Effects of Heel Length on Perceived Attraction

Name

V00xxxx

University of Victoria
It is well established in literature that men tend to place more value on attractiveness of the opposite sex when pursuing long-term relationships. Although certain facial and body features in women are universally found to be more attractive to men, cosmetics, and clothing can also effect a women’s attractiveness. In a study conducted by Gueguen (2014) the researcher was interested in finding out the effects of the length of heels on men’s perceived attractiveness of women. The results suggested that men tend to find women with higher heels more attractive as compared to those with shorter heels or flat shoes, and had increased compliance, helpful behavior, and made initial contact with those women. Research also suggests that when people are in a committed relationship they tend to engage in derogation of attractive alternatives, which means that people tend to perceive attractive rivals to their relationship as less desirable than what others think of them. In a study conducted by Lydon, Meana, Sepinwall, Richards, and Mayman (1999) the researchers explored the effects of individuals’ commitment to a relationship and its effects on the evaluation of attractive alternatives. The results suggested that level of commitment did decrease the evaluation of attractive alternatives. More specifically, those who were moderately committed to their relationship perceived moderately attractive alternatives as less attractive, and those who had highly committed to their relationship perceived highly attractive alternatives as less attractive.

In accordance with previous research, I expect the length of the heels to increase men’s perceived attractiveness of women; however, I expect the men’s perceived attractiveness of women to be different based on whether they are single or in a highly-committed relationship. I expect that men who are single will perceive women to be more attractive in larger heels as compared to medium heels or flat shoes. On the other hand, I expect the opposite results for men who are in highly committed relationship, in that they should perceive women to be less
attractive as their heel sizes increase. The rationale behind this expected result is the phenomenon of derogation of attractive alternative, those who are in highly committed relationship will try harder to derogate women who are more attractive to see them as less attractive to stay committed to their relationship.

Method

Subjects

The study will include total of 240 male subjects of which 120 would be single, and the other 120 in a highly committed relationship. The participants will be selected from university campus who have self-reported their relationships status to be either single or highly committed and they will get credits in return for the participation.

Design

The Design of this study will be a 2 (relationship status: single or highly committed) x 3 (Heel length: Flat shoes, medium heels 5cm, or high heels 9cm) to determine the effects of the length of the heels and relationship status on the men’s perceived attractiveness of women.

Procedure

This study will consist of 6 conditions in which 40 single subjects and 40 subjects in highly committed relationship will be randomly assigned to each of the following 3 conditions (flat shoes, medium heels, or high heels). Participants in all 6 conditions will each view 5 pictures of the same women who have already been established by raters as being moderately attractive. In the flat shoes condition the women will be wearing flat shoes, in the medium heels conditions the women will be wearing 5cm heels, and in the high heels condition the women will
be wearing 9cm heels. The dependent variable will be measured using a Likert-type attraction scale which will rate from (0: unattractive to 10: highly attractive). Each participant from all the conditions will rate all five women based on their perceived attractive of them. This can result in a maximum score of 50 if a participant’s perceives all five women to be highly attractive, or a minimum score of 0 if the participant perceives the women to be unattractive.

Results

The expected data for the single subjects is an increase in perceived attractiveness of women in medium heel condition, as compared to the flat shoes conditions, with highest perceived attraction in the high heels condition. Contrastively, the data for subjects who are in a committed relationship are expected to decrease with increasing heel size conditions. More specifically, those who are in the flat shoes condition are expected to have the highest perceived attractiveness scores, followed by lower overall scores in the condition with medium heels, with the lowest perceived attractiveness scores in the high heel condition.

Table 1. Expected means for conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Status</th>
<th>Heel Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flat Shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly committed</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Research project design specifications

Independent variable 1:

Heel Length

Level 1: Flat shoes
Level 2: Medium heels (5cm)
Level 3: High heels (9cm)

Independent variable 2:

Relationship Status

Level 1: Single
Level 2: Highly committed

Dependent variable:

Minimum score: 0   Maximum score: 50