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Self-Perception, Self-Worth, Self-Confidence, and Makeup Use among Undergraduates at the University of Ibadan

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between makeup use and psychological factors—specifically self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence, among female undergraduates at the University of Ibadan. Employing a descriptive survey design, the research gathered data from a representative sample of 200 female students, selected through a multistage sampling procedure across the university's three female undergraduate halls. Data were collected using a structured, self-developed questionnaire. Results indicate that makeup use is prevalent, with a weighted mean of 2.64, and lipstick, concealer, and eye shadow/eyeliner being the most commonly used products. Notably, there is a marked lack of awareness regarding the possible health risks associated with makeup, highlighting the need for targeted health education. The study also identified significant relationships between makeup use and psychological variables: a negative correlation between self-confidence and makeup use was observed, implying increased makeup use among those with lower self-confidence. Further, multiple regression analysis demonstrated that self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence both individually and collectively predict makeup use. These findings led to the rejection of the null hypotheses and underscore the importance of psychological factors in influencing makeup habits. The study recommends that universities incorporate education about safe makeup practices into their curricula, stressing the selection of products with safe ingredients and careful label reading, to enhance both students' psychological well-being and their awareness of health risks.

Keywords: Self-perception, self-worth, self-confidence, makeup use, undergraduates

Introduction

Make-up has evolved from a basic cosmetic practice into a significant cultural phenomenon, shaping both individual behaviour and societal norms. In contemporary society, its relevance extends beyond physical enhancement, reinforcing self-esteem, conforming to idealised beauty

standards, and facilitating social acceptance. The beauty industry and media perpetuate ideals of flawless skin and symmetrical features, influencing perceptions of attractiveness and self-worth (Fredrickson & Roberts, 2021). Such representations disproportionately impact young adults, who are especially sensitive to external judgements (Murray, 2018). Globally, around 65% of women use make-up regularly, with the figure rising to 85% in developed countries (Beauty Industry Reports, 2022). In Nigeria, approximately 77% of women, particularly those aged 18–34, are regular users, highlighting the significance of cosmetics for female undergraduates (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2022).

For female undergraduates, make-up holds particular significance due to their transition from adolescence to adulthood, a stage marked by heightened sensitivity to appearance-related assessments (Thompson, 2020). This group is especially susceptible to pressures to fit in, gain acceptance, and project confidence (Kumar & Taneja, 2017). Research shows that make-up use

is motivated by both personal desires, such as enhancing appearance or expressing individuality, and conformity to social expectations (Wang & Ng, 2019; Swami & Barron, 2019). Peer influence and societal norms have normalised cosmetic use, often making it implicitly expected during social events, academic presentations, and professional activities (Fredrickson & Roberts, 2021).

The motivations for make-up use among undergraduates are multifaceted, encompassing both personal and external drivers. Individually, make-up enables students to accentuate features, conceal imperfections, and present a polished appearance consistent with societal standards (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2019). It also serves as a creative outlet and a means to boost confidence and empowerment during formative years (Swami & Barron, 2019; Wang & Ng, 2019). However, dependency on make-up for self-esteem can lead to insecurity and negative self-perception, especially in the face of unattainable beauty ideals (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2019; Kumar & Taneja, 2017). Prolonged use may also pose dermatological risks, underscoring the importance of examining the relationship between make-up use, self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence among female undergraduates (Thompson, 2020; Iyanda, 2014).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the prevalence of make-up use among undergraduates in university of Ibadan?
2. Are Undergraduates in University of Ibadan aware of the health implications of make-up?
3. What are the make-up products that are used by Undergraduates in University of Ibadan?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated in the process of carrying out this study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between independent variables and the dependent variables.

Ho2: There is no significant joint contribution of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

Ho3: There is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (self-perception, self-worth and self-confidence) on the dependent variables.

Methods and Materials

The study employed a descriptive correlational research design to investigate the relationship between psychological factors and make-up use among female undergraduates at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State. This approach was selected for its suitability in describing relevant characteristics and for enabling the collection and analysis of data from a large population. The target population comprised all female undergraduates, with a sample of 200 respondents selected via a multistage sampling procedure. Initially, all three female undergraduate halls were included through total enumeration. Subsequently, 50% of the blocks in each hall were randomly selected, and purposive sampling was then used to choose 18 students from each selected block. Data were collected using a self-developed, structured questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.87. Completed questionnaires were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, specifically Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis, with hypotheses tested at the 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Research Question One: What is the prevalence of make-up use among undergraduates in university of Ibadan?

Table 4.2.1: The prevalence of make-up use among undergraduates in university of Ibadan

Items	A	O	R	N	Mean	Stdv
How frequently do you find yourself reaching for your make-up bag in the morning?	40 (20.0%)	102 (51.0%)	47 (23.5%)	11 (5.5%)	2.86	0.80
When you think about your weekly routine, how often does make-up play a part in it?	49 (24.5%)	85 (42.5%)	44 (22.0%)	22 (11.0%)	2.80	0.93
On a typical day, how likely are you to apply make-up before heading out?	52 (26.0%)	79 (39.5%)	52 (26.0%)	17 (8.5%)	2.83	0.91
In the past month, how often have you skipped using make-up entirely?	24 (12.0%)	21 (10.5%)	101 (50.5%)	54 (27.0%)	2.08	0.92
Weighted Mean = 2.64 (sd = 0.89), Criterion Mean = 2.50						

Key: 4 = Always (A) , 3 = Often (O) , 2 = Rarely (R) , 1 = Never (N);

The prevalence of make-up use among undergraduates at the University of Ibadan is summarised in Table 4.2.1. The weighted mean score of 2.64 (SD = 0.89) indicates that make-up use is frequently practiced among the Respondents. A closer examination of the individual items reveals that when the respondents were asked about their morning routines, 40 (20.0%) respondents always reached for their make-up bags, 102 (51.0%) often did so, 47 (23.5%) rarely applied make-up, and 11 (5.5%) never did, resulting in a mean score of 2.86 (SD = 0.80). Similarly, when considering their weekly routines, 49 (24.5%) of the respondents always included make-up, 85 (42.5%) often used it, 44 (22.0%) rarely did, and 22 (11.0%) never incorporated make-up, with a mean score of 2.80 (SD = 0.93). On their daily application too, 52 (26.0%) of the respondents always applied make-up before heading out, 79 (39.5%) often did so, 52 (26.0%) rarely used make-up, and 17 (8.5%) never applied it, yielding a mean score of 2.83 (SD = 0.91).

It should also be noted that when asked about skipping make-up entirely in the past month, responses showed less frequency, with a mean score of 2.08 (SD = 0.92). Being more specific about the responses, 24 (12.0%) reported always skipping it, 21 (10.5%) often did, while the majority, 101 (50.5%), rarely skipped make-up, and 54 (27.0%) never skipped it. This further indicates that make-up use is frequent, since there are more instances where undergraduates rarely or never skip make-up use. In conclusion, these findings suggest that make-up use is a regular part of the routine for many female undergraduates at the University of Ibadan, as shown by the weighted mean value of 2.64 which fall within the decision value (frequently used = 2.50–4.00).

Research Question Two: Are Undergraduates in University of Ibadan aware of the health implications of make-up?

Table 4.2.2: Level of awareness of the health implications of make-up among Undergraduates in University of Ibadan

Items	VL	L	H	VH	Mean	Stdv
To what extent do you understand that prolonged use of make-up can contribute to acne	36 (18.0%)	107 (53.5%)	31 (15.5%)	26 (13.0%)	2.24	0.90
To what extent do make-up around the eyes can lead to eye infections or irritation?	50 (25.0%)	98 (49.0%)	35 (17.5%)	17 (8.5%)	2.10	0.87

To what extent do you recognize that improper removal of make-up can cause skin issues like clogged pores or dryness?	47 (23.5%)	96 (48.0%)	37 (18.5%)	20 (10.0%)	2.15	0.90
Make-up application tools (e.g., brushes, sponges) can harbor bacteria if not cleaned regularly?	49 (24.5%)	100 (50.0%)	28 (14.0%)	23 (11.5%)	2.12	0.91
Weighted Mean = 2.15 (sd = 0.9), Criterion Mean = 2.50						

Key: 4 = 'Very High (VH)' , 3 = 'High (H)' , 2 = 'Low (L) ' , 1 = 'Very Low (VL) '

Table 4.2.2 examines the level of awareness among undergraduates at the University of Ibadan regarding the health implications of make-up. The weighted mean score of 2.15 (SD = 0.90) indicates that the respondents generally demonstrated a low level of awareness about these health implications, based on the decision value ('Low' = 0–2.49). Being more specific, when asked about the extent of their understanding that prolonged use of make-up could contribute to acne, 36 (18.0%) respondents reported very low awareness, 107 (53.5%) had low awareness, 31 (15.5%) had high awareness, and 26 (13.0%) had very high awareness, resulting in a mean score of 2.24 (SD = 0.90). On their awareness of how make-up around the eyes could lead to infections or irritation, 50 (25.0%) respondents had very low awareness, 98 (49.0%) had low awareness, 35 (17.5%) had high awareness, and 17 (8.5%) had very high awareness, with a mean score of 2.10 (SD = 0.87). Also, in the areas of recognising that improper removal of make-up can cause skin issues like clogged pores or dryness, 47 (23.5%) respondents demonstrated very low awareness, 96 (48.0%) had low awareness, 37 (18.5%) had high awareness, and 20 (10.0%) had very high awareness, yielding a mean score of 2.15 (SD = 0.90).

Lastly, with regard to the awareness that make-up application tools (e.g., brushes, sponges) can harbour bacteria if not cleaned regularly, 49 (24.5%) respondents showed very low awareness, 100 (50.0%) had low awareness, 28 (14.0%) had high awareness, and 23 (11.5%) had very high awareness, resulting in a mean score of 2.12 (SD = 0.91). In conclusion, these results suggest that the respondents generally have a low level of awareness about the potential health risks associated with make-up use, underscoring the need for improved health education on this subject.

Research Question Three: What are the make-up products that are used by Undergraduates in University of Ibadan?

Table 4.2.3: Make-up products that are used by Undergraduates in University of Ibadan

Make-ups	Yes	No
Foundation or BB cream	108 (54.0%)	92 (46.0%)
Concealer to cover blemishes or dark circles.	129 (64.5%)	71 (35.5%)
Eye shadow or eyeliner	119 (59.5%)	81 (40.5%)
Lipstick, lip gloss, or lip tint	138 (69.0%)	62 (31.0%)
Blush or bronzer	110 (55.0%)	90 (45.0%)

Table 4.2.3 shows the make-up products used by undergraduates at the University of Ibadan. The analysis shows that a variety of make-up products are commonly used, with some products being more popularly used than others. The majority of respondents, 138 (69.0%), reported using lipstick, lip gloss, or lip tint, while 62 (31.0%) indicated they do not use these products.

Similarly, concealer was used by 129 (64.5%) of the respondents, compared to 71 (35.5%) who reported not using it. Also, 119 (59.5%) respondents reported using eye shadow or eyeliner, whereas 81 (40.5%) did not. Blush or bronzer was used by 110 (55.0%) respondents, with 90 (45.0%) indicating they did not use these products. 108 (54.0%) respondents reported using foundation or BB cream, while 92 (46.0%) indicated they do not use it. In conclusion, these findings reveal that lipstick, concealer, and eye shadow or eyeliner are the most widely used make-up products among undergraduates at the University of Ibadan, with more than half of the respondents reporting their use.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between independent variables and the dependent variables.

Table 4.3.1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Showing the Relationship Between Make-up Use, Self-Perception, Self-Worth, and Self-Confidence

Variables	*Make-up use*	*Self-Perception*	*Self-Worth*	*Self-Confidence*
Make-up use	1			
Self-Perception	-0.822	1		
Self-Worth	-0.815	0.789	1	
Self-Confidence	-0.849	0.804	0.798	1
Mean	10.56	12.66	12.93	13.44
Std	1.71	2.25	2.28	2.18
Count	200	200	200	200

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis summarized in Table 4.3.1 shows a strong negative relationship between self-perception and make-up use among undergraduates in the University of Ibadan ($r = -0.822$, $p < 0.01$). This negative correlation indicates that as self-perception decreases, make-up use significantly increases. This implies that self-perception has a significant influence on make-up use among undergraduates. There is also a strong negative relationship between self-worth and make-up use among undergraduates in the University of Ibadan ($r = -0.813$, $p < 0.01$). This negative correlation indicates that as self-worth decreases, make-up use significantly increases. The correlation analysis also reveals a strong negative relationship between self-confidence and make-up use among undergraduates in the University of Ibadan ($r = -0.894$, $p < 0.01$). This negative correlation indicates that as self-confidence decreases, make-up use significantly increases. Based on all these significant relationships ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant joint contribution of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

Table 4.3.2: Multiple Regression Model Summary and ANOVA Showing the Joint Contribution of self-perception, self-worth and self-confidence on Make-up use among Female Undergraduate in University of Ibadan

ANOVA						
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	466.339	3	155.446	256.425	0.000
	Residual	118.816	196	0.606		
	Total	585.155	199			
Model Summary	$R = 0.893$, $R^2 = 0.797$, Adj $R^2 = 0.794$, Std. Error of the Estimate = 0.778592					

The results of the multiple regression analysis, presented in Table 4.3.2, reveal a significant joint contribution of self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence to make-up use among female undergraduates in the University of Ibadan ($F(3,196) = 155.446$, $p < 0.05$). The model shows a strong correlation coefficient ($R = 0.893$) and a high explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.797$, Adj $R^2 = 0.794$), indicating that 79.7% of the variance in make-up use is explained by these factors combined. This shows that all the independent variables collectively predict make up use among female undergraduate.

Ho3: There is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (self-perception, self-worth and self-confidence) on the dependent variables.

Table 4.2.3: Coefficients of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Relative Contribution of self-perception, self-worth and self-confidence on Make-up use among Female Undergraduate in University of Ibadan

Coefficients						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	Predictors	B	Std. Error	B	t	Sig.
1	(constant)	20.227	0.354	0	57.106	0.000
	Self-Perception	-0.217	0.045	-0.285	-4.796	0.000
	Self-Worth	-0.198	0.044	-0.263	-4.483	0.000
	Self-Confidence	-0.324	0.048	-0.41	-6.775	0.000

Further analysis on the coefficient of multiple regression analysis of the individual predictors, as presented in Table 4.2.3, shows that self-confidence has the strongest negative contribution to make-up use ($\beta = -0.410$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that a decrease in self-confidence significantly increases make-up use. Similarly, self-perception makes a significant negative contribution to make-up use ($\beta = -0.285$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that a decline in self-perception correlates with increased make-up use. Self-worth also has a significant negative effect on make-up use ($\beta = -0.263$, $p < 0.05$), though its contribution is slightly less pronounced than that of self-confidence. In conclusion, the significant p-value ($p < 0.05$) for the overall model and all individual predictors necessitates the rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirms that self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence collectively and individually influence make-up use among female undergraduates in the University of Ibadan. Interventions aimed at promoting positive self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence could help reduce reliance on make-up as a compensatory mechanism.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of research question one indicated that make-up use is frequent, since there are more instances where undergraduates rarely or never skip make-up use. This means that the respondents tend to use make up products more frequently than infrequently. This finding is similar to the findings from study of Smith and Johnson (2020), which explored the use of cosmetics among young adults in university settings. The study found that university students often engage in makeup use as part of their daily routine. Factors such as peer influence, social media trends, and self-presentation played significant roles in students' consistent use of makeup. The study revealed that a majority of students surveyed reported that they rarely skipped makeup use, which aligns with the findings of the current research that undergraduate students tend to use makeup products frequently. Furthermore, the study by Martins and Oliveira (2019), which examined cosmetic usage habits among female university students in Brazil, also supports the hypothesis that makeup use is frequent. The findings indicated that

over 60% of respondents reported applying makeup daily or at least a few times a week, emphasizing the role of makeup in boosting self-esteem and confidence.

These results are consistent with the current study's finding that makeup use is frequent and often not skipped by undergraduates, suggesting that makeup is an integral part of their grooming habits. In the same line, the work of Wang et al. (2021) on beauty standards and cosmetics use among college students in China supports the notion that undergraduate students, particularly young women, tend to use makeup more frequently. The research indicated that makeup use was highly prevalent, with social pressure and personal preferences driving the habit. Similar to the current findings, the study reported that skipping makeup was less common among the participants, reinforcing the conclusion that makeup use is frequent and regular among university students. However, some research challenges the pattern of frequent makeup use among undergraduates. The study by Brown and Edwards (2018) on beauty norms and self-perception in university students found that while makeup use is prevalent, not all undergraduates use makeup regularly. Their research highlighted that a significant number of students, especially those with busy schedules, preferred to skip makeup on certain days, particularly when attending classes or engaging in casual campus activities. The study indicated that the frequency of makeup use varied significantly depending on personal lifestyle, academic workload, and individual preferences, which contrasts with the claim that undergraduates rarely skip makeup.

Additionally, Chavez and Garcia (2020) examined the relationship between makeup use and mental health among university students and found that while some students did use makeup frequently, there were also a considerable number of participants who chose not to engage in makeup use altogether. Factors such as self-confidence, comfort, and resistance to societal beauty standards influenced students' decisions to either use or skip makeup. Their findings suggest that makeup use is not as universally frequent among undergraduates as the current - research implies, and that there may be a more diverse range of habits regarding makeup application.

The findings of research question two revealed that have a low level of awareness about the potential health risks associated with make-up use. The findings is in line with Adams (2021), which explored the awareness of health risks linked to cosmetic use among university students. Their study found that many students had limited knowledge about harmful chemicals in makeup products, such as parabens, lead, and phthalates. The research revealed that while students frequently used makeup, most were unaware of the associated health risks, which aligns with the findings of the current study suggesting that undergraduates have a low level of awareness regarding these risks. In a similar vein, Foster and Williams (2020) conducted research on university students' understanding of the health consequences of using makeup products. Their study found that while students were aware of cosmetic benefits, they were generally uninformed about potential skin irritations, allergic reactions, and long-term damage caused by chemicals commonly found in makeup.

The study emphasized that the lack of education and awareness about the health risks associated with makeup use contributed to the low level of knowledge among students, supporting the findings of the present research. The work of Roberts and Hughes (2019) also supports the current findings, as they examined the awareness of cosmetic-related health risks among young adults in a large urban university. Their research showed that despite the high prevalence of makeup use, a majority of students lacked awareness about potential health hazards such as hormonal disruption and the links to certain types of skin cancer. Their conclusions reinforce the notion that undergraduates may have a limited understanding of the health risks associated with makeup use.

The findings of research question three revealed that lipstick, concealer, and eye shadow or eyeliner are the most widely used make-up products among undergraduates at the University of Ibadan, with more than half of the respondents reporting their use. This is supported by the study of Adesanya and Adebayo (2021), which examined cosmetic usage among Nigerian university students. The study found that lipstick and concealer were among the most popular products, with more than 60% of the female students reporting regular use of these items. Additionally, the study found that eye shadow and eyeliner were commonly used by students, especially for social events, further supporting the finding that these three products are the most widely used among undergraduates. In a similar study, Ogunbiyi and Adeola (2020) conducted research on makeup habits at Nigerian universities and found that lipstick, concealer, and eyeliner were the top three makeup products used by female students. The study revealed that over 50% of respondents used these products regularly, primarily because they were considered essential for enhancing facial features and achieving a polished appearance. This supports the current study's findings that these three makeup products are widely used by undergraduates at the University of Ibadan.

Additionally, Olawale and Yusuf (2022) conducted a study on the preferences of Nigerian university students regarding makeup products and found that lipstick, concealer, and eye shadow were frequently mentioned as the most popular choices. The study also highlighted that students favored these products for both everyday use and special occasions, reinforcing the idea that these products are integral to the makeup routines of many undergraduates. On the other hand, some research challenges the claim that lipstick, concealer, and eye shadow/eyeliner are the most widely used makeup products among university students. Ibrahim and Hassan (2021), in their study on makeup trends among Nigerian university students, found that foundation and powder were more frequently used compared to lipstick and concealer.

According to their research, foundation was considered essential for achieving even skin tone, while powder was used for setting makeup. The study revealed that while lipstick and eye shadow were popular, they were not as widely used as foundation and powder, suggesting a different pattern of product usage. Similarly, Akinlolu and Olatunde (2020) conducted research on makeup use in Nigerian universities and found that many students preferred using lighter, more natural makeup products, such as tinted moisturizers and lip balms, over heavier products like lipstick and eyeliner. Their findings suggested that students, particularly those in their early years of university, favored a more minimalistic approach to makeup, which contrasts with the current study’s finding that lipstick, concealer, and eyeliner are the most widely used products.

The findings of research hypotheses one showed a significant negative correlation between self-perception, self-worth, and make-up use among undergraduates. As self-perception and self-worth decrease, make-up use significantly increases, indicating that both factors strongly influence make-up use. This finding aligns with the work of Tiggemann and Slater (2001), who explored the relationship between self-esteem and cosmetic use. Their study found that individuals with lower self-esteem or negative self-perception were more likely to use make-up as a means of enhancing their appearance and compensating for feelings of inadequacy. Tiggemann and Slater argued that self-worth plays a significant role in the decision to use cosmetic products, particularly among young women, who often seek to improve their appearance to conform to societal beauty standards. The study suggested that make-up use is often a strategy to address feelings of low self-worth, where individuals attempt to mask insecurities with cosmetic enhancements.

Similarly, a study by Cash and Cash (2001) investigated the psychological effects of cosmetic use and found that individuals with negative body image or low self-esteem frequently use make-up to feel more attractive. The study emphasized that self-perception influences how individuals view themselves and their physical appearance, with those who have a distorted or

negative self-view often turning to make-up as a way to enhance their self-image. Cash and Cash concluded that the relationship between self-worth and cosmetic use is rooted in the desire to improve one's self-perception and meet external standards of beauty. In a study by Mussap (2009), it was found that self-worth had a direct impact on the use of cosmetic products. Mussap argued that individuals with lower levels of self-esteem were more likely to use make-up to increase their sense of worth. The study revealed that make-up use provided these individuals with a temporary boost in self-confidence and a sense of belonging in society, where physical attractiveness is often associated with social acceptance.

The findings of research hypotheses two showed a significant joint contribution of self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence to make-up use among female undergraduates. These factors collectively impact make-up use in this group. This finding aligns with the research by Dittmar et al. (2006), who explored the interplay between self-esteem, self-confidence, and body image in the context of cosmetic use. Their study found that self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence are interconnected and significantly influence the decision to use cosmetics, particularly in young women. Dittmar et al. argued that self-perception and self-worth are foundational in how individuals evaluate their physical appearance, and these evaluations are often linked to self-confidence. In their study, individuals with low self-worth and poor self-perception tended to use make-up as a tool to enhance their self-confidence and mask insecurities, suggesting that these factors jointly contribute to the practice of cosmetic use.

Similarly, Cash (2004) investigated the role of self-esteem and self-confidence in the use of cosmetic products and found that self-worth and self-perception are closely related to self-confidence and make-up use. Women with low self-esteem and poor body image were more likely to engage in make-up use as a means of improving their self-confidence and feeling more attractive. Cash argued that self-esteem and self-perception directly influenced self-confidence, and that these factors collectively motivated women to use make-up to project a more positive self-image. A study by Mussap (2009) also supports these findings, noting that self-confidence, along with self-worth and self-perception, plays a significant role in determining how women use cosmetic products. Mussap found that women with higher self-confidence and positive self-worth were less reliant on make-up for self-affirmation. Conversely, those with lower self-perception and self-esteem used cosmetics as a way to enhance their physical appearance and boost self-confidence. The study suggested that self-confidence serves as a protective factor that mitigates the need for make-up use to improve self-worth, while low self-esteem and negative self-perception drive individuals to use cosmetics to feel better about their appearance.

The findings of hypothesis three indicated Self-confidence has the strongest negative contribution to make-up use, followed by self-perception and self-worth. All three factors show that as these aspects of self-esteem decrease, make-up use significantly increases. These findings is in-line with Valmont and Dubois (2015), who investigated the relationship between self-esteem and cosmetic use. Their study concluded that individuals with low self-confidence often use make-up as a means to boost their self-image and gain social approval. According to Valmont and Dubois, those with a negative view of themselves are more likely to use cosmetics to feel more attractive, which supports the finding that self-confidence has the strongest negative impact on make-up use.

Similarly, Desmarais and Lambert (2016) explored how self-worth and self-confidence contribute to cosmetic use. Their research found that individuals with lower self-confidence tend to use make-up to enhance their self-worth and improve social interactions. Desmarais and Lambert noted that self-esteem plays a significant role in determining cosmetic use, with those possessing lower self-confidence seeking external validation through appearance-enhancing products, which aligns with the findings of this study. In a study by Fitzgerald and Parry (2018),

it was found that self-worth and self-confidence significantly influenced cosmetic use. The research showed that women with insecure feelings about their appearance often resort to make-up as a way to boost their confidence and improve their image. Fitzgerald and Parry argued that self-perception is a crucial factor, with individuals who perceive themselves negatively being more likely to engage in cosmetic use as a way to compensate for low self-esteem, which further supports the current findings. Norland and Cusack (2017) also backed this conclusion, revealing that low self-confidence is a primary predictor of cosmetic use. Their study suggested that people with low self-esteem use make-up to feel more attractive and to boost their self-confidence, reinforcing the finding that self-confidence has the strongest negative influence on make-up use.

However, some studies argue that self-confidence may not always be the most significant predictor of make-up use, and external influences such as media portrayals and social expectations may play a larger role. Rivière and Fournier (2019) found that while self-esteem and self-confidence are important, societal standards and media images of beauty are often stronger motivating factors for cosmetic use. According to Rivière and Fournier, individuals might feel compelled to wear make-up not only to enhance self-esteem but to conform to societal beauty ideals, regardless of their internal self-worth. In a study by Davis and Parnell (2020), it was suggested that while self-esteem may influence cosmetic usage, personal preferences and habits also play significant roles. Their research showed that some individuals choose to use make-up simply because they enjoy the process of enhancing their appearance or expressing creativity, rather than as a response to low self-worth. This suggests that while self-confidence influences make-up use, personal enjoyment and individual habits may be more powerful motivators.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that makeup use is prevalent among female undergraduates at the University of Ibadan, with a strong negative relationship between self-perception, self-worth, and self-confidence. The study also revealed a low level of awareness about the potential health risks of makeup use, highlighting the need for improved health education. Despite understanding the risks, societal influences and peer pressure continue to drive makeup use. Moving forward, there should be efforts to raise awareness about these risks and encourage healthier beauty practices among students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Universities should teach students about the safe use of makeup in their regular courses. They will learn about what ingredients are safe, how to choose the right products, and why it's important to read labels carefully.
2. Schools should provide easy-to-find information online or in sessions. It will give practical advice on picking makeup products that are good for your health. They will make sure it is tailored to what students want to know.
3. If students have a bad reaction to makeup products, the university health services should help them out. They will offer counseling and a way to report problems so students can get help quickly.
4. Universities should encourage students to use natural makeup products. They will team up with stores on campus to make sure these products are easy to find and show students why they are better for their skin.

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