‘If you look the part you’ll get the job’

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Our work

‘If you look the part you’ll get the job’:  
*a theoretical introduction*

The Graduate Dress Code

*how graduates work out how to look*

Good looks and good practice

*career practitioner practice*

‘You try telling someone who’s ugly to get a face lift’

*career practitioner experiences*
Are you aware of anyone whose image has had an impact on their career?
Career Image

- Beauty
- Interpersonal skills
- Self-presentation

Getting job interviews

- Job offers
- Higher starting salaries

- Pay rises
- Positive appraisals
- Higher work ratings from colleagues

Promotion
Are these rewards ever justified?
Attractive sales assistants sell more
Attractive CEOs lead to increased share prices
Attractive political candidates get more votes
Attractive negotiators get better deals
Attractive bosses improve company performance
How it works

Attractiveness halo
Stereotypes
Links to other qualities
For men

For men the attractiveness premium is consistent

‘What is beautiful is good’
For women

For women the evidence is more mixed

‘Beauty is beastly’

Role incongruity
What to wear?

How you look is a symbol of your social identity

Dress codes – explicit and implicit
For men

For men the business uniform is straightforward:

‘I’d wear a suit. There’s nothing else you can wear really’
For women

What to wear is more complex

‘The more made-up you are, you’ve got that image of being more vacuous.’

‘It’s a fine line for women...they can look smart or like they’re on a night out’
Why is this a problem?

• Discrimination against groups who already experience barriers

• Organisations won’t get the right people doing the right jobs
Challenges

Unconscious processes
Links with confidence and performance
Attempts to outlaw it have failed
Would you ever advise a client on how they looked?
Would you ever advise a client on how they looked?

[Image of pie chart]

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
Do you think this is important to career success
Would you raise this with clients?
Career practitioners

‘It shouldn’t matter but we live in the real world and it does’

‘It’s uncomfortable no matter how many times you approach the subject’

‘How qualified are we really to give that kind of advice?’

‘It’s my job to have a difficult conversation if it’ll help the individual get their job’
Recommendations for career practice

Wider discourse
Training
Clearer ethical guidelines
A wider remit
Our work


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Thank You