

Attractiveness, Reciprocity and Students' Evaluation of Teaching (SET)

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I. Theory and Hypotheses

Attractiveness

Productivity and Discrimination

- Recent studies report that more attractive instructors receive better SET. However, it remains unclear whether this is due to differences in productivity or the result of discrimination.
- On the one hand, the quality of the course could increase with the attractiveness of the instructor (productivity).
- On the other hand, the quality of the course could remain constant and nonetheless the SET gets better (discrimination).

Beauty-is-Beastly

- People attribute typical characteristics of one's sex to extraordinary attractive persons. So women should be for example less assertive than men.
- Thus, female instructors with an attractiveness over a certain threshold could get a poorer evaluation.

Intersexual-Attraction

- Due to sociobiological reasons, a person's attractiveness is more important for people of the opposite sex.
- Therefore, the influence of the attractiveness on the SET is stronger if the instructor and the student are of opposite sex.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity and a Difficult Test

- If students evaluate a course after a difficult test, students will give poorer grades in their evaluation.

Reciprocity and Grading

- If students evaluate a course after a difficult test, their success has a positive effect on SET.

Reciprocity and Attractiveness

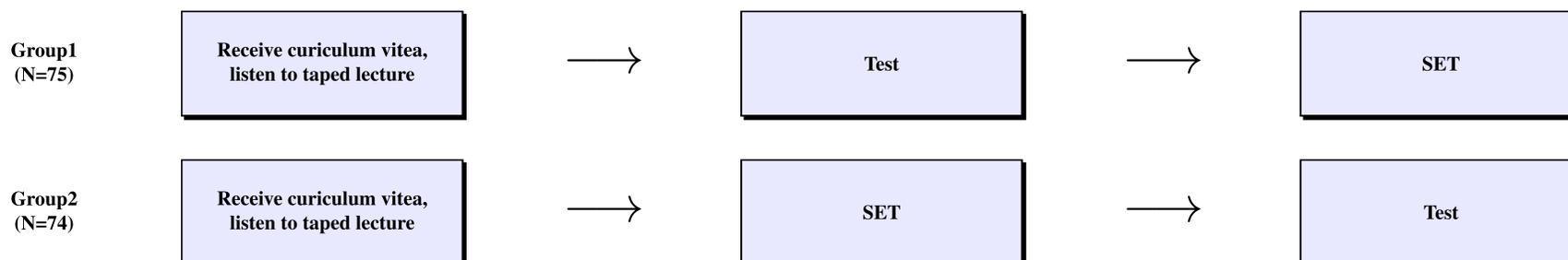
Glamour-Effect

- If the SET is conducted after a difficult test, the negative effect of poor test performance on SET is weaker for more attractive instructors than for less attractive instructors.

Beauty-Penalty

- If the SET is conducted after a difficult test, the negative effect of poor test performance on SET is stronger for more attractive instructors than for less attractive instructors.

II. Experimental Design



The pictures of the instructors



III. Empirical Results

Average SET by treatment

	Test following Evaluation		Evaluation following Test		summary
	female instructor	male instructor	female instructor	male instructor	
high	2,76	2,69	3,32	3,56	3,12
low	3,13	2,82	3,54	3,06	3,12
summary	2,97	2,76	3,42	3,31	3,12

Attractiveness

Productivity and Discrimination

- The influence of attractiveness was lower than in similar non-experimental studies.
- There are small productivity effects as well as very low levels of discrimination.

Beauty-is-Beastly

- Against the theoretical expectation: Only male instructors with an attractiveness over a certain threshold got a poorer evaluation than expected.

Intersexual-Attraction

- If instructors and students are of the same sex, the SET become worse.
- If instructors and students are of the same sex, the influence of the instructors attractiveness on the SET increases.

Reciprocity

Difficult Test and Grading on Reciprocity

- There is a significant interaction between the number of correct answers in a test and the timing of test.
- By adding students' interest, sex and prior knowledge, the interaction in the model gets stronger. So there is no indication for a spurious correlation.

- The results show a clear and strong influence of a difficult test and of grading on reciprocity.

Alternative Explanations can be excluded

- SET do not reflect learning success.
- The grading effect is not due to the attribution of failures to others and of successes to oneself.

Reciprocity and Attractiveness

Beauty-Penalty and Glamour-Effects

- The results seem to show a beauty-penalty and not a glamour-effect.
- After a difficult test, both male and female instructors with above average attractiveness were punished in the SET.