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Science confirms chicks dig bad boys

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Researchers at the University of British Columbia have confirmed it: chicks dig the bad boy.

Men, on the other hand, prefer women who are just plain happy.

In a series of studies, more than 1,000 adults were asked to rate the sexual attractiveness of pictures of the opposite sex displaying one of three emotions: happiness (meaning the people in the photos had broad smiles), pride (raised heads and puffed up chests) and shame (heads lowered, eyes averted).

Female participants were more attracted to men who looked proud or brooding than they were to happy, smiling guys. The opposite was true for men, with male participants most attracted to happy looking women and least attracted to women who appeared proud.

“While showing a happy face is considered essential to friendly social interactions, including those involving sexual attraction, few studies have actually examined whether a smile is, in fact, attractive,” Jessica Tracy, a professor in UBC’s psychology department, said [in a release](#).

“This study finds that men and women respond very differently to displays of emotion, including smiles.” Study co-author Alec Beall, a psychology graduate student at UBC, was quick to point out that the study was exclusively concerned with whether or not study participants were sexually attracted to the people in the images, and not at all concerned with whether or not they wanted to date them.

“It is important to remember that this study explored first-impressions of sexual attraction to images of the opposite sex,” he said in the release. “We were not asking participants if they thought these targets would make a good boyfriend or wife—we wanted their gut reactions on carnal, sexual attraction.”

Why do chicks dig the bad boy, while men prefer happy women?

The researchers say it's all to do with evolutionary and culture forces. For example, the pride expression accentuates a man’s muscularity and upper body size, features which have been shown to be among the most attractive to women. Meanwhile, smiling is inconsistent with the idea of the “strong, silent” man, but consistent with the idea of the “submissive and vulnerable” woman, according to the researchers.

They added that the shame expression was likely found attractive by both sexes because it elicits trust in others.

Does this research hold true in your life?

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