

A consideration of the beauty myth in Japan and the United States

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Abstract

This paper empirically investigates and compares the relationship between individual beauty (in particular, obesity status and self-reported beauty) and employment status in Japan and the United States. Using data from the Preference Parameters Study of Osaka University, recursive bivariate probit models are estimated that account for the endogeneity of obesity status. The results show that heavier men and women tend to be less likely to get hired for jobs (except for Japanese women). This study also finds that statistically significant relationships between self-reported beauty and individual employment status. These results imply that a jobseeker's physical appearance affect labor market outcomes in Japan, as in the United States.

JEL Codes: J71, J21, J10, I10

Key words: Obesity discrimination, Self-reported beauty, Self-reported bias, Endogeneity, Recursive Bivariate Probit model