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11/08/18

Senior Capstone

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Cosmetic Psychology

The Cosmetic industry is filled with a lot of insecurities yet provides a lot of confidence. Women all over the world turn to makeup to provide a sense of security and to make them feel beautiful. Makeup is a useful tool for women suffering from anxiety and depression; it could help boost their confidence and self-esteem. Makeup gives women the chance to express themselves in a way words cannot. People tend to misconstrue the fact that women wear makeup to impress others when in the reality of things, it's for themselves. When women put on makeup, it helps them feel more confident and less afraid to conquer the world. Very often the cosmetic industry is viewed in a derogatory way. Many people view the industry as promoting women to look and achieve the unachievable. The cosmetic industry does not promote evil or self-hate but rather tries to help women feel like the best version of themselves.

So, what exactly is anxiety? According to the DSM-5, "Generalized Anxiety Disorder is excessive anxiety and worry occurring more days than not for at least 6 months about a number of events or activities such as work or school performance." When someone is constantly walking around worried about any small number of things, wouldn't you want to find different ways to ease that feeling? Feeling more confidence within yourself by feeling good on the outside is a small yet helpful tool to ease some of that pressure; even it is something small such as putting on lipstick and touching up your hairstyle. Instead of waking up, rolling out of bed

and throwing on clothes, doing a small extra step and giving yourself a small accomplishment can start your day off on a positive note. People who struggle with this disorder feel a sense of doubt and worry day in and day out. I know from personal experience that if I work hard on my makeup one morning and get even one compliment on it, my day instantly is just a little better. According to Gray Chapman's article *How Makeup Can Affect People dealing with Anxiety and Depression*, "most cognitive behavior therapy patients are taught to do something either productive or pleasurable when they notice themselves getting stuck in feedback loops. For many, skincare and makeup just happen to handily tick both of those boxes." Rather than going down a straight narrow path in the brain's pattern of thinking, people who suffer from anxiety and depression tend to get stuck in so-called "loops". Finding ways to interrupt these "loops" and help change these patterns of thinking, such as having a hobby or daily pattern, helps.

Not only is makeup helpful to those with anxiety, it is also helpful to those suffering from depression. According to the DSM-5, "Depression is a common and serious mood disorder. Those who suffer from depression experience persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness and lose interest in activities they once enjoyed. Individuals can also present with a physical symptom such as chronic pain or digestive issues." Written on Business Insider, there are 6 ways that makeup can help improve mental health. 1. Taking back control. Having a daily routine can help you have a sense of "order" in your life. While putting your makeup on, you are in control of your own destiny! Whether you want to look "business casual" or "sexy" it doesn't matter, you are in control. 2. Treating yourself. Doing your makeup makes you feel good about yourself and is a way to so to speak "be nice to yourself". 3. Overcoming challenges. 4. Embracing your own skin. 5. Taking time out. 6. Getting out of your own head. This one in particular goes to those with anxiety and depression. Many people who suffer from these

illnesses tend to consistently overthink, whether it be worrying or thinking negatively. Within the 30 minutes to 2 hours it takes to put on makeup, all a person is focusing on is completing the task at hand.

In a 2002 study by Sarah Scott, from Hanover College, titled: *Influence of Cosmetics on the Confidence of College Women: An Exploratory Study*. In the experiment, five Caucasian women, comprised of teenagers and young adults, are shown to be most dissatisfied with their images. Women can use makeup to mask things they do not like about their appearances, or, in most cases, accents the features they want to highlight. Cosmetics grant the ability for women to remodel themselves, resulting in an increase in self-confidence. This study shows that when put in different situations with different types of makeup, anxiety levels increase or decrease based on how they felt when in that particular type of makeup (Scott). This is just one of the many ways that indicates when women wear makeup, they feel more at ease and less anxious. When women wore less makeup in certain situations they felt less confident and had higher levels of anxiety. This study shows that wearing certain kinds of makeup in different scenarios raises self-esteem and lowers levels of anxiety.

A scholarly journal called: *Benevolent Sexism and Cosmetic Use: A Replication With Three College Samples and One Adult Sample*, accurately portrays how “a woman’s physical attractiveness and or facial beauty, are part of traditional female roles and may be associated with substantial social power and influence.” Franzoi in 2001 stated that women’s use of cosmetics, provides a reliably fast, cheap, and accessible way to impact their image positively, and ultimately advance their social power via beauty-mediated means. Ambivalent Sexism Theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001), Franzoi’s hypothesis states that the path to social power should especially pertain to women who are more inclined to benevolent sexism. This particular scholar

referred to the work of his contemporaries to support the point of this journal. As I've quoted above from the journal itself, a quote with the use of another scholar's research. "Although we were unable to replicate the exact results reported by Franzoi (2001), the present results generally support his hypothesis of relationships between benevolent sexism and the use of cosmetics. Regardless of their level of benevolent or hostile sexism, women are rewarded with social power for physical beauty." So what exactly is Benevolent Sexism? According to Psychology.com, "Benevolent sexism is an affectionate yet patronizing attitude that treats women as needing men's help, protection, and provision (i.e., as being more like children than adults)." When going on an interview or meeting someone for the first time, the first thing you see is someone's face. Facial cues often lead first impressions which often guide our decisions.

Much like other consumer products that impact appearance, preconceived notions both positive and negative tend to dominate the conversation. According to the scholarly article: *Who Wears Cosmetics? Individual Differences and their relationship with cosmetic usage* by: Robertson, Fieldman & Hussey "What personality variables predict cosmetic usage, and why? In this correlational study 30 female participants, predominantly undergraduate students from a range of ethnic backgrounds answered questionnaires regarding 16 personality variables and their cosmetic usage. A multilinear regression analysis indicated that anxiety, self-presentation, and conformity, were positively correlated, and social confidence, emotional stability, self-esteem, and physical attractiveness were negatively correlated to cosmetic usage. The model, as a predictor of cosmetic usage, was highly significant. It is proposed that cosmetics are utilized primarily as a psycho-physical 'mask' in order to promote a desired image." In regard to this article, cosmetic usage was viewed both negatively and positively. When it comes to anxiety filled consumers, makeup was viewed in a positive light as opposed to emotional stability which

was quite interesting because many people who suffer from anxiety have a tough time when it comes to self-esteem. A few questions come into play when comparing and contrasting what makes some feel more self-confident and less anxious. What is it about makeup that made people view it in a negative light when it comes to certain variables? The findings suggest that cosmetics are not used primarily to attract attention but rather they are used actively as a method of manipulation of one's outward image. The definition of one's outward image in this journal is "The outward image is one that represents a more positive self image – one of greater self-confidence, self-esteem, emotional stability and health." The way in which the wellbeing and healthcare professionals promote cosmetics is shown through this definition. Just because cosmetics are promoted to increase these qualities in a person, do they actually? This study would suggest that it may not.

While the study by Robertson, Fieldman & Hussey was conducted in survey format, the article *Cinderella Revisited* was a study where the participants actually had to physically put on makeup in different circumstances. It comes together with the different emotions and feelings associated with putting on makeup. *Individual Differences Research* 2008, vol. 6, No. 1. "The impact of 2 target audience characteristics on appearance modification was examined. Women participants were led to expect an interaction with an attractive or unattractive male or female target (randomly assigned). Female raters assessed the amount of cosmetics worn by participants both before the experimental manipulation and on the day that they returned for the anticipated interaction. It was revealed that women wore significantly more makeup when they anticipated an interaction with a highly attractive target, irrespective of sex, wore the same amount of makeup when anticipating meeting an unattractive woman, and wore significantly less makeup when expecting to meet an unattractive man. These findings are congruent with a self-

presentational conceptualization of appearance and provide evidence that attractiveness and sex/gender are powerful social cues that elicit behavioral displays from others.” This study displays the self confidence that makeup can provide for people with low self-esteem. Each of those who wore makeup before meeting someone attractive felt more comfortable and confident. Throughout history, starting over 4,000 years ago, women started painting their faces.

As stated “The results of these investigations suggest that physically attractive faces tend to possess symmetry and averageness.” When someone was born with a facial birth defect, they tend to look at others and compare themselves and look to find similarity and symmetry. Makeup gives those who want those things, to make those things a reality. The author said “Beauty is, to some extent, only skin deep, and since skin can be painted, adorned, and otherwise modified, what we see will vary according to the goals and motivations of the individual upon whom we gaze.” Which I believe is open for interpretation. “Concerning make-up behavior, women from the group S more extensively manipulated their relative facial attractiveness, by using a large range of colors, but also through a significantly longer make-up process used to adjust their visual asymmetry and therefore increase their potential of attractiveness. On the overall, our results suggest that make-up is used differentially, according to stable psychological profiles of women, to manipulate specific visual/morphological facial features involved in attractiveness.” Pg 1.

In the article “I tackled my biggest body insecurity through the power of lipstick by: Izabella Zaydenberg”, Izabella talks about the insecurity she has with her lip and how lipstick has helped boost her confidence knowing she has a facial deformity. At first she would do makeup on different parts of her face to make those areas pop, rather than pay attention to the one area she has the most insecurity with. The older she got, she finally tried to wear lipstick

and fell in love with it. Women born with facial deformities struggle with their appearances daily. With the use of cosmetics, you can learn to love the features you were born with and enhance your confidence. People who live with facial disfigurement use makeup much of the time as a coping barrier to protect them from the stares they get on a day to day basis. I was personally born with a cleft lip and have gone through three surgeries and a lot of emotional trauma. Being born different has certainly shaped me in a way many people couldn't understand. When you're a child growing up and not appearing "normal", you tend to get teased. I never was really into makeup until I got older, I wanted to be different with the kind of makeup I wore. Typically, I would steer clear of anything to do with lips and accent my other features such as my eyes. Now, through time I've come to love my features as they are and I'm not afraid to wear a little lipstick every once in a while. I also suffer from depression and anxiety therefore can truly relate to this particular topic. When I'm having a rough day, usually I have no desire to do anything, but if I decide to do my makeup it makes me feel a little bit better about myself, and I have a boost to get through the day. Through my experience, I have found that makeup truly is an artistic outlet to express yourself, and pushes your mind off of negative thinking. Although makeup isn't necessarily the greatest way to cope with these day to day struggles, it can help those with differences. In comparison to the way the world worked over 4000 years, things have changed drastically. Initially when women would find ways to add color or dynamic to their faces in Egypt, it was to please the gods. During these times, women would use products such as red clay, animal fat and ochre on their cheeks and lips to invent the very beginning of lipstick and blush. During the 21st century (today) women are not obligated to search for a mate, get married and stay at home with the kids.

Women today are more powerful than ever. Makeup throughout time has been thought to be used to attract a man and look “more beautiful” for that man. For many years the makeup industry has followed that sort of pattern to attract consumers. Since the rise in women’s rights and equality of women to men, times have changed drastically. Today, the makeup industry is making progressions in celebrating diversity and those who deal with day to day struggles. Whether it be as small as a bad day or as large as living with mental illness, makeup can help improve the quality of life of people everywhere. Using makeup helps people who have insecurities within themselves look and feel as beautiful outside as they are on the inside.

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Writing reflection: include in your final draft submission.

My critical reflection is a thoughtful reflection on my process writing. In this reflection, I thought about the process of writing, including the initial writing I did, the way my ideas developed, how I wrote my drafts, what I experienced in peer review and writing workshops and how I understand the expectations of genre writing—capstone project. I didn't just write down what everyone in class was required to do – my instructor already knows that stuff. I really reflected on that that process.

_____ I answered the following questions by cutting and pasting and responding thoughtfully beneath each question:

- What did I know before about the subject, about the writing processes and about writing a capstone project? What did I accomplish?

I really didn't know much about the senior capstone besides the fact that it was a long paper, I knew absolutely nothing about the writing process. I accomplished writing a capstone and learning the processes of writing it

- What is important about what I did?

Having the discipline to follow the steps and working with peers.

- How did I develop the ideas and develop and revise my work? Here, I wrote about how I thought about the process of writing the project, including the initial writing I did, the way my ideas developed, how I wrote my drafts, what I experienced doing the pre-draft activities, peer reviews, conferences and reflective and writing workshops.

I went to the writing center for some help and even reached out to peers and my professor for notes and advice. It was a challenge at first to feel comfortable asking for help and getting it done, but through time it became easier. I started with free writing to get my idea and then did the assignments, and proceeded to writing!

- *I analyzed my process:* Are there patterns in what I did? In the processes? In my skills and or attitudes? What?

I was very overwhelmed in the beginning and probably at the end the most. The process was certainly helpful, you just have to take it a step at a time. After getting help from my professor and peers it helped me write a much better paper.

- *I evaluated my process:* What went well? Why might that be? What could have been done differently? Which assignments and in class writing and peer workshops were helpful to you?

The annotated bibliography really helped me kick off the paper. Procrastination was definitely my weakness and not asking for help sooner.

- *I evaluated my process:* I reviewed the rubric, the assignment prompt and my final draft. I would give myself B or B- grade because I don't think the paper was perfect, and could have been better, and certainly could've been longer.
- *I extended and reflected upon my process:* What would you develop/change if you had more time to work on your essay? Please be specific.

I would have probably made more outlines to help organize the paper better and write my information down separately from the paper and gather my thoughts that way. I would plan out my timing better and put my best foot forward. I definitely would get more help and notes as well.

- *I extended the process as I move forward:* One thing I would like to improve upon (as a writer, as a reader, as a peer) is....

I would like to become more involved and less afraid of what others will think.

- *I extended the process as I move forward:* What have I learned about my own process that I can apply to future work? For example, what did I learn about my process or about summary, research, analysis, interpretation and synthesis, writing choices, peer critiques, writing for an audience, etc. that I can transfer to other writing and communication situations

I've learned that communication is very important when working on something. I've learned that planning your time out strategically is very important, and outlining different parts of your paper keeps you focused. Always keep your audience in mind.