

Extent of importance in an individual's appearance



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1. 1 Introduction

Appearance is how someone looks on the outside. Appearance plays a vital role in our life as it most often is able to describe our characteristics from first impressions. A person can be judged by their appearance. A good appearance means to be neat and presentable in our daily life. Appearance will be our first impression to the society. In order to give a good first impression we should maintain our appearance. This can be done by looking into many aspect such as dressing style, hairstyle, personal hygiene and many more. However there are some environmental factors that damage our appearance. To overcome this problem people buy cosmetic products and do plastic surgery. However there are some internal factors that influence our appearance such as our behaviour and attitude. There is no point in spending money on our appearance when we have bad attitudes. Therefore in order to have a good appearance we should look into all aspects.

1. 2 Purpose

The purpose of this survey is to determine the extent of importance in an individual's appearance especially to the students of Sunway University College. Through this research, we would be able to identify and better understand how appearance can affect individual's especially college students.

1. 3 Subject and Procedure

The participants of this study are all students from Sunway University College. Their responses on our survey will be defined as the extent of importance in individuals' appearance. We have decided to distribute the

questionnaires to 50 random participants on the 1st of February to collect their responses on the importance of appearance.

2. 0 Literature review

2. 1 Definition of Appearance

Appearance is the state or style in which an individual appears. Appearance shows the physical outlook of an individual. Appearance however can also refer to inward appearance in the form of our behaviour and attitudes.

According to Niccolo Machiavelli (2008), “ Men in general judge more from appearances than from reality. All men have eyes, but few have the gift of penetration”. This statement shows that appearance is not only judged physically but also through inner beauty.

2. 2 Influence of eating habits on appearance

Eating habits has a high possibility to influence appearance. A person's eating habits can affect his or her body size. Consuming too much food can cause obesity and consuming little food can cause anorexia. Therefore eating habits is important to maintain a good appearance and an ideal body size. One of the best ways to have good eating habits is to eat a variety of foods. The human body needs a wide range of nutrients for daily activities (International Food Information Council Foundation, 1994). Eating a wide range of foods can provide sufficient nutrients to the body. Individual should reduce consuming certain type of food too much and try to eat all kinds of foods to maintain good health. This is because if that particular food contains a high level of fat, then it can affect the body. Other than that more vegetables and fruits should be included in our everyday meal. Skipping meals should be avoided because this can cause a person to overeat or

suffer from gastric. Besides that one should exercise regularly; this can help to burn the fats and keep the body healthy. Exercising also helps to reduce body weight and maintain a good appearance.

2. 3 Appearance differs based on individual's lifestyle.

2. 3. 1 Occupation

Different occupations acquire different appearances. A person that works in the paddy field and a person who works in an office will have different appearances. Some occupations require the use of uniforms which give a standard appearance. Outfits can also give first impressions to others and may become one's identity. A fashion designer would follow the current fashion trend. However, a painter or a mechanic would simply put on an ordinary T-shirt as their working outfit and employees who work in an office would look more formal. Occupation can also change a person's appearance due to the environmental factor. A farmer who works in a paddy field would have darker skin colour compared to a person who works in office (Hashizume, n. d).

2. 3. 2 Mental health and development

Stress can influence appearance as well. Relationship and careers sometimes can cause a vast pool of problems. This will result in inadequate sleep and too much pressure. These pressures will affect the appearance. Poor mental health and development also cause tiredness and lack of energy. Lack of sleep can cause eye bags and pimples while too much pressure can cause hair loss (American Academy of Dermatology, 2008). Too much pressure in studies and work can cause obesity and experts estimate

that 75% of overeating is caused by emotions in reaction to a stressor (Posner, 2008).

2. 3. 3 Habits

Unhealthy habits can affect appearance such as smoking and drinking.

Smoking can cause skin dryness and contribute to complexion colour changes. The decrease in skin moisture will cause premature skin ageing and facial wrinkles. Other than complexion, these unhealthy habits can cause nails to turn yellowish due to content of tar in cigarettes.

Decolourisation of teeth is also an affect of smoking. Those who abuse drugs also tend to have an untidy appearance. First impression on drugs abusers shows a tired and low spirited individual (American Council for Drug Education's, 1999). Habits can be changed, so can appearance. People have to realise their negative habits before it can damage their first impression.

2. 3. 4 Cultural and religious beliefs

Cultural and religious beliefs are personal to each individual. Cultural and religious beliefs can also influence the appearance of a person. These beliefs include having tattoos and body piercing which are traditions among the different ethnics (Hendrix, 2007). For example, appearance can be unique among tribe and native people who still hold strongly onto their cultural beliefs. These tribe members such as those in Padang (Southern Thailand), practise beliefs like having long necks are a symbol of beauty. In order to have elongated necks, the women wear brass rings around their necks. According to their customs, women with elongated necks are considered to be beautiful. There are also other purposes besides beauty for this custom, which is to avoid the tribe's women from leaving the village and marrying

into other tribes. A clearer example would be the use of the headgear by Muslim women around the world. They wear this headgear for religious and tradition purposes. Wearing the headgear is a sign of keeping with the commandments of the religion and as a sign of modesty and respect.

2. 3. 5 Personality

Personality also plays its role in the way a person appears physically. Some individuals may change the way they look in order to be accepted in their group of friends or family. However, there are some who change appearances not because they want to fit in but instead they dress differently to stand out or to gain attention from others. An individual's personality can be determined through their lifestyle and hobbies. For example, a person with a calm personality may enjoy calm activities therefore their appearance will also be calm and relaxed. However, a person with an outgoing personality may enjoy activities like rock climbing or boxing, so, his appearance will also show outgoingness and his style of dressing would be more rugged (Deligne, 2004).

2. 4 Appearance can be changed using different methods

In this era of modern technology appearance of a person is not permanent; it can be changed or improved. One of the most favourite ways that people use most is by using make up. Make up can make a person who is 50 look like a 30 year old. It is also used to hide a person's flaws on their face. Many teenagers use make up following ambassadors. They like to imitate how models and celebrities look like in magazines and televisions (Christian Heftel, n. d). Therefore they do not mind buying expensive beauty products. Even men are using make up these days. Some major changes cannot be

done through make up; that is when people will choose to do cosmetic surgery. This cosmetics surgery can make changes to any parts of the body. One of the most common surgeries is liposuction. This surgery sucks out the fats from the body part that a person wishes to reduce. There are many types of surgeries such as tummy tuck surgery, thigh lift, full body lift, varicose veins and many more. Even though these surgeries are sometimes dangerous, many people are willing to take the risk. Using both methods mentioned above; make up and cosmetic surgery a person can look like how he or she wants too. Previously appearance was god's gift, however now appearance depends on makeup and surgeons.

2. 5 Conclusion

Appearance is an important aspect in one's life. Appearance can differ based on an individual's lifestyle and eating habits. There are also many other external factors that influence appearance. These aspect causes variation among individual. A person with unsatisfied appearance may improve appearance through surgeries and make up. Further discussions on findings are done in Chapter 3 to check the validity of these hypotheses.

3. 0 Discussions of Findings

A survey was conducted on the importance of appearance to individuals. 50 questionnaires were distributed at random to Sunway University College students. The results and discussions are based on the collected answers. The findings will be presented using charts.

3. 1 Gender

The above chart shows that more girls participated in the survey. Number of female respondents was 41 and number of male respondents was 9.

3. 2 Influence of age on appearance

Respondents were asked about the influence of age on appearance. The result shows that the number of respondents who answered yes is 43 and only 7 answered no. This shows that most respondents agree that age does influence appearance.

3. 3 The most obsessed part in appearance

A question was asked on the most obsessed part in appearance. The option given was body size, facial features, height and hair. Most respondents were obsessed about body size and least respondents were obsessed about their height.

3. 4 Features judged on the most in a person's appearance

This question focuses on how people judge other's appearance. Options given were by looking at body size, facial features, height and hair. The result shows that most respondents judge others by looking at facial features and none of them judge others by looking at height.

3. 5 Carrying products that improve appearance.

Many respondents answered that they do not carry products that improve their appearance with them. 76% of the respondents do not carry beauty products with them and only 24% of them carry products that improve their appearance.

3. 6 Monthly spending on appearance.

The pie chart shows the percentage of monthly spending on respondents' appearance. 16% of the respondents have no spending on their appearance monthly. There are 24% of them spending below RM20 in a month, 16% of them spending between RM21 to RM40 and 20% of them spending between <https://assignbuster.com/extent-of-importance-in-an-individuals-appearance/>

RM41 to RM60. The remaining 24% of the respondents spend more than RM60 on appearance monthly. There is no significant percentage in any one of the price ranges.

3. 7 Likeliness to buy products promoted by brand ambassadors.

The likeliness of the respondents to buy products promoted by good looking brand ambassadors is shown in the pie chart above. 70% of the 50 respondents would not put their concerns on the looks of the brand ambassadors. However, the other 30% of respondents are more likely to buy products from good looking ambassadors.

3. 8a Willingness to make changes to appearance.

The pie chart above shows the percentage of respondents who are willing to make changes and those who are not when someone comments badly on their appearance. A significant percentage of 64% of respondents are willing to make a change in their appearance, while 30% of them are unwilling to make changes. The 18 respondents who answer “ No” in this question would then proceed to answering question 3. 8b.

3. 8b Lost of confidence after receiving negative comments on appearance

The pie chart shows the tendency of respondents to lose their confidence when faced with bad comments from the others. There are 89% of respondents who would not lose their confidence after the bad comments. However, 11% of the respondents would lose their confidence after that. It seems that that negative comment does bring an effect on minority of the respondents' confidence.

3. 9 Portion of friends who have good appearance.

This question has been done based on respondents' opinions on portion of their friends who have good appearance. The pie chart shows that over half of the respondents feel that they have 50% to 74% of friends who are good looking. Besides that, the lowest portion in the pie chart shows small percentage of respondents think that they only have 0% to 24% of good looking friends. The result followed by the second large portion of respondents, which are 18% of them judge 25% to 49% of their friends to have good appearance. Lastly, 24% of the respondents feel that over 74% of their friends have good appearances.

3. 10 The main reason for taking care of appearance.

The pie chart shows the main reasons for the respondents to maintain their appearance. The largest portion of 36% in the result states that majority of the respondents are more concerned about their self-satisfaction. Apart from self-satisfaction, the second largest portion in the chart, which is 34% of the total, determines the importance of respondents to establish their confidence through appearance. Thirdly, respondents take care of their appearance in order to give good first impressions. Lastly only 2% of the respondents are concerned about appearance so that they can be accepted by the people around them.

3. 11 The period taken to change appearance.

Based on the pie chart above, it shows the period for the respondents to make a change on their appearance from time to time. The result verifies that majority of the respondents are making a change on their appearance once every 10 to 12 months. For the second largest portion of 26% in the chart, these respondents change their appearance once in 4 months to half a

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year. Only 22% of respondents change appearance once in 7 to 9 months and 20% of respondents a change their appearance once every 1 to 3 months.

4. 0 Recommendation

Based on the findings it can be seen that many of the respondents are obsessed about their facial feature. Facial features also play an important role on how others judge a person. This shows many people nowadays judge a person through facial features. This is an unhealthy practise as the saying goes “ beauty is only skin deep”. Appearance should not be judge by looking a facial feature. Facial features only show how a person looks on the outside. Instead appearance should be judge by looking at inner beauty such as character and personality.

5. 0 Conclusion

5. 1 Importance of appearance

Appearance plays an important role in every individual's daily life. Apart from giving good impression, appearance also shows one's personality. The findings in Chapter 3 show that the hypothesis, the extent of importance of appearance in an individual is accepted.

5. 2 influence of age, habits and environment on appearance

People believe that age can influence one's appearance. It is true that the moisture of skin and the fairness of facial features would deteriorate once people proceed to the older phrases in life. Different phrases in life shows how every human being undergoes the cycle of development and how all these would result in human's physical appearance. In the findings, body size and facial features have obtained the highest possibility for people to judge

the others' first impression. This may cause most of the respondents to be obsessed on their body size. The result showed that it was quite rare for people to judge first impressions by looking into their personalities. Due to those obsessions, majority of the respondents have spent more than RM60 per month to improve their appearance. However, there were only a few of them who practiced the habit of carrying appearance-improvement-products with them. Their actions may be due to the situation; different situations such as wedding ceremonies would influence how concerned people would be on their appearance.

5.3 The impact of judgment on appearance

In addition to that, people are more likely to have a look into products' functions rather than purchase the product by just judging on the appearance of the brand ambassadors. The findings showed that only 30% of the respondents would be influenced by the appearance of brand ambassadors. Furthermore, appearance would mentally affect the people. People would try to make changes when someone has badly commented on their appearance. In other words, it demonstrates that people always wonder how others look at them and accept them. Apart from the respondents who chose to change their appearance, those who decided to remain the same after the bad comments were confident and maintained the way they looked. The responses given showed that people were in their collective minds because they considered others' comments and tried to be accepted by the society in which they live. Society's perspective on good appearance was able to shape various changes in people.

5. 4 Individuals concern on their appearance

Yet, there is no specific meaning or extent for good appearance and, therefore, people are judging others by following the notions in their society. Based on their own opinions, most of the respondents thought that 50% to 74% of their friends were good looking. Once again the result determined how people would perform their appearance as 'normal' as how the others looked in the society. Besides, the main reasons for the majority to take concern on their appearance are self-satisfaction, confidence and good first impression. Without any denying, once people satisfied their appearance, their commitment on works would be increased followed by the ascent of confidence. However, most of the respondents changed their appearance once in a year or in half year. This meant that they were less concerning on their hair styles or dressing styles if compared to their body size and facial features. Indirectly, this respond showed the moderate changing of fashion trend among the college students.

5. 5 Conclusion

Appearance is a vital factor in every individuals life. However, appearance not only refers to outward but also inward appearance such as attitudes and personality. Appearance is influenced by factors such as age, habits and the environment. The environment influences appearance , for example, individuals are more concerned about their appearance when attending weddings compared to if they are just home on the weekends. Generally, when individuals receive bad comments on their appearance they tend to make changes and improve on it. Appearance is improved in aspects such as dressing manner, hair styles and even facial makeovers. Certain individuals also improve their appearance in order to be accepted into the society.

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