



# APPEARANCE MATTERS

"Optimizing the outcomes for vocational guidance counselling and vocational training"

# APPEARANCE MATTERS OPTIMISING THE OUTCOMES FOR VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE COUNSELLING AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

National report - AUSTRIA

Prepared by





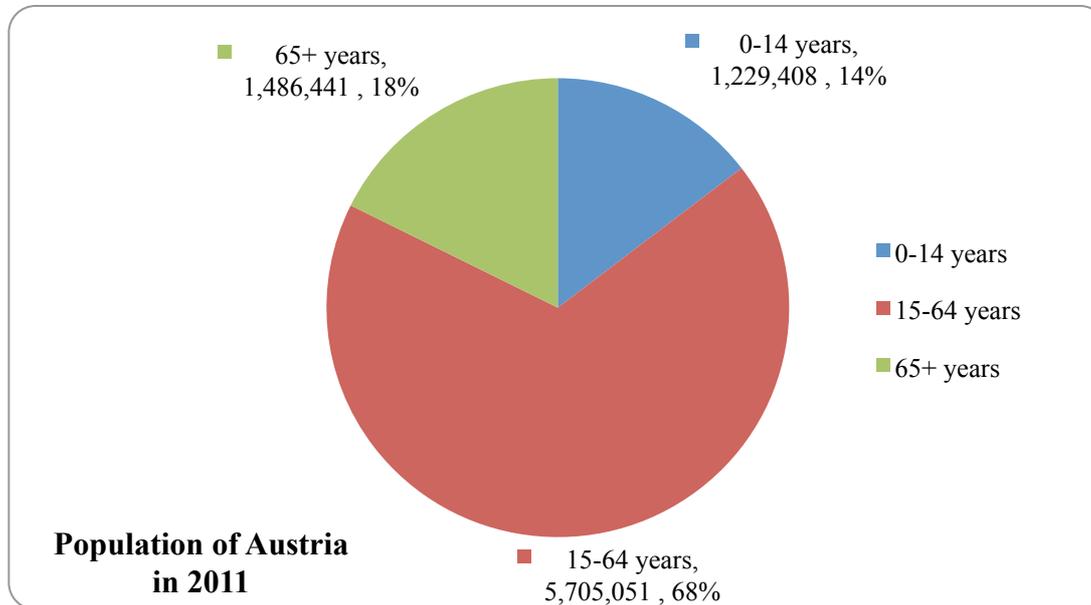
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## COUNTRY SPECIFIC BACKGROUND

Austria has a size of 83.870 km<sup>2</sup> and in 2012, had a population of approx. 8.457.000.<sup>1</sup> In 2011, Austria had a population of 8.420.900. Broken down into age groups, the following numbers present themselves:



Graph 1 - Population of Austria in age groups<sup>2</sup>

### Socioeconomic status

In 2012, Austria had a GDP of 36.640 Euros/ citizen or 68.770 Euros/ working citizen (based on a full time-equivalent). In 2011, the GDP/ citizen was 35.710 Euros or 85.110 Euros per working citizen.<sup>3</sup>

The following table presents the average gross annual income and the net annual income in Austria for the gainfully employed in general and gender specific, as well as for the different age groups, for the year 2011.

gross and net annual income 2011 in age groups						
age group	gross annual income <sup>1)2)</sup>			net annual income <sup>1)3)</sup>		
	total	male	female	total	male	female
	Euros					
<b>gainfully employed</b>						
<b>total</b>						
number of persons	4.004.748	2.112.666	1.892.082	4.004.748	2.112.666	1.892.082

<sup>1</sup> Cf. WKO, Fläche und Bevölkerung 2012. <http://wko.at/statistik/eu/europa-bevoelkerung.pdf> [access date: 080313]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Statistik Austria. ‚Volkswirtschaftliche Gesamtrechnung Hauptgrößen‘, [http://www.statistik.gv.at/web\\_de/statistiken/volkswirtschaftliche\\_gesamtrechnungen/bruttoinlandsprodukt\\_und\\_hauptggregate/jahresdaten/index.html](http://www.statistik.gv.at/web_de/statistiken/volkswirtschaftliche_gesamtrechnungen/bruttoinlandsprodukt_und_hauptggregate/jahresdaten/index.html) [access date: 080313]



arithmetic average	29.017	35.379	21.913	20.197	24.016	15.932
<b>up to 19 years</b>						
number of persons	179.371	83.722	95.649	179.371	83.722	95.649
arithmetic average	4.793	5.397	4.265	3.878	4.272	3.533
<b>20 - 29 years</b>						
number of persons	927.076	486.968	440.108	927.076	486.968	440.108
arithmetic average	18.600	21.088	15.847	13.682	15.244	11.955
<b>30 - 39 years</b>						
number of persons	934.871	501.986	432.885	934.871	501.986	432.885
arithmetic average	27.820	34.026	20.624	19.444	23.219	15.067
<b>40 - 49 years</b>						
number of persons	1.122.786	579.579	543.207	1.122.786	579.579	543.207
arithmetic average	34.046	42.300	25.239	23.362	28.203	18.197
<b>50 - 59 years</b>						
number of persons	760.123	403.334	356.789	760.123	403.334	356.789
arithmetic average	38.773	46.735	29.773	26.312	30.890	21.136
<b>60+ years</b>						
number of persons	80.521	57.077	23.444	80.521	57.077	23.444
arithmetic average	54.586	62.674	34.896	38.417	43.723	25.498

Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Lohnsteuerdaten - Sozialstatistische Auswertungen. 19.12.2012.

1) Without apprentices. - 2) gross anual income according to § 25 EStG. - 3) gross anual income according to § 25 EStG deducting social security contribution and income tax before employee assessment.

The following table provides an overview of the household incomes in Austria, divided into low, medium and high income groups; generally, age specific and according to citizenship.

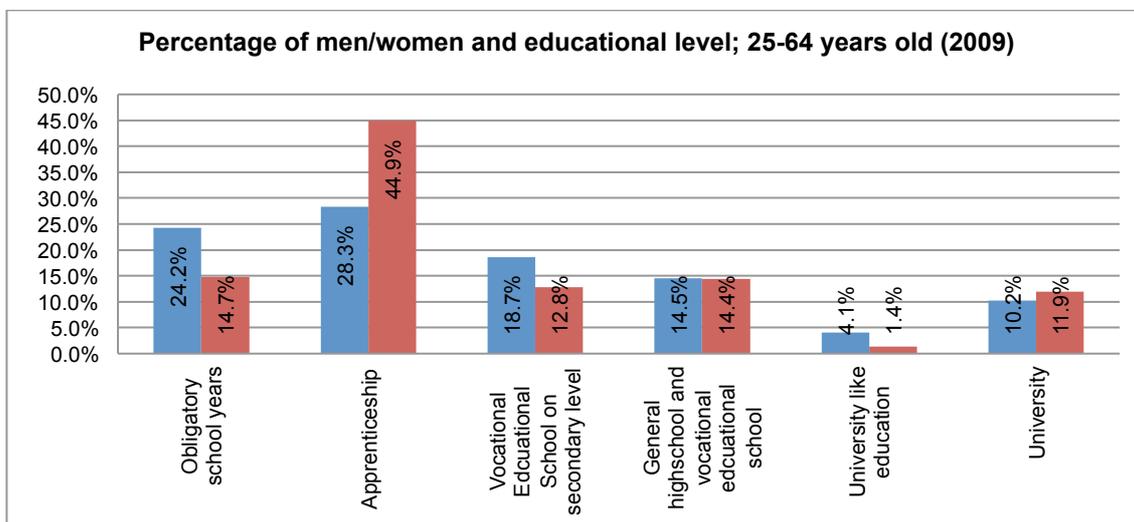
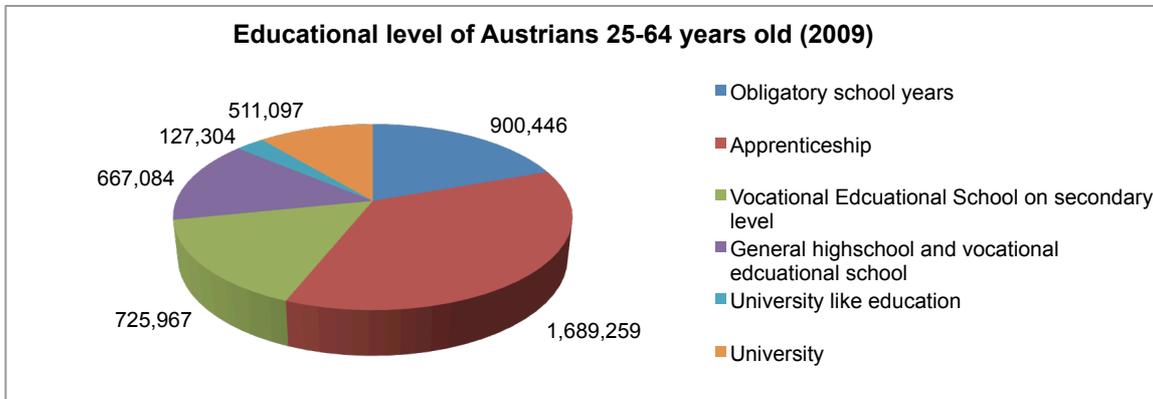
<b>Low, medium and high income classes by socio-demographic criteria</b>								
income class	Total (=100%) in 1.000	Low		Medium		High		Index
		in 1.000	in %	in 1.000	in %	in 1.000	in %	
<b>total</b>	<b>8.316</b>	<b>1.051</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6.562</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>age group</b>								
up to 19 years	1.776	268	15	1.424	80	84	5	90
20 - 39 years	2.065	263	13	1.647	80	155	8	101
40 - 64 years	3.057	295	10	2.414	79	348	11	109
65+ years	1.419	226	16	1.077	76	115	8	94
<b>Citizenship</b>								
Austria	7.394	786	11	5.934	80	674	9	103
nationalized (Non-EU/EFTA)	289	66	23	217	75	(6)	(2)	76
Not Austrian	922	265	29	628	68	29	3	75
EU/EFTA	360	83	23	252	70	24	7	91
Other countries	562	182	32	375	67	(5)	(1)	71

Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, EU-SILC 2011. - Low: below the threat of poverty line (< 60% of Medial-equivalent yearly income). - Medium: above the threat of poverty line (60-180% of Medial-equivalent yearly income). - High: above the triple threat of poverty line (> 180% of Medial-equivalent yearly income). - The Index represents the Medial value of the respective population group in % from the medial equivalent yearly income of the total population. Education: only persons of 16 yeary+. Numbers in brackets indicate low number of persons in the statistical sample.



## Education

The following two graphs provide an overview of the educational level of Austrian citizens in the age group 25 – 64 years. The first graph gives a general overview; the second graph shows gender-specific data of the population in specific educational levels.



Cf.<sup>4</sup> blue = women, red = men.

<sup>4</sup> Both tables cf. [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/bildung\\_und\\_kultur/bildungsstand\\_der\\_bevoelkerung/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bildung_und_kultur/bildungsstand_der_bevoelkerung/index.html) --> Ergebnisse im Überblick: Bildungsstand". [access date: 150213]



## Unemployment

According to the Austrian labour office (further referred to as “AMS”) 251.000 people were unemployed the year 2010<sup>5</sup> (145.000 men, 106.000 women). This corresponds to an unemployment rate of 6.9% (6.2% for men, 7.5% for women). In 2011, the unemployment rate fell to 4.2%, but as a consequence of the lasting economic crisis, rose again in 2012 to 6.7%, which means that 246 700 people (139 100 men and 107 600 women) were unemployed in 2012.

Unemployed and unemployment rate after ILO by age and gender								
Year	Unemployed				Unemployment rate <sup>1)</sup>			
	total	15-24 years	25-49 years	50+ years	total	15-24 years	25-49 years	50+ years
	in 1.000				in %			
	<b>total</b>							
2011	179,0	49,1	102,5	27,5	4,2	8,3	3,8	2,7
	<b>male</b>							
2011	92,9	25,1	51,3	16,5	4,0	7,9	3,6	2,9
	<b>female</b>							
2011	86,1	24,0	51,1	11,0	4,3	8,8	4,0	2,5

Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, From 2004 onwards micro-census labour force survey, annual average across all weeks. 15.3.2012.

Population in private households without military service and community service. –Unemployment after ILO concept: unemployed = not gainfully employed up to 74 years, looked for work within the last 4 weeks, could start a job within two weeks or within 3 months.- 1) in respect to all gainfully employed from 15 – 74 years.

Cf. Statistik Austria.<sup>6</sup>

The number of people receiving social benefits (unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance), since its all-time high following the economic crisis in 2009, is again lower in 2011:

Recipients of unemployment benefits of unemployment assistance 2009 - 2011						
year	Recipients of unemployment benefits of unemployment assistance					
	total	female	male	total	female	male
	Jahresdurchschnitt (absolut)			Jährliche Veränderung (in %)		
2009	237.525	92.890	144.635	23,8	14,8	30,3
2010	229.135	91.600	137.535	-3,5	-1,4	-4,9
2011	223.209	92.795	130.414	-2,6	1,3	-5,2

Q: Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich. Erstellt am: 12.09.2012.

Cf. Statistik Austria<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Cf. STATISTICS AUSTRIA – Figures from the “AMS” (Austrian labour office); November 2011

<sup>6</sup> Cf. [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/arbeitsmarkt/arbeitslose\\_arbeitssuchende/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/arbeitsmarkt/arbeitslose_arbeitssuchende/index.html) [access date: 0080313]



In accordance with a lower birth rate, the number of recipients of child care allowance dropped since 2009:

Recipients of childcare allowance 2009 - 2011						
year	all varieties	all-in childcare allowance				income-contingent childcare allowance
		Variety 30 + 6 Monate <sup>1)</sup>	Variety 20 + 4 Monate <sup>1)</sup>	Variety 15 + 3 Monate <sup>1)</sup>	Variety 12 + 2 Monate <sup>1)</sup>	Variety 12 + 2 Monate <sup>1)</sup>
recipients (male and female)						
<b>Total</b>						
2009	155.605	116.598	30.595	8.412	.	.
2010	147.546	101.935	29.761	5.532	2.681	7.637
2011	141.694	93.233	30.552	4.846	3.131	9.932
<b>female</b>						
2009	148.282	111.781	28.934	7.567	.	.
2010	140.833	98.178	28.183	4.891	2.445	7.136
2011	135.551	90.045	29.010	4.419	2.780	9.297
<b>male</b>						
2009	7.323	4.817	1.661	845	.	.
2010	6.713	3.757	1.578	641	236	501
2011	6.143	3.188	1.542	427	351	635

Q: Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend. Erstellt am: 17.09.2012.  
 1) Die zusätzlichen Monate stehen nur zur Verfügung, wenn sie der zweite Elternteil in Anspruch nimmt.

Cf. Statistik Austria<sup>8</sup>

In 2011, 368.196 Austrian inhabitants received care allowance. Looking at the gender-specific data, it is noticeable that the number of women receiving care allowance (245.388) is much higher than the respective number of men (122.809).

Recipients of care allowance 2011								
annual means	all levels of care allowance	level						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>recipients (male and female)</b>								
annual means	368.196	78.932	120.058	61.723	53.160	34.660	13.077	6.586
<b>female</b>								
annual means	245.388	55.462	78.470	40.382	34.678	23.505	8.384	4.507
<b>male</b>								
annual means	122.809	23.470	41.588	21.341	18.482	11.155	4.693	2.079

Q: Hauptverband der österreichischen Sozialversicherungsträger, Pflegegeldstatistik - Sonderauswertungen. Erstellt am: 05.07.2012.  
 1) Auf Basis des Bundespflegegeldgesetzes von folgenden Trägern: Pensions- und Unfallversicherung, Bahn, BVA-Pensionsservice, Post, Postbus, Telekom, Bundessozialamt; gesamtes Bundesgebiet und Ausland. Ohne Landeslehrerinnen und -lehrer und ohne Opferbefürsorgte.

Cf. Statistik Austria<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Cf. [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/soziales/sozialleistungen\\_auf\\_bundesebene/arbeitslosenleistungen/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/soziales/sozialleistungen_auf_bundesebene/arbeitslosenleistungen/index.html) [access date: 080313]

<sup>8</sup> Cf. [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/soziales/sozialleistungen\\_auf\\_bundesebene/familienleistungen/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/soziales/sozialleistungen_auf_bundesebene/familienleistungen/index.html) [access date: 080313]



## Health Care

*The provision of health care in Austria is a legally consolidated duty of public authorities. Health insurance in Austria is statutory; therefore 98% of inhabitants have a health insurance. It provides them with the possibility to use health services provided in hospitals (stationary or outpatient), by resident physicians (all branches) or other independent health care professionals, e.g. physiotherapists, midwife, psychologists, etc. The health insurance companies conclude contracts with the Medical Council which codify how much support each individual gets for the medical services they need, i.e. not everything is paid by the state, and different services have different deductibles. These also depend on the insurance company, the employment status of the individuals (e.g. employed vs. self-employed), the salary level and the kind of service needed. If treatment in a hospital is needed, the patient needs to pay a daily fee to help cover the costs. The fee is regulated by the Law for Medical and Rehabilitation Institutions (KAKuG). Other possible deductibles are different in each province.<sup>10</sup>*

## Education

In Austria, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture is responsible for the funding education. Education within the public school system is generally free; however, deductibles have to be paid for school books, some school events, etc. Financially weaker parents can however apply for aids that help them pay their children's education costs.<sup>11</sup> Compulsory education in Austria ends after 9 school years, at the age of 15.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf.

[http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/soziales/sozialleistungen\\_auf\\_bundesebene/bundespflegegeld/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/soziales/sozialleistungen_auf_bundesebene/bundespflegegeld/index.html) [access date: 080313]

<sup>10</sup> Cf. <https://www.gesundheit.gv.at/Portal.Node/ghp/public/content/FinanzierungGesundheitswesen.html> [access date: 110313]

<sup>11</sup> Cf. <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/befoe/index.xml> [access date: 110313]



### Total scholars and school dropouts

In the school year of 2010/2011, a total of 1.120.256 students were enrolled in Austria's schools. In the last decade, there has been a decrease of the total number of students in compulsory schooling which can be explained by the drop of the birth rate in the years following 1995 (see table below).

Scholars from 2000/01 to 2010/11			
School year	2000/01	2009/10	2010/11
General obligatory schools 1)	690,3	596,2	586,6
Academic secondary schools ("AHS")	184,7	202,6	200,7
Vocational schools (apprentices)	132,6	140,3	137,9
Vocational schools ("BMS" and "BHS")	178,5	196,7	195,0
<b>Total of scholars</b>	<b>1.186,2</b>	<b>1.135,6</b>	<b>1.120,3</b>
Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, "Schulstatistik", Vienna, 13.12.2011.			
1) until 2008/09 including new middle school ("Neue Mittelschule")			

On a tertiary level according to STATISTICS AUSTRIA, a total of 278.917 students were enrolled in the winter semester 2011/12. In total there are about 1.4 million students involved in education on primary, secondary and tertiary level at the moment.

### Early school leavers<sup>12</sup>

Early school leavers 1995 to 2011			
Year	Total	Female	Male
	in %		
1995	13,6	17,3	9,9
1996	12,1	14,9	9,2
1997	10,8	12,5	9,0
1999	10,7	11,9	9,6
2000	10,2	10,7	9,6
2001	10,2	10,7	9,7
2002	9,5	10,2	8,7
2003	9,0	9,8	8,3
2004*)	9,5	8,8	10,2
2005	9,1	8,7	9,6
2006*)	9,8	9,7	10,0
2007	10,7	10,1	11,4
2008	10,1	9,8	10,4

<sup>12</sup> Cf. [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_en/statistics/education\\_culture/formal\\_education/early\\_school\\_leavers/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/education_culture/formal_education/early_school_leavers/index.html)



2009	8,7	8,9	8,5
2010	8,3	8,2	8,4
2011	8,3	7,8	8,8
S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Labour Force Survey (Microcensus). Up till 2002 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter, since 2003 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter. Compiled on 19 April 2012			
Early school leavers refers to persons aged 18 to 24 in the following two conditions: the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short and respondents declared not having received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group. - *) Break in time series.			

In Austria, the number of early school leavers as a proportion of the corresponding age group is significantly below the EU average and has moreover decreased since the mid-1990s. (See table on the left.)

The term early school leavers here refers to people between 18 and 24 years of age whose highest qualification is below upper secondary level and who are not participating in training or further education.

### Current data

In 2011, the proportion of early school leavers was 8.3% (EU-15: 15.4%; EU-27: 14.1% - comparative figures of 2010). A total of around 58.000 people in Austria therefore had no further education qualifications, 31.000 were male and 27.000 were female. In Austria, however, the terminology concerning early school leavers or drop-outs is ambiguous and has to be treated with care. Since the term “early school leavers” has been introduced by the OECD, there are difficulties with the German translation. Sometimes, “drop-outs” is used as a translation, even on institutional level, while sometimes, early school leavers – the appropriate translation – is used. It can therefore be difficult to correctly interpret statistics about these parts of inhabitants.<sup>13</sup> A statistics published by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, for example, published the same number for 2011(8.3%)<sup>14</sup>, but claimed that this was the number of drop-outs who have not completed secondary II education, an apprenticeship or are in other educational programmes. Moreover, the publication is titled “Frühzeitiger Schulabbruch – Early School Leaving – Drop-out”. Most drop-outs are assumed to leave the education system in secondary II education once they have completed their compulsory schooling years. To date, there are no statistics that show in which educational path (secondary II vocational education or apprenticeships) young adults are more likely to drop out, or the number of male or female drop-outs per educational path.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. [https://www.zsi.at/attach/002\\_2012\\_schulabbrecher.pdf](https://www.zsi.at/attach/002_2012_schulabbrecher.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Cf. <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/schulabbruch.xml>



## Vienna

The Austrian participants will mostly come from the region of Vienna, which is also Austria’s capital city. In 2011, Vienna had a population of 1.721.573. Again split into age groups, the following numbers result<sup>15</sup>:

Vienna has a size of 414,87 km<sup>2</sup>. The numbers of Viennese households in the different income classes are illustrated in the following table<sup>16</sup>:

Low, medium and high income classes by socio-demographic criteria								
income class	Total (=100%) in 1.000	Low		Medium		High		Index
		in 1.000	in %	in 1.000	in %	in 1.000	in %	
Vienna	1.698	325	19	1.179	69	194	11	94

Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, EU-SILC 2011. - Low: below the threat of poverty line (< 60% of Medial-equivalent yearly income). - Medium: above the threat of poverty line (60-180% of Medial-equivalent yearly income). - High: above the triple threat of poverty line (> 180% of Medial-equivalent yearly income). - The Index represents the Medial value of the respective population group in % from the medial equivalent yearly income of the total population. Education: only persons of 16 yeary+. Numbers in brackets indicate low number of persons in the statistical sample.

As education is concerned, the following picture presents itself in Vienna.<sup>17</sup>

Level of education 25 bis 64 years - Vienna									
province, gender	total	highest completed level of education							
		compulsory schooling	apprenticeship	vocational educational school on secondary level	general high school	vocational educational school on secondary II level	college	university-like education	University
Vienna - total	967.270	222.866	243.546	109.067	96.762	78.541	9.895	22.670	183.923
<b>male</b>									
Wien	474.047	99.505	145.449	40.755	44.477	42.374	3.740	5.624	92.123
<b>female</b>									
Vienna	493.223	123.361	98.097	68.312	52.285	36.167	6.155	17.046	91.800
<b>in %</b>									
Vienna	100,0	23,0	25,2	11,3	10,0	8,1	1,0	2,3	19,0
<b>male</b>									
Vienna	100,0	21,0	30,7	8,6	9,4	8,9	0,8	1,2	19,4
<b>female</b>									
Vienna	100,0	25,0	19,9	13,9	10,6	7,3	1,3	3,5	18,6

Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Bildungsstandregister 2010. Erstellt am 1.10.2012. - 1) Inklusive Personen ohne Pflichtschulabschluss.

There are, unfortunately, no data about the number of drop-outs or early school leavers in Vienna.

## Unemployment

In 2011, the province of Vienna had an unemployment rate (EU measurement) of 7.1%. The unemployment rate for men was 7.4%, and for women, it was 6.8%.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Cf. [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/index.html) [access date: 080313]

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/bildung\\_und\\_kultur/bildungsstand\\_der\\_bevoelkerung/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bildung_und_kultur/bildungsstand_der_bevoelkerung/index.html) [access date: 0803013]

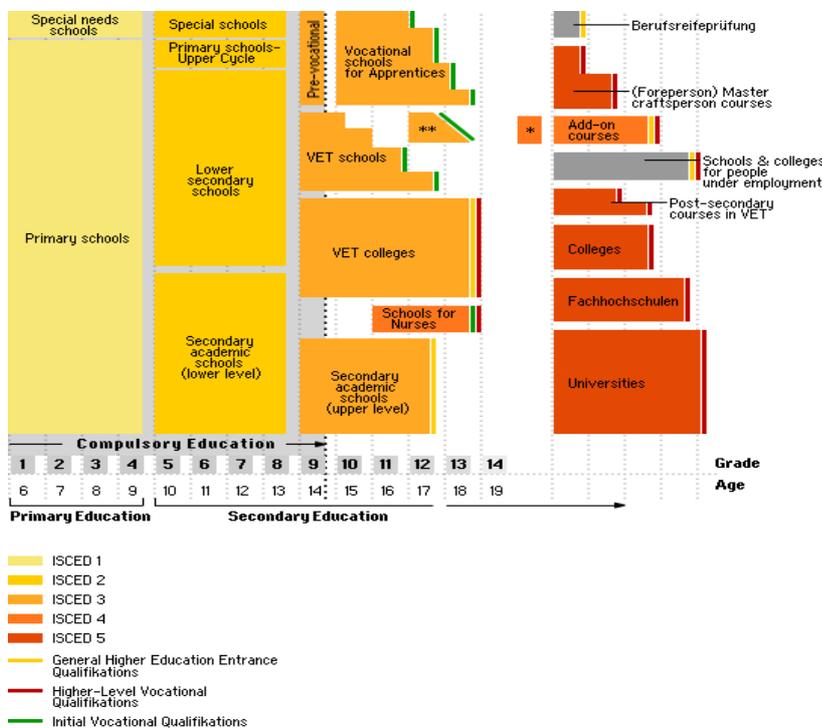


## VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND GUIDANCE

### The Austrian VET System

The Austrian educational system offers a great variety of opportunities following compulsory education (9 grades) and three of four possible education paths on secondary level II offering opportunities for vocational training (see figure 1). Besides the possibility to attend a secondary academic school (Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule, AHS) providing general education regarding humanities, science and languages and leads to university entrance, learners can choose one of the following types of vocational schools:

- five-year full-time vocational education and training (VET) colleges (Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen, BHS), which both provide vocational training (various branches of technology, business and commerce) and allow their graduates, in general, to access university;
- three to four-year full-time vocational education and training schools (Berufsbildende Mittlere Schulen, BMS), which also offer specialised vocational training in a technical or economic field but do not provide access to university;
- two to four-year part-time vocational schools (Berufsschulen) combined with apprenticeship training in enterprises (‘dual vocational training system’). To date, approximately 220 different vocational apprenticeships are offered in the dual vocational education system in Austria.<sup>19</sup>



Graph 2 - Austrian VET system from primary to tertiary level

<sup>18</sup> Cf. <http://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/arbeitsmarkt/tabellen/arbeitslosenquoten-zr.html> [access date: 110313]

<sup>19</sup> Cf. [http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/Berufsausbildung/LehrlingsUndBerufsausbildung/Documents/Lehrausbildung%20in%20C3%96sterr eich\\_2012\\_min.pdf](http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/Berufsausbildung/LehrlingsUndBerufsausbildung/Documents/Lehrausbildung%20in%20C3%96sterr eich_2012_min.pdf) [access date: 150213]



The previously mentioned vocational schools for apprentices start at grade 10. The so-called ‘pre-vocational year’ (Polytechnische Schule), the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of compulsory schooling, is often used to bridge the time to apprenticeship training and find out there the specific vocational interests are. Pre-vocational schools are mainly attended by those who do not (immediately) transfer to other upper secondary programmes in general education or VET after grade 8.

Besides these paths of formal vocational education and training there is a large offer of (continuous) professional training provided by various training institutes.

Similar to the different possibilities to obtain vocational education and training in Austria, there are also a variety of possibilities to seek guidance counseling. As a first option, guidance counseling is provided in nearly every secondary school: in the schools, there are teachers who are responsible for the provision of guidance counseling to whole classes and also individual counseling to students who wish to seek it. On secondary II level, in the general high schools, there are also teachers who are guidance counselors and who pupils can approach if they feel they need support in choosing their career paths.

The Austrian Employment Service (AMS) offers face-to-face guidance counseling or online offers for guidance counseling. Online offers would be the ‘Beruflexikon’ (EN ‘Job Lexicon’), which offers a list of job areas and of possible jobs. For the individual jobs, job characteristics, occupational requirements, educational training, employment opportunities and further jobs within the occupational area are listed. Users have the possibility of browsing the information and reading up on jobs that may interest them. Moreover, the website ‘Berufskompas’<sup>20</sup> (EN ‘Career Compass’) offers a self-assessment questionnaire which upon completion offers suggestions for possible suitable job areas. The AMS for the Youth offers aptitude tests and counseling to find out about vocational aptitudes and possibilities for young adults.

Besides the AMS, a number of non-profit organisations and also governmental organizations provide guidance counseling, especially with a focus on guidance counseling for women and girls. There are also specific guidance centres for men and for people with a migration background. The Austrian Volkshochschulen (EN ‘Adult Education Centres’), for example, also offer free guidance counseling to adults and teenagers; other private VET centres offer guidance counseling within their programmes for the AMS.

The following diagram offers an overview of the number of people completing VET schools in Austria and Vienna, where the project’s participants will come from<sup>21</sup>:

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. <http://www.berufskompas.at/berufskp31/> [access date: 130313]

<sup>21</sup> Cf. [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/bildung\\_und\\_kultur/bildungsstand\\_der\\_bevoelkerung/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bildung_und_kultur/bildungsstand_der_bevoelkerung/index.html) [access date: 130313]



<b>Level of education - VET 25 - 64 years 2010</b>				
Province, Gender	Highest level of education			
	Apprenticeship	BMS	BHS	College
<b>Austria</b>	<b>1.687.318</b>	<b>725.674</b>	<b>376.914</b>	<b>36.470</b>
Vienna	243.546	109.067	78.541	9.895
<b>Male</b>				
<b>Austria</b>	<b>1.031.650</b>	<b>294.693</b>	<b>199.820</b>	<b>13.238</b>
Vienna	145.449	40.755	42.374	3.740
<b>Female</b>				
<b>Austria</b>	<b>655.668</b>	<b>430.981</b>	<b>177.094</b>	<b>23.232</b>
Vienna	98.097	68.312	36.167	6.155
	<b>in %</b>			
<b>Austria</b>	<b>36,3</b>	<b>15,6</b>	<b>8,1</b>	<b>0,8</b>
Vienna	25,2	11,3	8,1	1,0
<b>Male</b>				
<b>Austria</b>	<b>44,5</b>	<b>12,7</b>	<b>8,6</b>	<b>0,6</b>
Vienna	30,7	8,6	8,9	0,8
<b>Female</b>				
<b>Austria</b>	<b>28,1</b>	<b>18,5</b>	<b>7,6</b>	<b>1,0</b>
Vienna	19,9	13,9	7,3	1,3

Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Bildungsstandregister 2010. Erstellt am 1.10.2012.  
1) Inklusive Personen ohne Pflichtschulabschluss.

The demographic profile of the Austrian participants is relatively diverse: most participants have Austrian heritage, but a many have a migration background from other European countries and a smaller proportion have a migration background from non-European countries. The age of the participants ranges from 16 to 50+, and both men and women will participate in the project. The educational background is also very diverse, ranging from drop-outs to university graduates.

In our organization, vocational training and guidance are provided on behalf of the AMS, but also for private persons. We offer a variety of courses ranging from languages, to hotel industry and gastronomy, to courses within trade and sales, administration, to kindergarten teacher courses. The courses have a duration of several weeks (actual duration depending on the subject) and the participants receive a certificate upon completion of the course.

Guidance counseling is provided within the framework of the training courses. The participants have one day of general guidance counseling per week, which happens within the course group. If the participants want further and even more individual guidance counseling, or feel that they cannot talk about what they want within the whole group, they can make use of individual guidance counseling which, just as the counseling within the group, is provided by trained vocational



guidance counselors. Furthermore, individual guidance counseling for private persons is offered against a fee and can be booked in a block of 10 or 20 sessions.

In our organization, up to 14.000 people participate in vocational training courses and receive guidance counseling.

The demographic profiles of participants in our programmes are very diverse. As already mentioned before, the participants have different heritages (Austrian, European, and also non-European) and are in different age groups. Most of the participants are in the age group 21-50+, a smaller proportion are in the age group 16-20. Approximately 60% of participants are female and 40% are male; this may however be the result of a number of programmes that are specifically for women, e.g. a programme targeted at women reentering the labour market after staying at home with their children. The educational background of our participants is very heterogeneous as well: it ranges from drop-outs to apprentices, to VET schools and colleges to university graduates. It has to be said, however, that the percentage of university graduates is comparatively lower than that of participants with secondary (II) education.



## APPEARANCE

In Austria, most appearance issues exist in connection with weight and ageing, with weight being more salient than ageing. Appearance is a socially salient issue in Austria, and it is becoming more and more salient. The flood of media presenting us with photoshopped slim bodies is constantly increasing and new media, such as blogs, which reinforce this effect, are becoming more fashionable and popular as well. With girls and young women, and increasingly also with boys and young men, appearance is becoming more important as can be seen in the statistics about level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the body and the occurrence of eating disorders. Furthermore, the choice of diet foods in big supermarket chains is also increasing, which suggests a higher consumer demand for such foods. There does not seem to be a difference as far as ethnicity is concerned; at least the answers of the participants of an initial survey conducted with a questionnaire do not suggest a difference due to this factor. There does, however, seem to be a slight difference concerning age and gender. Generally, while men seem to be generally more comfortable with their appearance and weight, women exhibit strong tendencies in either the direction of satisfaction with their bodies or the direction of dissatisfaction with their bodies and especially their weight. From our sample, women around the age of 30, and women around the age of approx. 55 seem to be most content with their appearance and bodies.

The social salience of appearance can also be deduced from the result of the survey we have conducted in the preamble of this project. A quick preview to the results of the questionnaire show that the greatest part of participants believe that their appearance will often (36%) or at least sometimes (42%) help them to get a date, and at least sometimes (42%) help them to get a job. Only 7% believe that their appearance does not influence their possibilities of getting a job or a date at all.<sup>22</sup>

The number of people, especially girls and women, with eating disorders has risen dramatically in Austria during the last few years. This can be seen in the number of admittances to hospital because of eating disorders: while in 2000, approximately 1.471 cases of eating disorder were diagnosed in Austrian hospitals, in 2011 the number has nearly doubled to 2.734 hospital admittances<sup>23</sup>. However, and this is especially worrying, this is only the official number which represents the most severe cases; the dark figures are much higher. Approximately every 15<sup>th</sup> woman in Austria suffers from eating disorders once in her life. About 2.500 girls and young women (15 – 20 years) suffer from anorexia, this amounts to approx. 1% of this population group. A minimum of 6500 young

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<sup>22</sup> See more about the survey results below p. 25 and following

<sup>23</sup> Cf. <http://derstandard.at/1317018461710/In-20-Jahren-verzehnfacht-Dramatischer-Anstieg-bei-Esstorerungen-in-Oesterreich> [access date: 110313]



women (20 – 30 years) suffer from bulimia, which constitutes 2-4% of the population group. About 5000 girls (15-20 years) however suffer from subclinical eating disorders, i.e. they have single symptoms of an eating disorder and are in high danger of getting an eating disorder. Even though the number of girls and women suffering from eating disorders is much higher than that of men (the ratio of women: men is approx. 1:10), the number of boys and young men suffering from such disorders is also rising.<sup>24</sup>

These data imply that the level of satisfaction with appearance and the body in Austria is constantly and rapidly decreasing. A study from the year 2000 showed that from 718 girls and 428 boys, 44% of this girls thought they were overweight, even though only 6% really were; 52% of the girls and 14% of the boys had already dieted; moreover, 80% of the girls and 40% of the boys were scared of gaining weight and as many as 89% of the girls and 65% of the boys were not content with their bodies.<sup>25</sup> The study we are referring to here was conducted in 2000 and generalizing from the fast increase in cases of anorexia, it can only be assumed that today, these numbers are higher as well.

A different study with 565 Viennese women of approx. 47 years of age showed that 82% thought that their ideal weight was below their actual weight; 83% of the women were not content with their bodies' proportions; 80% of the women said that their self-esteem was dependent on their weight, and 82% were afraid of gaining weight.<sup>26</sup>

A representative study conducted in 2007 investigated the motivations for dieting and reached the following results: 59% of the women diet to feel more attractive, 56% to raise their self-esteem and only 43% to improve their general health.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, causal relations to the representation of bodies in the media cannot be drawn without prior research, but an abundance of earlier studies, for example in the Fijis<sup>28</sup>, where TV did not exist until relatively recently, have verified such a correlation.

Appearance and body image is often covered or represented in various Austrian media. On TV, the amount of shows dealing with appearance-related topics is constantly on the rise, especially since private, commercial TV stations were allowed in Austria; programmes about these topics are rare in public service broadcasting. 'A life for beauty' (orig. *Ein Leben für die Schönheit*), e.g. is a programme about plastic surgeons, their daily life and the operations they offer. This programme does however also question the practice of plastic surgery on young adults. Another programme which focuses on the appearance and body image of girls and young women is the programme

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. <http://www.praevention.at/seiten/index.php/nav.400/view.407/level.4/> [access date: 110313]

<sup>25</sup> Cf. <http://neurologie-psychiatrie.universimed.com/artikel/alp-traumk%C3%B6rper-pr%C3%A4vention-von-essst%C3%B6rungen> [access date: 120313]

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. <http://www.praevention.at/seiten/index.php/nav.400/view.407/level.4/> [access date: 110313]



‘Austria’s Next Top Model’. The programme has regularly been under scrutiny and criticism because of utterances about already slim girls being ‘too fat’, not having a model-like (i.e. too rounded) body, etc.

Another documentary, which has already sparked great controversies in other countries, follows people who have severe problems with their bodies and appearances along their journey of plastic surgeries to a ‘beautiful’ appearance. Additionally, they undergo a make-over. It is called ‘*Endlich schön*’ (EN ‘beautiful at last’). In Germany, it was called ‘The Swan’. The women starring in the series have turned away from social life as a consequence of their bodies and their appearances; the series aims to reintroduce them to the social life. The participating women undergo a psychological assessment before being operated on the show.

Some Austrian magazines for women, such as *Woman* or *Wienerin*, sometimes denounce the body image and ‘norm’ created by very thin models and designers who book these models. They spark discussions about these issues and print critical opinions and reports on the repercussions such things have on the girls and young women, and sometimes use ‘average’ women as models. While this is praiseworthy and definitely of utmost importance, the magazines nevertheless regularly print pictures of thin models, which again reduces the effects of the measures against such a body ‘norm’.

A recent study has shown that most Austrians spend approx. 30 Euros/ month on cosmetic and beauty products. This amounts to approx. 360 Euros/ year. About 25% of the study’s respondents spend between 31 and 75 Euros/ month - which amounts to max. 900 Euros/ year. 18% spend less than 10 Euros/ month, which would be less than 120 Euros/ year on cosmetics and beauty products<sup>29</sup>.

Concrete numbers of how much Austrians spend on gym and health club memberships per year could not be discerned, but two opposing trends could be discovered: the first trend is the quick expansion of ‘discount gyms’, such as the chains FitInn or McFit, which offer memberships starting at approx. 20 Euros/ month. The second trend goes towards ‘luxury gyms’ which offer all-around support with individual training programmes, wellness areas, etc. and cost approx. between 80 and 135 Euros/ month. A recent survey has shown that Austrians want to spend more on fitness in 2013<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. <http://gesund.co.at/kosmetik-koerperpflege-oesterreich-beauty-report-25534/> [access date: 110313]

<sup>30</sup> Cf. <http://diepresse.com/home/wirtschaft/economist/1327501/Fitness-darf-2013-mehr-Geld-kosten> [access date: 110313]



## Cosmetic Surgery

The accessibility of cosmetic surgery in Austria has a variety of aspects: generally, cosmetic surgery is accessible to every adult and teenager; it is forbidden for children and teenagers up to the age of 16 years. However, surgeries such as ear corrections are also practiced on children as they can prevent teasing and a heavy psychological burden. The Health Insurance Companies do not pay surgeries which are not necessary from a medical point of view, which already constitutes an economic barrier to access. Furthermore, there are strict regulations by the law which further restrict cosmetic surgery (regarding, e.g. psychological issues, etc.). At the beginning of 2013, a new law regarding cosmetic surgery in Austria came into force; it regulates cosmetic surgery without a medical indicator. It decrees that only specialists for plastic surgery, aesthetic and reconstructive surgery, further specialists within their field and general practitioners with relevant qualifications are allowed to perform cosmetic surgery. All doctors allowed to perform such surgeries must be published on the website of the General Medical Council. Cosmetic surgery is forbidden for people under 16 years of age. Teenagers between 16 and 18 years need parental consent and documented psychological counseling if they want to undergo cosmetic surgery. Furthermore, specialists need to inform their prospective patients thoroughly about the procedure – the amount and kind of information, i.e. issues to be covered, are prescribed by the new law (photodocumentary of status quo and assumed result of the surgery, costs of the surgery). Patients need to sign a statement of agreement 2 weeks, and in the case of 16-18 year olds 4 weeks prior to the planned surgery. If specialists suspect a pathological mental disorder, the patients need to be sent to psychological counseling. The new law moreover regulates the advertising methods for cosmetic surgery. If there is a suspicion about medical malpractice, the insurance company needs to inquire possible claims of compensation. In case of infringements, administrative penalties up to 15.000 Euros (for a one-time infringement), or up to 25.000 Euros (in case of recurrence) need to be paid.<sup>31</sup> In Austria, there are no exact statistics about the number and kind of cosmetic surgery, as such surgeries are not subject to registration and are not paid by the health insurance companies. An estimate from the year 2011 however suggests that around 50.000 cosmetic surgeries are performed in Austria per year.<sup>32</sup> The most frequently performed cosmetic surgeries in Austria are lid corrections, breast augmentations, liposuction, and hair transplant or hair restoration surgery.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Cf.

[http://www.aekoee.or.at/cms/index.php?id=82&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=907&tx\\_ttnews\[backPid\]=1&cHash=4808c7d622ab017a4a765fc2debd9b06](http://www.aekoee.or.at/cms/index.php?id=82&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=907&tx_ttnews[backPid]=1&cHash=4808c7d622ab017a4a765fc2debd9b06) [access date: 130313]

<sup>32</sup> Cf. <http://www.profil.at/articles/0835/560/217559/schlachtfeld-schoenheit-der-boom-chirurgie-schattenseiten> [access date 130313]

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Ibid.



## Health statistics

The number of appearance or body image concerns in Austria, especially with women, are very high: as already mentioned, in a study in Vienna, Austria's capital, 82% of women thought their weight was above their ideal weight, 83% admitted that they were not happy with their proportions, 82% were afraid of gaining weight and 80% stated that their weight was the basis of their self-esteem, i.e. weight gains would result in a lower self-esteem. The percentage of young girls and boys who have appearance and/or body image concerns is even higher, with 89% of girls and 80% of boys being not content with their bodies.<sup>34</sup>

As already mentioned, the cases of eating disorders have dramatically risen in Austria during the last years: in 2000, approx. 1.471 cases of eating disorder were admitted to Austrian hospitals, in 2011 the number has nearly doubled to 2.734 hospital admittances, and these are only the severe cases where treatment in hospitals is necessary. About 6500 women (between 20-30 years), i.e. 2-4% of the population group suffer from bulimia, and about 1% of young girls (15-20 years) suffer from anorexia nervosa. About 5000 young girls (15-20 years) suffer from subclinical eating disorders. The ration of male to female is 1:10.<sup>35</sup>

In a representative study (early 2000s), it was found out that approx. 17.5% of women and 15.5% of men suffered from depression and anxiety. The rates decreased with age and more with men than with women.<sup>36</sup> Another statistics claims that at the moment, approx. 650.000 Austrians suffer from depression, with the percentage of women being twice as high as the percentage of men. This number amounts to 7.7% of the whole population, and numbers are constantly rising; in 2006, 'only' 400.000 cases of depression were registered.<sup>37</sup>

The Austrian Society for plastic, aesthetic and reconstructive surgery states that about 240.260 people suffer from severe burns that require admission to hospitals with following inpatient stays per year; this would be one in every 350 people.

As far as cancers that result in deformations in the face/ head and neck area are concerned, in 2010, there was a total of 987 malignant neoformations, 713 occurrences were in women, 274 in men. See also the diagram below:<sup>38</sup>

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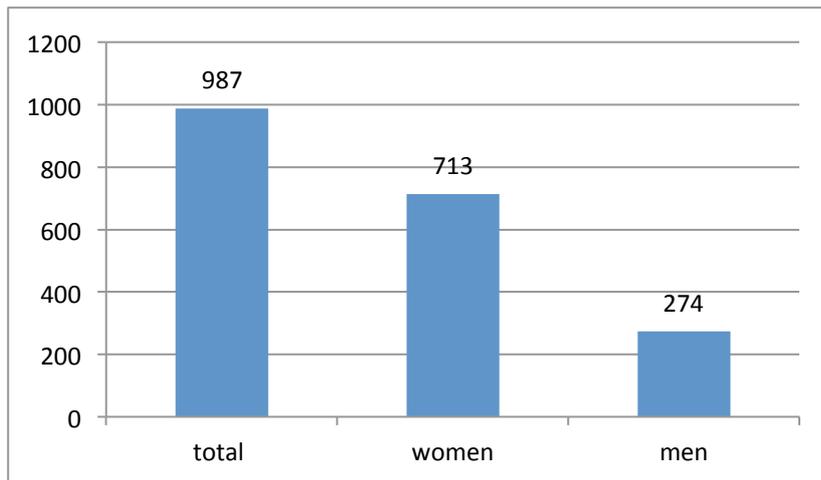
<sup>34</sup> Cf. <http://neurologie-psychiatrie.universimed.com/artikel/alp-traumk%C3%B6rper-pr%C3%A4vention-von-essst%C3%B6rungen> [access date: 130313]

<sup>35</sup> Cf. <http://derstandard.at/1317018461710/In-20-Jahren-verzehnfacht-Dramatischer-Anstieg-bei-Esstörungen-in-Oesterreich> [access date: 130313]

<sup>36</sup> Cf. [http://bmg.gv.at/cms/home/attachments/8/5/0/CH1273/CMS1038920009809/mental\\_health\\_in\\_austria.pdf](http://bmg.gv.at/cms/home/attachments/8/5/0/CH1273/CMS1038920009809/mental_health_in_austria.pdf) [access date: 130313]

<sup>37</sup> Cf. <http://www.medizinpopulaer.at/archiv/seele-sein/details/article/depression-neue-wege-aus-dem-seelentief.html> [access date: 130313]

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Statistik Austria, Jahrbuch der Gesundheitsstatistik 2011, p. 236-237.



**Graph 3 – Amount of malignant neoplasms in Austria, 2010 - source: ibid**

In Austria, congenital anomalies are relatively rare: during the last 10 years, only 0.4-1% of newborn children were affected, which are about 85 of the approx. 95.000 newborn children per year. About half of the congenital anomalies concern the extremities (syndactyly, deformities affecting the legs or hexadactyly), as well as cleft lip and palates. Slightly less frequent are congenital heart anomalies, such as cardiac septum defects, congenital chromosome defects and congenital anomalies in the area of the efferent urinary tract.<sup>39</sup>

### **Disfigurement**

Individuals with obvious or visible disfigurements may not be excluded from society, but certainly face a number of stigmata. Even if this may not make a big difference in everyday life, it can constitute a big disadvantage when it comes to obtaining a job. If a person with disfigurements applies for a position with customer contact, the prospective employers will greatly consider how this person may appear to the customer or whether this would affect the customers. Unless the employer wants to make a positive, inclusive statement and employ the person for a job with customer contact, this may certainly be a hindering factor. For positions without customer contact, disfigurements should not be an issue. When it comes to training, these persons may suffer from possible initial prejudices of the course group, which may hinder the person from attending a training. If the disfigurement also results in low self-esteem and self-confidence, then the individual also will have to work against the repercussions of this in training situations and also when looking for a new job.

As with a negative body image, which can also lead to low self-confidence and self-esteem, socially excluded individuals may become even more excluded because of their low self-esteem and the withdrawal from society, which may result from a low self-confidence and esteem. As with social

<sup>39</sup> Cf. [http://www.perinatal.at/sites/fb\\_frage\\_antwort.html](http://www.perinatal.at/sites/fb_frage_antwort.html) [access date: 130313]



exclusion, disfigurement may have the same repercussions of the completion of training or education as a negative body image, and also the same psychological or social support can be contacted (see below).

### **Body image**

The question at stake is whether and if so how the body image affects people in vocational training, education, guidance or at obtaining a job. We can only assume that a negative body image has a negative influence on the person's confidence although except the survey results stated below we do not possess statistic evidence at this respect.

Continuing this thought we assume that low self-confidence can attract then a variety of possible repercussions e.g. not feeling confident enough to carry out action plans that were decided in guidance counseling, to believing that they cannot complete their vocational training or education to not even making use of guidance counseling because they feel ashamed of themselves and maybe even their accomplishments up to this point. The last option, however, indicates a very low self-confidence.

It needs to be said, however, that a negative body image is not necessarily related to disfigurements or handicaps: among our participants, there was a woman, in her early thirties, who has been bound to a wheelchair for most of her life, because she is paraplegic. She does face the obstacle of a wheelchair as far as prospective jobs are concerned, but consistently continues her vocational training and has a good level of self-esteem.

Based on our experience in vocational training, we have found that participants with a negative body image and a resulting low self-esteem and self-confidence need a different kind of attention than participants whose self-esteem and self-confidence are at a healthy level. Alongside of improving their qualifications for a job, they need to improve their self-confidence and this may play an important part in vocational guidance counseling. To carry out their action plans, they need enough self-confidence to actually believe that they are good at something, and with more severe cases, this requires a lot of knowledge sure instinct to even remotely succeed as a counselor. Of course, guidance counselors must not be mistaken for psychotherapists and should delicately point their participants to a psychotherapist in order to not exceed their authorities and the limited time they have at their disposal for each participant. Some guidance counselors may have the proper training and background that provides them with enough knowledge to deal with such participants. However, this very much depends on the background of the counselors. Because this is a very delicate subject, there should be further training courses that counselors without such a strong background can attend to attain the necessary knowledge.



It is probable that socially excluded individuals, such as unemployed or ethnic minorities, who also have a negative body image may be more socially excluded or stigmatized, because if this is the case, the already existing stigma (being unemployed, having an ethnic minority background) may be reinforced by the low self-esteem and self-confidence a negative body image causes. The people surrounding such individuals would notice their attitude and mirror it, resulting in even further social exclusion.

In our organization, we have specific staff members who are psychologists and who offer psycho-social counseling for participants who need it. These staff members are frequently also trauma-specialists and can be approached in cases of emergency. They can also direct the participants towards other, external, psychologists or help centres when they feel that they need long-term support. If they are not available, there is always the Crisis Intervention Centre of the City of Vienna which can help in cases of emergency. The statements and experience of these professionals in our institute underline the conclusions drawn above.

### **Health compromising behaviors**

Health compromising behaviours such as dieting, not eating enough or over-training can influence educational outcomes primarily due to concentration problems and constant sleepiness or tiredness because of undernourishment. In order to fully profit from educational programmes, the participants should be mentally alert and able to participate in the activities. Lack of concentration could lead to the need for the trainer to often repeat contents, which may be boring for other participants and also reduce the learning outcome because not as many contents can be dealt with in a learning unit.

Behaviours such as smoking can interrupt the flow of the learning units, because especially heavy smokers have the predisposition to become restless, shift around in their chairs and articulate the need or wish for a cigarette break. This can be quite disturbing for non-smoking participants or the trainers and draw attention away from the learning content. Moreover, frequent breaks also reduce the lesson time and thus reduce the learning outcome.

At the moment, vocational trainers do not deal with appearance issues directly in the course room in order to not compromise the participants' face and status within the course group. Rather, they talk to the guidance counselors who are responsible for the group and who may deal with the participants in a one-to-one setting, so they can approach the topic in front of the participant. If, for any reason, this is not possible and the issues influence the participant in the course room, then the trainer will consider when and how to best approach the participant.

Generally, these issues manifest themselves in the same way as for people with no migration background or without changing cultural backgrounds. However, if these are the case, the



manifestations, especially low self-esteem and self-confidence, may be stronger or more severe: the individuals may already suffer from a lower self-confidence, because they might feel that due to their culture, they do not ‘belong’ to the mainstream. The effects of the manifestations, such as a drop-out in very severe cases, may be more likely for such persons, because they already have two influencing factors.



## **SURVEY RESULTS**

### **Introduction to survey results**

In order to find out how much appearance matters we have conducted the proposed project survey with members of staff and students of our institute. The data obtained shall be helpful to obtain a better understanding of the subject and links very well to the information presented above.

The survey collected information regarding the following topics:

1. **General personal information**– In the first part of the questionnaire participants were asked to state some personal information regarding origin, education and health relevant data. Specifically they were asked about their age, origin, ethnic group, relationship status, educational level, working situation, height, weight (including max. and minimum since the age of 16), diet and smoking habits.

To improve readability we have split this part in the following two areas:

- a. **Respondent profile** – age, origin, education and
  - b. **Health relevant information**
2. **Appearance and employment** – The aim of this section is to investigate how much certain factors influence the employment prospects in the opinion of the respondents
  3. **Appearance and self-definition** – The third part of the questionnaire aims at understanding the importance of appearance in the self-definition
  4. **Satisfaction with one-self** – The statements to be rated in this part of the query serve to evaluate how satisfied the participants are with the way they look.
  5. **Appearance ideals** – The concluding block of questions addresses the question how much ideals from the media and society have an influence on the individuals.

The question types vary slightly between the areas and will be explained briefly in the introduction to each chapter.

### **General personal information**

#### **a.) Respondent profile**

In this survey we collected data from 39 people in total. Ten respondents were members of staff and 29 were students of one of our vocational educational training courses. There was no information retrieved about the gender of the participants. The participants were between 25 and 59 years old. The average age of the staff was 39.8 and therefore approximately 11 years higher than the average age of the learners (28.5 years) that took part in the survey.



84.6% of the respondents were born in Austria. The rest of the people were born in Serbia, Macedonia, Turkey and Kenya. Although the questionnaire asked for the ethnic group the respondents did mostly not answer this question.

Regarding the relationship status 30.8% of the people claimed to be married, 53.8% were single, 12.8% lived together with their partners and 2,6% were in a relationship but not lived with their partner.

Exactly one third of the respondents stated to be employed. While 25.6% are presently involved in some kind of training 30.8% state that they are unemployed. The remaining 10.3% of the people ticked off the answer options “unemployed” and “in training”. Looking at the two participant groups (staff members and learners) we find that all staff members are evidently “employed”. Only 10.3% of the young participants were employed the rest was either “unemployed” (41.4%), “in training” (34.5%) or both (13.8%)

Looking at the educational level we find that it is much higher among the members of staff than among the learners. While all staff members have concluded some type of higher education only one of the learners has done so. Most of them (53.8%) have concluded a secondary education of some kind. The rest reports to have done some other kind of vocational training without specifying it.



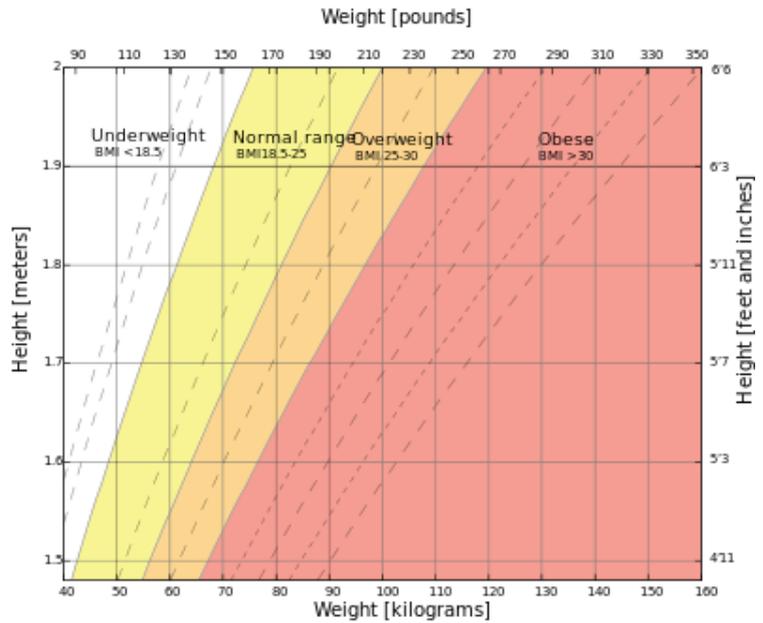
**b.) Health relevant information**

The participants in this study were asked to provide information about their height and weight as well as their maximum and minimum weight since the age of 16. Out of the 39 test persons two people did not enter their weight.

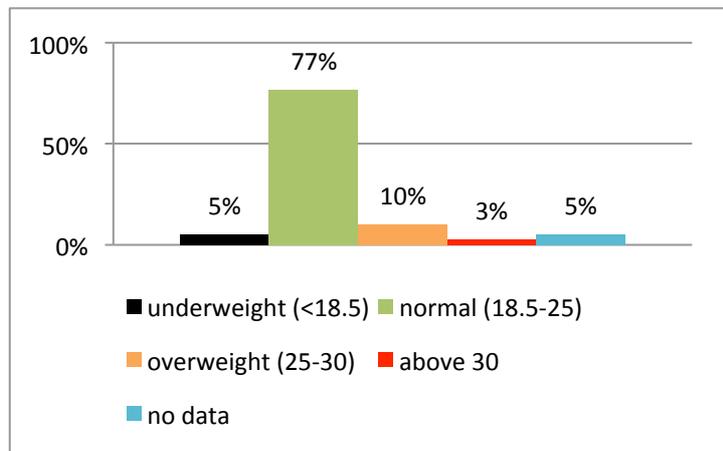
In order to be able to compare the results provided, we have decided to use the 
$$\text{Body-Mass-Index (BMI)} = \frac{\text{mass}(\text{kg})}{(\text{height}(\text{m}))^2}$$
 as the comparative value. The BMI is calculated the following way:

BMI

The table to the right shows how to interpret the results of the BMI figures. The results of our group of people showed that 10% of the people have a BMI between 25 and 30 and therefore count as overweight. One out of the 39 people would pass as “obese” with a BMI of 31.9. The majority of the participants have a BMI between 19.1 and 24.7 and are within the normal weight range. The average BMI amongst staff is 24.9 and therefore higher than the average BMI of the students who reach 22.0 as their overall average.



Graph 4 - Body-Mass-Index chart; source: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)



Graph 5 - BMI of survey participants

Regarding the maximum and minimum weight it is interesting to point out that almost all participants are much closer to their maximum weight than to their minimum weight.

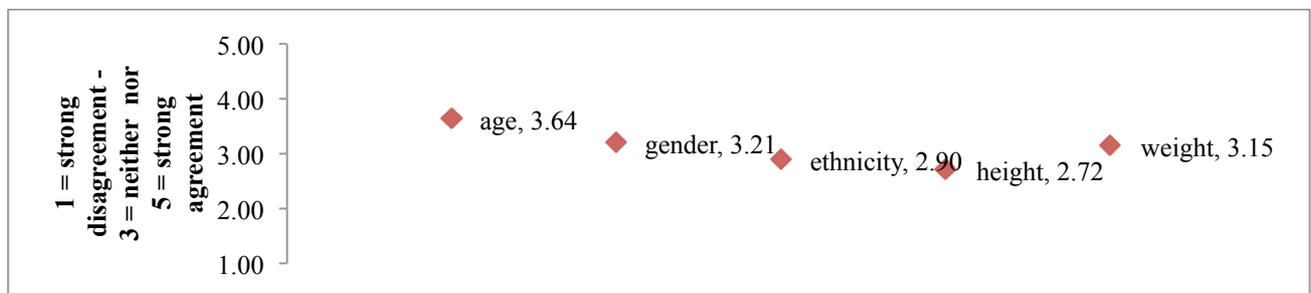
Almost half of the people in this study have undergone a diet or modified their eating habits at some point in their lives. The percentage of people who have limited their food intake is higher among the staff (60% of the staff) than among the students (41% of the students). The age at which people started to follow a weight loss diet was between the age of 12 and 22, averaging 17 years.



To conclude the data collection regarding health the participants were asked if they smoked tobacco or consumed chewing tobacco. 38.5% of the participants are smokers. The ratio of smokers and non-smokers is a little bit higher among students (41.4% of the students). The smokers started to pick up the habit between the age of 13 and 20, averaging approximately 17 years. About two thirds of the smokers report to smoke or chew tobacco every day.

### Appearance and employment

Having obtained some data about the survey participants in the first part of the questionnaire, the second section aimed at finding out how much certain aspects of the appearance would affect the employment prospects. The participants had to rate whether they agreed by rating on a scale from 1 (=strong disagreement) to 5 (=strong agreement) that any of the following five criteria had an impact on employment: age, gender, ethnicity, height and weight.



Graph 6 - agreement/disagreement with the influence of these criteria on employment.

The table above shows the average ratings of all respondents. We learn from this data that in average the people found that age did have the highest influence on employment. Height was evaluated as by far the least relevant factor. The average regarding the influence of ethnicity was almost ambivalent with a small tendency that it did not matter. The rating regarding the impact of weight and gender indicates that it would matter according to the respondents.

It has to be pointed out that the results were generally rather homogeneous. Also the ratings by the two groups of participants (staff and students) were very similar.

Participants were invited to add comments if they thought that any other factors of their appearance or anything else would have an impact on the employment prospects. Some said that “*clothing and style*” would matter. They found that someone with a “*well groomed appearance*” and who “*takes care of him/herself*” is better off than somebody who looks “*shabby*”. Survey participants also found that “*Body hygiene*” plays a role in employment as much as “*physiological or psychological limitations*”. Last but not least “*Evident handicaps*” or “*disfigurement*” can impact employment equally as “*health issues*”. One of the participants finds that “*being a single mother*” influences employment prospects significantly.



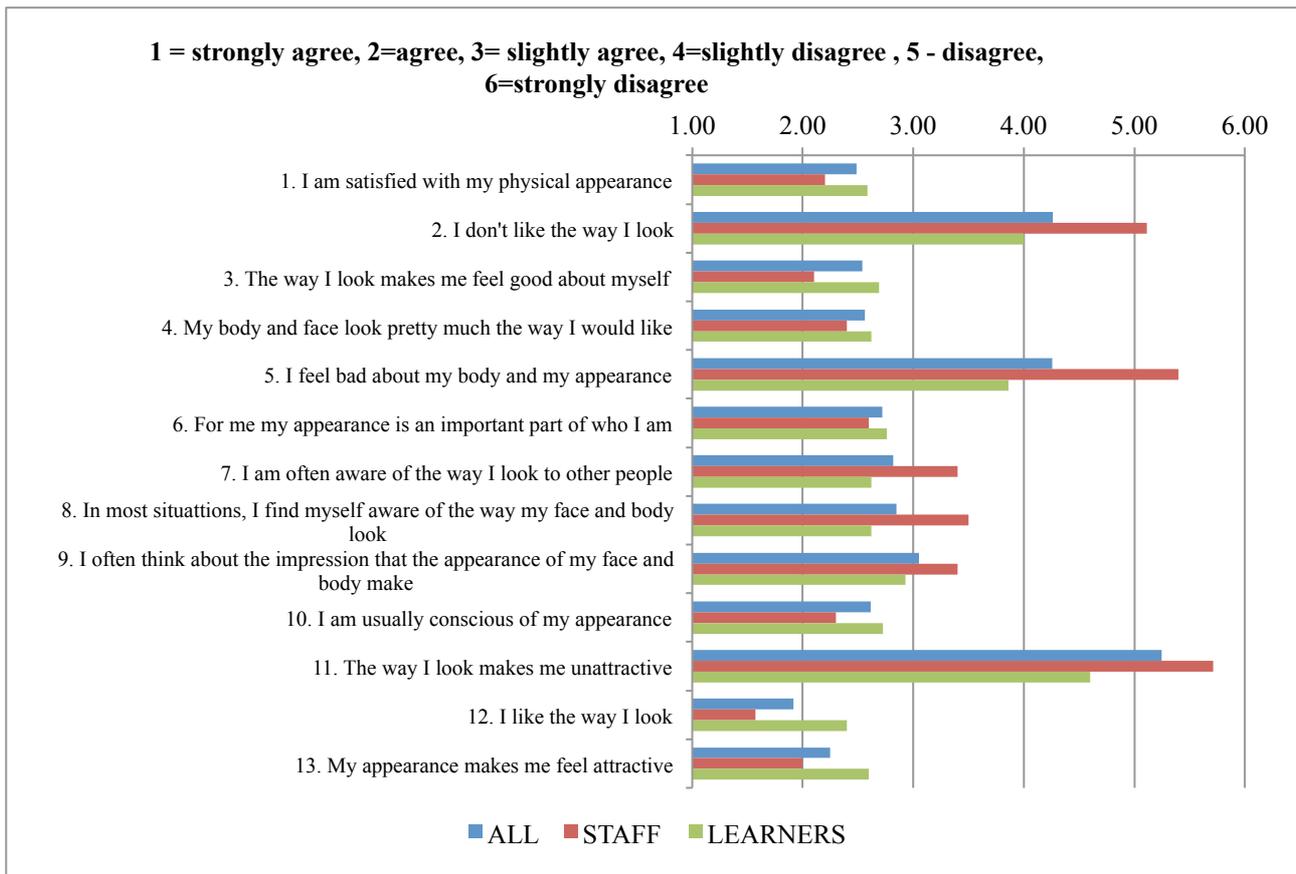
### **Appearance and self-definition**

The third part of the questionnaire contained a number of statements regarding the appearance. Participants had to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with different statements. The following graph displays the overall average results and the average results of staff and learners.

The results of the statements 1, 2, 3, 11, 12 and 13 show that participants in our survey feel rather attractive and like the way they look. They do not find that their looks make them unattractive. Based on the averages per respondent group it can be stated that staff members feel a little bit more confident about their looks than the learners.

The survey respondents report that their body and face pretty much look the way they like. They also agree that appearance is an important part of who they are, although the level of agreement is slightly less than with the former statement. The statement *“I feel bad about my body and my appearance”* received negative reactions by all respondents. Once again the staff members show much more disagreement than the learners.

The average ratings of the statements *“I am often aware of the way I look to other people”* (no. 7), *“In most situations, I find myself aware of the way my face and my body look”*(no. 8) and *“I often think about the impression that the appearance of my face and body make”* (no. 9) also evidence this discrepancy between the two participating parties. In these cases the learners’ average is almost exactly in the middle of the range while the staff members’ answers show more agreement than disagreement with this statement. They seem to be slightly more aware of these aspects.



**Graph 7 - Appearance and self-definition statements to be rated from 1 = strong agreement to 6 = strong disagreement**

The general impression of all these aspects is that people are rather aware of their appearance. The people who participated in this study generally like their looks and feel attractive. They do not overly identify themselves by their appearance and don't think about it too often but they pay attention to it.

**Satisfaction with one-self**

The fourth part of the questionnaire digs a little deeper and aims at finding out about the satisfaction with themselves and their image. As in the question before the participants had to rank certain statements, however this time the ranking should indicate how often they agreed with certain statements on a scale from 0 (= never) to 4 (=always).

The obtained feedback data shows that *“people sometimes like how they look in pictures and find that other people consider them good looking”*. A little less often they feel proud of their body. They seldom are preoccupied with trying to change their body weight, however learners are much more concerned about this than the staff members.

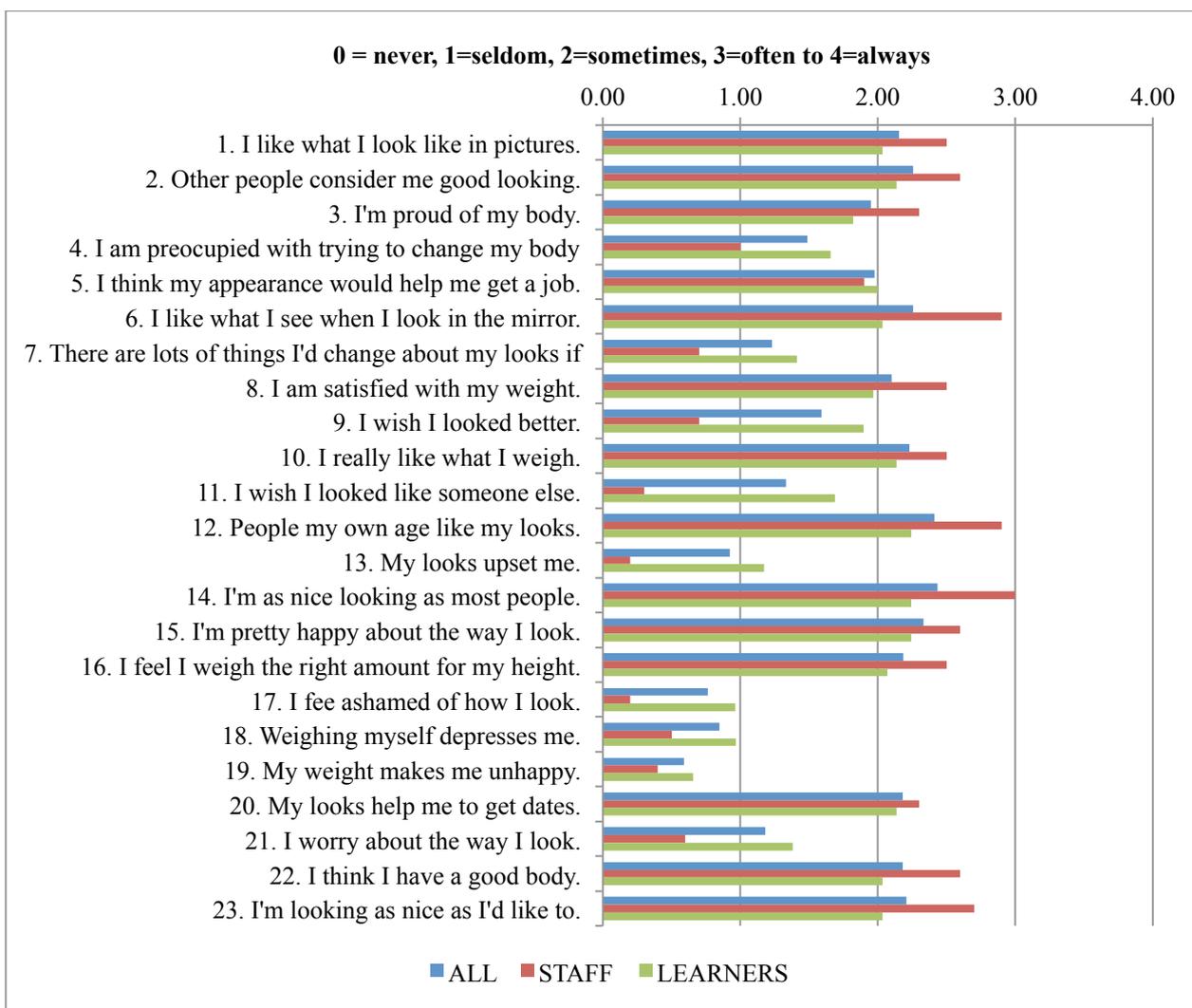
Participants sometimes think that their appearance helps them at getting a job. The opinions of staff and learners are almost identical about this statement.



The statements with the highest average frequency reaching up to 3.0 are the following three: “I like what I see when I look in the mirror”, “People my own age like my looks” and “I’m as nice looking as most people”. At all three statements the average of the staff members is significantly higher than the learners’.

The statements with the least frequency, with average answers ranging mostly between never and seldom are: “I wish I looked like some else.”, “My looks upset me”, “I feel ashamed of how I look”, “Weighing myself depresses me” and “My weight makes me unhappy”. Also here the learners’ results are higher than the staff members’ answers.

Generally the weight relevant statements show that the participants of this survey are rather satisfied with their weight.



**Graph 8 - How often do people agree with these statements?**

Summarising the observations from these statements, we find that people are quite satisfied with their looks and weight. They are more satisfied with their appearance than with their weight however. It becomes evident once again that the learners feel less confident than the staff members. This can be due to many factors such as: age, employment status or educational level.



### Appearance ideals

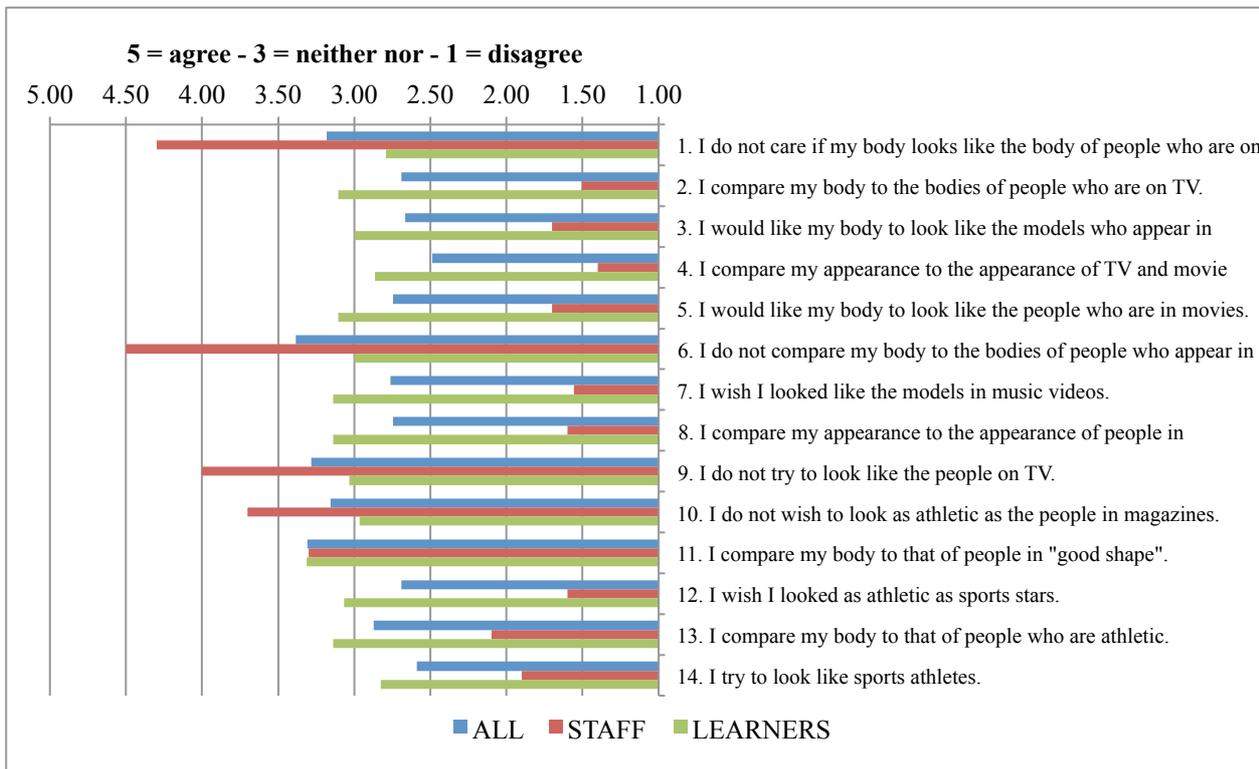
Finally the participants of this survey were asked to rate once again how much they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding appearance ideals. A quick glance at the graph below evidences immediately, that the opinions of the learners were much more ambivalent than the ratings by the staff members. The staff members' ratings show that they are much less influenced by the appearance of others than the younger learners.

In detail the staff members' rating shows a lot of agreement with statements like *"I do not care if my body looks like the body of people on TV"*, *"I do not compare my body to the bodies of people who appear in magazines"*, or *"I do not try to look like people on TV"*.

The statement *"I do not wish to look as athletic as people in 'good shape'"* was the question with the most similar rating by the two groups of participants. They all slightly more agree with this statement.

Statements like *"I compare my appearance to the appearance of people who are on TV"* and *"I try to look like sports athletes"*, received disagreement by the learners and the staff members. The staff members, however, disagreed much stronger than the learners.

The learners' rating regarding the following statements was rather ambivalent with a slight tendency towards agreement: *"I compare my body to the bodies of people who are on TV."*, *"I would like my body to look like the people who are in movies."*, *I wish I looked like the models in music videos"*, *"I compare my appearance to the appearance of people in magazines"*, *"I wish I looked as athletic as sports stars"* and *"I compare my body to that of people in 'good shape'"*. The staff members disagreed with all these statements.



**Graph 9 - Agreement and disagreement with statements regarding the ideals.**

The data obtained in this part of the survey shows a big difference between the learners and the staff members. While learners’ answers mostly range around the centre the answers by the staff members have a much stronger tendency for or against a statement.

As already mentioned above, these results lead us to conclude that the staff members are much less influenced by the ideals conveyed in the media than the learners. The higher degree of ambivalence among the results of the learners could be interpreted as a sign of insecurity and most likely makes them more vulnerable to “images” transported in the media.

**Concluding remarks to the survey**

As a concluding comment we can find that people who participated in our survey are rather content with their appearance. Although they find that the impact of appearance to employment prospects is generally rather low they do think that it matters. They care for how they look and unlike in other studies mentioned in this report they are not so much concerned about ideals or the perception of their looks by others. However our survey underlines the conclusion that younger people seem to be less confident about their appearance and may be more sensitive to ideals conveyed in the media. This becomes evident through the analysis of the differences between the two groups of respondents. A possible influence factor for this discrepancy may be that the group of staff members was older in average than the learners.



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