



The Glasses Stereotype, Revisited

by Michael Forster,
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and Helmut Leder



Don't miss our trial consultant responses at the end of this article: [Elaine Lewis](#) and [Michelle Ramos-Burkhart](#).

IS THERE NOTHING as helpful as a good stereotype? Stereotypes due to race, gender, age, or general facial appearance shape our evaluations of others. These—often too simple—conclusions about the personality and character of people can influence a broad range of opinions and judgments, including whether we believe they are capable of the offense for which they are accused. Likewise, in a juridical context, eyewitness memory errors can sometimes lead to wrongful convictions with severe consequences for the (wrongly) convicted. Faces play a crucial role in the perception of others and communication with them. Facial appearance may, therefore, potentially influence stereotypical evaluations and memory errors. Even simple changes to a face, such as wearing different types of eyeglasses or removing them, might influence how someone is perceived, and even whether someone is recognized. In this article we present some recent experimental findings showing how simple changes in facial appearance, owing to the use of glasses, influence facial perception, recognition, and evaluation.

“Let any one of you who is without *stereotypes* be the first to throw a stone at her.” (Paraphrased from The Bible: John 8:7 New International Version.) We all use stereotypical evaluations on a daily basis, including when judging people. Stereotypes are overgeneralizations carrying a kernel of truth. They can, nevertheless, be wrong in many particular cases. Why do we rely on stereotypes at all if they are so error-prone? (See for example Gigerenzer, Todd, & The ABC Research Group, 2001; Kahneman, 2011 for two excellent books on this topic.) The paradoxical reason we rely on stereotypes is that they help us. Why? Because, stereotypes, simple heuristics (“that make us smart”, Gigerenzer et al., 2001), or rules of thumb, help us make quick, economical decisions in the complex environments we inhabit. But there is more. These first impressions have a strong effect on our final decision: we are inclined to be consistent in our decisions and are rather reluctant to change them (Tavris & Aronson, 2007). They can, however, be revised during a subsequent and more detailed conscious analysis. What makes the difference is an awareness of our errors and oversimplifications.

Several stereotypical or automatic evaluations of people are

Stereotypes

based on facial appearance. One prominent example is the so-called “baby face” stereotype. People with babyish facial features (large eyes, thin eyebrows, large head, curved face) tend to be evaluated as less mature, more innocent, but also as less responsible (Zebrowitz & Montepare, 1992). In the defendant, these features are beneficial, but they are detrimental to the witness. High competence, on the other hand, is associated with an angular jaw and close eyes and eyebrows (Olivola & Todorov, 2010).

Another example of stereotypes arising from facial appearance is the “glasses stereotype”. Individuals who are wearing glasses tend to be seen as more intelligent (e.g., Brown, Henriquez, & Groscup, 2008; Hellström & Tekle, 1994), but less attractive (Hasart & Hutchinson, 1993; Lundberg & Sheehan, 1994). In a modified and more modern version one would also call it the “nerd stereotype”.

Not only do these stereotypes influence our everyday evaluation, they also influence our evaluations of individuals when this evaluation is especially important, as in court. From research on the effect of attractiveness on juror decisions we know that defendant attractiveness reduces the harshness of the sentence (Efran, 1974; Leventhal & Krate, 1977; Smith & Hed, 1979, but see also Sigall & Ostrove, 1975, for other evidence). In addition, people that appear intelligent receive fewer guilty verdicts (Brown et al., 2008, also published in an adapted version in [The Jury Expert, 23, pp. 1-12](#)). Because wearing glasses decreases apparent attractiveness and increases apparent intelligence, glasses may be a mixed blessing in court.

One crucial factor that has been neglected so far in research on eyeglasses is the type of glasses worn. With the large variety of types of eyeglasses, and especially with the trend of either wearing rimless glasses or glasses with quite thick and peculiar rims, the glasses stereotype may depend on the type of glasses. Therefore, an important aim of our study was to explore whether the changes in style over the years affect the glasses stereotype.

Face Recognition

A second important issue, especially for legal practice, is remembering faces. The problem of recognizing faces and also falsely recognizing faces is a major issue in face perception research. Its results have strong implications for legal practice (e.g., mistaking someone for the culprit). The high prevalence of wrongful convictions due to incorrect identifications even inspired founding the [Innocence Project](#). This non-profit organization is committed to exonerate wrongfully convicted individuals by applying DNA testing. By far, most of the wrongful convictions were due to incorrect identification by eyewitnesses.

Face perception researchers are well aware of the problem of wrongful convictions mainly due to errors in face perception and face memory (see Bruce, 2011; or Lindsay, Mansour,

Bertrand, Kalmet, & Melsom, 2011, for overviews on this topic). There has already been considerable progress in developing better systems to generate composite faces for mug shots (Bruce, 2011). Nonetheless, eyewitness identification is still flawed. Besides various factors influencing the accuracy of eyewitness identification (Lindsay et al., 2011), wearing glasses might interfere with a successful identification of an individual. The fact that a considerable percentage of the population in Western countries is wearing glasses makes it worth taking a look on the perception of faces with glasses.

To sum up, glasses potentially influence the perception of the wearers’ face and evaluation of their personality traits. We performed four experiments testing whether glasses, and especially the type of glasses worn, influence perception and evaluation of the wearers face and personality traits.

Novel Experimental Evidence

We will first present experimental evidence that glasses are able to elicit stereotypes and influence evaluations of faces in terms of different traits, such as intelligence, trustworthiness, or attractiveness (Experiment 1). We will then turn to the question of how glasses change our perception of faces in terms of attention and looking behavior (Experiment 2). The last two experiments discuss the influence of glasses on our ability to discriminate (Experiment 3) and recognize faces (Experiment 4). Taken together the experiments clarify the influence of glasses on evaluation and recognition of individuals, two highly relevant factors in legal contexts.



*Do Different Types of Glasses
Affect How Others Evaluate Us?*

Experiment 1 – The Glasses Stereotype Revisited

According to the glasses stereotype, the face of an individual wearing eyeglasses should be rated as less attractive but more intelligent than the same face of the same individual without glasses. To account for the current trend in glasses, we included two different types of glasses, full-rim glasses having thick peculiar rims and also rimless glasses, having no rim at all.

Seventy-six participants (students as well as members of the general population) rated the 78 images of faces comprising 26 images of faces without glasses, 26 images of faces with full-rim glasses, and 26 images of faces with rimless glasses on a computer screen and rated the images on six dimensions: successfulness, intelligence, trustworthiness, attractiveness, likability, and cooperativeness.

The results show that faces without glasses were seen more attractive and more likeable than faces with full-rim glasses. Faces with rimless glasses did not differ from faces without glasses in their attractiveness or likability rating. Regarding the ratings of successfulness, and intelligence, the results show that individuals wearing glasses (both rimless and full-rim) were rated as more successful and more intelligent than individuals not wearing glasses. Regarding trustworthiness, individuals with rimless glasses were rated as significantly more trustworthy than faces without glasses. Ratings of cooperativeness did not differ between the face versions.

These results show us that glasses influence various kinds of evaluations of a person. This may be due to the prominence of glasses in the face. In a second experiment we therefore tested whether glasses attract attention, and whether the eye region receives longer looks when the individual is wearing glasses.

Experiment 2 – Face Perception

In general, the eye region is a central and very informative part of the human face. Where people look at gives us important information about their current focus of attention and intentions (Bayliss & Tipper, 2006). Not surprisingly, thus, several studies have shown that the eye region is also the region most looked at in a human face (e.g. Bindemann, Scheepers, & Burton, 2009). Glasses, especially their rims change the appearance of this region. Therefore, they may also be in the center of our attention.

To assess the distribution of the eye movements we used an eye tracker. In short, an eye tracker allows measuring what is of interest for an individual in an image (where they look) and of how much interest it is (how long they look).

Twenty undergraduate students viewed 26 faces in all three versions (no glasses, full-rim glasses, rimless glasses), resulting in 78 images. In order to attend to the faces, the participants rated them on attractiveness and distinctiveness, defined as the peculiarity of a face, ranging from “ordinary” faces to faces that

would “pop out” in a crowd of people.

Indeed, the eye region was looked at longer than the rest of the face, but this depended on whether the model was wearing glasses. Both types of glasses attracted longer looks to the eye region. For the full rim glasses we expected to find longer looks due to the prominence of the glasses rims. Interestingly, rimless glasses, which are by design by far less peculiar, influenced looking behavior to the same extent as full-rim glasses, probably because even slight changes in the eye region suffice to attract longer looks.

Thus, glasses significantly influence our looking behavior. This leads us to the question of whether glasses influence our ability to discriminate (Experiment 3) and recognize (Experiment 4) faces.

Experiment 3 – Discrimination of Faces

In legal contexts discriminating and recognizing faces is crucial, especially, in the case of eyewitness testimony. Therefore, studying the effects of recognition of people with and without glasses can help both assess and improve the accuracy of eyewitness testimony and identification in line-ups.

In Experiment 3, we studied the speed in discriminating two faces. These were either presented next to each other (so-called simultaneous matching) or presented one after another (sequential matching). This allowed us to measure whether glasses, which add a feature to the eye region, impair perceiving a face and matching it to another face.

Twenty undergraduate psychology students looked at 180 pairs of faces, which were shown next to each other in one block and shown one after the other in another block. Participants decided as quickly as possible whether the two images portrayed the same person. Because we were interested in the effect of matching faces with and without glasses, one in each pair always lacked glasses. The pairs showed either the same face in two different versions or different faces.

When both faces were presented simultaneously, wearing full-rim glasses led to a longer reaction time in matching two different faces. This means that full-rim glasses impeded discrimination of faces when two different faces were shown, rimless glasses, however, did not produce this effect. For comparisons of the same face (i.e. the same individual) with and without glasses, we found that comparisons of faces without glasses in both images were quickest. This, however, is not surprising as the two images were not only of the same individual, but were also exactly identical themselves. To conclude: Faces with full-rim glasses compared to faces without glasses slowed simultaneous matching, but did not influence accuracy of the matching. This suggests that we can reliably match two faces even when an individual is wearing glasses in one image, but it takes some more time to do so.

When both faces were presented sequentially, no such effects were found. The only result was that when exactly the same image (e.g. no glasses, short break, no glasses) was shown reaction times were—not surprisingly—fastest. This shows that when faces had to be recognized shortly after the initial presentation, glasses did not impede this task.

To conclude, only full-rim glasses seem to impede the speed of face identification: they slow down recognizing someone. But they do not seem to reduce the accuracy of face identification. However, in a typical eyewitness situation, witnesses have to identify face, where the time span of seeing and recognizing is much longer than in the previous experiment. Thus, in Experiment 4 we measured whether wearing glasses influences long-term recognition of faces.

Experiment 4 – Recognition of Faces

In the first part of Experiment 4 (Experiment 4A), we tested how glasses affect recognition of faces in general. In the second part of Experiment 4 (Experiment 4B), we tested whether adding glasses to a face hinders recognition—all faces were first presented without glasses and then again with glasses. These experiments consisted of a learning phase and a test phase. Importantly, when they originally saw the faces they were subsequently asked to recognize, they were unaware of the future importance of the face. This resembles the situation of eyewitnesses.

In Experiment 4A, 24 undergraduate psychology students first rated images of faces without glasses, with full-rim glasses, and with rimless glasses on distinctiveness (learning phase). Experiment 4B differed in that only faces without glasses were rated during the learning phase by 24 different undergraduate psychology students. After the learning phase a distractor task was administered, aiming to prevent participants from actively rehearsing the previously seen faces. In the test phase of Experiment 4A, the previously seen faces were presented in combination with the same amount of new faces. As we also wanted to test whether adding glasses to faces hinders recognition, in the test phase of Experiment 4B, two-thirds of the previously seen faces were presented with glasses together with the same amount of new faces. In both experiments, participants indicated for each faces whether it has been presented in the learning phase or not.

The results show that recognition was highest when two identical images were shown during learning and test phase. In Experiment 4A, rimless glasses slightly affected recognition: faces with rimless glasses were more likely to be falsely evaluated as previously seen (false positives) compared to faces without glasses. However, adding glasses to the face in Experiment 4B did not influence recognition rates. Taken together, this means that wearing glasses does not seem to affect face recognition dramatically. Rimless glasses, however, lead to the effect of confusing some faces. This could be due to reduced distinctiveness of faces with rimless glasses (Leder

& Bruce, 1998), as also distinctiveness ratings throughout our experiments suggest.

Conclusion

In four experiments we studied how eyeglasses impact perception and impressions of faces. We could show that glasses (a) foster stereotypical evaluations, but (b) they depend on the type of glasses worn. Furthermore, glasses attract attention to the eye region and impede a quick discrimination and recognition of faces. However, it seems they do not impede the accuracy of face identification.

In our first experiment, testing stereotypical evaluations, we found that faces with full-rim glasses are evaluated as less attractive and more intelligent than faces without glasses. This confirms the glasses stereotype. Interestingly, faces with rimless glasses are not evaluated as less attractive, but as more intelligent and also as more trustworthy than faces without glasses. This means that wearing rimless glasses increases the chances of someone being regarded as more intelligent and trustworthy—which may be beneficial in court—without having the downside of getting evaluated as less attractive—which would not be beneficial in court. Being evaluated as more intelligent or trustworthy, of course, does not mean that one is indeed more intelligent or trustworthy. However, drawing on findings from first impressions and the tendency to confirm these, one might have a head start with rimless glasses.

Only faces with full-rim glasses got rated as less attractive compared to faces without glasses. This could be due to perceptual factors influencing facial attractiveness, particularly facial distinctiveness. Facial distinctiveness, the difference between a single face and the mean of the population, is mostly associated with lower attractiveness evaluations (Langlois & Roggman, 1990). Throughout our studies we found that faces with full-rim glasses were generally rated higher in distinctiveness compared to faces with rimless and faces without glasses. This explains why rimless glasses do not lead to lower attractiveness, whereas full-rim glasses, which confer higher distinctiveness, do.

Regarding perception, discrimination and recognition of faces our experiments show that glasses lead to longer looks at the eye region. Furthermore, it takes longer to discriminate (or match) two faces. Nonetheless, the accuracy of discrimination and recognition of faces with full-rim glasses is comparable to faces without glasses. Rimless glasses, on the other hand, seem to render faces more likely to be confused with a different face.

For practical purposes, our findings suggest that wearing full-rim glasses do not help in concealing one's identity in short-term recognition in general, but they do slow perception. Eyewitnesses at a crime scene often only have a short glimpse at the suspect(s) – glasses in this particular case might then complicate perception and, hence, later recognition. However, whether this really is the case remains to be tested. Especially,

rimless glasses show the effect that one's face becomes more easily confused with someone else's. In court this could be beneficial or detrimental—depending on whether one is guilty or innocent.

Limitations and Caveats

For applied purposes, our experiments bear the limitation of being performed in the laboratory with mostly undergraduate college students as participants. These factors imply that generalizations to all samples and contexts should be done with caution. Concerning the participants, there is, however, no indication that other participants would evaluate faces differently to students. The limitation of being laboratory studies attenuates our findings to mere suggestions for practical application in real world contexts, as for example in court. Maybe at this point you will be wondering why we do lab experiments in the first place, when generalization to real world contexts is uncertain. The primary reason is that lab experiments allow us to control possible mediating and confounding variables which would prevent us from drawing clear-cut conclusions about our findings. Real world contexts, such as situations in court, include plenty of these confounding variables.

Nonetheless, the studied phenomena included rather basic perceptual processes (recognition, discrimination, looking behavior). These, of course, influence our behavior, whether in a laboratory or in a “real” situation, as in front of a jury. Brown et al. (2008), for instance, have shown that there is a direct connection between evaluation of faces and severity of the penalty.

Apart from the studied perceptual factors influencing the

connection between wearing glasses and evaluation of faces, contextual factors also play a role. In court, one example of contextual factor is the type of crime of which one is accused. If one is accused of a crime committed mostly by highly intelligent people (white collar crimes, such as insider trading or forgery) wearing glasses might not be beneficial. For other crimes (assault, robbery, or sexual offense), conversely, looking more intelligent, more “nerdy”, and therefore not corresponding to the stereotypical culprit, might help in getting milder penalties. We do not intend to advocate wearing glasses that do not match the crime of which someone is accused. Our main intention is to raise awareness about the possible influence of people's evaluations on their beliefs about whether someone is capable of a specific crime or not.

Final Remarks

To sum up, glasses affect what is—and what can be—perceived in a face. They therefore have specific effects on perception, recognition, and evaluation. On the other hand, owing to existing stereotypes glasses may also encourage drawing conclusions about personality traits of persons (trustworthiness, successfulness, likeability, or intelligence). Wearing glasses in court may therefore be a mixed blessing. Full-rim glasses lead to higher intelligence ratings, which can be beneficial in court, but to lower attractiveness, which can be detrimental in court. But, with rimless glasses one has the advantage of being evaluated as more intelligent, as well as more trustworthy, but not as less attractive. What more could one want? ☹

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We asked two trial consultants to respond to this paper. Elaine Lewis and Michelle Ramos-Burkhart respond below.

Elaine Lewis responds:

Elaine Lewis is President of [Courtroom Communications LLC](#). She specializes in witness preparation, assists in framing and organizing trial issues and developing case themes and is a member of the American Society of Trial Consultants, SAG/AFTRA, and Actors Equity Association. Elaine is based in New York City but works for attorneys throughout the United States.

“**M**EN SELDOM MAKE PASSES at girls who wear glasses” is a line written by Dorothy Parker and first printed in 1925. This example of a glasses stereotype, although humorous, is similar to other well known stereotypes such as Asians are smart, Jews are good in business, and the Irish drink a lot. **The Glasses Stereotype Revisited**, an extremely well written research paper by three Austrian psychologists – a psychology graduate student, a post doc faculty researcher, and a psychology professor, all from the University of Vienna, unfortunately yields little more than a confirmation of stereotypes with which we are all familiar.

The problem in researching the glasses stereotype is the need to reduce a kaleidoscope of variables to just a few for the purpose of a laboratory experiment. In our modern world, eyeglasses have become fashion items with an endless variety of choices, as well as devices to improve vision. Depending on the style selected they can make a face look better, different, or worse, by accident or design.

In checking the countless vendors of glasses on the internet one finds that glasses come in shapes that include square, rectangular, round, and geometric, in sizes large, medium, and small, and seemingly infinite variations in between. They can be rimless or they can be full rimmed, half rimmed on either top or bottom, $\frac{3}{4}$ rimmed, all in various rim thicknesses. Frames come in a variety of colors and are made in many different materials like shell, plastic, and metal.

The professionals who help individuals select eyeglasses consider many things in helping people project the image they would like. There is, first of all, face shape such as oval, square, heart shaped, and diamond. Then there are skin tone, eye color, hair color and hairstyle to look at. Correctly selected, the right color glasses can brighten a sallow skin and give a glow of health. Wearing glasses can hide bags or wrinkles under the eye and make people look younger or more awake. Glasses can enhance eye color and complement one’s hair. They can soften harsh features, or give added dimension to faces that need more shape.

The glasses stereotype researchers selected three variables to test. They investigated reactions to computer images of faces

with full-rimmed glasses, rimless glasses and no glasses in four separate experiments. The glasses stereotype is the subject of only the first of the four. Choosing to include rimless glasses was an attempt to include changing styles in glasses.

In the stereotype experiment, the researchers took a second look at the way people perceive individuals with and without glasses. The finding that the commonly held stereotypes still exist, such as individuals who wear glasses seen to be more intelligent but less attractive than those without, is hardly a surprise. Outside the limits of the experiment, the results may have been quite different. With all the eyeglass options available, it is not hard to make someone more attractive with glasses than without. To be fair, the writers note that stereotypes can “*be wrong in many particular cases.*” They also state that “*the glasses stereotype may depend on the type of glasses.*”

Rimless glasses were the only novelty in this experiment. It was found they split the difference between glasses and no glasses, taking on some of the stereotypes of each. This too seems an obvious result. Rimless glasses are meant to be as invisible as possible, yet because they don’t disappear completely, the wearer has a look of no glasses and glasses at the same time.

As a specialist in witness preparation, I always consider the impact of glasses my client may be wearing, but rarely in terms of stereotype. If the glasses are hiding my witness’s eyes, I might suggest they be removed since being able to see a witness’s face, particularly the eyes, is one of the tests of credibility. On the other hand, if removing glasses will be a hardship or too upsetting to the witness, the glasses have to stay and we will work with the best choices available among other elements of testimony that help determine credibility.

Equally important is being certain that the glasses are not misrepresenting my client in a negative way. Each case has to be considered on its own merits. If I have a pussycat of a witness who is a truly decent man but may wear glasses that give him a mean and scary look, I might ask if there are other glasses that could be worn. There is nothing wrong with helping a witness present himself in the best way possible through the use or non-use of glasses, just as one would make sure the witness will look his best, behave respectfully, and answer questions appropriately at trial. On the other hand, using glasses as a sheep costume for the wolf in an attempt to deceive the trier of fact would be as inappropriate and unethical as tampering with evidence.

The remaining three experiments, using the same three variables, all dealt with issues of face recognition such as is called for in eyewitness reports or police line-ups. The results of these experiments also demonstrated what is already known. One obvious finding was that the reaction time in recognizing previously seen faces looking exactly the same the second time around, was faster than the recognition of faces seen previously without glasses and later with glasses. Not surprisingly another conclusion was that it is easier to remember faces that “*pop out*”

of a crowd rather than being ordinary. Given that the research generally found that reactions to faces with totally rimless glasses were more closely aligned to the reactions to faces with no glasses, rather than rimmed glasses, it is obvious rimmed glasses would stand out in a group. Unless the subject without glasses has some other striking attention-getting feature, the person wearing glasses, especially particularly distinctive glasses, will be the one who gets the quickest recognition and will be easiest to remember.

To their credit, the researchers offered their own caveats regarding their research. They suggested that one of the limitations was the fact that the experiments were done in a laboratory using perceptions of mostly undergraduate students. They warned that generalizing their results to real world applications is “*uncertain*” and should be “*done with caution.*”

To this warning I would like to add that given all the ways eyeglasses can affect appearance today, the need to choose three basic variables to explore could not possibly have turned up results of much value. It was a yeoman effort “full of sound and fury” but an impossible task, “signifying nothing” new. Therefore common sense must prevail over the research. ©

Michelle Ramos-Burkhart responds:

Michelle Ramos-Burkhart is President/Senior Trial consultant with [Verdict Works, LLC](#), located in Long Beach, California where her firm focuses on criminal and civil defense and serves clients nationwide. Michelle has a B. S. in Behavioral Science, a J.D., LL.M. in Trial Advocacy and is completing her PhD with emphasis in perception and cognition.

MY CURRENT RESEARCH and practice area is strongly focused in cognition and perception. While the implications of the research are applicable for many consultants and attorneys, I think the recent return to focus on external factors that influence a juror’s perceptions makes this study timely. It provides a nuanced look at how perception can be altered albeit slightly, by the wearing of eyeglasses.

Historically, juror personality traits and their relationship to decision-making were evaluated when determining how a juror might judge a person on trial. This gave way over the years to scientific methodologies that would provide stronger predictors of jury decisions (Greene, Chopra & Kovera, 2002). Currently, much of the research in juror decision-making focuses on information and cognitive processes as opposed to personality or physicality indicators (Greene et. al., 2002)

One poll conducted in the U.K. on behalf of the College of Optometrists amongst 2,000 respondents in December 2009 found:

- 43% of people think glasses make people look more intelligent

- 36% of people think glasses make someone look more professional
- 40% already wear or are considering wearing clear lens glasses they don’t need

While this data is interesting from a personal, business or career standpoint, for our purposes it is clear that criminal defendants appearances can also make impressions. You may recall that Lee Boyd Malvo dressed in conservative style sweaters when he was on trial for his role in the 2002 D.C sniper shootings. More recently, the Jodi Arias case reflects what many assume is a deliberate “rebranding” of her appearance from a blonde sexy bombshell to a diminutive brunette with glasses and bangs. These tactics are nothing new, however, the depth and data that researchers like Leder, Forster and Gerger are narrowing in on through studies like this, may be changing the way we use this information in a courtroom context.

In popular media it has been given a name, “*The Nerd Defense*” at least according to New York defense lawyer Harvey Slovis. However, these approaches are not without some pushback. In 2007, a District of Columbia Superior Court prosecutor requested that the jury be instructed on Harris’ altering of his appearance as a determining factor pointing to guilt, and these instructions were upheld by the court, *Harris v. State*, DC Circuit No. 08-CF-1405 (2012).

Leder, Forster and Gerger’s multi tiered study seeks to evaluate whether different types of eyeglasses could elicit stereotypes. They discovered that glasses could (a) foster stereotypical evaluations, but (b) it depends on the type of glasses worn (Leder, Forster & Gerger, 2011). Accuracy it seems was not impeded, but speed of identification was depending on the type of lens.

So, what does this mean for consultants and lawyers moving forward? It is clear the field is moving towards more specificity in strategies of trial execution and this is one of many studies that may or may not influence practice by attorneys or their consultants. While the recent focus of appearance in court has received a great deal of play in the media, it is not clear how often attorneys or consultants are using these methods in practice which might make for an interesting study in and of itself. Personally, I would be interested in a further study that looked specifically at gender, since prior studies, for example, indicate lack of credibility due to gender for female attorneys versus their male counterparts (Hahn & Clayton, 1996). How might eyeglasses alter those findings? Stereotypes and biases are cognitive psychosocial processes that affect all people and our relationships in various ways. These studies go hand in hand with many preconceived notions that may alter and sway our juror pools.

Finally, I believe that the impact of this research on jury decision-making may have a multitude of applications including juror perceptions of attorneys and judges as well as

defendants. Additionally, it may have applicability in the context of expert testimony for eyewitnesses or perhaps even in voir dire. As a consultant that works in criminal and civil defense, I welcome the data but would proceed with caution as the D.C. case noted above reflects; what you may think is a tool in your arsenal of strategy could with an insightful prosecutor or skeptical judge come back to bite you. Weighing the benefit and risk in conjunction with the facts and evidence should help determine whether to utilize this research in your cases. In the meantime, I'm off to buy some glasses. ☹️

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