

The Effect of Revealing Clothes on the Formation of Sexual Stereotypes

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the relationship between revealing clothes to forming some stereotypes based on evolutionary psychology. Through the color of clothing and revealing clothes, common examples in everyday life, we analyze the perceptions and reactions of both genders to such behaviors through evolutionary psychology. This paper finds that men and women have different views on revealing clothes, which directly leads to stereotypes. Research on stereotypes can allow society to understand the reasons for their formation and make improvements. From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, our behavior is determined by our ancestors, and if we make improvements now, our descendants will be positively changed.

Keywords: color, sexual over perception, revealing clothes

1. Introduction

A stereotype is a way of representing and judging others in fixed, unwavering terms. These revolve around the assumed characteristics of the assigned category. They are reduced to clichés and not seen as individuals with their features and qualities. Rather than being viewed and treated as unique and distinctive, they are simply represented by their categorical assignments and associated homogenized and naturalized attributes. The power of stereotypes is at its greatest when it is generally believed that they cannot be broken [1]. Most people now make stereotypes about the appearance of others, for example, the color of their clothes or revealing clothes. By understanding the factors that cause people to stereotype others' outward dress, more people could realize how to avoid stereotypes caused by clothing and thus view others more objectively and fairly. Studying such issues through the lens of evolutionary psychology can provide a better understanding of the mechanisms and motivations underlying such behavior. From the evolutionary psychological perspective, the brain contains adaptations due to natural selection in the ancestral environment. By analyzing people's perceptions of the color of women's clothing and the degree of nudity, the reasons for the related stereotypes can be drawn from a gender and cultural perspective.

2. Thesis Statement

As descendants of reproductively successful ancestors, modern humans have inherited the mating strategies that led to our ancestor's success [2].

These strategies include clothing color perception. Starting from ancient Egypt, people have been exploring improving the dyeing process of clothes for nearly four thousand years [3]. Why do people pay so much attention to the color of clothes? Thousands of years ago, people began associating color with sex, status, and other factors related to sex appeal.

When a stranger walks up to you from afar, most people will see his outfit from a distance - the overall color especially. By this point, we have formed a particular judgment or impression about the person coming without even realizing it.

So how are people's impressions affected by the sight of color?

To inquire into it, the concept of color stereotypes was expanded upon by Andrew Elliot and Daniela Niesta to explore sexual attraction [4]. They mainly wanted to know if there was a relationship between specific color and sex appeal; If there was, whether someone wearing them would be more appealing to the sex opposite.

It is well-known that red symbolizes good luck and happiness in Chinese culture. Especially during the Spring Festival every year, if you walk in the streets of China, you will see red lanterns hanging in front of every house and auspicious red pictures posted on the door. But red has different meanings in different cultures. Many Americans associate the color red with sex. If you give it some thought, you'll see that most things related to passionate love are red: red hearts on Valentine's Day candy boxes, red roses, red lipstick, red lingerie, and even the "red light district." [5].

Can wearing red make a lady more seductive since red is traditionally connected with sex? Perhaps we can think it through from the perspectives of both biology and psychology.

The "red effect" is widespread. Many animals have red skin or hair on their bodies, and researchers have found that this affects mate choice. The brighter red the whole body of the male three-stickleback during the breeding period, the higher the success rate of courtship [6]. Red-headed colorful birds are more popular than birds with other colors, and in the competition between red-headed birds, the more colorful red-headed birds tend to win [7]. Females prefer male rhesus monkeys with redder faces. This suggests that red is a biological signal in relationship situations.

The researchers further discovered through the experimental study that red can trigger excitement and make people feel that they are in a dominant position. This is also true among primates, where red symbolizes social status. In addition, animal studies have found that the redder the face, chest, and rump, the higher the level of male baboons and mandrills [8,9].

Why does red make the opposite sex seem more attractive? From a physiological perspective, red is the color of blood, and a rosy complexion represents high blood oxygen levels, reflecting healthy cardiovascular function. From a cultural perspective, red has been used in folk customs and daily life for a long time, which implies a profound cultural basis. For example, women have used lipstick to decorate themselves since 10,000 BC [10].

Evidence also suggests that men are more apt to perceive women dressed in red as more sexually attractive [4]. Researchers found that when a woman has a red background or her clothes turn red, men perceive her as more attractive and show more interest in her. However, red did not affect men's judgments of traits such as friendliness, intelligence, and general likability in women. The effect was only found between the opposite sex, and there is no red psychological effect when the same sex evaluates. They believe that the association between red and sex affects men's evaluation of women [4].

Women's clothes seem to have been a topic of great concern and have often been discussed since

ancient times. For example, in ancient China, women wore fat and long skirts that wrapped all the women up. In modern times, men will think that revealing women do not know self-love will feel that women dress as a sexual signal, which has been around since ancient times [11].

People usually judge a person by their appearance, which is also common in dressing; for example, in the disco, if there is a woman with sexy clothes, highly transparent clothing, and skin tightness, it will attract a lot of male attention. And through a large number of experiments suggest that: Men believe that women in tight clothes and skin displayed sexier than women in less revealing clothes. And if the target has bare shoulders, the male directly contacts all other areas before entering the site covered by clothing. So in public, a woman wearing sexy will attract more male attention than a conservative woman. Since ancient times, men have been mainly motivated to see women's clothes. Men will think that women's clothes represent the image of the whole country. For example, women wear sexy clothes, which means vulgar and indecent. The male mentality, it seems, is deeply ingrained. But the fact is that in this society, men's dress is not considered as necessary as women's dress; for example, in the street, some men often topless, but they don't seem to think it is an ugly thing. When women wear revealing clothes, they criticize women in a critical tone.

This phenomenon exists in that men and women have different views on the clothing, language, behavior, and eye contact of the opposite sex. Through an experiment, a study investigated the effects of clothing on the perception of sexual intentions in both men and women and whether women recognize that how they are dressed is seen by others as a sexual signal.

In this experimental study, researchers examined women's clothing choices, relationship status, hormonal status, and sexual motives in real courtship situations. There are three conditions studied: The first condition is women with a partner going to a discotheque without their partners ("partner absent"), the second condition is women accompanied by a partner going to a discotheque ("partner present"), and the third condition is women without a partner going to discotheques ("single").

According to the findings of this study, women go to discos mostly to make new acquaintances rather than to explore sexual prospects or flirtation. When we say flirtation, single women are more motivated than women with partners in the discos. In addition, analysis of skin presentation, compactness, and transparency of clothing shows that women describe their clothing in line with social clothing norms. This proves that women are aware of the sex-related social cues that clothing conveys.

The psychology researcher Abbey hypothesizes that Men possess a sexual over-perception bias, but women don't. He first surveyed to investigate whether an individual of the opposite sex had ever misinterpreted their friendly behaviors as sexual interests or sexual signals 1987. The results have shown that 72% of women reported that the members from the opposite sex had overestimated their sexual interests before, which is substantially more significant than the reports of men, about 60% [12].

Some ambiguities and critics of Abbey's findings are pointed out. For example, more cases of overestimating sexual interests reflect a greater decoding error rate. Furthermore, women are more ambiguous than men when they express their sexual interests through nonverbal language [12]. Therefore, based on Abbey's finding, the results cannot account for why men initially misinterpret women's friendliness as sexual interests, not affected by other ambiguities.

To address the ambiguity in Abbey's survey, Haselton & Buss conducted a study in 2000 to get the overall number of sexual over-perception and under-perception experiences of both men and women in one year. Additionally, Haselton & Buss dig deeper into the potential factors that affect the frequency of sexual misperceptions, such as mate value, sociosexuality, and relationship experience.

They found that women reported more sexual over-perception experiences than sexual

under-perceptions. In other words, men tend to overestimate a woman's sexual interests more than miss the sexual interests that a woman expresses. The results are consistent with two of the researchers' hypotheses. The first one is "Women will report more instances within the last year in which their sexual intent was over-perceived by a man than in which it was under-perceived [5]." "Differences between men's sexual under-perception and over-perception experiences should be non-existent or noticeably lower than the differences between women's experiences." [5]."

This study provides more evidence to prove the hypothesis that men possess a sexual over-perception bias, but women don't. The evidence is (1) the over-perception bias that men have not only exists in artificial experiments. (2) the over-perception bias showed in naturally occurring situations only present in men but not women. Since women reported that they had experienced more sexual over-perceptions than sexual under-perceptions, which indicates that they are being victims when men overestimate their sexual interests. But for men, no noticeable difference exists between the men who have experienced these two misperception errors. Therefore, it can be concluded that the presence of sexual over-perception bias cannot only be accounted for by the ambiguity which plausibly exists in women's signaling behavior [5].

Researchers validate the hypothesis, but why do men overestimate or misinterpret women's sexual interests? The theory of parental investment explains this phenomenon by pointing out that males evaluate the cost of missed sexual opportunities will often be greater than the time or energy cost wasted on unsuccessful courtship. However, for females, the energy and time costs spend on gestation and offspring care confined them from reproductive variance. As a result, females have little or non-existent reproductive benefits or other mating opportunities during pregnancy. Furthermore, sex role socialization leads men to value sex more than women, including emphasizing women's physical appearance and their sexual availability.

To let society alleviate the sexual stereotypes of women, awareness about the diversity of women's roles in society should be raised in new generations of children and teenagers.

3. Summary

The article claims three stereotypes about the color of clothes and revealing clothes. Firstly, the article state that males regard females in red as sexually attractive, but red does not affect men's judgments of traits such as friendliness, intelligence, and general likability in women. Secondly, the article states that women wearing revealing clothes are just for making new friends, not for pursuing sexual opportunities or flirting. Finally, the report claims that men possess sexual over-perception bias. This article collects psychologists' studies on related phenomena, summarizes them, and explains them from the perspective of evolutionary psychology. This paper suggests that society at large should remove the tinted glasses and avoid stereotypes between the sexes, and interprets these stereotypes in the hope that humanity will understand the reasons for these behaviors and reduce the occurrence of such situations. The "elimination of gender stereotypes" is a product of the increasing equality between men and women under the progress of the times by breaking the pseudo distinction between men and women under social stereotypes and not allowing standard labels to cover up individual differences. From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, our adaptations are determined by our ancestors. If our current transformations can be positively changed, then our offspring's adaptations will be positively influenced by us years later.

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