

Does external appearance have any effect on the career of the women at job?

Up the Career Ladder, Lipstick In Hand



WANT more respect, trust and affection from your co-workers? Wearing makeup — but not gobs of Gaga-conspicuous makeup — apparently can help. It increases people's perceptions of a woman's likability, her competence and (provided she does not overdo it) her trustworthiness, according to a new study, which also confirmed what is obvious: that cosmetics boost a woman's attractiveness.

It has long been known that symmetrical faces are considered more comely, and that people assume that handsome folks are intelligent and good. There is also some evidence that women feel more confident when wearing makeup, a kind of **placebo effect**, said Nancy Etkoff, the study's lead author and an assistant clinical professor of psychology at Harvard University (yes, scholars there study eyeshadow as well as stem cells). But no research, till now, has given makeup credit for people inferring that a woman was capable, reliable and amiable.

The study was paid for by Procter & Gamble, which sells CoverGirl and Dolce & Gabbana makeup, but researchers like Professor Etkoff and others from Boston University and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute were responsible for its design and execution.

The study's 25 female subjects, aged 20 to 50 and white, African-American and Hispanic, were photographed barefaced and in three looks that researchers called natural, professional and glamorous. They were not allowed to look in a mirror, lest their feelings about the way they looked affect observers' impressions.

One hundred forty-nine adults (including 61 men) judged the pictures for 250 milliseconds each, enough time to make a snap judgment. Then 119 different adults (including 30 men) were given unlimited time to look at the same faces.

The participants judged women made up in varying intensities of luminance contrast (**fancy** words for how much eyes and lips stand out compared with skin) as more competent than barefaced women, whether they had a quick glance or a longer inspection.

“I’m a little surprised that the relationship held for even the **glamour look**,” said Richard Russell, an assistant professor of psychology at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pa. “If I call to mind a heavily competent woman like, say, Hillary Clinton, I don’t think of a lot of makeup. Then again, she’s often onstage so for all I know she is wearing a lot.”

However, the glamour look **wasn’t all roses**.

“If you wear a glam look, you should know you look very attractive” at quick glance, said Professor Etoff, the author of “Survival of the Prettiest” (Doubleday, 1999), which argued that the pursuit of beauty is a biological as well as a cultural imperative. But over time, “there may be a lowering of trust, so if you are in a situation where you need to be a trusted source, perhaps you should choose a different look.”

“There are times when you want to give a powerful ‘**I’m in charge here**’ kind of impression, and women shouldn’t be afraid to do that,” by, say, using a deeper lip color that could look shiny, increasing luminosity, said Sarah Vickery, another author of the study and a Procter & Gamble scientist. “Other times you want to **give off** a more balanced, more collaborative appeal.”