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Lived experiences of Filipino men using cosmetics

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Abstract

This qualitative study utilized a descriptive phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of men who use cosmetic products. The researchers gathered data from 10 participants through purposive snowball sampling and examined the responses using inductive thematic analysis. The study identified four major themes that emerged from the participants' experiences: Empowerment, Influence, Negative Social Reaction, and Need for Inclusivity. These themes provide valuable insights into the complex personal, social, and cultural factors that shape men's engagement with cosmetic products, highlighting the importance of greater inclusivity and acceptance within society. This study concluded that although cosmetics could boost self-esteem and confidence, empowering individuals to engage more confidently in societal and professional contexts, they are also subjected to social stigma and gender biases. Despite the positive effects, rigid gender norms and stereotypes presented significant barriers, resulting in feelings of embarrassment and fear of persecution. Participants advocated for broad acceptance and normalization of cosmetic use regardless of gender, seeking to challenge existing norms and enhance inclusivity. This study emphasized the significance of fostering environments where individuals could freely express their identities, envisioning a future characterized by increased acceptance and empowerment for everyone.

Keywords: Qualitative study, descriptive phenomenological design, lived experiences, gender norms, Filipino men

Introduction

Since ancient times, the products used for beauty or improvement of appearance have been considered as cosmetics. People want to look beautiful, and the concept of cosmetics dates back to the dawn of time. The term "cosmetics" originates from the Greek word "korsmeticos," which means adornment. (Khan, 2019)^[60]. There was a significant change in the society's perception during the 18th century, for both men and women who use cosmetics. This happened around the time of the enlightenment and during the Victorian era, cosmetics were considered vulgar and feminine.

The cosmetics industry has historically been associated with female consumers, and much research has been solely focused on them. However, the male cosmetics market has been rapidly growing and evolving recently. Nevertheless, little attention has been given to men in terms of cosmetics use and is evident to the lack of literature regarding the matter (Martin, 2022). As the beauty norms are slowly shifting in a more inclusive direction, international brands are finally opening their doors and include male cosmetics into their product lineup (Brucculieri, 2018)^[21].

The global men's personal cosmetic care market was estimated at 7.5 billion US dollars in 2019 and was expected to grow to 10.1 billion US dollars by 2021 (Zuhadmono, 2021). According to Ipsos, a 2022 statistics research in the U.S. shows that 15% of heterosexual men ages 18-65 are currently using cosmetics and makeup and roughly one-third of all men are open to using cosmetics.

Males 18-34 are more open to use products like BB/CC creams, mascara, foundation, bronzer and concealer (Ipsos, 2022)^[53].

The Philippine consumer market is likely to follow suit. In fact, according to Carlos Barrera, CEO of Lazada Philippines, men's beauty is one of the fastest growing categories in the Philippines; furthermore, there is a growing patronage of mascara and makeup among men (Llemit, 2023) ^[62]. With the growing popularity of the "Hallyu Wave" or Korean Wave in the Philippines, K-beauty has been a significant influence for men to put makeup on their face which in Korea is a social norm (Dalagonan, 2023) ^[36].

The researchers aim to systematically document and understand the experiences of Filipino men who use cosmetics. By pursuing these objectives, society can further understand the societal perception and individual experiences of Filipino men who utilize cosmetic products, which could introduce new perspectives and foster awareness.

The researchers conducted this study due to the notable research gap about cosmetic usage of men in the Philippines. There is still a lack of acceptance and understanding when it comes to men's cosmetics in the Philippines despite the growing trend towards men's cosmetics. Some men are discouraged from using cosmetics due to cultural norms and societal expectations. The purpose of the study is to look deeper on their perspective and experiences of these men who use cosmetics.

The study builds upon limited research on the experiences of men's use of cosmetic products despite the global expansion of men's cosmetic usage (Zuhadmono, 2021) ^[120]. Therefore, this research aimed to study and systematically document the experiences of Filipino men utilizing cosmetic products within Metro Manila. The objective of this study is to describe and understand the experiences of men using cosmetic products.

Thesis Argument

1. There is a mix of both positive and negative experiences in Filipino men who use cosmetic products.
2. There is a stigma towards Filipino men who use cosmetics.

Related Literature

Men Cosmetics

Men meticulously apply cosmetics to highlight their best features and portray confidence and professionalism. Surprisingly to some, males have worn cosmetics for most of recorded history. There's no question that more and more men are adopting a formerly identified with women practice. From the millions of information available on social media to the growth of firms offering male cosmetics, it appears that the countdown is on to finally making beauty everyone's business (Lifestyle Asia, 2021) ^[65]. Although the positive effect of cosmetics on a person has been thoroughly demonstrated in women, no study has been conducted in men. However, the market for male cosmetics is expanding and changing. Men are starting to buy beauty items that were previously only used by women, such as concealers, powders, bronzers, and eyebrow gels (Franklin, 2022) ^[46]. It explores the idea that cosmetics are an art form that should be shared by everyone, regardless of gender, sexuality, or race. One research showed that men are not comfortable talking to others about their cosmetic usage.

Makeup should not be designated for a specific sort of individual or limited in any way (Subvtrmag, 2020) ^[98].

Metrosexual

Metrosexuals are mostly heterosexual men who prioritize self-care. Metrosexual is a neologism created in 1994 from the words metropolitan and heterosexual to describe a male who is highly concerned with his grooming and appearance and typically spends a significant amount of time and money on shopping as part of this. The term is widely used to contrast heterosexuals who follow stereotyped gay lifestyles and habits.

In recent years, metropolitan young men have shown a strong interest in fashion, cosmetic items, beauty maintenance, and spending money on looks. Because of changes in lifestyle, work, and feminism, metrosexual characteristics grew increasingly common in the twenty-first century. Men use their physical appearance to express their identity, authority, success, and value. People associate attractiveness and appearance with being more fascinating, competent, and earning more money. This assumption led to men using more cosmetic goods to enhance their looks.

Men are increasingly defining themselves by what they consume and how they look. Men are increasingly defining themselves by what they consume and how they look. Society's portrayals of men performing more household responsibilities have resulted in less conventional gender roles. Furthermore, because men are not permitted to express their feelings of inadequacy, they absorb them, which appears to be damaging to their self-esteem. As a result, society's increased emphasis on appearance now appears to exclude both men and women (Sruthi, 2022) ^[96].

Consumer Behavior and Beauty Industry

Filipino men are growing increasingly when it comes to the products they shop for, especially to cosmetic products. It also showed that 22% of growth in sales from March 2015 to March 2016. The Philippine cosmetic market comprises a wide range of brands and products that address the diverse needs of its customers. Korean beauty products were also popular among male Filipino cosmetic users, because of the positive recommendations from friends and family, positive evaluations from websites, and their favourite vloggers or influencers (Statista, 2024) ^[92]. Men are becoming increasingly aware of the value of looks in social situations. This information may help people shatter the taboos that surround the cosmetics industry.

The beauty industry in the Philippines has witnessed significant changes throughout the years. From traditional beauty to modern beauty, the sector has been impacted by a variety of variables, including foreign influences, economic trends, and historical events. The use of cosmetics in the Philippines has undergone rapid growth, fueled not just by ancient traditions but also by modern influences such as beauty pageants and social media (Tang, 2023) ^[101].

Beauty Standards

Filipino men have traditionally been seen as "macho" or "mestizo" and when it comes to beauty standards to men throughout the years. However, in the age of the Internet and Facebook, "macho" or "mestizo" has given way to "metrosexual," with beauty industry to men cropping up throughout the Philippines' urban areas. Men's standards in beauty are rising, whereas female standards are decreasing. Part of the spotlight, it appears, is directed at men (Pieraz,

2019)^[84]. The beauty standard in the Philippines has changed and instead of looking macho or mestizo, men care deeply about their looks and aim for a more beautiful look. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok encourage men's appearance standards. When people navigate through these platforms, they are regularly exposed to "the ideal" and what catches the attention of many people, as seen by a large number of likes and comments. When individuals such as men look at their bodies and faces, they may feel dissatisfied and sad if they do not meet this ideal (Mcghee, 2021)^[73]. Beauty standards have been an important aspect of society for centuries, with each culture having its own notions of beauty. Beauty standards in the Philippines have been impacted by a variety of causes including media influences. Beauty norms in the Philippines have strong roots in the country's colonial history. They have been encouraged by media influences, which frequently advocate the use of cosmetic products (HAPI, 2023)^[52].

Reluctance of Older Men on Using Cosmetics and Generational Gap

Research indicates that brands are having a hard time on making profit from cosmetic products in older men as men over 51 have more concerns about aging and they don't like to be viewed as a cosmetic user because they think that it threatens their masculinity. Data in make-up shows that 1 in 3 men are okay with using cosmetics while 73% of older men (51 and above) say they won't use it at all in contrast to only 37% of younger men aged 18-34. Older men are also more traditional about gender based norms like what's for and what's for women and majority of them think that using cosmetic products is a feminine trait. While most of the younger men are okay with the idea of men using cosmetic products. If this trend persists, we can expect the growth of the number of men using cosmetics in the future. (Aragon, Barker, Click, and Wallner, 2023)^[6].

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Inclusive Masculinity Theory (IMT) developed by Eric Anderson in 2009 challenges culturally dominant forms of masculinity. IMT emerged from findings that the modern heterosexual men have shown to reject homophobia; include gay peers in friendship networks; and embrace activities commonly associated with being feminine like having a skin care routine and using cosmetics.

Homophobia is defined as men's fear of being categorized as homosexual due to gender atypical behavior (Anderson, 2011)^[4]. IMT contends that the social trend of decreasing homophobia gives way for more diverse forms of masculinity. In this context, the femininity in men becomes less stigmatized.

Methodology

This study employed face-to-face interviews as the primary instrument for data collection, aimed at exploring the lived experiences of men who use makeup. The interview was designed to elicit rich, qualitative data through direct, personal interaction. By engaging participants in an open and conversational manner, the interview sought to uncover in-depth insights into their experiences, perceptions, and the social implications of their makeup use. The interview revolved around a central, open-ended question that allowed for detailed and nuanced responses.

Research Design

In this study, the researchers employed a qualitative approach, specifically a descriptive phenomenological design, to delve into the lived experiences of Filipino men who are actively using cosmetics. Qualitative research involves collecting and interpreting non-numerical data, aiming to extract meaning from the information to enrich our understanding of a social phenomena. This method prioritizes exploring the intricacies of human experiences, behaviors, and interactions, often by examining carefully selected populations or specific contexts (Crossman, 2019)^[35].

Within the context of this study, descriptive phenomenological research utilizes qualitative data collection methods such as in-depth interviews and open-ended observations. These methods allowed the researchers to capture perspectives and subjective interpretations of participants regarding their experiences with cosmetics. Moreover, descriptive phenomenological research employs rigorous techniques like bracketing, etc. to ensure researcher neutrality and access to the genuine lived experience of the phenomenon.

By integrating qualitative methodologies and phenomenological principles, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Filipino men navigate and make meaning of their engagement with cosmetics, shedding light on their motivations, attitudes, and the cultural contexts that shape their experiences.

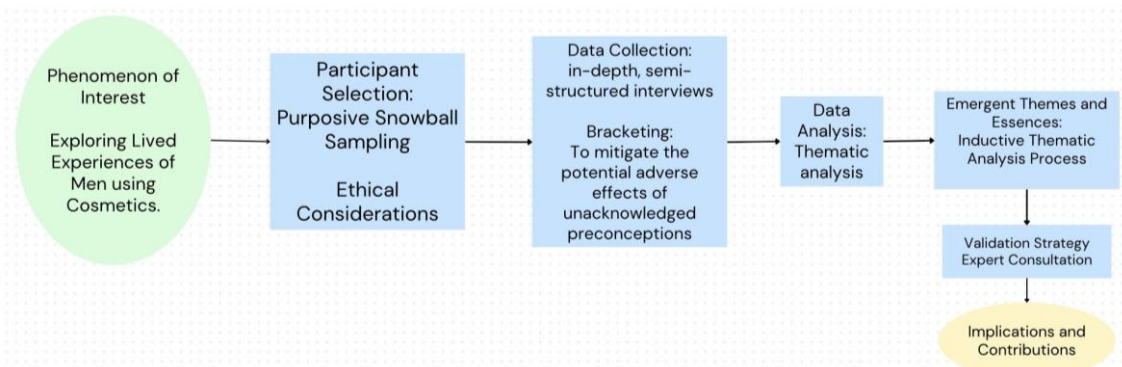


Fig 1: Research Paradigm

Data Analysis

The researchers conducted qualitative data analysis, aiming to understand the perspectives of Filipino men who use

cosmetics. Thematic analysis is the primary method used to identify recurring themes and patterns within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006)^[18]. Employing Husserl's principle of

bracketing, the researchers ensure neutrality and objectivity in their interpretations (Smith, Flower, & Larkin, 2009) ^[54].

Through thematic analysis, the researchers systematically code the data and explore emergent themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2013) ^[108]. This analysis aims to shed light on the motivations, attitudes, and cultural contexts shaping Filipino men's experiences with cosmetics, contributing to a deeper understanding of consumer behavior and cultural identity.

Results and Discussion

The study generated four main themes from the gathered data. The first theme is empowerment which exhibits the positive experience of the participants on their cosmetic usage. This theme has three sub-themes named as "Confidence", Enhancing Appearance, and Fulfillment. For the second theme which is Influence which describes the context that affects the experience of the participants. This theme has two sub-themes specified as Social Influence and Established Norms. The third theme generated in the study is termed as Negative Social Reaction which encompasses the negatives that the participants have experienced in the course of their cosmetic usage. This theme has two sub-themes, identified as negative feedback and negative emotional impact. For the fourth and final theme it was named as Need for Inclusivity as this theme comprises of the calls and pleas of the participants for a more inclusive society that may directly benefit their cosmetic usage experience.

With our research employing an inductive thematic analysis, the researchers have found Empowerment to be the first theme to emerge from the responses that the researchers have gathered. According to (Saavedra, n.d.) feelings of assuredness, self-confidence and self-determination means that one is feeling empowered. Empowerment is described as a transformative process that fosters power in the lives of the people and their environment by doing something about the issues that are important in their life, feeling empowered means feeling "in power". Empowerment allows individuals to feel and be confident that they own the power necessary to create their lives they want to develop and the belief that they are able to accomplish anything they set their mind to.

The following sub-themes are as follows in accordance to the main theme

Sub Theme 1: Confidence

According to Dr. Bandura, self-confidence is more of a general view of how likely you are to accomplish a goal, especially based on your past experience. This can also apply to how likely you believe you are to be accepted in a social group (Ravenscraft, 2019) ^[85].

Research indicates a strong connection between empowerment and confidence. Empowerment, which includes feelings of competence, autonomy, and impact, significantly enhances an individual's confidence. According to the research by Tohidi and Jabbari, 2012 empowerment is firmly connected with a sense of confidence.

"Otherwise kahit naman magsuot ako ng makapal or talagang alam mo yung plakado talaga the people's reaction won't matter because this is myself sabe nga nila "It's your body, It's your rules" participant 3 for their own psychology, making yourself, building self-confidence or self-esteem from Participant 10.

The participants said that using makeup enhances their confidence as well as self-worth. They also said that recognition and positive feedback encourages them and makes them feel appreciated and accepted. Applying cosmetic products in spite of criticism boost their confidence, enabling them to socialize with others. Through the application of cosmetics, persons are able to present themselves as who they actually are thus improving their looks so that they may be able to meet the ideal image of oneself. This serves to boost their confidence as well as self-worth at a certain level or situations. Compliments and validation is significant in boosting one's self-esteem. Gratitude for acceptance from peers and family further strengthens their sense of belonging and self-worth. Positive social interactions and feedback lead to emotional upliftment and increased overall self-confidence. An inclusive environment free from discrimination improves an individual's sense of security and acceptance.

The study found that participants experienced a boost in self-esteem and empowerment when using cosmetics, which was reflected in their increased confidence and self-assurance.

Sometimes they frequently receive compliments which encourage them to work even harder on themselves. For example Participant 3 said "it actually lifts me up whenever people complimented me whenever of course if you would wear cosmetics products it would somehow you know lighten your physical appearance." Similarly Participant 2 expressed that using cosmetics and wearing makeup makes them feel more comfortable and confident: "Yun yung mag bo-boost sa akin ng confidence. Yun yung mas comfortable ako na confident ako kasi may make-up ako." And "whenever i go out Generally just to feel confidence and just to feel confident and comfortable about my self" from Participant 5.

The act of applying makeup despite the potential for judgment or negative reactions serves as a confidence booster. This helps individuals go through social interactions with greater self-assurance. Participants describe how makeup Improves their physical appearance which in turn provides a sense of validation and self-worth. This validation adds to their overall confidence and empowerment. For instance "otherwise kahit naman magsuot ako ng makapal or talagang alam mo yung plakado talaga the people reaction wo matter because this is myself sabe nga nila "It's your body Its your rules" From participant 3 and "Pero ayun as time goes by. Parang matututuhan mong mag-deadma." From Participant 6 but this confidence is learned through time and the acceptance that there will always be people that will judge you no matter what.

Participant 3 shared a similar statement emphasizing that positive reactions from others along with the acceptance of their family have very importantly boosted their confidence. This sense of support and validation from their social circle further reinforces the empowering effects of cosmetics "my parents are actually cool with it so because they watch me do workshops when I was doing modelling prior to college and that is when they got an open mind na magsuot ng cosmetics products even sa guy."

Sub Theme 2: Enhancing Appearance

Individuals are most known populations often and actively change their appearance for different reasons and contexts. Enhancement of appearance refers to any intentional transformation of the physical appearance with the goal of positively influencing the perspective of others based only on

one's appearance (Lewis, Buss, 2022) [63].

Empowerment can significantly impact how individuals perceive and enhance their appearance. It boosts self-confidence, prompting individuals to take proactive steps to improve their appearance. For example, feeling empowered may encourage people to engage in better grooming, select clothing that reflects their personality, and adopt styles that make them feel confident and attractive. This enhancement in appearance goes beyond vanity; it plays a crucial role in how individuals present themselves and how others perceive them, reinforcing their sense of empowerment and self-worth. Overall, the relationship between empowerment and enhancing appearance is reciprocal: feeling empowered can lead to more deliberate and confident appearance choices, which, in turn, can reinforce and enhance one's sense of empowerment (Johnson, 2014) [57].

“Just to conceal ang acne marks or anything just to conceal yung mga acne marks anything na impurities sa mukha” from Participant 6.

Cosmetic usage enables individuals to improve their appearance, in order to align themselves with their desired self-image and present themselves in a way that reflects their inner identity. This is motivated by one's idealized self, allowing them to project confidence and professionalism in different settings.

Participants prioritize presentability aiming to look their best to feel confident and command respect in personal and professional environments. Participant 4 for instance uses cosmetics to conceal imperfections and boost their confidence despite the criticism they sometimes face. They Adjust by choosing products specifically designed for men such as Black Water BB cream to align with their identity and still maintain their self-assurance.” I look for a cosmetic brand that is intentional for men. So, I found Black Water, BB cream. So, I use that just to prove that there is a product for men.”, from Participant 4.

Participant 5 highlighted that makeup helps them feel confident and comfortable specifically in public speaking scenarios. They go through the expectations of the society by balancing personal comfort with societal norms: “...as long as I'm feeling confident about that thing that I am doing so I think that's good enough.”

Furthermore, Participant 10 highlighted the importance of looking presentable in professional settings noting that makeup helps them maintain a professional appearance which is decisive for their career. They face mixed reactions but Highlight the necessity of cosmetics for Constructing self-confidence and achieving professional respect: “In sales specifically you must sell yourself first before you can sell your service or product.”

These statements reveal how cosmetic use goes beyond appearance enhancement. It serves as a powerful tool for self-expression and confidence allowing individuals to present their best selves, manage societal expectations, and feel empowered in their daily lives.

Sub-Theme 3: Fulfillment

Fulfillment is the ultimate goal of a human effort and the primary indicator of an individual life's goodness, according to cultures all across the world. The ability to satisfy oneself by achieving one's own objectives is the definition of fulfillment. This idea is sometimes referred to as self-

actualization or self-realization. Fulfillment is defined differently since it is a personal idea.

Empowerment is a broad societal process that helps individuals in taking responsibility for their own lives. By taking action on issues that they feel important and assess it is a process that empowers individuals to use their own power for the benefit of their own lives, communities, and society as one. Giving others the resources, self-assurance, and opportunities they need to grow and develop to make them feel empowered. It's about encouraging others in reaching their goal and fulfilling their potential as well as empowering them to make their own decisions.

“So i'm glad na kahit na nagmamakeup ako as a male na nag mamakeup hindi naman naman ako nadidiscriminate” from Participant 1.

Receiving compliments about their appearance improves participants' sense of fulfillment in their efforts in using cosmetics. As Participant 3 mentioned, “it actually lift lift me up whenever people complimented me whenever ofcourse if you would wear cosmetics products,” and “uy ang fresh mo!” “ang ganda ng lapat ng makeup mo” from Participant 1.

Participants feel grateful and like they belong when others recognize and appreciate their use of cosmetic products. This shows how acceptance leads to integration into social environments supporting self-esteem and confidence Participant 1 said, “So ahmm thankfully I have never encountered any negative feedback from people and on the other side naman ahmm I'm so so overwhelmed with the people's reaction towards me yun”, indicating how they are grateful for the acceptance they receive.

Positive social feedback in form of compliments and validations highly contribute to improving participants' self-worthiness. Appreciation for their appearance through praise they receive motivates them to continue using cosmetics as well as strengthening their confidence level. In addition to this, Participant 3 explained how it feels good when other people compliment regarding cosmetic utilization. Also, gratitude for being accepted and acknowledged by peers fosters a sense of belongingness plus self-value. Such external affirmation immensely empowers someone by making them know that they are important in their own societies. Moreover, according to Participant 1 this increased self-assurance while putting on make-up increases confidence and comfort levels wearing makeup.

Positive social interactions and feedback lead to feelings of empowerment. Compliments and positive remarks contribute to better mental well-being and a more positive self-perception. Participant 3 noted the emotional upliftment: “It actually lift lift me up whenever people complimented me,” and “Uy, ang fresh mo!” “Ang ganda ng lapat ng makeup mo” from Participant 1, and “Pinupuri nila yung isura ko, pinupuri nila yung pagiging presentable ko. So I guess, yun yung isa sa mga magandang memories ko when it comes to using makeup” from Participant 8.

When people can feel safe without any judgment regarding their use of cosmetics, it creates an inclusive environment, where the confidence of all such individuals improves. Both in personal relationships and at work when we receive equal treatment without any discrimination based on appearance, it makes us more comfortable and less worried about how we look. This in turn leads to a positive self-image and empowerment as individuals. “Hindi naman ako

nadidiscriminate or hindi ako na you know nabully, hindi ako namamak because I choose to wear makeup," based on the narrative of Participant 1, and "Thankfully, on my own experience, I haven't encountered any negative experiences towards people with me wearing cosmetics products," from Participant 3.

Emotional well-being and self-esteem are increased through positive interactions and feedback. Compliments and other positive words concerning oneself elevate the mood of a person promoting overall happiness. This feeling of an emotional lift is depicted in participant 3's states of being lifted by a compliment. An inclusive setting that lacks prejudice on the use of cosmetics makes people feel safe and wanted. Feelings of fear over issues of look are reduced by this fairness and hence improved self-concepts giving people the freedom to express themselves without fear both personally and professionally.

With our research employing an inductive thematic analysis, the researchers have found Influence to be the second theme to emerge from the responses that the researchers have gathered. The ability to shape someone's personality, development, or behavior of an individual is known as an influence. This involves deep emotional connection between other people and oneself. Individuals who are good at influencing others usually have a strong sense of how to relate to other's emotions. This explains why leadership and influence go together hand in hand (Laker, Patel, 2020) ^[61]. The following sub-themes are as follows in accordance to the main theme:

Sub-Theme 1: Social Influence

Social influence encompasses intentional and unintentional actions to manipulate the thoughts, characteristics, or conduct of one person. On the other hand, social influence can be accidental unlike persuasion that is normally deliberate and calls for some level of consciousness from an individual. This might lead to a scenario where, as the individual perceives it, there was no argumentative attempt. Social influence often lacks direction while its outcomes may not necessarily be in agreement with or relate to those intended by the communicator unlike compliance gaining which usually has a goal in mind. The category includes authority, liking and beauty, commitment, social proof and scarcity strategies among others (Gass 2015) ^[47].

The connection between social influence and influence lies in the broader concept of power and how it shapes human interactions and societal structures. Social influence is a subset of influence, specifically focusing on the interpersonal dynamics that drive changes in individuals' actions and thoughts due to social interactions.

Peer pressure and natural curiosity are significant factors that drive individuals to explore or practice cosmetics. Participant 1 illustrates how observing a roommate's makeup skills sparked a desire to experiment with cosmetics themselves:

"...Sa mga reason tsaka kasi yung isa kong roommate ngayon ahmm nursing din siya ahmm ang galing niya rin kasi magmakeup like super na aamaze ako pag nagmemake up siya and ang sabi ko 'hala gusto ko ring matry gusto ko ring makita kung ano itsura ko with makeup on' so yun kaya ako nag nagmakeup."

This statement emphasizes the important role of social learning and admiration in promoting cosmetic use. Also, this

curiosity about cosmetic methods and effects further fuels this exploration as Participant 1 also mentions:

"...nacurious ako sa makeup like how it works bakit ang daming ano like methods like foundation tapos magcoconcealer kahit everything so nacurious talaga ako dun andyun nga dahil nga lagi akong pumaparty syempre gusto ko namang magmukhang fresh."

Curiosity and social interactions are combined, emphasizing that the need to look put together and fresh in public might be the motivation for cosmetic applications.

"doon medyo nag open yung mind ko and nung mga time kasi na yun di pako yung gumagawa yung mom ko pa and then ngayon as I grow older medyo natutunan ko na rin yung basic makeup for men" Participant 3 also mentioned that his mother helps him in using cosmetics and from this the researchers have inferred that his mother influenced him on using makeup.

Participant 6 was forced to learn to use cosmetics to conceal his insecurities from acne marks and from this the researchers have inferred that this is a response to social norms and the desire to meet societal standards of appearance.

"It's just I was forced to learn some of the basics, not even everything. Just to conceal ang acne marks or anything" from Participant 6.

Sub-Theme 2: Established Norms

Established norms refer to the commonly accepted standards and rules of behavior within a particular society, culture, or group. They are also defined as rules or standards of behavior shared by group members that prescribe appropriate or expected behavior in a given context. These norms are established through social interaction and consensus within a group, serving to regulate behavior and maintain social order (Deutsch, 1955) ^[42].

The connection between influence and established norms is a fundamental aspect of social behavior and societal functioning. Influence contributes to established norms through several mechanisms. Conformity is a form of social influence wherein individuals adjust their behaviors or beliefs to align with group norms, thus reinforcing and stabilizing those norms. Compliance, another form of social influence, occurs when individuals agree to requests or follow rules set by others, further embedding these norms within the social fabric. Additionally, influential figures or authority figures can shape norms through their actions and directives, which others follow either out of respect, fear, or a desire for social acceptance.

For men in particular, stereotypes and gender norms provide significant barriers to the use of cosmetics. Participant 4 explains how men who wear cosmetic products that conform to strict gender norms and cultural stereotypes face criticism and judgment:

"...when it comes to wearing men's cosmetics as I receive criticism or judgments towards people even my classmates and my friends that 'Oh why do you utilize concealer? Why do you use such makeup? You're a man. Are you gay?'"

The statement shows the stigma surrounding men who use cosmetics, which forms beliefs associating cosmetic use with femininity or particular sexual orientations. Participant 4 emphasized further the lack of normalization of men's cosmetic use in everyday settings:

“...Here in Philippines we all know that concealer is utilized in such occasions when it comes to pageantry when it comes to female artists. so why do they not normalize to utilize men as well for makeup? For daily routine.”

This reflects broader cultural and social norms that restrict cosmetic use to women and certain contexts, promoting gender stereotypes. Additionally, Participants 5 and 7 emphasize how societal norms predominantly associate women with cosmetics, further reinforcing these prevailing beliefs:

“...Most Filipinos are not accustomed to ah. men wearing make-up.” (Participant 5)

“...so alam naman natin na ang kagamitang kosmetiko na ginagamit lang ng mga babae.” (Participant 7)

The statements of the participants highlight the influence of social stereotypes and gender norms in shaping and restricting individuals' cosmetic practices. These negative reactions, creates challenges and barriers for men who want to use cosmetic products.

With our research employing an inductive thematic analysis, the researchers have found Influence to be the third theme to emerge from the responses that the researchers have gathered. A negative social reaction is how society responds when someone breaks social rules or norms. This can include informal responses like ridicule, disapproval, or exclusion, as well as formal consequences like fines or imprisonment (Sociology, 2016) ^[105]. Labeling theory explains that when society labels someone as deviant, it can make that person more likely to continue acting in deviant ways. This happens because the person starts to see themselves according to the label and others treat them based on that label. This is how society tries to control behavior and maintain order (Berk, 2015) ^[9].

The negative social reactions, prejudice, and stereotypes significantly affect individuals, especially men, who use cosmetics. This theme encompasses different types of negative feedback, judgments, and emotional discomfort experienced by these individuals.

The following sub-themes are as follows in accordance to the main theme:

Sub-Theme 1: Negative Feedback

Experiencing criticism and negative feedback involves receiving comments or judgments about one's actions, behavior, or performance that highlight perceived deficiencies or mistakes. The impact of such criticism largely depends on its nature, whether it is constructive or destructive, and the recipient's perception and emotional state. Constructive criticism aims to provide helpful and actionable suggestions for improvement, while destructive criticism often involves harsh or judgmental comments that can lead to negative emotional reactions such as defensiveness, hurt, or demotivation (Fong C. *et. al.*, 2016) ^[45].

Criticism might have a significant and negative effect on one's physical and mental well-being of an individual. Considering this kind of effect might explain how an individual who often receives a lot of criticism could act differently than those who often receive positive encouragement or fair feedback from others (Agarwal, 2023) ^[2].

“When it comes to cosmetics like lipsticks, concealer, I do not use lipsticks because of the criticism that I receive towards people” from Participant 4.

In cosmetic usage, participants usually get criticism and negative feedback, which discourages them from fully expressing themselves through cosmetic usage. This kind of criticism often takes the form of direct comments and societal criticisms, which develop a negative environment in the cosmetic usage of men.

Participant 4 discussed how criticism affects their cosmetic choices:

“When it comes to cosmetics like lipsticks concealer I do not use lipsticks Due to the criticism that I receive towards people.”

The statement emphasizes on how these individuals may completely avoid using cosmetic products as a result of societal criticism. It is common for negative feedbacks to doubt their intentions and masculinity, as Participant 4 explains, “Negative feedback always. Kasi nga yun yung point nila is bakit nga nag-wear ng makeup yung men if I was really a man?”

Participant 7 discussed the common societal assumption that using makeup is considered feminine. This challenges traditional notions of masculinity. Participant 7 also emphasized experiencing judgment and criticism from others for using makeup:

“Napapansin pag ako’y na’ka na gumamit nito komestiko napapansin ko ang reaksyon ng iba na parang sila ay nalalawsaan sa aking itsura.”

This perception can unfairly label men who choose to wear makeup, insinuating that it is inappropriate or too much. Participant 10 discussed the prevalence of criticism in social situations:

“Whenever I'm using makeup then when I get out of the door, everyone is looking at me and I think they are criticizing whatever cosmetics I'm using.”

The criticism and negative reactions men face demonstrate the societal attitudes that create challenges for men who want to use makeup. These attitudes foster harmful stereotypes, making it difficult for men to express themselves freely through cosmetic use.

Sub-Theme 2: Negative Emotional Impact

Negative emotional Impact refers to the psychological effect that an event, experience, or stimulus has on an individual's emotions, often leading to feelings of sadness, happiness, fear, anger, or other emotional states. It encompasses both immediate reactions and long-term emotional responses (Rubin, K. *et. al.*, 2009) ^[86].

Negative criticism can affect the foundation of every relationship. As a matter of fact, criticism ruins that connection. An individual's ability to analyze criticism can be seen in their sensitivity in their emotions as well as how they respond to it. An individual who is more sensitive to criticism may also be less motivated and perform lower standards, which might keep them from receiving more opportunities for helpful feedback (Borresen, 2019) ^[22].

“Hindi na ako maging hindi ko na kayang maging normal because there's like a little a little tear of trauma there even if it's very trivial to say but it affected how my day to day experience is like” from participant 10.

Negative social interactions have a significant emotional impact, allowing feelings of discomfort, shame, and fear of persecution. These affective statements may have a lasting effect on individuals' desire to use cosmetic products and their overall well-being.

Participant 8 states an unpleasant experience that happened to him:

“Habang nakapila kami for the flag ceremony, sinabihan niya ako, naka-lipstick ka no? Pero I wasn't really wearing any kind of lipstick at that time, so medyo napahiya ko nun”.

This experience shows how inaccurate beliefs and feedback said in public may cause discomfort and shame. Participant 6's thoughts about the discomfort they felt emotionally:

“Emotionally it's... At first it's... Emotionally uncomfortable talaga.”

The discomfort can eventually develop into a fear of persecution which causes one to hide their cosmetic use. Participant 6 expresses this fear:

“I'd rather wear a mask. Conceal whatever it is na nasa mukha ko kaysa mag-makeup para lang hindi na manotice sa'yo.”

These feelings are worsened by judgement and stereotyping from others. Participant 4 discusses the judgment they face:

“Like the judgment kasi ng tao notably ngayon nowadays yung magiging judgment kasi ng like sasabihin 'Are you gay?'”

Participant 10 goes further in explaining the dread from stereotyping:

“There's a judgment inside their head that is plaguing na parang ah this might be gay this person can be a metrosexual or whatever.”

Negative emotional consequences may result from these judgements as explained by Participant 4:

“Nasasaktan at the same time nagagalit. Kasi judgment yun eh.”

Also being ridiculed based on cosmetics use can be quite distressing:

Participant 10 recounts:

“Even powder. I'm not gonna be speaking for myself this time but I have some workmate na straight naman siya. Nagpupulbo siya. Tapos minamock siya ng mga kateam nya kasi most of it ng kateam nya is babae. Parang may tawang kasama.”

This makes these experiences difficult to move beyond, leaving individuals feeling abnormal. Participant 10 articulates this:

“Hindi na ako maging, hindi ko na kayang maging normal because there's like a little a little tear of trauma there even if it's very trivial to say but it affected how my day to day experience is like.”

The profound emotional discomfort and fear of persecution stemming from negative social interactions highlight the significant barriers to cosmetic use among men.

With these experiences being classified as elements of the experience of stigmatised individuals and according to Lucas and Phelan, 2001 Stigma, is defined as the intersection of multiple components. Stigma exists when the following elements occur: labeling, stereotyping, separation, discrimination, and status loss in a situation where power allows them and the stigma literature can't be guided by only using one theoretical framework. the stigma process consists of four steps the first step is people differentiate and put a label on human differences step 2, dominant beliefs in culture link these labeled persons to undesirable traits step 3, Labeled persons are categorized to achieve separation of social identities namely "us" from "them" and lastly step 4, The labeled individuals experience, discrimination, rejection, exclusion, and status loss which leads to undesirable outcomes such as restricted social networks, reduced earnings, and demoralization.

Need for Inclusivity

By addressing the historical injustices and inequalities caused by differences in physical features, access to goods and services, and individual meanings, inclusivity aims to address these kinds of issues. Since our modern world continues to adhere to the demographic classifications and approaches of the previous two paradigms, inclusivity is an idealistic process that necessitates ongoing fights. The need for inclusivity in cosmetic use is a common theme that reflects a desire for acceptance and normalization of makeup for all genders. This theme includes efforts to foster inclusivity, promote acceptance, and challenge existing norms (Tzirides, Kalatzis, 2023) ^[104].

“Gusto kong ipakita sa kanila na itong kosmetiko ay para ito'y sa lahat hindi lang sa mga babae” from Participant 7.

The participants show a desire to foster inclusivity in using cosmetic products. They believe that cosmetics are not just for females, and everyone should receive the same opportunity to use cosmetics, regardless of gender, personal motivation, and traditional norms about who should wear it.

The statement of Participant 8 demonstrates the belief that cosmetics should be for everyone, not just for women. This encourages getting rid of the negative attitudes about men

wearing cosmetic products and embracing cosmetic use to boost once confidence:

“Mas naging reason lang yung stigma to make them feel down and not use it. so ako mas naniniwala ako sa panahon natin ngayon na lalo na 2024 na it's not a big deal anymore to use makeup even for guys so that they could be much more confident sa skin nila.”

This reflects a progressive view that aims to normalize makeup use for men promoting self-confidence and self-expression. Acceptance of judgment also plays a role in this advocacy. Participant 6 notes:

“Pero ayun as time goes by. Parang matutuhan mong mag-dead ma.”

Learning to ignore and resist judgment is part of advocating for a more inclusive and accepting environment for cosmetic use.

Participants express frustration over the lack of normalization of cosmetic use for men pleading for societal acceptance. They highlight the need for change in societal attitudes to foster a more inclusive environment.

Participant 10 articulates this frustration

“If it's a bad day it's a little bit it's getting under my skin. It's annoying because why are we not normalizing it? And in this state of the world everyone is clamoring about about equality.” This plea for normalization reflects a desire for equality and acceptance in cosmetic use. Participant 4 questions why makeup use for men is not normalized:

“So why do they not normalize to utilize men as well for makeup? For daily routine.”

Participant 10 further highlighted the need for normalization:

“Parang ano pa rin hindi pa rin normal yung pag-use ng cosmetic products.”

These statements reflect a strong desire for societal change advocating for an inclusive environment where cosmetic use is accepted for all genders promoting equality and reducing stigma.

Discussion

Based on the data that the researchers gathered the effects of cosmetic usage in men is also similar on cosmetic usage in women as it boosts their self-esteem and confidence and in turn leads to greater well-being. Based on the theme of empowerment as it empowers individuals who use it by concealing their facial features that they want to hide, increasing self-assurance of presentability and the validation that they get for looking presentable through expressing their idealized self. This is also consistent with the findings of Blake *et al.*, on 2021 that states that the popularity of makeup stems from the elevation of the perceived attractiveness and presentability of the user, and women that feel more attractive would experience greater well-being and higher self-esteem. The theme of empowerment can be better justified and supported by self-determination theory, positive psychology theory and inclusive masculinity theory. According to the research of Copes *et al.*, 2020 Participants in their study

discussed the benefits of internal motivation for makeup use, such as fulfilling needs of mastery, and relatedness. This is achieved through gaining control on the outcome of their appearance and having a connection with others through platforms like beauty forums. Participants who were internally motivated or had a strong sense of mastery and relatedness reported positive change on their self-esteem and confidence from makeup use. Using makeup is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, as stated in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and its sub-theory, the Organismic Integration Theory (OIT). Intrinsic motivation includes engaging in an activity for its inherent gratification, while extrinsic motivation is driven by the attainment of a separate objective outcome. Introjection is a form of extrinsic motivation, involving actions that induce aversion of guilt and enhancement of ego. For example, using cosmetics to receive compliments and boost self-esteem.

Positive psychology theory according to Sutton, 2016 is the scientific study of human flourishing which focuses on positive aspects and strengths as a way to achieve well-being in individuals and communities. The theory is based on the belief that happiness stems from both emotional and mental factors. The goal of positive psychology is to help individuals identify from moment to moment rather than only appreciating it when looking back. This theory resonates with our study as in the theme of empowerment participants express the sensation of fulfillment in the validation and acceptance that they get from their positive environment. This theory has 5 main pillars for wellbeing named positive emotions which is experiencing joy, gratitude, love, and other positive feelings, Engagement, engaging in activities that provide meaning and purpose, Relationships which is defined as building positive connections with others, Meaning, finding purpose and fulfillment in what we do and Accomplishments which is seeking and savoring milestones in life. In the context of cosmetic usage of Filipino men, these elements are present on the theme of empowerment as the participants emphasize the positive experiences and validation that they receive from using cosmetics and in turn increases their confidence and they can build connections through this similar interest, and in that particular type of activity they can find meaning as it is a form of self-expression and a way to reinvent themselves through challenging societal norms. As stated by Anderson and McCormack, 2016 inclusive masculinity theory is a research finding that characterizes the changing dynamics of masculinity and being hyper masculine is not necessary for acceptance in the society and embracing activities and artefacts that were once attributed or associated with femininity and also rejection of violence and bullying. In the context of cosmetic usage of Filipino men this is a central theory since cosmetic usage is attributed to femininity and this theory claims that there is a decline in anti-homosexual behaviors and it is okay to embrace activities that were considered feminine and the eschewing of bullying and violence hence some of the participants have claimed that they have never experienced negative feedbacks and from their cosmetic usage which is the manifestation of being receptive to feminine activities and rejection of bullying. Despite of its positive effects there's still resistance to social change since cosmetic usage among men is relatively new for our country and studies regarding cosmetic usage in men is severely limited in the context of Philippines, it is also in general knowledge that cosmetic usage is attributed to

women and femininity in our modern society, and Filipinos are known for being conservative-liberal might suggest or better explain the origin for the contradicting experiences especially in the context of our study where our participants have received positive and negative experiences. Cosmetic usage is attributed to femininity since it's a type of product originally created for women "Since makeup is for (women)", "'You wear makeups. That's intentionally for girls.'" also said by Participant 4.

According to Bernardo, 2017 Philippines has two possible political core values which can be used to identify groups of Filipinos which are conservation and equal rights. It can be interpreted as the conservative-liberal dichotomy of values. Where "conservation" indicates motivations that are associated with security, conformity, and tradition.

Influence can be better explained by the help of social learning theory as a supporting theory. Social Learning Theory, according to an article by Mcleod, 2024 and proposed by Bandura, posits that individuals learn via observation, imitation, and modeling. This theory highlights the importance of observational learning, where individuals acquire skills, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes by observing the actions of others and its consequences. In the context of cosmetic usage in Filipino men, the researchers will explain its connection to social learning theory through observation, imitation and modelling framework. For observation, the positive effects of cosmetics from peers celebrities, influencers and family that are using cosmetics as mentioned by participant 1 that he was amazed and from observing his roommate using cosmetics and participant 3 mentioned that his mother used to be the one applying cosmetics to him before his pageants. After observing others imitation occurs where Filipino men started using cosmetics motivated by the positive change they observed from others that are using cosmetics. Lastly, the modelling where these behaviors become integrated into their routines and becomes a part of their lifestyle. In terms of established norms, the social learning theory process comes to us at a very young age where we have observed it from our peers, family etc. and we blindly follow these norms as society deems it as acceptable or the standard, for example in observation we have observed that cosmetic usage is only seen in women and men who are using it are being persecuted and then we slowly adapt to this behavior and its slowly integrating to our perspectives and to add to that, Philippines is a religious and conservative country by default.

The researchers found out that there is a stigma on cosmetic usage among men in Metro Manila, Philippines as some of the participants have experienced negative reactions from their cosmetic usage that are considered manifestations of stigma, these negative experiences consist of criticism, negative feedback, prejudice, stereotyping, feeling of embarrassment, being emotionally uncomfortable, fear of persecution, questioning of sexuality, and these experiences makes the male cosmetic user feel that they are being labeled as different and devalued, and this discrimination from their environment leads to a depreciation of their status and according to Ratcliffe and Stutterheim, 2021 Stigmatization is a socio-cultural construct, taking place in social settings, where a person is categorized as different and degraded, with that person consequently losing status and experience discrimination. Given that this stigma has been existing in our society and hasn't been properly documented yet because of the limited research on this field the researchers would like to

provide a deeper understanding regarding the stigma through the help of hegemonic masculinity theory and the concept of homophobia.

According to Menswear style, 2023 In the Philippines, traditional gender roles and cultural standards of masculinity are the basis of the stigma surrounding men's cosmetics because men's cosmetics are associated with femininity. Men who use cosmetics find it very challenging to use cosmetics in their everyday lives in public without being criticized by society.

These negative reactions from the society and stigmatization can be better explained by the help of homophobia and hegemonic masculinity theories which suggests that:

According to Anderson and McCormack, 2014 Males in our society are avoiding behaviors that are socially perceived as feminine or gay to avoid homophobia, Femininity in men was particularly problematic in our culture because of its attribution to homosexuality, homophobia is a concept from inclusive masculinity theory.

The embodiment of hegemonic masculinity is viewed to be "macho" which is often associated with hypermasculinity which is considered as assertive, aggressive, courageous, almost invulnerable to threats and problems, and stoic. It has an association with the presentation of courage, strength and the refusal to acknowledge weakness (Goodall, Hepworth, and McVittie, 2017) ^[75].

Philippines is known for being traditional, conservative and the ideal form of masculinity is the "macho" man, hence the prevalence of machismo even in popular culture in this country and according to Mapoy *et al.*, 2021 displays of machismo and sexism still persist in the socio-political climate that we currently experience. Leaders flaunting their machismo, rape jokes, and the vilification of women are still prevalent in the Philippines. Hence this "macho" man is the peak form of masculinity in the hegemonic masculinity theory and using cosmetics where cosmetics has an attribution to femininity provides a perceived degradation of one's masculinity resulting in stigma where men that are using cosmetics are categorized, labeled or viewed as homosexual. As stated by Berry *et al.*, 2014 and according to social cognitive theory, individuals are more likely to avoid behaviors that are associated with punishment and, instead, engage in behaviors which they perceive as rewarding. Most of Filipino men especially the traditional ones believe that performing behaviors that are attributed to femininity are punished in our society as they will be stigmatized and therefore have limited opportunities and they think that negatively criticizing this behavior is rewarding as it helps defend and preserve their definition of masculinity and most of all they will not be in subject to second hand stigmatization.

With the current state of our world, more and more people, organizations and institutions are pushing for inclusivity and even in the field of research but the experiences of Filipino men using cosmetics in Metro Manila, Philippines would suggest otherwise that despite of this progressiveness in our country the stigma is still present, hence some of the participants are pleading and advocating for normalization of cosmetic usage among men and because of this some participants chose to just endure the judgment as the lines between the between the positive and the negative effects of using cosmetics here in Metro Manila, Philippines are continuing to blur and it cannot be distinguished whether its positive effects outweigh the negatives.

For the theme of the need for inclusivity, the central supporting theory is inclusive masculinity theory and as previously stated and according to Anderson and McCormack, 2016 Inclusive masculinity theory is the decline of homophobia, rejection of bullying and violence. It also stated that inclusive masculinity embraces activities that were once associated with femininity such as cosmetic usage. In the context of cosmetic usage in Filipino men, Inclusive Masculinity would be the ideal type of masculinity to foster an accepting environment for men using cosmetics in the Philippines. The limitations in inclusivity is a hindrance for all the positive points being discussed on theme one which is empowerment. Gathered data from the study reveals that there is a growing advocacy for acceptance and inclusivity. Some participants are baffled by the rigidity of gender norms despite being already 2024 where the world has already become progressive and as corporations prioritize diversity, equity and inclusivity in policy making. Data gathered from the study also reveals that some of the Filipino men have learned to just endure the subtle judgment or hints of disapproval from the society.

According to Menswear, 2023, for men in the Philippines, to eliminate this stigma it should have an inclusive and accepting cultural norms. These barriers may be further broken down by the cosmetic industry's continued promotion of cosmetic products especially for men and by openly sharing their perspective and experiences on men's cosmetics, influencers and celebrities have a great impact on the normalization of men's cosmetics usage.

As also stated by Santoro, 2023 Psychologists are challenging traditional societal norms and thinking in research, re-examining how research terms should be defined, how research is executed, who will be the researchers, and the kinds of research that will be rewarded. It is also included that research questions should consider the historically marginalized groups and capture the full human experience without bias.

Summary of Findings

The study investigated the experience of individuals, specifically men using cosmetics, revealing several important themes and sub-themes that illustrate empowerment, social influence, negative social reaction, and the need for diversity. Empowerment

The participants said that using makeup enhances their confidence as well as self-worth. They also said that recognition and positive feedback encourages them and makes them feel appreciated and accepted. Applying cosmetic products in spite of criticism boost their confidence, enabling them to become more sociable. Through the application of cosmetics, participants are able to present themselves as who they actually are thus improving their looks so that they may be able to meet the ideal image of oneself. This serves to boost their confidence as well as self-worth at a certain level or situations. Enhancing Appearance is significant in boosting one's self-esteem. Positive social interactions and feedback lead to fulfillment and increased overall well-being leading to feelings of empowerment.

Influence

Individuals have a tendency to learn and embrace cosmetic usage by learning from peers and personal curiosity. This curiosity is motivated by a desire to explore more and by observing others. For men, societal expectations and gender

norms provide significant barriers to cosmetic use, often resulting in criticism and judgment from others, which discourages them from using cosmetics as a means of self-expression.

Negative Social Reaction

Almost all of the participants have consistently reported a negative reaction that discourages them from using make-up. This negative reaction relates to questioning their masculinity and other intentions. This mostly translates to embarrassment, which has even gone to the extent that makes them feel scared of being persecuted and stigmatized. These emotional statements have overall long-term questions regarding their willingness to use cosmetics and their well-being

Need for Inclusivity

The participants want the use of cosmetics to be encouraged and regarded widely, and this is in the light of a call for more inclusivity. Participants are irritated with the lack of normalization in the use of cosmetics by men and hence societal expectations and a much more inclusive, accepting attitude toward it is what is important.

In studying the lived experiences of Filipino men who use cosmetics, the researchers have found out that Filipino men have both positive and negative experiences regarding their cosmetic usage. Filipino men feel empowered when using cosmetics to enhance their appearance, this empowerment is manifested through increased confidence and self-esteem. The researchers also confirmed the existence of stigma on Filipino men who use cosmetics through the analyses of their negative experiences. Filipino men using cosmetics might find themselves confused between feeling empowered and dreading from the anticipation of stigma.

Conclusions

This research took time to analyze Filipino men's experiences with cosmetics, and established that cosmetics boost their self-esteem as well as being a way of expressing themselves. However, these advantages are often compromised due to social prejudices against male cosmetic use. Participants' responses show that while they appreciate the efficacy of make-up in boosting their confidence and overall satisfaction with appearance, there is still an undercurrent of criticism and judgment exemplifying the continued stigma surrounding males who use such products.

These encounters were shaped by societal pressures and norms. Some males were motivated by their peers into using cosmetics; others experienced disapproval and negative feedback from others that made them avoid applying makeup openly. This study proves that it is time for society to begin accepting and normalizing men's use of cosmetics. The respondents stress on creating a more inclusive environment where one feels free to be themselves without any fear of prejudice or discrimination.

Therefore, this study aligns with the principles of the Inclusive Masculinity Theory (IMT) because it questions dominant cultural masculinity. It underscores how important it is to provide a space where everyone feels safe to express themselves without fear of being judged or victimized, particularly with regard to men using cosmetics. We must work towards making cosmetics a daily routine among men by challenging deeply held concepts about gender identity and norms hence creating an equal opportunity society that values diversity in terms of cultural perspectives on beauty

products thereby promoting fairness and inclusion for all individuals regardless of their gender.

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