

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**TITLE:**

**DO GOOD LOOKING PEOPLE HAVE AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE IN THE  
WORKPLACE?**

**By**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Business Administration**

**Graduate School of Business  
Faculty of Management Studies**

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**Year of submission: 2010**

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**  
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## DECLARATION

I Praline Ross declare that:

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## **Acknowledgements**

In retrospect, with regards to my studies at the Graduate School of Business, I am grateful for the pivotal role played by many people in my life, whom I hold dear. I wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following individuals, as without their assistance, this study would not have been possible:

- Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for giving me the strength needed to complete my studies.
  
- Dale, my wonderful and loving husband, who is always at my side uplifting me in moments when I have felt that I could not go on. You are truly my pillar of strength. This is not MY MBA, but rather OUR MBA, as your words of encouragement, your positive energy and warmth have kept me alive and focused. We have been in this TOGETHER. I love you with all my heart!
  
- My parents, Kenny and Esme Joyce. Mum and Dad, I would not be where I am today had it not been for your hard work and tenacity. The sacrifices made by both of you have made me the person that I am today. You have both shown me how hard work can pay off, as long as God is at the centre of my life.
  
- My siblings, Karen, Charmaine, Chris and Gerard. Thank you to all of you for your kind words and support during this time and for always being there for me.
  
- Father Sylvester David (OMI), my mentor and spiritual guide throughout. Thank you for all your pearls of wisdom.
  
- Lester Bouah, my vibrant general manager and dear friend, together with your wife Denise, you have both been an ongoing means of support for me. You have been extremely helpful and cheerful, which has helped to pave the way for a bright future.

- My supervisor, Dr Martin Challenor. Thank you so much for your support and patience and for having your students' best interest at heart. You are truly a shining example to us all and yes, you have it in writing!
  
- My sincere thanks and appreciation goes out to all respondents for taking the time to complete my questionnaires. Your input has been absolutely essential in completing this dissertation.

## **Abstract**

### **Do Good Looking People Have an Unfair Advantage in the Workplace?**

According to studies conducted by Mobius and Rosenblat (2003) attractive candidates are seen to be more productive in the workplace and would be rewarded for it by receiving higher remuneration than less attractive candidates who are just as qualified. The focus of this study revolves around suggestions that good looks play a major role in the workplace. In addition, Fryer and Kirby (2005) report that obese people earn less than people of average weight with the same set of skills.

This study aims to determine the extent to which good looks play a role in recruitment in the workplace and assess the extent to which looks are important to young managers as opposed to older managers when recruiting employees. It also seeks to identify the extent to which looks play a role between male and female managers when recruiting staff and determine if and to what extent good looks give an interviewee an undue advantage. Lastly, it seeks to determine if and to what extent overweight candidates are discriminated against.

The sample is segmented using both male and female managers in Durban as key respondents of the questionnaire. The research aims to determine if good looks play an important role in Durban, not only in recruitment in the workplace, but also in the workplace as a whole.

Interesting conclusions were drawn.

- 71% of the sample population agreed that good looks are based on one's physical appearance.
  - 71% agreed that good looking managers have confidence in themselves.
  - 63% of respondents agree that managers are more tolerant of good looking people.
- The response overall proved to be that good looking people certainly do have an unfair advantage in the workplace.

## **List of Abbreviations**

United States of America – USA

Body Mass Index - BMI

Leading Employees to Activity and Nutrition - LEAN

South Africa - SA

Physical Attractiveness - PA

Chief Executive Officers - CEOs

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Overview of the study**

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### **1.1 Introduction**

The intention of the study is to solicit information from managers in Durban regarding the role that good looks play in the workplace, with special attention on the role of good looks when recruiting employees. This study aims to highlight the importance placed on good looks in society. A survey was conducted via a questionnaire, which was sent to 120 managers in Durban. The intention was to gauge perceptions of managers regarding the role of looks in the workplace and also to see if managers in Durban are involved in discriminating against employees on the basis of their looks. Chapter 1 provides an overview of what this study aims to achieve and highlights the problem statement and motivation.

### **1.2 Motivation for the study**

Good looks and the important role that it plays in today's society is a topical issue. Studies have revealed that some people in the workplace are discriminated against on the basis of their looks. According to Zakas (2005), research reveals that individuals who are obese are often viewed as lazy and insecure, whilst people who are considered to be good looking earn more than unattractive colleagues. The aim of this study is to establish to what extent good looks play a role in the workplace with reference to recruitment, as well as in society. One intention is to see if there is a difference in the way that male and female managers view good looks in the workplace. It also seeks to explore if age plays a role in determining whether good looks are based on one's physical appearance or one's inner beauty. Another intention is to see if and to what extent overweight candidates are discriminated against in the workplace.

This area of study was chosen because of the desire to highlight the importance placed on looks in today's society, even to the extent where unattractive people are discriminated against on a conscious and subconscious level. It is hoped that this study will create an awareness of any discriminatory measures on this basis.

This research will provide managers within the Durban area with insight into the importance placed on looks in the workplace. This study will create an awareness of the concept, known as “lookism” (Patzner, 2008) which will be beneficial to managers, reinforcing the principle of treating people in a fair manner and not on the basis of one’s looks. It will also benefit those in human resources particularly with regards to the recruitment and selection process.

### **1.3 Focus of the study**

This study will focus on whether or not good looking employees have an undue advantage in that because of their good looks they are at an unfair advantage in the working environment over colleagues who are not as good looking.

### **1.4 Problem statement**

According to studies conducted by economists Mobius and Rosenblat (2003), attractive candidates are seen to be more productive in the workplace and would be rewarded for it by receiving higher remuneration than less attractive candidates who are just as qualified. The focus of this study will revolve around Mobius and Rosenblat’s (2003) recommendation that good looks play a major role in terms of recruitment in the workplace. In addition, Schuman (2010) has reported that the Council on Size and Weight Discrimination in the United States of America (USA), advised that job applicants, referred to as “larger than average” suffer prejudice and discrimination in every aspect of employment.

This study aims to determine the extent to which looks play a role in recruitment in the workplace in Durban. It also explores whether a manager’s age affects their opinion of “good looking” when recruiting employees. This study will attempt to determine to what extent the notion of “good looking” is based on one’s physical appearance as opposed to one’s inner beauty.

### **1.5 Research questions**

The main research question is: To what extent, and in what ways do good looking people

have an unfair advantage in the workplace?

Further questions emerged as a result of the main research question:

1. If and to what extent do good looks play a role in recruitment in the workplace?
2. If and to what extent are good looks important to young managers when recruiting employees?
3. If and to what extent are good looks important to both male and female managers when recruiting staff?
4. If and to what extent do good looks give an interviewee an undue advantage?
5. If and to what extent are overweight candidates discriminated against?

## **1.6 Objectives**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine the extent to which good looks play a role in recruitment in the workplace.
- To assess the extent to which looks are important to young managers when recruiting employees.
- To identify the extent to which looks play a role between male and female managers when recruiting staff.
- To determine if and to what extent good looks give an interviewee an undue advantage.
- To determine if and to what extent overweight candidates are discriminated against.

## **1.7 Limitations**

Only managers within the Durban area will be canvassed.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

Chapter 1 provided a synopsis of what the study aims to achieve in terms of the objectives and highlights that previous research suggests that good looks play an important role within the workplace. It also mentions the motivation for the study as well as focus areas of the study. This chapter lays the foundation for future chapters. The next chapter provides a review on previous literature researched on similar topics which will assist in preparation for this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### An overview of the importance placed on looks in the workplace and society

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#### 2.1 Introduction

For many years, particularly in the USA, extensive research has been done with regards to the role that looks play in the workplace, with special reference to the importance of looks in recruitment, as well as society. The intention of this chapter is to explore research findings by various experts, on the importance of good looks which is perceived to be linked to one's salary, confidence and productivity levels. The notion of "lookism," is discussed and various examples have been used to highlight the importance of this silent form of discrimination. Issues related to obesity discrimination in the workplace are discussed with particular attention on the different way in which obese men and women are treated. Another important aspect, namely obesity and the "glass ceiling" effect is explored. Research suggests that good looking people earn more and "ugly men" seem to be discriminated against more than ugly women, yet obese men, seem to be treated better than obese women. Important concepts like beauty and its addiction and the term "beauty premium" are explored.

#### 2.2. Lookism - discrimination in a silent form

According to Patzer (2008), "Lookism" refers to "treating people in ways biased by their perceived level of physical attractiveness." In other words "lookism" is a term used when a person discriminates against another based on their physical appearance. The difficulty with regards to this notion of "lookism" is that of subjectivity-one person's view of "good looking" may be different to another.

##### 2.2.1. Lookism and one's physical attractiveness

Patzer (2008) argues that from our birth, we are judged either silently or unconsciously on the basis of our height, weight and facial features. This he refers

to as one's Physical Attractiveness (PA) and that a person's looks are increasingly more important. This is evident in personal discussions, as well as the media where looks are focused on in great detail, coupled with the desire to be thin. Magazines show pictures of thin models in a way that creates the illusion that being skinny is fashionable. Fat people want to be thin and short people want to be tall.

Patzer (2008) believes that a person's PA has a great influence in the way that they are treated by others. He argues that just like books, people judge others by their "covers". When someone is seen for the first time, before getting to know that person or even before speaking, that person has already been judged whether consciously or subconsciously on their body language, i.e. the way they look, walk, as well as overall mannerisms.

Patzer (2008) argues that PA corresponds with "benefits and detriments" respectively. People need to be aware of the term "lookism" when they are drawn to one person over another in future and be sensitive regarding their interactions with others. Lookism is subjective. Patzer encourages people to rise above lookism and be more self aware of one's own PA. Whilst Patzer creates awareness of lookism, this means of discrimination is quite challenging as it involves changing the mindset of people, which individuals can control consciously, but cannot on a subconscious level.

Millar (2005), argues that there is a "trend of lookism sweeping across the world". It was discovered that people who are "overweight, unattractive or unconventional in appearance" were discriminated against. Interestingly enough, it found that 39% of Americans felt that employers should be allowed to discriminate against people based on their appearance and 33% believe that physically attractive people are more likely to be promoted.



According to Duckers (2005) “We are increasingly becoming a ‘lookist’ culture. In time we will undoubtedly have laws that protect us from beauty bias, but in the meantime, perhaps we should keep off the cream cakes-it could be damaging our career prospects.” The sad issue is that even if there are laws protecting one from a “beauty bias”, proving this would be extremely difficult and it may very well be a lot easier to “keep off the cream cakes” instead.

### **2.2.2 Beauty is not in the eye of the beholder**

According to Money (2005), “beauty is not in the eye of the beholder” but rather that babies enter the world “favouring pretty faces rather than ugly ones” and refers to this as a “genetic predisposition”.

Money (2005) advises that in a study done by psychology lecturer, Dr Alan Slater from Exeter University, newborns were shown 30 photographs and their faces were observed thereafter. The 30 photographs were of white females. Some were models. These photographs were shown to these newborns (up to the age of three days) for up to five minutes. It was observed that there was a significant difference in the time spent by these newborns in viewing attractive faces over less attractive ones. For instance, these babies spent “60-65% of the time looking at the attractive face.” After swapping the internal features, namely, the eyes, nose and mouth of the attractive face with the unattractive face, researchers observed that the infants were "more responsive to the internal features" which is what infants used to ascertain whether the model was attractive or not.

Money (2005) suggests that Dr Slater’s belief is that “perception of beauty is something genetic rather than socially constructed.” Newborns that have not been exposed to that many faces, come into the world with an “in-built representation of a face” which corresponds to an attractive face. He rejects the belief that perception of beauty is a learned process and feels that if the beauty concept was a learned characteristic then the public would not all pick the same person as being attractive.

Sneddon, at Stirling University advises that “A fair bit of evolutionary psychology has been done which suggests visual perception is innate, but I think culture has a role to play too” (Money, 2005).

### **2.2.3 Man’s deep-rooted desire**

According to Aronson (2010), in her review of Nancy Etcoff’s book, “Survival of the prettiest: the science of beauty”, Etcoff argues that there is a deep-rooted desire for physical beauty within every human being. She defines Etcoff’s views on beauty as a “basic pleasure that conjures an emotional response, often a physical one as well.” Aronson further elaborates that studies show that good looking people receive more respect and attention, and behave more confidently and assertive. It is argued that if one is considered to be “good-looking”, this entitles one to behave more confidently and may even lead one to get ahead due to their good looks.

Hamermesh and Biddle (1994) refer to the “beauty premium” where physically attractive workers, “derive sizeable rents from their looks” as workers considered to be “above average” in terms of their looks earn 10 to 15% more than workers of below average beauty. Physically attractive workers are generally seen to be more productive when interacting with clients. Hamermesh and Biddle also conclude that physical attractiveness raises lawyers’ wages simply because clients prefer to deal with good looking lawyers.

Mobius and Rosenblat (2003) argue that there is a discrepancy between the wages of the physically attractive employee versus their “less beautiful, but equally qualified compatriot” where the “physically attractive” employee is able to “extract greater rents”. In a world where looks plays a major role in society, this is certainly discrimination.

According to Collard (2008), a global survey was conducted where 7000 people in 9 markets were interviewed about their beauty secrets. People from Brazil,

Bulgaria, Canada, Korea, India, Singapore, Spain, South Africa and the United States were asked how they describe beauty and if they would do anything in order to change the way they look.

One in five respondents advised that they would undergo plastic surgery if they could afford to whilst 30% would not change anything even if they could afford to. Spaniards wanted darker skin, whilst Koreans wanted to be paler. South Africans, both men and women would utilise a personal style service if they could afford it. Americans had the lowest self image in terms of beauty with 7% feeling that they are not beautiful and wanted to change that. This further emphasises that we live in a “lookist society” where the desire to want what we do not have is strong (Collard, 2008).

The survey also focused on physical beauty or beauty from the outside, but 35% defined beauty as “what’s on the inside” whilst 32% said that it’s about confidence. In India, 11% of respondents felt that “beauty is about being complimented by other people”. South Africans (43%) felt that beauty comes from within. It appeared that South Africans (65%) and Brazilians (62%) had the best “beauty images” of all respondents feeling that whilst they think that they are beautiful, there is still room for improvement (Collard 2008).

In India and Brazil, 55% of the respondents felt that you could “get away with less work as long as you look good”. Overall, the survey highlighted that just over 40% of respondents would like to change their looks if they could (Collard, 2008).

Krueger & Foster (2008) in their account on studies conducted by Hamermesh, highlight that good looks are advantageous as “doors of opportunity open more frequently”. Hamermesh’s research further highlights that spending money to enhance your looks is useless, as in terms of return of investment, for every dollar spent, you will only get 15 cents back. His research leaves no hope for those considered to be unattractive. This suggests that if you do not have natural physical beauty, you should not waste your time trying to enhance this-you either have it or

you do not.

There is a website that only allows “beautiful people” to join. This website: [www.beautifulpeople.com](http://www.beautifulpeople.com), highlights that “British people are among the World’s Ugliest”. Swedish men have been the most successful with 65% of those applying for acceptance on the website, being successful. Women from Norway were considered to be the most beautiful with 76% “making the grade” (Clancey, 2009).

When the website opened to UK members, 295 000 applied with only 35 000 being accepted. This leaves lots of disgruntled, not so good-looking people being denied access on this website. This site which apparently began in Denmark in 2002, rejected close to 1.8 million people from 190 countries within two weeks in November 2009. Sweden, Brazil and Norway prove to be the most “beautiful countries overall, with applicants from Germany and the UK among the least successful.” Why people choose to apply for membership on this website, which is a discriminatory one, highlights man’s deep-rooted desire to be beautiful and even more importantly demonstrates man’s longing for acceptance in society, as a whole (Clancey, 2009).

### **2.3. Good looks and its role in recruitment**

Lookism in the workplace often occurs where staff are bound by an employee handbook or written policy that defines the image that the organisation wishes to portray. At times rules are set regarding clothing and hairstyles and overall neatness which are linked to the image of the organisation. Zakas (2005) elaborates on the investigation into “lookism” in 2004, on the ABC news show, 20/20. Four people (two men and two women) were hired with each gender being represented by an attractive person and one that was average-looking. This was done in an attempt to test whether looks play an important role in an interview. Each candidate had identical qualifications and was trained to act in the same manner. The only distinguishing difference was their looks. In both cases, the attractive candidate, was offered the job and treated a lot better.

### **2.3.1. “Look policies” in the workplace**

Robbins (2001) argues that an employment interview is of utmost importance when recruiting staff, as “interviewers make perceptual judgements that are often inaccurate” and often draw impressions early that become entrenched. Studies have indicated that most interviewer decisions “change very little after the first four or five minutes of the interview.” This already places a candidate at a disadvantage as this means that they only have four to five minutes to make an impact and if lookism is anything to go by, a less attractive candidate may already be at a disadvantage from the second they walk into the interview.

It is argued that people who are attractive also complain that people often assume things about them, without really getting to know them well and people assume that they are superficial, unintelligent and at times even arrogant. It is assumed that whilst people have been “given the gift of physical attractiveness”; they are bound to be lacking in other areas. This leads to the question, “Are good looks an advantage or disadvantage at work?” (Krueger & Foster, 2008).

Lee (2009) argues that the “cute factor” has different and sometimes opposite consequences for both male and female employees, as men who are viewed as good-looking seem to be given respect and admiration whilst women on the other hand are faced with jealousy and “undue criticism”, all because they have a “nice figure” and a “good face.”

Lee (2009) further argues that workers who are considered to be physically attractive are sometimes victims of the “too cool to touch” syndrome, as many pretty women complain that their good looks often deter people from approaching them, which may be damaging particularly in a work environment when you are often reliant on teamwork.

### **2.3.2. The “bigger” you are, the “smaller” the salary**

Fryer and Kirby (2005) argue that in terms of salary comparisons in the US, obese people earn on average between 6 and 12 percent less than people of average weight with the same set of skills. Overweight candidates receive fewer recommendations for promotions and some being denied health benefits because of the additional costs involved.

Fryer and Kirby (2005) present a hypothetical case study which highlights issues that arise when an obese person in the working environment seeks a promotion. The scenario unfolds where a manager wishes to employ a sales consultant who will be responsible for forming relationships with clients and developing new business ideas and will also be responsible for company sales. The manager receives two external applications and one internal one. The external candidates have had sales experience but in a different area, whereas the internal candidate has been in the organisation for eight years and has a good overall perspective of the organisation, including its objectives. The “challenge” is that the internal candidate is the only one that is obese.

Zakas (2005) advises that in a study conducted by Forsythe, Drake and Cox (1985), it was revealed that an applicant’s style of dress coupled with their physical attractiveness contributed to the interview outcome. Results of this study indicate that there is a possibility of people who are physically attractive, earning more money and are able to afford nicer clothes and perform better in interviews, whilst those who are less attractive and cannot afford nice clothes are possibly at a slight disadvantage.

### **2.3.3 Good looks, professionalism and confidence**

Hando (2010) argues that a person’s confidence is easier to achieve from “the outside in” in that a person may be nervous, but this is camouflaged by their physical appearance including one’s dress, as well as one’s hairstyle which can

boost one's level of self-confidence. One's dress and hairstyle contribute greatly to one's self-image, which is said to be enhanced. Hando (2010) argues that the "foundation of a confident self" is to "look in the mirror, ask a friend or two" then decide on what your best attributes are and keep them in mind and identify and reflect on your own unique personality.

Hando (2010) further argues that confidence requires an effort, as well as an awareness throughout life and that caring about how we look is one of the best tools that we have at our disposal.

## **2.4. Good looks and their advantage**

According to studies conducted by Hamermesh and Biddle (1994), people who are attractive, earn more than those considered to be "average looking" in the workplace, with "ugly men" being affected even more than ugly women. These findings suggest that people perceived to be "very nice looking", earn approximately 10% more than those people considered to be "homely", despite similar experience and education levels.

### **2.4.1 Remuneration based on discrimination**

Zakas (2005) states that based on proof, individuals who are deemed to be "attractive", generally make up to 12 percent more money for the same job and have more opportunities to date and marry and are seen to have positive characteristics such as "intelligence", purely based on their appearance. Similarly, individuals considered to be "below average" in appearance, are more likely to be "abused" as children, are seen to be less intelligent and are often excluded from selection in certain positions. This is indicative of the importance that society places on good looks.

Zakas (2005) points out that according to studies conducted by Hamermesh & Biddle (1994), Biddle & Hamermesh (1998) and Hamermesh, Meng & Zhuang (2001), there is a huge gap between salaries of attractive workers and their less

attractive counterparts in certain industries. He further points out that the salaries of MBA graduates was monitored over 10 years and it was discovered that attractive graduates earned more than less attractive graduates. Included in this research it was found that there was a higher starting salary for males and higher salaries for all attractive graduates irrespective of gender.

According to Harris (2010), “Blondes stand out for having more funds”. A recent study of 13000 women done in Australia found that “fair-headed women earned 7% more than women with other hair colours and the difference in pay was not connected to other factors such as height, weight or education.” Harris (2010) further advises that the managing director of 1<sup>st</sup> for Women Insurance Brokers, disputes these findings and argues that South African women have many challenges to deal with such as salary trends and gender equality in the workplace and hair colour is not an issue.

Harris (2010) elaborates that Terry McCarthy, co-owner of Sharklady Adventures, feels that hair colour should not affect recruitment or one’s salary. “Physical appearance should not make any difference when it comes to hiring staff or remunerating them, but unfortunately it often plays a role.” She also adds that being well groomed is not a bad idea and “appropriate clothing and polished shoes do make or break a first impression”. Harris (2010) further advises that the CEO of Pam Sorel Properties, agrees that looks do make a difference in business, but is not restricted to hair colour. She advises that when she was an estate agent, she had a partner who looked like “Julia Roberts”. That definitely “opened doors” for them.

Schuman (2010) advises that workers in the USA, who are “plain, unattractive or overweight”, can expect to earn less than those colleagues who are thinner and better looking. In 2007, a survey was done by Elle Magazine and MSNBC.com who polled more than 60 000 correspondents online. The outcome was that better looking bosses were seen to be more competent. Males and females differed significantly in the way that they saw themselves judged on the job. 61% of women said that they thought that men judged them on their looks, followed by work ethic



(54%) and accomplishments (49%), whilst men believed that female colleagues judged them on their work ethic first (43%), accomplishments (40%) and looks (32%).

Bennett (2010) argues that paying careful attention to your looks is a means of “economic survival” and is not simply related to being vain. In an online survey conducted by Newsweek in the USA, on 202 managers involved in the recruitment process in the corporate world, as well as a telephone survey consisting of 964 members of the public, it was revealed that 57% of managers are of the belief that qualified, but unattractive job candidates will have a difficult time getting hired. 68% believe that once employed by a company, a person’s good looks will continue to affect an employee’s performance in a positive way. When requested to rate character attributes, from 1 to 10 with 10 being the most important, looks came in third with a mean of 7.1, experience rated as 8.9 and confidence rated as 8.5. 59% of managers involved in recruitment also admitted to “spending as much time and money making sure they look attractive” as compared to perfecting a resumé. 64% of managers advised that companies should be allowed to hire employees based on their looks.

#### **2.4.2 “Erotic capital” and “reward circuitry” of the brain**

According to Sociologist, Catherine Hakim, “Men and women with erotic capital can expect to earn 10 to 15 times more than those without” (Spicer, K., 2010). Hakim argues that we may be “missing a trick” by not recognising the power of “erotic capital”. She defines its key elements as “sex appeal, charm and social skills, physical fitness and liveliness, sexual competence and skills in self-presentation”. Hakim’s emphasis lies on women, as “women have more erotic capital than men in most societies because they work harder at personal presentation and the performance of gender and sexuality”. She argues that sexual attractiveness is about how someone moves, talks and behaves (Spicer, 2010).

In a study conducted by Aharon, Etcoff, Ariely, Chabris, O'Connor and Breiter (2001) it was discovered that looking at an attractive person affects brain activity and chemistry. Brain scans on heterosexual males were performed as they looked at pictures of both men and women of various degrees of attractiveness. Viewing a picture of an attractive woman activated the "reward circuitry" of the brain. This is the area of the brain that responds to results that are pleasing.

## **2.5 The importance placed on looks by male and female managers when conducting interviews**

Zoller, from Image Consulting in the USA, argues that "55% of another person's perception of you is based on how you look" (Doyle, 2010).

Teare, 2005 argues that as an interviewee, you can never go wrong by being "boring and unconventional" when preparing for an interview and argues that irrespective of the job that you are applying for, you want the interviewer to remember you for your "personality and performance" as opposed to "the one with the garish tie, short skirt, nose stud..."

In a survey conducted by a management company in the United Kingdom, theladders.co.uk, it was found that for senior male and female executive interviewers, 37% decided against hiring a candidate due to the way that the candidate was dressed. The traditional more formal dress code for an interviewee was still preferred by interviewers more than the casual dress code, which was considered to be the "biggest turnoff". The survey was aimed at male and female executives involved in the recruitment process and highlights the importance placed on one's physical appearance by both male and female interviewers when conducting an interview (Teare, 2005).

The survey further indicates that in terms of colour co-ordination and styles, 36% felt that the way a candidate dressed in terms of co-ordination of colours was an indication of the candidate's personality. 95% of interviewers felt that orange was

the “worst” colour to wear to an interview, with 84% feeling exactly the same about wearing red to an interview and 83% feeling the same about pink, which was also seen by interviewers as being inappropriate. 59% of interviewers admitted to being turned off by stains on clothing (Teare, 2005).

It was felt that in general, colours such as navy or black were seen to be considered “safe” corporate colours. The interviewers cautioned against the interviewee wearing too much jewellery, showing too much “cleavage” or wearing casual wear. An interviewee that is dressed in more formal attire, will be seen as being more confident in the interview which will place the candidate in a good and positive light, which will certainly stand in the candidate’s favour.

The survey also highlighted the following percentages which resulted in a negative impression felt by both male and female interviewers when interviewing candidates:

- Without a tie 52%
- No jacket 50%
- Dangling jewellery 99%
- Chinos and polo shirts 50% and 66% respectively
- Big shoulder pads 97%
- Low necklines 95%
- Bare legs 94%
- Jeans 82%
- Leather jackets 70%

The study further highlights the importance of grooming in terms of the hairstyle chosen by the interviewee as well as the importance of clean nails and not having “too much” make up, which may defer the attention of the interviewer (Teare, 2005).

## 2.6 Overweight discrimination

The author of “Health at every size”, Linda Bacon, argues that fat people face discrimination in all aspects of life, from having to “squeeze” into a seat on plane to buying clothing in a shop (Treleaven, 2010).

### 2.6.1. Overweight, Body Mass Index (BMI) and productivity

Kaufmann (2010) elaborates by adding that there are “challenges” and “routine humiliations” faced by overweight Americans. He mentioned that in February 2010, the film director, Kevin Smith was “kicked off” a South West Airlines flight after the carrier declared him to be “too fat to fly”.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the term BMI is used to differentiate between the terms “overweight” and “obesity”. The ranges for overweight and obesity are determined by a calculation involving weight and height, which are used to calculate one’s BMI, which is linked to one’s body fat.

According to Kelly (2006), BMI can be classified as evidenced below.

Table 2.1 Weight Classifications Based on BMI adopted from Kelly, 2006

Category	BMI/Kg/m <sup>2</sup>
Underweight	<18.5
Normal	18.5 -24.9
Overweight	25.0-29.9
Class I Obesity	30.0-34.9
Class II Obesity	35.0-39.9
Class III Obesity	>40

According to the above table, an adult who has a BMI of between 18.5 to 24.9 is considered to have a “healthy weight”. An adult who has a BMI of between 25 to 29.9 is considered to be overweight, whilst an adult, with a BMI of 30 to 34.9 is considered to be in Class I of obesity, 35-39.9 is in Class II of obesity and individuals with a BMI of 40 or more is in Class III, which is extreme or morbid obesity.

For the purpose of this study, the terms “overweight” and “obese” are used synonymously, unless stated otherwise.

In the Medical Research Council’s Chronic Diseases of Lifestyle report, “Obesity numbers shock” (2008), it is reported that obesity in South Africa is “high”, with over 29% of men and 56% of women, being classified as overweight or obese.

It is reported that almost 50% of adults in the developed world are overweight or obese with South Africa on par with countries like the USA and the UK, with up to 40% of women suffering from obesity.

A survey conducted by GlaxoSmithKline (2010) highlights that South Africa, alarmingly has “one of the worst obesity rates in the world and that nearly two thirds of South Africans could be eating their way into an early grave”. According to this report, “Road Safety Highlights”, 61% of South Africans are overweight. 72% of Capetonians are overweight with Pretoria following with 68%, Johannesburg with 59% and Durban with 52%. It reports that 66% of South Africans actually think that they are slim and almost half, do not exercise.

In a report titled, “Obese workers face prejudice” (2010), Slimming World commissioned a study where over 2000 British people over the age of 18 were surveyed and of these 227 were employers. Respondents were requested to mention their attitude towards obesity in the workplace, with their responses being matched

to their BMI. It was discovered that respondents with a BMI of 40+ were “four times more likely to never feel confident and twice as likely to dread applying for a new job”. Of the male bosses surveyed, one in four advised that they would turn down a candidate because of their weight and one in 10 admitted to having done so already.

In a survey done by Personnel Today (2005) with 2000 personnel officers, it was revealed that 50% of polled individuals assumed that obesity affected productivity. It was also assumed that overweight people lacked self-discipline. Alarming, 1 in 10 officers admitted to not wanting an overweight person to meet with a client and the same percentage said that they would “sack” a worker for being obese.

### **2.6.2. Obesity and stereotypes**

According to Zakas (2005), research reveals that individuals who are obese are often viewed as lazy and insecure, whilst others mention that overweight candidates are unable to complete work on their own and are heavily reliant on other team members.

Bellizzi and Hasty (2000), mention that it is assumed by interviewers that individuals who are obese cannot perform the necessary tasks associated with the job. These researchers even discovered that because of certain stereotypes with regards to obese people, despite their experience, these obese people were not assigned more challenging tasks than “non-obese” colleagues.

According to statistics, it is estimated that approximately 65% of people in the United States are overweight, which has a negative impact in the workplace, where they either encounter subtle or not so subtle discrimination in the workplace. These overweight employees are either fired or demoted due to “stated or unstated” weight discrimination. Crowder elaborates that Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts, prohibits discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex and national origin, it does not extend protection based on weight (Crowder, 2010).

Tahmincioglu (2007) commented on a statement made by “America’s TV boss”, Donald Trump who had been in a “war of words” with Rosie O’Donnell, “If I were running, ‘The View’, I’d fire Rosie. I’d look her right in that fat ugly face of hers and say, Rosie, you’re fired.” Tahmincioglu argues that when it comes to discrimination based on obesity, there are very few, if any rights at all, when it comes to being hired, fired or promoted. She further argues that if he had said “I’d look her right in that Asian ugly face” or “Black ugly face”, he could have been charged with workplace discrimination, had he been Rosie’s boss.

### **2.6.3. Overweight discrimination**

It has been reported by a British weight-loss organisation that in London, people who are overweight either are not employed or are overlooked in terms of a promotion because they are seen to be “lazy” by their employers. It is further reported that overweight employees are “twice as likely to earn a low salary, four times more likely to experience bullying about their weight and six times more likely to feel their appearance has caused them to miss out on a promotion.

Kaufman (2010) writes that the National Business Group on Health, in Washington DC, reported on obesity-related issues such as absenteeism and increased health insurance premiums which were estimated to cost employers \$13 billion annually. These include “hypertension and diabetes” which are seen to be “preventable lifestyle choices”. Weight issues contribute to roughly 25% of all worker health costs and some employers offer cash incentives encouraging workers to lose weight, whilst others penalise employees for being overweight and raise their health insurance. Others try to develop obesity management strategies for their workplace based on the USA’s Centers for Disease Control’s L.E.A.N. Works Program, which is a workplace obesity prevention programme in the USA.

According to a Sunday Times report (2010), a former employee of “Hooters” in Detroit, sued the restaurant chain, as she alleges that she was unable to keep her job

after being advised to “lose weight”. She alleges that Hooters first placed her on a 30 day “weight probation” programme and further advised her to join the gym to improve her looks, as well as be able to fit into her uniform. It is also alleged that her employer disclosed her weight status to other employees, which humiliated her, thus forcing her to resign. In a statement made by Hooters, they advised that they “challenge employees about their image”.

#### **2.6.4. Poor performance linked to obesity**

Based on a report “Obesity on the job” from Statistics Canada, it is argued that there is a clear correlation between obesity and job performance. It was found that obese men (between the ages of 18-34) were absent from work, almost four times more than those with normal weight. It was also found that for women, obesity may impact negatively on productivity (Dobson, 2009).

At the Toronto police service, it was also found that shift work was also linked to obesity, as some officers sat in their cars for long hours with no healthy meals available. Some officers were doing 10-hour shifts per day for the entire week, which was stressful. McClelland (Dobson, 2009), wellness co-ordinator argues that the “stress alone makes people fat”. She added that “It raises leptin in the body and makes you hungry all the time and makes you crave fatty, high carbohydrate foods” (Dobson, 2009).

#### **2.6.5. The “glass ceiling” effect of obesity**

According to a study done by Michigan State University, it was found that overweight, as well as obese women were not well represented among top CEOs in the USA. Interestingly enough, overweight men are over represented among top CEOs. Whilst being obese can be limiting in the corporate environment, it seems that for women being overweight, seems to harm even more (Dobson, 2009).

Roehling, et al. (2009) argue that the “glass ceiling” concept, though originally



applied to describe the so-called “invisible barrier” preventing women from advancing to higher levels in an organization, which is also used to describe the same for “minority groups” present a study investigating whether this concept should also be applied to the prevention of overweight and obese individuals from advancement to higher management levels.

Roeling, et al. (2009) have shown that based on their findings, it is estimated that between 5 and 22% of top female CEOs in the US are overweight and about 5% are obese. In relation to the general population in the US, overweight and obese women are “underrepresented” among “top female CEOs”. With regards to top male CEOs, it is estimated that between 45 and 61% are overweight and about 5% are obese. When compared to the general population, overweight men are “overrepresented” among “top CEOs” and obese men are “underrepresented”. This highlights that even at the highest levels, there is weight discrimination. Basically, weight discrimination in the workplace adds to the “glass ceiling effect for women” and possibly serves as a “glass ceiling for obese men”.

## **2.7 Weight discrimination & the law**

### **2.7.1. Weight discrimination and the law in the USA**

Weight is not a protected factor in fair-employment law, in most of the USA (except for Michigan and some cities and counties such as Santa Cruz, Madison, Washington DC and San Francisco). Legally, this gives the employer the right to dismiss an obese employee on this basis and they could even deny an obese person an interview. However, should a rejected candidate object, it is up to the employer to demonstrate that weight is a qualification for the job in question. An obese person stands a better chance to raise an objection legally, if they link the discrimination with a characteristic that is protected by USA Employment Law such as race and gender or disability, e.g. “On average there is a greater incidence of obesity in African Americans than Whites and in women than men. Therefore, an employer who discriminates against an obese African American female on the

grounds of obesity puts them self in a potentially tricky legal situation” (Fryer & Kirby, 2005).

### **2.7.2. Weight discrimination and the law in South Africa (SA)**

In SA, there is a statute which sets aside basic conditions for employees. This statute is the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) 75 of 1997, which basically regulates working hours, remuneration, leave, employment termination and methods of enforcing provisions (Grogan, 2008).

The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 places an obligation on employers to “promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice”. This is reinforced by a “prohibition on unfair discrimination” which reads as follows:

“no person may unfairly discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language or birth.” This Act also includes harassment of an employee on any of the listed grounds. The disappointing issue is that weight is not mentioned in the above policy.

There are two types of discrimination, namely direct discrimination, which is intentional, such as not choosing a woman for a particular job, just because she is a woman or indirect discrimination, where members of certain groups are excluded, simply because they belong to that particular group e.g. imposing a weight requirement that would exclude people over the given weight.

According to Grogan (2008), the term “employee” includes applicants for employment, however, these persons must have indicated their desire in order to enter into a contract of employment. An interesting point to note is that only a person who has applied directly to the employer for a position can “claim” unfair

discrimination. Basically, applicants who have lodged an application with an agency on behalf of the employer would not be considered an “applicant for employment” and would therefore not be able to claim “unfair discrimination” on that basis.

Whilst we do not have a specific law protecting South African employees from Obesity related discrimination in the workplace or laws protecting one from discrimination based on their looks, if an employee does claim to have been treated in an unfair manner, the onus is on the employee to prove this claim and it is up to the employer to prove that it has not acted in an unfair manner.

## **2.8 Summary**

Chapter 2 was a theoretical review of research conducted by experts in the field of lookism and its role in society at large. Lookism is arguably the most discriminatory practice in the world today, albeit on a conscious or subconscious scale. The general discussions related to the overall importance of looks in the workplace and its impact on people who are obese resulting in salary discrepancies and various forms of discrepancies. The next chapter discusses the research methodology applied.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Research Methodology

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#### 3.1 Introduction

Extensive research has been done highlighting the important role that looks play within the work environment. Studies have indicated that there certainly are advantages to being attractive in the workplace. Chapter 3 covers the research methodology applied in determining perceptions of managers within the Durban area regarding whether or not good looks have an unfair advantage with regards to recruitment as well as the importance placed on looks in the workplace. It also discusses how the research was conducted as the questionnaire method was utilised, where questionnaires were sent out to 120 managers in Durban with 80 responses being received. The sampling design, research design and data collection and analysis will also be discussed.

#### 3.2. Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to establish to what extent good looks play a role in the workplace in Durban, with reference to recruitment, as well as in society. The intention is to see if there is a difference in the way that male and female managers view good looks in the workplace. It also seeks to explore if age plays a role in determining whether good looks are based on one's physical appearance or one's inner beauty. Another intention is to see if and to what extent overweight candidates are discriminated against in the workplace.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine the extent to which good looks play a role in recruitment in the workplace.
- To assess the extent to which looks are important to young managers when recruiting employees.
- To identify the extent to which looks play a role between male and female managers when recruiting staff.

- To determine if and to what extent good looks give an interviewee an undue advantage.
- To determine if and to what extent overweight candidates are discriminated against.

### **3.3. Data collection strategies**

An extensive survey was designed and distributed to a selected sample of the population, namely managers within Durban. Durban is the largest city in KwaZulu-Natal and is situated on the east coast of South Africa. It has a population of about 3.1 million people and is the second largest contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product, totaling 16% (Civit, 2010).

The data was obtained by sending out questionnaires to managers in Durban. The reasons why the questionnaire method was adopted was because it was quick for the respondent to complete and it was felt that this method would give respondents an opportunity to answer sensitive questions like their thoughts related to recruitment of obese candidates, which they may otherwise feel uncomfortable to answer in other formats like an interview. Respondents were from various fields including human resources, finance, as well as the marketing department.

Whilst 120 questionnaires were hand delivered to managers in Durban only 80 responses were received. It must be noted that these questionnaires were not aimed at companies specifically, but were aimed rather at individuals who met the necessary criteria i.e. managers based in Durban, who are involved in the interviewing process and therefore recruit staff.

The questions were structured around determining if good-looking people have an unfair advantage in the workplace, since research done in the past (Hamermesh and Biddle, 1994) suggests that there is appearance discrimination in the workplace as well as salary discrepancies based on appearance. The questionnaire was designed to establish if these types of discrimination exist within the Durban area.

### **3.4 Research design and methods**

#### **3.4.1 Description and purpose**

The research used quantitative methods of data collection and it was conducted via a questionnaire (See Appendix 2). The quantitative method was used due to the fact that it is a method that is deductive in nature, as opposed to the qualitative method which is more exploratory. The quantitative method was preferred as gathering numerical data is an unbiased way of gathering data as opposed to the qualitative method which is quite subjective. The aim of this study is to deduce if good looking people have an unfair advantage in the workplace and draw conclusions from the sample population as being representative of the population as a whole. The primary data collected aimed at ascertaining whether research as outlined in the literature review on the role that good looks played within the working environment was also applicable to the workplace in Durban. This data was coded and analysed in SPSS.

##### **3.4.1.1 Construction of the instrument**

The questionnaire which fit over 2 pages, consisted of 22 closed ended questions and was made up of 2 sections. The first section collected information such as the age, gender and position of the respondent, as well as the number of years that the respondent had been in that particular position. This was gathered in order to assess the extent to which looks are important to young managers when recruiting staff. It was also designed to ascertain if and to what extent looks are important to both male and female managers and to ascertain if there are considerable differences in the way that male managers view “good looks” in recruitment as well as in the workplace. Another important reason was to gauge if there are any differences between the ways that younger male managers view good looks when compared to older male managers. This research also seeks to investigate if male managers focus on recruiting good looking employees more than female managers.

The second part of the questionnaire used the five-point Likert Scale, as given the

topical nature of the research question, “Do good-looking people have an unfair advantage in the workplace?”, it was essential to obtain the extreme level of agreement or disagreement from respondents. This method was also chosen as given the wider range of responses, this allows a wider range of possible scores which in turn increase the statistical analyses to choose from. Respondents were requested to provide answers to their level of agreement or disagreement to the questions and were asked to demonstrate this by marking the applicable answer with an X. There were 5 levels to choose from and these ranged from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree) with 3 (Undecided), which is considered to be a neutral response. Questions were structured in a way that would intentionally allow respondents to consciously reflect on their own techniques and methods used during the interview process or in the workplace in general. This part of the questionnaire was designed to gauge perceptions of whether or not managers are aware of appearance discrimination in the workplace and more importantly to assess whether discrimination in the workplace is rife in Durban. As managers who are involved in the recruitment and selection process, it was structured to also determine if they were involved in discriminatory practices of this nature.

Respondents were informed about the aims and objectives of the study via a separate cover letter which assured the respondent of anonymity and they were advised that their participation was completely voluntary and that they had the option of withdrawing at any time. Whilst the respondent was given a two to three week time period in order to respond to the questionnaire, this was not always possible due to work pressures and some respondents took longer than anticipated to complete. Nonetheless out of 120 questionnaires sent out, 80 responses were received, resulting in a 66.6% rate of response. A 60% response rate was required for this research to be considered as acceptable. The response rate exceeded the 60% rate required and is therefore acceptable.

#### **3.4.1.2 Recruitment of study participants**

The survey conducted was in the form of a questionnaire which was aimed at

managers in Durban, due to their involvement in the recruitment and selection process, as well as their overall insight into the importance of looking good in the workplace. The questionnaire was hand delivered to 120 managers in Durban and 80 responses were received. The snowball technique, which is also referred to as judgemental sampling, was used and is defined as “a non-probability sampling method, often employed in field research, whereby each person interviewed may be asked to suggest additional people for interviewing” (Babbie, 2010). This method was chosen due to the fact that a special population was chosen, namely managers within Durban. It is a difficult task to locate and identify all managers in Durban, so a select few were targeted and referrals were made, which led to more managers being approached in their personal capacity.

Babbie (2010) further defines “snowball” as "the process of accumulation as each located subject suggests other subjects". It was felt that the sample would certainly be sufficient to highlight any differing trends between managers in Durban and the results of the research study collectively will provide insight into whether good looks are so important in the working environment in Durban to the extent that obese people are discriminated against.

### **3.4.2 Pretesting and validation**

Ethical clearance is a prerequisite at the Graduate School of Business at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Westville. This needs to be obtained before distributing the questionnaire. This is essential to ensure that the questions posed in the questionnaire were not offensive to anyone and would not be discriminatory based on race or gender.

In addition, a pilot-test was conducted after ethical clearance was received. This pilot-test was performed by requesting 5 Managers to answer the questionnaire first. This was done to gauge whether the questionnaire was easily understood by the target market, so that they could respond appropriately.

The population in this study refers to managers within Durban who are involved in the



recruitment and selection process. In terms of validity of the questionnaire, empirical data was collected. “One measure of a scale’s reliability is its internal consistency. The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing define an internal consistency coefficient as ‘an index of the reliability of test scores derived from the statistical interrelationships among item responses or scores on separate parts of a test’ ” (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001) and Cronbach’s Alpha is one method of testing internal consistency, which was used in this study and has been detailed in Chapter 4.

### **3.4.3 Administration of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was hand delivered to 120 Managers in Durban and 80 responses were received.

### **3.5 Analysis of the data**

The SPSS software was used and the questionnaire was coded. Various statistical techniques were utilised such as:

- Cronbach Alpha
- Descriptive Statistics (obtained by using Frequencies and Descriptives)
- Measures of Central Tendency
- Correlation
- Regression Analysis

Central tendency is defined as finding “some central value around which the data tend to cluster” (Khan, 2008). It is a means of finding an average with data, allowing researchers to compare two or more data sets. The mean, median and mode were used as a means of central tendency.

Spearman or Pearson Correlation is utilised “when you want to explore the strength of the relationship between two continuous variables. A positive correlation indicates that as one variable increases, so does the other. A negative correlation indicates that as one variable increases, the other decreases” (Pallant, 2007). In terms of this study, the strength of the

relationship between the respondent's "physical appearance" and level of "self-confidence" was conducted. A further analysis of the strength between "Good looking employees being more favoured in the working environment" and "tolerance" levels of managers in relation to the "good looking" employee was also conducted.

In this study, SPSS was utilised, which provided a simple "bivariate" or "zero-order" correlation (meaning between two variables). Pearson Correlation, which was used in this study, describes the strength as well as direction of the linear relationship between the variables on a range from -1 to +1. The strength of the relationship is indicated by the size of the absolute value (ignoring the sign). If the correlation is perfect, namely either +1 or -1, the value is easily determined by knowing the value of the other. If a scatter plot is done on this basis, it would show a straight line. A correlation of 0 indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables. If a scatter plot is done, it would be shown as a "circle of points, with no pattern evident" (Pallant, 2007).

Regression Analysis is a "statistical tool for the investigation of relationships between variables" (Sykes, 1992).

To highlight the differences between males and females and their thought processes, bar graphs have been used to articulate the distinct differences in responses and in addition to the frequency tables, will be able to assist in finding answers to the research questions posed.

### **3.6 Summary**

The methodology utilised in the research process of this study has been defined in this chapter. The various techniques in terms of obtaining this research have been explained in detail with the reliability and validity of data being presented. The insights gained as a result of answers received in the questionnaires were very informative and will form the basis to present the necessary data in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Presentation of results

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#### 4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, the methodology was discussed, which formed the basis for presentation of the data, which will be presented in this chapter. The aim is to merely present the empirical data in the form of tables and graphs in this chapter with intentions of discussing the results in Chapter 5. The data gathered will be used to determine the importance placed on good looks in the workplace in Durban.

#### 4.2 Results of the research

This test was performed in order to ascertain if the research results are consistent. The following information has been gathered with regards to reliability of data as showcased in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Reliability of Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.908	.906	19

According to Pallant (2007), values with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient reported above .8 are preferable, suggesting very good internal consistency reliability for the scale. Values ranging from 0-1 with higher values indicate greater reliability. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is .908, indicating good internal consistency.

In terms of validity of data, in SPSS, the data was reviewed to ensure that there were no errors. Firstly, the data for gender, based on the categorical variable method was reviewed, as per the coded data in SPSS, gender for males was coded as 1 and gender for females was coded as 2. The procedure for checking gender which is a categorical variable was performed where values that fall outside of the range of 1 and 2 (namely males and females) were reviewed, as determined by the minimum and maximum values showcased in table 4.2 below (Pallant, 2007).

Table 4.2. Validity of data-categorical variable

Statistics		
Gender		
N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Minimum		1
Maximum		2

The minimum and maximum values in the table above highlight the values 1 and 2 representing the male and female values correctly, therefore validity of the data based on gender is acceptable.

Table 4.3. Validity of data – continuous variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Id	80	1	80	40.50	23.238
Age	80	1	6	3.08	1.644
Position	80	1	3	1.80	.582
Experience	80	1	4	1.64	.830
Valid N (listwise)	80				

The above demonstrates the validity of data related to continuous variables, namely, age, identification, position and experience of the respondents. The minimum value is 1 and the maximum value is 80, as 80 responses were received. Data has been checked for errors. The maximum value as per the codebook reflects data correctly with age coded from 1 to 3, Position-coded from 1 to 6 and Experience coded from 1 to 4. Therefore, there are no errors in the data.

#### 4.2.1 Frequency distribution

Table 4.4 Frequency table depicting the gender of participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Male	40	50.0	50.0	50.0
2 Female	40	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The first frequency analysis as per Table 4.4 above was performed to separate the gender groups and highlights that 80 responses were received in terms of the questionnaires. The questionnaire utilised in this research was answered by 40 males and 40 females.

Table 4.5 Frequency table depicting the age of participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 25-30	17	21.3	21.3	21.3
	2 31-35	19	23.8	23.8	45.0
	3 36-40	11	13.8	13.8	58.8
	4 41-45	15	18.8	18.8	77.5
	5 46-50	10	12.5	12.5	90.0
	6 50 and over	8	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.5 above segments the respondents based on their age. This table depicts a fair representative distribution of participants in terms of their age.

Table 4.6 Frequency table depicting the managerial level of participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Senior Management	23	28.8	28.8	28.8
	2 Middle Management	50	62.5	62.5	91.3
	3 Junior Management	7	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.6 above segments the respondents according to their position within management ranging from senior to junior management.

Table 4.7 Frequency table depicting the number of years experience by the participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 0-5 years	44	55.0	55.0	55.0
	2 6-10 years	24	30.0	30.0	85.0
	3 11-15 years	9	11.3	11.3	96.3
	4 16 years and above	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.7 above segments the respondents according to their years of experience in their respective managerial positions.

Under the valid column in Tables 4.4 to Tables 4.7, a breakdown of the various grouping of respondents that have participated in this questionnaire is outlined. The age group of respondents range from 25 to older than 50 years. There are 3 managerial levels ranging from senior, middle and junior levels. The number of years experience is from less than 1 year to over 16 years.

The following frequency tables represent the 22 questions posed to respondents in the questionnaire and have been analysed in accordance with the aims and objectives of this

study. Note that whilst all 22 questions have a frequency table showcasing the number of responses, as well as the percentage, some questions have a bar graph in addition. Those questions with the bar graph highlight the difference in the male and female responses and will assist in answering the research questions posed in this study.

### Question 1

#### All men share a common understanding of what is good looking

Table 4.8 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 1.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	13	16.3	16.3	16.3
2 Agree	23	28.8	28.8	45.0
3 Undecided	2	2.5	2.5	47.5
4 Disagree	35	43.8	43.8	91.3
5 Strongly Disagree	7	8.8	8.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 13 strongly agreed that all men share common understanding of what is good looking, 23 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 2 were undecided, 35 disagreed and 7 strongly disagreed with this statement that all men share a common understanding of what is good looking. Overall, there is a 53% disagreement with this statement.

### Question 2

#### All women share a common understanding of what is good looking

Table 4.9 –Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	10	12.5	12.5	12.5
2 Agree	22	27.5	27.5	40.0
3 Undecided	6	7.5	7.5	47.5
4 Disagree	34	42.5	42.5	90.0
5 Strongly Disagree	8	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 10 strongly agreed that all women share common understanding of what is good looking, 22 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 6 were undecided, 34 disagreed and 8 strongly disagreed with this statement that all women share a common understanding of what is good looking. Overall, there is a 53% disagreement with this statement.

### Question 3

#### Good looks are based on one's physical appearance

Table 4.10- Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 3. See table 4.31 and 4.33

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	23	28.8	28.8	28.8
2 Agree	34	42.5	42.5	71.3
4 Disagree	15	18.8	18.8	90.0
5 Strongly Disagree	8	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 23 strongly agreed that good looks are based on one's physical appearance. 34 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 15 disagreed and 8 strongly disagreed with this statement that good looks are based on one's physical appearance. Overall, there is a 71% agreement with this statement.

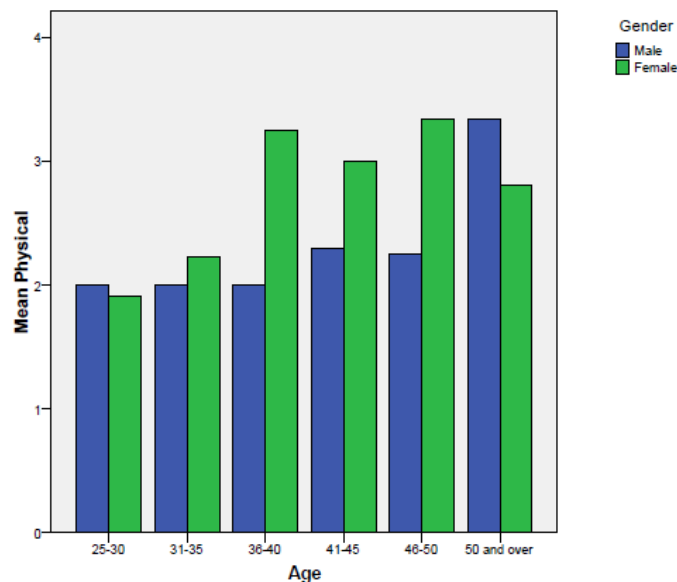


Figure 4.1 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 3

### Question 4

#### Good looks come from one's heart

Table 4.11 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 4

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	18	22.5	22.5	22.5
2 Agree	22	27.5	27.5	50.0
3 Undecided	6	7.5	7.5	57.5
4 Disagree	28	35.0	35.0	92.5
5 Strongly Disagree	6	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 18 strongly agreed that good looks come from one's heart, 22 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 6 were undecided, 28 disagreed and 6 strongly disagreed with this statement that good looks come from one's heart. Overall, there is a 50% agreement with this statement. Note that 7.5% are undecided on this statement.

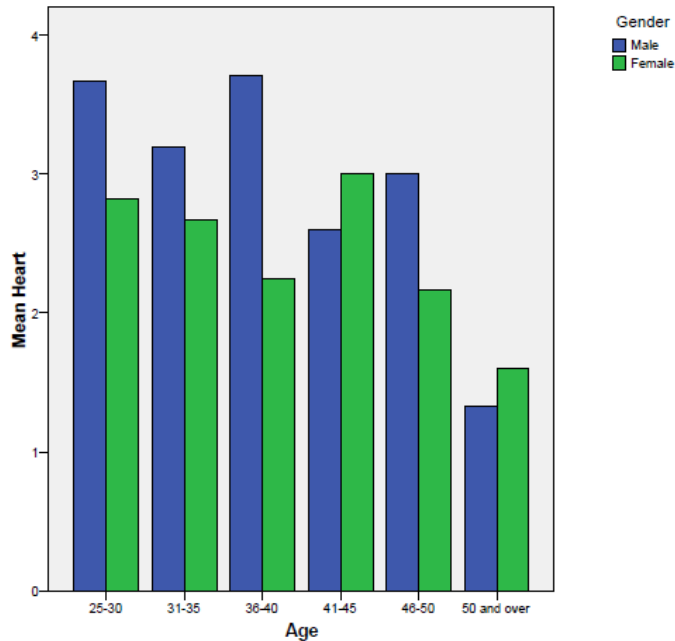


Figure 4.2 – Bar Graph depicting the answer to Question 4

### Question 5

#### Good looks fade with time

Table 4.12- Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 5

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	18	22.5	22.5	22.5
2 Agree	27	33.8	33.8	56.3
3 Undecided	10	12.5	12.5	68.8
4 Disagree	17	21.3	21.3	90.0
5 Strongly Disagree	8	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 18 strongly agreed that good looks fade with time, 27 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 10 were undecided, 17 disagreed and 8 strongly disagreed with this statement that good looks fade with time. Overall, there is a 56% agreement with this statement.



### Question 6

#### Male managers focus more on recruiting good looking employees than female managers

Table 4.13 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 6

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	18	22.5	22.5	22.5
2 Agree	25	31.3	31.3	53.8
3 Undecided	11	13.8	13.8	67.5
4 Disagree	21	26.3	26.3	93.8
5 Strongly Disagree	5	6.3	6.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 18 strongly agreed that male managers focus more on recruiting good looking employees than female managers, 25 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 11 were undecided, 21 disagreed and 5 strongly disagreed with this statement that male managers focus more on recruiting good looking employees than female managers. Overall, there is a 53% agreement with this statement.

### Question 7

#### Good looking managers have confidence in themselves

Table 4.14 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 7. See table 4.31

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	26	32.5	32.5	32.5
2 Agree	31	38.8	38.8	71.3
3 Undecided	6	7.5	7.5	78.8
4 Disagree	14	17.5	17.5	96.3
5 Strongly Disagree	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 26 strongly agreed that good looking managers have confidence in themselves, 31 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 6 were undecided, 14 disagreed and 3 strongly disagreed with this statement that good looking managers have confidence in themselves. Overall, there is a 71% agreement with this statement.

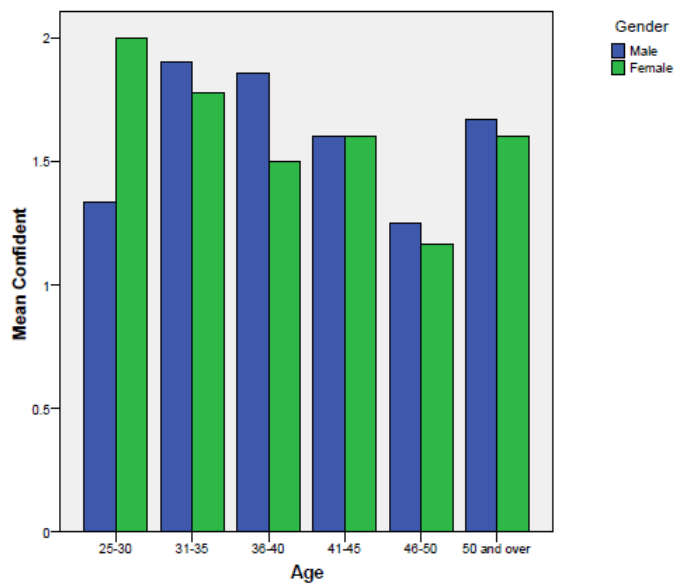


Figure 4.3 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 7

### Question 8

#### Good looking employees are more productive at the workplace

Table 4.15 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 8

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	6	7.5	7.5	7.5
2 Agree	9	11.3	11.3	18.8
3 Undecided	10	12.5	12.5	31.3
4 Disagree	42	52.5	52.5	83.8
5 Strongly Disagree	13	16.3	16.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 6 strongly agreed that good looking employees are more productive in the workplace. 9 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 10 were undecided, 42 disagreed and 13 strongly disagreed with this statement that good looking employees are more productive in the workplace. Overall, there is a 68% disagreement with this statement.

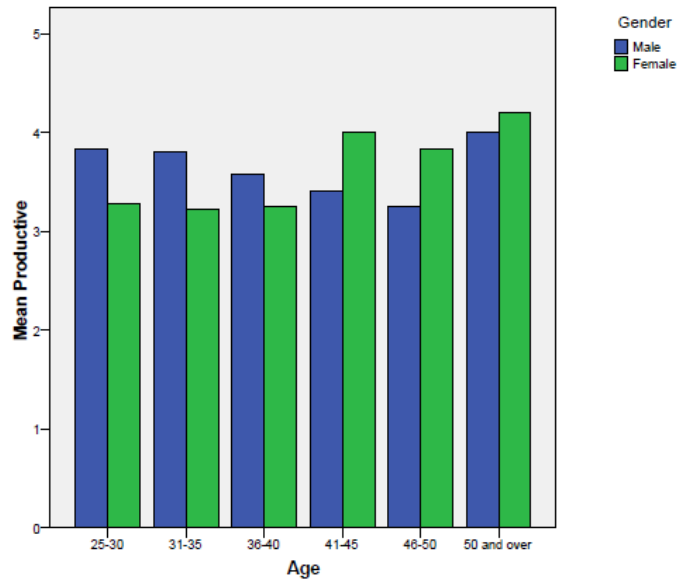


Figure 4.4 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 8

### Question 9

#### Good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment

Table 4.16 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 9

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	33	41.3	41.3	41.3
2 Agree	20	25.0	25.0	66.3
3 Undecided	9	11.3	11.3	77.5
4 Disagree	16	20.0	20.0	97.5
5 Strongly Disagree	2	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 33 strongly agreed that good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment, 20 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 9 were undecided, 16 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed with this statement that good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment. Overall, there is a 66% agreement with this statement.

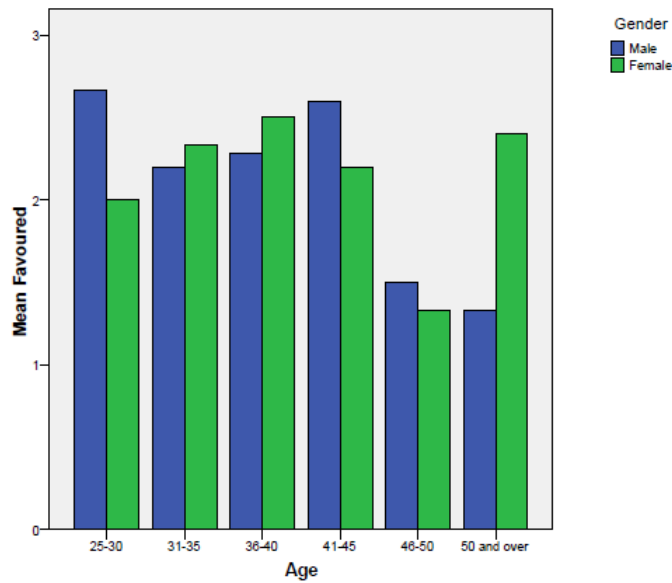


Figure 4.5 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 9

### Question 10

#### Managers are more tolerant of good looking people

Table 4.17– Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 10. See table 4.33

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	29	36.3	36.3	36.3
2 Agree	21	26.3	26.3	62.5
3 Undecided	10	12.5	12.5	75.0
4 Disagree	16	20.0	20.0	95.0
5 Strongly Disagree	4	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 29 strongly agreed that managers are more tolerant of good looking people, 21 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 10 were undecided, 16 disagreed and 4 strongly disagreed with this statement that managers are more tolerant of good looking people. Overall, there is a 63% agreement with this statement.

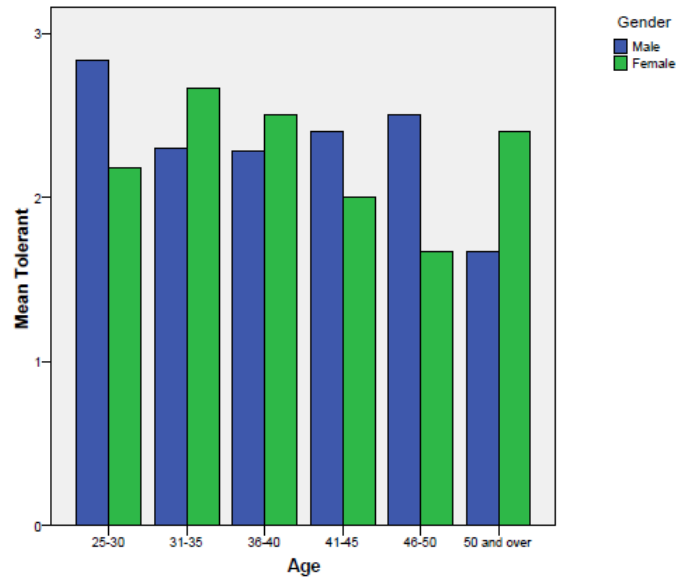


Figure 4.6 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 10

### Question 11

#### I would give preference to a candidate based on their looks

Table 4.18- Frequency Table depicting the answer to Question 11

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	16	20.0	20.0	20.0
2 Agree	17	21.3	21.3	41.3
3 Undecided	3	3.8	3.8	45.0
4 Disagree	25	31.3	31.3	76.3
5 Strongly Disagree	19	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 16 strongly agreed they would give preference to a candidate based on their looks, 17 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 3 were undecided, 25 disagreed and 19 strongly disagreed with this statement that they would give preference to a candidate based on their looks. Overall, there is a 55% disagreement with this statement.

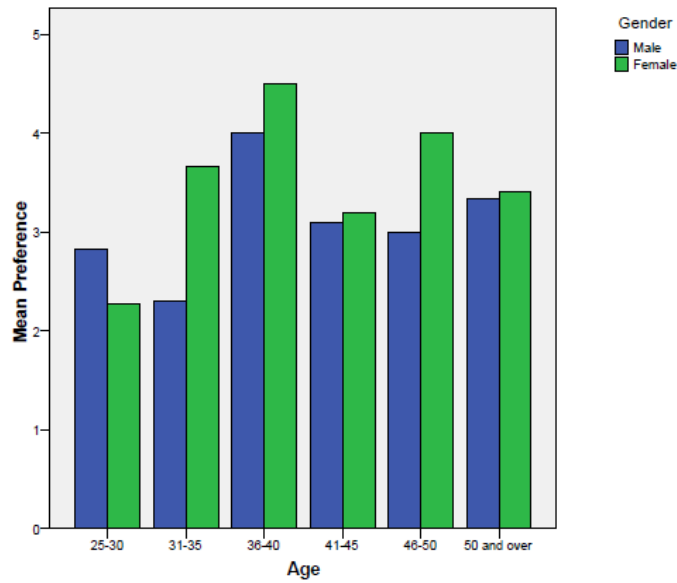


Figure 4.7 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 11

### Question 12

#### Colleagues are more tolerant of good looking people

Table 4.19 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 12

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	22	27.5	27.5	27.5
2 Agree	26	32.5	32.5	60.0
3 Undecided	10	12.5	12.5	72.5
4 Disagree	15	18.8	18.8	91.3
5 Strongly Disagree	7	8.8	8.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 22 strongly agreed that colleagues are more tolerant of good looking people, 26 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 10 were undecided, 15 disagreed and 7 strongly disagreed with this statement that colleagues are more tolerant of good looking people. Overall, there is a 60% agreement with this statement.

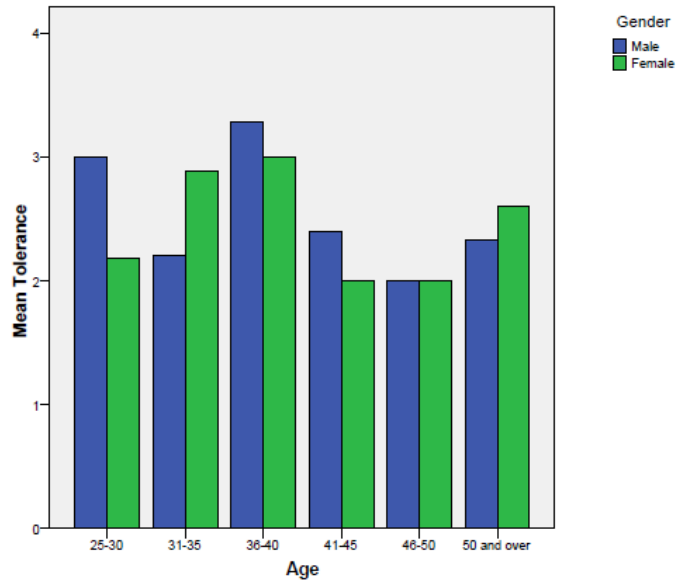


Figure 4.8 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 12

### Question 13

#### I condition myself more professionally in the company of good looking people

Table 4.20 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 13

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	15	18.8	18.8	18.8
2 Agree	20	25.0	25.0	43.8
3 Undecided	3	3.8	3.8	47.5
4 Disagree	27	33.8	33.8	81.3
5 Strongly Disagree	15	18.8	18.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 15 strongly agreed that they condition themselves more professionally in the company of good looking people, 20 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 3 were undecided, 27 disagreed and 15 strongly disagreed with this statement that they conduct themselves more professionally in the company of good looking people. Overall, there is a 53% disagreement with this statement.

### Question 14

#### I assess the looks of people of my gender

Table 4.21 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 14

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	15	18.8	18.8	18.8
2 Agree	37	46.3	46.3	65.0
3 Undecided	5	6.3	6.3	71.3
4 Disagree	14	17.5	17.5	88.8
5 Strongly Disagree	9	11.3	11.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 15 strongly agreed that they assess the looks of people of their gender, 37 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 5 were undecided, 14 disagreed and 9 strongly disagreed with this statement that they assess the looks of people of their gender. Overall, there is a 65% agreement with this statement.

### Question 15

#### I am a confident person

Table 4.22 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 15

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	38	47.5	47.5	47.5
2 Agree	35	43.8	43.8	91.3
3 Undecided	4	5.0	5.0	96.3
4 Disagree	2	2.5	2.5	98.8
5 Strongly Disagree	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 38 strongly agreed that they are confident people, 35 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 4 were undecided, 2 disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed with this statement that they are confident. Overall, there is a 91% agreement with this statement.

### Question 16

#### Overweight candidates can be good looking

Table 4.23 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 16

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	16	20.0	20.0	20.0
2 Agree	47	58.8	58.8	78.8
3 Undecided	4	5.0	5.0	83.8
4 Disagree	11	13.8	13.8	97.5
5 Strongly Disagree	2	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 16 strongly agreed that overweight candidates can be good looking, 47 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 4 were



undecided, 11 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed with this statement that overweight candidates can be good looking. Overall, there is a 79% agreement with this statement.

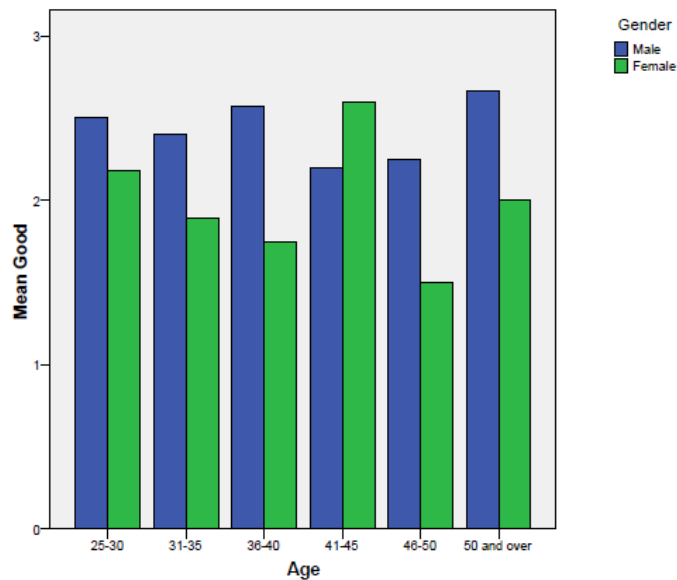


Figure 4.9 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 16

## Question 17

### I will not give preference to a candidate who is overweight

Table 4.24 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 17

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	13	16.3	16.3	16.3
2 Agree	18	22.5	22.5	38.8
3 Undecided	12	15.0	15.0	53.8
4 Disagree	22	27.5	27.5	81.3
5 Strongly Disagree	15	18.8	18.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 13 strongly agreed that they would not give preference to candidate who is overweight, 18 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 12 were undecided, 22 disagreed and 15 strongly disagreed with this statement that they will not give preference to a candidate who is overweight. Overall, there is a 46% disagreement with this statement. Note that 15% are undecided.

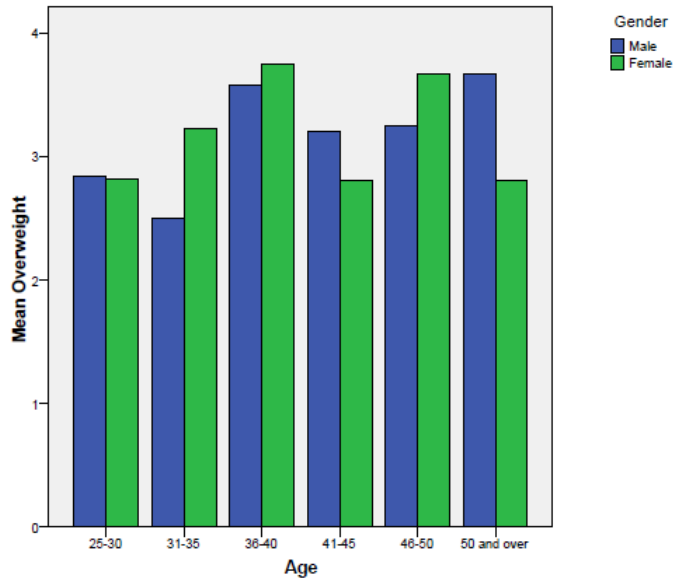


Figure 4.10 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 17

### Question 18

#### It is important for me to look good

Table 4.25 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 18

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	36	45.0	45.0	45.0
2 Agree	37	46.3	46.3	91.3
3 Undecided	3	3.8	3.8	95.0
4 Disagree	4	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 36 strongly agreed that it is important for them to look good, 37 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 3 were undecided and 4 disagreed with the statement that it is important for them to look good. Overall, there is a 91% agreement with this statement.

### Question 19

#### Good looks are enough to be successful in the workplace

Table 4.26 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 19

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	4	5.0	5.0	5.0
2 Agree	3	3.8	3.8	8.8
3 Undecided	4	5.0	5.0	13.8
4 Disagree	37	46.3	46.3	60.0
5 Strongly Disagree	32	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 4 strongly agreed that good looks are enough to be successful in the workplace, 3 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 4 were undecided, 37 disagreed and 32 strongly disagreed with this statement that good looks are enough to be successful in the workplace. Overall, there is a 86% disagreement with this statement.

## Question 20

### I judge employees positive contributions by their looks

Table 4.27 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 20

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	4	5.0	5.0	5.0
2 Agree	6	7.5	7.5	12.5
3 Undecided	2	2.5	2.5	15.0
4 Disagree	36	45.0	45.0	60.0
5 Strongly Disagree	32	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 4 strongly agreed that they judge employees positive contributions by their looks, 6 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 2 were undecided, 36 disagreed and 32 strongly disagreed with this statement that they judge employees positive contributions by their looks. Overall, there is an 85% disagreement with this statement.

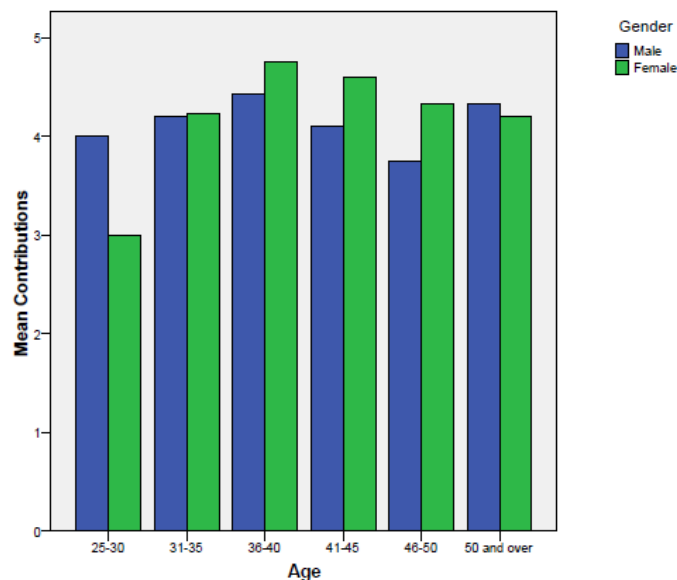


Figure 4.11 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 20

### Question 21

**I will reward a good looking employee with higher remuneration than an equally qualified less attractive employee.**

Table 4.28 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 21

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	11	13.8	13.8	13.8
2 Agree	6	7.5	7.5	21.3
3 Undecided	2	2.5	2.5	23.8
4 Disagree	25	31.3	31.3	55.0
5 Strongly Disagree	36	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 11 strongly agreed that they would reward a good looking employee with higher remuneration than an equally qualified less attractive employee, 6 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 2 were undecided, 25 disagreed and 36 strongly disagreed with this statement that they would reward a good looking employee with higher remuneration than an equally qualified less attractive employee. Overall, there is a 76% disagreement with this statement.

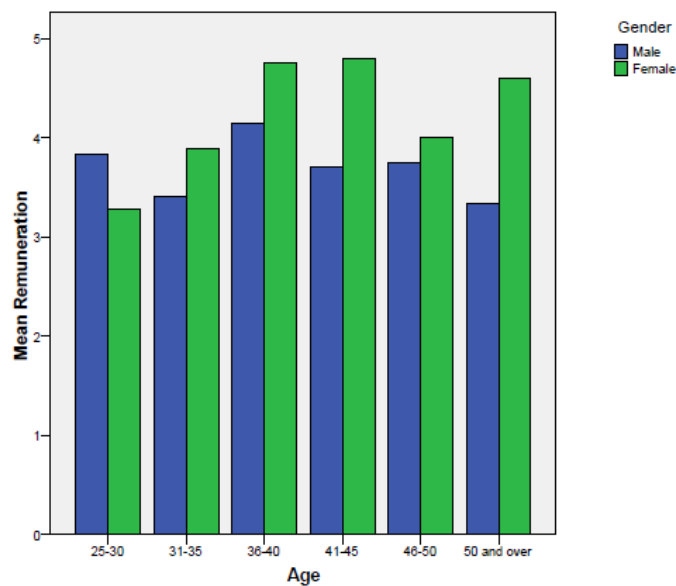


Figure 4.12 – Bar graph depicting the answer to Question 21

### Question 22

**My looks have helped me progress in the workplace**

Table 4.29 – Frequency table depicting the answer to Question 22

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1 Strongly Agree	11	13.8	13.8	13.8
2 Agree	14	17.5	17.5	31.3
3 Undecided	8	10.0	10.0	41.3
4 Disagree	14	17.5	17.5	58.8
5 Strongly Disagree	33	41.3	41.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The above table depicts that out of the 80 respondents, 11 strongly agreed that their looks have helped them progress in the workplace, 14 respondents simply agreed with this statement, 8 were undecided, 14 disagreed and 33 strongly disagreed with this statement that their looks have helped them progress in the workplace. Overall, there is a 59% disagreement with this statement.

#### 4.2.2 Central tendency measures

Table 4.30 – Central tendency-mean and standard deviation of each data set

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Men	80	3.00	1.322
Women	80	3.10	1.269
Physical	80	2.39	1.345
Heart	80	2.78	1.340
Fade	80	2.63	1.316
Focus	80	2.63	1.267
Confidence	80	2.21	1.187
Productive	80	3.59	1.122
Favoured	80	2.18	1.240
Tolerant	80	2.31	1.289
Preference	80	3.18	1.508
Tolerance	80	2.49	1.312
Professionally	80	3.09	1.451
Assess	80	2.56	1.291
Confident	80	1.66	.795
Good	80	2.20	.999
Overweight	80	3.10	1.383
Importance	80	1.69	.773
Successful	80	4.13	1.023
Contributions	80	4.08	1.088
Remuneration	80	3.86	1.421
Progress	80	3.55	1.509
Valid N (listwise)	80		

The above table depicts the mean and standard deviation of the data sets. The first column on the extreme left starting with “men” and ending with “progress”, represents questions 1 to 22 of the questionnaire and have been coded as such for SPSS. So, question 1 is “All men share a common understanding of what is good looking”. The code word for SPSS is “men”. Likewise, question 22 is as follows, “my looks have

helped me progress in the workplace. The code word for SPSS is “progress”. All other questions ranging from questions 1 to 22, have been arranged in this order and are coded for SPSS as discussed earlier.

This table provides the response on average to each of the questions. It provides an indication on whether or not respondents are in agreement with the statement, have taken a neutral response or are in disagreement. Mean scores range from 1.66 to 4.13. Scores between 4 and 5 show disagreement with the statement e.g. Contributions-Question 21. Scores between 1 and 2 generally indicate agreement and those around score 3 such as men and women, namely questions 1 and 2 indicate a neutral response.

#### 4.2.3 Correlation Analysis

The strength of the relationship between the respondent’s “physical appearance” and level of “self-confidence” was conducted. The results are reflected in table 4.31 below.

Table 4.31 – Correlation analysis showing the strength of the relationship between a manager’s physical appearance and their level of self-confidence

		Physical Appearance	Self-Confidence
Physical Appearance	Correlation coefficient	1	0.493
Self-Confidence	Correlation coefficient	0.493	1

Table 4.31 depicts a positive total value for physical of .493. The closer that the coefficient is to 1 signifies the strength of the relationship and the closer the coefficient is to 0, the weaker the relationship. The above analysis showcases the strength of the relationship between the respondent’s “physical appearance” and level of “self-confidence” possessed by the respondent. Nonetheless as both variables are positive, indicates a positive relationship and that an increase in one variable will signify an increase by the same amount in the other. Table 4.14 shows that overall, there is a 71% agreement with the statement that good looking managers have confidence in themselves. This highlights that

there is definitely a relationship between physical appearance and one's level of self-confidence.

Table 4.32 – Correlation Analysis showing the strength between good looking employees being more favoured and “tolerance” levels of managers in relation to the “good looking” employee.

		Good looking Employees Favoured in work environment	Tolerance levels of Managers
Good Looking Employees-Favoured in work environment	Correlation coefficient	1	.789
Tolerance Levels of Managers	Correlation coefficient	.789	1

A further analysis of the strength between “Good looking employees being more favoured in the working environment” and “tolerance” levels of managers in relation to the “good looking” employee was also conducted. The correlation coefficient generated .789 highlighting that good looking employees are perceived to be more favoured in the working environment. There is certainly a strong relationship between the two variables.

4.2.4 Various regression analyses were performed to highlight the relationship between a range of dependent and independent variables. Regression involves changing a dependent variable to secure a change in an independent variable.

Table 4.33 Regression analysis

R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.789	0.575	0.572	0.695

The table above reveals that the correlation between good looking employees and the tolerance level afforded to these employees by managers is 78.9%. R squared indicates that a good looking employee accounts for 57.5% of the tolerance level afforded to him. Table 4.17 highlights that there is a 63% agreement with the statement that managers are more

tolerant of good looking employees. The above table highlights that managers would be 0.572 of a unit more tolerant to an employee who is good looking.

Table 4.34 – Model summary of regression analysis of physical appearance and self-confidence

R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.257	0.152	0.125	0.190

The table above reveals that the correlation between a manager’s physical appearance and his level of self-confidence is 25.7%. R squared indicates that a manager’s physical appearance accounts for 15.2% of his self-confidence level. The above table highlights that if a manager’s physical appearance was enhanced by one unit, then they would be 0.125 of a unit more self-confident.

### 4.3 Summary

Chapter 4 presented the results of the study by utilising tables that were generated in SPSS. The theory behind the techniques used in this chapter was discussed in Chapter 3. The 22 questions posed in the questionnaire were depicted in frequency tables with some having an additional bar graph to assist in answering research questions posed in Chapter 1. Descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency and correlation and regression analysis were also presented. Detailed discussions related to these findings will follow in Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Research findings & interpretation of results

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#### 5.1 Introduction

Presentation of the results were highlighted in Chapter 4. This chapter provides a discussion of the findings, which will assist managers particularly in the human resources field, as well as recruitment agencies. Comparisons will be drawn in relation to research done by previous researchers which have been highlighted in the literature review.

#### 5.2 Results of the frequency distribution analysis

The four frequency tables labeled 4.4 to 4.7 mainly showcased the demographics of the respondents as follows:

Table 4.4 depicted the fact that there were 80 respondents, namely 40 males (50%) and 40 females (50%).

Table 4.5 depicted the age groups of the respondents as follows as well as % of sample population:

25-30 years – 17 responses totaling 21.3%

31-35 years – 19 responses totaling 23.8%

36-40 years – 11 responses totaling 13.8 %

41-45 years -15 responses totaling 18.8%

46-50 years – 10 responses totaling 12.5%

50 and over – 8 responses totaling 10.0%

Table 4.6 depicted the position of the respondents as well as % of

Senior Management – 23 totaling 28.8%

Middle Management -50 totaling 62.5%

Junior Management –7 totaling 8.8%

Table 4.7 depicted the number of years of experience by the respondent as well as the %as follows:

0-5 years – 44 totaling 55.0%  
6-10 years – 24 totaling 30.0%  
11-15 years – 9 totaling 11.3%  
16 and over – 3 totaling 3.8%

In order to proceed by discussing the findings, it is necessary to reinforce what the problem statement is and to highlight the objectives as these formed the basis for the study performed.

According to studies conducted by economists, Mobius and Rosenblat (2003), attractive candidates are seen to be more productive in the workplace and would be rewarded for it by receiving higher remuneration than less attractive candidates who are just as qualified. The focus of this study will revolve around the study previously mentioned and the finding that good looks play a major role in recruitment in the workplace. In addition, it has been reported by Schuman (2010) that the Council on Size and Weight Discrimination have advised that job applicants, referred to as “larger than average” suffer prejudice and discrimination in every aspect of employment.

In order to address the main objectives of this study, questions directly related to assist with answering these objectives have been extracted.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 3 highlights the strong perception that good looks are based on a person’s physical appearance. In addition the bar graph distinguishes the perception of males and females with regards to this question. 28 % of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and 42% just agreed. Together this constitutes 71% agreement with this statement. The bar graph further highlights that females agree more than males with this statement, particularly, females in the 31-50 year age group. It is interesting to note that the belief of young males in terms of good looks being based on one’s physical appearance is not as high as that of older males over 50.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 4 highlights the answer from respondents in terms of good looks being based on one’s heart. 22.5% of respondents

strongly agreed with this statement and 27.5% just agreed. Together this constitutes 50% agreement with this statement. The bar graph further highlights that males agree more than females with this statement, particularly, males in the 25-30 year age group, as well as 36-40 year age group. This belief lessens with age.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 7 highlights the answers from respondents in terms of whether or not good looking managers have confidence in themselves. 32.5% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and 38.8% just agreed. Together this constitutes 71% agreement with this statement with 21% in disagreement. The bar graph further highlights that females in the 25-30 year age group believe highly in this regard, followed strongly by men in the 31-40 year age group.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 8 highlights that 16.3% of respondents strongly disagreed with this statement and 52.5% just disagreed. Together this constitutes 68% disagreement with this statement that good looking employees are more productive in the workplace with only 18% in agreement. The bar graph highlights that there is not much difference between males females with this statement. This belief, however seems to increase with age as older managers both male and females tend to have a stronger belief in this statement.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 9 highlights that 41.3% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and 25% just agreed. Together this constitutes 66% agreement with this statement that good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment with 20% in disagreement. The bar graph further highlights that young males in the 25-30 year age group as well as 41-45 year age group agree more than females with this statement. On the males' side, this belief lessens with age but females older than 50 tend to agree with this statement.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 10 highlights that 36.3% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and 26.3% just agreed. Together this constitutes 63% agreement with this statement that managers are more tolerant of good looking people with 25% in disagreement. The bar graph further highlights that males

agree more than females with this statement, particularly, males in the 25-30 year age group, as well as 46-50 year age group. This belief lessens with age for males. It is interesting to note that the belief of females in the 31-40 age group and those older than 50 is relatively high.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 11 highlights that 20% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and 21.3% just agreed. Together this constitutes 41% agreement with this statement that they would give preference to a candidate based on their looks with 55% in disagreement. The bar graph further highlights that males and females in the 36-40 year age group strongly concur with this statement.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 12 highlights that 27.5% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and 32.5% just agreed. Together this constitutes 60% agreement with this statement that colleagues are more tolerant of good looking people with 28% in disagreement. The bar graph further highlights that males in the 25-30 year age group, as well as 36-40 year age group feel strongly about this statement.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 16 highlights the answer from respondents in terms of the statement that overweight candidates can be good looking. 20% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and 58.8% just agreed. Together this constitutes an overwhelming 79% agreement with this statement that overweight candidates can be good looking with 16% in disagreement. The bar graph further highlights that males agree more than females with this statement. Older males more than younger ones tend to concur with this statement whilst younger females more than older ones concur.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 17 highlights that 16.3% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and 22.5% just agreed. Together this constitutes 39% agreement with this statement that they will not give preference to a candidate who is overweight with 46% in disagreement. The bar graph further highlights that males and females in the 25-30 age group feel the same way regarding this statement

with females in the 36-40 age group feeling a very strong disagreement regarding this statement.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 20 highlights that 40% of respondents strongly disagreed with this statement and 45% just agreed. Together this constitutes 85% disagreement with this statement that they judge employees positive contributions by their looks with 13% in agreement. The bar graph further highlights that females agree more than males with this statement.

The frequency analysis results conducted on Question 21 highlights that 13.8% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and 7.5% just agreed. Together this constitutes 21% agreement with this statement that they will reward a good looking employee with higher remuneration than an equally qualified less attractive employee with 76% in disagreement. The bar graph further highlights that males agree more than females with this statement and there is a high level of disagreement amongst females, particularly, females in the 36-45 category.

As the problem statement discussed earlier in this chapter was dissected, the following objectives were identified:

- To determine the extent to which good looks play a role in recruitment in the workplace.
- To assess the extent to which looks are important to young managers when recruiting employees.
- To identify the extent to which looks play a role between male and female managers when recruiting staff.
- To determine if and to what extent good looks give an interviewee an undue advantage.
- To determine if and to what extent overweight candidates are discriminated against.

### 5.3. Results against objectives

The analysis conducted on Questions 3, 9, 10, 12 indicate that good looks certainly play a major role in the workplace in Durban in that:

- Good looks are based on one's physical appearance
- Good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment
- Managers are more tolerant of good looking people
- Colleagues are more tolerant of good looking people.

Objective 1 has been realised in that the study has found that good looks play a major role in recruitment in the workplace to the extent that good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment, with managers and colleagues being more tolerant of good looking people. The study concurs with the statement made by Terry McCarthy, co-owner of Sharklady Adventures (Harris 2010), in that "Physical appearance should not make any difference when it comes to hiring staff or remunerating them, but unfortunately it often plays a role." She also adds that being well groomed is not a bad idea and "appropriate clothing and polished shoes do make or break a first impression". These comments again highlight the advantages of looking good in the workplace. This study also concurs with research conducted by Hamermesh (1998) in that if you are good looking, "doors of opportunity open more frequently" for you. Whilst there appears to be an overwhelmingly strong focus on the importance placed on looks not only in recruitment, but also in the workplace, given the findings by Dr Alan Slater and Dr Gwyneth Doherty Sneddon in their research regarding "perception of beauty is something genetic rather than socially constructed". Can one be blamed for being biased towards attractive people?

The analysis conducted on Questions 3 and 11 are linked to the second objective, namely to assess the extent to which looks are important to young managers when recruiting employees. Looks are important to young managers in the following ways:

- Young males aged between 25-30 do not feel as strongly as older males in the belief that good looks are based on one's physical appearance.
- Younger managers would not really give that much preference to a candidate based

on their looks, as much as older managers.

Objective 2 has been realised, as whilst both young and old managers in Durban place importance on looks when recruiting employees, young managers do not place as much emphasis on looks as much older managers do. Looks are not as important to young managers to the extent that preference would be given to a candidate based on their looks.

The analysis conducted on Questions 3 and 4 clarifies the extent to which looks play a role between male and female managers when recruiting staff in that:

- females concur with the statement more than males that good looks are based on one's physical appearance, whilst
  - males tend to believe more than females that good looks come from one's heart,
- thus objective 3 has been realised.

The analysis conducted on Questions 3, 9, 10 and 12 clarify that good looks certainly give an interviewee undue advantage in the following ways:

- Good looks are based on one's physical appearance
- Good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment
- Managers are more tolerant of good looking people
- Colleagues are more tolerant of good looking people.

Objective 4 has been realised. The study concurs with the research conducted by Patzer (2008) who referred to lookism as "treating people in ways biased by their perceived level of physical attractiveness." Respondents are more tolerant of good looking people on the basis of their looks.

The analysis conducted in Questions 16 and 17 and 21 highlight that there is an overwhelming response that overweight candidates can be viewed as good looking and respondents strongly disagreed with Question 17 and 21. On this basis, the study refutes the claims made in the statement by Schuman (2010), that workers who are overweight earn less than those who are thinner as this study highlights that this is not the feeling of managers in Durban. Objective 5 has been achieved and highlights that whilst some

overweight people are discriminated against in the workplace in Durban, it is felt by the majority that overweight candidates can be good looking and the majority feel that they will not discriminate against an overweight person to the extent that they will “not give preference to” an overweight candidate at an interview.

Whilst this research seems to show that on a large scale, overweight candidates are not discriminated against, there is a high percentage of responses to other questions which showcase that good looks do give candidates undue advantage in the workplace. Whilst it is unethical to discriminate against someone due to their race, gender or weight, the manager seeking the right candidate for the job will undoubtedly consider the bias of others, either other staff or external clients and the manager will also consider the image that will be projected for the company when the obese candidate seeks new business relationships for the company.

Results of this study prove that younger male managers seem to view good looks as being based on one’s heart as opposed to older male managers' views.

This study also highlights that female managers focus more attention on physical appearance and recruiting good looking employees more than male managers.

In terms of the correlation analysis, table 4.31, which shows the strength of the relationship between a manager’s physical appearance and their level of self-confidence, there is a positive total value for physical of .493. The closer that the coefficient is to 1 signifies the strength of the relationship and the closer the coefficient is to 0, the weaker the relationship. The above analysis showcases the strength of the relationship between the respondent’s “physical appearance” and level of “self-confidence”. Nonetheless as both variables are positive, indicates a positive relationship and that an increase in one variable will signify an increase by the same amount in the other.

A further analysis of the strength between “Good looking employees being more favoured in the working environment” and “tolerance” levels of managers in relation to the “good looking” employee was also conducted. The correlation coefficient generated .789



highlighting that good looking employees are perceived to be more favoured in the working environment. There is certainly a strong relationship between the two variables. This showcased that good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment and that managers are more tolerant of good looking employees.

Various regression analyses were performed to highlight the relationship between a range of dependent and independent variables.

The regression analyses in table 4.33 revealed that the correlation between good looking employees and the tolerance level afforded to these employees by managers is 78.9%. R squared indicates that a good looking employee accounts for 57.5% of the tolerance level afforded to him. This table highlights that managers would be 0.572 of a unit more tolerant to an employee who is good looking.

Table 4.34 reveals that the correlation between a manager's physical appearance and his level of self-confidence is 25.7%. R squared indicates that a manager's physical appearance accounts for 15.2% of his self-confidence level. The above table highlights that if a manager's physical appearance was enhanced by one unit, then they would be 0.125 of a unit more self-confident.

#### **5.4 Summary**

Chapter 5 provided a detailed explanation and discussion based on the presentation of data shown in Chapter 4. The discussion revealed that good looking employees have an unfair advantage in the workplace. All objectives have been realised and certain statements made by previous researchers have either been concurred with or refuted on the basis of the findings in this study in Durban. The detailed analysis also proved that younger males tend to focus more on good looks as coming from one's heart as opposed to older males and their focus on physical appearance. Female managers tend to focus more on recruiting good looking employees than male managers. The correlation and regression analyses showed that the relationship between a manager's physical appearance and self-confidence is not as strong, yet the relationship between a managers tolerance levels with good looking employees is very strong. This shows that whilst a manager's looks do not have much

influence on the manager's confidence levels, good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment and managers are more tolerant of good looking employees. The next chapter will conclude the study and will also provide recommendations for future studies.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Recommendations

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#### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore if and to what extent good looks have an unfair advantage in the workplace in Durban with particular reference to recruitment and to assess the importance placed on looks in the workplace. Its intention was to gain insight into perceptions by managers in Durban with regard to whether there is a bias based on good looks and whether good looking employees are treated better than employees who are not as good looking. It has been suggested that good looks do play a major role not only in recruitment, but also in the workplace as a whole. This study aimed to establish the importance placed on looks by managers in the recruitment process as well as the overall working environment in Durban.

#### 6.2 Further discussion

Findings in this study suggest that the research has successfully achieved all objectives.

Research findings have revealed the following:

- The perception that good looks play a major role in the workplace is a reality.
- 71% of the sample population agree that good looks are based on one's physical appearance.
- 50% agreed that good looks come from one's heart.
- 71% agreed that good looking managers have confidence in themselves.
- 68% disagreed that good looking employees are more productive in the workplace.
- 66% agreed that good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment.
- 63% of respondents agreed that managers are more tolerant of good looking people.
- 55% disagreed that they would give preference to a candidate based on their looks.
- 68% agreed that colleagues are more tolerant of good looking people.
- 71% agreed to being confident in themselves.
- 79% agreed that overweight candidates can be good looking.

- 46% disagreed with the statement that they would not give preference to a candidate who is overweight.
- 85% disagreed that they would reward a good looking employee with higher remuneration than an equally qualified less attractive employee.
- Younger male managers view good looks as being based on one's heart whilst older male managers view good looks as being based on physical appearance.
- Female managers focus more on recruiting good looking employees more than male managers.

Findings suggest that there is a correlation between good looking employees and the tolerance level afforded to these employees by managers in that managers would be 0.572 of a unit more tolerant to an employee who is good looking.

Further findings suggest that there is a correlation between a manager's physical appearance and his level of self-confidence in that if a manager's physical appearance was enhanced by one unit, then they would be 0.125 of a unit more self-confident.

Findings in this study have concurred with findings based on previous research in terms of good looking employees having an unfair advantage in the workplace. This can be applied in Durban as well. This study does however refute claims that good looking candidates will be rewarded with higher pay than a less attractive candidate.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

This topic sparked numerous debates when engaging with people, which encouraged the researcher to continue to explore this study further.

This research highlights that lookism is rife in the workplace in Durban. This study will be particularly useful for those in the field of human resources in that it creates an awareness of the importance placed on looks by managers to an extent where managers are more tolerant of good looking employees.

This study is also useful to managers as it creates an awareness of lookism and the importance of not discriminating against an employee on the basis of their looks. It also focuses on the importance of a managers confidence levels in that if a manager's physical appearance was enhanced by one unit, then they would be 0.125 of a unit more self-confident. The regression analysis is important as it suggests that changes in one unit will bring about changes in another as evident in tables 4.33 and 4.34.

It is important to employees as it creates an awareness of lookism as a means of discrimination.

#### **6.4. Limitation of the Research**

This research was only conducted on managers in the Durban area and a bigger sample size, reflective of the province of KwaZulu-Natal should be explored.

#### **6.5 Further research**

It is recommended that a similar study be done in Kwazulu-Natal entitled "Do good looking people have an unfair disadvantage in the workplace? As at times good looking people are perceived to have "no brains." This leads to the question, "Are good looks an advantage or disadvantage at work?" (Krueger & Foster, 2008).

Another study entitled "Good looks and rivalry in the workplace" should be explored in KwaZulu-Natal. Given the findings that good looking employees are more favoured in the workplace and that managers are more tolerant of good looking people, this would be an interesting topic to explore.

#### **6.6 Conclusion**

It is hoped that this research paper will create more awareness of lookism and its damaging effects and that employees should not fall victim to discriminating against someone purely on the basis that they are not considered to be as good looking as others.

The main objective of this research paper was to explore if good looking people have an unfair advantage in the workplace in Durban. Research objectives have been explored and the results obtained in this study prove that good looks do give a person undue advantage, not only in recruitment, but also in the workplace.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Letter of informed consent

#### UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL SCHOOL

Dear Respondent,

#### **MBA Research Project**

**Researcher:** Praline Ross (031 3689617)

**Supervisor:** Dr Martin Challenor (031 2608104)

**Research Office:** Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

I, **Praline Ross** am an MBA student, at the Graduate School of Business, of the University of Kwazulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “Do good looking people have an unfair advantage in the workplace?” The aims of this study are to:

- Determine the extent to which good looks play a role in recruitment in the workplace.
- Assess the extent to which looks are important to young managers as opposed to older managers when recruiting employees.
- Identify the extent to which looks play a role between male and female managers when recruiting staff.
- Determine if good looks give an interviewee an undue advantage.
- Determine if overweight candidates are discriminated against?

Through your participation I hope to understand the importance placed on good looks when managers recruit employees. The results will assist in gaining insight into the role that Good Looks play in the workplace today.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The questionnaire should take you about 15 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey and thank you in advance for participating.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
SCHOOL**

**MBA Research Project**  
**Researcher:** Praline Ross (031 3689617)  
**Supervisor:** Dr Martin Challenor (031 2608104)  
**Research Office:** Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

**CONSENT**

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT**

**DATE**

.....

Appendix 2  
Questionnaire

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

**MBA Research Project**  
**Researcher:** Praline Ross (031 368 9617)  
**Supervisor:** Dr Martin Challenor (031 2608104)  
**Research Office:** Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

**Title of Survey**

The purpose of this survey is to solicit information from Managers in Durban regarding the role that good looks play when recruiting employees in the workplace. The information and ratings you provide us with will go a long way in helping us identify the extent to which good looks play a role in recruitment. The questionnaire should only take 15 minutes to complete. In this questionnaire, you are asked to indicate what is true for you, so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to any question. If you wish to make a comment please write it directly on the booklet itself. Please ensure that you do not skip any questions. Thank you for participating.

Please mark the applicable box with an X where necessary

Age

25-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	50 >
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	------

Gender

Male	Female
------	--------

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years experience in current position: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**1. All men share a common understanding of what is good looking.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**2. All women share a common understanding of what is good looking.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**3. Good looks are based on one's physical appearance.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**4. Good looks come from one's heart .**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**5. Good looks fade with time.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**6. Male managers focus more on recruiting good looking employees than female managers.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**7. Good looking managers have confidence in themselves.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**8. Good looking employees are more productive at the workplace.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**9. Good looking employees are more favoured in the working environment.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**10. Managers are more tolerant of good looking people.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree



**11. I would give preference to a candidate based on their good looks.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**12. Colleagues are more tolerant of good looking people.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**13. I condition myself more professionally in the company of good looking people.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**14. I assess the looks of people of my gender.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**15. I am a confident person.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**16. Overweight candidates can be good looking.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**17. I will not give preference to a candidate who is overweight.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**18. It is important for me to look good.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**19. Good looks are enough to be successful in the workplace.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**20. I judge employees positive contributions by their looks.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**21. I will reward a good looking employee with higher remuneration than an equally qualified less attractive employee.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**22. My looks have helped me progress in the workplace.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

**End of the Questionnaire:** Thank you for taking the time to complete it.



**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Research Office  
Govan Mbeki Centre  
Maitland Campus  
University Road  
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Tel No: +27 31 260 2187  
Fax No: +27 31 260 2184  
E-mail: [info@uukzn.ac.za](mailto:info@uukzn.ac.za)

09 April 2010

Mrs P Ross  
71 Walmer Avenue  
Sydenham  
DURBAN  
4091

Dear Mrs Ross

**PROTOCOL: Do good looking people have an unfair advantage in the workplace?**  
**ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0169/2010 M: Faculty of Management Studies**

In response to your application dated 07 April 2010, Student Number: **971141114** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

**PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.**

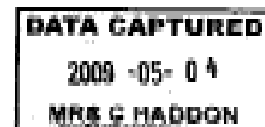
I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

**Professor Steve Collings (Chair)**  
**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE**

SC/sn

cc: Dr M Challenger (Supervisor)  
cc: Ms C Haddon





**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

*University of KwaZulu-Natal  
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09 April 2010

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Yours faithfully

**Professor Steve Collings (Chair)  
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE**

SC/sn

cc: Dr M Challenor (Supervisor)  
cc: Ms C Haddon

**DATA CAPTURED**  
2009 -05- 04  
**MRS C HADDON**