TOWSON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Hair Length Influence on Perception of Male Attributes

By

Patrick Connors

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TOWSON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by __Patrick Connors__ entitled __Hair Length Influence on Perception of Male Attributes_ has been approved by the thesis committee as satisfactorily completing the thesis requirements for the degree __Master of Arts.

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Committee Member Associate Dean, College of Graduate	Date Date
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Abstract

Hair Length Influence on Perception of Male Attributes

Patrick Connors

Although the relationship between a woman's hair length, attractiveness and perceived

intelligence has been studied, the same relationship has not been investigated in males

(Buss, 1995; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Hinsz, Matz, and Patience 2001; Mesko & Bereczkei

2004). In the present study, 148 female Towson University undergraduate students rated

photos of male models in terms of these two attributes, among others. There was found to

be two significant main effects of the Hair length and Model, specifically on the two

main attributes of attractiveness and intelligence.

Keywords: Hair Length, Intelligence, Attractiveness, Gender

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Introduction

First impressions are difficult to change, and 100 ms is all that is required for an individual to formulate an impression (Bar, Neta & Linz, 2006; Willis & Todorov, 2006). However, first impressions are seldom accurate because they are based largely on physical characteristics. Heckert (2003) found that hairstyle is an important aspect of appearance that influences first impressions. Hair can be easily manipulated to emphasize physical attributes or to hide their imperfections. The amount of money spent on hairstyle, especially by women, indicates its significant influence on impressions (Hinsz, Matz, & Patience 2001). Hair can denote a person's health, age, and even suggest the quality of their genetic make-up (Mesko & Bereczkei 2004), all of which influence how attractive or intelligent they may seem to others.

This paper will examine the relationship between hair length, attractiveness and intelligence. It will also outline the gender differences in mate selection, with focused attention on the importance of perceptions based on male hair length, highlighting why research on the perception of male hair length is as important as the perception of females' hair length.

Hair and Attractiveness

Mesko and Bereczkei (2004) conducted an experiment to test three evolutionary based hypotheses relating to hair: covering hypothesis, healthy mate theory, and good genes theory. The covering hypothesis suggests that head hair either accentuates or hides a person's facial features; short hair shows off advantageous ones, while long hair conceals them. Thus, short hair should increase the attractiveness of women who were judged to be highly feminine, and long hair should obscure features that appeared more

masculine, such as a larger jaw. The healthy mate theory states that the conditioning of the hair would accentuate or diminish the attractiveness because it indicates an absence of pathogens that could potentially be harmful to mates or offspring. This theory is similar to the good genes theory, which states that, regardless of the person's facial features, longer hair suggests a healthier individual. If a person has long healthy looking hair, he/she will appear to be free of any parasites or diseases that would diminish their appeal as a potential mate.

To test their predictions, Mesko and Bereczkei (2004) took pictures of 77 females who had their hair pulled back in clips to reduce the amount of visible cranial hair, and adopted a neutral expression. This was called the "basic face" (Mesko & Bereczkei, 2004). A group of 30 males then rated these pictures for attractiveness using a scale of 1 to 6, where 6 was the most attractive. The 10 most attractive and 10 least attractive rated photos were selected for further use. Using computer software (Cosmopolitan My Style 2), the researchers modified the women's photos to create six different hairstyles: short, medium, long, disheveled, bun, and unkempt, applied to them instead of the basic face. Next, a new group of 52 males rated the 20 females' photos. First, they were shown the "basic face" and then were randomly shown the remaining 120 pictures; each picture was rated on four different features of female attractiveness as defined by previous studies: femininity, youth, health, and sexiness (Mesko & Bereczkei, 2004). By eliminating the original attractiveness values of the "basic face" from the ratings of the styled photos, Mesko and Bereczkei were able to calculate the effect that hairstyle had on attractiveness.

The results from the Mesko and Bereczkei (2004) study supported the good genes theory. Only the medium and long-length hairstyles seemed to have a positive effect on

perceived attractiveness; these variables also had the largest change when it came to the dimension of perceived health. The conclusion, therefore, was that the longer a woman's hair, the healthier and more attractive she appears to be. Thus, her appeal as a potential mate increased (Mesko & Bereczkei, 2004).

Hinsz, Matz, and Patience (2001) concluded that longer hair suggests youthfulness. These researchers interviewed women randomly in various public places. While one researcher asked the women a battery of questions, regarding marital status, health, and reproductive ability, a confederate researcher stood discreetly aside and rated the participants' hair quality and length, as trained by local hair salons (Hinsz, Matz, & Patience 2001). The difference between their measures suggested that younger women's hair tends to be longer, and appears better cared for versus older women's hair. A possible explanation provided by the researchers was that men naturally look for younger women, because they would be more likely able to carry a full-term pregnancy. Therefore, women are more likely to keep their hair longer and better maintained while they are younger and actively searching for a potential mate.

The main impact of this finding is that it identifies what males seem to find attractive in women. While being younger does not guarantee a woman to be more physically attractive, propagating the species is hardwired into every animal. By appearing younger, and thereby boosting the innate potential of fertility, women are more likely to attract a mate (Buss, 1995; Buss & Schmitt, 1993).

In addition to biological prosperity, hair can also portray social or economic status (Banet-Weiser 2001). For instance, women in high-level jobs, such as a business executive, often adopt a "power cut" (a short, well-manicured style) to look less

feminine, but not too masculine (Drentea 2004). This hairstyle may suggest competence, efficiency and success. In a business setting, a woman with short hair might appear more attractive, on an accompanying socioeconomic level, rather than a purely physical one. Biologically, this attraction can be explained as an individual searching for a mate that can best provide for and protect it and its offspring. Also, in this day and age, what better protector and provider could there be than a successful and most likely rich, one?

To summarize, women, who are most often the subjects of these studies, are generally more attractive to males if they have longer hair which accentuates their youthfulness and health status (Mesko & Bereczkei 2004; Hinsz, Matz, & Patience 2001). However, hair does not just attract a mate based on the physical aspects it portrays. By adopting a shorter "power cut" style of hair, women portray a more professional and efficient appearance that suggests competence and success (Drentea 2004). This possibly provides them with a better socioeconomic appeal, which in the modern world, may have as much influence as the physical appearance (Banet-Weiser 2001).

Hair and Intelligence

Men are traditionally portrayed as having short hair in the media, with cultural differences in presentation. Men who have less hair, typically due to male pattern baldness, are viewed as older, and consequently, more intelligent, than those with more hair (Cash 1990; Wogalter & Hosie 1991).

Similar to Mesko and Bereczkei (2004), Wogalter and Hosie (1991) used a computer program (Mac-a-Mug Pro) to simulate different amounts of cranial hair in males. Two experimenters then classified these variants based on the quantity of cranial

hair; having less hair and raised frontal hairlines indicated that the person "appeared to be balding." These hairstyles were then paired with 16 faces. The study also placed the hairstyles on faces that also had one of 16 randomly generated beards on the chin. The photos were then placed in a booklet in random order and given to the 48 participants (29 female, 19 male), who were asked to estimate the ages of the people and to rate their attractiveness, intelligence, and social ability using a scale of 0-6, with 6 being the highest.

The results indicated that cranial hair and the gender of the rater significantly affected ratings of intelligence (Wogalter & Hosie 1991). Overall, pictures of men who had less cranial hair had higher ratings of intelligence, and female raters were more likely than male ones to rate the photos that way. A possible explanation for this is that, while males with less hair appeared more intelligent, they also appeared older. This finding was important to the current study because unlike the attractiveness studies, it provides evidence that women believe a man with shorter hair looks more intelligent.

Cash's (1990) experiment supported the notion that the less cranial hair a man has, the older he is assumed to be. In this study, 108 participants (54 male, 54 female) rated 18 photos of both balding and non-balding men on seven dimensions of social perception. Cash found that, with less cranial hair, a man is assumed older. These results support Wogalter and Hosie's (1991) findings, and provide more evidence for the idea that a man with shorter hair will be seen as more intelligent than one with longer hair.

Methodological Issues

With the exception of Hinsz, Matz and Patience (2001), all studies of the possible effects of hair on social perception have used photos of individuals. While this

methodology ensures an internally valid experimental design, it does not depict the types of judgments people make of live models. For instance, Cash (1990) used 18 photos of men with either balding or not balding hair. By using multiple models, he allowed for some external validity, but he also could not be completely sure that hair was the only variable having an effect. Because no one person looks *exactly* like another how can the investigator be sure that the length of hair is the only factor? For example, the arc of a person's cheekbones, or any other minor facial detail, may compliment a person better than another.

On the other hand, both Mesko and Bereczkei (2004) and Wogalter and Hosie (1991) used a computer program to create the different hairstyles. Wogalter and Hosie used the program to generate facial features also. While this does control for the possibility of another variable influencing the rating, it does not necessarily provide as much external validity.

Gender Differences in Mate Selection

Male preferences of a mate's hair could be drastically divergent from the female.

Do women desire men with long hair that look younger, less successful and perhaps more feminine? Unfortunately, there have been no studies so far that have investigated this possible variable.

Studies that have investigated possible sex differences in attraction have found differences in mate selection between men and women (Cunningham, Barbee, & Pike 1990; Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, Shebilske, & Lundgren 1993; Fallon & Rozin 1985; Brown, Cash, & Noles 2001). According to Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, Shebilske, and Lundgren (1993), men tend to choose their mates based upon their physical features

alone, while women's choices are based more upon the male's socioeconomic status and ambition. Singh (1995) also found that women tend to choose mates based on socioeconomic status. By combining the ideas that a man's hair can depict not only how healthy he is, but also his socioeconomic standing, it is obvious that hair can influence a woman's mate choices.

How much a woman's mate selection is influenced by a man's hair is supported by Brown, Cash and Noles (2001). They discovered that attraction is significantly related to the neatness of a person's hair and overall grooming. They theorized that the more an individual conformed to gender standards (i.e., males more masculine, and females more feminine), the more attractive they were perceived. The results suggested that masculinity/femininity is related to hair neatness and grooming. Again, longer hair tends to accentuate feminine qualities, thus raising the question: would a male who has longer hair suffer a penalty to his attractiveness rating, by not conforming to gender standards? In addition, if a man is considered more intelligent when he is going bald or already is bald, then a man with short hair should be viewed as more intelligent than a man with long hair.

Evidence from several online websites is consistent with the previous literature. There are numerous sites on the internet now that allow people to rate another person's body for attractiveness based upon pictures they post to the site. While these may not be well controlled pictorial manipulations, they are good examples of the fact that men with short hair are viewed physically more attractive. For instance, on the site Rate My Body (www.ratemybody.com), the top eighteen men on the site all have short hair. This is also the case on other sites. On "Cutemeter" (www.cutemeter.com), eight out of the top ten

males have short hair. On "Like My Body" (www.likemybody.com), the top ten males all have short hair, as opposed to long hair. On "Rating My Look"

(www.ratingmylook.com), there were more males with long hair in the top 10, but the majority of photos still had short hair.

The Present Study

The present study was designed in an attempt to determine if males with short hair are seen to be more attractive and intelligent than males with longer hair. This study adds to the literature since previous studies failed to look at attractiveness and intelligence as dependent variables when hair length is deliberately manipulated with wigs. It is hypothesized that the shorthaired photos will rate higher in intelligence and attractiveness.

Method

Participants

This study was conducted using 148 Towson University female undergraduate students. The mean age of the participants was 20.6 years. 79.7% of the participants reported themselves as being White, 17.6% Black, .7% Asian, and 2.0% Other. All were collected from the Towson Psychology research pool.

Materials

Photos. Three different male models were used for the stimuli, each with three pictures: a shorthaired photo, a medium-haired, and a longhaired one. After taking the shorthaired photo the longer hairstyles were simulated using a wig (see Appendices A through I).

Rating Scales. Under each picture were multiple rating scales, ranging from one to five, with one being the lowest rating, and five the highest. The objects of the rating scales were attractiveness, intelligence, friendliness, athleticism, and whether the participant believed the model would be found attractive by other women. Participants also indicated whether they would date said model, along with an inquiry of their relationship status, and their significant others' hair length. In addition to this, participants were asked to provide their age and ethnicity. See example of the rating scales in the Appendix.

Procedures

One of the nine photos was selected randomly and presented to the participant face down. Each participant turned over the photo and rated it in terms of the given qualities. Participants also rated the model's attractiveness to other women and rated whether they would romantically date said model. They also answered questions about their current relationship status, and about their significant others' hair length. In addition to this, participants provided their age and ethnicity. All information provided was kept confidential.

Results

A 3 (Model) X 3 (Hair length) ANOVA was conducted on the data. A significant main effect of Hair was found, Wilk's Lambda = .608, F (16, 124) = 2.192, p<.05, partial eta squared = .220. The observed power was .97, accounting for roughly 97% of the variance. Another significant main effect was found for the Model, Wilk's Lambda = .653, F (16, 124) = 1.841, p<.05, partial eta squared = .192. The observed power of the Model condition was .932, accounting for roughly 93% of the variance. There was no

significant main effect interaction of the two. Using a post-hoc Tukey test, it was determined that there were no significant differences between the Short and Medium hair lengths. The same post-hoc test also determined that both the Short and Medium hair lengths were significantly different from the Long condition.

Attractiveness

A one-way ANOVA found a significant effect of Hair on the Attractiveness rating, F(2,147) = 13.877, p<.05. Looking at Figure 1 (Appendix J), the Short and Medium conditions average Attractiveness rating were higher than that of the Long hair condition. A two-tailed Pearson R Correlation analysis of the data was also found to be significant, r = -.316, p<.05.

A one-way ANOVA also found a significant effect of Model on the Attractiveness rating, F (2, 147) = 7.726, p<.05. Looking at Figure 1 (Appendix J), it appears that Model M was rated highest regardless of the hairstyle, with Models MC and J respectively 2^{nd} and 3^{rd} . A two-tailed Pearson R Correlation analysis of the data was also found to be significant, r= .189, p<.05.

Intelligence

A one-way ANOVA found a significant effect of Hair on the Intelligence rating, F (2, 147) = 4.648, p<.05. Looking at Figure 2 (Appendix K), the Short and Medium conditions average Intelligence rating were higher than that of the Long hair condition. A two-tailed Pearson R Correlation analysis of the data was also found to be significant, r = -.219, p<.05.

A one-way ANOVA also found a significant effect of Model on the Intelligence rating, F(2, 147) = 6.535, p<.05. Using Figure 2 (Appendix K), Model M was rated the

most intelligent looking, regardless of the hairstyle the participant viewed. Model J was rated 2nd most intelligent, and Model MC the least intelligent looking of the models.

Discussion

Hair is a very prominent and influential part of a person's appearance: it can denote a person's gender, age, and in some cultures, even their social standing. It also influences other aspects, like a person's perceived intelligence and attractiveness, at least in women (Hinsz, Matz, & Patience 2001; Mesko & Bereczkei 2004). Because men's hair length is less frequently studied than women's, this study looked at how a male's hair length affected his perceived intelligence and attractiveness. It was found that both the Hair and Model conditions had an overall significant effect, as well as a significant effect on the attractiveness and intelligence ratings.

Using the correlational analysis, the shorter the hair in the picture, the higher the rating was. This shows that, of the women who participated, males with shorter hair were perceived as both more attractive and more intelligent than males with the longer hair.

This directly supports the hypothesis that men with shorter hair will be seen as both more attractive and intelligent than men with longer hair.

There were also ratings collected for how friendly, athletic, and how attractive other women would find the model. In regards to friendliness, there was a significant effect of the Model condition on the rating. The ratings of athleticism and attractiveness to other women, however, were found to be significantly effected by the Hair condition.

Seeing as there were no significant interactions between the Hair and Model conditions, this indicates that each condition was acting independently on the select ratings. The importance of this is that, while the different models did have an effect on

some ratings, like friendliness, it did not confound the dependent variable of changing the hair length via wigs. In other words, while it would appear that both the Model and Hair conditions affected the ratings of attractiveness and intelligence, the two together did not work in concert to do so.

While this study has not only furthered the literature of first impression and attraction, it also has potential in the nonscientific world. Using these findings, dating sites can take steps to further assist their clients who are more difficult to find matches. In the same regard, an employment agency can help hard to place clients refresh their looks to help them appear more friendly, attractive, or intelligent to potential employers. Even a salon or barber shop could use these results to sell hairstyles to customers, again quoting that it would help them appear more intelligent or attractive.

This study examined how much influence a male's hair length has over his perceived attractiveness and intelligence. While women's hair length and style has been extensively examined, the same cannot be said for male's (Buss, 1995; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Hinsz, Matz, and Patience 2001; Mesko & Bereczkei 2004). This is just one step towards readily quantifying what women may find attractive in a potential mate.

Appendix A

Age: Race: White Black



Rate this guy in terms of friendliness:		Rate this guy in terms of attractiveness:	
123	-45	13	45
Not	Very	Not	Very
Very	Friendly	Very	Attractive
Friendly		Attractive	
Rate this guy in terms	of athleticism:	Rate this guy in terr	
Not	Very	Not	Very
Very	Athletic	Very	Intelligent
Athletic		Intelligent	
Do you believe this gu	ıy is found	Would you date this	s guy?
attractive by other wor	men?	Yes No	17858.0
13	45	(s-2)	
Not	Very		
Very	Attractive		
Attractive			

Are you currently dating someone?

Yes No If so, how long is their hair?

Bald

Buzz/Military

Ear-length

Shoulder-length

Appendix B

Age: Race: White Black Asian Other



Rate this guy in terms of friend		Rate this guy in term	
Not	Very Friendly	Not Very Attractive	Very Attractive
Rate this guy in terms of athleticism: 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Athletic Athletic		Rate this guy in terms of intelligence: 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Intelligent Intelligent	
Do you believe this guy is found attractive by other women? 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Attractive Attractive		Would you date this guy? Yes No	

Are you currently dating someone?

Yes No If so, how long is their hair?

Bald ____ Buzz/Military ____

Ear-length_

Shoulder-length ___

Appendix C

Age: Race:



Rate this guy in ter	ms of friendliness:	Rate this guy in ten	ns of attractiveness:
13-	45	13	45
Not	Very	Not	Very
Very	Friendly	Very	Attractive
Friendly	vice construction	Attractive	
Rate this guy in ter		Rate this guy in ten	
13-		13	900
Not	Very	Not	Very
Very	Athletic	Very	Intelligent
Athletic		Intelligent	1000
Do you believe this guy is found attractive by other women?		Would you date this Yes No	
13-		TOTAL CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY O	
Not	Very		
Very	Attractive		
Attractive			

Are you currently dating someone?

Yes No If so, how long is their hair?

Bald

Buzz/Military

Ear-length Shoulder-length

Appendix D

Age: Race: White Black Asian Other



Rate this guy in terms of friendl		Rate this guy in ten	ms of attractiveness:
Not V	ery iendly	Not Very Attractive	Very Attractive
Rate this guy in terms of athleticism: 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Athletic Athletic		Rate this guy in terms of intelligence: 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Intelligent Intelligent	
Do you believe this guy is found attractive by other women? 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Attractive Attractive		Would you date this Yes No _	

Are you currently dating someone?

Yes ___ No __ If so, how long is their hair?

Bald ____ Buzz/Military ____

Ear-length _____ Shoulder-length ____

Appendix E

Age: Race:



Rate this guy in terms of friend		Rate this guy in terms	
Not \	Very Friendly	Not Very Attractive	Very Attractive
		Rate this guy in terms 1 2 3 Not Very Intelligent	
Do you believe this guy is found attractive by other women? 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Attractive Attractive		Would you date this g Yes No	guy? —

Are you currently dating someone?

Yes ____ No ___ If so, how long is their hair? Bald ___ Buzz/Military ___

Ear-length Shoulder-length

Appendix F

Age: Race:



Rate this guy in terms of friend		Rate this guy in terms	
Not	Very Friendly	Not Very Attractive	Very Attractive
Rate this guy in terms of athleticism: 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Athletic Athletic		Rate this guy in terms of intelligence: 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Intelligent Intelligent	
Do you believe this guy is found attractive by other women? 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Attractive		Would you date this guy? Yes No	

Are you currently dating someone?

Yes No If so, how long is their hair?

Bald

Buzz/Military _ Ear-length _ Shoulder-length

Appendix G

Age: Race: White Black Asian Other



Rate this guy in terms of friendliness:		Rate this guy in terms of attractiveness:	
Not Very Friendly	Very Friendly	Not Very Attractive	Very Attractive
Rate this guy in terms of athleticism: 12345 Not Very Very Athletic Athletic		Rate this guy in terms of intelligence: 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Intelligent Intelligent	
Do you believe this guy is found attractive by other women? 1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Very Attractive		Would you date this Yes No _	~ .

Are you currently dating someone?

Yes ____ No ___

If so, how long is their hair?

Bald ___

Buzz/Military ___

Ear-length ___

Shoulder-length ___

Appendix H

Age: Race: White Black Asian Other



Rate this guy in terms of friendliness:		Rate this guy in terms of attractiveness: 15	
Not	Very	Not	Very
Very	Friendly	Very	Attractive
Friendly	vice control de	Attractive	
Rate this guy in ter		Rate this guy in terr	
Not	Very	Not	Very
Very	Athletic	Very	Intelligent
Athletic		Intelligent	
Do you believe this	guy is found	Would you date this	s guy?
attractive by other	women?	Yes No	108502
13	45	40	
Not	Very		
Very	Attractive		
Attractive			

Are you currently dating someone?

Yes ____ No ___

If so, how long is their hair?

Bald ___

Buzz/Military ___

Ear-length ___

Shoulder-length ___

Appendix I

Age: Race: White Black Asian Other



Rate this guy in ten		Rate this guy in terr	
Not	Very	Not	Very
Very Friendly	Friendly	Very Attractive	Attractive
Rate this guy in ten		Rate this guy in terr	
Not	Very	Not	Very
Very Athletic	Athletic	Very Intelligent	Intelligent
Do you believe this		Would you date this	
attractive by other		Yes No _	
Not	Very		
Very	Attractive		
Attractive			

Are you currently dating someone?

Yes ____ No ___

If so, how long is their hair?

Bald ___

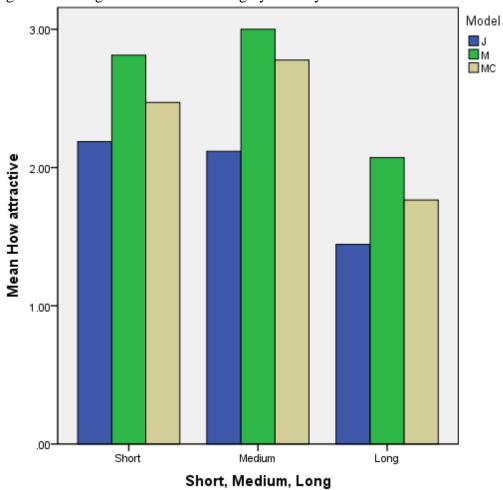
Buzz/Military ___

Ear-length ___

Shoulder-length ___

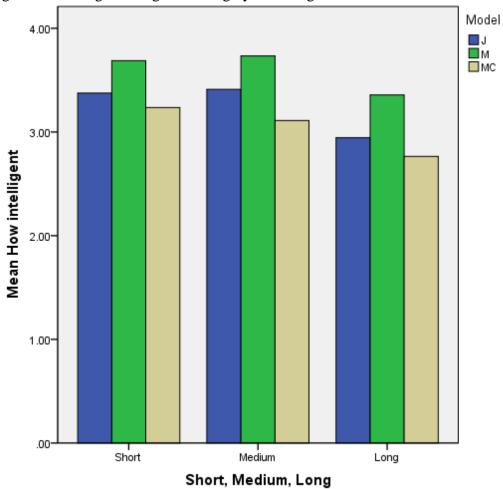
Appendix J

Figure 1- Average Attractiveness rating by Hair style and Model



Appendix K

Figure 2 - Average Intelligence rating by Hair length and Model



IRB Exemption Letter



EXEMPTION NUMBER: 10-1X26

To:

Patrick

Connors

From:

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human

Subjects, Deborah Gartland, Chair D6/WAP

Date:

Tuesday, April 13, 2010

RE:

Application for Approval of Research Involving the Use of

Human Participants

Office of University Research Services

Towson University 8000 York Road Towson, MD 21252-0001

> t. 410 704-2236 f. 410 704-4494

Thank you for submitting an application for approval of the research titled,

Prejudice Towards Males Based on Hair Length

to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants (IRB) at Towson University.

Your research is exempt from general Human Participants requirements according to 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). No further review of this project is required from year to year provided it does not deviate from the submitted research design

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CURRICULUM VITA

NAME:Patrick Connors					
PERMANENT ADDRESS:12322 Itnyre Rd					
_Smithsburg MD, 21783					
PROGRAM OF STUDY:Psychology					
DEGREE AND DATE TO BE CONFERRED:Master of Arts in Experimental					
Psychology, 2011					
Secondary education: (name of school, city, state and graduation date:					
Collegiate institutions attended Dates Degree Date of Degree					
Towson University, Towson MD (Master's) 08/10 - 05/11 MA 05/11					
Towson University, Towson MD (Bachelor) 08/05 - 05/10 BA 05/10					
Major: Psychology					
Professional publications: (list publications chronologically in proper style)					
Poster Presentation - Towson Student Research Expo - 05/10					
Relationship between Word Use and Health					
Poster Presentation - 1st International Positive Psychology Association Conference					
08/10					
Relationship between Word Use and Health					
Professional positions held:					