

Choosing who to work with from facial expression and clothing color

Augusta Gaspar¹ and Barbara Rodrigues¹

¹Department of Psychology, Faculty of Human Sciences, Universidade Católica Portuguesa

Summary In the current study we explored the role of facial expression, clothing color and stereotype conformity in Likability and competence attribution and corporate collaborator choice.

Keywords · Color, Emotion, Competence, Likability, Non-verbal

✉Name: augusta.gaspar@ucp.pt

Introduction In spite of the discussion surrounding what do facial expressions express and the general weak emotion- spontaneous expression association, the (Joy/amusement) smile stands out as one of the most predictable expressions from context (Dúran, Reizenzein & Fernández-Dols, 2017) and one that has been consistently linked to positive trait attributions in interpersonal perception (Garrido & Prada, 2017). Although color evokes emotion and clothing color has been shown to influence person perception (e.g. Dael et al, 2016), the role of gender color stereotypes in clothing and perceptions of likability and competence has not - to our knowledge - been addressed in previous studies.

Aims We assessed whether smile vs neutral face affected the categorization of people as Competent and/or Likable and whether dressing according to color gender stereotypes in combination with facial expression affects job candidates' choice. We expected male candidates wearing pink would be less chosen, and that a combination of smiling and conformity to color gender stereotype or white would enhance candidate choice.

Methods Two studies were conducted: S1, aimed at selecting stimuli; S2 aimed at understanding how pink, blue and white impacted the decision of choosing collaborators to work with. In S1 faces from the image base KDEF (Lundquist et. al., 1998) were placed in a corporate style body using Adobe Photoshop 2020, creating "portraits" of job candidates for a categorization involving brief CV description matching Casciaro & Sousa Lobo's (2005) employee Archetypes (combining Likability and Competence: Lovable Star (LS), Lovable Fool (LF), Competent Jerk (JF) and Incompetent Jerk (IJ)). Portraits were presented one by one, along with categories and respective descriptions to participants who filled a questionnaire with their categorization options ($N= 35$). An Independence *Chi-square* analysis for the portraitXcategory crosstab was carried out. In S2, pictures selected from S1 were manipulated to dress in pink, blue or white, and presented in 18 pairs of "job candidates" in a task of "who would you choose to work with, A or B ?" (Fig. 1 for examples). The task was carried out

online in a *Qualtrics* survey ($N=348$). Dichotomous choice data were analyzed with *Cochran's* test, and pairwise comparisons were carried out using the *McNemar* test.

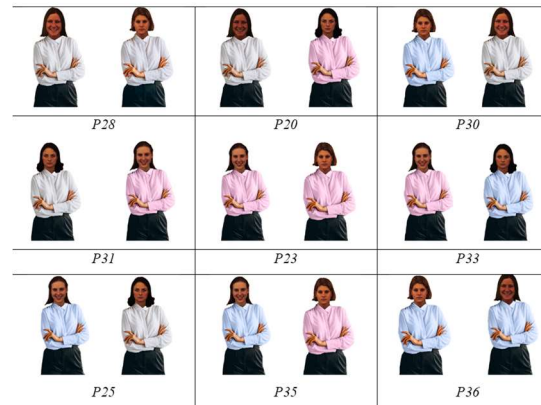


Figure 1: Examples of female candidate pairs in the choice task

Results S1 returned a significant categorizationX-portraits association, concentrated in the "Lovable fool" and "Competent jerk" categories: all portraits categorized as "LF" were smiling, and all portraits highly convergent in "CJ" had neutral faces. In S2, participants chose to work with likeability (LF) over competence (CJ), highlighting the effect of smile. Participants also confirmed hypotheses on the effect of color and stereotype violation: when dressed in pink, CJ targets were significantly less chosen; they were, however chosen when dressed in white or blue

Conclusions Our results support the role of smile in the implicit inference of personal traits such as likability, and highlight the relevance of other non-verbal, such as clothing color and norm conformity cues in preference formation and decision making in corporate contexts.

References

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