

6-1-2018

Is Beauty Only Skin Deep? Exploring the Connections Between Makeup and Perception

Shawn Kuehl

Concordia University, Saint Paul

Scarlett DeWild

Concordia University, Saint Paul

Jessica Mai

Concordia University, Saint Paul

Mai Yeng Yang

Concordia University, Saint Paul

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/comjournal>



Part of the [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kuehl, Shawn; DeWild, Scarlett; Mai, Jessica; and Yeng Yang, Mai (2018) "Is Beauty Only Skin Deep? Exploring the Connections Between Makeup and Perception," *Concordia Journal of Communication Research*: Vol. 5, Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54416/USGB5571>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/comjournal/vol5/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Journal of Communication Research by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@CSP. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csp.edu.

Is Beauty Only Skin Deep?

Exploring the Connections Between
Makeup and Perception

Shawn Kuehl, Scarlett DeWild, Jessica Mai, and Mai Yeng Yang

Concordia University, St. Paul

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Course

Com: 441 Methods in Research

and Com: 442 Research Theory

2017

ABSTRACT

This study explored college students' perceptions of the use of makeup. In order to determine what effect makeup had on first impressions, an online survey was conducted. The study suggests that makeup does impact the perception of others, specifically women, based on how society views physical beauty. Interestingly, after conducting the survey, researchers found a higher percentage of individuals perceiving makeup toward a more positive view of how it enhanced one's perception of attractiveness and how much usage of makeup enhanced that attractiveness based on the perception of participation.

Purpose and Overview of Contents

The use of makeup has been a common topic of research and analysis, yet there is still much to be learned. As cosmetic makeup has evolved through society and cultural changes, so does the interpretation of it. With media driving society into a new generation of communication patterns, the uses and style of usage concerning self-image is rapidly changing (Krayner, Ingledew, Iphofen, October 2008). Those experiencing and striving to keep up with the changes of societal views on cosmetics, are predominantly the female population.

The term "makeup" is a broad term that is used to include elements such as blush, foundation, mascara, and lipstick. It has been used by a variety of cultures for centuries and for a number of different reasons. When a person first interacts with someone, they cannot help but make judgments and assumptions based on the way that person looks. The study seeks to find the answer of how people react to women wearing and not wearing makeup, and what specifics made them react that way. Because society and cultures are ever changing, the need to study what the uses and impressions of makeup has on people is a relevant topic.

With this research, the researchers hope to bring a further understanding of how makeup impacts the impressions of onlookers. Can onlookers identify if an individual is wearing makeup

just by their first impression? Does makeup actually affect a first impression? If so, is there a specific product that influenced this impression (i.e. mascara, lipstick, blush)? This study is designed to address these questions.

Literature Review

When looking into how the application of makeup impacts first impressions, it was revealed that it encompasses several areas of investigation. Over the years, makeup has been around for a variety of reasons, including on the time, self-image, and definition of beauty. The many perspectives of beauty depend upon individual's' gender, race, self-concept, and even societal standards. Cosmetics have been a universal form of expression and have the potential of altering one's perception of an individual. Most women have experimented with makeup at least once in their life, and the reasons why depend upon a number of factors. The numerous factors can stem from self-concept, male's perception of cosmetics, first impressions along with the definition of beauty, and the cultural history of cosmetics itself.

Self-Concept

Self-concept could be deemed one of the most important subjects in researching the basis of why people act the way they do. When individuals gained an understanding of a person's reasoning for their actions, a handful of influences can be found that shape their way of thinking. The concept of self-image, for one, is one of the biggest influences. Cash, Dawson, Davis, Bowen, and Galumbeck (2010) conducted a study on thirty-eight American female college students that revealed the women had a more positive body image when wearing makeup versus when they were not wearing makeup. In fact, the more makeup that was worn, the greater the body-image by the individual. Cash et al. (2010) believed that it is a Dynamic-State-Trait perspective that physical appearance is not simply a fixed, immutable attribute, but rather it is

altered by individuals to manage and control their self and social images. Cash et al. (2010) stated that women often wear makeup to “manage and control their self-and social images” (p. 1). Self-esteem plays an important role in personal success. In fact, the perception one has of their own beauty plays an even bigger role. Research found that the fundamentals of self-esteem are further constructed with achievements in professional, athletic, personal, creative involvements, and more (Dayan, Cho, Siracusa, and Gutierrez-Borst, 2015). It is estimated that appearance is responsible for 70% of one’s self-esteem (Dayan, Cho, Siracusa, and Gutierrez-Borst, 2015). When an individual is confident with their appearance, their behavior can positively reflect that. In an experimental study that used an 11-point scale, the women who rated themselves as more attractive made 70% more money than women who were objectively rated a point higher by observers. Basically, if one thinks they are beautiful, they are more likely to make more money than if you actually are beautiful. Those with elevated self-esteem stand taller, appear more extroverted, friendlier, and approachable (Dayan et al., 2015).

Although media has a huge impact on girls, what affects girl’s self-esteem the most was their parents and peers (Krcmar, Giles, & Helme, 2008). It is commonly believed that mass media is hurting the esteem of children, but Krcmar, Giles, & Helme (2008) found that a girl’s social network (friends and family) played the biggest role in their belief of what beauty is and how a girl should look.

Male Perspective of Cosmetics and Beauty

Societal pressures and standards to look a certain way is an idea projected globally. It would appear this idea to look a perceived way would be equally distributed between genders, yet that is not the case at all. Researchers compiled 90 folktales from 13 different diverse cultures to determine the emphasis on male and female attractiveness. It was found that only

16% of the folktales emphasized male attractiveness while 83% emphasized female attractiveness. It was also found that in virtually all of these folktales, males were referenced more often than females (Gottschall, 2008).

Women tend to wear makeup for a multitude of reasons, one being to impress their male counterparts. Previous research had been conducted that asked males and females to rate the same pictures of females with and without makeup. In the case of males and females, the rating of sexual attractiveness was higher for images of girls that had cosmetics on as opposed to when they did not (Mileva & Jones, 2016). In addition, women rated the general attractiveness higher than the males of the study. The participants were also asked to rate the perceived dominance of the women in the picture, and males showed no difference in rating regardless of makeup. (Mileva & Jones, 2016).

Because there are many different dimensions of wearing makeup (whether it be blush, foundation, lipstick, etc.), in a Buckinghamshire Chilterns University study, Mulhern et al., (2003) found that male's number one preference was shown to be foundation, followed by eyes as the second most important. Foundation most commonly helps to cover up imperfections and increase facial symmetry. Not only did the use of makeup impact the wearer, it also affected the judge's' view of them. Male judges were less favorable when the women were cosmetic free; female judges were not differentially affected.

In a study done by Smolak, Murmen, and Meyers (2014), it was found that the understanding of what made males feel they are sexy greatly differs from that of females. A focus group that consisted of 25 men were asked about what they do to look sexy. Most of what their answers consisted of was not really based on looks, but mainly on hygiene, smell, and being confident. The group found that females focused mainly on physical characteristics to be

attractive while males were more worried about attitude (Smolak, Murmen, and Meyers, 2014).

These findings were reflected in the previously sighted work of Gottschall (2008), which found that there are pressures that girls are exposed to from a young age about expectations of body image that men are not subject to. These factors of influence found in the media as well as other societal norms are reflected in the mentality that many women go about their daily lives and see as what makes them as valued in the eyes of society.

Attractiveness and First Impressions

First impressions are unavoidable, and essential for individuals to try and gain an idea of the people they encounter without prior acquaintance. These impressions tend to be lasting, and can be formed in a very short amount of time. First encounters help give light to whether someone is trustworthy, intelligent, and ultimately attractive. Oftentimes, judgments based on facial appearance play a powerful role in how people treat others and how they were treated. Since first impressions are so powerful, changing the mentality of an individual is difficult regardless of the fact. Nicholas Rule of the University of Toronto stated that, 'We judge books by their covers, and we can't help but do it,'... 'With effort, we can overcome this to some extent, but we are continually tasked with needing to correct ourselves' (P. 1). Studies presented at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) annual conference in 2014, revealed that despite hopes to alter and adjust people's thinking, judgments are made by appearance and not even fact will change first impressions (Drinkard, 2014).

Psychologists have long known that attractive people get better outcomes in practically all walks of life. Workman and Johnson (1991) explored the effects of cosmetics use on impression formation. The use of cosmetics resulted in more favorable appearance ratings and more favorable ratings of personality by both male and female subjects.

When developing first impressions, particularly between men and women, attractiveness plays a key factor. How first impressions are created is also important in the context of finding a potential partner. Naturally, individuals are drawn in first by attraction and appearance. “Physical appearance is important to humans and certain features appear to be found attractive across individuals and cultures” (Thornhill and Gangestad, 1999, p.452). There appears to be a relationship between determining someone’s attractiveness based on what others deem beauty to be. The definition of beauty itself varies from one person to the next, with influences from those around them, media, marketing, and even childhood factors.

Beauty and attractiveness judgments, portray two dimensions of interpersonal perception that can be related but differ on their underlying motivational aspects. The evaluation of beauty has been the topic and concentration of many individuals alike over a vast number of years. The exact meaning and definition has come from some of the most fundamental of language development having an origin that was traced all the way back to the Latin word ‘bellus.’ Through the adaption of language, Anglo-French expanded further with keying the terms ‘bel’ and ‘beau’ meaning “beautiful, good-looking.” The Middle English borrowed the French definition and created ‘beaute’ and ‘bealte’ (Beauty, n.d.). Determining whether to classify someone or something as beautiful or having beauty, is ultimately dependent upon one’s own personal viewpoint.

Beauty’s Definition, History, & Cultural Views

Hunt, Fate, and Dodds (2011) stated that “as society changes, so does the perception of beauty, and the cosmetics industry must respond to these cultural and social changes” (p.1). Makeup may enhance or disguise facial characteristics (Ueda & Koyama, 2009). Different ethnicities and countries have different historical reasons as to how makeup came to exist in their

culture. As to how those cultural values and views of beauty are defined differently, it can be determined by the individual's perception. The history of cosmetics has not been used in the same way they are used in today's modern society.

The word *cosmetae* was first used to describe Roman slaves whose function was to bathe men and women in perfume (Chaudhri & Jain, 2009). Egyptians were the first to use "cosmetics" as a way of accentuation a certain part of the body (Hunt, et al., 2011). As the influences of trades spread, other nations became influences on the perspective of the beauty usage and change of how individual looks. While society changed, the definition of beauty changed from an essential part of daily grooming to extenuating individual's' facial features through makeup. Individual mindset is that makeup is part of their physical appearance of who they are in public with everyone. It tells everything else about how a woman's self-image is based on the facial characteristic of makeup they put on. Women are constantly bombarded by information in mass media which transmits and reinforces values, norms, and ideals of fashion and beauty via images of models, movie stars, and female celebrities in a variety of media formats (Polivy & Herman, 2004).

Taking this into consideration, the belief that westernization of fashion and beauty are being communicated worldwide, minority cultures are confronted with the possibility of losing their independence in setting up standards of ideal beauty (Yan & Bissell, 2014). As the standard westernization influences of beauty increases, non-western women are impacted with the impossible feat of measuring up to the definition of beauty. The history of beauty defines the standard of what beauty is and also influences how cultures take shape and evolve in their definition of what beauty becomes. The history behind beauty and how it's perceived throughout the world has been influenced by an array of cultural views. These views have helped shape,

style, and change the perceived standard of beauty.

Chaudhri and Jain (2009) stated that “growing media and westernization influenced... awareness of personal hygiene as well as beauty consciousness, enhancing the adoption and frequency of usage of cosmetics” (p. 167). In history, not only did the Egyptian use cosmetics as a source to show beauty but, also used as a belief of that it shows the mirror-image of an individual soul and the symbol of either they are good or evil. However, in the Hebrew culture usage of cosmetics is similar to the Egyptians’ way of hygiene, yet the Hebrew also believed that the use of cosmetics possessed qualities that could heal the sick. The Geeks in a way used cosmetics as their religious rights, grooming and medicinal purposes. However, Geeks used much less cosmetics compared to other cultures because Geeks men must have attributes suitable of a good housewives/lady image.

A study done by Yang and Bissell (2014) looked at the portrayal of female beauty worldwide through a content analysis of female models in four top beauty and fashion magazines from several countries and regions. The conclusions of this study revealed that different magazines held different standards when selecting models, suggesting that the image of beauty is not one universal agreement. Gottschall (2008) discovered that although the emphasis of female attractiveness is primarily a Western practice, the concept is not new nor unused in other cultures of the world. Gottschall (2008)’s results suggest “that the main elements of the beauty myth are not myths: there are large areas of overlap in the attractiveness judgments of diverse populations, and cross-cultural emphasis on physical attractiveness appears to fall principally upon women” (p.174-188).

Impression Management

Human beings care about the way others feel and think about them. Especially with the

rise of the internet and social media, people seem to be more worried about self-image than ever before. When someone posts on social media or walks out in public, they are essentially an actor putting on a performance to their audience. At all times while they are making these “performances”, they are trying to portray an image they think will be liked by others. (Hill, 2014). In daily life, it is believed that everyone is essentially wearing masks and putting forth a routine that people feel will portray one another in the way individuals would like to be seen.

In a database that Allison Hill gained access to, a data analysis was done on survey responses from 1,026 girls ranging from the ages of 14-17 about their view of their own online presence as well as their view of other girls. In the results, they found that when these girls evaluated how authentic their online presence was compared to their actual lives, 78% felt as though they portrayed themselves accurately online to how they are in person. When those same girls answered questions wondering whether other girls their age portray themselves accurately online, 65% of the participants said that others did not represent themselves accurately.

Hill’s study suggests individuals have control over the exposure individuals present on social media then in real life. Because of this, people can more easily control the way they want others to view us. Social media is a planned skit whereas real life is a live action play that does not have a delete button or do-overs. When people are on the internet, they have the ability to express their “real” self or experiment with their identity (Hill, 2014).

A separate study was conducted to determine what women do to look “sexy”. They gathered this data by conducting focus groups of girls between the ages of 18-22. When the girls were asked what they do to look attractive, they referenced using push up bras, more revealing clothing, high heels, and the use of makeup. They also said that doing their hair and working out were tactics used to be more attractive. The participants noted the difference between everyday

makeup use and “I’m trying to look sexy” makeup use. They also discussed the social construct of looking “sexy” on a weekday is unacceptable but the same outfit is completely fine for going out on the weekend (Smolak et al., 2014).

This study did show that in the case of the women questioned, that they do use makeup, specifically techniques such as “smokey eyes”, “big eyes”, and mascara to look sexier and send a message to onlookers. Smolak and the research team also found that the way that women dressed was very much influenced by what they think the other girls will view as socially acceptable. This suggests that women are not strictly dressing up to attract men, but to please their female counterparts.

Research Question

The impact of how and why cosmetics affect first impressions was an interesting topic of research and study. The specific amount of makeup worn, the psychology, cultural view and history of beauty, male perspective of cosmetic and beauty, first impression and attractiveness, and the definition of beauty are characteristics featured in previous studies focused on how individuals judge others through first impression. The intended research was justified because although there was research concerning the appeal of makeup, much of those research studies have been conducted in foreign countries, with not as much research in the western world. The concept of beauty is ever changing and thus requires additional research.

Research Question: How Does the Use of Makeup Influence the Perception of Others and Self?

Subset Question: How Does the Application of Makeup Impact Perceptions?

Methodology

257 students were surveyed at a religion based, private university located in the Midwest. This location was chosen because it supplied participants with ethnic diversity and socio-economic variances that was beneficial in the data collection. The sampling was gathered from the undergraduate student population of the University, excluding PSEO and graduate students. The participants of this survey varied in gender, age, and background. Throughout the process of data collection, the identities of the participants remained anonymous. The study's hypothesis was that men and women would have different reactions to the use of makeup.

The data was gathered through an online survey utilizing Survey Monkey to collect results. The reasoning for using an online survey was to gather more data and to cut down on the likelihood of human error. The research design was cross-sectional versus longitudinal because of time restriction, since there wasn't a need to carry it out for a long time. The aim of this process was to get male and female participants from a variety of different ethnicities and age groups to attain a formidable sample, in which, the researchers are able to analyze further for validity. The survey consisted strictly of closed ended questions. The first part of the survey was made up of various inquiries that helped gain an understanding of participant demographics. The second part of the survey displayed women with varying amounts of makeup. The participants in the study then utilized the Likert scale to rate the attractiveness of the different pictures individually.

Once the data was collected, a further breakdown comparing the difference in opinions between men and women on the usage of makeup was conducted. Additionally, there was another analysis to seek whether or not cultural background played a role in the way participants viewed the pictures. The goal was to be able to display potential differences within these varying

groups based on demographics, background, and how their perceptions affected their first impression of makeup.

Results

In conducting this survey, every undergraduate student at the selected private, faith based institution located in the Midwest of the United States was sent an online survey. They were asked twelve questions that were chosen in hopes of finding a better understanding of how people view makeup and what elements of makeup specifically have the most favorable impacts to onlookers. This survey was distributed to 1145 students, with responses from 257 of them (a response rate of 22%). Of those respondents, three did not complete the entire survey, leaving 254 remaining participants. This left 98.8 percent of the total respondents to be active for data collection.

The researchers first navigated through the data to explore potential differences in favorability of makeup in general between males and females. For males, 17% of respondents viewed makeup negatively, 43% had a neutral view toward makeup, and 40% viewed it in a positive light. Amongst females, 6% viewed makeup negatively, 20% viewed it neutrally, and 74% viewed it positively.

These results are very different between males and females. Because of this, the researchers compared the results of the two groups to find any significance in the findings. When a chi-square test was conducted, the results for neutral and positive views were found to be significant ($P < .05$). The results the researchers have found indicate that there is a significant difference between the way males and females view makeup. The researchers reject the null and accept the alternative.

When responders were asked “Does the use of makeup make a person more attractive?”

the responses were virtually identical between males and females. Both groups said that makeup does make the user more attractive on some level. Of the males surveyed, 86% said that makeup enhanced attractiveness and 87% of females said the same. There was no significant difference in these results.

Participants were also asked why they felt people wear makeup. Amongst males, 19% of them said that women wear it because they like to. Women who were asked the same question responded with 47% saying that they wear it because they like it. The second reason picked by females was they were worried about how they would be perceived, at 30% (males answered at 40%). When a chi-square test was used to determine if there was significance in the results, it revealed that the difference between male and female responses on 'enjoying wearing makeup' was significant ($P < .05$). These results demonstrate that there is a difference in the way males and females perceive wearers of makeup. The researchers reject the null and accept the alternative.

During this study, the researchers sought to look at why the females who participated wear makeup. The results revealed that 47% answered that they wear it because they enjoy it. This was followed by 30% saying that they are worried how they would be perceived without it, then 22% saying it is because of norms.

Looking further into potential reasons why 30% said they were worried at how they would be perceived, the study delved deeper into how that group answered the question of who they wear makeup for. The researchers found almost an even split between themselves, means of attraction, and societal norms. When a chi-square test was conducted, no significant differences ($P > .05$) was found. The researcher results were unable to find significance in the difference of females answering questions amongst those who answered that they were worried about their perception. These findings failed to reject the null hypothesis.

The results from the data suggests that onlookers regarding cosmetics was a consensus across all demographics. The response to this question was eyeliner/mascara with 47%. In this same question, the second most chosen was lipstick at 30%, followed by foundation at 16%. Additionally, when responders were asked which facial feature is most influential in determining the attractiveness of an individual, 82% of the total respondents answered 'eyes'.

To further explore the results of the people who answered 'eyes,' researchers focused on how those same people answered which cosmetic product was most influential. 49% of those who answered 'eyes' said that mascara/eyeliner was the most important factor in determining attractiveness. Lipstick came in with the second highest percentage at 30%. When a chi-square test was conducted to determine if there is significance in the way they answered, there was no significant differences ($P > .05$). The researchers' results could not find a link that indicates that those who answered "eyes" significantly preferred mascara. These findings fail to reject the null.

To try and determine if there may be a difference in how people of different ethnic backgrounds view or use makeup, the researchers analyzed the data to find how often people of different backgrounds used makeup. In answering the question of how often makeup is worn, the results showed that 37% of people who identified as white wear makeup daily, which was higher than other races (Asians reported 26% and African Americans answered 20%).

The researchers then compared each race to see whether there was a significant difference in how they responded to whether they had a positive, negative, or neutral view of makeup. When looking at the differences in who had a 'very positive' view toward makeup, it was revealed that there was a difference between Asians (28%) and white people (13%). A significant difference was found ($P < .05$). These results demonstrate a potential link between race and the level of favorability towards makeup. Researchers reject the null and accept the

alternative.

For the last part of the survey, four pictures of the same model with different levels of makeup usage in each picture was shown to the participants. The first had no makeup, second had small amounts with some cover up, third had cover up and mascara, then the fourth and final one had makeup applied heavily. Those answering were asked to rank the four images from least attractive to most attractive. When compared, African Americans voted the picture with no makeup least attractive 55%, followed by whites at 48%, and Asians at only 30%. The percentages of who voted the image with the most makeup ‘least attractive’ were 58% of Asians voted that image least attractive, followed by whites at 45%, and African Americans at 41%. When a chi-square test was carried out, there was not a significant difference between how Asians and whites answered on the image with no makeup ($P > .05$). These results demonstrated that there could not be a link made between race and the way makeup is preferred to look. Because of these findings, the researchers fail to reject the null.

Discussion

When looking at the data collected from the surveys, several themes were present. Themes on gender differences, cultural variations, and a general consensus of the participants emerged. The theories will be used as a lens to interpret the data. Within Impression Management Theory, gender, cultural differences, as well as social judgment theory will be discussed.

Impression Management Theory

Gender. Developed in 1959 by Erving Goffman, the Impression Management theory involves the perceived image of one’s self presented non-verbally or verbally to others (Appelrouth, 2008, p.14). Impression management refers to the many ways individuals attempt

to control the impressions others have of them: their behavior, motivations, morality, and a host of personal attributes like dependability, intelligence, and future potential (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1994). This is done through protecting one's self-concept by influencing others' perceptions. Impressions are one of the biggest influences motivating humans and their behavior. Portraying the right kind of image or coming across in a good light, is something almost every person actively strives to do.

Based on the findings, it appears as though females' version of impression management is different than men. The results revealed that 10% of the men surveyed wear makeup to some extent compared to females at 93% who wear it on varying levels ranging from rarely to daily. Impression management theory discusses that humans are all inherently trying to impress the people around them. Since both males and females are included in this theory, the results of the study could show that there is a difference in what "impression management" means between genders. The results collected for that particular private university and their students, may show that in order for females to make a positive impression on others, they feel they must wear makeup.

Despite individuals having their own motives for why they might want to portray a positive self-image, the two most common motives are instrumental and expressive (Abeysekera & Lu, 2014). Instrumental motives entail a desire to increase self-esteem while expressive motives involve the desire of being in charge of one's personal behavior and identity. Whether to fit social norms or particular expectations, most people want to be in control of how they are regarded by others. Wearing makeup can be an example, for some, to convey a particular identity, maybe to give off that they have a better complexion since they can hide their imperfections with foundation and cover-up. Or the multiple coats of mascara they put on, are to

give the illusion that they possess long, full lashes fitting into the societal norm to have such lashes. When the participants were asked which product is most influential for an individual to appear more attractive, eyeliner or mascara was the most selected response with 40.32%, foundation and cover up came in at a close second at 38.17%.

Amongst females who answered as to why they wear makeup, 47% said it was because they enjoyed it. That was the most commonly chosen answer regardless of race. But the next two most chosen answers were that they were worried how they would be perceived without it (around one third), followed by social norms at 22%. Even though there are 47% of females that said they wear makeup because they enjoy it, the majority (52%) gave answers that may tell that outside sources are the biggest factor in why they wear makeup.

The notion to protect one's self-concept is another aspect of impression management. "Self-esteem may be defined as the attitude about self, which is derived from judgment regarding one's self-worth and the emotions attached to this perception of self; it is part of the self-concept" (Theodore, 2015, p.52). Self-concept and self-esteem are often associated together and fused as one to create the idea of positive self-concept. The basic human desire is to be viewed by others in a favorable manner is what impression management is all about (Rosenfield et al., 1994). Establishing both one's self-concept and self-esteem is done through experiences and interactions with people around us. Interactions with others and the impressions they have can have a significant impact on a person's self-concept as they grow and develop; this on-going process continues throughout everyone's lives (McLean, 2002, p.32).

Sometimes predictions can be made about how others will act or who people believe they are, leading to self-fulfilling prophecies. These prophecies often come true due to the consistency in how people act based on the prediction. Individuals may have been told they have nice skin

and complexion over time that they believe they do, even associating it as a positive aspect of themselves, yet when a blemish were to appear or a flaw in their complexion, maintaining that perceived notion of themselves could be what motivates people to wear makeup.

Believing in one's own attractiveness and beauty isn't always easy, but that's why people like to utilize products such as makeup to help enforce that. Makeup wearers tend to feel better about themselves and their beauty, because products can help enhance their features or portray desirable results of beauty, leading them to enjoy wearing it and often. Just under half of the females in the study said they enjoy wearing makeup, and about 45% wear it daily. This discovery could correlate to these women wanting to sustain a positive self-concept.

Cultural Differences. All races had a positive view toward makeup in general. When asked which makeup item they noticed on one's face first, every race agreed that eyeliner was what they noticed first. It was also found that the use of makeup was extremely common amongst females of all races. Over 80% of each race reported that they wear makeup to some extent, ranging from rarely to daily.

Survey respondents who identified as Asian had a very positive view towards makeup, more than those of other ethnic backgrounds. Trying to better understand why the results came out the way they did, the researchers looked to see how each race ranked the pictures with levels of makeup that range from no makeup, to a lot of makeup. Asian participants rated the second image, the one with minimal makeup, most attractive at 52%. Cultures across the globe have different beauty standards, including makeup and the amount worn. A possible explanation for the differences in the results, could hold the cultural differences of beauty standards accountable. Based on the results received, it seems that Asian respondents have a positive view of makeup and it is very commonly used. The results may show that makeup is just as valuable within their

culture, but they prefer the use of minimal makeup versus heavier makeup.

No matter the beauty standard of a particular country, there is usually a common thread: youthfulness and femininity. There's this pressure to look younger and appear closer to society's version of feminine. No matter the skin tone, being free of "imperfections" is celebrated. Makeup products like concealer and foundation are sold to mask imperfections on people's skins including discoloration and blemishes. Studying different cultures and their attitudes toward something as subjective as beauty allows one to widen the awareness of what's going on within one's own subcultures. It offers a reminder that everyone has their own perceptions of the world around them. Self-perception theory posits that people determine their attitudes and preferences by interpreting the meaning of their own behavior. This theory focuses on whether people also rely on the unobservable behavior that is their mind wandering when making inferences about their attitudes and preferences. Culture and generally where you come from can play a large part within this when assessing why an individual might have the beauty standards that they do.

From the data received from females, the desire or need to apply makeup to have a more positive impression on the people around them is evident in all races surveyed. But the idea of just applying makeup is not universal in its appeal. Within the task of simply applying makeup, the results may show there to be another factor that could influence the perception of others. The amount of makeup used may have a different impression from onlookers based on their cultural backgrounds.

Social Judgment Theory

Developed by Muzafer Sherif, the Social Judgment Theory, also known as social judgment-involvement approach, is a theory about the subconscious of individuals' perception and evaluation of an idea by comparing it with current attitudes. Based on Sherif's study, he

indicated that there are three zones of attitudes that people could respond. According to Sherif, “Social Judgment Theory, describes the stance of an individual as a point in a continuum of possible opinions is not adequate because the individual’s degree of tolerance is also important in determining his/her response to external stimuli and persuasion” (Hovland, Harvey, & Sherif, 1961, p.47). Basically saying that the main idea of SJT is that attitude change of an individual is a judgmental process. The three zone of attitudes that Sherif focus on were the latitude of acceptance, rejection, and non-commitment.

Of the participants, 10% of the participants had a negative perspective toward the usage of makeup. This small percentage can be seen as a latitude of rejection which means that participants in these categories see makeup as a range of ideas that is seen not reasonable or objectionable in what they think is important. It was also interesting to find that most of the negative views were those of men. This shows the ego-involvement of social judgment which define, based on the study, that men seem to feel that the use of makeup on themselves or another individual to not be such an important aspect in life.

The number of people who said that they had a neutral view toward makeup was 26% of the people surveyed. This is considered to be the latitude of non-commitment. Sherif’s studies offers that this is a group that does not see the behavior as acceptable or objectionable. It was also interesting to see that amongst males; the latitude of non-commitment was much larger (42%) compared to females who answered neutral at 20%. This could show that males and females have different levels of acceptance for makeup.

About 64% of participants in the study were shown to lean more toward the latitude of acceptance, which means that these participants had a more positive perspective of using makeup themselves. The higher percentage could show that individuals, cultural norms, and the media

have established makeup as commonplace and widely accepted by people regardless of demographic.

Conclusion

The results suggest that the perception of makeup can differ based on ethnic background and gender, as well as individual's perception of themselves. Both gender and race plays a role in the way individuals are viewed by others and how they view themselves. The study also found that the amount of makeup applied is also a factor in the way people view those who wear it. Additionally, finding that the use of makeup was very common amongst people of all backgrounds and all had a positive view toward its use was an interesting finding that the researchers had not expected coming into this study.

Limitations

An issue the researchers of the study ran to into was getting a lower response rate from men than they anticipated. The study received exactly 70 male responses and 186 female responses. Meaning that 27.34% of the responses were male while 72.66% were female. A second issue encountered was that the private, Midwestern university where this study was conducted is a predominantly white campus. Although, the study did receive responses from a few different race groups, there weren't many. Of the 256 responses, 24 responses were received from those who identify as Black or African American, 6 for those who identify as Hispanic, 46 who identified as Asian, and 1 who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native. This means that 179 of the responses were from those who identify as White.

A potential limitation could be that people did not completely understand the meaning of each question. Researchers were not present to clarify and questions that participants had. The last question has multiple dimensions to it that could have caused confusion. The results could

have been altered by people answering questions with an incorrect understanding of what was requested.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results from this survey provided critical foundation for more extensive research. Any retrospective study done in the future should be conducted with a different cultural group to provide a more accurate representation of how the application of makeup influences the first impression of those from a different cultural group. By doing this, it would allow the researchers to examine if makeup triggers a different reaction depending on the cultural group individuals identify with.

Future research should also experiment with a different age group. This particular study was limited due to the fact that the survey was only sent to the undergraduate student body. Of course when conducting research with a topic dealing with first impressions, it is important that those being surveyed include people from every age group. The majority of the responses came from 20-21 year olds (39.06%) with 18-19 year olds' responses coming in second at 37.11% total of responses.

Lastly, if this research is explored further in the future, the researchers suggest that there be more male responses than the original study. This would allow people to hear more about what someone who identifies as male thinks about makeup. The study only had 27.34% male responses compared to the 72.66% female responses.

References

- Brown, T. A., Cash, T. F., & Noles, S. W. (2010). Perceptions of physical attractiveness among college students: Selected determinants and methodological matters. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 126(3), 305-316.
- Cash, T., Dawson, K., Davis, P., Bowen, M., & Galumbeck, C. (2010). Effects of cosmetics use on the physical attractiveness and body image of American college women. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 129(3), 349-355.
- Chaudhri, S. K., & Jain, N. K. (2009). History of cosmetics. *Asian Journal of Pharmaceutics*, 3(3), 164.
- Dayan, S. H., Cho, K., Siracusa, M., & Gutierrez-Borst, S. (2015). Quantifying the impact cosmetic make-up has on age perception and the first impression projected. *Journal of Drugs in Dermatology*, 14(4), 366.
- Drinkard, A., Society for Personality and Social Psychology (2014). *Even fact will not change first impressions* [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.spsp.org/news-center/press-releases/even-fact-will-not-change-first-impressions>
- Ferdenzi, C., Delplanque, S., Vorontsova-Wenger, O., Pool, E., Bianchi-Demicheli, F., & Sander, D. (2015). Perception of men's beauty and attractiveness by women with low sexual desire. *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 12(4), 946-955.
- Foos, P. W., & Clark, M. C. (2011). Adult age and gender differences in perceptions of facial attractiveness: Beauty is in the eye of the older beholder. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 172(2), 162-175.
- Freedman, R. J. (2008). Reflections on beauty as it relates to health in adolescent females. *Women & Health*, 9(2-3), 29-45

- Gottschall, J. (2008). The "beauty myth" is no myth. *Human Nature: An Interdisciplinary Biosocial Perspective*, 19(2), 174-188.
- Griffin, E., Ledbetter, A. M., & Sparks, G. G. (2015). *A first look at communication theory* (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Guéguen, N. (2012). Makeup and menstrual cycle: Near ovulation, women use more cosmetics. *The Psychological Record*, 62(3), 541-548.
- Guéguen, N. (2008). Brief report: The effects of women's cosmetics on men's approach: An evaluation in a bar. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 10(1), 221-228.
- Hill, A. M. (2014). The kids are all right online: Teen girls' experiences with self-presentation, impression management & aggression on Facebook (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (Order no. 3642565).
- Hovland, C. I., Harvey, O. J., & Sherif, M. (1961). Assimilation and contrast effects in reactions to communication and attitude change. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 55(2), 244-252
- Hunt, K. A., Fate, J., & Dodds, B. (2011). Cultural and social influences on the perception of beauty: A case analysis of the cosmetics industry. *Journal of Business Case Studies*, 7(1), 1.
- Jones, A. L., Kramer, R. S., & Ward, R. (2014). Miscalibrations in judgments of attractiveness with cosmetics. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 67(10), 2060-2068.
- Korichi, R., Pelle-de-Queral, D., Gazano, G., & Aubert, A. (2011). Relation between facial morphology, personality and the functions of facial make-up in women: Influence of makeup products. *International Journal of Cosmetic Science*, 33(4), 338-345.
- Krayer, A., Ingledew, D. K., & Iphofen, R. (2008). Social comparison and body image

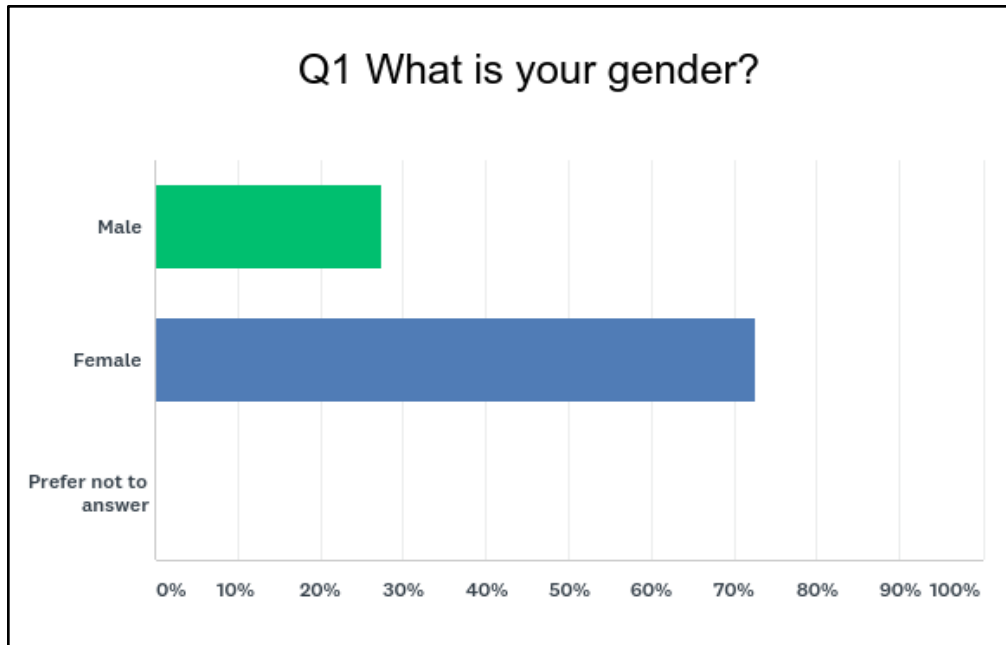
- in adolescence: A grounded theory approach, *Health Education Research*, 23(5), 892–903.
- Krcmar, M., Giles, S., & Helme, D. (2008). Understanding the process: How mediated and peer norms affect young women's body esteem. *Communication Quarterly*, 56(2), 111-130.
- Li, X., & Zhang, M. (2011). Images of attractive women make young females behave virtuously. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 39, 797.
- Louis, C. S. (2011). Up the career ladder, lipstick in hand. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/13/fashion/makeup-makes-women-appear-more-competent-study.html>
- Lu, Y., & Abeysekera, I. (2014). *Social and environmental disclosure by Chinese firms*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- McLean, S. A. (2002). *The Basics of Speech Communications* (1st ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Mileva, V. R., Jones, A. L., Russell, R., & Little, A. C. (2016). Sex differences in the perceived dominance and prestige of women with and without cosmetics. *Perception*, 45(10), 1166-1183.
- Mulhern, R., Fieldman, G., Hussey, T., Lévêque, J., & Pineau, P. (2003). Do cosmetics enhance female Caucasian facial attractiveness?. *International Journal of Cosmetic Science*, 25(4), 199.
- Nash, R., Fieldman, G., Hussey, T., Lévêque, J. L., & Pineau, P. (2006). Cosmetics: They influence more than Caucasian female facial attractiveness. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36(2), 493-504.
- Oi, N., & Ohi, K. (2013). The psychosocial influence to habit using make-up of women aged

- 40 to 59 years menopausal Japanese women. *International Journal of Cosmetic Science*, 35(1), 64-68.
- Poran, M. A. (2002). Denying diversity: Perceptions of beauty and social comparison processes among Latina, black, & white women. *Sex Roles*, 47(1), 65-81.
- Riggio, R. E., Widaman, K. F., Tucker, J. S., & Salinas, C. (1991). Beauty is more than skin deep: Components of attractiveness. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 12(4), 423-439.
- Rosenfield, P., Giacalone, R. A., & Riordan, C. A. (1994). Impression management theory and diversity: Lessons for organizational behavior. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 37(5), 601+.
- Smolak, L., Murnen, S. K., & Myers, T. A. (2014). Sexualizing the self: What college women and men think about and do to be “sexy”. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 38(3), 379-397.
- Theodore, D. D. (2015). Self-concept and self-esteem promotion. *Textbook of Mental Health Nursing* (Vol. 1). India: Elsevier Health Sciences.
- Thornhill, R., & Gangestad, S. W. (1999). Facial attractiveness. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 3(12), 452-460.
- Ueda, S., & Koyama, T. (2010). Influence of makeup on facial recognition. *Perception*, 39(2), 260-264.
- Verderber, K. S., & MacGeorge, E. L. (2016). *Inter-act: Interpersonal communication concepts, skills, and contexts* (14th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Workman, J. E., & Johnson, K. K. (1991). The role of cosmetics in impression formation. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 10(1), 63-67.

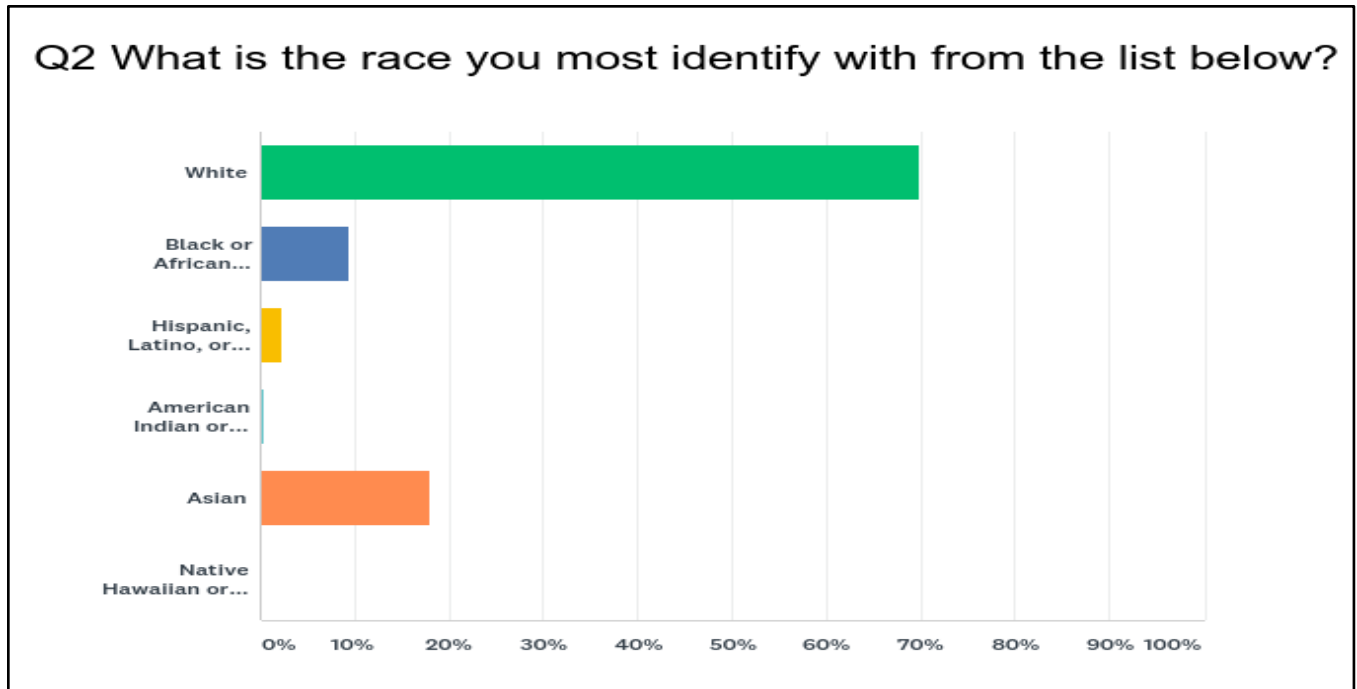
Yan, Y., & Bissell, K. (2014). The globalization of beauty: How is ideal beauty influenced by globally published fashion and beauty magazines?. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 43(3), 194-214.

Appendix

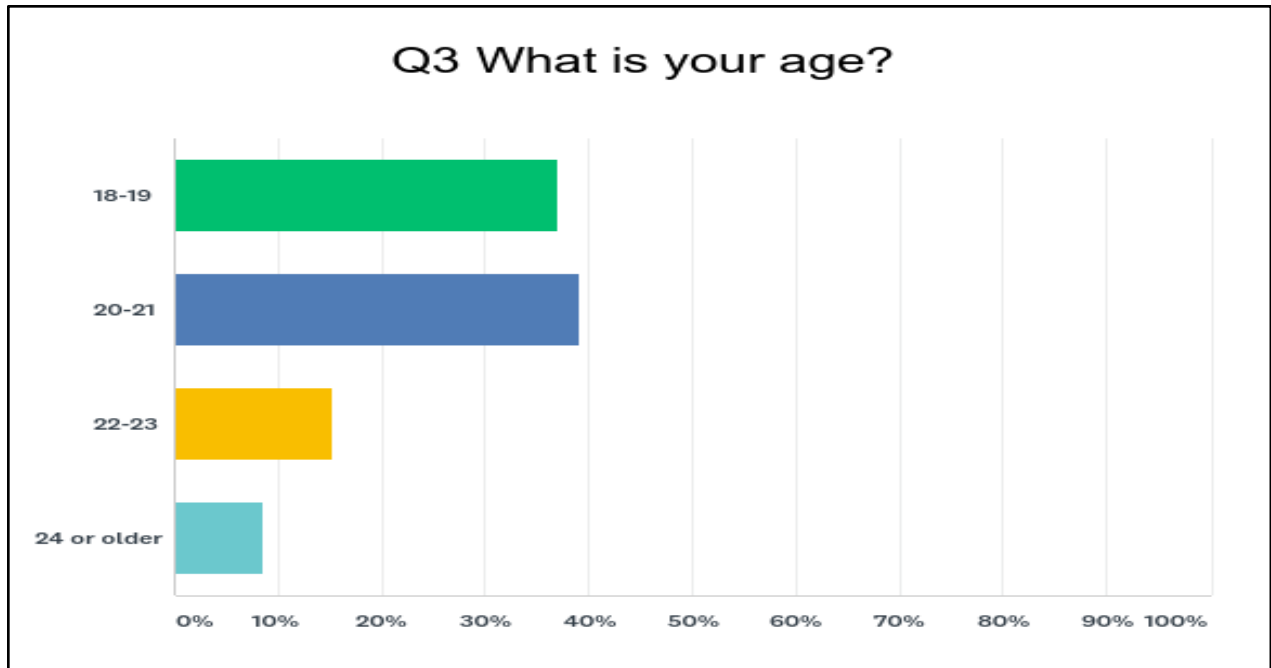
1. What is your gender?
2. What is the race you most identify with from the list below?
3. What is your age?
4. How often do you wear makeup?
5. Using the scale, rate your feelings toward the use of makeup?
6. Do you think that makeup enhances attractiveness?
7. Which of these facial features do you think is most influential in determining the attractiveness of an individual?
8. Why do you think individuals feel the need to wear makeup?
9. Who do individuals wear makeup for?
10. From the list below, which do you notice first when you see someone wearing makeup?
11. Which of these products is most influential for an individual to appear more attractive?
12. Rank these images from 1 (Most Attractive) to 4 (Least Attractive)



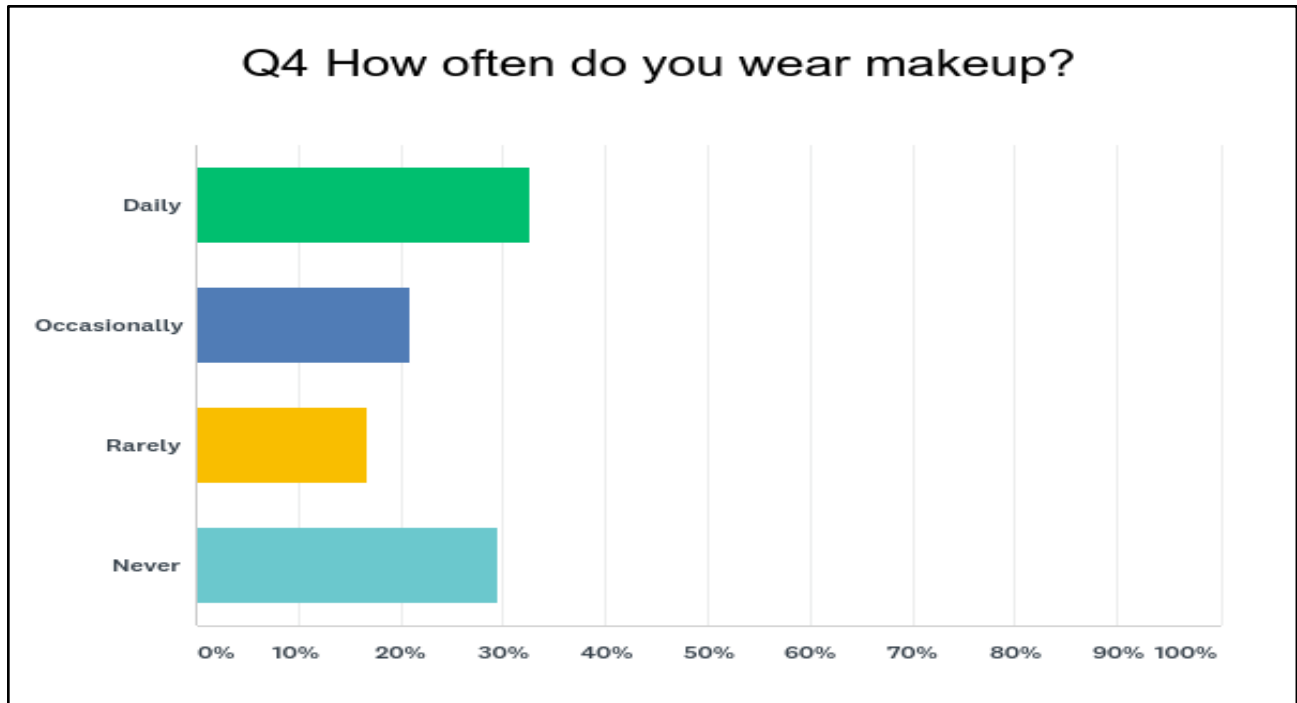
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	27.34%	70
Female	72.66%	186
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0
TOTAL		256



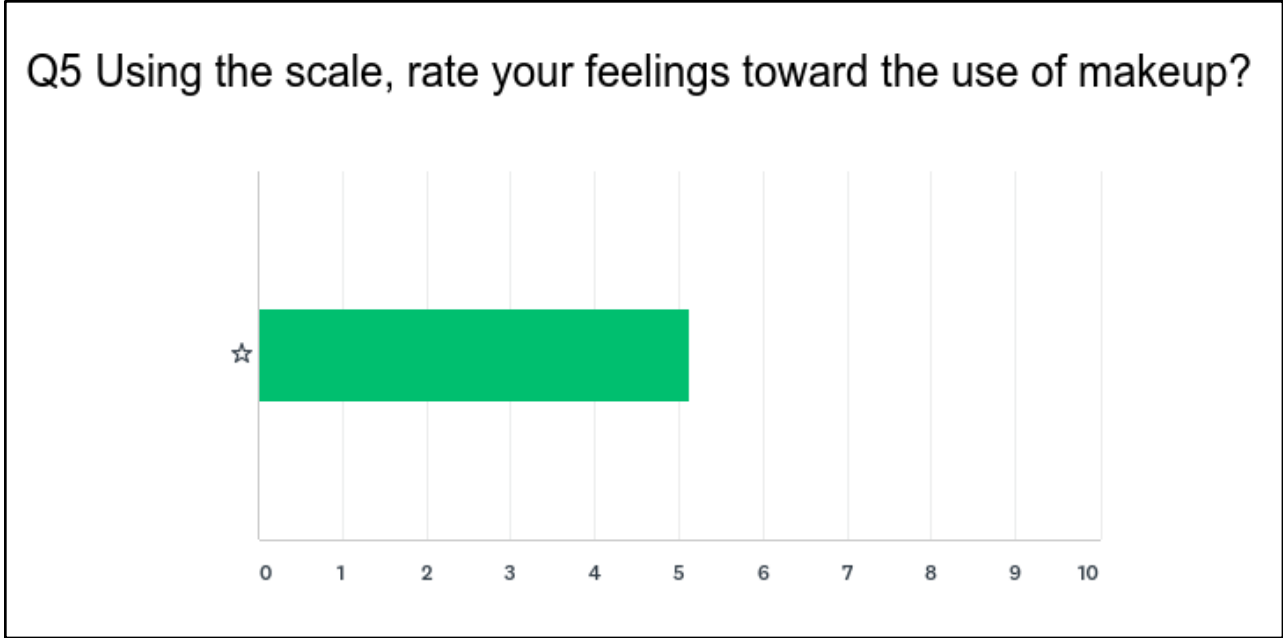
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White	69.92%	179
Black or African American	9.38%	24
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin	2.34%	6
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.39%	1
Asian	17.97%	46
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0
TOTAL		256



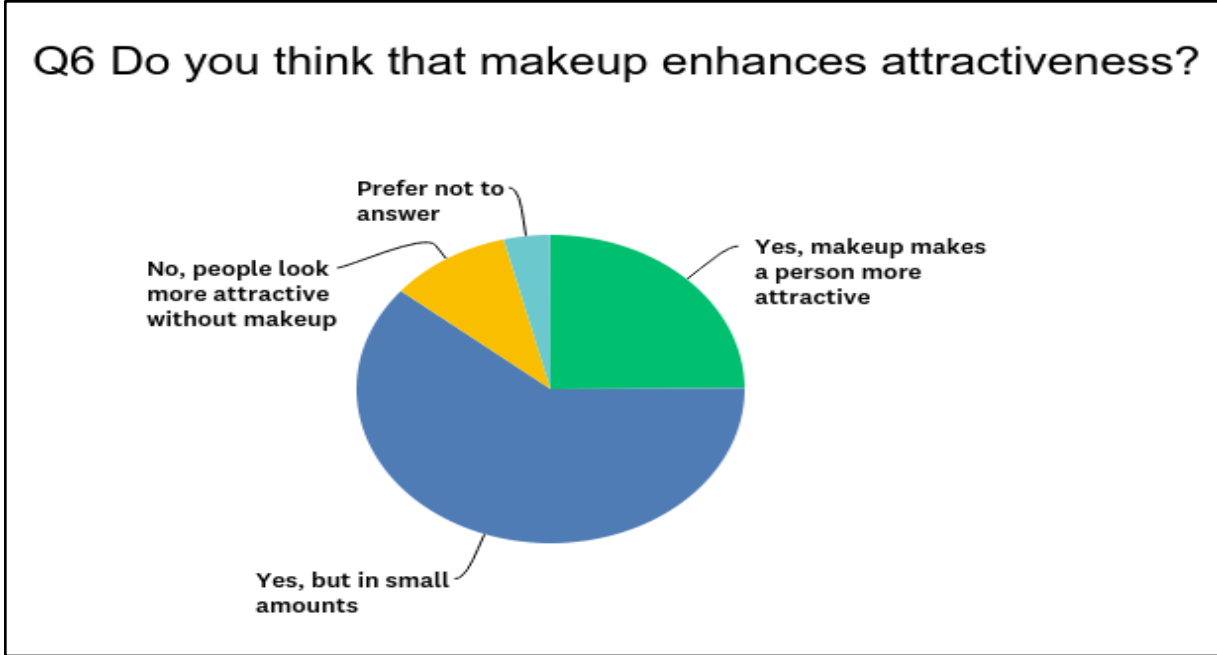
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18-19	37.11%	95
20-21	39.06%	100
22-23	15.23%	39
24 or older	8.59%	22
TOTAL		256



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Daily	32.68%	84
Occasionally	21.01%	54
Rarely	16.73%	43
Never	29.57%	76
TOTAL		257

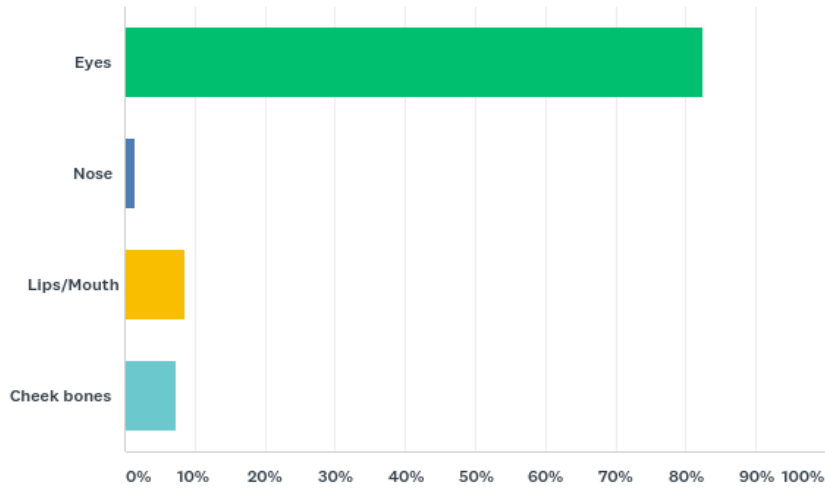


	VERY NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	LEAN NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	LEAN POSITIVE	POSITIVE	VERY POSITIVE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	1.17%	2.33%	6.23%	26.07%	17.90%	29.96%	16.34%	257	5.12
	3	6	16	67	46	77	42		

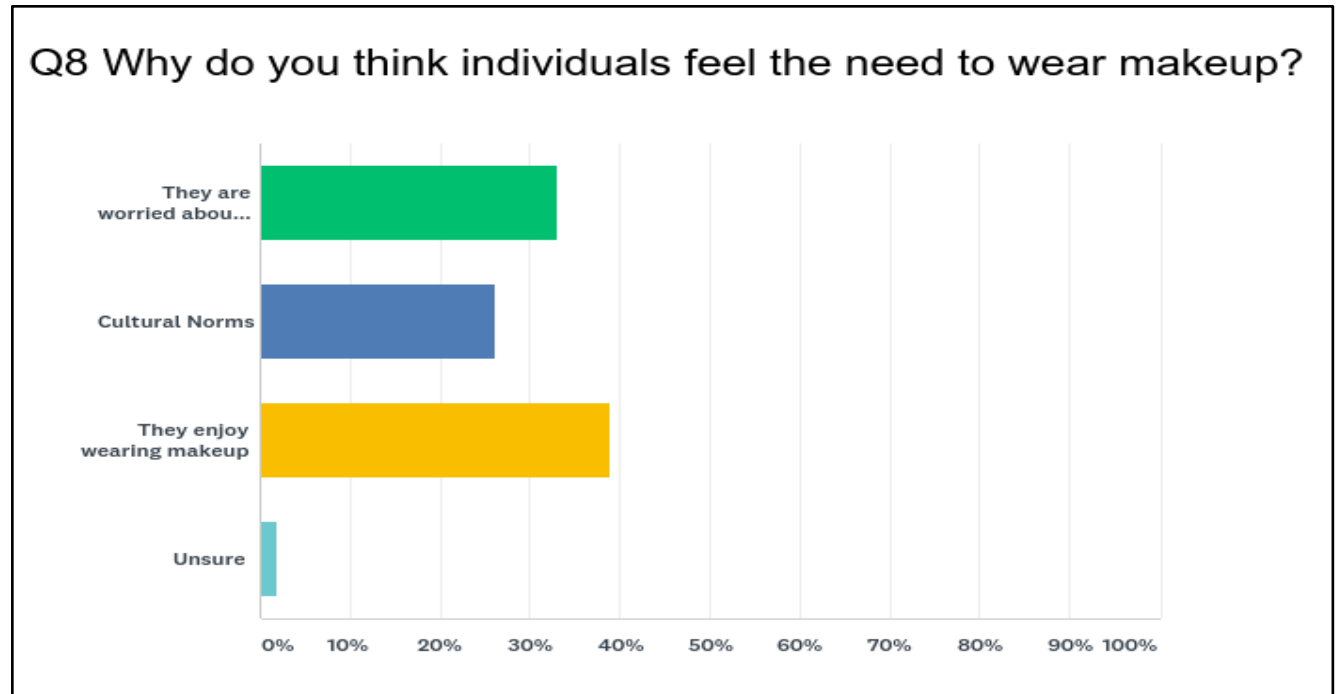


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, makeup makes a person more attractive	24.90%	64
Yes, but in small amounts	61.09%	157
No, people look more attractive without makeup	10.12%	26
Prefer not to answer	3.89%	10
TOTAL		257

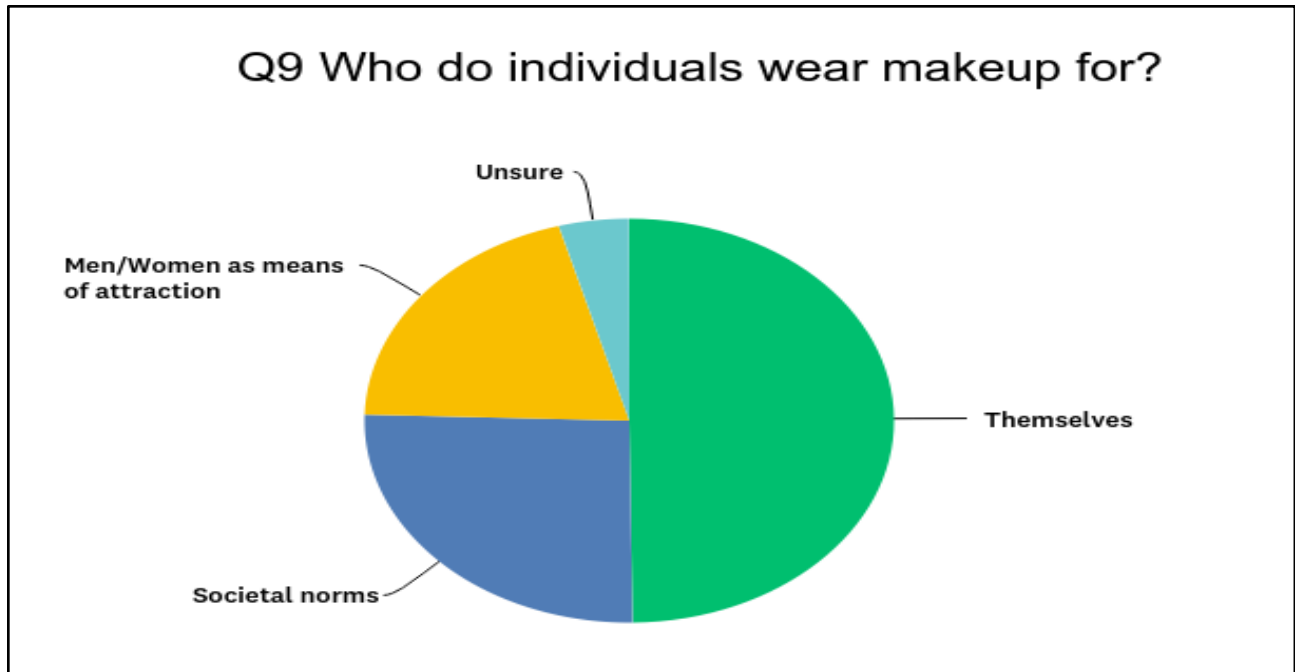
Q7 Which of these facial features do you think is most influential in determining the attractiveness of an individual?



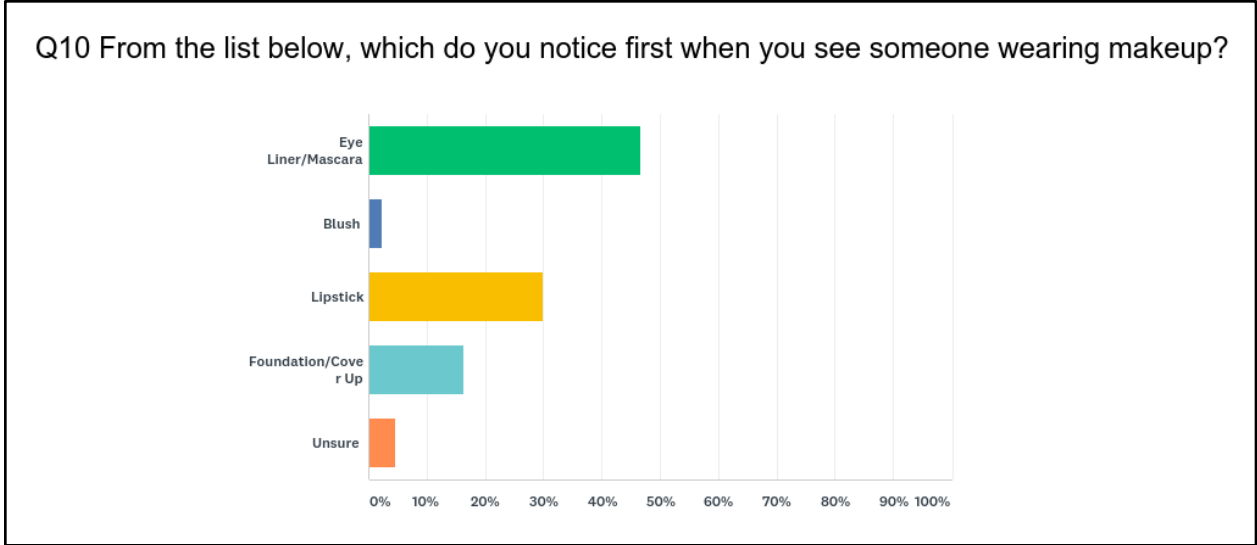
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Eyes	82.42%	211
Nose	1.56%	4
Lips/Mouth	8.59%	22
Cheek bones	7.42%	19
TOTAL		256



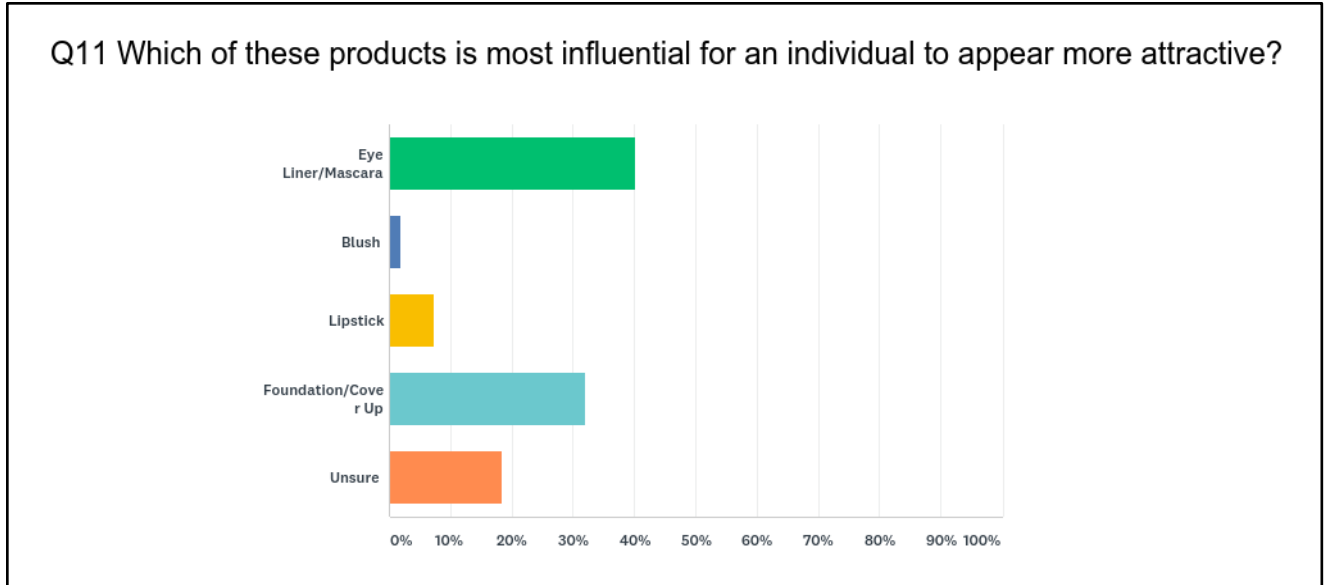
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
They are worried about how they would be perceived without makeup	33.07%	85
Cultural Norms	26.07%	67
They enjoy wearing makeup	38.91%	100
Unsure	1.95%	5
TOTAL		257



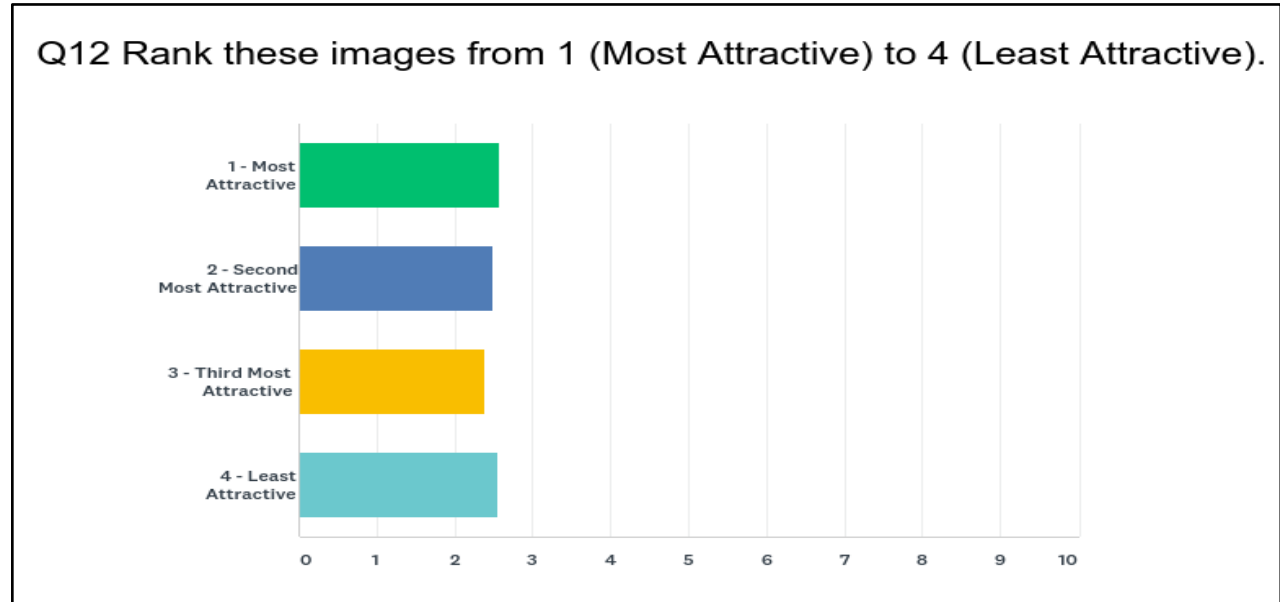
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Themselves	49.81%	128
Societal norms	25.68%	66
Men/Women as means of attraction	20.23%	52
Unsure	4.28%	11
TOTAL		257



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Eye Liner/Mascara	46.69%	120
Blush	2.33%	6
Lipstick	29.96%	77
Foundation/Cover Up	16.34%	42
Unsure	4.67%	12
TOTAL		257



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Eye Liner/Mascara	40.23%	103
Blush	1.95%	5
Lipstick	7.42%	19
Foundation/Cover Up	32.03%	82
Unsure	18.36%	47
TOTAL		256



	1ST IMAGE(FROM THE LEFT)	2ND IMAGE(FROM THE LEFT)	3RD IMAGE(FROM THE LEFT)	4TH IMAGE(FROM THE LEFT)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
1 - Most Attractive	8.37% 21	41.83% 105	33.86% 85	15.94% 40	251	2.57
2 - Second Most Attractive	18.00% 45	30.00% 75	38.00% 95	14.00% 35	250	2.48
3 - Third Most Attractive	29.44% 73	25.00% 62	22.98% 57	22.58% 56	248	2.39
4 - Least Attractive	44.72% 110	3.25% 8	4.07% 10	47.97% 118	246	2.55

