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## Cosmetics Use and Self-Image Among Contemporary American Women

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# Cosmetics Use and Self-Image Among Contemporary American Women

## Background

\$426 billion! This is the amount of revenue the beauty and cosmetics industry makes approximately every year, worldwide. After learning this statistic, I began to wonder, *Why do so many women like me devote so much time, energy, and money into superficial beauty?* Additionally, cosmetics have been used by women for thousands of years. Therefore, I decided to research how cosmetics influences the way women view themselves. Eventually, my research topic developed into, *How the use of cosmetics has influenced women in our modern society.*

## Conclusion & Closing Remarks

Through extensive research, I concluded that cosmetics use has either a positive or negative influence on self-image depending on certain situations. Positive influence is more often associated with temporary or short-term use, or in the case of a user who already has a good deal of self-confidence. Negative influence is more often associated with long-term use and in the case of a user who does not have a strong sense of self-confidence. Personally, I think that using cosmetics can greatly influence one's self-image positively, it is however more important to empower women so that they may have confidence in themselves whether they use cosmetics or not.

## Research

Generally, I found varying opinions about whether cosmetics use positively, or negatively affected self-image. For the purposes of the essay I wrote for my class, I argued that it had a more negative influence. However, I personally believe that cosmetics use can influence a woman's self-image either way, depending upon how often it is used and the particular individual. For example, in a 2011 study published in the African Journal of Business Management and written by Vanessa Apaolaza-Ibanez, it was found that many women experience positive emotions connected to using beauty products such as a "sensation of well-being" and reduced feelings of guilt and worry. (2011)

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## Findings

- ❖ Some researchers have found that after viewing fashion magazines or beauty advertisements, many women become dissatisfied with themselves.
- ❖ Many American women desire an unrealistic appearance and body build for themselves.
- ❖ Cosmetics influences both the social and self-perception of women.
- ❖ Using cosmetics allows women to highlight their best qualities, and hide their worst which ultimately can give them a significant boost of self-confidence.

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