Consistency versus Fluidity: The Effect of Backgrounds on Perceived Attractiveness

1. All subjects for this research will be volunteers from the Texas State University student body population. All materials will be supplied by Texas State University. All data will be collected from the research participants. Characteristics of all participants will be a representative of the greater Texas State University student population.
2. Subjects will be recruited via flyers posted in the psychology and sociology buildings at Texas State University. Each participant will be required to sign a consent form before being allowed to engage in any research. Signature will indicate consent.
3. This research will set out to determine if perceived attractiveness is dependent upon a physical background. Levels of attractiveness will be averaged to observe fluctuation according to the background. Photographs of fifteen women will be taken with a digital camera against a white (neutral) backdrop. They will be asked to dress in similar dark, short-sleeved shirts with denim jeans. Their hair is to be worn as it grows from their heads (not in an up-do, or any type of extra styling) with no products. No make-up is to be applied. Negative and positive backgrounds will be created using a computer, and software designed for editing photos. The backgrounds will be of weather conditions. The “positive” defined as favorable, sunny weather, the “negative” defined as unfavorable, stormy weather. The white background of the original photograph will represent the control. Participants will rate the attractiveness of the women in the photographs using an eleven-point scale. An SPSS program will be used to analyze the data. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of three groups. Photographs will be split into three levels: neutral, negative and positive; and numbered 1 through 15 within their respective groups. Each group of subjects will be shown one set of photographs. Participants will rate the attractiveness of each person in the photographs using an eleven-point scale. There will be a total forty-five photographs. Each participant in group number one will judge: neutral photographs 1-5, positive photographs 6-10, and negative photographs 11-15. Each participant in group number two will judge: neutral photographs 6-10, positive photographs 11-15, and negative photographs 1-5. Each participant in group number three will judge: neutral photographs 11-15, positive photographs 1-5, and negative photographs 6-10. The data will be collected and a one-way AVOVA will be conducted.
4. There do not appear to be many potential risks associated with participation in this study. Discomfort or anxiety caused by rating the attractiveness of others may occur.
5. The procedure taken to prevent or minimize risk includes a participant consent form and an explanation of the study given by the researcher.
6. There are no potential benefits to be incurred by participating other than a minimal amount of extra credit to be given at each professor’s discretion.
7. There will be no compensation for this research. Only if a professor decides on his or her own accord to award extra credit, will it be given.
8. The only negative risk in conjunction with the benefit of this study would be if one teacher decided to grant extra credit, while others did not.
9. There will be no other agencies aside from Texas State University that will be used in this research.
10. This research is being conducted to earn three hours of psychology credit. It is classified as an elective. Stan Friedman Ph.D. is the professor of the class, as well as the sponsor of the research.
11. Approval of this research by Dr. Friedman was given by acceptance into this individual studies course at Texas State University.
12. This research has not, and will not be approved by any other IRB.
13. Only I, Jamie Parsons and Dr. Friedman will have access to the participant’s information, and any data collected from them. Once results have been found, each participant will have the opportunity to view them. Publication will only occur if the results are statistically significant. All participants will be informed if this occurs.