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## Research note

## Waitresses' facial cosmetics and tipping: A field experiment

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## ABSTRACT

It had been found that cosmetics do improve female facial attractiveness when judgments were made based on photographs. However, these studies were conducted only on laboratory and field studies are scarce in the literature and none of them have tested the effect of customers' behavior. An experiment was carried out in restaurant in order to verify if waitresses' makeup is associated with an increase in patrons' tipping behavior. Female waitresses with and without makeup were instructed to act in the same way than usual with their patrons. Results showed that the makeup condition was associated with a significant increase in tipping behavior of the male customers.

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Literature examining the role of cosmetics on social perception, has found that, overall, makeup is associated with positive evaluation of a woman. Graham and Jouhar (1981) reported positive effects of cosmetics on judgment. Male and female participants rated color photographs of four female targets of average physical attractiveness on several traits related to appearance and personality. With facial makeup, the targets were rated as being cleaner, more tidy, more feminine, more physically attractive, as well as being more secure, sociable, interesting, poised, confident, organized and popular. Cox and Glick (1986) examined how average-looking women were perceived after a professional make-over versus cosmetics free and found that cosmetics were positively associated with femininity and sexiness. Workman and Johnson (1991) instructed female participants to view one of three colored photographs of a professional model wearing either heavy, moderate, or no cosmetics. They found that cosmetics significantly enhanced the impression of attractiveness and femininity. Cash et al. (1989) conducted an experiment in which American college students were photographed while wearing their typical facial cosmetics and again following the removal of their makeup. Participants rated the physical attractiveness of the women. It was found that males' judgments were more favorable when the women were photographed with cosmetics than when they were cosmetics free, whereas females' judgments were not affected by the presence versus absence of makeup. In a recent study, Nash et al. (2006) presented four women's facial photographs either with or without cosmetics. It was found that women with cosmetics were perceived as healthier

and more confident than when presented without. Participants also awarded women wearing makeup with a greater earning potential and with more prestigious jobs than the same women without cosmetics.

It seems that different levels of cosmetics use are associated with different perceptions. Mulhern et al. (2003) asked male and female participants to view a set of five photographs of women volunteers and to rank each set from most to least attractive. Volunteers were made up by a beautician under five cosmetics conditions: no makeup, foundation only, eyes makeup only, lips makeup only and full facial makeup (foundation, eyes and lips). It was found that faces with full makeup were judged more attractive than the same faces that were makeup free. They also found that eye makeup alone yielded higher levels of mean attractiveness ratings than foundation makeup only, and the latter yielded higher levels of mean attractiveness ratings than lip makeup only.

Taken together, these studies seem to show that cosmetics enhance the perception of physical attractiveness and some other feminine traits of women. The intent of the present study was to explore the effect of makeup on individual behavior, as contrasted with previous research where impression formation of facial attractiveness was evaluated in a laboratory with the help of photographs. In particular, tipping behavior was used to evaluate the impact of cosmetics on behavior.

It had been found in previous research that tipping was influenced by physical attractiveness of restaurant employees. Lynn (in press) found that waitresses' tips increased with breast size, increased with having blond hair, and decreased with body size. Lynn and Simons (2000) also found that attractive waitresses earned large sales-adjusted tips than did less attractive waitresses whereas attractiveness had no effects on the tips of waiters. Previous research also found that facial or hair ornamentations were associated with greater level of tipping behavior. Stillman

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and Hensley (1980) found that diners left larger tips for waitresses who wore flower in their hair than the same waitresses without a flower. Tidd and Lockard (1978) found that a waitress exhibiting a broad smile reaped larger tips than a minimal smile and more from men than from women patrons. These later experimental studies seem to show that patrons are affected by facial or head components of waitresses. Thus, in such setting, facial makeup would probably influence patron's behavior. According to previous literature, we hypothesized that waitress's makeup would enhance tipping behavior especially with men patrons.

## 1. Method

### 1.1. Participants

Two hundred and seventy-four restaurant's customers (186 males and 98 females) who acted as participants were randomly assign in two groups. All of them were seated alone at a table in a restaurant of a medium-size city (more than 70,000 inhabitants) in a very attractive spot. This provincial town was Vannes, located in the west of France on the Breton Atlantic Coast.

### 1.2. Procedure

Two waitresses (19 and 20 years old, respectively), regularly employed, were used as confederates in this experiment. However, they were not aware of the goals of our experiment and they have not received any information about previous studies on the effect of cosmetics on person perception or behavior. Precaution was taken in order to select confederates who usually wore makeup.

The experiment was conducted each day during 4 weeks (excluding Saturdays and Sunday) during lunch hour because there were sufficient patrons who were alone at this time (the restaurant where the experiment was carried out used to receive many commercial travelers who lunched alone). For each waitress, 20 observational periods were obtained (5 days a week  $\times$  4 weeks). The two experimental conditions were manipulated according to a random selection of 10 lunch parties with makeup and 10 lunch parties without makeup. Another volunteer was a young female beautician who "made up" the two waitresses during the length of the experiment. In the makeup-free condition, the beautician cleaned and moisturized the faces of the two waitresses. In the makeup condition, the beautician applied makeup to the eyes, cheeks and lips in a way that enhanced the attractiveness of each waitress.

The confederate was instructed to act in a similar way as usual. She acted similarly in both conditions when she returned at the patron's table with the drink and the bill. After the patron had left, the waitress returned to the table to clear it. She reported on a notebook how the client had behaved, namely, whether he/she had left a tip or not and how much he/she gave to her.

## 2. Results

In France giving the waiter or the waitress a tip is unusual because French legislation mandates that a 12% service

charge be included in the cost of the item on the menu. Thus, in this experiment, the number of patrons who left a tip was the first dependant variable whereas the amount of tip left by patron who gave a tip was the second dependant variable. Preliminary data analysis was conducted for the two waitresses and revealed no difference on both dependant variables according to the two experimental conditions and gender of the patrons. Thus, their data were combined and were presented in Table 1.

With the number of participants who gave a tip, a loglinear analysis of the 2 (patron gender)  $\times$  2 (experimental condition)  $\times$  2 (compliance) design was performed. A significant interaction effect between the experimental conditions and the patrons' behavior was observed revealing that, overall, patrons gave more favorably tip in the makeup condition than in the non-makeup control condition ( $\chi^2(1, N = 274) = 6.88, p < .01, r = .16$ ). However, this effect was found only with male's patrons ( $\chi^2(1, N = 186) = 6.03, p < .02, r = .15$ ) whereas it was not significant with female's patrons ( $\chi^2(1, N = 98) = 1.91, ns, r = .14$ ). Finally, a main effect of gender on tipping behavior was found: males' patrons gave tip more favorably than females' patrons ( $\chi^2(1, N = 274) = 6.11, p < .02, r = .15$ ).

With the 102 patrons who gave tips, a 2 (patron gender)  $\times$  2 (experimental condition) ANOVA analysis was performed with the amount of money gave as the dependant variable. Neither main effect of the two independent variables nor interaction effect was found ( $p < .20$ ). However, when considering each group according to gender, it was found that males' patrons in the makeup condition gave more money to the waitresses than they did in the non-makeup control condition ( $t(73) = 2.22, p = .03, d = .52$ ). Non-significant difference was found when comparing the female's patrons in the two experimental conditions ( $t(25) = .02, ns, d = .01$ ).

## 3. Discussion

The present findings confirmed that women makeup is associated with greater helping behavior of men. In this study we found that men patrons gave tips more favorably to waitresses who wore makeup and, when they did so, they gave a large amount of money. However, no difference was found in the tipping behavior of females' patrons according to the experimental conditions.

The results have a theoretical interest by showing that makeup which is associated with higher positive impression of a target (Cash et al., 1989; Graham and Jouhar, 1981; Cox and Glick, 1986; Nash et al., 2006.) is also associated with positive behavior toward the same target. However, this link between impression and behavior seems to be activated only with male-observers. Indeed, in these previous studies on impression formation, it was found that female participants evaluated more positively women who wore cosmetics (Workman and Johnson, 1991). The results found in our experiment seem to show that this positive effect is not associated with variation in the female patron behavior. Thus, perhaps the effect found with male patrons is explained by greater physical or sexual attractiveness of waitresses when they wore makeup. A recent study (Guéguen, 2008) had examined the effect

**Table 1**

Percent of customers who gave a tip and amount of tip gave according by experimental condition and sex of customer.

	Men patrons		Women patrons	
	Makeup $N = 86$	No makeup $N = 90$	Makeup $N = 47$	No makeup $N = 51$
Percentages of patrons who gave a tip	51.2% (44/86)	34.4% (31/90)	34.0% (16/47)	21.6% (11/51)
Mean (SD in brackets) of amount of tip gave (in €)	1.40 (0.67)	1.11 (0.46)	1.10 (0.42)	1.09 (0.49)

of cosmetics on courtship context. Female confederates with and without makeup were seated in two bars during 1 h and the number of men's solicitations and the latency of the first solicitation were used as dependent variables. Results showed that the makeup condition was associated with a higher number of male solicitations and a shorter latency between the arrival of the confederates in the bar and the first courtship solicitation of a male. In our experiment, this greater physical or sexual attractiveness of our waitresses could explain why the males' patrons gave tip more favorably because, unconsciously, they wanted to be noticed by the waitresses.

These results have some practical implication for females employees in bar or restaurant. They confirm the effect of servers' physical attractiveness on the amount of tips earned especially for waitresses (Lynn, *in press*; Lynn and Simons, 2000). It would be interesting for women's restaurant employees to use facial makeup to enhance their physical attractiveness and then, in return, to enhance their incomes especially in bars or restaurant where men used to go. Further experiments are now necessary to confirm these first results in further restaurants and to observe if these results still remain the same with mix-gender dyad.

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