



Envy mediates the relationship between physical appearance comparison and women's intrasexual aggression and mate retention

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Female physical attractiveness is a central component of their mate value. However, the extent to which women possess attractive physical traits varies between individuals, placing less attractive women at a mating disadvantage. Researchers have suggested that ancestrally, females would have benefited from social-cognitive mechanisms that promote them to compare their physical attractiveness to others in the group in order to accurately determine their standing on this important mate value trait. Moreover, envy experienced in response to unfavorable social comparisons may have evolved as an affective mechanism that promotes compensatory intrasexually-competitive behavior.

Sample. 132 undergraduate women aged 17 to 32 ($M = 20$, $SD = 2.29$). Of these, 71 were in romantic relationships (these were examined for mate retention)

Measures.

- Upward Physical Appearance Comparison (UPACS)
- Dispositional Envy Scale (DES)
- Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ)
- Mate Retention Inventory Short form
- Indirect Aggression Scale

Conclusion: Evidence supports the hypothesis that envy evolved, in part, to motivate compensatory intrasexual competition when faced with evidence that one is at a mating disadvantage.

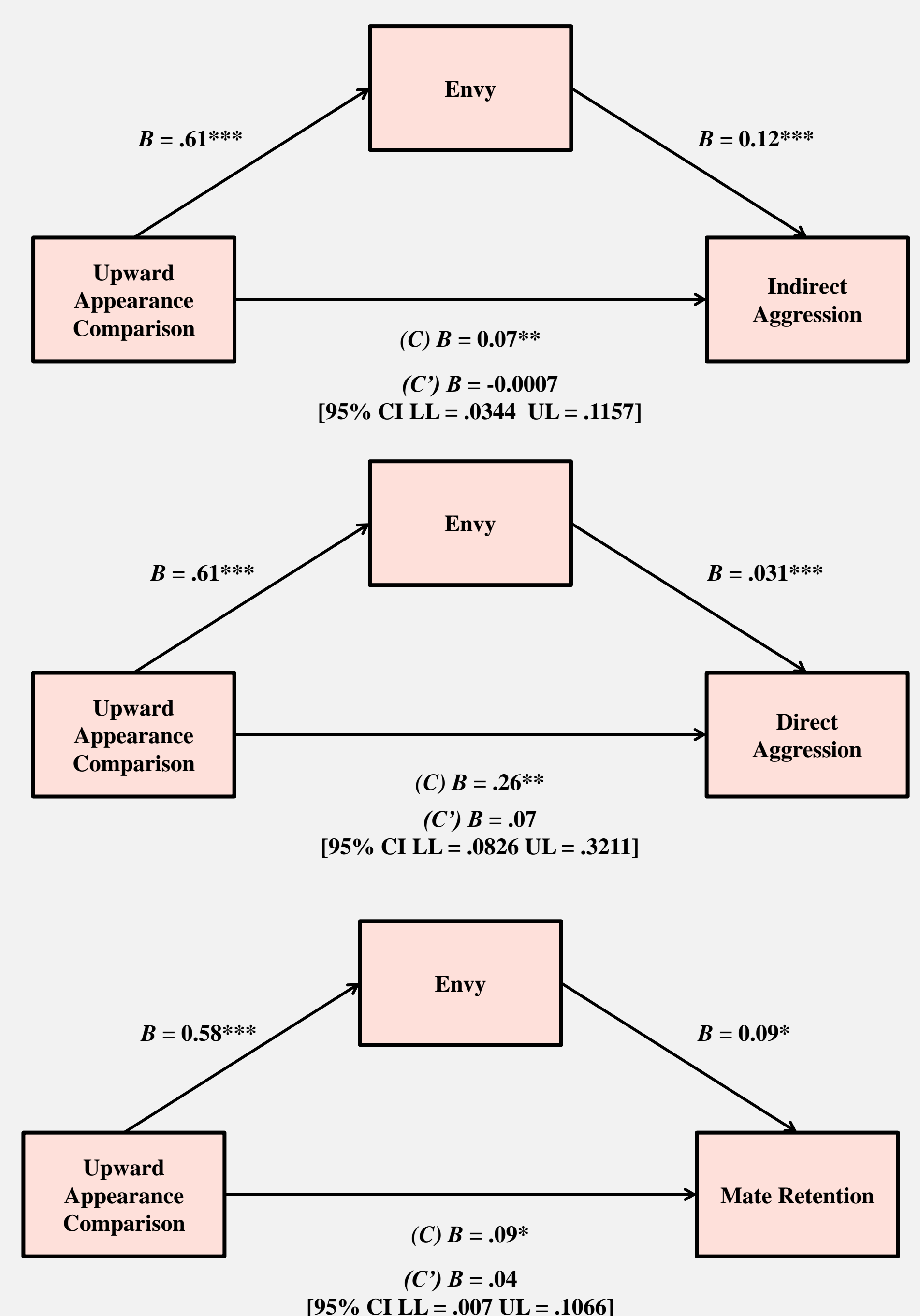


Figure 1. Females † = $p < .10$, * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

