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Sizing Up the Competition: Influence of Weight on Intelligence Perception

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Sizing Up the Competition: Influence of Weight on Intelligence Perception

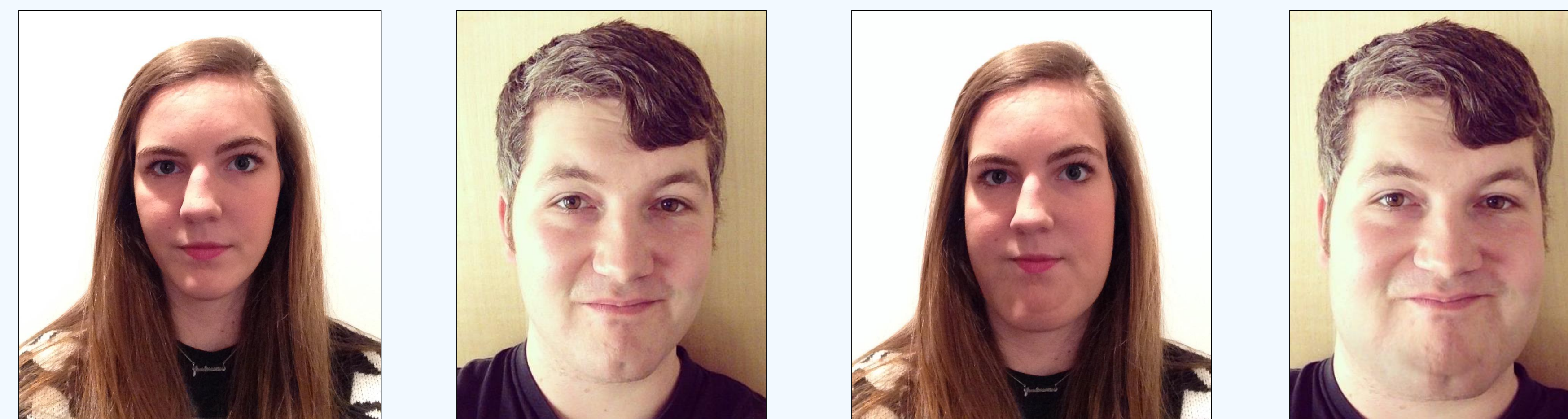
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Ouachita Baptist University

Background

- ❖ Prejudice and discrimination is common for overweight individuals of both genders, and can sometimes come in the form of negative evaluations of intelligence.
- ❖ It has been shown that overweight people, especially women, are rated as less attractive than those of average weight or that are underweight (Wilson, Tripp, & Boland, 2005).
- ❖ Discrimination in employment settings is also common for people that are overweight, as they are often less likely to be hired compared to other applicants (Grant & Mizzi, 2014).
- ❖ Overweight women were more often the victims of discrimination in hiring situations, seen as less qualified than other candidates (Pingitore, Dugoni, Tindale, & Spring, 1994).
- ❖ When compared to average weight counterparts, overweight individuals are often assigned more negative attributions and treated more negatively (Puhl, Andreyeva, & Brownell, 2008).
- ❖ In the current study, we predict that the overweight applicants will be rated as less intelligent than the average weight applicants.
- ❖ We also predict that the female overweight applicant will be rated as less intelligent than the male overweight applicant and either of the average weight applicants.

Method

- ❖ Participants were 71 undergraduate students (61 female, 10 male) at Ouachita Baptist University, with a mean age of 19.68 years old.
- ❖ Participants were randomly assigned to an application with one of four pictures attached, that of an overweight or average weight male or female (shown here).
- ❖ Participants first reviewed a job description for a camp counselor position and then read and evaluated a fabricated application, which contained the exact same information as the rest of the applications, save for the attached picture.
- ❖ They then rated their given applicant on personality traits and characteristics using the Application Evaluation Questionnaire and the Ten Item Personality Measure.
- ❖ We made the Application Evaluation Questionnaire, a ten-question survey, to assess the participants' view of their applicant's intelligence using a 5-point Likert-type scale.
- ❖ We used the Ten Item Personality Measure to analyze their perception of their applicant in terms of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience.



Average Weight Female

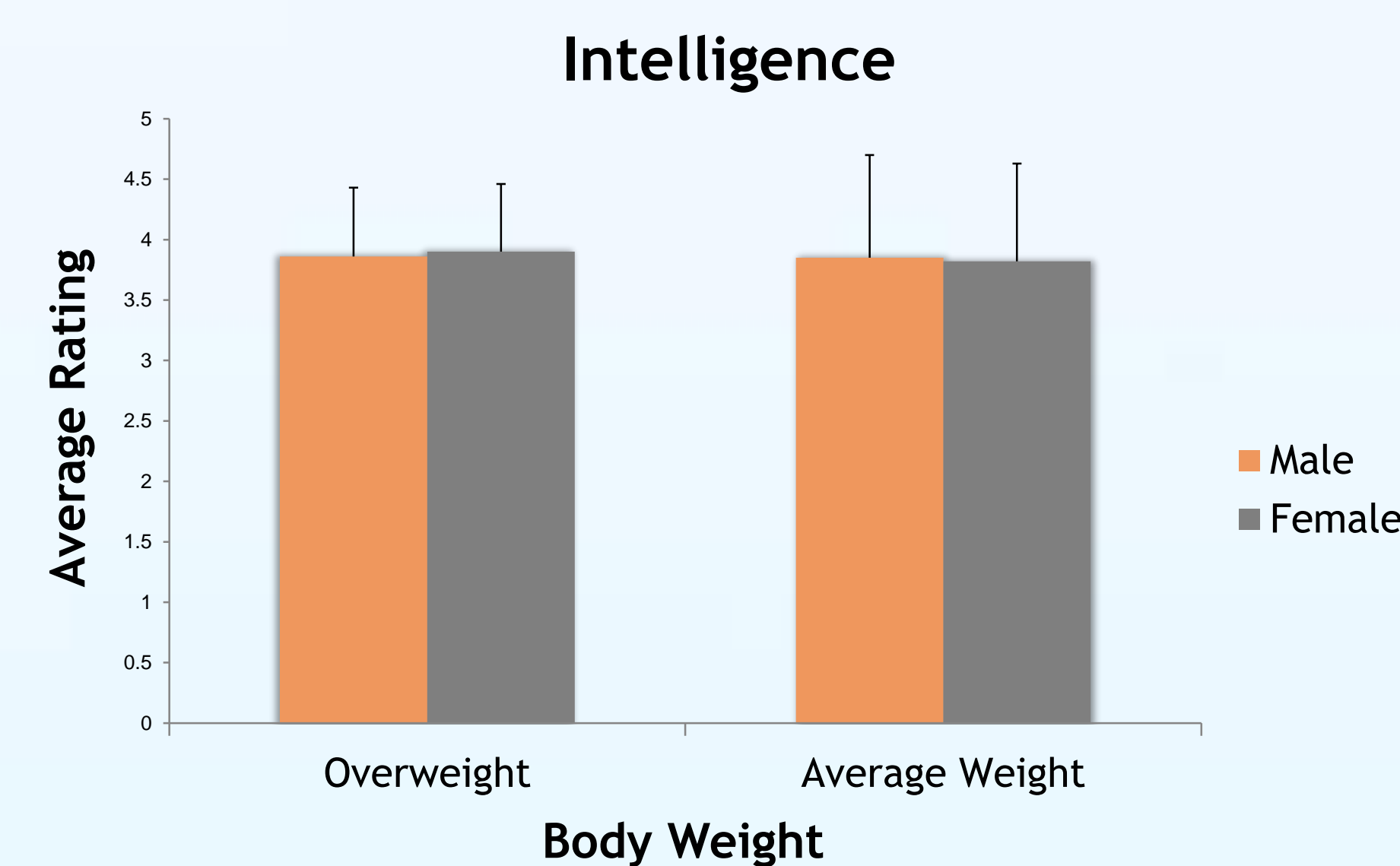
Average Weight Male

Overweight Female

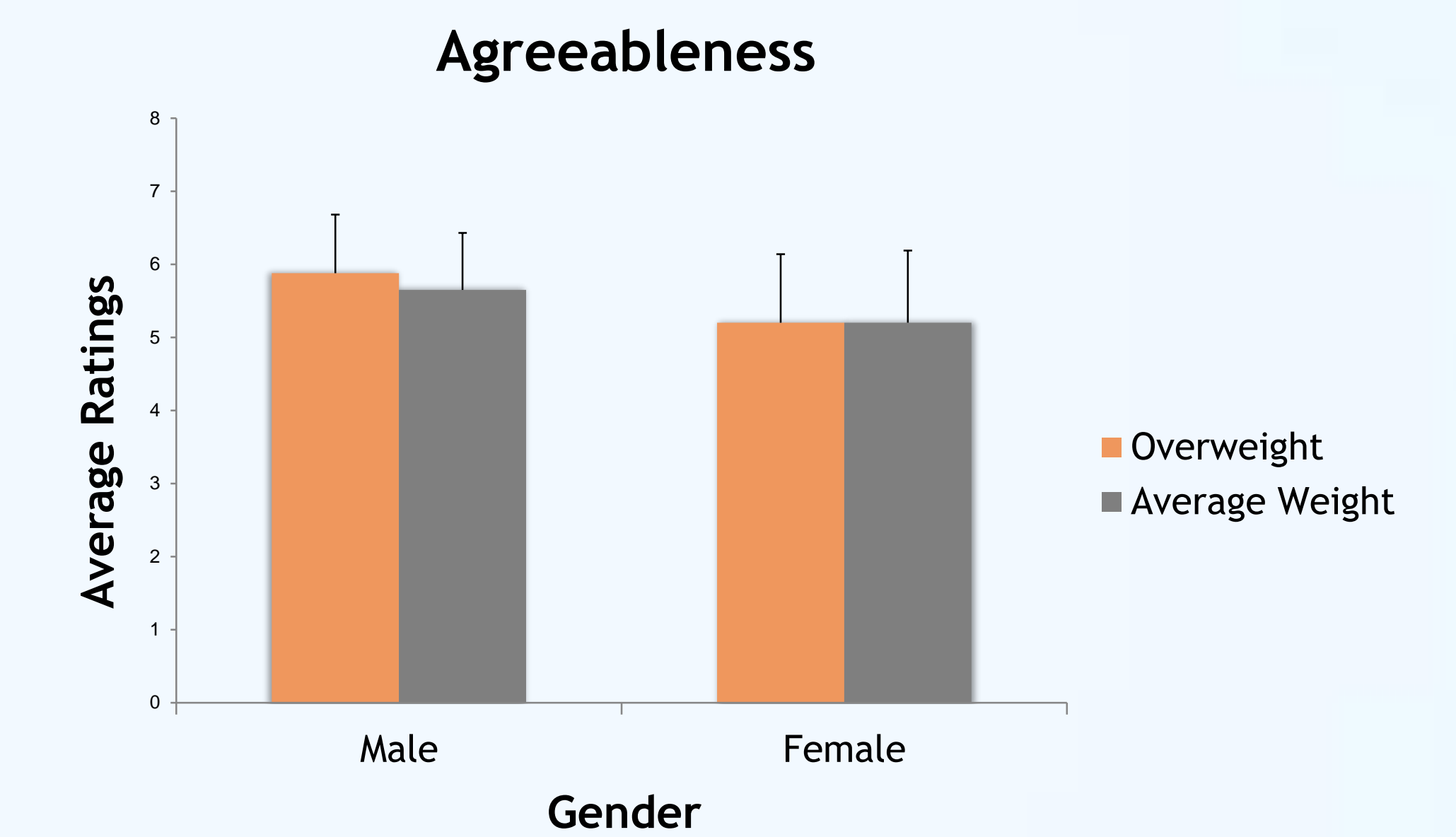
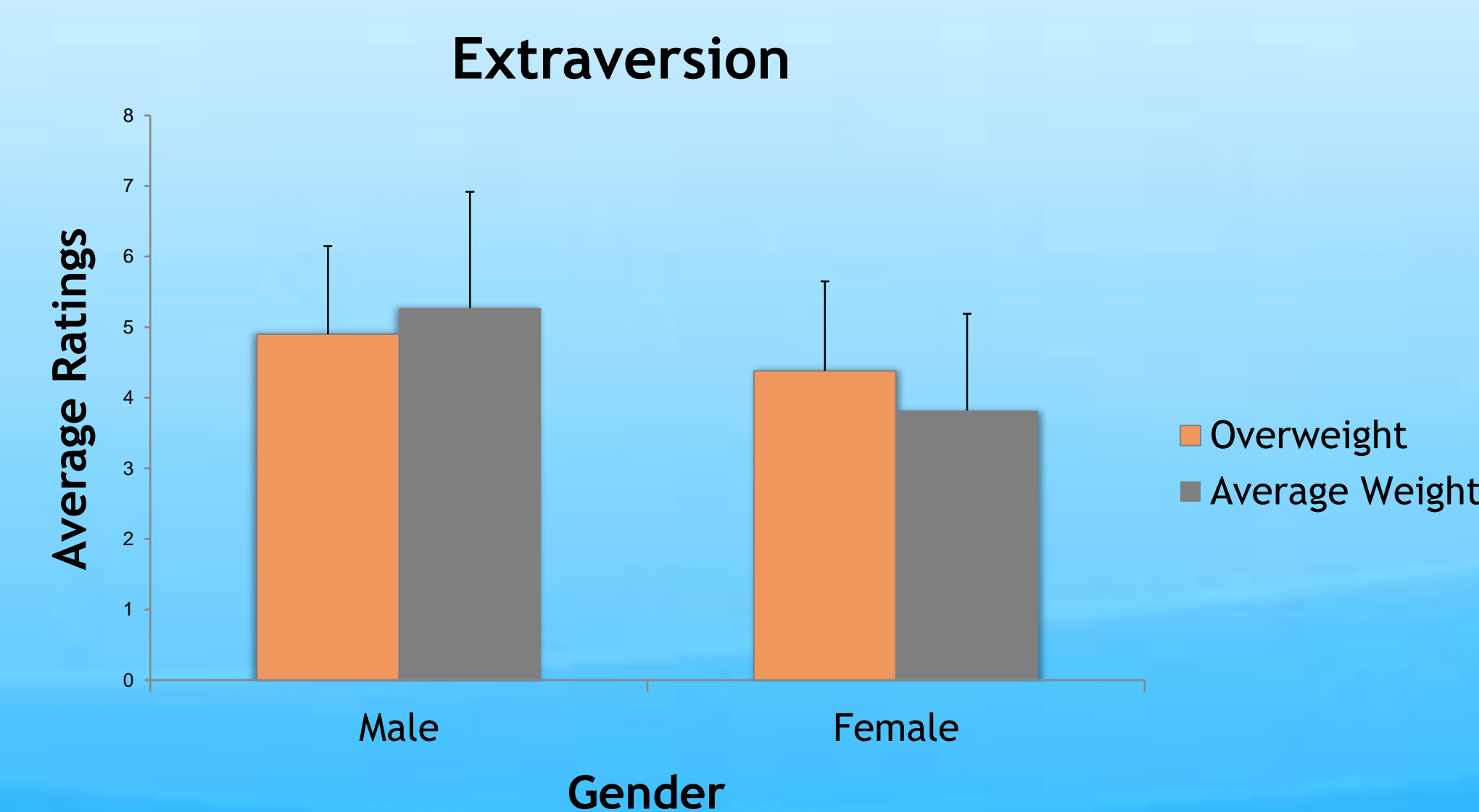
Overweight Male

Results

- ❖ There was no significant interaction between weight and gender on perceptions of intelligence, with $F(1,70)=.036, p>.05$.
- ❖ There was no main effect of weight on perceptions of intelligence, with $F(1,70)=.06, p>.05$.
- ❖ There was no main effect of gender on perceptions of intelligence, with $F(1,70)=.00, p>.05$.



- ❖ There was a main effect of gender on perceptions of Extraversion, with $F(1,70)=8.49, p<.05$
- ❖ There was a main effect of gender on perceptions of Agreeableness, with $F(1,70)=6.82, p<.05$.
- ❖ Our analysis showed no significant results for the other Big 5 personality traits.



Conclusions

- ❖ The results of our study failed to support our hypothesis that weight would have a negative effect on perceptions of intelligence.
- ❖ Unfortunately none of our results regarding intelligence were significant.
- ❖ We did find that the female applicant, regardless of weight category, was given significantly lower ratings of Extraversion and Agreeableness than her male counterpart.
- ❖ Our sample consisted primarily of Caucasian females, all of whom attend a small, southern, Christian university. This sample is not indicative of the general population, and could have impacted the results.
- ❖ Future research should attempt to have a sample that is more similar to the general population.
- ❖ A future direction for this research could record the BMI of participants to see if there is any in-group bias in overweight individuals.

References

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