Hair Color Stereotypes and Their Associated Perceptions in Relationships and the Workplace

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ABSTRACT. Previous research has shown that people associate positive and negative personality traits with certain hair colors. Participants view blondes as attractive but dumb, brunettes as studious and competent, and redheads as smart but temperamental. The present study examined the effects of stereotypes with respect to hair color, setting, and gender. Participants rated a male or female model on several personal characteristics (e.g., attractiveness, intelligence) based on a description and photo of the model. The model was depicted in both a work setting and a dating setting and was shown in the photo with 1 of 3 hair colors: blonde, brown, or red. Results indicated that hair color stereotypes are not only linked to various personal traits, but are affected by the setting as well. When placed in a setting with certain stereotypes, the stereotypes associated with that hair color are augmented.

It is the nature of human beings to categorize everyday life. In order to process all the information encountered during the day, humans are programmed to develop categories for the things and people around them (Allport, 1954). The point of categorization is to make individuals' lives easier so they can quickly understand the situations they encounter. By recognizing the similarities of the current event to past events and, in turn, placing the current event into a previously constructed category, people essentially never encounter an event not met previously (Allport, 1954). Not only does categorization make it easier for people timewise, but it is also key to their survival. Evolutionarily speaking, it was crucial that humans comprehended their surroundings instantaneously to avoid peril. Although instantaneous categorization is not typically needed today, people still categorize the beings around them without conscious awareness.

When it comes to people, humans categorize them based on a number of factors. The categories developed need to be specific to group members. However, these categories also need to have a degree of flexibility in order to accommodate any individual who is clearly a member of the category, yet does not fit the classifications (Tajfel, 1969). Therefore, in a sense, anyone could fit into a category if he/she has the relevant factors.

A common dichotomy people use is that of gender. Because there are only two categories, it is simple to place an unknown target into one of the categories with only a small bit of knowledge about the target. Through the use of gender stereotypes, people categorize intangible concepts such as personality traits into this gender dichotomy. For instance, presumed masculine traits are those associated with task efficiency (assertive, capable leader, rationality), whereas presumed feminine traits are associated with communal activities (compassionate, loyal, warmth; Bem, 1974; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972).

Typically, research on prejudice toward out-groups focuses largely on race, gender, or age. However, research also shows that stereotypes are plentiful in society in many other forms. Despite the time and money people spend on their hair,

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hair color is one area that has received minimal research; yet, the findings suggest that such stereotypes and their associated perceptions are widespread.

Hair Color Preference

The study of hair color preference dates to the early 1970s, when Lawson (1971) found a clear affinity for certain hair colors. Both sexes favored brown hair followed by blonde, red, and artificial blonde, respectively. Furthermore, Lawson found research participants had the highest favorability for their own hair color.

Clayson and Klassen (1989) confirmed Lawson's findings. When they asked participants to rate a model on attractiveness, based only on the model's resume and reported gender, hair color, and weight (obese/nonobese), participants considered blondes as most attractive, followed by models with brown hair, and models with black hair. Redheads were found least attractive.

Hair color preference does appear to be affected by gender. Feinman and Gill (1978) conducted a study of 482 female participants and 549 male participants to examine hair color preferences of the opposite sex. Male participants tended to prefer blonde female targets, whereas female participants tended to prefer dark-haired male targets. However, 83% of both genders disliked redheaded individuals. This animosity toward redheads was similar to that found in Lawson's (1971) study.

Most of the studies cited previously suggest that the hair color of the population majority is preferred; that is, participants prefer blondes and brunettes. However, Thelen (1983) found a different order of preference. Thelen found that when rating potential mates, male participants preferred women with rarer hair colors. However, this trend did not occur among female participants. If this finding holds, with redheads being in population terms "rare," male participants, and possibly female participants, might consider redheads more preferable.

Personality Trait Perceptions

Several studies have shown that hair colors carry certain perceptions, generally linked to the overall stereotypes. Generally, the stereotypes associated with blondes are that although blondes are found to be attractive, they are also dumb, as can be seen with the prevalence of dumb blonde jokes. In accordance with the saying that "blondes have more

fun," people tend to perceive blondes as more popular (Weir & Fine-Davis, 1989) and more feminine and beautiful than brunettes and redheads (Clayson & Maughan, 1986). Blondes also tend to be rated as richer (Synnott, 1987).

Rich and Cash (1993) and Synnott (1987) found that although blondes represent a low percentage of the population, images of blondes have been featured in magazines at a much higher rate than images of models with other hair colors. The magazine *Playboy* presented blondes at an even higher rate (41%) than most general magazines (Rich & Cash, 1993). Yet, although blondes are overrepresented in magazines, they are underrepresented in certain sections of the workforce. Employing data of the top 500 CEOs of the London Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE), Takeda, Helms, and Romanova (2006) found that blondes represented only 5% of CEOs of the London FTSE, a finding consistent with the belief that blondes are considered incompetent. Although in Takeda et al.'s study, only two of the 500 CEOs were women, it is possible that the dumb blonde stereotype has influenced how blondes are perceived in other aspects of their lives, affecting how they are perceived in general.

Researchers used an interview approach to discover the cause of hostility toward redheads. Participants generally believed that redheads were known for their flaring tempers (Heckert & Best, 1997; Weir & Fine-Davis, 1989). Furthermore, other stereotypes of redheads included clown, weird, and wimpy men. Interestingly, some people perceive redheads to be exceptionally smart (Heckert & Best, 1997) despite the other perceptions. Moreover, participants in one study perceived redheads as the "active, executive type" (Horn, as cited in Synnott, 1987, p. 386). Heckert and Best (1997) noted that, due to these perceptions, redheads suffered from low self-esteem and the feeling that they were "the undisputed center of attention" (p. 380). However, the sample size was small, with only 20 redheaded participants interviewed.

Although there do seem to be well-known stereotypes about blondes and redheads, there do not seem to be overall positive or negative stereotypes about people with brown hair. Generally, people perceive individuals with brown hair as normal, possibly because these individuals make up the majority of the population. Interestingly, people perceive brunette women as more competent and intelligent than blondes and redheads (Kyle & Mahler, 1996; Weir & Fine-Davis, 1989). Kyle and

Mahler (1996) also found that when researchers told participants to assign a salary for a candidate, participants assigned a significantly higher salary to brunettes than to blondes or redheads.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis #1. I hypothesized that certain personality traits would be perceptually linked to a certain hair color: that participants would find blondes more attractive, feminine, and immature; brunettes more intelligent, successful, mature, and with a stronger work ethic; and redheads more aggressive and emotional.

Hypothesis #2. As one might view someone differently in a nightclub versus a library, I hypothesized that environment would affect ratings of model personality traits, especially when combined with hair color. Although previous research examined both gender of the model as well as the participant, the setting of the models was rarely mentioned, if mentioned at all. Therefore, I presented participants with two situations: a work-related setting and a dating-related setting. I hypothesized that the male and female models with brown hair would be viewed more favorably in the work setting than in the dating setting.

Hypothesis #3. I hypothesized that the typical stereotypes associated with hair color (i.e., dumb-flirty blonde, studious brunette, temperamental redhead) would become stronger when combined with a situation common to these stereotypes. I expected that these stereotypes would be associated with the model's gender. For instance, I hypothesized that, not only would participants perceive the blonde female model as more attractive than the other models, but also that participants would perceive the blonde female model as even more attractive when viewed in the dating setting, due to the nature of the setting as well as the stereotypes associated with blonde females.

Method

Participants

Participants consisted of 180 undergraduate students (90 male students and 90 female students) from a Midwestern university. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 54 ($M = 20.29$, $SD = 4.77$). Ethnicity was comprised of 102 (56.7%) Caucasians, 29 (16.1%) Arab Americans, 19 (10.6%) African Americans, 17 (9.4%) Asians, 8 (4.4%) Hispanics, and 5 (2.8%) who classified themselves as "other." Participants consisted of 30 (16.7%) blondes, 130 (72.2%) brunettes, 11 (6.1%) participants with black hair, 3 (1.7%) with red hair, and 1 (.6%) with gray hair, with 5 participants opting not to answer. Approximately 24% of participants had dyed their hair at the time of the study, either the same or a different color than their natural hair color. Participants were all enrolled in an introductory level psychology course and completed the study as a part of the university's subject pool research requirement.

Materials

Participants received a questionnaire packet. Each packet directed participants to pretend that they had visited a social networking page to find out some information about a male or female target model. On the social networking site, the participant found a short profile about the model as well as the model's photo. The profile was gender neutral and described several favorite activities of the model. This profile further explained that the model was single and recently unemployed in order to match the given directions. The same profile accompanied both the male and female models, with only the model's name changed accordingly.

Participants viewed the profile twice: once in a work-related setting in which the participant was to review job candidates (as a potential coworker), and once in a dating setting in which the participant was to review prospective dates for a friend. The order of settings was counterbalanced to control for the possibility of order effects.

After each setting presented, participants viewed a list of personality characteristics (attractiveness, intelligence, work ethic, maturity, emotional level, success level, aggressiveness, and femininity/masculinity) and rated the model on a 1 to 7 bipolar adjective scale, with higher ratings indicating a greater prevalence of the trait.

Participants viewed a photo of one of the two models while they completed the ratings. The photo showed the model against a beige background with neutral facial expressions. Both photos depicted the model with the same pose and differed only in terms of gender and hair color. Hair color of the model was altered using photo alteration software in order to create the three hair color conditions: blonde, brown, and red. In several cases, the skin color of the model was also slightly pigmented in order to make the change in hair color appear natural. In order to remain consistent with previous studies and to keep the hair colors natural, both models were Caucasian. Each participant rated only one of the two models with the model's gender

corresponding accordingly to the model's name.

Participants in a pilot study previously rated both models as having average attractiveness and intelligence, among several other characteristics. During the pilot study, the photo was shown in black and white in order to prevent the possibility of the model's hair color affecting results. However, during the actual study, the model was shown in color.

Design

The study was conducted using a 2 (scenario: work vs. dating) x 3 (hair color: blonde, brunette, or redhead) x 2 (gender of model) x 2 (gender of participant) experimental design using a mixed-measures ANOVA. The within-subjects factor was the scenario, whereas the other factors were between-subjects. The design originally included scenario order as a factor; however, this factor was eliminated from analysis due to its lack of explanatory power.

Procedure

Participants rated the individual shown on the projector screen according to the directions in the scenario. Afterward, participants completed a brief demographics questionnaire. Participants were thanked for their input, given participation credit, and debriefed.

Results

Work Ethic

Analysis revealed significant main effects with respect to the model's gender on perceived work ethic, $F(1, 167) = 13.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Participants attributed a lower work ethic to the male model ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.31$) than the female model ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.32$). Analysis also revealed a significant main effect with respect to the participant's gender, $F(1, 167) = 5.79$, $p < .05$. Male participants perceived the models as having a lower work ethic ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.31$) than female participants ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.36$).

Analysis also revealed an interaction between the model scenario and model hair color, $F(2, 167) = 3.84$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Paired samples t tests with a Bonferroni correction compared means between variables. As shown in Table 1, participants perceived the blonde model with the same level of work ethic in both the work setting and the dating setting, $t(59) = .00$, ns. Meanwhile, participants perceived the brown-haired model with a higher work ethic in the dating setting

	TABLE 1					
	Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of Characteristics With Scenario and Hair Color					
	Work Setting			**Dating Setting**		
	Blonde	Brown	Red	Blonde	Brown	Red
Work Ethic	4.05 (1.24)	4.07 (1.39)	4.07 (1.40)	4.05 (1.32)	4.59 (1.10)	4.25 (1.07)
Maturity	4.20 (1.25)	4.48 (1.38)	4.25 (1.43)	4.48 (1.19)	4.68 (1.41)	4.07 (1.38)
Emotional	4.40 (1.01)	3.90 (1.23)	4.10 (1.13)	4.17 (1.12)	4.25 (1.26)	4.02 (1.08)
Success	3.82 (1.11)	3.92 (1.25)	4.10 (1.40)	3.87 (1.24)	3.93 (1.16)	3.67 (1.20)
Aggressiveness	3.68 (1.03)	2.98 (1.03)	3.53 (1.44)	3.50 (1.19)	3.15 (1.18)	3.85 (1.55)

Note. Higher ratings indicate a greater prevalence of the trait.

than in the work setting, $t(58) = 2.85$, $p < .01$. Alternatively, the setting did not affect how participants perceived the red-haired model, $t(58) = .89$, ns.

Maturity

Analysis revealed a significant main effect for model gender, $F(1, 168) = 5.11$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Participants attributed higher maturity to the female model ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.34$) than the male model ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.33$). Analysis also revealed a significant main effect for participant gender, $F(1, 168) = 5.70$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Male participants perceived the models as more mature ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.36$) than female participants ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.39$).

Analysis also revealed a marginal interaction between scenario and model hair color, $F(2, 168) = 2.82$, $p < .10$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. As shown in Table 1, participants perceived both the blonde and brown-haired models as somewhat more mature in the dating setting than in the work setting, whereas participants perceived the red-haired model as somewhat more mature in the work setting than in the dating setting. As this interaction was marginal, Bonferroni corrected t tests were not conducted.

Emotional

Analyses revealed a main effect of model gender, $F(1, 168) = 15.37$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Participants perceived the female model as more emotional ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.12$) than the male model ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.12$). Analyses revealed that there was not a significant main effect for model hair color, $F(1, 168) = 1.09$, $p = ns$.

Analysis also revealed an interaction between

model gender and model hair color, $F(2, 168) = 3.80$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. As shown in Table 2, participants perceived the brown-haired male model as less emotional than the blonde female model; a Tukey HSD post hoc test indicated that the difference between these means was significantly different ($p < .001$). Furthermore, participants perceived the brown-hair male model as less emotional than the brunette female model; the post-hoc test indicated that the difference between means was significantly different ($p < .001$).

An interaction was also found between scenario and model hair color, $F(2, 168) = 3.83$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. As shown in Table 1, in the work setting, participants perceived the brown-haired model as less emotional than the blonde-haired and red-haired models. On the other hand, in the dating setting, participants perceived the brown-haired model as more emotional than the blonde-haired and red-haired models. A paired samples t test indicated, however, the difference in means with respect to setting for the brown-haired model was not significant, $t(59) = 2.09$, ns.

Success
Analysis revealed a main effect with model gender, $F(1, 168) = 9.39$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Participants perceived the male model as less successful ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.19$) than the female model ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.24$). Another main effect was found with respect to participant gender, $F(1, 168) = 4.38$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Female participants perceived the models as less successful ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.20$) than male participants ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.25$).

A marginally significant interaction was found between scenario and model hair color, $F(2, 168) = 2.37$, $p < .10$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. As shown in Table 1, participants perceived the red-haired model as somewhat less successful in the dating setting, compared to the blonde and brown-haired models. Meanwhile, participants perceived the red hair model as somewhat less successful in the work setting, compared to the brown-haired and blonde models. Further analysis was not conducted however, because this interaction was marginally significant.

Aggressiveness
Analysis revealed a main effect with model hair color, $F(2, 168) = 5.57$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Participants attributed less aggression to the brown-haired model ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.10$) than the blonde ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.11$) and red hair ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.50$) models. Bonferroni post hoc tests indicated

that the means for the blonde and brown-haired models differed significantly ($p < .05$) and that the means for the brown-haired and red-haired models also differed significantly ($p < .01$).

Analysis also revealed a marginal interaction between scenario and model hair color, $F(2, 168) = 2.64$, $p < .10$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. As shown in Table 1, participants perceived the brown-haired model as somewhat less aggressive in both the work and dating settings. Participants perceived the dating setting redhead as somewhat more aggressive than the other models. Further analysis was not conducted as this interaction was only marginal.

Feminine-Masculine
Analysis revealed a main effect with model gender, $F(1, 168) = 121.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .42$. Participants perceived the male model as more masculine ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 1.24$) than the female model ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.27$).

Analysis also revealed an interaction between model hair color and model gender, $F(2, 168) = 4.81$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. As shown in Table 2, participants perceived the brunette female model as the most feminine followed by the blonde female model and red-haired female model. A Tukey post hoc test indicated that the difference in the means between the brunette female model and red-haired female model was marginally significant ($p < .10$). The post hoc test also indicated that the difference in means between the male models and female models of all three hair colors were significantly different (all $ps < .001$). However, this difference in means was most likely due to the nature of the gender characteristic; that is, the female models were viewed as more feminine than the male models and vice versa.

Other Traits
Analysis indicated that participants found the models to have an average level of attractiveness ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.15$). However, no significant differences among hair colors were found, $F(2, 166) = 1.25$, $p = ns$. Participants also perceived the models to have an average level of intelligence ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.32$). However, no significant results for hair color with respect to intelligence were found, $F(2, 166) = .29$, $p = ns$.

Discussion
The findings supported Hypothesis #1 that differential perceptions associated with hair color do exist. Furthermore, these perceptions are amplified

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when depicted in a setting with similar stereotypes as indicated in Hypothesis #2, such as the brown-hair model being perceived with a higher work ethic in the work-related setting than in the dating setting. However, the application of one or both hypotheses depends on the personality characteristic measured, as these trends were evident only in certain traits (work-ethic, maturity, etc.) and not others (i.e., attractiveness, intelligence). Furthermore, the findings supported Hypothesis #3 that when hair color stereotypes are in a situation common to these stereotypes, the associated stereotypes will be seen as stronger due to situational factors.

Blonde Hair

Participants' attributions of maturity to the model fit Hypothesis #1. Blondes are historically stereotyped as attractive flirts, especially blonde female adults as shown by their prevalence in magazines like *Playboy* (Rich & Cash, 1993). However, blonde male adults are also seen as attractive (Clayson & Klassen, 1989), typically depicted as athletes/surfers in the popular media, and seem to fit a masculine version of the dumb-blonde stereotype. Because of this stereotype, the finding that participants in this study considered blondes as more mature in a dating setting fits if one looks at the concept of maturity as equivalent to more experience. Because people perceive blondes as more flirtatious than people with other hair colors, participants may have perceived blondes as having more dating experience, thereby leading to perceptions of greater maturity in the dating setting, where the blonde models possibly feel more comfortable.

Similarly, participants' attributions of the model's success supported Hypothesis #2. As noted, participants typically considered blondes as less intelligent and competent than people with other hair colors, and therefore blondes might have been seen as not successful in a situation that favors those traits. Therefore, it is fitting that participants perceived the blonde model as the least successful in the work setting, whereas participants perceived models with brown and red hair as the most successful in the work setting. Because blondes are underrepresented in the power positions of the workforce (Takeda et al., 2006), it is possible that this underrepresentation is due in part to this stereotype.

Surprisingly, contrary to previous research (Clayson & Klassen, 1989; Feinman & Gill, 1978; Lawson, 1971), there was no preference (measured

TABLE 2					
Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of Characteristics With Model Gender and Hair Color					
	Male Model			**Female Model**		
	Blonde	Brown	Red	Blonde	Brown	Red
Emotional	3.98 (1.08)	3.58 (1.12)	4.03 (1.09)	4.58 (.96)	4.57 (1.17)	4.08 (1.13)
Feminine/ Masculine	5.00 (1.24)	5.43 (1.17)	5.03 (1.28)	3.40 (1.30)	2.82 (1.23)	3.62 (1.14)

Note. Higher ratings ratings indicate a greater prevalence of the trait. Higher ratings for the Feminine/Masculine characteristic indicate greater masculine characteristics, whereas lower ratings indicate greater feminine characteristics.

by attractiveness) for one hair color over the others. The findings also did not support Hypothesis #3, that participants would perceive blondes as more attractive in the dating setting. Because participants rated both models as average in terms of attractiveness, it is possible that they were too "plain" to be affected by any attractiveness tendency brought out by a certain hair color. Or, perhaps, with the vast majority of research on this topic being considerably dated and one's hair color capable of complete change within a few hours, people no longer associate attractiveness with one specific hair color. Although everyone might have a favorite hair color, or one considered more attractive than others, it is possible that a universal favorite no longer exists.

Brown Hair

Participants' ratings of masculinity or femininity of the model were clearly consistent with Hypothesis #1. Consistent with previous research (Feinman & Gill, 1978), participants rated brown-haired men as the most masculine. The typical tall, dark, and handsome "ideal" fits as this type would be seen as the most masculine, with the dark part referring to brown hair instead of the lighter colors of blonde or red. It is also interesting that participant ratings for the blonde and red-haired men were similar, possibly indicating that red-haired men are not perceived as harshly as they once were.

However, instead of the blonde female model being perceived as the most feminine (Clayson & Maughan, 1986), in this case, participants chose the brunette model. It is possible that as trends change over time, blondes are losing their edge in terms of perceived femininity to brunettes. Or perhaps, this change is due to the media showing feminine brunettes like Julia Roberts, instead of the once quintessential blonde image of Marilyn Monroe.

The interaction between the brown-haired

models and situation in terms of emotional stability is interesting and predicted by Hypothesis #2. Because participants typically perceive brown-haired individuals as competent and industrious, an emotional display in the workplace would be contrary to these detached, rational depictions. However, when displayed in a setting that does not typically include the previously mentioned stereotypes (the dating setting), participants viewed the brown-haired model as more attached and personal, consistent with traits viewed positively in this setting.

Surprising, there was not a significant interaction for perceptions of intelligence and hair color, nor was there an interaction between perceptions of intelligence and situation. Although I hypothesized that participants would perceive the brown-hair model as more intelligent than the other models as well as perceive them favorably in the work setting, in accordance with stereotypes, this hypothesis was not confirmed. Failure to find this difference in intelligence is further perplexing when considering the fact that participants attributed a stronger work ethic to brunettes when depicted in a work setting.

Given previous research, the finding regarding work ethic fit Hypothesis #2 as people with brown hair are seen as more competent and usually more intelligent (Kyle & Mahler, 1996). One could argue that intelligence and work ethic are related (although not the same trait), and therefore intelligence and work ethic as variables would show similar trends. However, as this hypothesis was not supported in this study, it is more likely that the participants did not see intelligence and work ethic as similar traits and thus treated them independently.

It should be noted that when rating the model's success, participants perceived the brown haired model as the most successful in the work setting, consistent with the common stereotypes of intelligence and competence, thereby resulting in success. This finding also fits with actual success as the majority of real-life CEOs were found to have brown hair (Takeda et al., 2006).

Red Hair

As predicted, participants' attributions of aggressiveness and emotional state of the model fit Hypothesis #3. The "temperamental" redhead stereotype demonstrated itself in participants' perceptions of aggression, as it did in past studies (Heckert & Best, 1997; Weir & Fine-Davis,

1989), juxtaposing itself with the calm, competent stereotypical nature of the models with brown hair. However, it is interesting that participants rated the blonde model similar to the red-hair model. It is possible that participants perceived the brown-hair model as more passive than the other two hair colors. It is also possible that participants perceived either the blonde model as more aggressive than previous research would suggest or that participants perceived the red-haired model as less aggressive overall. Whereas any of the previous explanations would fit, given that when rated in terms of masculinity/femininity, participants perceived the red-haired man more favorably than in previous studies (Clayson & Klassen, 1989), it is possible that the hostility toward redheads is not as pervasive as it once was, due perhaps to the ease of hair dye.

Similarly, the fact that participants perceived redheads as less successful in the dating setting is also consistent with Hypothesis #3. Because most of the stereotypes associated with red hair are negative (e.g., temperamental, weird; Heckert & Best, 1997) and given the fact that previous studies found that red hair was least preferred among participants (Feinman & Gill, 1978; Lawson, 1971), it would make sense that redheads were seen as the least successful in the dating situation. Typically, redheads are not considered attractive or preferred, and they may be less associated with dating and viewed as not successful.

Conclusions

This study had several limitations. It is possible that the repeated measure confused participants regarding what aspect of the model they were evaluating during the second round of ratings, and therefore participants did not realize the situation had changed. Also, because the skin color of the models had to be slightly altered, the photos, although similar, were essentially not the same.

Furthermore, instead of using a standard post hoc test for the repeated measures design, paired samples *t* tests with a Bonferroni correction were used. Because the level of correction used tended to be on the conservative side in order to decrease the chance of Type 1 error, it is possible that Type 2 error increased. Although only a few *t* tests were used for each trait, it is possible that this method affected the results of the study.

Further research could include different hair colors such as black or platinum blonde, as well as unnatural hair colors such as blue or purple. Furthermore, because situational factors affected

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the attributed perceptions, changing or adding different settings, such as a party or sporting event, could yield significant results. If this study is a reflection of the views of society, then hair color perceptions are prevalent. However, their application and the degree of stereotype application are dependent on situational influences as well as the specific personality trait.

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