

Running head: LIKING, LOOKS, AND LEARNING

Looking Good, Teaching Well? Linking Liking, Looks, and Learning Critique

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*Abstract*

All of the necessary information required for a review was presented. In my opinion, it could have been better if some key words had been used. This abstract also seemed too short.

*Introduction*

It is my belief that the authors' claims of "Attractiveness also contributes to first impressions" (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 5) were supported. However, the authors' use of citations was incorrect in the first paragraph. Towards the end of the first citation, "...Langlois et al., 2000;..." (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 5) should have listed all of the authors "...Langlois, Kalakanis, Rubenstein, Larson, Hallam, & Smoot, 2000;..." (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 9) within the introduction. A second citation, "... Epting, Zinn, Buskist, & Buskist, 2004;..." (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 5) is incorrect because "...Buskist, & Buskist,..." should read, "...Buskist, C., & Buskist, W...." (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 9). It would be easy to get in touch with the authors because their mailing and e-mail addresses are listed under the Notes section on page 10. This is a scholarly article. After being given the link on the Web, the Method section shows that the students were able to input their survey answers directly on a survey form via the internet (Gurung & Vespia, 2007). This method was appropriate. One of the sources cited was 35 years old, but quite a few of them were less than five years old. Most of the articles cited were a good fit for this topic while a few of them were only sparsely related. The Method section contained all of the requirements necessary for the participants section except there was no mention of ethnic breakdown. In my opinion, this sample was appropriate for this particular type of research. Data was collected using a voluntary survey in the form of an opinion scale. This survey was on the internet and the students who agreed to complete the survey were supplied

with the Web link. Information was collected for two classes from each student. Two of the most important findings were "...grade in class and self-reported learning, were moderately related,  $r(861) = .38, p < .001$ " (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 6). These findings were presented on two separate tables. Gurung & Vespia (2007) summarized that professor likeability was a good predictor of grades and self-reported learning. According to Gurung & Vespia, (2007) likeability included how attractive the professor was, how they dress (formal or informal), how easy a professor was to approach, how difficult a class was, how often students were present in class, and if the students participated in class. Although discouraging for some professors, "... there may be legitimate theoretical explanations for the demonstrated relations between liking, attractiveness, and learning" (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 8) and "... motivation does not always come from what instructors do, but also from who they are (e.g., approachable)" (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 8). Also mentioned were limitations. The authors stated that "Although we had a large sample that appeared representative of the student body, we cannot assess all ways in which participant self-selection might be a concern (e.g., ACT scores, socioeconomic status)" (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 9). Another limitation was the fact that all of the data collected was from one university. Gurung & Vespia (2007) stated that even though they did not think it would make a difference in the outcome, they used data from only one university. "The data collected also did not permit an exploration of possible causal models, and it did not include a measure of final grades" (Gurung & Vespia, 2007, p. 9). According to Gurung & Vespia (2007) a major contribution that was made was the fact that no matter how well organized or how good a professor is, learning can be influenced by individual characteristics. They also found that being prepared to give a lecture may not be enough. Professors must also dress for the part, be approachable, open, and willing to communicate with students (Gurung & Vespia, 2007).

*Conclusion*

In my opinion, the results section of this article was difficult to read and comprehend. The research was good for the most part except for the citation errors. This article did add to our knowledge base in that it lets professors know that how they look and how they communicate with students can make a difference in how well their student's perform. It was shocking to me that anyone would do research on this topic. I would have never thought that appearance would make such a difference in student learning. For me, it has generally been teachers who have open communication and an organized way of instructing.

References

Gurung, R., & Vespia, K. (2007). Looking good, teaching well? Linking liking, looks, and learning. *Teaching of Psychology, 34*(1), 5-10. Retrieved October 10, 2007, from Academic Search Complete database.