

Appearance and discrimination critical thinking samples

[Business](#), [Management](#)



It is difficult to defend Tom's statement that candidates can be discriminated against based on physical appearance. Although it is in general true that people "naturally" favor more attractive people, when it comes to a business, hiring, legal, or similar situation, discrimination should not be tolerated because attractiveness is highly subjective. It is easy to imagine situations in which appearance affects a candidate's hiring prospects in ways that are natural but unethical and discriminatory. The obvious example is in a hiring situation in which an under-qualified but better-looking person is hired over a less-attractive but well-qualified candidate. A friend once related a story in which she was hired as a waitress, but the attractive female manager did not appear to favor the idea of another attractive young woman being part of her team. In spite of her reliability and skill as an employee, the friend suffered from the manager's jealousy by having her shifts suddenly cancelled in favor of other (male) employees, receiving no support from the manager in difficult situations, and so forth. Maybe it is rare that attractive appearance can work against a person, but in the friend's case it did.

While I do not agree with discrimination based on appearance, especially when it concerns aspects of the self that cannot easily be changed, I believe it is within a business's rights to establish a dress code and personal hygiene standards that employees must adhere to. This can include limitations on obvious physical modifications such as piercings, tattoos, hair color, and so forth. In an article by Robert VerBruggen, he states that a critic of appearance discrimination says businesses should not be permitted to restrict "self expression" if the business cannot demonstrate "substantial business needs" (2010). VerBruggen appears to believe that any sensible

business would not apply draconian, unfairly discriminatory policies about employee's self-expression because it would not be in the business's best interest; however, he also concludes that "rebellious styles of 'self-expression' can be — in fact, are usually intended to be — offputting to the public" (VerBruggen 2010).

Maintaining strict guidelines for employee dress and appearance is appropriate depending on the job and its requirements. Many department and discount stores require employees to wear specific colors of shirts, pants, or even a uniform so that their employees can be easily located by customers in need of assistance, among other reasons. Style of dress is something that can be easily adhered to by most employees. The most compelling counterargument to this would be discrimination or requirements based on factors that employees cannot easily change, especially when they have no effect or relevance to the job. One example would be in an office full of cubicles where employees spend the day performing data entry, filing, and other basic office tasks where part of the dress code is that hats are not permitted, and a candidate who wears a head-scarf for religious reasons is not offered employment because the manager is worried it will go against the dress code of the strict owner. Arguably, religious beliefs are not things a person can easily change about him or herself. Additionally, the head-scarf would have no effect on the employee's ability to perform the required tasks, so this case would be unfair and discriminatory if not illegal.

References

Shaw, William H. (2013). *Business Ethics*. Independence, Kentucky: Cengage Learning.

<https://assignbuster.com/appearance-and-discrimination-critical-thinking-samples/>

VerBruggen, Robert (29 Jun. 2010). "' Appearance Discrimination': The New Racism?" National Review Online. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/243355/>

appearance-discrimination-br-new-racism-robert-verbruggen