

## **A study on the structure of preference for a fair complexion**

**Miho Saito**

*School of Human Sciences, Waseda University*

The main purpose of this study is to determine the psychological structure of aesthetic preference for white by surveying the preference for a fair complexion. A series of studies on color preference conducted by the author have shown a strong preference for white among Japanese and other Asian subjects (Japanese Psychological Research, Vol.36, No.4, 1994). This suggests that "whiteness" and positive feelings like "pleasantness" may be interrelated for Japanese and Asian people, as shown, for an instance, by the ancient Japanese saying "A fair complexion can hide seven blemishes." Not only to determine whether or not a fair complexion is preferred psychologically but also to study the cultural aspects of the preference for complexions, 176 Japanese and 132 Indonesian male and female university students were presented four stimuli, i. e., four pieces of paper, each colored with one of four stages of flesh color from fair to dark. Covering each color sample was a transparent plastic sheet with a drawing of the contour of a female face. The subjects were then asked to answer a questionnaire designed to discriminate personal images. The results, examined by both Factor Analysis and Quantification Method III by Hayashi, showed that the images associated with a fair complexion were positive in Japan, but were rather negative in Indonesia. This suggested that the cultural criteria in feelings of pleasantness and beauty may have been a factor in the study results.