationship between client physical attractiveness and prognosis for therapy outcomes. Barocas and Vance (1974) investigated the relationship between the physical attractiveness level of clients and their therapist's judgements of the client's level of

adjustment and prognosis. The subjects in this study were undergraduate students who sought help for personal adjustment problems at a university counseling center. The counselors were center staff members. The counselors were asked to rate each client they had seen in the previous nine months on three 12-point scales for: (1) clinical status estimate at initial contact, (2) clinical status estimate at last contact and (3) prognostic estimate at last contact. Approximately two months after completion of these ratings the counselors were asked to retrospectively rate each of their clients for physical attractiveness. The results of the analysis indicated that regardless of the sex of the counselor, counselor ratings of attractiveness were significantly related to counselor ratings of client adjustment and prognosis. That is, the more attractive a client was to a counselor, the more the counselor viewed the client as better adjusted, and with a more favorable prognosis. A Study by Choban, Cavior and Bennett (Note 1) lends further support to the above findings. These investigators studied the relationship between the physical attractiveness of psychiatric hospital patients and the outcome of their therapy in a token economy program. The study findings showed that the patient's physical attractiveness level was positively related to the number of tokens earned and earlier discharge from the hospital.

One final study intended to investigate the relationship between an individual's physical attractiveness and the judgements made by therapists with regard to that individual, has been recently reported by

Hobfall and Penner (1978). The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between an individual's physical attractiveness and a therapist's estimate of that person's self-concept. Undergraduates rated photographs of 83 of their classmates on a scale of physical attractiveness. On the basis of these ratings, the 2 most attractive males, 2 least attractive males, and a similar number of females were selected as stimulus persons. These eight people were interviewed and a 10-minute audiotape or videotape of the interview was presented to 13 male and 3 female graduate students in clinical psychology (each with at least 1 year of clinical experience). After the presentation of an interview with a stimulus person, the student clinicians rated the person on a seven point scale of self-concept. The stimulus persons were therefore seen only in the videotape interviews. The investigators found that physically attractive persons at both sexes were rated as having better self-concepts than unattractive persons. Further, the self-concept ratings of attractive females increased significantly from the audio-tape (unseen) to the videotape (seen) conditions, whereas the ratings of the other stimulus persons remained the same. These findings suggest that the physical attractiveness of the female stimulus persons did influence self-concept ratings given by the student clinicians.

All of the studies reported thus far in the context of psychotherapy suffer from a common methodological error that makes the interpretation of their results difficult. In none of these studies is it clear whether the findings are due to different qualities inherent in attractive

and unattractive clients, to differential expectations of the therapist due to the effects of physical attractiveness stereotyping, or to some interaction of these variables. It has been argued that the physical attractiveness stereotype holds a seed of truth (Dion, et al, 1974; Adams, 1977), in that physically attractive persons, because of more positive social experiences, actually develop traits consistent with the stereotype. Some investigators have presented quite convincing evidence that this may be the case (e.g. Goldman & Lewis, 1977). On the other hand, the present review of literature has also shown that a genuine stereotyping effect has been repeatedly documented with regard to physical attractiveness. Because previous investigators in the area of psychotherapy (when investigating physical attractiveness effects) have failed to control for personality differences in stimulus persons, it is not possible to determine whether the results reported are due to stereotypic attributions by the therapists or whether these results are a function of actual characteristics of stimulus persons.

Only one investigation found in the present review controlled for the personality characteristics of the client when investigating the relationship between client attractiveness and perceived adjustment in a clinical setting. Martin, Freedmyer and Moore (1977) offer evidence to suggest that psychiatric hospital personnel hold different expectations for attractive and unattractive clients in terms of emotional adjustment. These investigators photographed 77 acutely disturbed adult schizophrenics who had been admitted for treatment at a

psychiatric facility. Eight judges (4 male, 4 female) independently rated the patients' physical attractiveness and emotional adjustment from photographs. The judges were selected from the hospital staff on the basis of diversity of age, education, position in the hospital, and amount of usual contact with the patients. For each of the 77 photographs, the judges made two ratings on 7-point scales. The first rating was of physical attractiveness and the second of emotional adjustment. The results revealed that the judges' ratings of clients' physical attractiveness and level of adjustment were significantly correlated. Patients who were judged to be more attractive were also judged to be better adjusted.

A number of weaknesses in the above study make the interpretation of the results difficult. First, the reported description of the subjects (judges) used in the study is highly inadequate. It was simply reported that the judges were selected on the basis of diversity of age, education, position in the hospital and amount of usual contact with the patients. The study therefore offers no evidence concerning the relationship between the training levels of the various judges (hospital personnel) and their respective ratings of the physical attractiveness and emotional adjustment of the patients involved in the study. Secondly, the procedures used to collect the data are questionable. The judges were asked to rate each of 77 photographs on a scale for physical attractiveness and a scale for adjustment. The difficulty in this procedure lies in the transparency of the variables involved in the study.

More importantly, the use of multiple sequential ratings made from the same stimulus materials most likely produced highly inflated cross-measure correlations (i.e. increased the likelihood of a type I error). Finally, since the ratings of adjustment were made solely on the basis of photographs and no other relevant information, the generalizability of these findings to actual settings is highly questionable. Therefore, although this study controlled for client personality variables, the results must be considered inconclusive because of the methodological limitations noted.

The evidence cited in the preceding section suggests that professionals possessing specialized training in human relations skills are not immune to possible biasing effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype. The reported literature supports the influencing effects of the stereotype on professionals in the areas of educational assessment, employment decision making and mental health. It has also been noted that several studies in the latter area suffer from a number of methodological difficulties.

#### Review Summary

The general review of the available literature supports the following conclusions:

1. An individual's level of physical attractiveness can be an important determinant of how well he/she is liked (Walster, et al., 1966). Specifically, individuals of high attractiveness levels seem to be better liked than their less attractive counterparts. Further, the relationship between physical attractiveness and liking lasts beyond the first encounter (Mathes, 1975). That



is, as other information about a person becomes available to others, physical attractiveness continues to have an undiminishing effect on how much he/she is liked.

2. Client likeability is an important variable in psychotherapeutic treatment process and outcomes (Shapiro et al., 1976). Specifically the evidence indicates that likeable clients stay longer in therapy, are seen as better adjusted by their therapists and are predicted to attain better therapeutic outcomes.

3. Physically attractive individuals are attributed more socially desirable personality characteristics than are less attractive persons (Dion, et al, 1972). Not only are attractive individuals seen as possessing more positive personality characteristics, but they are also viewed as better adjusted emotionally, and are predicted to lead more successful lives in general.

4. Professionals (with specialized training in human relations skills), are influenced in their judgements about clients and others by physical attractiveness levels of people they evaluate professionally. This effect is reported in the areas of educational assessment, employment decision making and the mental health professions.

5. Research on the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype in a psychotherapeutic context seems flawed by two types of typical methodological errors: (1) the lack of control over personality variables of the stimulus persons, and (2) the use of purely photographic information as the basis for clinical impressions of the client.

6. Previous investigators have failed to systematically investigate whether the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype are mediated by highly specialized training in human relations skills, such as those possessed by experienced psychotherapists.

The present study differed in four major ways from many previous investigations: (1) a range of training levels were utilized to determine whether training in psychotherapy might mediate the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype, (2) three clinically important impressions investigated in the study as dependent variables were client likeability, client psychological adjustment and client prognosis (as

perceived by judges), (3) unlike many previous studies on this topic, more than simplistic photographic information was presented to the subjects as a basis for more informed impressions of clients, and (4) client personality variables were controlled to allow the assessment of strictly stereotypic impression formation.

Methodology of the present study is discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter III

### Method

The purposes of the present research were two-fold: (1) to determine whether the ratings a client receives on measures of likeableness, psychological effectiveness, and prognosis differ when the client is seen in an attractive versus an unattractive condition, and (2) if such a stereotype effect exists, to determine whether the level of training in human relations skills possessed by the judges mediates the effects of the stereotype. To accomplish these aims four groups of subjects, varying in training level, listened to an identical 12-minute audio-tape excerpt of an actual initial interview with a counseling client. Half the subjects at each training level viewed, in conjunction with hearing the tape, a photograph of an individual previously rated high in attractiveness, and half the subjects viewed a photograph of an individual previously rated low in attractiveness. The subjects were told that the photograph was of the client to whom they were listening. Following the presentation of the tape, the subjects responded to several questionnaires regarding their perceptions of the client. The following chapter outlines the research design and methodology followed in gathering and analysing the data of the present investigation.

### The Sample

The subjects in this study included a total of 48 solicited white, male volunteers who were selected on the basis of a number of criteria. These criteria for selection of the sample defined four distinct comparison groups. The criteria and makeup of the four groups of subjects were as follows:

Group I. Inclusion in this group required (1) a Ph. D. or equivalent degree in clinical or counseling psychology, and (2) a minimum of 5 years of experience beyond the doctorate as an active psychotherapist. Twelve subjects comprised this group, with the average age being 44 years ( $SD = 8.4$ ) and the average number of years of experience being 12.25 years ( $SD = 6.9$ ). The subjects comprising Group I were solicited from the faculty of the graduate level programs in clinical/counseling psychology at Utah State University (Logan, Utah), and Brigham Young University, (Provo, Utah) and from the professional staff of the Utah State University Counseling Center and the Weber County Mental Health Clinic (Ogden, Utah)(See Table 1).

Group II. Criteria defining Group II were (1) current enrollment in a graduate level clinical or counseling psychology program and (2) the completion of at least one year in such a program. Twelve subjects comprised this group. The average age of Group II subjects was 29.3 years ( $SD = 7.25$ ) and the mean number of years of experience was 3.35 years ( $SD = .78$ ). All of the subjects comprising Group II were solicited from graduate level counseling practica at Utah State

Table 1  
Location of Group I Subjects by Institution

Institution	Number of Subjects
Utah State University Psychology Dept.	3
Brigham Young University Psychology Dept.	3
Utah State University Counseling Center	3
Weber County Mental Health Clinic	3

Table 2  
Location of Group II Subjects by Institution

Institution	Number of Subjects
Utah State University Psychology Dept.	9
Brigham Young University Psychology Dept.	3

Table 3  
Distribution of Group III Subjects by Department

Department	Number of Subjects
Business Administration	2
Economics	3
Music	2
Sociology	1
Physics	3
Education	1

Table 4  
Distribution of Group IV Subjects by Department

Department	Number of Subjects
Landscape Architecture	2
English	1
Forestry	2
Sociology	1
Natural Resources	1
Physics	1
Microbiology	1
Toxicology	1
Chemistry	1
Biology	1

University (Psychology 636) and Brigham Young University (Education 675). (See Table 2)

Group III. Criteria for Group III subjects were (1) a Ph.D degree in a field unrelated to clinical or counseling psychology, and (2) no previous formal training in clinical or counseling psychology. This group consisted of twelve subjects. The average age of these subjects was 41.7 years ( $SD = 9.33$ ). Subjects of this group were solicited from the faculty of various departments at Utah State University (see Table 3).

Group IV. Criteria for Group IV subjects were (1) current enrollment in a graduate level program in a field unrelated to clinical or counseling psychology, and (2) no previous formal training in clinical or counseling psychology. Twelve subjects comprised this group. The average age of these subjects was 27.75 ( $SD = 3.6$ ). The subjects were solicited from various graduate departments at Utah State University (See Table 4).

The two groups of trained subjects (Groups I and II) were matched with regard to educational level with subjects in the two untrained comparison groups (Group III and IV). That is, subjects of both Groups I and III possessed a Ph.D. degree, while subjects of Groups II and IV were all students in graduate training. As may be seen in Table 5, matching for educational levels in the comparison groups was successful across both attractive and unattractive stimulus conditions. Although the groups were not systematically matched

Table 5  
 Comparison of Subjects Across Training Levels and Attractiveness Condition  
 on Age, Education Level, and Counseling Experience

Group	Attractive Stimulus Picture							Unattractive Stimulus Picture						
	N	Mean Age	SD	Educ. Level	SD	Years Exp. in Counseling and/or therapy	SD	N	Mean Age	SD	Educ. Level	SD	Years Exp. in Counseling and/or therapy	SD
I	6	43.0	8.9	Ph. D.	--	11.5	6.1	6	45.2	7.8	Ph. D.	--	13.0	7.8
II	6	30.3	9.5	2 yrs*	8.9	2.7	.8	6	28.3	5.0	2.8 yrs*.75		4.0	3.0
III	6	44.2	11.8	Ph. D.	--	0.0	0.0	6	39.3	6.9	Ph. D.	--	0.0	0.0
IV	6	29.5	5.3	2.2 yrs*1.3		0.0	0.0	6	26.0	2.0	2.3 yrs*1.0		0.0	0.0

Note: Group I = Ph. D. in Clinical or Counseling Psychology; Group II = Graduate trainees in Clinical or Counseling Psychology; Group III = Ph. D. in an unrelated field; Group IV = Graduate students in an unrelated field.

\* indicates number of years of graduate training completed at the time of the present study.

with regard to age, or years of counseling experience, the comparison groups were also highly similar with regard to these characteristics across attractiveness conditions and training levels. The subjects in each group were given either the attractive or unattractive stimulus condition by the flip of a coin (heads = attractive, tails = unattractive) as each subject became available and was scheduled for participation in the study tasks.

#### Development of the Stimulus Materials

The stimulus materials consisted of: (1) a 12-minute audio-taped excerpt of the beginning portion of an actual first interview between a client and a therapist, and (2) four photographs of young women, two of whom had been previously rated high in attractiveness level and two who had been rated low in attractiveness level. The development of these materials is described in greater detail below.

Excerpt of an audio-taped therapy interview. The audio-taped interview excerpted for use in this study was chosen for three major reasons. First, the problems discussed by the client seemed to be representative of the kinds of problems that might typically be reported by a young female college student seeking counseling. The client's presenting problems, discussed during the interview segment included: (1) her concern about popularity at school, (2) her difficulty with interpersonal relationships, especially with men, and (3) communication difficulties with her parents. The second reason for selection of the



interview used in the study was that the client provided a large amount of information about herself in the brief time allotted to the experimental procedure in the study design. A final reason for choosing the particular interview used was that the therapist was highly nondirective and unobtrusive. It was felt therefore that his participation would be minimally distracting to the subjects' perceptions of the client. All information that may have identified the client was deleted from the tape. Deletions were minimal and in no way affected the continuity of the interview. A full transcript of the interview excerpt is found in Appendix A.

The rationale for the use of an actual interview segment rather than a staged interview was two-fold: (1) it was reasoned that an actual interview would provide a more "realistic" test of the hypotheses. That is, the actual interview would more closely simulate the kinds of information realistically available in a clinical setting, and (2) it was felt that a "moc" or scripted interview might appear too artificial and thus be recognized by the subjects as contrived.

Stimulus photographs for use with the taped interview segment.

Four photographs of young women, two of whom had been previously rated high in attractiveness level and two who had been rated low in attractiveness level were utilized in the present study. Two photographs at each attractiveness level (high and low) were used to increase the likelihood that the photographs tapped the general trait of attractiveness, therefore minimizing possible influences due to idiosyncratic

characteristics of one particular individual. The attractive and unattractive stimulus photographs for the study were developed and utilized in the following manner.

The investigator photographed 40 female college students of approximately the same age as the client on the stimulus tape (22 years). The photographs were all taken in an outdoor setting on the campuses of Utah State University, University of Utah, Weber State University and Brigham Young University. The photographs were in color and all showed a full face view of the individual, including the face and trunk, to just below the shoulder level. All subjects were smiling when photographed. The women sought out and considered for photographing were initially screened by the investigator for attractiveness level (high or low) in an informal "on the spot" manner. The women were then approached and a brief explanation of the study was provided them by the investigator. Each of those approached was asked if she would consent to be photographed and to allow the photograph to be used for the purposes of the study. An informed consent agreement (see Appendix B), again explained the nature and purpose of the study and the possible use of the photograph, was given to each woman to read and to sign if she agreed to participate. Forty photographs were obtained in this way. Eighteen of the 40 photographs were discarded because of poor photographic quality or poor standardization with regard to the other photographs (e. g. subject not smiling, eyes closed, general pose, shadows, etc.). The remaining 22

photographs were shown to a series of 17 male judges, who were approximately the same age as the photographed women. The judges rated each photographed woman for facial attractiveness, using a nine-point scale in their ratings, with a rating of 9 being the highest attractiveness level and a rating of one being the lowest in rated attractiveness. An inter-rater reliability coefficient was calculated for these ratings using an analysis of variance estimate technique, which produced an  $r$  of .88. Thus, the obtained inter-rater reliability coefficient showed a high level of agreement among the judges with respect to their ratings of attractiveness levels of the 22 photographed women.

In choosing the four photographs to be used in the study, the photographs of two women who were consistently rated the highest on attractiveness and the two who were consistently rated the lowest on attractiveness were selected. This selection was based on the means and standard deviations calculated from the judges ratings. The two high attractive photographs both received a mean attractiveness rating of 7.41, with standard deviations of 1.9 and 1.2, respectively. The two low attractive photographs received mean attractiveness ratings of 2.76 and 2.68, with standard deviations of 1.8 and 2.1, respectively. As a final check on the differences in mean ratings between the high and low rated photographs in terms of attractiveness levels, a  $t$  test of the difference between means for correlated samples was conducted. The statistical difference between rated levels of the women's

attractiveness in the two photographs rated high versus the two rated low was significant at the .001 level ( $t = 7.34$ ,  $df = 16$ ).

### Instrumentation

Three measures were used to assess the subjects' perceptions of the client following the presentation of the stimulus materials, i.e. listening to the recorded interview segment while viewing one of the stimulus photographs (either an attractive or an unattractive young woman). Each of the three measurement instruments is described below.

Huston's Likeableness Scale. The Huston Scale (1973) includes both positive and negative characteristics in assessing likeableness (Appendix C). A six point scaling system is used in which agreement with positive items ( $n = 4$ ) and disagreement with negative items ( $n = 6$ ) is scored as Likeableness. The ratings for items are summed to attain an overall score. Huston (1973) has reported correlations of the overall scale with the following personal trait items which comprise the Likeableness Scale: helpful (.61), warm (.62), honest (.51), considerate (.53), self-centered (.58), phony (.76), envious (.50), quarrelsome (.53), insincere (.61), and narrow-minded (.58). On appraisal, the items of this scale appear to tap areas usually associated with one's liking of others. Thus, the scale appears to possess face validity. While extensive psychometric evidence is currently unavailable on this measure, Adams (1975) has demonstrated that perceived physical

attractiveness is typically associated with high Likeableness scores. Given that the physical attractiveness stereotype assumes attractiveness to be positively associated with social desirability, the liking for attractive persons is consistent with the general stereotype predictions. Hence, the above data offer tentative evidence for criterion-related (predictive) validity.

Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale. Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale was used in the present-study to assess the subjects' perceived level of adjustment of the client in the stimulus tape interview (see Appendix C). Poe's scale purports to measure Psychological Effectiveness, which has been defined as competence, integration, or positive mental health. The inventory produces a composite score based on 50 additive 9-point Likert-type items. The scale is designed in such a manner that high scores reportedly indicate high levels of psychological effectiveness, while low scores could be expected to reflect low levels of Psychological Effectiveness. The instrument seems to possess satisfactory internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91$ ) (Poe, 1973). A study conducted by Poe with college students revealed a test-retest reliability coefficient of .93 after a two-week interval and .91 after a three-month interval (Note 2). Poe has also shown that scores on the Psychological Effectiveness Scale differentiate between alcoholics, psychotics and medical-surgical patients (Note 2), which provides evidence for predictive validity. Poe's scale has been utilized to measure perceived mental health in at least one study highly similar in nature to the

present study. Cash, et al. (1977) have used the scale in a study previously described in Chapter II. These investigators played 2 sets of audio-taped interviews constructed to reflect low or high levels of maladjustment for 140 college students. Half the subjects heard the tape reflecting low levels of maladjustment and half the subjects heard the tape reflecting a high level of maladjustment. The subjects rated the individual on the tape on Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale. In the study reported above Poe's Scale was found to differentiate between the high versus low adjustment conditions at a significant level ( $\alpha = .001.$ ).

The Prognostic Scales. Two 9-point Likert-type prognostic scales were constructed for use in this study (see Appendix C). Both scales are scored so that ratings in the direction of more favorable prognosis receive higher numerical values. The scales were designed to provide a measure of the subjects' expectations of the future adjustment of the client. Essentially the same kinds of prognostic scales have been used previously in similar research studies (Cash, et al., 1977; Barocas and Vance, 1974). The scores of each scale were summed to provide an overall index of prognostic expectation. The two scales were constructed as parallel forms to allow the establishment of the reliability of the total index. The mean of all subjects' ratings of the client on Scale I is 4.42 with a standard deviation equal to 1.7. The mean of all subjects' ratings of the client on Scale II is 5.7 with a standard deviation equal to 2.18. The correlation between

the two scales was moderate ( $\underline{r} = .43$ ). The respective correlations of Scales I and II with the overall prognostic index is  $\underline{r} = .79$  and  $\underline{r} = .89$ . The correlation coefficient of .43 obtained between the two scales suggests low to moderate reliability of the scales.

### Procedure

1. The subjects in Groups I and III (Ph. D. faculty, both trained and untrained in therapy) were solicited by a personal or phone contact by the experimenter. Subjects in Group II were solicited from clinical/counseling practica during Fall and Winter Quarters, 1978-79 and were asked to volunteer. The consent of all practicum instructors was first obtained so as to allow the study to be a part of the subjects' practicum experience. The subjects in Group IV were obtained by phone contacts to faculty members of various graduate departments at Utah State University in which volunteers were solicited. All subjects were told that the experimenter was conducting a study designed to assess how one's level of training in specialized human relations skills is related to that individual's perceptions of a person seeking personal adjustment counseling. The subjects were told that the study would require about 30 minutes of their time. When subjects agreed to participate, an appointment was made with them for the data collection. None of the individuals contacted refused participation in the study. The data were collected either individually or in small groups, of 2-4 subjects, depending primarily on the subjects' available times and convenience of scheduling both for the subjects and the experimenter.

2. A standardized audio cassette tape was prepared, explaining the nature of the study, instructions to the subjects, and the 12-minute therapy session excerpt. Prior to the appointment with each subject, determination was made by the experimenter (by the flip of a coin) which of the stimulus photographs would be presented to the subject(s), that is, a picture of an attractive or an unattractive "client." Each subject received one of the two photographs of either the high attractiveness or low attractiveness condition. Each of the two photographs for each condition were used approximately an equal number of times.

3. At the beginning of the data collection procedure, all subjects received a packet of materials containing: (a) a typed transcript of the therapy session excerpt (see Appendix A), (b) a questionnaire packet including the three dependent measures (see Appendix C), (c) a biographic information sheet (see Appendix D), (d) an informed consent agreement (Appendix B), and (e) a photograph of either a high or low-attractiveness level female. The subjects were told that the photograph was a picture of the client they were about to hear in the taped counseling session excerpt. The prepared audio cassette tape was then played, providing the subjects with the following information:

I'd like to ask your help in a study designed to assess therapists' impressions of clients, based upon a brief initial exposure to the client through a portion of a taped interview. I'm interested specifically in how the training level of the therapist affects the accuracy with which the client is seen. I realize that the information that will be presented in the interview that follows is minimal, however, I would like you to fully complete the questionnaire based on the information that is presented.



Before you, you should have a packet of materials containing a transcript of the tape you are about to hear, a photograph of the client being interviewed, and a questionnaire to be completed after you have listened to the interview. I would now like you to look over the questionnaire to help orient you to the kinds of questions being asked about this client.

(one minute)

I will now play a portion of an initial interview with this client. The segment will last about 12 minutes. During this time I would like you to simply follow the interview on the transcript provided. Please listen to the interview portion in its entirety and then fill out the questionnaire afterwards.

Now, please read and sign the informed consent agreement and complete the biographic information form. If you have any questions please ask them at this time.

Any questions the subjects had were answered at this time. The audio cassette was then restarted and the subjects listened to the 12-minute excerpt of the client interview. All subjects heard exactly the same instructions and excerpt. At the conclusion of the excerpt, the following instructions were provided on the standardized cassette:

Now please fill out the questionnaire that you have received. Remember that all of the items on the questionnaires refers to your perceptions of the client. Be as accurate as possible, basing your responses on the information that has been presented. Thank you for your participation in this study.

4. After the questionnaires were completed, the subjects were debriefed. They were told briefly about the nature of the physical attractiveness stereotype and that the study was designed to determine whether training in psychotherapeutic skills reduced the effects of the stereotype. The subjects were informed that the individual whose photograph they had viewed was not, in fact, the client heard on the tape.

The subjects were informed that the photographed individual had volunteered for the study and had given signed consent for her picture to be used in the procedure followed for the study. Any further questions the subjects had were answered at this time. The foregoing procedures were followed with each subject.

#### Analysis of Data

The primary analysis of the data was done statistically through a series of 2 x 4 analyses of variance, using levels of attractiveness and training as independent variables. A separate analysis was conducted for each dependent variable. A secondary analysis involved the computation of interscale correlations of the various dependent measures. The results of the data analysis are discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter IV

### Results

The purposes of the present research were two-fold: (1) to determine whether the ratings a client receives on measures of likeableness, psychological effectiveness, and prognostic outcome differ as a result of the client's perceived attractiveness level (i. e. high or low), and (2) if such an effect exists, to determine whether the level of training in human relations skills possessed by the judges mediates these effects. The literature review in Chapter II suggested that the physical attractiveness of a client may have biasing effects upon judgments made about the client by a counselor or therapist. Likewise, the literature suggested that the level of professional training of the raters may mediate (i. e. reduce) biasing effects.

The data collected in the present study consisted of a number of judgements (ratings) requested of the participating male subjects (both trained and untrained in psychotherapeutic skills) about a female "client" (previously rated as high or low in physical attractiveness) whose photograph was viewed by the subjects during the experimental procedures of the study. The study involved four distinct groups of subjects. One group consisted of trained and experienced therapists; one group was comprised of graduate students in training in clinical

or counseling psychology, and the other two groups of subjects were untrained in the field of psychology, but matched to the trained groups with respect to educational level. The number of subjects in each group was 12, thus the total sample consisted of 48 male subjects. All subjects listened to the same 12-minute audio-tape excerpt of an initial interview with a counseling/therapy client. Half the subjects in each group viewed a photograph of a woman previously determined to be of a high physical attractiveness level, while the other half of the subjects in each group viewed a photograph of a woman previously determined to be low in physical attractiveness level. All subjects were told that the photograph was a picture of the client they were listening to in the taped interview. After presentation of these stimuli, the subjects rated their assigned client (i. e. the female whose photograph they had been given to look at while listening to the interview tape). Subjects were asked to rate the client on each of the following scales: (1) Huston's Likeableness Scale, (2) Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale, and (3) an index of prognostic expectation. The subjects' ratings of the respective clients on the above scales comprise the data discussed in the present chapter.

The major analyses of the data were accomplished by conducting a series of 2 x 4 analyses of variance on the three dependent measures (the three scales noted above). A secondary analysis consisted of the computation of inter-scale correlations between the dependent measures. The study findings obtained from the various statistical analyses are

presented and discussed immediately below.

#### Validity of Photographic Stimulus Materials

To determine whether the subjects actually perceived a difference in the attractiveness levels of the women whose photographs were used as stimuli, an analysis of the subjects' ratings of the client's physical attractiveness was conducted. The photographs used as stimuli in the study had been previously determined to be of either a high or low attractiveness level (see Chapter III). This particular analysis was conducted to determine the validity of the previously determined ratings of attractiveness given each of the four females photographed and used as stimuli in the present study. The data used were obtained by a 6-point Likert-type scale embedded within Huston's Likeableness Scale (Appendix C). Each subject rated only the photograph he saw during the experimental procedures. Therefore, the subjects rated the individual depicted in the photograph (the presumed client) for attractiveness on the embedded scale. In this manner, 12 ratings for each of the four stimulus photographs were obtained (or 24 ratings for each condition).

A 2 x 4 analysis of variance (attractiveness level by training level) revealed a significant difference in perceived attractiveness level as a function of the predetermined attractiveness level ( $p < .001$ ). That is, the subjects gave significantly higher mean attractiveness ratings to the women (as viewed in the photographs) who had been previously determined to be high in attractiveness level than they gave to

the photographed women previously rated low in attractiveness level. No significant differences were found on attractiveness ratings among the four training levels of subjects or for the interactions of attractiveness level and training level (see Table 6).

Table 6  
Analysis of Variance by Previously Determined Attractiveness Level and Training Level on the Perceived Attractiveness Level of the Photographic Stimuli

Source of Variation	df	MS	F
Attractiveness Level	1	67.69	87.81
Training Level	3	1.24	1.61
Interaction	3	0.69	0.89
Error	40	0.77	

Note:  $df = 1/40$ .  $F_{7.31}$  required for significance at .001 level.

#### Findings Specific to the Study Hypotheses

A series of 2 x 4 factorial analyses of variance were used to test the study hypotheses with regard to counselor/therapist ratings of client Likeability, Psychological Effectiveness, and prognosis. Specific findings to each hypothesis are presented below, with the statistical data of this analyses summarized in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

The Results of the Likeability Analysis. The hypothesis that there is no difference between the ratings of the client in the high attractiveness condition and the client in the low attractiveness condition on

ratings of Likeableness failed to be rejected. Likewise, no differences were found between the training levels of the subjects and their respective ratings of client Likeableness. The interaction of training level with attractiveness level was also non-significant (see Table 7).

Table 7  
Analysis of Variance by Attractiveness Level and Training Level on Ratings of Client Likeableness

Source of Variation	df	MS	F
Attractiveness Level	1	36.75	0.76
Training Level	3	103.64	2.14
Interaction	3	17.64	0.36
Error	40	48.40	

Note: For  $df = 1, 40$ ;  $F 4.08$  is required for significance at the .05 level.  
For  $df = 3, 40$ ;  $F 2.84$  is required for significance at the .05 level.

Results of the Psychological Effectiveness Analysis. No difference in Psychological Effectiveness ratings was found between clients viewed in the unattractive condition and clients in the attractive condition. The hypothesis that there are no differences between subjects who are professionally trained, in graduate training, or untrained (in psychotherapeutic skills) with regard to their ratings of clients on Psychological Effectiveness also failed to be rejected. No significant interaction effects were found (see Table 8).

Table 8  
 Analysis of Variance by Attractiveness Level and Training  
 Level on Ratings of Psychological Effectiveness

Source of Variation	df	MS	F
Attractiveness Level	1	2451.02	1.20
Training Level	3	424.02	0.21
Interaction	3	757.46	0.37
Error	40	2062.21	

Note: For  $df = 1, 40$ ;  $F 4.08$  is required for significance at the .05 level.  
 For  $df = 3, 40$ ;  $F 2.84$  is required for significance at the .05 level.

Results of the Prognostic Index Analysis. The hypotheses related to the main effects and interactions with regard to the prognostic index were tested. The hypothesis that there is no difference between the ratings of the client in the high attractiveness condition and the client in the low attractiveness condition with regard to the prognostic index scores failed to be rejected. No differences were found among the various training levels of the subjects in terms of their respective ratings of client prognosis. The interaction of training level and attractiveness level on the prognostic index was also non-significant (see Table 9).

Correlation Analysis. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed between the dependent measures used in this study. These intercorrelations are summarized in Table 10.

Likeableness was highly or moderately correlated with all of the other dependent variables. Most conspicuously, a correlation of



Table 9  
 Analysis of Variance by Attractiveness Level and Training  
 Level of Prognostic Index Scores\*

Source of Variation	df	MS	F
Attractiveness Level	1	10.08	1.20
Training Level	3	20.14	2.30
Interaction	3	17.47	2.00
Error	40	8.72	

Note: For  $df = 1, 40$ ;  $F 4.08$  required for significance at the .05 level.  
 For  $df = 3, 40$ ;  $F 2.84$  required for significance at the .05 level.

\* The prognostic index scores are derived by the summation of the ratings of the two prognostic scales. (see Appendix C)

.72 was obtained between the Likeableness measure and the Psychological Effectiveness measure. The Likeableness measure was also moderately correlated ( $r = .50$ ) with the prognostic index and somewhat less so with the perceived attractiveness of the client ( $r = .28$ ).

The Psychological Effectiveness measure was moderately correlated with the other dependent measures. A correlation of .33 was noted between the perceived attractiveness of the client and the ratings received on the Psychological Effectiveness measure. The Psychological Effectiveness measure was also moderately related to the prognostic index ( $r = .52$ ).

In summary, no significant main effects or interactions were found for any of the dependent measures used in the study. Thus, all null hypotheses failed to be rejected. In addition to the primary

analyses for testing the study hypotheses, inter-scale correlational data for the dependent measures were presented.

Discussion of the study findings, and implications drawn therefrom follow in Chapter V.

Table 10  
Inter-Scale Correlations of the Dependent Measures

	Likeable- ness	Perceived Attractiveness	Prognostic Index	Psychological Effectiveness
Likeableness	1.00	0.28	0.50	0.72
Perceived Attractiveness		1.00	0.25	0.33
Prognostic Index			1.00	0.52
Psychological Effectiveness				1.00

Note:  $\underline{r}$  .288 is required for significance at the .05 level ( $\underline{df}$  = 46).  
 $\underline{r}$  .372 is required for significance at the .01 level.

## Chapter V

### Discussion

The present study was an attempt to investigate the extent to which therapists' judgements of a female client's likeability, psychological effectiveness, and prognosis are influenced by her level of physical attractiveness. In addition, the level of the judge's training in clinical or counseling psychology was considered as a factor that may influence these judgements. Four groups of male subjects (each group representing a different level of training) listened to the same audio-tape excerpt of a female client in an actual therapy session. Half the subjects in each group saw a photograph of a female "client" previously rated high in physical attractiveness, while half the subjects in each group saw a photograph of a female previously rated low in physical attractiveness. After the presentation of these stimuli, the subjects were asked to rate the client on scales of likeability, psychological effectiveness, and prognosis.

Two major conclusions were drawn regarding the results of this study. First, the physical attractiveness level of the client (high or low) resulted in no systematic biasing of the subjects' judgements of client likeability, psychological effectiveness or prognosis. In other words, judgements about the client rated high on physical attractiveness

did not differ significantly from judgements made about the unattractive client. This held true for ratings of clients on all three dependent variables. Therefore, there was no apparent influence on the judges' ratings of the client due to her physical attractiveness level. Second, no differences in ratings of client likeability, psychological effectiveness or prognosis were found among the four groups of subjects representing different levels of training in clinical or counseling psychology. That is, the judgements made about the client by those subjects untrained in psychology did not significantly differ from the judgements made by the subjects trained in clinical or counseling psychology. Neither were there differences between Ph.D. level psychologists and graduate students in training. Therefore, there were no systematic differences in the ratings the client received on the dependent measures as a result of the training level of the subject.

#### Discussion of the Findings

The major thrust of this study was the investigation of the influence of the physical attractiveness stereotype on clinical judgements made about the client. The present findings suggest that individuals who are highly trained in clinical psychology are not influenced in their clinical judgements by the physical attractiveness of the client. However, the findings also suggest that individuals who are completely untrained in psychology likewise are not influence in these judgements by the physical attractiveness of the client. None of the groups of subjects,

regardless of their level of training, seemed to be biased by the physical attractiveness stereotype. As reported in the literature review, however, a great quantity of data exist that support the influence of the physical attractiveness stereotype on interpersonal perception. Specifically, the literature suggests that physically attractive individuals are typically seen much more positively than physically unattractive individuals. The incongruence of the present study results with past findings is apparent. Following are some explanations that may account for this difference.

It could be argued that the high and low attractive conditions may not have been perceived by the subjects as reflecting significantly different levels of attractiveness. If this were the case, no differences would be expected in the subjects' ratings of the client due to attractiveness because the two attractiveness levels were not perceived as distinctly different levels. Two precautions, however, were taken to ensure that the attractiveness conditions were representative of high and low levels of attractiveness and that these two levels were perceived as significantly different. First, the stimulus photographs were pre-rated on attractiveness by a number of independent raters. Only those photographs consistently rated very high or very low in attractiveness were used in the study. The inter-rater reliability concerning these judgements was high, indicating good agreement among the judges concerning perceptions of physical attractiveness. Second, data about the subjects' actual perceptions of the attractiveness level of the stimulus

photographs were collected. These data showed that the subjects involved in the study actually perceived a significant difference in attractiveness level between the high attractive and the low attractive condition (see Chapter III). It therefore appears that the stimulus photographs validly depicted two distinct levels of physical attractiveness. Given that the stimulus materials were valid, the literature suggests that the physical attractiveness level of the client should bias other's judgements about the client. Again, this biasing effect was not found in the present study. Two further explanations may account for these results.

A second possibility that may explain the contradictions between the present findings and previous research in the area is the high education level of the subjects participating in the study. Half the subjects in this study were at the Ph. D. level, while the remainder of the subjects were well into their graduate training. The majority of the previous studies investigating the effects of the physical attractiveness stereotype have typically utilized undergraduate students as subjects. Therefore, previous research has not adequately studied the population sampled in the present investigation. It is possible that individuals who have achieved high levels of educational training are less prone to be influenced by stereotypes than are individuals of lower educational status. It is unfortunate that an additional group of subjects at the undergraduate level was not included in the present study. This could have provided some additional information as to the validity of this

explanation. Future research might be directed at the investigation of this possibility.

Finally, it is possible that no attractiveness effects were found in the present work as a result of the presentation of additional, highly intimate information about the client to the subjects. The subjects in the study not only received a photograph (high or low in attractiveness) of the client, but also listened to an audio-tape interview of her in which she related highly authentic and intimate information about herself (see Appendix A). It is possible that this kind of information functions to diminish the influence of the stereotype with regard to the subjects' judgements about the client. That is, the subjects may have attended more closely to the interview information than to the photographic information. Most of the previous investigations in this area have utilized only photographic stimuli when investigating the influences of the stereotype. It may be conjectured that as other, more extensive and personal information becomes available about a person, this information tends to diminish the influence produced by the stereotype. An interesting area for future research may be the investigation of the relative strength of the physical attractiveness stereotype in the presence of varying amounts of additional information.

Some interesting relationships among the dependent variables were revealed by the computation of inter-scale correlations. The ratings of the client's likeableness strongly covaried with ratings of the client's psychological effectiveness and favorable prognosis. In other

words, if the client was perceived as likeable, she also tended to be perceived as more psychologically effective. Similarly, the more likeable the client was perceived, the better the prognosis she tended to receive. No causal relationships are meant to be implied here, since these data only suggest the covariation of these variables. These particular findings are consistent with the findings of Shapiro, et al (1976). As reported earlier in the literature review, Shapiro, et al found a strong relationship between the degree to which a client was liked and ratings of that client's improvement in therapy. These data suggest that client likeability may play an important role in the therapist's perceptions of the client's level of adjustment and prognosis. A note of caution seems appropriate here with regard to these correlational data. It is possible that the relationships between the dependent variables is the result of a response set of the subjects. That is, the subjects may have had a tendency to rate the client consistently positively or negatively on all the scales. The likelihood of this possibility seems to be reduced, however, given the wide variability of the correlation coefficients ( $r = .25 - .72$ ).

#### Limitations of the Study

Possibly the primary limiting dimension of this investigation was the sample studied. Both the sample selection techniques and the sample size are of some concern with regard to the generalizability of the findings. Ideally, the sample of psychotherapists would have been



drawn from a much larger pool (e. g. the A. P. A. register). However, because of the constraints of time and money, solicited therapists from the local area were used. Since the subjects were solicited on the basis of availability and were not randomly drawn, these subjects may not be highly representative of the desired population. This concern is also applicable to the other three groups of subjects. A second concern related to the sample used in the present study is its small size. The small number of subjects composing each training level makes it difficult to generalize the results to a larger population. It might be noted here that the difficulties related to sampling a highly select population of professionals are formidable. These difficulties offer serious reservations to the external validity of the present study.

Another limitation of the study that should be considered is the possibility that some of the subjects identified physical attractiveness as the variable pertinent to the study. The presentation of a photograph may have cued the subjects that the client's appearance was somehow important. The subjects may then have guarded against stereotyped impressions or "faked good." No systematic data were collected as to whether the subjects actually identified the variables involved in the study. However, on debriefing the subjects, the experimenter noted that 4 of the subjects commented that they had an idea that the physical attractiveness of the client may have been the variable under study. The possibility that other subjects also "guessed" the intent of the study must be kept in mind.

A final limitation of the present study may have been some difficulty encountered by the subjects in responding to the questionnaires based upon the limited information presented. Feedback from one subject indicated that he had difficulty deciding on some alternatives because of the lack of information. It is possible that other subjects had similar difficulty. The impact of this difficulty on the results is hard to assess. Although it is likely that the alternatives a subject felt he could not answer accurately were probably marked in the neutral position on the scales.

#### Implications for Theory

The present findings do not support the "beautiful-is-good" hypothesis proposed by a number of authors in the physical attractiveness stereotype literature. The above hypothesis indicates that physically attractive clients are seen more positively than physically unattractive clients. The data of the present study do not support this supposition. In the present study the client in the attractive condition did not receive significantly higher ratings on likeability, psychological effectiveness or prognosis than the client in the unattractive condition. Contrary to Adams' (1977) conclusion that the stereotype is seldom mediated by situational contexts, the present data suggest a couple of possible mediating mechanisms. As discussed earlier, it is possible that the educational level of the observer serves to mediate the influences of the physical attractiveness stereotype. It may be that the experiences

involved in attaining an advanced degree serve to breakdown stereotype-based attributions. A second variable that may reduce the effects of the stereotype is the quantity and/or quality of other information available to the observer. It seems possible that as more information about an individual becomes available, the less effect stereotypic information may have on judgements about that person. In general, one implication of the present work on theory in the area of physical attractiveness stereotyping is to suggest some possible variables that may mediate the effects of the stereotype.

#### Implications for Future Research

No evidence emerged from this investigation in support of the influence of the physical attractiveness stereotype on subjects' judgements about a client. As the present findings are contrary to the results of past work, further research is necessary to determine under what conditions and in what populations the effects of the stereotype occur. The education level of a person may be one variable that is worthy of further investigation as a mediating factor in the strength of the stereotype's influence. In the present study, all of the subjects were highly educated individuals. These individuals did not seem to be influenced by the physical attractiveness stereotype. Although a number of other factors may have resulted in these findings, education level appears to be one of the most likely. A second factor that appears to merit further research is the amount of other information (besides attractiveness

level) that is available to the subjects. It may be conjectured that as other information becomes available to the observer, the relative influences of the stereotype weaken.

The findings of the present work suggest that the perceived likeableness of the client is closely related to ratings she receives on adjustment and prognosis. When the client was rated as more likeable, she also tended to be rated as more psychologically effective, with a more favorable prognosis. Previous research investigating client likeableness in a clinical context supports this particular finding (Shapiro, et al, 1976). Previous data, like the present finding on this point, have been correlational in nature. More experimental evidence regarding this area is needed to investigate any causal relationship between the variables of likeableness, perceived adjustment and prognosis. Further work might profitably investigate the nature of this relationship and it's implications for the area of psychotherapy.

### Summary and Conclusions

The process of identifying and investigating the nature of variables that influence the special relationship between a client and psychotherapist is an important one. Research regarding the many factors affecting the nature of patient-therapist relationships should aim at a continuous improvement in the quality of the services offered by those involved in the mental health professions. Toward this end, the present study investigated the influences of the physical

attractiveness of a client on the therapist's perceptions of that client.

A rapidly accumulating body of literature suggests that an individual's level of physical attractiveness may play an important role in the dyadic and group relationships in which he/she are involved. In particular, this literature indicates that physically attractive individuals are viewed by others as possessing more "socially desirable" attributes than less attractive persons. Based on the research in this area, many authors have proposed the existence of a physical attractiveness stereotype. The literature suggests that physically attractive individuals (of either sex) tend to be better liked, seen as better adjusted emotionally, and are assumed to be more likely to enjoy more successful future lives than are unattractive individuals. The available literature also suggests that the physical attractiveness stereotype exists across a variety of situational contexts.

Given that the physical attractiveness stereotype does in fact exist across a variety of situational settings, the purpose of the present investigation was to investigate possible influences that such a stereotype may have in the context of clinical psychology. Specifically the purposes of the present study were two-fold: (1) to determine whether the ratings a client receives on measures of likeableness, psychological effectiveness, and prognostic outcome differ as a result of the client's perceived attractiveness level (i. e. high or low) and, (2) if such an effect exists, to determine whether the level of training in human relations skills possessed by the raters mediates these effects.

To achieve these purposes, four groups of subjects (varying in level of training) listened to an identical 12-minute audio-tape excerpt of an actual initial interview with a client. Half the subjects in each group viewed a photograph of a woman previously determined to be of a high physical attractiveness level and half the subjects in each group viewed a photograph of a woman previously determined to be low in physical attractiveness level. The subjects were told that the photograph was of the client to whom they were listening. Following the presentation of these stimulus materials, the subjects responded to questionnaires designed to determine the subjects' perceptions of the client's likeableness, psychological effectiveness, and prognosis.

Analysis of variance techniques were used for statistical comparisons of the data. The results showed: (1) the physical attractiveness level of the client (high or low) resulted in no systematic biasing of the subject's judgements of the client's likeableness, psychological effectiveness, or prognosis, and (2) the four groups (representing different levels of training in counseling or clinical psychology) did not differ significantly from one another in the ratings they gave the client. Therefore, the results of the present study did not support previous research on this topic. Possible implications of the findings of the present study, with consideration of the apparent contradiction with earlier research and suggestions for further investigation of this topic are presented in the Discussion section of this thesis.

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superase 77

Gilbert bond

25% cotton

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Transcript

Therapist: I'm completely in the dark.

Client: Well, I have been concerned with...well maybe I'm a little idealistic, but...I'd like to, you know, you always want to make the most of your life and so I've been concerned with several problems that have been bothering me. I think the main thing I'm concerned with is being able to establish more warm relationships with other people...because I had difficulty in this, and I...I..know that I shouldn't have because basically I'm an out-going person...and ah...ah I don't think I'm getting the most out of my school experience...and I think that part of it is because I'm distracted, because I'm always worried about...wanting to be with people, you know. So I didn't ...ah...

T: Are you popular?

C: Well...I...that's kind of a funny question because my friends are the school leaders...but...I am a...I..I.. never go to parties or anything like that, but the people that are my very closest friends are school leaders, but I don't hold any positions.

T: Would you like to be popular?

C: Well...yes, everyone would like to be popular. I think that...I found that I can be with people when we're working on something definite, but just to be with them for the purpose of ordinary friendship, you know, this is kind of ...I just find it very difficult for me.

T: If you don't know what you're going to do with them.

C: Yes...I mean if we're working on a project and I know what my place is and what I'm expected to do, then I can do it. I have more problems...I think..with fellows than I do with girls, because as far as, well I used to be pretty good with it, but as far as small talk goes it seems like I can't...I feel ill at ease and I don't...can't respond, you know, just being casual and talking. I think maybe the main thing I'm interested in is...I usually throw expressions around because...I read an article once and it was called How to Maximise One's Life and it was by C. O. Skinner...and it was very idealistic but, maybe that's what I'm trying to do, because I can see that I'm not...I think the most important thing is to be able to associate with people and be in with them and I'm having a very difficult time in that particular area, and I don't think you can really have...a full and rewarding kind of life if you want to...if you are going to isolate yourself and...and.. uh..not be able to feel good around people.

- T: You feel, if they don't want me, I don't want them anyway.
- C: No, because I usually wind up wanting them anyway, you know.
- T: You can't hold out.
- C: No, I usually can't...uh..well sometimes...I mean I can find my friends in other places. I mean as far as that goes, but as far as just people in general, I'm not the kind of person who can just build a wall around myself and completely stay away because even when I've got the wall up it's alright for a while but, I realize that what I really want to do is not to shut them out but to be able to be in with them.
- T: Are you in with me right now?
- C: Umm...I think so.
- T: You are as far as I'm concerned. Do you feel it yourself here?
- C: Ah...ya...you know sometimes you can kind of sense, you know, if you're in with people. I think that...uh...it's difficult...if I didn't feel like I was in with you, then I wouldn't be able to talk to you because I...if I feel like you're kind of empathizing or curious or sympathizing in a way, then I can talk to someone, but if I feel like they don't understand, or they think...if they can't empathize you know, with my point of view, then I think it's best just to keep quiet...because when you do go ahead and talk to people who feel like this, you usually create some kind of problems between you.
- T: Well you felt pretty good about coming to see me today, didn't you?
- C: Ya, because I don't think that my problems are insoluable, but I think that I need definite guidance on them, because as long as we keep going on making the same mistakes, that's...that's no good, but if I can conquer them, then that's good.
- T: I sense you've been feeling pretty bad.
- C: Well...confused maybe. Ah...I really seriously want to build a good life for myself, but I've seen tendencies...in myself and things that have...you know...I've traced for a long time...I've been fighting, but I've just never been able to solve...or ah...just to solve...or to come to an end with.
- T: What is that?
- C: Pardon?
- T: Do you want to explore that a little bit?
- C: Oh...ah, it was like I told Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, the first interview, I thought that if I didn't get some of this out of my system, I would throw it up against people that I love the most,



because...uh...I'm..when I'm searching for answers, I want to go to people who will accept me anyway, and then ask them for answers..and they...but a lot of times, well like my parents for instance, they can't answer my questions...so all I do is create ill feelings...and the reason I came to Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ in the first place was I started thinking...ah...if I...well I've been having trouble establishing just casual relationships with boys...and if I do get involved with someone...and...and...a warm relationship I'm afraid I'll ruin it by...taking advantage of his affection for me by throwing all these things at him ...do you know what I mean? Uh...demanding..uh... well...demanding that uh...well if I'm insecure or something, demanding that, emotionally that I get the kind of security that I need. This doesn't make this much sense, but just for instance...um..

T: Could I make a guess?

C: Yes.

T: Are you saying in a way that you might sort of expect him to make up for what other people haven't given you?

C: Ya...whether...ya...see...

T: Suddenly he might get sucked into a big vacuum.

C: Well, it's just that when anyone expects this much of another person, it isn't fair...and it's difficult...and I don't think too many people would be...ah...would want to get involved in anything like that.

T: You need a lot of love don't you?

C: Well...I think everybody does...um...I like to feel accepted and loved...and um...like I'm of some value to someone. That's why I think that I'm afraid that if I did get involved with someone that I would try to demand all of it from one person which is impossible, and and I think the reason I would is because...um...if I could answer questions I've had you know...well...I guess I was a very difficult child but...uh...coming up along with my parents, but I never did feel like I could completely have their confidence, or love...and yet they did, but it's just that we had...there were misunderstandings between us...you know. I think I expected more of them than they could give me. This has caused problems in my relationship with my parents, cause I've wanted more from them than they could give me.

T: Still do?

C: Ya...perhaps. It's ah...you know, I don't want to keep throwing these things up to my parents, because it isn't fair, but there are always things that have bothered me

that I'd like to get answered, because I'm afraid that if I don't answer them, instead of throwing them at my parents I'll throw them into someone else, and uh...who's not even involved and who's it is even anyone's fault.

- T: When you say throw it up to them...
- C: Trying to get answers to...well...it really isn't to rational you know, but like I know to my own parents I'm always wanting them to assure me of all kinds of things, and I'm afraid I'll want this sort of thing...
- T: You would look for a lot of reassurance from a boy, wouldn't you?
- C: Yes...
- T: He makes a simple statement...you're beautiful or I love you or something like that and you're going to be saying tell me again...is it really true. Is this the kind of thing?
- C: Ya...but probably not so directly.
- T: More subtle than that, but the demand will be there, and he'll pick it up and he'll be antagonized by it.
- C: Right.
- T: You're saying that it comes from your relationship with your folks.
- C: I think so because...umm...my
- T: Yet they're not the ones that...ah...you don't want to take it up with them.
- C: You see, I've tried and they are having a hard enough time as it is...you know...without...
- T: They're just barely able to stay afloat and if you hang on you'll all go under.
- C: Well it's just that...if I ever bring this up, it seems like when I start doing this our whole family just goes all to pieces. Now I'm the oldest of six...and...um...my mother is a very nervous woman and my father, he has lots of...oh patience of job sort of thing, you know...he'll keep fighting but he'll accept life, but mother just...ah...everything is just the end of the world and...
- T: You put more and more demand on her and she collapses.
- C: Ya...and see the funny thing is, I was thinking about it the other day, now my father has always...I've been able to talk to him...you know, close and we've had a very close, warm relationship and then as the pattern went along, my mother has always been the practical one and I can see things that have happened and I respected her opinion because Dad was idealistic maybe like me and because I was I could see through this and know that he would just tell me that, but I knew that mother was extremely honest and...ah...she saw things like they were...and um...she would...and I wanted her assurance because I

respected her opinion of things because she could see things so clearly, but..mother has always been an insecure person and she couldn't open up to people, not much even me.

T: You've kind of written off the possibility of you and her actually communicating directly and fully.

C: On this problem yes. I think that it would just hurt her more, because I know she senses that...I..well...it's been a problem and she would rather when we get together now just take it out from here and please don't bring this sort of thing up because it's just disrupting. Now this situation we've had in my family...um...all of my younger brothers and sisters have suffered of it you know...and I was talking to one of them and I didn't realize it but I'd lose my temper and get mad and I never realized how it affected them because I was so confused and so concerned trying to fight with something, I don't know what, and they would just keep quiet and we would have these really violent ...you know...screaming and everything, back and forth and I can see where my sister, the one that's next to me ...two years younger...has really suffered because she's withdrawn and she's a very...really you know...wonderful person and so are all my other sisters, and I'm the one who'se going to have to help them because my parents aren't going to be able to emotionally because...because if I can't reach them somehow, I'm afraid that the situation in our home is...is going to hurt them. I mean there is nothing too serious that it can't be helped, but if I can be close to them...close to my sisters and my brothers...and give them, you know, the support and confidence and hope and things that they need, then that will be alright because it will kind of balance out the rest.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Agreements

Utah State University

Investigation of Therapists' Perceptions of Clients

Department of Psychology  
College of Education

I understand that my photograph may be used in a study on therapists' perceptions of clients. Further, I understand that my photograph, if used, will be paired with an audio-tape of an actual client being interviewed by a therapist. I have been informed of the nature of the study, the use of my photograph, and the fact that the subjects in the experiment will be told at the end of their participation that the person in the photograph and the person on the tape are not the same individual. I will receive answers to any inquiries regarding the study and am free to withdraw my consent for the use of my photograph at any time.

---

Signature

---

Date

## UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

## Investigation of Therapists' Perceptions of Clients

Department of Psychology  
College of Education

I hereby give consent to participate in this person-perception study involving human subjects. I have been informed of the nature of the study and understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time.

---

Signature

---

Date

Appendix C

Huston's Likeableness Scale

Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale

Prognostic Scales

The Huston Likeableness Scale

Please respond to all statements and mark the scale on the lines, not between them. Respond to the statements on the basis of the impressions you have of the person you have just heard.

1. This person was perceived as a helpful person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly
Agree					Disagree

2. This person was perceived as a warm person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly
Agree					Disagree

3. This person was perceived as a physically attractive person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly
Agree					Disagree

4. This person was perceived as a self-centered person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly
Disagree					Disagree

5. This person was perceived as a phony person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly
Disagree					Disagree



6. This person was perceived as an envious person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly		Agree	Disagree		Strongly
Agree					Disagree

7. This person was perceived as an honest person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly		Agree	Disagree		Strongly
Agree					Disagree

8. This person was perceived as a considerate person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly		Agree	Disagree		Strongly
Agree					Disagree

9. This person was perceived as a quarrelsome person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly		Agree	Disagree		Strongly
Agree					Disagree

10. This person was perceived as an insincere person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly		Agree	Disagree		Strongly
Agree					Disagree

11. This person was perceived as a narrow-minded person.

_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____:
Very	Agree	Mildly	Mildly	Disagree	Very
Strongly		Agree	Disagree		Strongly
Agree					Disagree





	fits very closely	fits some- what	neu- tral	fits some- what	fits very closely					
12. reasonable fears	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	excessive fears
	fits consid- erably	fits slightly		fits slightly	fits consid- erably					
13. optimistic	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	pessimistic
14. indifferent	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	curious
15. resourceful	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	inept
16. productive	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	barren
17. excessively cautious	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	willing to take risks
18. directionless	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	purposive
19. jealous	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	grateful
20. makes good choices	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	makes poor choices
21. lacks stress tolerance	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	has stress tolerance
22. expects fair treatment	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	expects special treatment
23. feels vulner- able frequently	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	feels vulnerable occasionally
24. seeks to please others	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	seeks to please self
25. aware of self	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	unaware of self
26. relies on own judgment	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	can't decide for self
27. illogical thinking	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	logical thinking



- |  |  |                       |                      |                           |                         |                           |
|--|--|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 42. expects<br>too much;<br>too little | fits<br>very<br>closely                  | fits<br>some-<br>what | fits<br>neu-<br>tral | fits<br>some-<br>what     | fits<br>very<br>closely | realistic<br>expectations |
|  | <u>1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : 8 : 9</u> |                       |                      |                           |                         |                           |
|  | fits<br>consid-<br>erably                | fits<br>slightly      | fits<br>slightly     | fits<br>consider-<br>ably |                         |                           |
| 43. dependent<br>on others             | <u>: : : : : : : :</u>                   |                       |                      |                           | self-sufficient         |                           |
| 44. unimaginative                      | <u>: : : : : : : :</u>                   |                       |                      |                           | creative                |                           |
| 45. adapts to change                   | <u>: : : : : : : :</u>                   |                       |                      |                           | resists change          |                           |
| 46. vigorous                           | <u>: : : : : : : :</u>                   |                       |                      |                           | sluggish                |                           |
| 47. predictable                        | <u>: : : : : : : :</u>                   |                       |                      |                           | unpredictable           |                           |
| 48. developing                         | <u>: : : : : : : :</u>                   |                       |                      |                           | stagnant                |                           |
| 49. feels<br>worthless                 | <u>: : : : : : : :</u>                   |                       |                      |                           | feels<br>worthwhile     |                           |
| 50. denies<br>problems                 | <u>: : : : : : : :</u>                   |                       |                      |                           | admits<br>problems      |                           |
| 51. prognosis good                     | <u>: : : : : : : :</u>                   |                       |                      |                           | prognosis poor          |                           |

THANK YOU

## The Prognostic Scales

Scale I\*

On the scale below you will find a phrase on either end. Decide which phrase best fits this person, then decide how closely it fits.

Mark the space on the scale.

I would expect this person's future life to be:

Very unhappy	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Very Happy
with	_____								with
Numerous Pro-									Few Problems
blems									

Scale II\*\*

prognosis good \_\_\_\_\_ prognosis poor

\* Scale I was placed after the eleventh item of Huston's Likeability Scale.

\*\* Scale II was embedded in Poe's Psychological Effectiveness Scale as item number 51.

Appendix D

Biographic Information



## Biographic Information

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Highest degree obtained \_\_\_\_\_ Degree area \_\_\_\_\_

Current year level in graduate training (in years) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years of experience in counseling outside of graduate school  
(i. e. excluding graduate school training) \_\_\_\_\_