

Attributions of Guilt and Punishment as Functions of Physical Attractiveness and Smiling

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ABSTRACT. The authors found an interaction between sex of participant and sex of defendant in the leniency bias toward a smiling defendant. Differences occurred for male participants when levying punishment for a smiling male defendant vs. a smiling female defendant and for a smiling male defendant vs. a nonsmiling male defendant, whereas differences did not occur for female participants. The authors found moderating effects of physical attractiveness and smiling between guilt and punishment. The only significant positive relationship between guilt and punishment occurred for the defendant whom participants rated low in physical attractiveness and who was not smiling. When guilty, the smiling and unattractive defendant received less punishment than did the smiling and attractive defendant. The authors discussed complex relationships between physical attractiveness, smiling, guilt, and punishment.

Key words: guilt, leniency bias, physical attractiveness, punishment, smile-leniency effect

PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS of a person is a key characteristic influencing the perceptions that others form about the person, in that individuals who are viewed as more attractive are ascribed more positive traits than those who are viewed as unattractive, in accordance with the “what is beautiful is good” stereotype (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972). Thus, it is common to make judgments about people based on first impressions and to then generalize those impressions to their whole personality (Heider, 1944, 1958). Moreover, a smiling facial expression increases one’s physical attractiveness and is associated with more positive attributes (Lau, 1982; Mueser, Grau, Sussman, & Rosen, 1984; Reis et al., 1990), and the influence of smiling on positive traits appears to be independent of physical attractiveness (Reis et al.). Reis et al. suggested that smiling is a

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component of attractiveness that influences the “what is beautiful is good” stereotype. Furthermore, a smiling or physically attractive person is granted less severe punishment than a nonsmiling or unattractive counterpart, even when they are viewed as similarly guilty of a transgression (LaFrance & Hecht, 1995).

Physical Attractiveness and Guilt and Punishment

Numerous laboratory and field studies have shown that physical attractiveness affords a leniency bias in the determination of guilt and punishment (Darby & Jeffers, 1988; DeSantis & Kayson, 1997; Downs & Lyons, 1991; Efran, 1974; Landy & Aronson, 1969; Stewart, 1980, 1985). However, this effect may depend on the type of transgression, on instructions that are given to those judging the offense and on whether they are judging guilt or punishment. In a meta-analysis, Mazzella and Feingold (1994) found a small but significant leniency bias for attractive defendants but suggested the effect may depend on the type of crime. In an early laboratory study, Landy and Aronson focused on the attraction-leniency bias by using a negligent-homicide scenario with an attractive or unattractive male defendant. With the attractive defendant being sentenced to significantly fewer years in prison than was the unattractive defendant who committed the same crime and who was similarly rated as guilty of the crime, Landy and Aronson's results supported the leniency bias. Using the same scenario as Landy and Aronson but with an attractive or unattractive female defendant, Friend and Vinson (1974) found the same results for a group of participants given no instructions to disregard the defendant's characteristics. However, participants who were told to disregard the defendant's characteristics and to be impartial in their judgments sentenced the attractive defendant to more years of imprisonment than they did the unattractive defendant (Friend & Vinson). Lieberman (2002) examined the attraction-leniency bias in participants who were induced to use either a rational-processing mode or an emotional-processing mode in a civil liability case. The leniency bias existed only in those using the emotional-processing mode. Consequently, a type of rational-processing mode may be induced when participants are given explicit instructions to disregard the defendant's characteristics, as in Friend and Vinson's study.

Additional researchers examined whether sex of participant or sex of defendant affected the attractiveness-leniency bias. Using Landy and Aronson's (1969) negligent-homicide scenario and a female defendant, Abwender and Hough (2001) found a significant leniency bias in punishment of the attractive defendant in female participants but no significant bias in male participants and no significant effect for attractiveness on guilt ratings. Wuensch, Castellow, and Moore (1991) found similar results using either a burglary scenario or a swindle scenario. Female participants judged attractive male defendants more leniently than they did unattractive male defendants but had no leniency bias for female defendants. In contrast, male participants exhibited no attraction-leniency bias when judging either sex.

In another early study, Efran (1974) presented a photo of a male or female student who was either attractive or unattractive and who was accused of cheating on an exam. Attractive defendants received significantly lower ratings of guilt and milder punishments than did unattractive defendants. Efran had participants rate only the opposite sex. In contrast to the later studies by Abwender and Hough (2001) and Wuensch et al. (1991), Efran's study showed leniency bias in male participants rating female transgressors but not in female participants rating male transgressors. These findings mean specifically that male participants levied less severe ratings of guilt and punishment of an attractive female than of an unattractive female, whereas female participants were not influenced by physical attractiveness when rating the male transgressor's guilt and punishment. Efran, however, used a less serious transgression—that is, cheating versus negligent homicide—and did not examine the interaction between participant sex and defendant sex.

Field studies in laboratory settings with simulated judges or jurors have supported the effects of attractiveness. Conducting studies in actual criminal courtrooms, Stewart (1980, 1985) found that defendants who were rated more physically attractive received less severe sentences, and yet ratings of attractiveness were not related to ratings of guilt and incarceration. Downs and Lyons (1991) found the same relationships when examining judges' bails and fines for misdemeanors only, but physical attractiveness had no influence on bails and fines for felonies. Hence, physical attractiveness had no influence for those accused of more serious crimes, a result supported by the studies by Stewart (1980, 1985).

In sum, studies have revealed that participants' attributions of guilt and recommendations of punishment can be influenced by the physical attractiveness of the defendant (Efran, 1974; Friend & Vinson, 1974; Landy & Aronson, 1969; Mazzella & Feingold, 1994; Stewart, 1980, 1985). However, this influence appears to depend on the type and seriousness of the transgression, whether there were instructions to disregard the defendant's characteristics, and whether participants rated guilt or punishment. Michelini and Snodgrass (1980) suggested that attractiveness can have differential effects on ratings of guilt and punishment because guilt often requires more objective evaluations, whereas punishment requires more subjective evaluations. Further, Baumeister and Darley (1982) suggested that physical attractiveness may have a stronger influence on ratings of guilt when relevant information is missing.

Smiling, Physical Attractiveness, Guilt, and Punishment

Several studies have shown that smiling increases ratings of physical attractiveness (Mueser et al., 1984; Otta, Follador e Abrosio, & Hoshino, 1996; Reis et al., 1990). There are many different types of smiles, for example, felt or involuntary smiles of enjoyment (Duchenne) and voluntary smiles, such as false and miserable smiles (meant to hide or fake emotions; see Ekman, 1985; Frank, 2002;

Frank, Ekman, & Friesen, 1993), and forms of smiling, e.g., closed (teeth remained covered), upper (upper lips raised revealing upper teeth only), and broad (upper and lower teeth exposed; Otta et al.). Facial muscles, in particular the orbicularis oculi muscles around the eyes, are typically used to differentiate involuntary felt smiles from voluntary smiles (see Frank). Although Otta et al. found increased ratings of attractiveness with all three forms of smiling in their study—that is, closed, upper, and broad smiles—Cunningham (1986) found that a broader smile enhanced attractiveness ratings of females. According to Frank, broader smiles can result in facial changes associated with activation of the orbicularis oculi muscles.

Only a few researchers have examined how a smiling facial expression, associated with greater physical attractiveness, can affect ratings of guilt and punishment. Forgas, O'Connor, and Morris (1983) conducted a study to assess how facial expressions influence decisions on attributions of personal responsibility, a combined measure of guilt and punishment. They presented a scenario of a student cheating on an exam and mild or severe consequences and presented a photograph of the student with either a “naturally” occurring smile or a neutral facial expression. Participants subsequently rated the student’s responsibility, that is, the guilt and punishment connected to the transgression. The results revealed more positive evaluations of the student and significantly less severe judgments of responsibility for the transgression when the student displayed a smiling expression than when the student displayed a neutral expression, especially in the scenario associated with mild consequences. In a later study, Forgas (1988) found a significant interaction between smiling and physical attractiveness in attribution of responsibility (a combined measure of guilt, punishment, and honesty as in the earlier study) in cheating on an exam by a female student. A smiling facial expression was positively related to ratings of greater physical attractiveness. However, leniency was only related to a smiling unattractive defendant. No leniency was found for a smiling attractive defendant who was rated as even somewhat more responsible for the transgression. According to Forgas, “being good-looking and smiling after committing a transgression may be too much of a good thing” (p. 487) and could lead to more negative impressions.

LaFrance and Hecht (1995) conducted a study to assess whether different smiles produced different degrees of leniency in punishment and to examine mediators of the smile-leniency effect. Specifically, two female targets in individual photographs displayed a neutral expression, a felt smile, a false smile, or a miserable smile. The experimenters gave all participants one photograph and a scenario of academic misconduct. The participants rated their impressions of the target and answered questions about guilt and punishment. Participants gave smiling targets—regardless of the type of smile—more leniency than they did the non-smiling targets, yet smiling had no effect on judgments of guilt. The results did not support a mediating effect of physical attractiveness in the smile-leniency relationship. In other words, regardless of the type of smile, smiling was inde-

pendently and directly related to leniency ratings. However, LaFrance and Hecht did find that the perceived trustworthiness of the target mediated the smile-leniency relationship. Consequently, smiling targets were perceived as more trustworthy, and this perceived trustworthiness accounted for the smile-leniency effect. Results of a field study by Ruback (1981) were consistent with those of LaFrance and Hecht. Ruback found that those who smiled in a parole hearing at a state correctional institution were perceived as more honest and that those perceived as more honest received more lenient recommendations for parole and release from jail. These studies in combination suggest a complex relationship between smiling, physical attractiveness, and guilt and punishment.

Purpose of the Present Study

Research on impression formation has supported the association of (a) leniency ratings and (b) physical attractiveness and a smiling facial expression (Landy & Aronson, 1969; Mueser et al., 1984; Reis et al., 1990). Attractive people who engage in the same negative behaviors or criminal acts as their unattractive counterparts are judged less harshly (Efran, 1974; Friend & Vinson, 1974; Landy & Aronson, 1969; Stewart, 1980, 1985). Just as attractive people are judged more leniently, smilers are judged more leniently (Forgas, 1988; Forgas et al., 1983; LaFrance & Hecht, 1995; Ruback, 1981), and this smile-leniency effect appears to be independent of physical attractiveness (LaFrance & Hecht).

While Forgas et al. (1983) included the sex of the defendant in their study, and LaFrance and Hecht (1995) included the sex of the judge in their analyses, no researcher has previously examined the interaction between sex of judge and sex of defendant when determining the effects of smiling on ratings of guilt and punishment. Men and women may respond differently to men and women who are smiling, especially in their judgments of guilt and punishment (see Efran, 1974). As Wuensch et al. (1991) suggested, the attractiveness-leniency bias effect may be moderated by both sex of participant and sex of defendant. In the present study, we addressed this possibility by controlling for physical attractiveness and examining differences in male and female participants' ratings of the guilt and punishment of male and female defendants who were smiling or not smiling.

It was hypothesized (a) that smiling defendants (both male and female) would be rated as more attractive than would nonsmiling male and nonsmiling female defendants, (b) that no smile-leniency effect would exist in ratings of guilt, and (c) that male participants would demonstrate a smile-leniency effect for punishment of smiling female defendants but not for smiling male defendants, whereas female participants would demonstrate no smile-leniency effect for smiling or nonsmiling male or female defendants. Male participants may well be suspicious of a smiling man and yet not of a smiling woman because smiling is more often associated with emotional expressiveness in women than in men (Briton & Hall, 1995; Brody, 2000; Hall, 1998; Hall, Carney, & Murphy, 2002; LaFrance & Car-

men, 1980; Reis et al., 1990) and is positively related to femininity and negatively related to masculinity (Reis et al.). A related study by Efran (1974) showed that leniency effects for physical attractiveness existed more for male participants rating female defendants than for female participants rating male defendants.

Finally, in the present study we explored the moderating effects of physical attractiveness and a smiling facial expression between guilt and punishment. Although degrees of guilt and punishment should be positively related, no researchers have examined whether physical attractiveness and smiling moderate this relationship or whether physical attractiveness moderates the smile-leniency relationship. Although LaFrance and Hecht (1995) found no mediating effect for physical attractiveness in the smile-leniency relationship, they did not examine moderating effects. Therefore, we hypothesized (a) that ratings of guilt and punishment would be positively related only for unattractive individuals who do not smile and (b) that on the basis of Forgas' (1988) suggestion that both smiling and being physically attractive may be "too much of a good thing" (p. 487), a smiling facial expression would predict more leniency in punishment in physically unattractive individuals than in physically attractive individuals.

Method

Participants

Participants were 144 undergraduate students (69 men, 75 women) enrolled in psychology courses. Participation in the study was voluntary, and students received course credit for their participation. The average age was 19.95 years ($SD = 3.47$ years), and half of the sample comprised 1st-year students.

Stimulus Materials

Photographs were those produced in the lab of Matsumoto and Ekman (1988), entitled *Japanese and Caucasian facial expressions of emotion* (JACFEE) and *neutral faces* (JACNeuf). We chose one Caucasian male and one Caucasian female. We used photographs of the man and woman displaying either a felt smile or a neutral expression. Thus, we used four photographs in the present study: (a) a photograph of a female displaying a felt smile, (b) a photograph of the same female displaying a neutral expression, (c) a photograph of a male displaying a felt smile, and (d) a photograph of the same male displaying a neutral expression. These photos depicted the individuals from the shoulders up, as in a mug shot. We chose the specific photographs because they had been validated by Matsumoto and Ekman as portraying a felt smile and a neutral expression.

The scenario that we used in the present study described a suspected negligent homicide that was similar to the one in the scenario used by Landy and Aronson (1969), except that the degree of guilt was left to the judgment of the partic-

ipant without being explicitly stated. Personal pronouns in the scenario corresponded to the sex of the person in the picture. The crime was described in the scenario as follows:

Chris Sanders was at an office Christmas party on the 24th of December. The employees of the insurance office where Chris worked began to party at around 2:00 p.m. By 8:00 p.m., some people were already leaving for home, although many continued to drink and socialize. Chris, who by this time had had several drinks, was offered a lift home by a friend who did not drink and who suggested that Chris leave the car at the office and pick it up when he/she was in better shape. Chris declined the offer, claiming he/she was 'stone sober' and would manage fine. By the time Chris had finished another drink, the party was beginning to break up. Chris left the office building and walked to the garage where he/she had parked his/her car, a white, four-door, Honda Accord. It had just started to snow. He/She wished the garage attendant a Merry Christmas and pulled out into the street. Traffic was very heavy at the time. Chris was six blocks from the garage when he/she was stopped by a police officer for reckless driving. It was quite apparent to the officer that Chris had been drinking, but rather than give him/her a ticket on Christmas Eve, he said that he would let Chris off if he/she would promise to leave his/her car and take a taxi. Chris agreed. The officer hailed a taxi and Chris got into it. After the taxi turned the corner, Chris asked the taxi to stop and pull over, for he/she could not find any money to pay the driver. He/She then returned to his/her car.

Attached to the scenario were sentences that we described as clipped from a local newspaper on December 25. They follow:

A pedestrian by the name of M. Lowe was killed last night when an automobile struck and killed Lowe. Witnesses reported hearing a "thumping noise" followed by the "fleeing of a white car."

We designed this scenario to induce suspicion of guilt but not certain guilt.

Procedure

We used a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial design that varied sex of participant (male vs. female), sex of target (male vs. female), and smiling condition (smiling vs. non-smiling), controlling for level of physical attractiveness. We manipulated sex of target by presenting participants with a photograph of either a male target or a female target. We manipulated the smiling condition by presenting participants with either a nonsmiling photograph or a smiling photograph. The focal dependent variables were ratings of guilt and severity of punishment.

Participants signed consent forms. We tested them in small groups. The participants received a packet containing the above scenario with one of the four pictures and rating scales on which to indicate their judgments. All participants, regardless of group, received the same scenario—except with gender that corresponded to that of the person in the photograph they received—and a rating form containing identical questions. On the rating forms, they individually judged the

degree of guilt and the amount of punishment that the target deserved. Specifically, they were asked to answer the following four questions on 7-point Likert response scales: (a) "What is the likelihood that Chris committed the crime?" (from 1 = *very unlikely* to 7 = *very likely*), (b) "How do you feel about the case as presented?" (from 1 = *Chris should be given the benefit of the doubt* to 7 = *Chris should not be given the benefit of the doubt*), (c) "What is the likelihood that Chris has committed a crime in the past?" (from 1 = *very unlikely* to 7 = *very likely*), and (d) "What is the likelihood that Chris will commit a crime in the future?" (from 1 = *very unlikely* to 7 = *very likely*). We averaged responses to Questions a and b as a measure of present guilt because they were highly correlated ($r = .46$). Likewise, responses to Questions c and d were averaged as a measure of past and future guilt because they were highly correlated ($r = .71$). On the rating form, we then instructed participants to consider the crime as punishable by imprisonment for anywhere between 0 years and 60 years and said, "If Chris Sanders was guilty, how many years of imprisonment would you give Chris? Please complete the following statement by filling in the blank with a number between 0 and 60: I sentence Chris Sanders to ____ years of imprisonment." These questions were similar to those asked in the studies by Forgas et al. (1983), LaFrance and Hecht (1995), Landy and Aronson (1969), Reis et al. (1990), and Sigall and Ostrove (1975).

Participants also rated the target person as to his or her physical attractiveness along a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *unattractive* to 7 = *attractive*. The characteristic of physical attractiveness was embedded within 13 additional opposing adjectives that were not germane to the present study. We scattered positive and negative adjectives so that not all positive traits were to one side of the scale's midpoint. We counterbalanced the rating scales on judgment and those on adjectives across participants.

Results

Physical Attractiveness

Participants considered the smiling targets ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.16$) as more physically attractive, $F(1, 136) = 6.39$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .05$, than they did the non-smiling targets ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.25$). Participants also viewed the male target as significantly more attractive ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.13$) than they did the female target ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.23$), $F(1, 136) = 12.16$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .08$. We found no significant differences for sex of participant and no significant interactions.

Level of Guilt

We conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the effects of smiling and sex of target on level of present guilt and past and future guilt levied by male and female participants, controlling for level of target's physical attractiveness. Physical attractiveness was not a significant covariate, and we dropped

it from further analyses; the results remained the same. We found no significant effect for smiling versus nonsmiling on level of present guilt. However, we found a significant interaction of sex of target with sex of participant, $F(1, 140) = 4.21$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Follow-up tests revealed that male participants levied a higher degree of present guilt on the male target ($M = 8.13$, $SD = 1.42$) than on the female target ($M = 7.26$, $SD = 1.94$), $F(1, 67) = 4.57$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .06$. Furthermore, a moderately significant difference existed between male and female participants when levying present guilt on the male target ($M = 8.13$, $SD = 1.42$, vs. $M = 7.48$, $SD = 1.53$, respectively), $F(1, 67) = 3.23$, $p = .08$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Female participants levied equal amounts of guilt on male targets and female targets ($M = 7.48$, $SD = 1.53$, vs. $M = 7.77$, $SD = 1.80$, respectively). No significant effects were found on the measure of past and future guilt.

Punishment

Controlling for level of physical attractiveness, we conducted an ANOVA to examine the amount of punishment in years that all participants assigned the smiling targets versus the nonsmiling targets. Physical attractiveness was not a significant covariate and was dropped from further analyses; the results remained the same. We found no significant main effect for smiling versus nonsmiling. On the other hand, we found a significant three-way interaction, $F(1, 136) = 3.86$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$. We decomposed the three-way interaction by examining the interaction of the smiling condition versus the nonsmiling condition with sex of target for male participants and female participants separately. For male participants, the interaction of the smiling condition with sex of target was significant, $F(1, 65) = 6.54$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .09$. Follow-up tests to examine the significant interaction revealed that male participants levied a significantly higher punishment on the smiling male target than on the smiling female target, $F(1, 31) = 8.32$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .21$. In contrast, no significant difference existed for male participants in punishment between male and female nonsmiling targets. Additional follow-up tests revealed that male participants levied a significantly higher punishment on the smiling male target than on the nonsmiling male target, $F(1, 32) = 5.29$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .14$. In addition, male participants levied a significantly higher punishment on the smiling male target than did female participants, $F(1, 29) = 4.28$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .13$. No significant differences existed between smiling male and female targets versus nonsmiling male and female targets for female participants. See Table 1.

Moderating Effects of Smiling and Physical Attractiveness on the Relationship Between Level of Present Guilt and Punishment

Controlling for sex of target and sex of participant, we conducted hierarchical multiple regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) to examine the moderating effects of smiling and physical attractiveness between level of guilt and punish-

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics on Level of Punishment

Variable	Smiling target		Nonsmiling target	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Men				
<i>M</i>	38.75 ^a	20.06 ^b	23.44 ^b	27.61
<i>SD</i>	19.28	17.95	19.45	17.49
<i>n</i>	16	17	18	18
Women				
<i>M</i>	25.07 ^b	27.41	33.83	33.75
<i>SD</i>	17.44	17.16	22.75	21.02
<i>n</i>	15	22	18	20

Note. Means with different subscripts were significantly different at $p < .05$.

ment. Sex of target and sex of participant were not significant covariates and were dropped from the analyses. A significant three-way interaction between smiling, physical attractiveness, and present guilt accounted for 3% of the variance in years of punishment, $F(1, 136) = 3.92$, $p = .05$. See Table 2.

Simple linear regression equations revealed a significant positive relationship between guilt and punishment for the target person who was rated low in physical attractiveness (1 *SD* below the mean) and who was not smiling, $B = 4.58$, $t(136) = 2.98$, $p < .01$. The negative relationship between guilt and punishment for the target person who was rated high in physical attractiveness (1 *SD* above the mean) and not smiling approached significance, $B = -3.53$, $t(136) = -1.65$, $p = .10$. See Figure 1. Furthermore, no significant relationship existed between punishment and physical attractiveness at any level of guilt for the smiling targets. In contrast, a significant negative relationship between ratings of punishment and those of physical attractiveness occurred at both average-guilt level, $B = -4.84$, $t(136) = -2.72$, $p < .01$, and high-guilt level (1 *SD* above the mean), $B = -10.53$, $t(136) = -3.92$, $p < .01$, for nonsmiling targets; no relationship existed at low-guilt level (1 *SD* below the mean). At low perceived attractiveness and high guilt, the smiling targets received less punishment than did their nonsmiling counterparts, $B = -13.58$, $t(136) = -2.10$, $p < .05$. In contrast, at high perceived attractiveness and high guilt, the smiling targets received greater punishment in years than their nonsmiling counterparts. However, the effect was only marginally significant, $B = 12.13$, $t(136) = 1.83$, $p = .07$. See Figure 1.

Discussion

The “what is beautiful is good” stereotype can elicit positive impressions of a guilty person leading to a leniency bias in punishment (Forgas et al., 1983;

TABLE 2. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Punishment

Variable	R^2 change	F
<i>Step 1</i>		
	.03	1.61
Smiling condition (0 = nonsmiling, 1 = smiling)		
Level of guilt		
Physical attractiveness		
<i>Step 2</i>		
	.06	3.26**
Smiling condition by level of guilt		
Smiling condition by physical attractiveness		
<i>Step 3</i>		
	.03	3.92*
Smiling condition by guilt level by physical attractiveness		
<i>Full model</i>		
$R^2 = .12$. $F(7, 136) = 2.73$.**		

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

LaFrance & Hecht, 1995). However, this leniency bias associated with physical attractiveness appears to be influenced by the type and seriousness of the transgression, instructions given to participants to disregard the defendant's characteristics, and whether participants are rating guilt or punishment. A smiling facial expression also increases perceived physical attractiveness and is linked to a smile-leniency effect that is independent of physical attractiveness (LaFrance & Hecht). Further, we expected that men and women would respond differently to smiling male and female defendants because smiling is more associated with femininity and less with masculinity (Brody, 2000; Hall, 1998; Hall et al., 2002; LaFrance & Carmen, 1980; Reis et al., 1990).

The present results supported previous research in that participants perceived male and female smiling targets as more physically attractive than their nonsmiling counterparts. In addition, the results held regardless of the sex of the target and the sex of the participant. So, we used physical attractiveness as a covariate in the analyses on guilt and punishment by sex of participant and sex of target. Although physical attractiveness was not a significant covariate

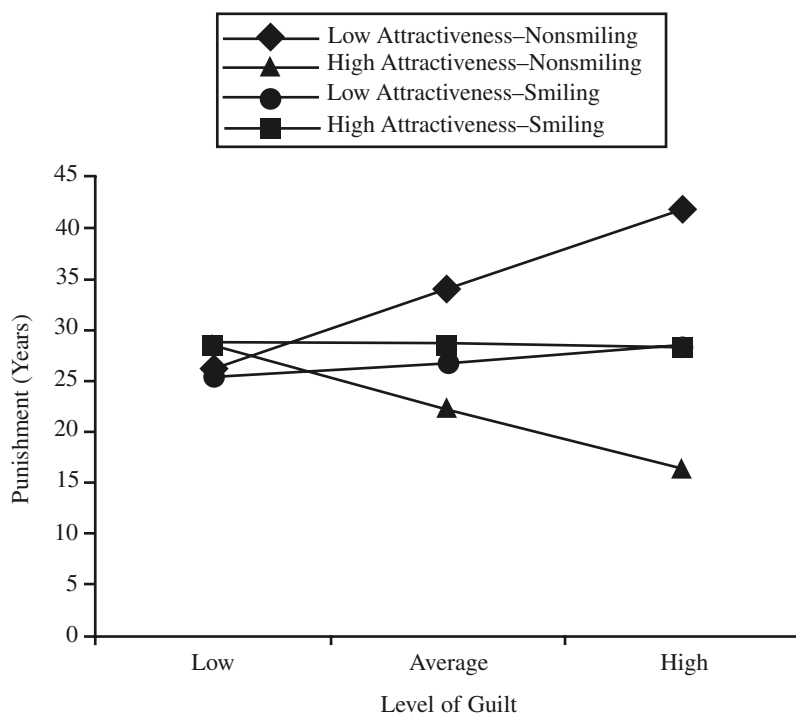


FIGURE 1. Simple regression lines showing relationship between guilt and punishment for conditions of (a) low or high attractiveness and (b) smiling or nonsmiling.

supporting the independence of smiling and physical attractiveness, further analyses that we will discuss later in the present article did reveal a moderating role of physical attractiveness in the multiple relationship between smiling, guilt, and punishment.

As expected, participants assigned smiling targets and nonsmiling targets the same level of guilt. However, male participants did grant a higher degree of guilt to the male target in committing the crime than to the female target, regardless of the smiling condition. There were no differences for female participants. Hence, men in the present sample were more lenient toward the female target in rating of guilt than they were toward the male target. The nature of the crime that we described in the scenario could have influenced this result. Men may expect that other men are more likely to be guilty of “driving under the influence” of alcoholic beverages than women. Another explanation may be simply that men are more lenient toward women than toward men in general regardless of crime. Fur-

ther researchers could test these explanations. Mazzella and Feingold (1994) have suggested that type of crime could influence guilt ratings and punishment.

Both Forgas et al. (1983) and LaFrance and Hecht (1995) found that participants were more lenient in punishment of smiling targets than of nonsmiling targets. However, the present results revealed a significant interaction between sex of participant and sex of target. Male participants assigned the smiling woman to fewer years of imprisonment than they did the smiling man but judged the nonsmiling photographs similarly regardless of the target's sex. No leniency effects were found for the female participants. These results on the attractiveness-leniency bias supported those of Efran (1974), who similarly found significant leniency effects for male participants but not female participants. However, because Efran did not examine the interaction between sex of judge and sex of target, we do not know whether in Efran's study differences occurred in participants' rating of the same sex, as they did in the present study. One plausible explanation for men's stronger leniency ratings for smiling women is that men are more likely to be influenced by women's emotional expressiveness than they are by men's emotional expressiveness. This possibility could be due in part to gender role socialization in that it is more acceptable—if not expected—for girls to be emotional than for boys, whereas boys are discouraged from expressing emotion (Brody, 2000). Further, male participants sentenced the smiling male target to significantly more years of imprisonment than they did the nonsmiling male target. This punishment by male participants was significantly higher than that by female participants. As supported by research, men tend to smile less frequently than do women (Hall, 1998; Hall et al., 2002). It is possible that men are more suspicious of another man accused of a crime who is smiling because smiling is more associated with femininity (LaFrance & Carmen, 1980) than with masculinity (Brody; Reis et al., 1990). Similar reasoning could be applied to why male participants, compared with female participants, sentenced the smiling male target to more years of imprisonment than they did the smiling female target as discussed earlier in the present article.

We designed the scenario for the present study to induce suspicion of guilt without direct evidence of guilt, so that degree of guilt and punishment should be positively correlated. However, the multiple regression analyses revealed moderating effects for smiling and physical attractiveness between guilt and punishment with no mediating effects for sex of participant and sex of target. As we expected, a significant positive relationship between guilt and punishment existed only for the target's low physical attractiveness and neutral facial expression. No other significant relationships existed between guilt and punishment; this finding supported the influence of physical attractiveness and smiling. Further, a significant negative relationship between punishment and physical attractiveness occurred at average- and high-guilt levels for the nonsmiling targets. The smile-leniency effect existed only at low physical attractiveness and high-guilt level, whereas a tendency existed for smiling targets at high physical attractiveness to receive greater pun-

ishment than did their nonsmiling counterparts, supporting Forgas's (1988) suggestion that "being good-looking and smiling after committing a transgression may be too much of a good thing" (p. 487). People may view someone who is both physically attractive and smiling as less honest or, according to Forgas, attribute too much self-confidence to that individual, leading to negative impressions.

A few important caveats about the present study are necessary. Because the present study is quasiexperimental in nature, researchers can infer no firm cause-effect relationship for sex of participant. Furthermore, an important limitation of the present study arises from the stimuli as a risk to ecological validity. There is the possibility that actual "live" individuals or videotapes of individuals giving facial expressions, that is, smiles versus neutral expressions, would lead to different results than would photographs as in the present study. Past researchers have used still photographs as stimuli when examining the attractiveness-leniency bias on judgments. However, smiling is more fleeting and transitory than physical attractiveness. In addition, the use of only one male and one female for the different expressions limits the results. Similar findings across multiple individuals portraying the same expressions could have strengthened the external validity of the present results. Therefore, future researchers should use different stimuli formats and multiple stimuli when investigating the smile-leniency effect.

Considering the above caveats, the present results should be cautiously applied to the actual courtroom. Past research does indicate the possibility that people unconsciously make attributions on the basis of observed behavior. Hence, it is likely that jury members and judges make attributions about defendants on the limited behavior that they display, such as their facial expressions. Since smiling behavior increases physical attractiveness and perceptions of more positive qualities, defendants who smile may be more highly regarded than nonsmiling defendants. Further, male jurors may give lighter sentences to smiling defendants—especially female ones—than to unsmiling defendants. In contrast, male jurors may give heavier sentences to male defendants who are smiling than to male defendants who are not smiling and who are accused of identical crimes. However, on the basis of the results of the present study, the smile-leniency effect may be dependent on the target's level of physical attractiveness regardless of the defendant's sex. If the target is unattractive, his or her smile may lead to leniency; whereas if the target is attractive, the target's smile may lead to harsher punishment. Therefore, the present study suggests that if a person is actually guilty and physically unattractive, he or she should smile; whereas if the person is actually guilty and physically attractive, he or she should not smile.

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