

Role of Physical Appearance in Associating People with a Group Identity

Authors : Gurleen Kaur

Abstract : Being tall-short, fat-thin, black-white, etc. is an inevitable part of how people perceive you. This association of people with your external appearance carves out an identity for you. This paper will look at the reasons why people relate a person to a particular categorization on the basis of his/her physical appearance. The paper delves into reasons for this categorization into groups: Subconscious grouping, personal gain, ease of relating to the group, and social acceptance. Development of certain unique physical features also leads to a person relating himself to a collective identity. Thus, this paper will support the fact that physical appearance plays a crucial role in categorization of people into groups and hence forming a group identity for them. This paper is divided into three parts. The first part will discuss what physical appearance is and how is it linked to our daily lives. The second part will talk about why it works i.e. why this factor of external appearance is important in formation of identity. The last part will talk about the factors which lead to categorization of identity because of physical appearance.

Keywords : group identity, physical appearance, subconscious grouping, collective identity

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