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Beauty Halo Effect

“The Halo Effect (Beauty Halo Effect or Attractiveness Halo Effect) refers to a cognitive bias whereby attractive people are viewed to have more desirable personalities, skills, and traits compared to less attractive people” (McWhirter). Beauty is an admired quality or topic in human life. Everybody wants to be as beautiful as possible. Because of the social acceptance or recognition of beautiful people over others, everybody wants to be beautiful even if they are not so in reality. The general feeling about beautiful people among others is that they are intelligent than others. Moreover, such people often escape from severe punishments once they commit serious crimes. The above phenomenon is often referred as beauty halo effect in psychology. This paper analyses different characteristics of beauty halo effect.

“Research shows attractive people also have more occupational success and more dating experience than their unattractive counterparts. One theory behind this halo effect is that it is accurate -- attractive people are indeed more successful” (Feng). The concept of beauty is different for different people. Some people give priority to facial beauty or the beauty of eyes lips etc while others give priority to physical appearance, shape or symmetry. In any case, it is a fact that beautiful people always get beautiful partners. In other words, beautiful people will never think of selecting an ugly person as his/her partner. The ability of beautiful people to catch the attention and love of others will create a sense of admiration among others. Non-beautiful people will always try to put the beautiful people one step above them.

Suppose a beautiful lady and an ugly lady attends an interview for the post of receptionist in a company. The interviewer may give preference to the beautiful lady even if her answers

were inferior to the answers of the ugly lady. This is because of the perception of the interviewer that the beautiful lady may catch the attention of the customers more and she may raise the image of the company. It is a fact that the customers would like to talk more to a beautiful receptionist than an ugly receptionist.

The appearance of the accused often creates an impression in the minds of the juries in court. An ugly person always makes a false sense in the minds of the juries even if he was innocent. On the other hand, the juries seek every option to release a beautiful person even if the evidences were against him. In other words, beauty halo effect is often visible in courts also while granting justice to the people. There are many cases, in which the celebrities and beautiful people get away from punishments when they violate traffic rules. On the other hand, even for silly mistakes, ugly people could face severe punishments from the traffic police. This is another form of beauty halo effect.

An alternative explanation for attractive people achieving more in life is that we automatically categorize others before having an opportunity to evaluate their personalities, based on cultural stereotypes which say attractive people must be intrinsically good, and ugly people must be inherently bad (Feng).

“It was hypothesized and confirmed that the halo effect brought forth by physical attractiveness is more apparent than the halo effect obtained by vocal attractiveness (based on tone, diction, pitch, etc)” (The Halo Effect: Learned Behavior?). In election campaigns, people often vote for beautiful people. They often give priority to physical beauty over vocal beauty. In other words, even if an ugly candidate delivers intelligent lectures, he may not get votes from the public if the opponent is a beautiful person.

In many cases, ugly people are more intelligent than the beautiful ones. However, people have the pre-conceived notion or assumption that beautiful people will never be idiots whereas ugly people could be idiots most of the times. However, history shows that some of the greatest intelligent people were not so beautiful. For example, Stephen Hawking, the living legend and scientist is not so beautiful even though he is regarded as a genius by scientific world. On the other hand, some of the beautiful celebrities like Hollywood film stars often catch the newspaper headlines for their unintelligent acts like drunken driving, alcohol or drug addiction etc.

People always like to believe that first impression is the best impression. But in reality, last impression could be the best impression. For example, only after knowing more about a person, we could judge whether he/she is intelligent or not. Skin color, physical appearance, symmetry, good looking eyes or lips etc are only the physical aspects which have nothing to do with intelligence or behavior.

To conclude, beauty halo effect is a pre-conceived belief that beautiful people are always intelligent and well behaved ones. But in reality, it may not be true always. Like all the other people, beautiful people also can be intelligent and idiots.

Works Cited

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