

Original Article

Creative destruction caused by the cosmetic products; A false signal

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Abstract

Background: The cosmetic industry now dominates the global standards of beauty due to the unreal definition of an ideal appearance. Advertising companies are playing with the human psychology and have displayed such a perfect body image that now people feel disappointed with their natural appearance and tend to opt the cosmetic products for a perfect look. The purpose of this research was to explore the attitude and opinion of females regarding cosmetic products and to evaluate the factors of self-esteem, makeup involvement and makeup satisfaction. **Methodology:** In this cross-sectional study a total of 107 females were enrolled. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire inquiring the respondent's demographic details, cosmetics use, preferences and perceptions etc. Five-point Likert scale was used for rating the level of happiness/satisfaction with and without makeup and questions pertaining to the responder's perception of self-image and makeup involvement.

Results: The mean age of the respondents was 21.5 ± 4.68 years and the age when they first started wearing makeup was 17.14 ± 2.87 years. Based on the results, 42.1% females were very happy with their natural face features without makeup while 55.1% preferred applying makeup. Moreover, latest trends (64.8%), discounts (17.6%), advertisements (16.7%) and morning shows (3.7%) were among the major sources capturing females for cosmetic purchase. 57.0% were involved in cosmetic purchase monthly and 30.8% were those spending 1000 to 2000 PKR per month on cosmetic products. Women mostly preferred cosmetic products for facial care (43.9%) and to improve self-image (28.0%). Although 55.1% of them preferred wearing no makeup to school or work while 39.3% would wear little makeup. Regarding the cosmetic use and purpose, 41.1% females strongly agreed to the fact that they feel good when their makeup is good. Moreover, 15.0% voted for confidence and desirability and 13.1% agreed that it is mainly used for hiding flaws.

Conclusion: Although equal number of women reported loving their natural features without makeup as compared to those preferring makeup but it might be indicative of personal bias as it is evident that the women today wants to be seen confident and attractive.

Keywords

Cosmetics, Self-Image, Makeup Involvement, Makeup Satisfaction, Psychological Factors.

Introduction

Outward appearance and the significance of cosmetics in shaping the individual's perception and beliefs about body image has become the most important asset for today's women. Our modern society measures and attributes the beauty on the basis of facial features and body shape. Moreover, these standards are formed, endorsed and adopted for attention seeking by majority females¹. Cosmetic manipulation has been used since ages, features found in appropriate or unideal are mostly fixed with makeup². Cosmetics boost self-confidence, conceal facial flaws and develops positive self-image, and it has also connected humans emotionally³.

It has been observed that makeup brings positive change in the individual's personality³. Apparently, it is due to the fact that if an individual is judged based on their appearance it ultimately leads to investing efforts for positive feedback⁴. Previously the cosmetic availability and use was occasional among grownup females but the recent statistics indicate that the cosmetic utilization among the teenagers has become more frequent as compared to adults i.e. the average age of makeup use has declined. As per a report, around 300 billion won are invested in the market for teenage makeup products⁵. The Global cosmetic market is likely to make a profit of \$429.8 billion by 2022 as per the report published by Allied Market Research in 2016⁶. Geographically, North America, Europe and Asian-Pacific countries usually dominate the global cosmetic market followed by Latin America, Middle Eastern and African (LAMEA) countries⁶.

Makeup involvement and satisfaction has excelled to such a degree that the relationship between physical appearance and mental health is being studied⁴. It was found that the makeup products held a profound effect on the mental health of the consumer. Moreover, the confidence built with appearance was found to enhance one's mood⁷. Therefore,

cosmetics products have both positive and negative impacts on the health specifically among women. Negativity rises when individual is evaluated on the basis of superficial appearance and hence induces increased cosmetic support for satisfaction while few of the positive influences include positive emotional states, boosted confidence and positive valence induced by colors and odors⁸.

To the best of our knowledge, no such research indulging the consumers has been conducted in Pakistan. Much work is required to understand the psychological perspective behind the frequent cosmetic purchase and utilization. This study is a little step ahead to explore the consumer point of view regarding cosmetic products and to evaluate the factors of self-esteem, makeup involvement and makeup satisfaction.

Methodology

This observational cross-sectional survey-based study was conducted during September to November 2018. The responses were received from a total of 107 females from diverse affiliations and having different occupations while the incomplete responses were excluded from the study sample. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire inquiring the respondent's demographic details and information regarding makeup preferences, use and factors influencing cosmetic sales. Five-point Likert scale was used for rating the level of happiness/satisfaction with and without makeup where 4=Very Happy, 3=Happy, 2=Neither Happy nor Unhappy, 1=Somewhat Unhappy & 0=Unhappy. Moreover, 12 questions pertaining to the responder's perception of self-image and makeup involvement and rated as per the following; 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Uncertain, 1=Disagree & 0=Strongly Disagree.

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 22.0, all qualitative variables like happiness level with/without makeup,

influencing factors for cosmetic sales, preferences and habits regarding makeup purchase etc., were presented as frequency and percentages. While, quantitative variables like respondents age and age when the makeup was first worn were displayed as mean and standard deviation (SD).

Result

A total of 107 females were enrolled in the study with a mean age of 21.12±1.979 years. The age when majority of the females started

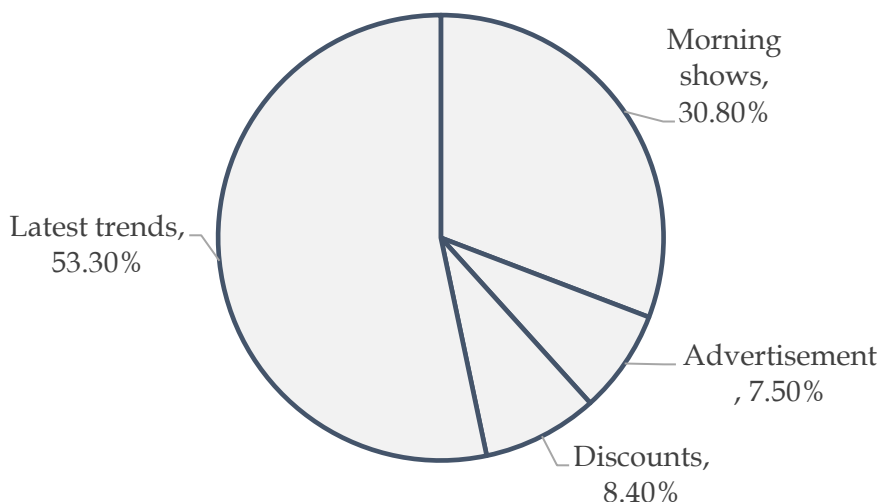
wearing makeup was 17.19±2.703 years, typically in between 15 to 25 years (83.3%). The level of happiness and satisfaction with the natural face features without makeup and after applying makeup, 13.1% respondents were neither happy nor unhappy with their overall face features without makeup while 42.1% were very happy. The results were also consistent with makeup look, 51.4% reported being very happy with their overall features after wearing makeup while only 2.8% were somewhat unhappy.

Table 1: Represents the level of happiness/satisfaction with the natural face features without makeup & face features after wearing makeup

Without Makeup	Very Happy	Happy	Neither Happy nor Unhappy	Somewhat Unhappy	Unhappy
Eyes	55(51.4)	44(41.1)	8(7.5)	-	-
Lips	36(33.6)	53(49.5)	16(15.0)	2(1.9)	-
Forehead	44(41.1)	42(39.3)	19(17.8)	2(1.9)	-
Cheek & Cheekbones	50(46.7)	39(36.4)	12(11.2)	5(4.7)	1(0.9)
Chin	42(39.3)	43(40.2)	21(19.6)	-	1(0.9)
Overall	45(42.1)	46(43.0)	14(13.1)	2(1.9)	-
With Makeup					
Eyes	63(58.9)	30(28.0)	14(13.1)	-	-
Lips	66(61.7)	32(29.9)	9(8.4)	-	-
Forehead	40(37.4)	38(35.5)	26(24.3)	1(0.9)	2(1.9)
Cheek & Cheekbones	50(46.7)	41(38.3)	11(10.3)	3(2.8)	2(1.9)
Chin	40(37.4)	38(35.5)	26(24.3)	-	3(2.8)
Overall	55(51.4)	37(34.6)	12(11.2)	3(2.8)	-

Values are given as n(%)

Figure 1: Shows the factors influencing the sales of the cosmetic products



The major influencer enhancing the cosmetic sales were latest trends (53.30%), morning shows (30.80%), discounts (8.40%) and advertisements (7.50%).

It was found that 57.9% of the respondents were spending almost 500 PKR, 30.8% would spend 1000 to 2000 PKR and 3.7% would even spend around 3000 to 4000 PKR monthly on cosmetic products. 57.0% reported buying beauty products monthly

while 0.9% also bought it weekly or daily. Although 55.1% females said that they do not wear makeup for going to school/work but the makeup preferences were contradictory i.e. most preferred and used product for daily basis was found to be foundation/BB cream/CC cream (70.1%) followed by Lip primer/Lip liner/Lipstick/Lip gloss (11.2%). Majority females were using these cosmetic products for facial care and for improving self-image

Table 2: Elaborates the habits, preferences and purpose for buying cosmetic products

Characteristics		n(%)
Money spent on your beauty products monthly (PKR)	≤ 500	62(57.9)
	1000-2000	33(30.8)
	2000-3000	8(7.5)
	3000-4000	4(3.7)
Frequency of buying beauty products	Daily	1(0.9)
	Weekly	1(0.9)
	Monthly	61(57.0)
	Yearly	44(41.1)
Makeup Preferences on daily basis	Foundation/BB cream/CC cream	75(70.1)

	Eye shadow/Eye pencil/Eyeliners/Mascara	1(0.9)
	Lip primer/Lip liner/Lipstick/Lip gloss	12(11.2)
	Facial foam/Cleanser/Toner	1(0.9)
	Day/Night/Moisturizing/Cold cream	4(3.7)
	Sun block/Vanishing/Tanning cream	2(1.9)
	Herbal products	2(1.9)
	None of the above	10(9.3)
Makeup worn on an average day going to school/work	None	59(55.1)
	Very little, foundation and lip gloss	42(39.3)
	Foundation, lip gloss, and a little eye makeup	6(5.6)
Purpose of using cosmetic products	Facial Care	47(43.9)
	Occupational Requirement	3(2.8)
	Improving Self-Image	30(28.0)
	Better Feeling	18(16.8)
	Being Fashionable	9(8.4)

Table 3 shows the effect and involvement of makeup on responders’ confidence and self-image. 41.1% respondents believed that makeup makes them feel complete and helps in hiding flaws while 48.6% said that they feel

more comfortable and desirable with makeup. Moreover, 37.4% felt uncomfortable when wearing more makeup than usual and 21.5% agreed that wearing makeup is a necessity.

Table 3: Indicates the responder’s perception for the self-image, makeup involvement & makeup satisfaction

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It makes you feel complete	8(7.5)	44(41.1)	30(28.0)	21(19.6)	4(3.7)
It helps you in hiding all “flaws”	14(13.1)	44(41.1)	22(20.6)	22(20.6)	5(4.7)

It makes you feel more confident and desirable	16(15.0)	52(48.6)	21(19.6)	16(15.0)	2(1.9)
You feel good when your makeup looks good	44(41.1)	57(53.3)	4(3.7)	2(1.9)	-
You wear a little makeup even if just running out to the store	6(5.6)	19(17.8)	27(25.2)	28(26.2)	27(25.2)
You feel unattractive without makeup	5(4.7)	15(14.0)	24(22.4)	40(37.4)	23(21.5)
Uncomfortable when wearing more makeup than normal	35(32.7)	40(37.4)	14(13.1)	13(12.1)	5(4.7)
Wearing makeup makes you feel fake	15(14.0)	22(20.6)	36(33.6)	29(27.1)	5(4.7)
Wearing makeup is a necessity	3(2.8)	23(21.5)	39(36.4)	30(28.0)	12(11.2)
You will be judged for not wearing makeup	4(3.7)	14(13.1)	29(27.1)	36(33.6)	24(22.4)
You hate going out and meeting people without makeup	5(4.7)	16(15.0)	25(23.4)	33(30.8)	28(26.2)
You think others find you unattractive without makeup	7(6.5)	12(11.2)	37(34.6)	29(27.1)	22(20.6)

*Values are given as n(%)

Discussion

The trend of cosmetic fixation, desire to look attractive and beautiful has long been supported in our society and for satisfying this need women frequently depend on cosmetics. Previous studies showed that makeup has significant correlation with perceived femininity, attractiveness, self-image and perceived age⁹⁻¹¹. Makeup has been used for varying reasons depending upon the requirements. As per our findings, the top five reasons for wearing makeup were to feel complete, hide flaws, confidence, enhance desirability and necessity (Table 3). Similarly, Marfo et al., reported career support, confidence, attractiveness and empowerment as the major reasons behind makeup use¹².

Another study also enlisted confidence, attraction, creativity and safety as the reasons behind makeup satisfaction and excessive involvement in their normal daily life¹³.

With reference to the significance of makeup in women's life, it is important to note that the individual average age for wearing makeup has decreased in comparison to past. Majority females (83.3%) who responded were in between 15 to 25 years of age. Comparatively, a parallel study reported that 97.3% females using cosmetic products fell in between 18 and 35 years with majority being youth. The use of makeup and its increasing demand is growing rapidly, the profit margin of the cosmetic market is increasing every year¹². Narang in his study investigating the

psychological factors affecting the makeup use and its perception, found that the desire for attractiveness and sexiness were the prime culprits¹⁴.

As time passed, cosmetic market grew and makeup became an essential. According to a study, most females preferred wearing makeup when going to colleges, work, visiting friends, church and market etc¹³. In contrast, our results indicate that 55.1% females preferred wearing no makeup to school/work while 39.3% were those wearing very little makeup (Table 2). Situational preferences also vary among different countries i.e. in a study from Europe suggested that club was the place where makeup was frequently worn¹⁵, while another study reported that students preferred wearing makeup to a date¹⁶. Furthermore, foundation/BB cream/CC cream were the most frequently used cosmetic products (70.1%) followed by lip products (11.2%) (Table 2). Also, supported by a similar study¹². The makeup preferences and makeup situations differ both individually and geographically. For instance, a contradictory study present mascara as the most used makeup item by the Caucasians females¹⁵. Similarly, another study from an American College revealed similar results¹⁶.

The level of satisfaction and happiness with overall face features both with and without makeup was also assessed, it was found that 42.1% respondents were satisfied and very happy with their natural face features without makeup and 51.4% felt satisfied with makeup. While quite prominent difference was reported in a similar study where 55.8% females were satisfied without makeup and 39.6% were dependent upon makeup to feel attractive¹². It is important to educate women regarding the negative impact of cosmetics to make them well-aware of the harms and benefits of promoting such products. This study was limited to females which is the major limitation, as now the demand and consumption of makeup products is found equally among males. Also, the self-reporting

might have involved biasedness. A comparative analysis among males and females will add meaningful information to the literature. Moreover, further studies are recommended to evaluate the effect of makeup on self-esteem and how cosmetics are significant in shaping the individual's personality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there do exist association between self-image and makeup involvement. As women wearing makeup do feel more organized and when their makeup looks good, they feel more confident. Media and advertisement contributed to the promotional strategies and campaigns introduced by the cosmetic companies, they had smartly played with human psychology by manipulation and portrayal of an ideal women to be the one without flaws. Hence, negative side of cosmetic market must also be explored as it is very essential for the women to understand how these agencies are destructing the individual self-esteem in terms of globalization.

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