

EFFECTS OF COSMETICS USAGE AMONG TEENAGERS; A STUDY OF PARENTAL PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the perception of parents towards the use of cosmetics and its effects on teenage girls in Enugu state. The study was designed to identify the opinion of parents on the use of cosmetics by teenage girls. The survey design was used in the study. The population of the study consisted of all parents of teenagers in Enugu state. Sample size was determined using Cohen, Manion and Morrison's sample size chart. Simple convenience sampling technique was used to select 600 parents of teenagers across three towns within the state. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation were the techniques that were employed for the analysis of the data collected. The result of the study showed that parents are of the view that; use of cosmetics is irrelevant for their girl child at their teenage age, that teenagers shouldn't wear makeup because they are paying wrong attention, using cosmetics may damage their skin, it will lead teenagers to getting wrong attention from the opposite sex, it's inappropriate as it could lead to exposure of the teenager to skin bleaching and the fact that most teenage girls have inadequate knowledge on the chemical nature of cosmetics and so may develop dermatological diseases. In all parents believe that most teenagers misuse cosmetics. From the result of the studies some recommendations were made with a suggestion for further studies.

Keywords: Parents, Perception, Teenagers, Cosmetics, Effects

INTRODUCTION

Cosmetics are natural or synthetic products which are applied to the skin for the primary purpose of aesthetic enhancement. Cosmetics are generally mixtures of chemical compounds derived from natural and synthetic sources used to enhance the appearance or odor of the human body (Chang & Hildebrand, 2019). In support of this view, Samson, Philip, Arjun & Varadan, (2017) are also of the opinion that cosmetics substances or products used to enhance or alter the appearance or fragrance of the body. For Onuoha & Chukwuone (2019), they identified that a cosmetic product is to be applied externally to care for and enhance the sheen of the hair, the glow of the face, skin and nails. Cosmetics such as "makeup covers facial flaws and enhance one's self-confidence and interpersonal relations as not only does it serve as clothing for the face, makeup has become a medium that connects human emotion" (Lee & Oh, 2018).

There are different types of cosmetics available in the market. According to Onuoha & Chukwuone (2019), cosmetics are categorized according to the following parameters namely; area of the body intended for application (facial cosmetics, skin care lotions, enhancers etc.); purpose for application (skin care, skin enhancement, improved appearance); chemical composition of the cosmetic product (natural, mineral or synthetic) and physical composition of the cosmetic product (liquid, powders both pressed and loose, creams, paste, and sticks). Cosmetics include products that can be applied to the face: skin-care creams, lipsticks, eye and facial makeup and colored contact lenses; to the body: perfumes, deodorants, lotions, powders; to the hands/nails: fingernail and toe nail polish, and hand sanitizer; to the hair: hair dyes, hair sprays, and hair gels among others (Philip, Samson, Ebenezer and Prabhakar, 2014).

The use of cosmetics plays a large role in self-identity in women as it forms an essential part of what many women consider important about their outward appearance. Studies show that women utilize cosmetics for a variety of reasons, ranging from appearance anxieties, conforming to social norms, public self-consciousness, personal satisfaction, self-esteem issues, through to appearing more sociable and assertive to others (Jones & Kramer, 2016; Lee & Oh, 2018). Self-esteem appears to play a huge role in cosmetic usage as individuals with negative self-esteem, have been identified to achieve superficial satisfaction and self-fulfillment from application of cosmetics (Lee & Oh, 2018). For these individuals with negative self-esteem, the psychological effects of cosmetic use include the feeling gotten from caress of skin upon contact, completion of hope of transformation, stress relief or pleasurable tension during makeup application (Kim, 2013).

Also, research has shown that, the social environment has a significant influence on individuals' desire to utilize cosmetics. The role of the social environment is ever glaring as females may experience bullying and teasing from peers; hence, they become motivated to indulge in cosmetic usage or undertake cosmetic surgery to fix their body dissatisfaction (Walker, Krumhuber, Dayan & Furnham, 2019). In support of this view, Buegeler (2015) opines that females are directly and indirectly pressured in social environment to wear makeup to enhance their physical appearance. This is a true fact as females put in a significant effort in managing their looks in order to receive positive feedback from her peers, especially a when she is aware that she is being evaluated in her appearances (Lee & Oh, 2018). Humans often seek for approval from the social organizations which they are a part of. This is in a bid to keep up the feeling of belongingness. However, the attitude of seeking validation among peers is most predominant in teenagers.

Teenage is a human developmental stage usually characterized by the beginning of puberty. It is a stage in human development characterized by a phase of physical growth and development and accompanied by sexual maturation (Anyiam, 2016). It is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood filled with multiple transitions involving education, training, employment and unemployment as well as transition from one living circumstance to another (Okon, 2016). The author went on to define a teenager as a person that is in the transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Adolescence is usually associated with the teenage years, but its physical, psychological or cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later.

Teenage girls' initial experimentation with cosmetics in early adolescence can be seen as a rite of passage as well as growth towards developing feminine identity. It is during teenage that females typically become more concerned with their appearance. As the use and importance of cosmetics increase, teenage girls' satisfaction with their bodies also increase. Hence, this stage is critical if they are to develop good self-esteem and body satisfaction. Teenagers within the age brackets of 13 and 19, place a lot of emphasis on their social environment and factors such as peer opinion, popularity among peers, changes in financial situation and parental divorce can negatively affect a teenager's self-esteem and therefore motivate the use of cosmetics or undertaking of cosmetic procedures (Singh, 2015).” Therefore, it is important for parents to guide teenage girls in cosmetic use and also determine whether or not these teenagers are utilizing cosmetics to satisfy their own interest or to meet the expectations of someone else, for example a female friend or boyfriend.

In guiding the teenager towards cosmetic use, the parenting style adopted by the parents affects the teenager and their choices. Parenting style refers to the behavioral, values attachment and attitudinal strategies adopted by parents to interact with their children and influence their physical, emotional, social and intellectual development (Baumrind, 1991 as cited in Alika, Akanni & Akanni, 2016). Parenting styles adopted by parents are identified alongside their ideologies and these styles range from authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles of parenting, and are based on levels of warmth and control used by the parent in disciplining the child (Alika, Akanni & Akanni, 2016). A fourth type of parenting style has however been identified by Maccoby and Martin (1983), referred to as neglectful or uninvolved parenting. Parenting practices have been repeatedly linked to teenager's psychological state.

As a result of the influence of parenting style and opinion on the teenager, this present study seeks to identify the perception of parents regarding the effects of cosmetics usage among teenagers. It is important to study the use of cosmetics by teenage girls to determine the position of their parents on how much they wear and when and how it affects their confidence in a given situation. This need arises as studies have shown that teenage girls misuse their access to cosmetics resulting to poor academic performance, prostitution and transactional sex, stubbornness, extravagance in spending, stealing (if they don't have money to purchase them) etc. In view of this, many parents feel bad seeing their children exhibiting these characters. For the most part, the usage of cosmetics

among teenagers is as a result of parental upbringing. In a preliminary research, a sample of teenagers were questioned to ascertain their thoughts on parental opinion regarding use of cosmetics. The results received was divided as some of the teenagers say, it is the wish of their parents to allow them use different kinds of cosmetics. While some of them feel it is against their parents' wish. Also, literature review shows no existing research on perception of parents on cosmetic use among adolescents. Hence, this is a pilot study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. This design according to Nworgu (2015) is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. Therefore, the researcher adopted the design as it is considered appropriate for this study.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Enugu State. Enugu is a state in south – eastern Nigeria. The principal urban towns in the state are Enugu (the biggest and most developed. It is also the capital of Enugu state), Ngwo, Nsukka, and Agbani. These towns were selected as the areas of the study as their populations consist of individuals from different areas in the state.

Population for the Study

The population for this study will comprise of all parents of teenagers in Enugu state. According to the Population Distribution Tables as published by the National Population Commission (2010), the population of Enugu state is estimated to be 3,267,837 which is made up of 1,596,042 males and 1,671,795 females. Of this population, there are 1,133,648 parents of which 1,024,017 are married, 14,952 are separated, 10,528 are divorced while 84,151 comprises of widows/widowers. There was however no information on the number of parents with adolescents in their families.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study was made up of four hundred (400) respondents which was drawn from the four principal urban centers within Enugu state. The selection of 100 respondents from each of the four principal urban centers (hence a total of 400 respondents) within the state was to ensure that all areas of the state were represented in the data collected. Due to the unavailability of data regarding the statistics of parents with adolescents in their families in the state, the sample size was determined using Cohen, Manion and Morrison's sample size chart (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Simple convenience sampling technique was used to select parents of teenagers who were willing to be part of the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The study utilized questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to collect demographic data as well as ascertain the opinions of parents on the use of cosmetics by teenage girls. The questionnaire items were drawn from the review of related literature. The questionnaire was structured and developed by the researchers to adopt a four-point Likert scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Vocational Technical Education, University of Nigeria. A final copy was then produced based on the corrections and inputs made by the validators.

Technique for Data Collection

In order to be able to access parents of teenagers, the researchers wrote letters to religious bodies within the study area and the men and women association within the church assisted the researchers to identify parents of teenagers within their respective religious institutions. Dates were fixed on the days of worship for the researchers to collect data from the respondents and this was carried out simultaneously across the study area. At the end of the exercise, a total of four hundred copies of questionnaire were distributed by hand to the respondents. These were also collected

by hand after they had been filled. Four Hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were distributed and all the copies were filled and returned.

Method of Data Analysis

The completed copies of the questionnaire were examined for completeness. Mean and standard deviation were the techniques that were employed for the analysis of the data collected. Any response that falls within 2.5 and above was taken as agreed, while the ones that fell within 0.5 to 2.5 was taken as disagreement on the items.

RESULTS

The following findings were made:

The demographic information of respondents of this study is presented in tables below.

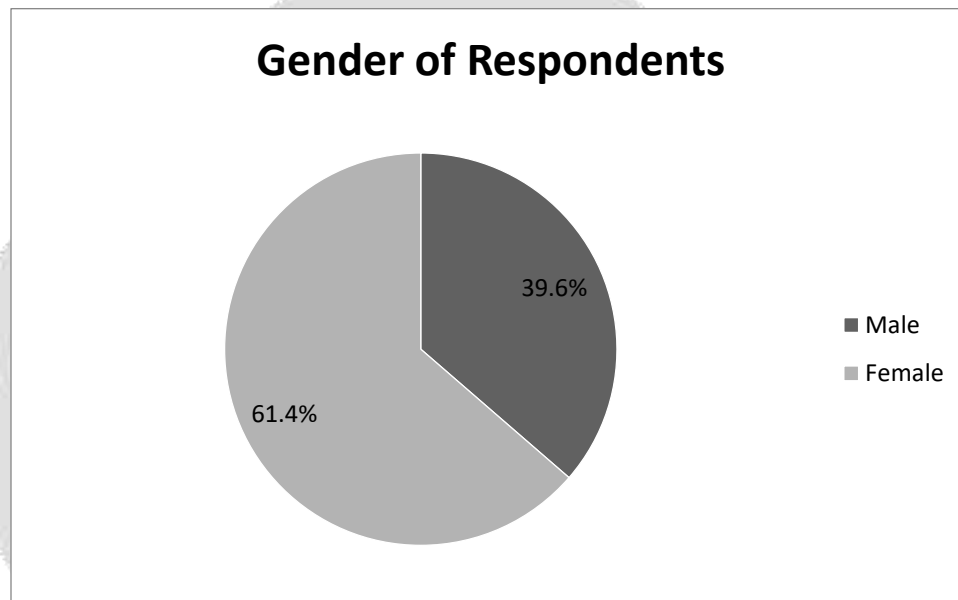


Figure 1: Gender of respondents

From Figure 1 above, 39.6% of the respondents are males while 61.4% of the respondents are females. This is due to the fact that the respondents sampled included more females with teenage daughters than males. The implication of this disparity in gender for the study is very important. This is advantageous for the study as females are mostly more involved in child rearing than their male counterparts. Also, mothers are usually much closer to their children, hence the information they provide will be vital to make appropriate conclusions on the perception of parents on use of cosmetics among teenagers.

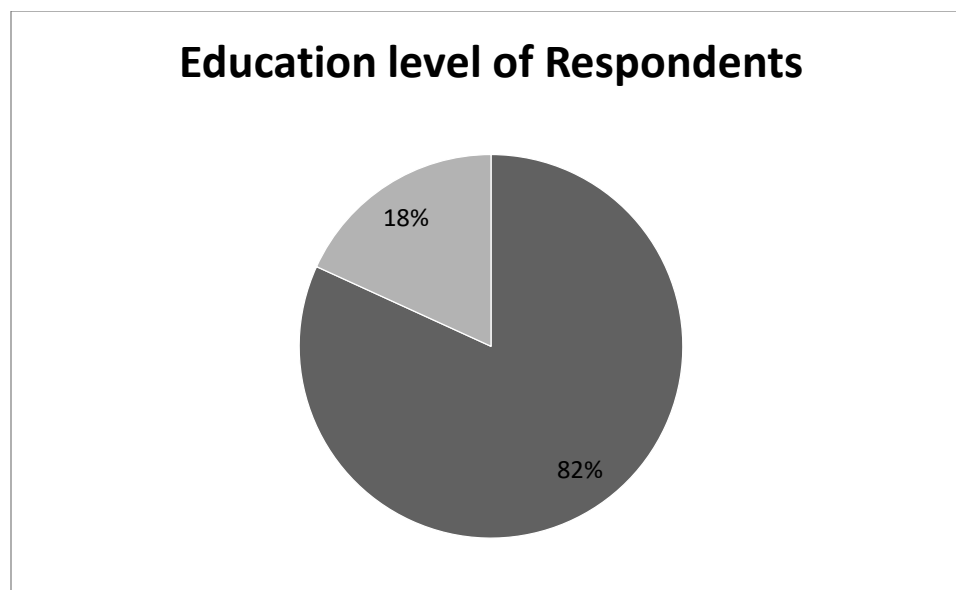


Figure 2: Educational level of respondents

Figure 2 above shows that 81.8% of the respondents are first degree leavers whereas only 18.2% are senior secondary certificate holders. The study population therefore have more first-degree holders as parent of teenagers and very few senior secondary school leavers. This disparity in educational qualification can be ascribed to the fact that in most urban centers (as is the study area), degree holders are quite many. The implication of this data to the study is such that the respondents understood the study goals and were willing to be part of the study.

Research Question: What is the perception of parents on the use of cosmetics by teenage girls?

Table 1: The perception of parents on the use of cosmetics by teenage girls

Perception of parents on the use of cosmetics by teenage girls	Mean	SD	Remarks
It breeds insecurity in teenagers as they have negative feelings about their looks when they don't wear makeup	3.24	1.08	Accepted
It is irrelevant for their girl child at their teenage age.	2.94	0.77	Accepted
It exposes teenagers to bad friends	2.30	1.00	Not Accepted
It could lead to involvement in transactional sex (offering of sex in exchange for money or materials)	2.93	1.04	Accepted
Exposure to involvement with multiple sexual partners	2.98	1.06	Accepted
Could lead to premarital sex	3.06	0.98	Accepted
Teenagers shouldn't wear makeup because they are paying wrong attention.	2.74	0.98	Accepted
Using cosmetics will damage their skin.	2.99	1.03	Accepted
It is a waste of scarce resources (money)	3.06	0.98	Accepted
It is a waste of time	2.72	0.92	Accepted
It will lead teenagers to getting wrong attention	3.04	0.83	Accepted
Could lead to contraction of STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections)	2.59	1.14	Accepted
It is inappropriate as it could lead to exposure of the teenager to skin bleaching	3.17	1.01	Accepted
Most teenage girls have inadequate knowledge on the chemical nature of cosmetics and so may develop dermatological diseases	3.08	0.80	Accepted
Use of cosmetics causes distractions from educational pursuit	2.40	1.46	Not Accepted
Most teenagers misuse cosmetics	3.01	0.98	Accepted

Table 1: In table 1 the information shows that fourteen (14) items out of sixteen (16) items had a mean score ranging from 2.30 to 3.24. All these means except two, are above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows that fourteen (14) items out of sixteen (16) items were agreed upon by the respondents as the opinions of parents on the use of cosmetics by teenage girls in Enugu state. Item 1 – indicating that use of cosmetics breeds insecurity in teenagers as

they have negative feelings about their looks when they don't wear makeup, scored the highest mean of 3.24. Therefore, this represents the fact that it is a strong opinion among parents on the use of cosmetics by teenage girls. The table also shows that two (2) items out of the sixteen (16) items had a mean score less than 2.50. This shows that those two items were disagreed upon by the respondents. Also, the degree of agreement with item 3 which was 2.30 was the least mean in the table.

DISCUSSION

For many parents, their discouragement of cosmetic use among their teenage daughters can be traced to a lot of reasons. Although, these reasons are not direct consequences of cosmetic use, most parents are of the view that these issues are more or less of the same causative factor which is teenage cosmetic use; such issues as transactional sex, premarital sex, unwanted pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, skin bleaching, unsafe abortions, contraction of HIV, etc (Luke, 2003). Transactional sex is the offering of sex for money or favor (Madalla, 2003). Although the practice is worldwide, it is thought to be more prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa and also notably popular in Southern Nigeria of which Enugu state is a part of.

As noted by Adogu, Udigwe, Udigwe & Ubajaka (2014), the promise of purchase of articles of clothing and cosmetics by intending sexual partners account for 33% to 63% of the reasons why teenagers get involved in transactional sex. This scenario cuts across ages, in school and out of school girls. This is one the reasons that makes parents become skeptical about use of cosmetics by their teenage girls. To them, it exposes their children to ill meaning individuals. In a study carried out by Ilika & Igwegbe (2004), it was confirmed that 93% of the respondents who happen to be female teenagers had sexual relationships due to financial gains. This bad trend has a whole lot of attendant issues that string along with it. Transactional sexual habits found in teenagers tends to weaken their bargaining power in relation to safe sexual behavior including use of condoms and rendered them more vulnerable (Luke, 2003). For Adogu et al., (2014), the more desperate a need is, the weaker the power to negotiate.

The consequences are manifold especially following unprotected sexual intercourse. The outcome especially in young uneducated or street girls is a sequence of events such as pregnancy, exposure to involvement with multiple sexual partners, unsafe abortion and sexually transmitted infection including HIV. Continuous involvement in transactional sex leads teenagers to have multiple sexual partners. According to Moore, Biddlecom, & Zulu (2007), the pursuit of multiple sexual partners is underpinned by exchange of gifts or favors and this affects the ability to negotiate the terms of sexual relationship. This statement is in absolute agreement with research studies carried out by Ilika & Igwegbe (2004), Luke (2003), Madalla (2003) and most recently Adogu et al., (2014).

Parents are of the view that teens are too young to use certain types of cosmetics in that the use of cosmetics at an early stage can be an undue exposure and invitation to their male counterparts and may result in such issues as premarital sex. This feeling is due to the societal conception of the use of cosmetics especially by teenagers. In Nigeria, the wearing of make up by a lady is actually regarded as a statement that she is mature for admiration from their male counterparts and parents would not allow such being thought of their adolescent daughters. For some parents, wearing too much makeup too soon can open the doors to street harassment and people thinking young girls are grown women. Not only did they want makeup to be a rite of passage for their daughters, they also wished young girls wouldn't be so quick to cover up their faces:

The cost of sophisticated cosmetics craved for by adolescents, may deter their parents from purchasing them as they would look upon that as being irrelevant for their girl child at their teenage age. Some parents deter their teenagers from using cosmetics due their inadequate knowledge on the careful use and applications of certain cosmetics. This inadequate use or abuse of cosmetics may lead such dermatological conditions such as acne, black spots and other skin diseases. Constant fixing of artificial nails on their fingernails can cause a nail problem. The glues used in sticking artificial fingernails make your natural fingernails become very weak and sometimes lead to entire loss of the natural fingernails.

Inadequate exposure to knowledge on the chemical nature of cosmetics and its attendant effects also affect the attitude of parents on the use of cosmetics by their teenage daughters. Skin bleaching, now a trend for teenagers and young adults alike, is also one of the reasons parents deter their children from using cosmetics. Skin bleaching is the practice of applying hydroquinone and/or other depigmenting agents to specific or widespread areas of the body, the primary function being to lighten normally dark skin. Bleaching agents have been used to lighten skin colour for decades. It has been a common practice throughout the world, especially in the sub-Saharan Africa, starting in dark-skinned women, but recently spreading to fair-skinned women to tone their skin colour. The use of bleaching agents

is very common in Asia and Africa, because a having fair skin is linked to beauty and high social class. In Africa, the use of cosmetic bleaching agents has been a long-standing practice that chiefly aims to change one's skin colour. It is common among both men and women (Nnoruka & Okoye, 2006).

CONCLUSION

In the opinions of parents, the use of cosmetics among female teenagers is a serious issue because of the social implications and health issues these cosmetic products present. Studies have shown that teenagers do these to fulfil the need for belonging or acceptance within society, and that natural looks aren't socially acceptable. Parents however are of the view that; use of cosmetics is irrelevant for their girl child at their teenage age, using cosmetics may damage their skin, it will lead teenagers to getting wrong attention from the opposite sex, it's inappropriate as it could lead to exposure of the teenager to skin bleaching and the fact that most teenage girls have inadequate knowledge on the chemical nature of cosmetics and so may develop dermatological diseases. In all, parents believe that most teenagers misuse cosmetics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A replication of the study could be undertaken using a different geographical area after which the results can be compared.
2. Parents should learn to always complement their teenage daughters and encourage them to understand that they are beautiful just the way they are without make-up application.
3. Parents should educate and train their teenage daughters against the abuse and wrong use of cosmetics.
4. Parents should also teach their undergraduate daughters to readjust their attitudes and expectations towards use of cosmetic products.

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