

## **Analysis of Men's Perception on Yoruba Women Cosmetics Usage in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

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Cosmetics are artificially applied to the body either by surgical or non-surgical means, which is meant to enhance the physical appearance of a person. They are mostly associated with women, due to their constant desire to enhance their physical appearance. The study compares men's perception on women using cosmetics and those with no cosmetics at State Universal Basic Education Board [SUBEB], Abeokuta, Ogun, State. Random sampling technique was used to select the respondents; data was collected through a well-structured 4-point Likert Scale questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics. The result reveals a favorable perception of cosmetics usage in enhancing the beauty of a woman and attractiveness towards opposite sex. Statements number 1, 5 and 9 with mean scores of **3.32, 2.99 and 2.89** respectively shows that cosmetics enhances the beauty of a woman; cosmetics make women attractive to the opposite sex and cosmetics make men appreciate different facial looks of women. On the other hand, statements 4, 11 and 15 with Mean Scores of **3.17, 2.97 and 3.05** respectively reveals that men prefer their spouses to be natural; women without cosmetics are pleasing to men and that natural beauty should be encouraged. The overall perception score is 2.81 confirming a favorable usage of cosmetics by women.

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**Keywords:** Cosmetics, Beauty, Perception, Men

### **Introduction**

Cosmetics are natural or synthetic/chemical substances used to enhance the appearance of an individual. Cosmetics are artificially applied to the body either by surgical or non-surgical means, which is meant to enhance the physical appearance of a person. They are mostly associated with women, due to their constant desire to enhance their physical appearance. A subset of cosmetics is called "make-up," which refers primarily to coloring products intended to alter the user's appearance. In Nigeria today, cosmetics application has become a common phenomenon in younger women especially ladies in tertiary institution. Some are addicted to the use of cosmetics, hence feel unattractive without it. The output of cosmetics depends on the style of application, current vogue, quality of cosmetics used and the level of exposure/civilization of the individual. Some people abuse cosmetics usage while to others, it is the most irrelevant but no matter how cosmetics are used or applied, they still remain an effort to enhance the physical appearance of a person. There are two categories of cosmetics: the surgical means and the non-surgical means. Surgical means are cosmetics conducted with the aim of making the normal body structure more attractive. Examples are facelift (which gets rid of sagging skin and wrinkles; it tightens the skin and makes the individual looks younger); breast argumentation / lid (Increasing the size of the breast); tummy tucks (to reduce the size of the tummy and remove tissues surrounding the abdomen) while non-surgical means are cosmetics done by the application of substances to the body. Examples are powder, eye lashes, eye shadow, body cream, nail polish e.t.c. Bruno and Luisella (2010). There are traditional non-surgical cosmetics that identify tribe or customs. Among the Yoruba, traditional cosmetics include: *ororo* (lipstick), *tiro* (eye liner), *laali* (nail polish), *osun* (skin toner), *atike/pankeki* (powder), *ayoorun* (relaxer), *Ewe aailu* (conditioner) *adiagbon* (hair/body cream).

### Yoruba Traditional Cosmetic

Yoruba regards beauty as a gift of God and anyone with natural beauty is fortunate. It is also believe that God intentionally make female to be more beautiful than male, consequently, it is culturally expected that everyone especially female should pay personal attention to body adornment. Body adornment takes many forms such as special hairdos, body painting/ use of cosmetics, tattooing and use of outing accessories. These do not only enhance beauty but also emphasise femininity. Young girls learn the techniques of body adornment from their mothers or from female friends of the same group. Hair dressing is an art of hair adornment by styling or coloring of hair in order to enhance personal appearance of both men and women. Among Yoruba women, hairdressing is a notable traditional occupation requiring skill and keen imagination; while every Nigerian woman knows the rudiments of hair braiding, some have become professional hairdressers who establish stalls or sheds in the market places of cities, towns or even villages. Men do not dress their hair, they shave it and whenever they do dress it, it has to do with a kind of religious observance. Working tools for hairdressing include: wooden or plastic combs (*ilarun*), black thread (*owu dudu*), a mirror (*gilas*), a long hair pin (*ikoti*), a blade, and locally made oil (*adin*). The wooden comb, *ikoti* and *adin* are traditional tools still widely use despite some innovation. Body painting is an art of body decoration and expression of beauty. Among the Yoruba, body painting includes tattoos, painting of lips, finger/ toe nails, eyes, face and hair colouring. This body embellishment enhances the beauty of the wearer. For instance, *tiro* is a black substance gotten from lead, it is been grinded into powdered form and applied on the lines of the eyes as the eye pencil; *efun or moju* is a white substance gotten from white clay. It is white in colour, grinded into powdered form and applied on the face with the use of foam as the face powder. It is mostly used for local dramatic make over. On the other hand, *laali* is gotten from henna plant. The leaf is been squeezed and the juice extracted from the leaf is applied on finger/toe nails as cortex. It stays on the nails till it fades off. It is also used to make temporary tattoos on the body for beautification.

*Ori* is the local name of shea butter. It is an off- white or ivory-colored fat extracted from the nut of African shea tree (*Vitellaria paradoxa*). Shea butter is widely used in cosmetics production as a moisturizer or lotion. It is been applied on the skin as body cream, It smoothens and moisturizes the skin. *Ori* is edible and is used in African food preparation. Occasionally, the chocolate industry uses shea butter (*ori*) mixed with other oils as a substitute for cocoa butter although the taste is noticeably different. *Ori* also works as balm for wounded parts of body. *Adin dudu* is an oil extract from the palm kernel seed while *adin agbon* is an extract from coconut oil. Both *adin dudu* and *adin agbon* are used as body oil to lubricate and smoothens the skin. *Osun* is gotten from Camwood or sandalwood tree. It is been added to body cream or local bathing soap (*ose dudu*) to softens and moisturizes the skin.

### Effect of Cosmetics Usage

Several studies have found that cosmetics improve female facial attractiveness when judgments are made based on photographs (Gueguen and Jacob, 2010). In a study carried out by Graham and Jouhar (1981), reported that with facial makeup, the targets were rated as being cleaner, more tidy, more feminine and more physically attractive as well as being more secure, sociable, interesting, poised, confident, organized and popular. Similarly, Nash, Fieldman, Hussey, Leveque and Pineau, (2006) found that women with cosmetics were perceived as healthier and more confident than when they were presented without cosmetics; women with makeup were awarded greater earning potential and more prestigious jobs than the same women without cosmetics. In a study carried out by Workman and Johnson, (1991), instructed female participants to view one of three colored photographs of a professional model wearing either heavy, moderate or no cosmetics. It was discovered that cosmetics significantly enhanced the impression of attractiveness and femininity. Graham and Jouhar (1981), state that a central theme in the work on physical attractiveness is that if one is physically attractive one is assumed to have a more ideal personality than someone of lesser attractiveness. If cosmetics really do make people look more physically attractive, then with the use of cosmetics others should perceive people more favorably in terms of personality characteristics. Graham and Jouhar (1981), therefore, find out whether cosmetics really do improve appearance ratings (by males and females) and in result improve ratings of personality. Two hypotheses were confirmed: The use of cosmetics (facial make-up and hair care) leads to more favourable appearance ratings by others (both males and females). For make-up there were more favourable ratings on all of the six appearance scales, and for hair care there were more favourable ratings on four of the six appearance scales. The use of cosmetics leads to more favourable ratings of personality as perceived by others (both males and females). Facial make-up enhanced ratings on eight of the fourteen personality dimensions tested and hair treatment led to more favourable ratings on ten of the scales (Graham and Jouhar, 1981).

Cash, Dawson, Davis, Bowen and Galumbeck (1989), found that women with facial makeup as opposed to a no-makeup condition were associated with positive traits and high-status professions. Few systematic studies have examined individual differences in women's use of facial make-up or the possible psychosocial effects of such use. Cash and Cash, (1982) developed several measures of the amount and the situational and temporal patterning of cosmetics use among forty-two female college students through the imagery-induction of cosmetics use and non-use conditions. Result shows that differential use was associated with a number of selected personality variables-public self-consciousness, public body-consciousness, social anxiety, and various body-image factors. In a variety of imagined situations, subjects reported being more self-confident and sociable when wearing as opposed to not wearing their customary cosmetics. Thirty-eight American female college students completed several body-image measures and were photographed while wearing their typical facial cosmetics and following the removal of their makeup, in a counterbalanced within-subject experimental design. Results indicated more positive body-image cognitions and affect in the cosmetics-present than the cosmetics-absent condition. The more makeup typically worn by the subject, the greater the body-image differences between the two cosmetics conditions. Male judges were less favorable when the women were cosmetics free; female judges were not differentially affected (Cash, etal, 1989). Guegen and Jacob (2011) discovered that women's makeup is associated with the behavior of men; male patrons gave tips more often to a waitress who wore makeup while female patrons have no difference though both male and female patrons rated the waitress as more attractive in the makeup condition than in the non-makeup control condition.

On the other hand, Graham and Klingman, (1985), examined the relationships between physical attractiveness; cosmetic practices and self-perception in elderly females. Attractiveness did not appear to be correlated with the aspects of examined cosmetic practices among the elderly. It was discovered that the physically attractive and unattractive did not differ significantly with respect to cosmetic usage (frequency and number of products), attitude towards cosmetics, history of cosmetic care, or difference between their cosmetic and basic attractiveness. Griffiths (2014), reported a study conducted by Welsh, a psychologist that people often misjudge what the opposite sex find attractive and, men found women's faces more attractive when they were much fresher faced; in some cases, they found women more attractive with 40 per cent less make-up. The study also claims women shared similar ideas and thought females looked better as more natural beauties. Cosmetics form a basic component of dressing; however, concern has been expressed for many years about the adverse health effects of cosmetics. According to Diffey, (2003), in the medical and regulatory literature use of cosmetics especially melanoma has raised concern, from the use of sun beds for cosmetic tanning. While cosmetic tanning using sunbeds should be discouraged, prohibition is not warranted especially as exposure to the sun, which cannot be regulated, remains the major contributory factor to the risk of melanoma. The wide range of cosmetics used by women gives various appearances even though they are all aimed at enhancing appearances of an individual. Application of cosmetics by women have its advantages (makes women look good and attractive) and disadvantages (conflicts between couples, skin problems e.t.c). Consequently this study compares men's perception on women using cosmetics and women with no cosmetics/with natural beauty.

### **Specific Objective**

- To assess men's ability to identify various cosmetics used by women.
- To assess men's perception on the use of cosmetics by women.
- To compare men's perception on women with cosmetics and women without cosmetics.

### **Methodology**

The study was carried out at Ogun State Universal Basic Education Board, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Random sampling technique was used to select 140 men and data was collected through validated structured questionnaire to elicit responses in line with the objectives of the study. The instrument was designed using 4-point Likert Scale and analysed using descriptive statistics. Both modern and traditional cosmetics were presented to the respondents for identification.

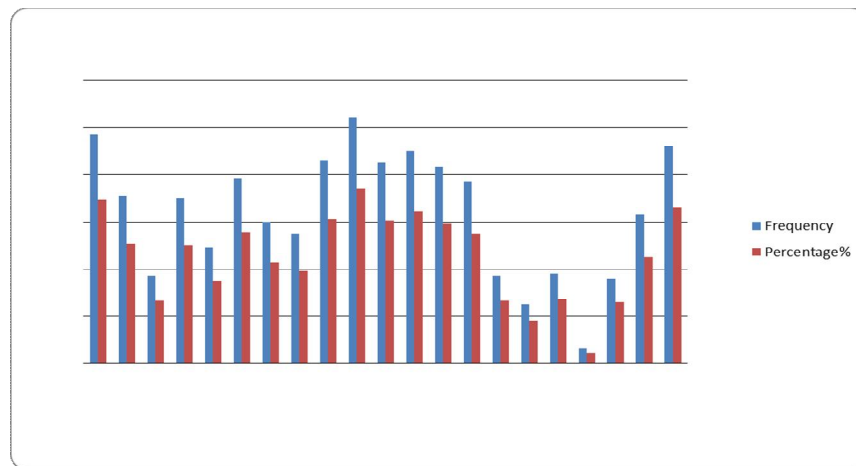
**Result**

**Table 1: This Table Shows the Socio Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
25-30	44	31.9
31-35	20	14.2
36-40	20	14.2
41-45	14	9.9
>45	42	29.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Qualification</b>		
SSCE	12	8.5
OND/NCE	19	13.5
B.SC/HND	94	67.3
M.Sc.	7	5.0
Others	8	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	102	72.9
Single	34	24.3
Divorce	3	2.1
No response	1	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam	57	40.4
Christianity	83	59.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Ethnic Group</b>		
Yoruba	132	94.4
Igbo	5	3.5
Hausa	2	1.4
Others	1	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows that 31.9% of the respondents fall within the age range of 25-30years and 9.9% are within the age range of 41-45 years; 67.3% of the respondents are B.Sc/HND holders while 5.0% have Masters’ Degree.

**Fig.1: Identification of Various Cosmetics**



This chart shows that 69.3% men can identify lipstick, 50.7% identify foundation, (pankek)26.4% identify body oil (ororo), 50% identify nail and feet polish (laali), 35% identify eye shadow, 55.7% identify eye liner, 42.9% identify mascara, 39.3% identify blush, 61.4% identify nail polish, 74.3% identify facial powder, 60.7% identify artificial nails, 59.3% identify eye pencil, 55% identify tiro, 26.4% identify osun, 17.9% identify ayaorun, 27.1% identify adiagbon, 4.3% identify ewe aailu, 25.7% identify ose dudu, while 45.0% identify toner and 65.7% identify cleanser as cosmetics used by women. Consequently, the men are able to identify various cosmetics used by women.

**Table 2: Men's Perception on the Use of Cosmetics by Women**

S/NO	STATEMENT	SCORE	MEAN	REMARK
1	Cosmetics enhance the beauty of a woman	465	3.32	Agree
2	Cosmetics make women pleasing to the senses.	422	3.01	Agree
3	Cosmetics are beauty treatment to improve the quality of skin.	407	2.91	Agree
4	I prefer my spouse to be natural	444	3.17	Agree
5	Cosmetics make women attractive to the opposite sex.	419	2.99	Agree
6	Cosmetics have nothing to do with my spouse beauty.	401	2.86	Agree
7	Women in multi-colour cosmetics piss me off.	442	3.16	Agree
8	Women in bogus cosmetics piss me off.	440	3.14	Agree
9	Cosmetics make me appreciate different facial looks of women	404	2.89	Agree
10	Women with traditional cosmetics are pleasing to me.	383	2.74	Agree
11	Women without cosmetics are pleasing to me.	416	2.97	Agree
12	Women in moderate cosmetics meet my taste.	393	2.81	Agree
13	Traditional cosmetics promote my culture.	444	3.17	Agree
14	Modern cosmetics should be discouraged in our society.	330	2.36	Strongly Disagree
15	Natural beauty should be encouraged	427	3.05	Agree
16	Women in traditional cosmetics are fetish.	367	2.62	Agree
17	My religion disapproves the use of cosmetics.	364	2.60	Agree
18	Women using cosmetics are sinners.	331	2.36	Strongly Disagree
19	Women with natural beauty are more holy than women with artificial beauty.	314	2.24	Strongly Disagree
20	I can afford buying cosmetics monthly for my spouse.	340	2.43	Strongly Disagree
21	I can easily afford #5,000 for my spouse cosmetics monthly.	319	2.28	Strongly Disagree
22	Cosmetics is not part of my monthly budget	367	2.62	Agree
23	Women with cosmetics are sociable	448	3.20	Agree
24	Cosmetics make women look younger and fashionable.	419	2.99	Agree
25	I enjoy buying cosmetics for my spouse.	397	2.84	Agree
26	Women with cosmetics look scary.	380	2.71	Agree
27	I can contribute freely to discussion on women's usage of cosmetics.	405	2.89	Agree
28	My friends admire my spouse when she uses cosmetics.	387	2.76	Agree
29	My wife usage of cosmetics attracts my friends and I get jealous.	334	2.39	Disagree
	<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>11,409</b>	<b>81.48</b>	

**KEY:**

0.50 ≤ 1.49 = Disagree

1.50 ≤ 2.49 = Strongly Disagree

2.50 ≤ 3.49 = Agree

&gt;3.49 = Strongly Agree

Men's perception on the use of cosmetics by women = Total Mean Likert Score

Number of Statemen

$$\frac{81.48}{29} = 2.81 \text{ (Agree)}$$

The table reveals the Mean Score of the perception of men on women using cosmetics and women without cosmetics. For instance statements number 1, 5, 9, 24 and 28 with mean scores of **3.32**, **2.99**, **2.89**, **2.99** and **2.76** respectively shows that cosmetics enhances the beauty of a woman; cosmetics make women attractive to the opposite sex; makes men appreciate different facial looks of women; make women look younger and fashionable and friends of the respondents admire their spouses when they use cosmetics.

This is in line with Gueguen and Jacob, (2010); Graham and Jouhar (1981) that cosmetics improve female facial attractiveness. On the other hand, statements 4,6, 11 and 15 with Mean Scores of **3.17, 2.86, 2.97** and **3.05** respectively reveals that men prefer their spouses to be natural; cosmetics have nothing to do with their spouse beauty; women without cosmetics are pleasing to men and that natural beauty should be encouraged. This confirms the report of Griffiths, (2014), that men found women's faces more attractive when they were much fresher. However, statement number 14, 16, and 18 with Mean Scores of **2.36, 2.62** and **2.36** respectively, reveals that modern cosmetics should be discouraged in our society, women in traditional cosmetics are fetish and strongly disagree that women using cosmetics are sinners. It can however be deduced that men have unfavorable perception towards modern and traditional cosmetics. Statements number 20, 21 and 22 with Mean Scores of **2.43, 2.28** and **2.62** respectively, shows that the respondents Strongly Disagree to statements 20 and 21 informing that cosmetics are not part of their monthly budget. Though the respondents cannot afford buying cosmetics for their spouses, the overall perception of men on women use of cosmetics is **2.81** confirming a favorable response toward cosmetics usage. There are many other statements that support the view that cosmetics enhances beauty of women, however further research should be carried out to compare the perception of women on the use of cosmetics.

**Table 3: Comparison of Men's Perception on women with Cosmetics and Women without Cosmetics**

<b>A woman that uses lipstick</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>A woman without use of lipstick</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
Very Beautiful	48	34.0	Very Beautiful	64	46.1
Moderately Beautiful	50	36.2	Moderately Beautiful	59	41.9
Not Beautiful	39	27.7	Not Beautiful	16	11.3
No response	3	2.1	No response	1	0.7
TOTAL	140	100.0	TOTAL	140	100.0
<b>A woman that uses foundation</b>			<b>A woman without use of foundation</b>		
Very Beautiful	40	28.4	Very Beautiful	57	40.1
Moderately Beautiful	56	40.4	Moderately Beautiful	61	44.3
Not Beautiful	44	31.2	Not Beautiful	22	15.6
TOTAL	140	100.0	TOTAL	140	100.0
<b>A woman that uses blush</b>			<b>A woman without use of blush</b>		
Very Beautiful	35	24.9	Very Beautiful	52	36.9
Moderately Beautiful	57	41.1	Moderately Beautiful	69	48.9
Not Beautiful	48	34.0	Not Beautiful	19	13.5
TOTAL	140	100.0	TOTAL	140	100.0
<b>A woman that uses mascara</b>			<b>A woman without use of mascara</b>		
Very Beautiful	29	20.6	Very Beautiful	53	37.6
Moderately Beautiful	50	35.4	Moderately Beautiful	67	48.2
Not Beautiful	60	43.3	Not Beautiful	19	13.5
No Response	1	0.7	No Response	1	0.7
TOTAL	140	100.0	TOTAL	140	100.0
<b>A woman that uses eye shadow</b>			<b>A woman without use of eye shadow</b>		
Very Beautiful	32	22.7	Very Beautiful	63	45.4
Moderately Beautiful	50	36.2	Moderately Beautiful	61	43.3
Not Beautiful	58	41.1	Not Beautiful	16	11.3
TOTAL	140	100.0	TOTAL	140	100.0
<b>A woman that uses eyeliner</b>			<b>A woman without use of eyeliner</b>		
Very Beautiful	29	20.6	Very Beautiful	61	43.9
Moderately Beautiful	59	42.5	Moderately Beautiful	55	39.1
Not Beautiful	52	36.9	Not Beautiful	23	16.3
TOTAL	140	100.0	No Response	1	0.7
			TOTAL	140	100
<b>A woman that uses tiro</b>			<b>A woman without use of tiro</b>		
Very Beautiful	37	26.2	Very Beautiful	51	36.2
Moderately Beautiful	71	51.1	Moderately Beautiful	73	52.5
Not Beautiful	32	22.7	Not Beautiful	16	11.3
TOTAL	140	100.0	TOTAL	140	100.0
			<b>A woman without any cosmetics (natural beauty).</b>		
			Very Beautiful	72	51.8
			Moderately Beautiful	52	36.9
			Not Beautiful	15	10.6
			No Response	1	0.7
			TOTAL	140	100.0

This table compares the use of each facial cosmetic by a woman with non-usage. The result shows that men assess a woman without use of lipstick to be more beautiful (88.0%) than a woman that uses lipstick (70.2%); a woman without use of foundation (84.4%) is more beautiful than a woman that uses foundation (68.8%); a woman without use of blush (85.8%) is more beautiful than a woman that uses blush (66.0%); a woman without use of mascara (85.8%) is more beautiful than a woman that uses mascara (56.0%) and a woman without any cosmetics was assessed to be beautiful with 88.7% favorable response. Consequently, men prefer women to be natural.

### Conclusion

Cosmetics are artificially applied to the body either by surgical or non-surgical means, which is meant to enhance the physical appearance of a person. Men find women with less or no cosmetics more attractive. Most of the men prefer women with moderate cosmetics and dislike women with bogus cosmetics because they appear scary. Majority of them prefer women with natural beauty. It is therefore advisable for women to apply cosmetics moderately or better still maintain their natural beauty.

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