2015

Cosmetics Use and Self-Image Among Contemporary American Women

Alexis A. George
Virginia Commonwealth University, georgeaa2@mymail.vcu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/uresposters

Part of the Political Science Commons

© The Author(s)

Downloaded from
http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/uresposters/162

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Research Posters by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact libcompass@vcu.edu.
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.

**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)

**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.

**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.

**References**

**Acknowledgements**
- UROP
- Professor Gordon

Alexis George