

Marketing Makeup: How Advertising Cosmetics Affects Consumers

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Abstract:

As a young woman who wears makeup, I notice new makeup trends in society. I see what the popular look is, and I understand the inspiration behind that look. Trends in makeup seem to be changing at rapid speeds, with new styles and ideas appearing every few weeks. Style icons are changing weekly, with focus moving from Angelina Jolie to Kylie Jenner. With trends changing so quickly, there must be a psychology behind it. The marketing major in me wants to discover why these trends are changing so rapidly. Are makeup consumers influencing these changes? Are advertisers influencing these changes? Are advertisers going too far with the advertising of makeup and cosmetics?

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Introduction:

Cosmetics originated in Ancient Egypt, where many men and women used scented oils to clean and soften their skin. This was part of their means of hygiene. Then, the Ancient Egyptians began to mix spice powders, nuts, and metals to create what could be considered face makeup. They would burn different types of nuts, such as almonds, and mix them with copper and other ingredients to create a substance called “kohl,” which women would use to define their eyes. Soon the rest of the world followed in adorning their faces and bodies, with the Ancient Chinese staining their nails, and several other ancient civilizations using powders, like rice powder or chalk, on their faces for an even complexion. Soon, these makeshift face powders and eye makeup became the modern day makeup we see in the store.

Today, there are several different types of makeup, and even more are being created. There are stores dedicated to makeup alone. Advertisements for makeup are everywhere, both on the street and online. With the use of modern day research techniques, advertisers and marketing researchers can track which demographic is buying what product. With that knowledge, marketing researchers can determine exactly what triggers that demographic to be attracted to the product, whether it is the name, the packaging, the product formula itself, or other reasons.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to discover the consumer behaviors and purchasing decisions of those who use makeup and cosmetics. Primarily, the purpose of this study is to discover how much advertising affects purchasing decisions over other influences, like celebrities, reviews, and more. With this information, one can draw conclusions as to what influences these consumers’ behaviors. Furthermore, one can see how much advertising influences these decisions, and if there needs to be changes in the advertising of makeup and cosmetics.

Research Objectives:

The research being done for this project is to help analyze the root cause of why people purchase and consume cosmetics, as well as to discover the reasoning behind differing consumer decisions. In order to determine the more prominent reasoning amongst a small sample size, the following objectives are being observed:

Descriptive Research Objectives:

- 1) What are the typical makeup usage patterns?
 - a. What age do people typically begin to wear makeup?
 - b. How often do people wear makeup?
- 2) What is the reasoning behind purchasing makeup and cosmetics?
 - a. How much do celebrities influence purchasing decisions?
 - b. How much do comments from friends and family influence purchasing decisions?
 - c. How much do advertisements influence purchasing decisions?
- 3) What are the overall views of cosmetics advertisements?
 - a. Are cosmetics advertisements misleading?
 - b. Are there better forms of media that expose makeup brands, such as video reviews, online reviews, commercials, etc.?

Thesis Statement:

This thesis will focus on the effect advertisers have over consumers of makeup and cosmetics. Are advertisers exploiting consumers? How much are advertisers involved with the purchase of makeup. How much are other influences, such as celebrities, involved with the purchase of makeup? How much are psychological influences, such as self-esteem, involved with the purchase of makeup? In this thesis, there is a list of hypotheses that are to be tested.

Hypotheses:

- 1) Psychological influences account for 10-20% of a consumer's purchasing decision.
- 2) Other influences, such as celebrities and reviews, account for 60-70% of a consumer's purchasing decision.
- 3) Consumers of makeup believe that advertisers are deceptive.
- 4) Advertisers' influence accounts for 30-50% of a consumer's purchasing decision.

Definition of Constructs:

The study being conducted will focus on a few constructs. The constructs of age, employment, and makeup use will be focused on. The construct of age is being focused on to see the average age participants in the study began to wear makeup. The construct of employment is important, as it determines if money is the reason why people purchase makeup over psychological reasons. Makeup use is the main construct being focused on. This construct can be broken up into the following sections:

- Why people wear makeup
- How often people wear makeup
- What influences people's makeup decisions

Age and employment were chosen as constructs for sorting purposes, but they also function to help determine the other hypotheses.

Literary Review:

In a general review of advertising, Debra Trampe, Diederik Stapel, and Frans Siero focused on how advertising affects a consumer. One point that was made is that advertising directly to consumers could create an unnecessary need for the consumer. An advertiser can make it appear that their product is a necessity to a consumer, thus changing the way a consumer thinks about themselves. This is caused by the consumer self-referencing the product to their

own daily life. An example including cosmetics would relate to a foundation that promotes covering fine lines and wrinkles, but displays a young woman in the advertisement. A consumer viewing ad could self-reference the ad to their own lives, despite possibly not needing the foundation for that purpose. What was also found in the study was the use of first person in an ad. When an advertisement uses first person statements, this further activates a consumer into self-referencing themselves into the advertisement (Trampe, 2011).

The study also considered advertisements featuring physically attractive people. This significantly affects female consumers and their self-esteem. Advertisers target women into buying beauty products by making them seem like problem-solving products. Advertisers make it appear these products will fix the flaws of a person's appearance, and that by using beauty products, the consumer will be as attractive as the person featured in the advertisement. Further, when beauty advertisers create an ad, they suggest an ideal view of beauty and create a standard of beauty. This further pushes consumers of cosmetics to make these purchases by self-referencing their own looks to the looks of the people in the ads (Trampe, 2011).

Stacey Fabricant and Stephen Gould studied how why women wear makeup, and the connections between frequent use and quantity used of makeup amongst different ages. What was found was that the women in the study used makeup as self-expression, as well as using it as a mask to improve their looks. However, despite enjoying using makeup, some of the women saw makeup use as negative, and attempt to change their makeup routines to avoid that negative stigma by changing the colors used in their routines from bright to neutral colors, or by using less makeup overall. Other women in the study who saw makeup as a symbol of their femininity would wear more makeup to display that (Fabricant, 1993).

One note that Fabricant's et al. study touched upon is the view of makeup by others. One of the participants in the study, Marie, was asked to wear makeup and a skirt to get her job in sales. When she altered her look, her sales began to increase, and this allowed her to become a more prominent person on her team. On the other hand, another participant, Jeanne, described the anti-makeup stance in her company as, "Very ugly." Her company is in the chemical industry, and many of the people who work with her are men. Some of the women who do not wear makeup, or only wear a very little amount of makeup, are competing with the men in the industry. However, Jeanne discussed her disdain for that impression, as she, an avid makeup user, wants to be seen as on that same level while wearing makeup (Fabricant, 1993).

Iryna Pentina, David Taylor, and Troy Voelker focused on how advertising and society focuses on unrealistic body standards, and how that affects females. The advertisers of the cosmetics industry portray the body as an object, insinuating that it can be changed easily into a more attractive form. This can be seen as dangerous as those with low self-esteem can look to modify their bodies through makeup and cosmetics or more drastic measures. Pentina, Taylor and Voelker highlight how males and females react differently to societal standards. Men tend to react to the standards only if the changes will help them physically. Women react to these standards on a harsher level, engaging in the changes if it will help improve their self-esteem (Pentina, 2009).

Mary Martin and Patricia Kennedy considered how advertisers affect adolescent girls. They touched upon the fact that advertisers create the impression that young females should always look nice, even if that means putting on a mask of makeup. Because of this, Martin and Kennedy did a study of how preadolescent and adolescent females reacted to models in advertising. The study found that as females get older, they become more concerned with their

looks, and they strive to look more like models as they get older. Furthermore, even a one-time exposure to an ad featuring a model could affect the participant into wanting to change their appearance (Martin, 1993).

Sofia Bratu of Spiru Haret University confirmed that women who view advertisements that feature physically attractive females will react negatively to the ad, especially if the ad has a suggestive nature. However, much of the reaction towards the ad will be based off the viewer's current mood. For example, a female who is in a positive mood will be more likely to react positively to a sexually suggestive ad. Further, females tend to be more detail-oriented, and tend to process and engage more than men in these ads. A female will nitpick the ad, and feel more emotions towards the ad than a male viewing the same ad (Bratu, 2013).

The question of corporate social responsibility in advertising is beginning to come to light in recent times. A paper written by Charles Taylor discusses how advertisers can display how they are responsible on a corporate level by considering the interests of the stakeholders while keeping in touch with the interests of the company. Because the stakeholders have a large share in the company, it is important to appeal to them. There are still questions regarding how advertisers should react to social issues (Taylor, 2014). For example, it has been shown in Trampe's et al. study that women react poorly to advertisements for cosmetic products, and this was supplemented by Bratu's essay (Trampe, 2011) (Bratu, 2013). The issue that arises is if advertisers should continue to advertise as normal. By ignoring the issue of female self-esteem, this could backfire on advertisers. This could make the company look like they do not look out for their consumers' best interests. On the other hand, consumers still react to these ads in a way that allows them to spend money. The line of corporate social responsibility is very thin in this instances. Furthermore, the research done by Pentina et al. shows that women react stronger to

societal norms than men, so the issue continues to arise if advertisers should continue to advertise as practiced. Advertisers may be aware that women react to ads differently than men; if their target market focuses on women, they may have to change their advertising practices to avoid this issue (Pentina, 2009).

Research done by James Muncy and Jacqueline Eastman, it showed that people who are the least happy with their lives are more likely to be materialistic and are more likely to purchase what they believe will make them happy. Those who are materialistic tend to allow social pressures to affect their thinking (Muncy, 1998). The issue of corporate social responsibility continues to arise with those who are materialistic and have low self-esteem. If advertisers continue to advertise cosmetics as they have been, this could make the company seem ruthless, and as though they are exploiting their customers. However, as discussed, consumers are still reacting to this type of advertising, making the makeup seem as a necessity. This allows the company to have increased revenue. There is a fine line being drawn between acting responsible, yet still making money.

Sourabh Sharma wrote an article focusing on how advertisers should be advertising their products. The issue with trust becomes relevant as Sharma suggests making the company feel as though they can be trusted by the consumer. This trust can be built by being corporately responsible and focusing on those issues. By simply selling the product, it gives the consumer the impression that the company only wants profits as opposed to looking out for the best interests of the consumers. For example, the brand TRESemme released a commercial of Chrissy Teigen acting candidly, and this allowed the consumers, as well as viewers of the ad, to trust Teigen. This practice could help cosmetics advertisers overall by making them seem open about their company and their practices (Sharma, 2016). In Japan, advertisers take a less harsh approach,

using a soft-sell approach, differing from how the United States produces their ads. Further, Japanese advertising of cosmetics is very interactive, turning ads and television commercials into bits of entertainment. The concern with Japanese ads comes with including non-Japanese women in the ads themselves. Many of the cosmetics ads are beginning to include Western women. This is starting to change the standard of beauty in Japan, causing the women in that country to buy more makeup in order to change their appearance (Barnes, 2008).

Another article, written by Jeanine Skorinko, Suzanne Kemmer Michelle Hebl, and David Lane, focused on the naming of products, and how those names affect consumer choices. In the article, Skorinko et al. discuss how advertising attracts customers to the products and make the products more prominent in their daily lives. However, before a company can start advertising, they need to think of a name for their product. The name chosen should have a certain appeal to the everyday customer to pique interest, and still be relevant to the product. The name of the product is extremely valuable, as that is the first impression of the product. The name can create the standard for the rest of the products on the market; for example, many people refer to soda in general as Coke (Skorinko, 2006).

Much of Skorinko's et al. research revolves around how naming colors affects consumers' perceptions. In their study, they sent out a survey which showed the picture of a colored towel, and the participant had to choose a color name for the towel. What was found was a brown towel would be suggested to be labeled "mocha" or a blue towel would be suggested to be labeled "ocean." These "fancy names" for the colors had higher appeal to the consumers, and consumers would be willing to pay more for a product with a fancier name (Skorinko, 2006). This would be important for marketers in a cosmetics company, as the company would want their products to be named appropriately and still appeal to the consumer. For example, a lipstick

called “Blood Red” may not appeal to some consumers, but a lipstick called “Ruby Red” may have more appeal.

Research Methodology:

An online survey of 23 questions will be sent to the Salem State community. Participants will be chosen at random, with participants of all ages, races, genders, and incomes. Those who did not wish to participate could opt out of the survey for any reason. Sections of the survey include:

- Introductory questions
- Makeup use questions
- Influence questions
- Advertisement analysis questions
- Demographic/Sorting questions

Data and Analysis:

General:

After receiving 100 valid participants, it is shown that 41% of the participants wear makeup on a daily basis, 32% of participants wear makeup 2-4 days a week, 12% of participants wear makeup once a week, and 15% of participants wear makeup only for special occasions.

Makeup Use:

Out of the 100 participants, 41% said they wear makeup daily currently. However, out of the 41%, 16 participants stated they began wear makeup for fun, and 25 participants stated they want to change their appearance. Out of all 100 participants, 27% of them state they wanted to change their appearance when they first began to wear makeup.

wearmakeupoften * whybeganwear Crosstabulation

Count		whybeganwear					Total
		It was fun/hobby	Wanted to change appearance	Wanted to experiment	Look nice for special occasion	Other	
wearmakeupoften	Everyday	16	25	0	0	0	41
	Every 2-4 Days	0	2	30	0	0	32
	Once a week	0	0	8	4	0	12
	Only on special occasions	1	0	0	11	3	15
Total		17	27	38	15	3	100

The chart below shows a crosstabulation between how often the participants wear makeup and the reasons why they currently wear makeup. Of the 41% of people who wear makeup every day, only 5 participants feel they still want to change their appearance, and 36 participants find makeup to be fun. Further, of the 32% of participants who answered they wear makeup 2-4 days per week, they all stated they want to change their appearance. Overall, out of the 100 participants, 43% of participants state they want to change their appearance.

We can see that despite not always wearing makeup, there are people who want to change their appearance. Further, we can see the people who wear makeup on a daily basis are more likely to do it for fun, and not to change their appearance.

wearmakeupoften * currentwear Crosstabulation

Count		currentwear			Total
		It is fun/hobby	Want to change appearance	Look nice for special occasion	
wearmakeupoften	Everyday	36	5	0	41
	Every 2-4 Days	0	32	0	32
	Once a week	0	6	6	12

	Only on special occasions	0	0	15	15
Total		36	43	21	100

The chart below shows a crosstabulation of why people wear makeup currently and what comments they received when they began wearing makeup. We can see from this chart that out of the 100 participants, 35 participants stated that when they began wearing makeup, they received comments that they looked nice, and now they use makeup to change their appearance. On the other hand, of the 100 participants, 4 participants received a negative comment when they began wearing makeup. Of those 4 participants, only 1 participant wears makeup to change their appearance; the other 3 participants wear makeup only for a special occasion.

commentsbeganwear * currentwear Crosstabulation

Count		currentwear			Total
		It is fun/hobby	Want to change appearance	Look nice for special occasion	
commentsbeganwear	Looked nice	36	35	0	71
	No change	0	7	0	7
	Did not look nice	0	1	3	4
	No comment	0	0	18	18
Total		36	43	21	100

The chart below shows a crosstabulation of the comments participants received when they first began wearing makeup and how much money they currently spend on makeup per month.

People who received no comment all answered that they spend over \$35 in makeup per month. People who received a negative comment answered that they spend between \$15-\$34 in makeup per month. People who received a positive comment were most likely to spend less than \$5 per month on makeup.

commentsbeganwear * moneyspentcurrent Crosstabulation

Count		moneyspentcurrent						Total
		Less than \$5	\$5-\$14	\$15-\$24	\$25-\$34	\$35-\$44	More than \$45	
r	Looked nice	13	25	22	11	0	0	71
	No change	0	0	0	7	0	0	7
	Did not look nice	0	0	0	2	2	0	4
	No comment	0	0	0	0	Young women7	11	18
Total		13	25	22	20	9	11	100

The chart below shows a crosstabulation of the participant's age and the reason they currently wear makeup. Most of the participants fell between the ages of 18-23 years old. Most of the participants who are between the ages of 18-20 years old stated they use makeup for fun. On the other hand, the participants between the ages 21-23 years old stated they mostly use makeup to change their appearance. The study done by Martin et al. showed that women react negatively to ads featuring models as they get older, and this chart shows that could be plausible. The older participants are displaying a lower self-esteem through their makeup usage.

age * currentwear Crosstabulation

Count		currentwear			Total
		It is fun/hobby	Want to change appearance	Look nice for special occasion	
age	Under 18 years	1	0	1	2

18-20 years	35	14	0	49
21-23 years	0	29	16	45
24-26 years	0	0	3	3
27 years and up	0	0	1	1
Total	36	43	21	100

Influence:

Out of the 100 participants, 75% said they rely on online reviews for their purchasing decisions.

These reviews include blog posts, or manufacturing reviews.

influence_onlinereviews

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	72.8	75.0	75.0
	No	25	24.3	25.0	100.0
	Total	100	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.9		
Total		103	100.0		

Out of the 100 participants, 23% of them cited print reviews as influence for their purchasing decisions. Print reviews include reviews done by magazines and newspapers.

influence_printreviews

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	23	22.3	23.0	23.0
	No	77	74.8	77.0	100.0
	Total	100	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.9		
Total		103	100.0		

Out of the 100 participants, 39% of the participants cited video reviews, such as the reviews done on YouTube, as an influence for their purchasing decisions.

influence_videoreviews

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	39	37.9	39.0	39.0
	No	61	59.2	61.0	100.0
	Total	100	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.9		
Total		103	100.0		

Out of the 100 participants, 11% of the participants cited celebrities as an influence for their purchasing decisions. Often, celebrities will become spokespeople for a certain product. They would be featured in ads and commercials for the product, and they could possibly promote the product on their social media pages.

influence_celebrity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	10.7	11.0	11.0
	No	89	86.4	89.0	100.0
	Total	100	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.9		
Total		103	100.0		

Further into the celebrity influence, the participants were asked to rate how much celebrities influence their purchasing decisions on a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning “Not very much” and 5 meaning “Very Much”. What is surprising is that of the 11% of participants who said celebrities influence their purchasing decisions, they answered that the overall influence celebrities have is very little. Furthermore, of the 89% of participants who stated they are not influenced by celebrities for their purchasing decisions, 6 of the 89% answered that celebrities influenced them “Very Much”.

celebrityinfluence * influence_celebrity Crosstabulation

Count

		influence_celebrity		Total
		Yes	No	
celebrityinfluence	1- Not very much	11	25	36
	2	0	33	33
	3	0	18	18
	4	0	7	7
	5- Very Much	0	6	6
Total		11	89	100

Out of the 100 participants, 25% of them cited commercials as an influence for their purchasing decisions. These commercials include TV commercials and radio commercials.

influence_commercial

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	25	24.3	25.0	25.0
	No	75	72.8	75.0	100.0
	Total	100	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.9		
Total		103	100.0		

Advertisement Analyses:

According to the study, 90% of the participants found the following CoverGirl ad for mascara to be misleading.



The cosmetics company came under scrutiny when it was revealed that the model on the left side was wearing false eyelashes.

What is surprising is that the same percentage of people who answered that the ad was misleading also started that makeup ads in general were misleading. There is a 100% correlation between the two questions.

Correlations

		covergirlad	misleadingads
covergirlad	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
misleadingads	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

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

However, another surprising fact is that 37% of the participants who answered they believe makeup ads to be misleading said they still cite makeup ads as one of their influences into purchasing makeup. Furthermore, 10% of the participants who said they do not believe makeup ads to be misleading stated that they do not cite makeup ads as one of their influences.

misleadingads * adsinfluence Crosstabulation

Count

		adsinfluence		Total
		Yes	No	
misleadingads	Yes	37	53	90
	No	0	10	10
Total		37	63	100

Discussion:

When considering why people currently use makeup, as age increases, the want to change appearance also increases. This supports the study done by Martin et al. Psychological influences do in fact increase their influence in consumer decisions as time goes on. When the participants began wearing makeup, only 27% of the participants cited they wanted to change their appearance. In regards to their current wear, 43% of participants want to change their appearance. This exceeds the hypothesized amount of 10-20%, which shows how much psychological influences affect consumers.

Out of the 100 participants, 11% stated they are influenced by celebrities, much lower than the hypothesized 60-70% influence. However, this statistic was based off a yes or no question on the survey. When asked to rank how much celebrities influence their purchasing decisions on a scale of 1-5, 31 participants answered a level of 3 or above, which shows that 31% of people are truly influenced by celebrities. Further research may be done to find a more

accurate number, as there are two conflicting answers in this one study. Despite the conflicting numbers, both percentages are still below the 60-70% of influence hypothesized.

A majority of the participants started they believed makeup and cosmetics ads to be misleading. However, despite 90% of participants seeing makeup ads as deceptive, 37 participants cite ads as an influence in their purchasing decisions. The question of corporate social responsibility can arise in this instance. Despite consumers not agreeing with makeup ads, they still work as an influence over consumers. For the advertisers, this could pose the question of whether they need to change their advertising style or not. As highlighted by Charles, advertisers may want to focus on what the stakeholders find important in order to appeal to them (2014). In turn, this would allow the consumer to trust them, as Sharma had suggested in her article, causing an increase in consumers (2016). It is hypothesized that advertisements influence 30-50% of consumer decisions, which is proven by the study.

Conclusion:

Advertising companies do not have as much influence over the modern-day consumer. This is can be attributed to the fact that there are other influences over consumers nowadays. These other influences are causing advertisers to lose their hold over the consumers. These influences include online reviews, like blogs and testimonials, as well as video reviews. Advertisers should be aware of how much influence they are losing compared to these forms if media.

What should be remembered is that psychological influences are a large influence over makeup and cosmetics consumers. There is a fine line of what advertisers can say in their ads to not offend their consumers. Further research could be done to discover what line advertisers can

cross as far as what can be said in the ads. It would be counterintuitive to research what consumers find as uncomfortable to hear from an ad, and continue to advertise that way.

Furthermore, more research must be done to discover how much influence celebrities have over purchasing decisions. The current study received conflicting results, but both results proved the hypothesis incorrect. With further research, it can be more accurately seen how much celebrities influence the consumers. Advertisers may want to consider the use of celebrities in ads if they have a large influence over consumer decisions. However, getting a celebrity sponsor is very expensive for the advertiser, so they should be weary of their expenses.

Recommendations:

One recommendation made after this study is for the advertisers to be weary of their advertising style. A majority of the participants found makeup advertisements to be misleading, which causes distrust between the consumer and company. Research must be done to find the best way to advertise makeup. A new way of advertising the products could help the company in the long run. A new form of advertising or a new style of advertising could help increase their revenues. Many of the participants relied on online reviews and video reviews as influence over their purchasing decisions. By incorporating elements from those types of media, an advertiser would be able to attract the consumers who believe ads are misleading and would rather view those types of media instead.

Celebrities do not influence the participants of this study as much as hypothesized, so use of celebrities in advertising might not work in the company's favor. Getting a celebrity sponsor for the product is an expensive venture, and if the celebrity does not have as much pull over consumers as expected, this could cause the company to lose money.

Overall, advertising companies should investigate changing their style of advertising. According to the study done, only 37% of the participants use advertisements as an influence over their purchasing decisions. This could be changed with the appropriate research. Advertisers should consider what influences the customers most, while not touching upon the psychological issues of the consumer. By focusing on psychological issues and letting the consumer feel as though makeup is a necessity, this would cause mistrust between the consumer and the advertiser. Advertising companies should change their ways, but they need to be careful with how this is done.

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