Romantic Relationships in the Modern Age

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Research Questions

What do people look for in a relationship, and how do people behave when seeking/engaging in a relationship?

What are the **specific attributes** people value more or less? How do these differ by demographics (gender, political orientation, etc.)?

What are the ways in which **people interact** through cell phones and social media when starting and ending relationships?

Do people feel like they can create **meaningful bonds** in their relationships through social media and cell phones?

Sources of Data

Data Source 1:

- Private data source from research conducted by psychology professor at Penn
- 200+ responses on 20+ questions
- A survey designed to determine the respondents' "Ideal Man / Woman"
  - Survey question:

All trait are presented in alphabetical order. You can spend anything between $0 and $100 on each trait

$____ **Body**

$____ **Face**

$____ **Fidelity**

$____ **Intelligence**

$____ **Kindness**

$____ **Sense of humor**

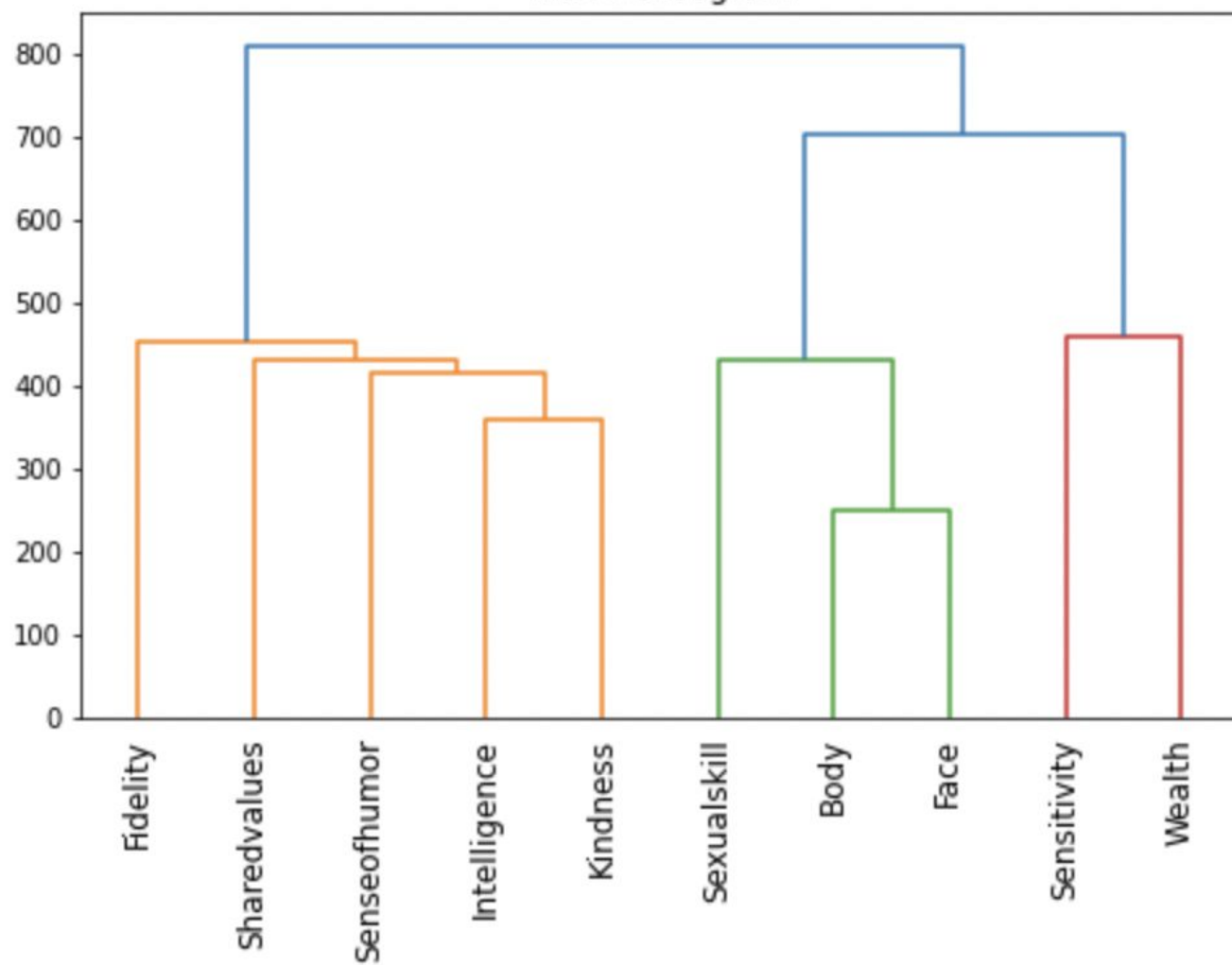$____ **Sensitivity**

$____ **Sexual skill**
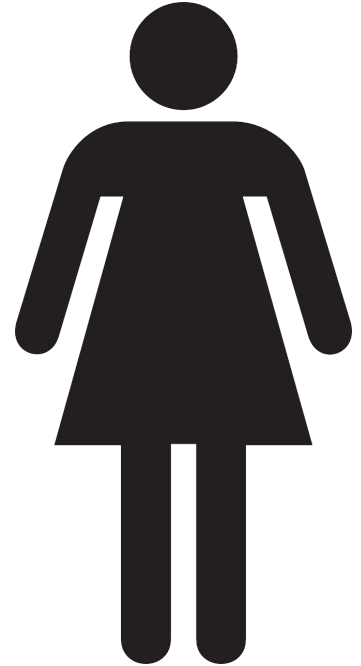
$____ **Shared values**

$ ____ **Wealth**

Trait Dendogram

Data Analysis: What is an ideal woman that a man looks for?

1. $65 - Body
2. $64 - Face
3. $62 - Fidelity
4. $61 - Intelligence
5. $56 - Kindness
6. $51 - Sense of humor
7. $47 - Shared values
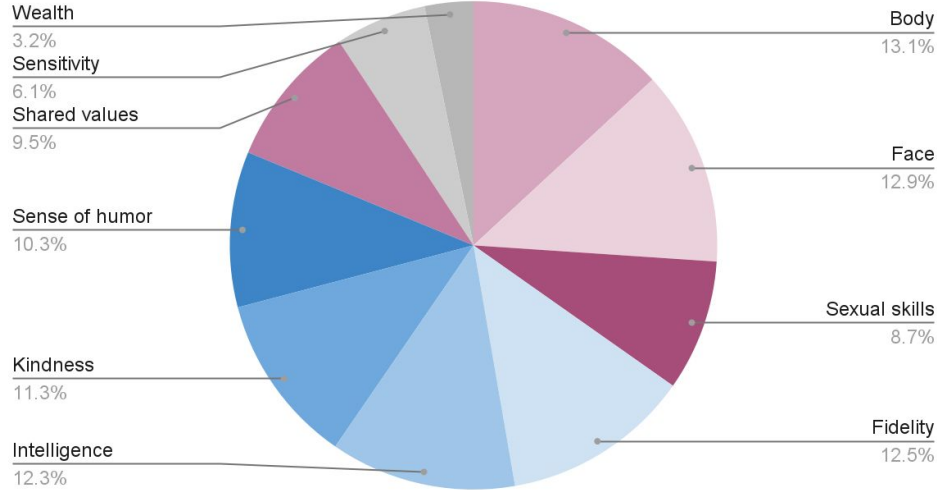8. $43 - Sexual Skills
9. $30 - Sensitivity
10. $16 - Wealth

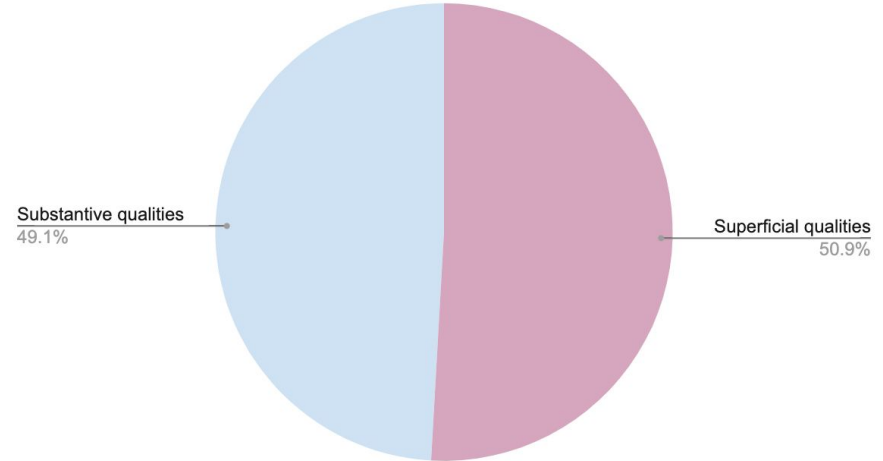1. $57 - "Superficial" qualities
2. $55 - "Substantive" qualities

Data Analysis: What is an ideal woman that a man looks for?

Attributes valued in woman

Wealth 3.2%
Sensitivity 6.1%
Shared values 9.5%
Sense of humor 10.3%
Kindness 11.3%
Intelligence 12.3%
Body 13.1%
Face 12.9%
Sexual skills 8.7%
Fidelity 12.5%

Attributes valued in woman
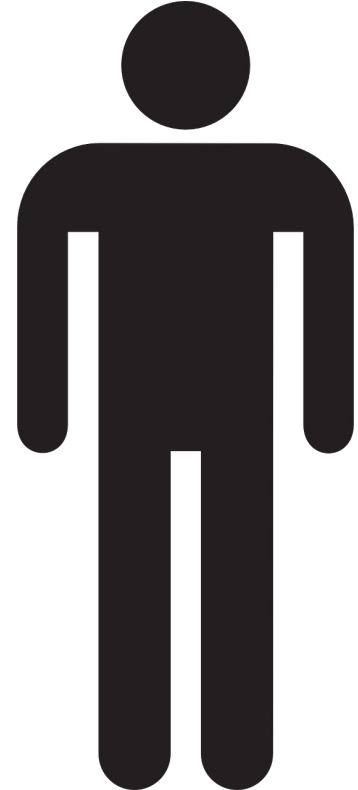

Substantive qualities 49.1%
Superficial qualities 50.9%

Data Analysis: What is an ideal man that a woman looks for?

1. $68 - Intelligence
2. $62 - Fidelity
3. $61 - Kindness
4. $56 - Sense of humor
5. $56 - Shared values
6. $47 - Face
7. $39 - Body
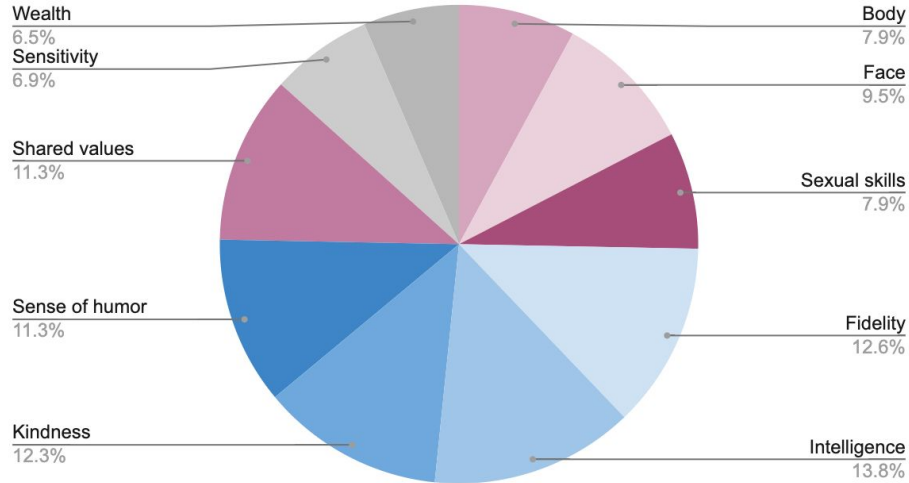8. $39 - Sexual Skills
9. $34 - Sensitivity
10. $32 - Wealth

1. $61 - Substantive qualities
2. $42 - Superficial qualities

Data Analysis: What is an ideal man that a woman looks for?

Attributes valued in man

- Wealth 6.5%
- Sensitivity 6.9%
- Shared values 11.3%
- Sense of humor 11.3%
- Kindness 12.3%
- Intelligence 13.8%
- Fidelity 12.6%
- Sexual skills 7.9%
- Face 9.5%
- Body 7.9%

Attributes valued in man

- Superficial qualities 40.8%
- Substantive qualities 59.2%
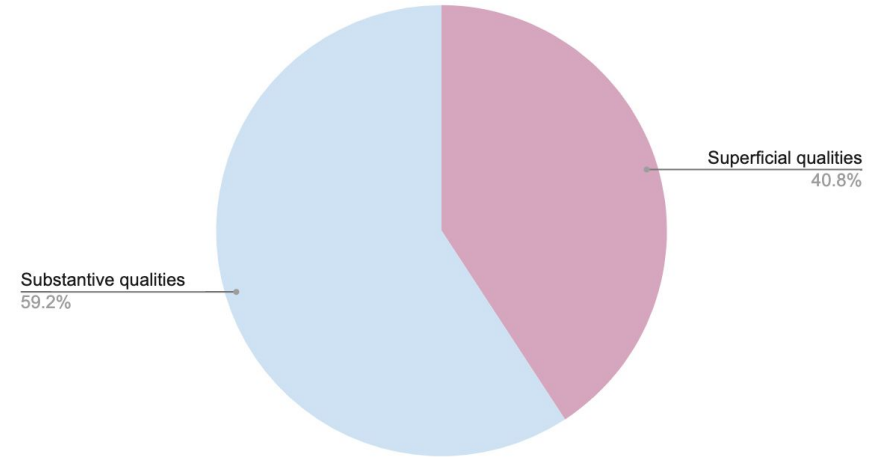
Sources of Data

Data Source 2:

- Pew Research Center survey
- Collected data from more than 1600 parents and teenagers in 2014 and 2015
- Asked wide variety of questions revolving around technology, social media, dating, and friendships. Also includes demographic information

Sample Questions:

- How acceptable is it to break up with someone through a private message on social media?
- Do you believe your significant other is less authentic on social media?

Data Analysis: Ending Relationships

- *Breaking up in person is the only method that teenagers find* acceptable
- *Majority of teenagers have broken up with someone* in-person

- Share similar views *on which methods are acceptable and unacceptable*
- *Breaking up by* phone *is the only method where there isn't a consistent view on acceptability*

Data Analysis: Beginning a Relationship & Hanging Out

- *People believe the **most appropriate** way to ask someone out is in-person*
- *People found the options that involved asking someone out through the phone, or through social media, to be the **least appropriate***
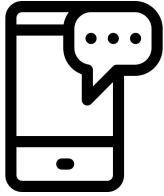
- *People talk to their significant other on the phone or through texting **everyday***
- *When referring to how much time people spend with their significant other outside of school**, **the majority chose the answers **"every few days"** or **"less often"***

- While asking someone out through the phone was the least acceptable option, this is how couples spend most of their time together, which provides a nuanced insight about human behavior
- Even though in the modern age people have geared more towards using technology, there are still lines we draw in terms of intimacy and genuine interactions

Data Analysis: Communication, Interactions, and Dichotomies

Communication Frequency

- *People expect their significant other to be in **constant** communication with them through social media and cell phones*
- *People expect their significant other to want them to communicate with them **significantly less frequently***

Meaningful Interactions

- *People, in general, **do not believe** that social media or cell phones have **significantly increased** the meaningfulness of their relationships*
- *However, these same respondents admit that they have had real, **meaningful bespoke conversations** with partners through cell phones and social media*

- There is a difference between what people expect of their partners, and what they expect their partners to expect from them
- A dichotomy is evident between interpretation of the personal vs. the impersonal, and the micro vs. the macro
- Why these dichotomies exist is difficult to determine: there are too many outside factors that can contribute to one's feelings and interpretations of the impact of social media and cell phones