

5th icCSBs 2017
**The Annual International Conference on Cognitive-Social,
and Behavioural Sciences**

**IMPACT OF APPEARANCE TYPE ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS
ETHNIC LOOKISM**

Vera Labunskaya (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) Department of social psychology and personality psychology. Academy of psychology and pedagogy. Southern Federal University. Narodnoe opolchenie 222A, Rostov-on-Don 344011, Russia. vlab@aaanet.ru. Tel. +7(863)2009193

Abstract

This study focuses the attitudes towards lookism defined as discrimination of ethnic groups based on everyday description of their appearance such as “Slavic, North Caucasus or Asian type of appearance”. It is hypothesized that the interplay of appearance type and gender influences the level of lookism acceptance. The study is aimed 1) to identify different levels of lookism acceptance in relation to type of interaction situation, type of target’s (discriminated person) appearance and gender as well as 2) to analyze gender differences in acceptance of discriminating behavior. The inventory “Assessment of Acceptance of Discriminating Behavior towards Ethnic Groups” was administered. The inventory includes 15 interaction situations such as “living together” or “go for a walk” that vary in target’s appearance type and gender. The results show that level of lookism acceptance depends on appearance type and gender of discriminated person and on the type of interaction situation. There no significant differences in the level of lookism acceptance in relation to participants gender. However males tend to have higher level of lookism acceptance in comparison to females. It could be also concluded that the level of lookism acceptance is significantly different when a male target with North Caucasus appearance is discriminated in studied situations.

© 2017 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Attitudes, discrimination, ethnic lookism, appearance, gender.

1. Introduction

One of the approaches considering interaction in poly-ethnic environments has routes in the ethnic anthropology and is aimed at development of ethno-cultural typologies. This approach is presented in



psychological paradigms examining face perception of individuals of different ethnicity (Anan'eva, 2008) or exploring perception of physical attractiveness from the perspective of race theory (Aksjanova, 2003). The influence of ethno-territorial and gender factors on esthetic perception of human face is also addressed in the frameworks of ethnic anthropology (Haldeeva, 2004). From the perspective of ethnic psychology anthropological features of face and appearance can serve as classification criteria for ethnic groups. Thus, the appearance has a function of differentiation of ethnic groups (Soldatova, 1998).

Basing on findings concerning graphical representation of „Russianness“, „People of Russia“ (Vishlenkova, 2007) is stated that construction of borders of ethnic uniqueness is done by identification of distinctiveness of individuals who belong to out-groups. According to the social-psychological model of Stranger perception the knowledge about out-group members includes characteristics of individuals that could be perceived directly such as color of hairs, eyes, skin, figure, dress (Skarabis, Schäfer & Shleder, 2004).

It is stressed (Leontovich, 2007) that appearance has a role of ethnic community demonstration and can divide social and ethnic groups into “visible” and “invisible”. Strengthening the role of appearance in different types of interaction leads to greater value and importance of appearance that for instance becomes responsible for all changes in one individual’s life (Moss, Lawson & White, 2014). This understanding of appearance functions reflects the existing in the modern psychology discussion concerning “appearance and discrimination praxis” (Adamitis, 2000; Bello, 2004; Cates & Dana, 2012; Jawahar & Mattsson, 2005; Johnson et al, 2007).

Stock (2014) pointed out that clash between socio-cultural representations about appearance and its importance in various social contexts can lead to greater “cultural shock” and consequently can result in more frequent discriminating behavior. Accordingly, the appearance concern increases in representatives of ethnical groups which appearance is dissimilar to majority group. Jankowski et al (2014) suppose that social –cultural pressure experienced by ethnic minorities leads to strong desire to change own appearance also in elderly people.

Political and everyday language of Russian modern society includes such definitions as “person with North Caucasus appearance” or “person with Slavic appearance”. Jarskaja (2011) mentions that race discourse“ is becoming more popular in different life spheres that in turn triggers negative attitudes towards representatives of ethnic groups. Appearance related labels of ethnic groups used in everyday life are linked indirectly with anthropological classifications and are products of interethnic and intercultural interaction. These labels being translated through mass media back into ethnic, political, and everyday communication increase the accessibility of discriminating behavior.

2. State of the art

The understanding of discrimination as political, vocational, cultural phenomenon or as violation of human rights and limitation escalation is suggested in various studies. In addition to ethnic, gender or age discrimination the notion of lookism is introduced in the literature and is defined as discrimination based on individual’s appearance. It was mentioned in the introduction section that ethnic-cultural categorization of others is built upon their appearance. Thus, the investigation of ethnical discrimination should be combined with the analysis of lookism as both are complement social-psychological

phenomena. For this purpose the notion of ethnolookism is introduced and defined as discrimination towards representatives of ethnic groups based on their appearance (Bzejjan, 2012; Labunskaya & Bzejjan, 2014, 2016; Pogonceva, 2013). Taking into account that discriminating behavior undergoes a transition from explicit and institutionalized patterns to symbolic, indirect, and hidden patterns of discrimination, the phenomenon of ethnic lookism is considered in this study as commonplace, hidden, and masked discriminating behavior.

Basing on these assumptions the empirical-research model of ethnic lookism contains the operationalization of attitude ethnic lookism as attitude towards discriminating behavior of others directed at members of ethnic groups with diverse type of appearance (Labunskaya & Bzejjan, 2014, 2016). Attitude towards discriminating behavior of others is operationalised as individual's acceptance or non-acceptance of discriminating behavior of others. Acceptance of discriminating behavior of others implies the readiness of individual to perform discriminating behavior himself. The attitude towards discriminating behavior of others is measured with Likert scale as agreement vs. disagreement with discrimination towards representatives of ethnic groups depicted in various interaction situations. The description of ethnic appearance types used in the study are adopted from the commonplace communication: "Slavic type of appearance", "North Caucasus type of appearance", "Asian type of appearance". Following parameters are varied in the empirical-research model of ethnic lookism: 1) interaction situation; 2) characteristics of the target of discrimination: type of appearance and gender as well as 3) gender of study participants.

3. Research Questions

1. Does level of discriminating behavior acceptance depend on type of appearance of target of discrimination?
2. Does level of discriminating behavior acceptance depend on interplay between type of appearance of target of discrimination and his gender?
3. What types of interaction situation increase the level of discriminating behavior acceptance?
4. Are there any gender differences in levels of discriminating behavior acceptance?

4. Purpose of the Study

The study is aimed at investigation of differences in levels of discriminating behavior acceptance in relation to type of interaction situation, type of target's appearance and target's gender as well as gender of participants.

5. Participants and Research Methods

93 females and 35 males aged 19 to 27 ($M=23$) who indicated their identification with the Slavic type of appearance took part in the study. The inventory "Assessment of Acceptance of Discriminating Behavior towards Ethnic Groups" was developed for the purposes of the study (Лабунской, Бзезян, 2014). The inventory contains 15 vignettes describing interaction of two persons whereas first one is performing discriminating behavior towards the other one - target person. The target's gender (male vs.

female) and type of appearance (“Slavic type of appearance” vs. “North Caucasus type of appearance” vs. “Asian type of appearance”) are as well as the type of interaction (“providing with service” vs. “living together” vs. “walking in the city”) were varied. The acceptance of discriminating behavior towards members of other ethnic groups is operationalised as degree of agreement with discriminating behavior described in vignettes. Participants indicated their agreement with discriminating behavior described in vignettes on a five point Likert scale.

Following scores were calculated: 1) general score of acceptance of discriminating behavior (calculated as a sum of agreement scores reached by participants in each vignette divided through number of situations (GLADB = $\sum:15$); 2) scores of acceptance of discriminating behavior in relation to the target’s type of appearance (acceptance of discriminating behavior towards target with Slavic vs. North Caucasus vs. Asian type of appearance); 3) scores of acceptance of discriminating behavior in relation to the target’s type of appearance and gender (acceptance of discriminating behavior towards females vs. males with Slavic vs. North Caucasus vs. Asian type of appearance); 4) scores of acceptance of discriminating behavior in relation to the type of interaction situation, target’s type of appearance and gender (acceptance of discriminating behavior in “providing with service” vs. “living together” vs. “walking in the city” situations towards females vs. males with Slavic vs. North Caucasus vs. Asian type of appearance). The specific scores are calculated analogous to calculation of general agreement score.

6. Results

The data was processed using SPSS Version 13. The t-test of mean comparison for paired and independent samples was administered. Results show that level of acceptance of discriminating behavior depends significantly on the target’s type of appearance (Table 1), on the combination of target’s gender and type of appearance (Table 2), on the type of interaction situation (Table 3). The results indicate significant gender differences in the level of acceptance of discriminating behavior (Table 4).

In detail results testify that level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards targets with North Caucasus type of appearance is significantly higher compared to targets with Slavic or Asian type of appearance and that level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards targets with Slavic type of appearance is significantly lower in comparison to Asian one ($T=4,616$; $T=3,245$; $T=-2,259$) (Table 1).

Table 01. Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior in relation to the target’s type of appearance. Results of t – test for paired samples.

	Pair	Mean	T-score
Pair 1	LADB”CAP” – LADB”SAP”	,2586	4,616
Pair 2	LADB”CAP” – LADB”AAP”	,1484	3,245
Pair 3	LADB”SAP” – LADB”AAP”	-,1102	-2,597

Legend: LADB – level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards: ”CAP” – North Caucasus type of appearance; ”SAP” – Slavic type of appearance; ”AAP” – Asian type of appearance.

Further on the results reveal that level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards female (T=3,29) and male (T=3,41) targets with North Caucasus type of appearance is significantly higher in comparison to female (T=-3,06) and male (T= -2,53) targets with Asian type of appearance following by female and male targets with Slavic type of appearance (Table 2).

Table 2. Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior in relation to the target's gender and type of appearance. Results of t – test for paired samples.

Pair	Mean	T-score	Sig.(2 –tailed)
Pair 1 LADB"CAP"(F) – LADB"SAP"(F)	,289	3,29	,001
Pair 2 LADB"CAP"(F) – LADB"AAP"(F)	,136	1,45	,148
Pair 3 LADB"SAP"(F) – LADB"AAP"(F)	-,152	-3,06	,003
Pair 4 LADB"CAP"(M) – LADB"SAP"(M)	,285	3,41	,001
Pair 5 LADB"CAP"(M) – LADB"AAP"(M)	,200	2,23	,027
Pair 6 LADB"SAP"(M) – LADB"AAP"(M)	-,085	-2,54	,012

Legend: LADB – level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards: "CAP" (F)/(M) – female/male with North Caucasus type of appearance; "SAP" (F)/(M) – female/male with Slavic type of appearance; "AAP" (F)/(M) – female/male with Asian type of appearance

Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior in specific situations differs significantly depending on target's gender and type of appearance (Table 03). Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards male targets with North Caucasus type of appearance in situations "providing with service" (T=2,65) and "living together" (T=5,02) is higher compared to level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards male targets with Slavic (T=5,02) or Asian (T=3,67) type of appearance in these situations. Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards female targets with North Caucasus type of appearance in named situations is higher in contrast to female targets with Slavic (T=4,529) or Asian (T= 3,53) type of appearance. The same tendencies were observed for the situation "walking in the city".

Table 03. Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior in relation to the type of interaction situation. Results of t – test for paired samples

Pair	Mean	T-score	Sig. (2 –tailed)
Pair 1 "providing service" – "living together"	-,378	-8,52	,000
Pair 2 "providing service"–"walking in the city"	-,479	-8,55	,000
Pair 3 "living together" – "walking in the city"	-,100	-8,42	,000

Results demonstrate that there are no significance gender differences in level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards members of other ethnic groups (Table 4). At the same time it could be stated that level of acceptance of discriminating behavior in males is higher compared to females (T=-2,03) especially for targets with North Caucasus (T=-1,57) and Asian (T=-1,54) type of appearance.

Table 04. Gender differences in level of acceptance of discriminating behavior in relation to the type of interaction situation and target's gender and type of appearance. Results of t – test for independent samples

	Pair	T-score	Sig. (2 –tailed)
Pair 1	(F) GLADB – (M) GLADB	-2,039	,044
Pair 2	(F) SitPs – (M) SitPs	-1,746	,083
Pair 3	(F) SitLt – (M) SitLt	-1,583	,116
Pair 4	(F)SitWc – (M) SitWc	-1,466	,145
Pair 5	(F)LADB”CAP” –(M)LADB”CAP”	-1,054	,294
Pair 6	(F)LADB”SAP”- (M)LADB”SAP”	-,640	,523
Pair 7	(F)LADB”AAP”- (M)LADB”AAP”	-1,653	,101
Pair 8	(F)LADB”CAP”(F) – (M)LADB”CAP”(F)	-1,084	,281
Pair 9	(F)LADB”CAP”(M) – (M)LADB”CAP”(M)	-1,575	,118
Pair 10	(F)LADB”SAP”(F)- (M)LADB”SAP”(F)	,614	,541
Pair 11	(F)LADB”SAP”(M) – (M)LADB”SAP”(M)	-1,326	,187
Pair 12	(F)LADBAAP(F) – (M)LADBAAP(F)	-,434	,665
Pair 13	(F)LADB”AAP”(M) - (M)LADB”AAP”(M)	-1,541	,126

Legend: (F) /(M) GLADB - general score of acceptance of discriminating behavior of female/male participants; (F)/(M) SitPs - level of acceptance of discriminating behavior of female/male participants in situation “providing with service”; (F)/(M) SitLt - level of acceptance of discriminating behavior of female/male participants in situation “living together”; (F)/(M) SitWc - level of acceptance of discriminating behavior of female/male participants in situation “walking in the city”; (F)/(M) LADB – level of acceptance of discriminating behavior of female/male participants towards: ”CAP” – North Caucasus type of appearance; ”SAP” – Slavic type of appearance; ”AAP” – Asian type of appearance; ”CAP” (F)/(M) – female/male with North Caucasus type of appearance; ”SAP” (F)/(M) – female/male with Slavic type of appearance; ”AAP” (F)/(M) – female/male with Asian type of appearance.

7. Conclusion

1. Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards representatives of ethnic groups with North Caucasus type of appearance is significantly higher in comparison to representatives of ethnic groups with Slavic and Asian type of appearance.
2. Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards representatives of ethnic groups with Slavic type of appearance is significantly lower in contrast to representatives of ethnic groups with Asian type of appearance.
3. The target's gender does not impact the dominance of higher levels of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards targets with North Caucasus type of appearance compared to targets with Slavic and Asian type of appearance.
4. The target's gender does not impact the dominance of lower levels of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards targets with Slavic type of appearance compared to targets with Asian type of appearance.

5. Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior differs significantly depending on type of interaction situation: acceptance of discriminating behavior for male and female targets with North Caucasus type of appearance in situations “providing with service” and “living together” was higher compared to male and female targets with Slavic and Asian type of appearance. The same tendency was observed for the third situation “Walking in the city”

6. No significant gender differences could be revealed for level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards representatives of other ethnic groups in studied interaction situations. Nevertheless the tendency could be shown that male participants has higher level of acceptance of discriminating behavior towards males with North Caucasus and Asian type of appearance.

Summing up, results testify the stated hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Participants indicate higher acceptance of discriminating behavior towards female and male targets with North Caucasus type of appearance in comparison to female and male targets with Slavic and Asian type of appearance. Level of acceptance of discriminating behavior significantly increases in interaction situations "providing with service", "living together", and "walking in the city" when the target of discrimination has North Caucasus type of appearance. Hypothesis 4 could be partially verified. The tendency could be proved indicating that male participants demonstrate higher level of acceptance of discriminating behavior as their female counterparts.

8. Discussion and limitations

Analysis of differences in levels of acceptance of discriminating behavior of others (ethnic lookism) requires implementation of complex empirical-research model of investigation of attitudes towards ethnic lookism (acceptance vs. non-acceptance of discriminating behavior based on appearance) which contains three interdependent groups of factors: 1) in relation to person accepting discriminating behavior - ethnicity, ethnical identity, affective-evaluative attitudes towards minority ethnic groups, appearance stereotypes; 2) in relation to target of discriminating behavior – gender and ethnicity identified as type of appearance; 3) in relation to interaction situation – different type of situations "providing with service", "living together", and "walking in the city". According to this model attitude towards ethnic lookism is predicted by the system of attitudes towards discriminating behavior in general, value and importance of appearance, satisfaction with own appearance connected with overall subjective well-being and life satisfaction. Despite the individual characteristics listed above are not exhausted, these very characteristics define the appearance attitudes and, consequently, could impact the acceptance or non-acceptance of discriminating behavior of others towards ethnic groups based on their type of appearance.

Acknowledgments

This study was conducted in the frameworks of research project №16-36-00049 supported by Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation.

References

- Adamitis, E. (2000) Appearance matters: A proposal to limit appearance discrimination in employment. *Washington. Law Review*, 75(January), 195 – 199.
- Aksjanova, G. (2003) Theoretical aspects of rasovedeniâ and especially psychological perception of physical human appearance (answer opponents rasovedeniâ) [Teoreticheskie aspekty rasovedeniya i osobennosti psihologicheskogo vosprijatija fizicheskoy vneshnosti cheloveka (otvet opponentam rasovedeniya)]. *Science of man and society: results, problems and prospects* (37-64). Moskva.: RAS. [Nauka o cheloveke i obshchestvo: itogi, problemy, perspektivy. M.: RAN, 37-64].
- Anan'eva, K. (2008) Ethnic type of person and especially its perception. [Jetnicheskij tip lica i osobennosti ego vosprijatija]. *Psychological and psychoanalytic studies* (148-156). Moskva: Gnosis [Psihologicheskie i psihoanaliticheskie issledovanija. M. : Gnozis, 148-156].
- Bello, J. (2004) Attractiveness as hiring criteria: Savvy business practice or racial discrimination?. *Journal of Gender, Race & Justice*, 483, 504–505.
- Bzejzan, A. (2012) Lukizm and ethnic discrimination. [Lukizm i jetnicheskaja diskriminacija]. *North Caucasian psychological Messenger*, 14(3), 21-23. [Severo-Kavkazskij psihologicheskij vestnik, 14(3),21-23].
- Cates, S., Dana, H. (2012) Discrimination in a Covert Methodology: An Analysis of Physical and Social Characteristics That Prohibit People from Becoming Employed. *iBusiness*, 4 (2), 178-184.
- Cavico, F., Stephen, C., Bahaudin, G., & Mujtab G. (2012) Appearance Discrimination, «Lookism» And «Lookphobia» In The Workplace. *Journal Of Applied Business Research*. Sept.-Oct.. Web. 10 Mar. 2014.
- Haldeeva, N. (2002) Age peculiarities of antropoèstetičeskogo preferences of appearance type [Vozrastnye osobennosti antropojetetičeskogo predpochtenija tipa vneshnosti]. *Through biological history of mankind* [Na putjah biologicheskoy istorii chelovechestva]. Moskva, 2. 199-212.
- Jankowski, G., Diedrichs, P., Williamson C., Harcourt H., & Christopher G. (2014) Looking age-appropriate while growing old gracefully: A qualitative study of ageing and body image among older adults. *Journal of Health Psychology*. <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/22982>.
- Jarskaja, V. (2012) My Language is my enemy: racist discourse in Russian society [Jazyk moj - vrag moj: rasistskij diskurs v rossijskom obshchestve] *Sociological researches* [Sociologicheskie issledovanija], 6, 46-53.
- Jawahar, I., Mattsson, J. (2005) Sexism and beautyism effects in selection as a function of self monitoring level of decision maker. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90, 563–573.
- Johnson, S., Podratz, K, Dipboye, R., & Gibbons E. (2010) Physical attractiveness biases in ratings of employment suitability: tracking down the «beauty is beastly» effect. *J Soc. Psychol.* MayJun,150(3), 301-318.
- Labunskaya, V., & Bzejzan, A. (2014) Research methodology the discriminatory attitude towards representatives of ethnocultural groups in different situations of interaction [Metodologija issledovanija diskriminacionnogo otnoshenija k predstaviteljam jetno-kul'turnyh grupp v razlichnyh situacijah vzaimodejstvija]. *Materials of the fourth international scientific conference "Theoretical problems of ethnic and cross-cultural psychology"* 30- 31 May (1, 50-55). [Materialy Četvertoj Mezhdunarodnoj nauchnoj konferencii «Teoreticheskie problemy jetnicheskoy i kross-kul'turnoj psihologii»]. Smolensk: “Smolensk humanitarian University”. 1, 50-55.
- Labunskaya, V., & Bzejzan, A. (2016) Methodological approach to the study of "Appearance"-stereotypes as emotional-cognitive component of ethnolookism [Metodologicheskij podhod k izucheniju «Appearance»-stereotipov kak jemocional'no-kognitivnogo komponenta jetnolukizma] *Theoretical problems of ethnic and "Theoretical problems of ethnic and cross-cultural psychology": proceedings of the Fifth International Scientific Conference, 27-28 May,2*, 37-41. Smolensk: “Smolensk humanitarian University”. 2, 37-41.
- Leontovich, O. (2007) The concept of national identity. Physiological identity. *Introduction to intercultural communication*,145-157. Moskva: Gnosis. [Ponjatje o nacional'noj identičnosti.

- Fiziologicheskaja identichnost'. *Vvedenie v mezhkul'turnuju kommunikaciju*. Moskva.: Gnozis], 145-157.
- Malos, S. (2007) Appearance-based Sex Discrimination and Stereotyping in the Workplace: Whose Conduct Should We Regulate? *Employ Response Rights J.* DOI 10.1007/s10672-007-9037-z.
- Moss, T., Lawson, V., & White, P. (2014) Salience and Valence of Appearance in a Population with a Visible Difference of Appearance: Direct and Moderated Relationships with Self-Consciousness, Anxiety and Depression. *PLoS- Public Library of Science ONE*, 9(2) doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0088435.
- Pogonceva, D. (2013) Ethnolookism: a look at the problem [Jetnolukizm: vzgljad na problem]. *National Security/Note Bene. [Nacional'naja bezopasnost'/Note Bene*, 6, 144-150.
- Roehling, M. (2002) Weight discrimination in the American workplace: Ethical issues and analysis. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 40(2), 177-189.
- Roehling, P., Roehling M., Brennan A., Drew A., Johnston A. et al. (2014) Weight bias in US candidate selection and election. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion An International Journal*, 3 (4), 334-346.
- Skarabis, M., Shefer, B., & Shleder, B. (2004) Socio-psychological model of perception of someone else: identity, knowledge, ambivalence [Social'no-psihologicheskaja model' vosprijatija chuzhogo: identichnost', znanie, ambivalentnost']. *Psychology [Psihologija]*, 1, 24-51.
- Soldatova, G. (1998) *Psychology of inter-ethnic tension [Psihologija mezhjetnicheskoj naprjazhennosti]*. Moskva: «Smysl».
- Stock, N. (2014) Culture clash: Appearance concerns in black and minority ethnic groups. *Journal of Aesthetic Nursing*, 3 (7), 294-295.
- Vishlenkova, E. (2007) Body for people, or "see Russian is not given to everyone [Telo dlja naroda, ili «uvidet' russkogo dano ne kazhdomu»], *Sociological Review* ,6./3. 64-99 [*Sociologicheskoe obozrenie*], 6 (3),64-99.