Is your physical look important to you? If so, why?

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Abstract

Those are the results of an online survey 275 people took part in about the perceived importance of one's own physical look and the reason for it.

92% of people consider their physical look at least somewhat important and about 44% of those consider it as really important.
The reasons are many and can vary a lot from person to person.
Self-confidence, with feeling comfortable and self-worth, is one of the most common ones. Other reasons are often referred to society and judgment from other people and they include getting some sort of advantage, having a better love or sex life, or not being seen in a negative way (which also relates to self-confidence).
In some cases, the reason is just personal (the subject likes looking good). But even among those cases, lots of times there are also extrinsic motivations.
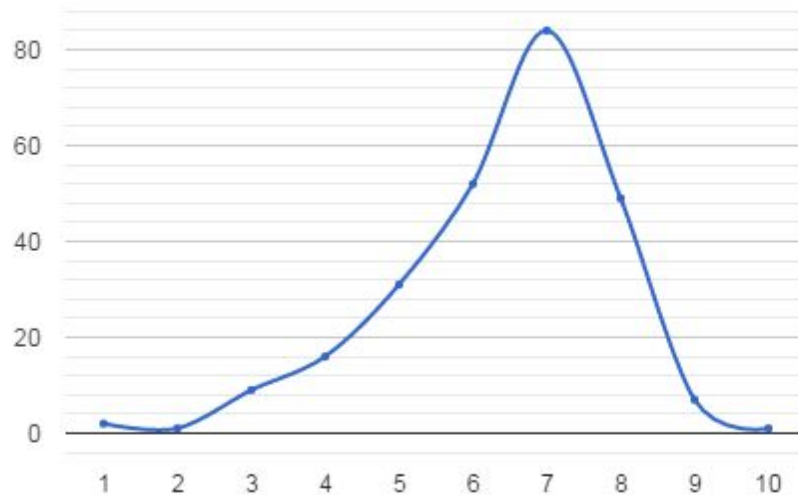
Analysis overview

Results
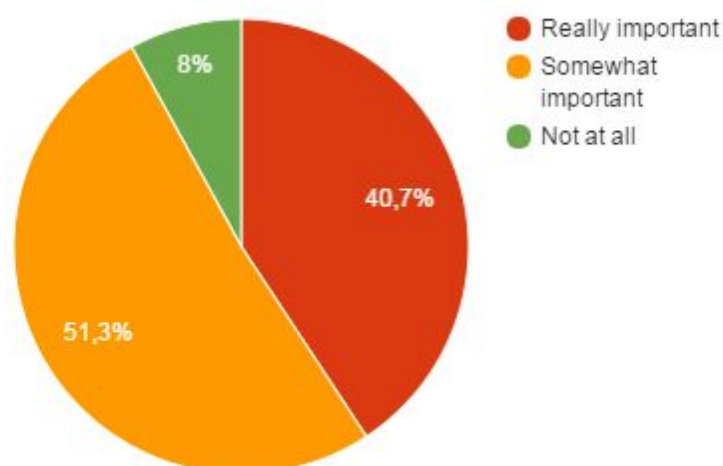
How good-looking do you think you are?

This question has not been asked to those who stated their physical look was not important to them at all.

Subjects have been asked to rank their physical look from 1 ("Really ugly") to 10 ("Really good-looking").
The most common score was 7:

Why is it important to you?

This question has not been asked to those who stated their physical look was not important to them at all.
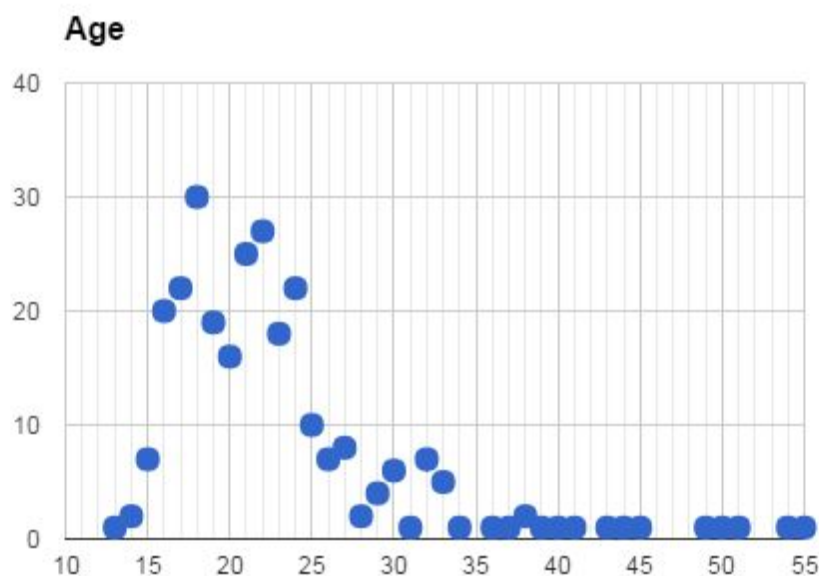The following are random 30 answers:

- *My ego demands compliments. I must feed it.*
- *It defines the way people look at you and judge you in day to day life. I also feel more confident when I think I look good.*
- *attract a mate, get a job*
- *I don't really know why. Maybe because people will judge me based upon my looks.*
- *Feel more confident when I look alright*
- *I want to look as good as is reasonable for the occasion but I also am not bothered enough to put in excessive amounts of effort just for the sake of appearances.*
- *Being satisfied with the way I appear to other people.*
- *Get laid*
- *Being healthy physically is probably the most important thing. Caring about your physical appearance is important to build self esteem and to attract others.*
- *Because I want to adore myself, I also have a fear of being judged as unhealthy or someone who doesn't take care of himself*
- *i feel more confident and energetic when i look put together.*
- *I feel more confident as I feel others perceive me to be a better person*
- *I guess I care too much what other people think, but also, whether people want to admit it or not, being attractive gets you places in life.*
- *I do not want to look like a bum; Dress to impress.*
- *I have some social anxiety, so feeling like I look decent means I have one less thing to worry that strangers are judging me about. It's like a bit of armor.*
- *My physical appearance expresses who I am as a person, in particular my gender. Whether or not I "pass" as male, or at least as /masculine/ as I want to be, depends largely on my physical appearance. When I look in the mirror and see myself as I*
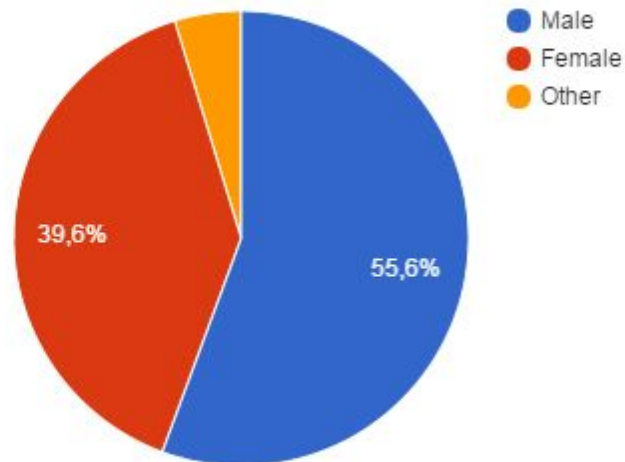
want to, it makes me feel excellent. It's also a way for me to show off my sense of style -- mostly for myself but of course it's nice when I get compliments on it.

- *Because I'm extremely shy/insecure and it's the main thing I expect people to judge me for.*
- *It is not important in the sense that agreed upon beauty standars apply to my love life. But when I love someone I find them attractive. Looks and behaviour are part of a whole I cannot separate.*
- *People judge you on appearance.*
- *If I don't find my partner physically attractive, we're not going to have an enjoyable sex life.*
- *It is a big part of attraction to me. Yes, what's on the inside matters more, but I don't want to have to stare at someone ugly for the rest of my life. I want to make a cute couple and cute babies.*
- *Fitness and hair grooming. Nothing much else i can do*
- *Looks are good for self-confidence, and it makes it easier to present yourself to others*
- *Cant be looking like a ragged douche right?*
- *It affects how I am perceived by the world - how seriously I am taken, whether I am accepted & trusted.*
- *How I'm perceived by others*
- *To find someone to spend my life with.*
- *It's part of how people initially judge me.*
- *To seem more like an adult around my students.*
- *Because you have to wake up every morning and see the person first thing. Not to mention, you're going to be seeing the person for the rest of your life. As well, physical appearance is important for future children. Beautiful people get more benefits, and you want the best for your future child.*
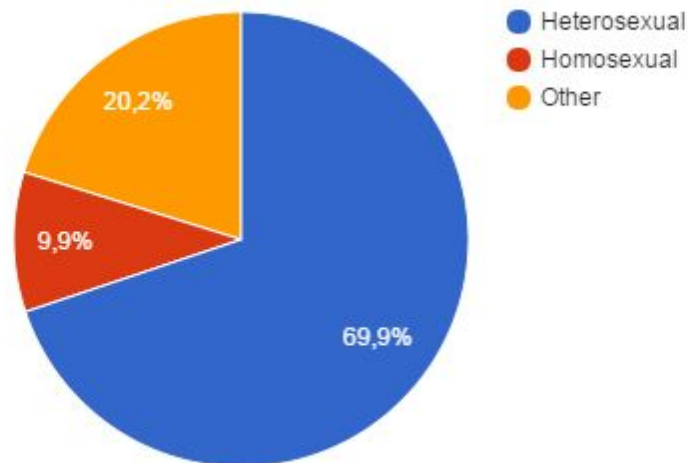
Sample demographic

Gender

Legend:
- Male
- Female
- Other

39,6%
55,6%

Sexual orientation
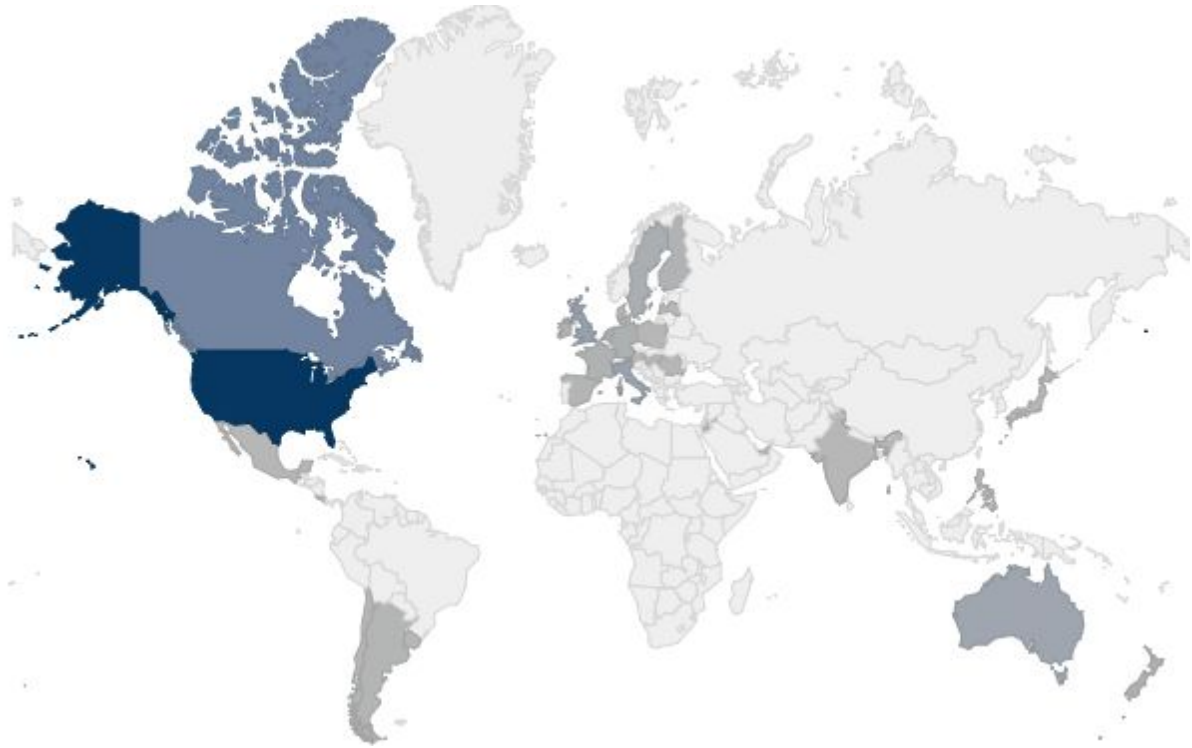

Legend:
- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Other

20,2%
9,9%
69,9%

Country

The darkest countries are those with more people who took part in the survey.
54,6% of subjects are from USA.

Detailed information

The following data is useful for those who want to deeply investigate this analysis into details.

The survey

The survey was an online one made with [Google Forms](#) and shared through social media (especially [Reddit](#)). A total of 275 answers from different countries were collected.

The survey contained the following questions:
1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your sexual orientation?
4. What country do you currently live in?
5. How important is your physical look to you?
6. Why is it important to you?
7. How good-looking do you think you are?
8. Other details.

All questions were optional except for the numbers 5, 6 and 7. The questions 6 and 7 were only asked to those who didn't answer "Not at all" to the question number 6.

On Reddit there were also some comments about the survey, which can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Reliability problems

This analysis may have some reliability problems, which are explained below.
Those problems don't necessearily make it unreliable.

Changes

The answers of question 5 had to be modified twice.
"Really important" used to be misspelled as "Realy important", while "Somewhat important" used to be "Quite important".
All the "Realy important" and "Somewhat important" answers are counted as "Really important" and "Quite important" in the analysis.
Another minor change is about the question number 7, which used to contain "well-looking" instead of "good-looking".

Inaccurate answers

Some users may have given random or wrong answers, or they may have misinterpreted the question (in particular, some of them may have answered about why they find important the look of other people, instead of their own).
All answers were considered in the percentages, but clearly inaccurate open answers were, of course, not considered.

Sexual orientation

Less than 70% of subject who answered the survey stated they were heterosexual.
Since heterosexual people are supposed to be more than 90%, that may suggest some problem in the sample (which may not be representing the actual population in a correct way).
This one may be the bigger problem of this survey, but it may also not be, since the actual percentage of straight people is not know.
In particular, a YouGov survey suggests that nearly half (about 49%) of the population between 18 and 24 years old don't identify as completely straight and that pretty much solves the problem.

Complete list of answers

For those who want to make a deeper analysis of the results, a complete list of all original answers is available here:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IFoJtpfSg2P702TNqK49K_QMslJSpd_jpph4Se9L6d8/