The made-up lass is of higher class: Sex differences in judgements of dominance and prestige for women with and without make-up.

Viktoria R. Mileva¹, Alex Jones², Richard Russell³, and Anthony C. Little¹

¹University of Stirling, Scotland, ²University of Bangor, Wales, ³Gettysburg College, USA
Email correspondence: v.r.mileva@str.ac.uk

Questions
Does wearing make-up make women look more attractive, dominant, or prestigious?
Does make-up influence ratings by men and women in the same way?

Social Status
Authority, Influence, and Power
Two proposed ways to attaining high social status⁶:
1. Dominance: Using intimidation, coercion, and manipulation to reach high status
2. Prestige: Freely conferred high status based on qualities and merits

Methods
1. Photographed 45 female faces both with and without make-up
2. Averaged all 45 with make-up and all 45 without make-up into composites
3. Applied standardized amount of make-up to each face
4. Students rated attractiveness, dominance, and prestige
5. Within-subjects, fully randomised design

Results

Attractiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of Rater</th>
<th>No make-up</th>
<th>Make-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both sexes think women with make-up look more attractive

Dominance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of Rater</th>
<th>No make-up</th>
<th>Make-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women think women with make-up look more dominant

Prestige

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of Rater</th>
<th>No make-up</th>
<th>Make-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Men think women with make-up look more prestigious

Discussion
Make-up makes women more attractive, but men and women differ in how they see make-up use. Men may not compete directly with women and associate prestige with attractiveness. Women may feel jealous and threatened by other women’s attractiveness.

References