

Cultural And Social Influences On The Perception Of Beauty: A Case Analysis Of The Cosmetics Industry

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ABSTRACT

This case investigates the history of cosmetics and the cosmetic industry. The success (or failure) of a specific cosmetic is dependent upon the consumer's perception that the cosmetic will make him/her more attractive. The case illustrates that this perception of attractiveness is a function of culture, society, and the time-frame of the purchase. Specifically, that which is considered attractive in one society may not be considered attractive in another. In addition, that which is considered attractive today may not be considered attractive tomorrow. After illustrating the historical and cultural influence on beauty and cosmetics, teaching notes are offered to illustrate the importance of these variables on the success of the cosmetic industry.

Keywords: Case; Cosmetics; Cosmetology; History of Cosmetics

INTRODUCTION

The influence of cultural and social variables on consumer behavior is a cornerstone of marketing. A cursory review of leading consumer behavior textbooks shows that most begin with an overview of the impact culture has on the behavior of the consumer. Perhaps no industry offers insight into the impact of society on the individual than the cosmetics industry. Society dictates what is perceived to be attractive. The whims, desires and sense of fashion of the consumer require that the cosmetic industry continuously offer different and more advanced products. This case offers insight into this lucrative and constantly changing industry. The case begins with the history of cosmetics. As the case reveals, society influences what is considered attractive. As society changes, so does the perception of beauty, and the cosmetics industry must respond to these cultural and social changes.

HISTORY

In 100,000 B.C., the Neanderthal man was said to have used body paints made of mud and dried plants to apply decorative patterns to the body (Gunn, Fenja 1973). The designs served more than one purpose. First, it helped the men camouflage themselves into the surrounding environment while they hunted animals for food. Second, it was believed that by mimicking the markings of an aggressive or powerful animal, a person would acquire some of that animal's power or characteristics. As time progressed, it became apparent in many different cultures that color was an important aspect of body and face painting. It is believed that colors, similar to those of the solar spectrum, were commonly used in body and face painting because the sun was seen as a powerful force that brought daylight and safety from the real and imaginary dangers of nighttime. To this day, red and yellow are still significant colors in aborigine's cultures as they represent peace and are often included in everyday rituals and ceremonies.

Egypt

Egyptians were the first to use “cosmetics” as a way of accentuating a certain part of the body. The Egyptians believed that a person’s eye was the mirror to his or her soul and could be perceived as a symbol of either good or evil. There is evidence that Egyptians began using eye paint as early as 3000 B.C. (Brown, Bobbi 2008).

The paint was made of powdered kohl or crushed ant’s eggs. Other ingredients that were used to make eye paint included malachite, galena and crushed plant stems. The materials were ground into a powder on a stone slab, then placed in a container. Bees wax, vegetable oil and animal fat were used to make a variety of pastes, balms, ointments and moisturizers. In the dry climate, moisturizers were considered essential to people of every class, so much so that they were distributed regularly to workers and farmers. Egyptian eye paint was used for medical purposes as well as cosmetic purposes. The copper in the eye paint helped to guard against suppuration of the eyes due to the glare of the sun. It also prevented certain eye diseases. Children were encouraged to use eye makeup, as well as female and male adults, because of its various medical aspects. Eye paint was considered so important that the builders were made to stop all work on the pyramids until eye paint was delivered to help shield and protect the eyes of the workers from the powerful rays of the sun. Cleanliness was very important to the Egyptians and was a large part of the reasoning behind their elaborate bathing systems. It was very common to bathe several times a day, applying oils, lotions and ointments to the skin each time.

Another aspect of Egyptian culture was the use of creams, razors and pumice stones, which were used to rid the body of hair. It was common for both men and women to shave themselves bald and wear wigs. The wigs were made of human hair coated with bee’s wax and were later dyed black or dark red with henna. The hair was often braided and adorned with exotic jewelry. For those who could not afford wigs made of genuine human hair, there were wigs made of felt. It was common for women to own elaborate chests to house their makeup, equipment and tools. Women routinely washed their faces with egg whites and painted their faces with a powder derived from water and lead carbonate; in some cases the powder was deadly. Henna was used to create lip and nail stains in many different shades of orange. In the Egyptian society, red was believed to be a magical color; any make-up that was colored red was banned. The Egyptians used stones, shells, wood and ivory to make tools used for applying make-up. Around 2000 B.C., formulas were created from papyrus that claimed to aid in the removal of wrinkles, blemishes, pimples and age spots (Brown, Bobbi 2008). To remove wrinkles, it was common to apply creams made of incense, olive oil, crushed cypress and wax to the face and leave them on the skin for six days. Around 1500 B.C., the Egyptians made body oils out of frankincense and myrrh. These oils were often traded to Mesopotamian soldiers and considered to be more valuable than cash. The Egyptians became known throughout the world for their cosmetic skills and trade helped to spread their ideas to other cultures throughout the Middle East.

Cosmetics and the Hebrew Culture

It is believed that the Hebrews traded and bought cosmetics and fragrances from Egypt and brought them back to Judea. Hebrew women often used cosmetics to enhance their facial features although many Jewish prophets looked down upon the act. Jezebel is remembered as the painted woman in the bible. She was said to have used cosmetics and eye paints made of kohl in an attempt to appear seductive. The Hebrews valued aromatics and believed that the qualities they possessed could heal the sick. Nearby Mesopotamian people had many of the same beliefs when it came to aromatics and cosmetics. Perfumes played a large role in religious ceremonies. The Mesopotamians were known to use lip balm made from white lead and eye paint to accentuate the eyes. The Egyptians and Mesopotamians shared similar attitudes toward beauty and hygiene and set many examples for men and women of other cultures around the world.

Greeks

Although the Greeks had a more refined attitude toward cosmetics, they used them in their religious rights, grooming and for medicinal purposes. The word *cosmetology* is derived from the Greek word *kosmeticos* which means “skilled in the use of cosmetics” (Gerson, Joel 2004). The people of Greece expressed a more simple and natural style when it came to their clothing and make-up. It was rare for clothing to be made of brightly colored fabric and the amount of face paints used on the face was much less than in other cultures. Grecian society directly

affected women and how they used cosmetics. A Greek man did not wish his wife to appear as a seductress, being that he could hire a courtesan for such purposes. Attributes such as being a good housewife and home keeper were more important than beauty in the Greek society. It is believed that Greeks created the first cold cream by mixing bees wax, rose water and olive oil together. This formula was mimicked much later in the creation of Pond's Cold Cream.

Rome

The Romans mimicked many of the customs and traditions of the Egyptian and Greek people. It was common for women to use eye paints made of saffron, wood ash or antimony. Roman women enjoyed facials using ingredients such as milk and fine wine, bread, corn and flour. After facials, powdered chalk and white lead was applied to the face to lighten the skin. Vegetable dyes were used to darken cheeks and lips. A purple pigment called *fucus* was mixed with saliva and used to color women's lips (Brown, Bobbi 2008). Blue paint was used to outline the veins, as they were seen as a sign of beauty. The Romans were also known to use sheep's fat to buff their nails and pumice stones to whiten their teeth. Roman women commonly used hair dyes and bleaches, which often severely damaged the hair. In an effort to avoid baldness or loss of hair, conditioning creams were created. These creams were made of sheep or bear grease, pepper and in extreme cases rat's heads and excrements. The creams usually did not help with the conditioning or recovery of one's hair, so women had to resort to wigs and ornate hairdressings. Roman wigs were not meant to appear realistic, but often were crimped and frizzed with curling irons and adorned with flowers, ribbons and other jewelry. At one time however, the Christian church attempted to do away with the use of wigs being that false, flaxen hair was thought to be a sign of a prostitute. The idea of beauty was so important to Roman women that it was common for wealthy women to have an *ornatrix*, or a skilled handmaiden who was in charge of caring for her mistress' hair and skin.

Roman men and women both devoted many hours of the day toward caring for their skin, hair and bodies. Their attitudes toward hygiene and beauty set an example of civilized elegance that remained unrivalled by any other civilization for centuries.

Asia

In ancient China, one's grooming practices and clothing indicated their status in society. Long, healthy nails were an important part of one's self image. Gum Arabic, egg whites, gelatin and bees wax were all common ingredients in nail lacquer and stains. Japanese geishas used extreme beauty practices to paint their faces and bodies and sculpt and mold their hair into decorative and appealing styles. Boiling wax was used to coat the hair as it was being pulled back into place so that it would not shift throughout the night.

Cosmetology and the Renaissance

In England, the reign of Elizabeth I starting in 1559 and the spirit of the Renaissance changed many of the ideals and beliefs of the Middle Ages. English women were free to adopt new and exciting cosmetics fashions from the continent and cultures around them. For both sexes, a pale face remained a perfect example of simplicity and beauty. White powder made of white lead was used on the face, even though it was extremely dangerous if used daily. White powder was also made from ground alabaster or starch mixed with perfume. After the face was powdered, red ochre was most often applied to the cheeks. A pencil made from ground alabaster or watered down plaster of Paris mixed with color was used to line the lips. After applying make-up to the entire face, a thin glaze of egg white would be applied to preserve the work. After applying the glaze, women of the Elizabethan period were able to venture outdoors without fear of messing up their freshly painted faces.

White hands were also desired, as they were seen essential to perfect beauty. Hands were treated with ointments and lotions made from various ingredients such as milk, hog lard, honey and bees wax mixed with cherries, rose petals and various herbs. Olive oil was a popular and inexpensive ingredient for many cosmetic concoctions. During the Renaissance, a bare brow was thought to give women a look of greater intelligence. For this reason, it was common for women to shave their eyebrows off and even pluck back their hairline. Elizabeth often painted artificial veins upon her brow to draw attention toward her high plucked forehead. Men and women in

the Elizabethan period took great pride in their physical appearance so much so that the sale of mirrors increased dramatically. Hair was always beautifully styled and maintained and elaborate and elegant clothing was popular. It was imperative that one's hair be the right fashionable color and red was very popular because it was Elizabeth's natural color. Golden hair was also very popular and desirable due to the influence of the Italian court. Elizabeth had a large selection of fashionable wigs and was known to have prepared many of her own cosmetics. She was said to have "used the fat of a puppy dog mixed with apples to make hair pomade, a compound of posset curd to free her forehead from wrinkles and an elaborate skin lotion that included egg white, powdered egg shells, alum, borax and white poppy seeds" (*The Artificial Face: A History of Cosmetics*, Gunn, Fenja 1973). At the time of her death in 1603, Queen Elizabeth I was rumored to be wearing an inch and a half of make-up (Brown, Bobbi 2008). Such rituals were common being that many people used make-up to cover horrible scars caused by small pox. For the remainder of the seventeenth century, a doll like look with pale skin and scarlet red cheeks remained very popular. Toward the end of the century, silk taffeta or thin leather patches in the shapes of flowers, stars and moons became the most popular way to conceal the scars left by small pox. The patches were also used to signal whether or not a woman was available to a man. If a woman wore a patch close to the lips it meant that she was available for courtship. If a woman was engaged, she wore a patch upon her left cheek and then switched to her right after marriage. The patches became so important that women brought small patch boxes filled with patches to social events so that they would be able to replace a patch if it were to fall off. It also became very popular to paste a small scene over one's eyebrow, or even wear the profiles of family members upon the face.

18th Century Cosmetics

During the eighteenth century, fashions changed dramatically from the Elizabethan period Marie Antoinette became the queen of France in 1755 and so came the age of extravagance. Wealthy women bathed in strawberries and milk and used a large array of cosmetic preparations (*Milady's Standard: Fundamentals for Estheticians*, Gerson, Joel 2004). Scented face powder became very popular. Pink and orange shades became desirable for lips and cheeks. Silk patches remained very popular ways of embellishing the face. Eyebrows were groomed and maintained. Women often applied a clear gloss to eyelids, and color upon the eyes was no longer in fashion.

Wealthy men and women wore large powdered wigs and very elaborate clothing. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, Marie Antoinette's extravagant ways began to take a toll on the people of France. As people starved in the streets, Marie Antoinette suggested, let them eat cake. Her downfall began shortly thereafter and she was beheaded in 1793.

Beauty Practices of the Victorian Age

The Victorian Age brought many changes to the overall perception of cosmetics and beauty. The French, American and Industrial Revolutions all played a large role in people's attitudes toward make-up. The age of extravagance was over and it was no longer acceptable to spend excessive amounts of money on cosmetics. Make-up and racy clothing were discouraged, except for actors in the theatre. Women began wearing very little face make-up and anything made with a bright colored dye was considered to be vulgar. Cleanliness, personal care and a neat appearance became more important than beauty. It was common for women to use beauty masks to promote healthy skin. Masks were made of ingredients such as honey, eggs, milk, oatmeal, fruit and vegetables. It became common for women to strive to improve the natural condition of their skin rather than temporarily disguise its faults. Unlike the strange and often dangerous concoctions of the eighteenth century, cosmetics of the nineteenth century were produced using natural ingredients. In 1846 Pond's Cold Cream was introduced to the public with great success (Brown, Bobbi 2008). Instead of using cosmetics, women would pinch their cheeks or bite their lips to induce redness. Women would even go as far as to drop belladonna, a plant extract that had been used in ancient times as a poison, into their eyes to dilate their pupils. It was believed that dilated eyes gave women a "dreamy look". Powdered wigs were no longer fashionable after the French Revolution, in fact, heavy taxes on hair powder were enforced to discourage use. Following the Elizabethan period, lye became the main ingredient for shampoo and the juice of nettles was used as a conditioner. It was only considered proper to wear lip salve if one's lips were chapped, not just for vanity. In 1867, the department store, B. Altman and Company, opened a make-up department to the public and focused on training women how to apply rouge, powder and eyebrow pencil in a natural fashion (Brown, Bobbi 2008). In 1886, David Hall McConnell a former door-to-door book salesman founded AVON the

first door-to-door cosmetics line (Bobbi Brown Makeup Manual: For Everyone From Beginner to Pro. Brown, Bobbi 2008). During the final years of Queen Victoria's reign, the new tolerance toward cosmetics gave women a new attitude and ideal toward make-up.

Cosmetics During the 1900's

The popularity of powder and rouge worn by older women persisted; however, un-married girls were expected to rely on their natural beauty to attract gentlemen. Industrialization began influencing people and it became popular to apply rouge generously to tint the skin and contrast a milky, pale complexion. Theatre played a huge role on the influence of everyday make-up practices in the 1900s. Actors and actresses were the only people who knew much about make-up being that it was used exclusively for the stage. Professional beauticians began giving women advice on skin care and beauty products. Women also began to mimic the styles of silent film stars. Bobbed hair, bold lipstick and rouge became acceptable and increasingly popular. Cosmetic manufacturers became very common and often struggled to keep up with the demand for various types of cosmetic preparations.

In 1901, Guerlain introduced the first lip colors to come in stick form (Brown, Bobbi 2008). In 1909, Elizabeth Arden opened a salon that offered various beauty treatments. That same year, Max Factor, a Russian immigrant opened his first make-up studio in Hollywood. In 1910, a French chemist named Eugene Schueller opened the first safe commercial hair dye company and later named it L'Oreal. That same year, the first pressed compact powders were introduced. In 1914, T.I. Williams formulated the first mascara after watching his sister Maybel apply petroleum jelly to her lashes (Brown, Bobbi 2008). The mascara became so popular, he later opened a company to manufacture the product and named it Maybelline. The opening of cosmetic chain stores in the early part of the 1900's made inexpensive make-up available to everyone and women began using it more and more. The flappers of the 1920's had a huge impact on women. It became chic to display tan skin, heavy eyeliner and extremely thin eyebrows.

The media continued to influence American women well into the 1930's. Women could receive information related to fashion by radio, newspapers, magazines and films.

Greta Garbo was a huge star in the 30's and started the trend of platinum blond hair matched with brightly colored lips and cheeks. Men also focused on their appearance and a sleek, clean cut hairstyle and well-groomed mustache became popular. In 1932, Revlon launched its first commercial nail enamel and women everywhere began painting their nails (Brown, Bobbi 2008).

Post World War II

WWII brought many changes to the world of cosmetics. Petroleum and alcohol were commonly used ingredients in the production of cosmetics. During the war however, petroleum and alcohol were used primarily for war supplies. With large numbers of men in the military, a clean shaven face, closely cropped and maintained hair and a neatly pressed uniform became a standard for men all over the world. Women continued to mimic the stars they saw in motion pictures on the big screen. Natural, softly curved eyebrows, subtle eye shadow and mascara were fashionable. It was fashionable to line the lips with color and natural colors were the most popular at the time. Some women strived to duplicate Joan Crawford and her bold penciled in, arched eyebrows. Her look was thought to be the ideal look of a business woman (Brown, Bobbi 2008).

Although the war affected the economy and many Americans financially, sales of cosmetics and grooming tools continued to grow. In 1943, Estee Lauder launched her first company with a line of only six products (Brown, Bobbi 2008).

After WWII interest in fashion, cosmetology and hairstyling continued to grow. European designers became very popular in America and influenced everyday clothing and hairstyles. In 1952, Revlon launched a new variety of lipstick colors. Fire and Ice: a bold red color became an instant success with American women. The market for foundations, face cleansers, creams, lotions, moisturizers and lip, cheek and eye colors was bigger than ever before. Women could purchase cosmetics anywhere from Woolworths to Orlane, Dior, or Lancôme. Women

learned how to use darker foundations and bases to resemble a more tanned and warm complexion during the winter season. Marilyn Monroe brought back the trend of having fuller eyebrows and voluptuous lips. Her platinum blond hair and sexy ringlets became a look that women all over the world strived to achieve.

In the 1960's Audrey Hepburn was the big star that influenced women and their fashion choices. Heavy eyeliner, bold eye-make-up and stiff, maintained hairstyles were all popular. Toward the end of the century, facial contouring with cosmetics became popular. Once again, thin eyebrows came back into fashion. Cosmetic surgery also began to become more popular. In 1967, a supermodel named Twiggy popularized a bold eye look by drawing lashes around the eye and applying several sets of false eyelashes to her eyes.

In the 1970's natural make-up was a huge trend. The model, Jean Shrimpton, was a classic example of natural beauty. The trend became more to enhance one's natural beauty, rather than trying to emulate someone else. Men and women alike became interested in scientific skin care. In 1970, the Color Additive Amendment passed a regulation that made it illegal for cosmetic manufacturers to use ingredients in their cosmetics that had not been tested by the FDA. Salons all over America began full service salons and offered a variety of different treatments to their clients. In 1974, Lauren Hutton became the first model to sign a contract with a cosmetics company. Revlon paid her \$100,000 to appear in their advertisements.

During the 1980's women's awareness of nutrition and its effects on their bodies and skin began to grow. Women really considered what they were putting on their faces and used creams that aided in conditioning and preserving the skin. The age of the baby boomers saw many products that visibly improved women's skin. This directly led to increased sales in those products as well as cosmetics to apply to healthy skin. Makeup trends focused on looks that were bold and exaggerated. Women felt free to express themselves through make-up and natural simple looks were no longer desirable. Bold, bright hues were popular eye-shadow colors. Blue and fuchsia were acceptable and very common. During this time Mary Kay began producing eye shadows that came in palettes so that women would no longer have to guess when it came to picking out a color scheme.

Cosmeceuticals are known as cosmetics with therapeutic properties. During the 1990's cosmeceuticals became increasingly popular (Gerson, Joel 2004). Not only were they safe to apply to the skin they actually improved the skin's appearance and overall health. Anti-aging products were available to women, as well as products that promoted health from the inside out, with the use of vitamins and supplements. Skin procedures such as micro-dermabrasion and epidermal skin leveling were commonly practiced to clean and refresh the skin. Natural make-up choices became popular again during the 90's. Models such as Cindy Crawford, Christy Turlington and Naomi Campbell influenced women and their choices when it came to clothing and make-up. In 1995, Vincent Longo created his own line of bold fun cosmetics primarily because he was frustrated by the lack of vibrant color choices. Fake tans became extremely popular throughout the 90's. Tanning beds, sun bathing and tanning products were soon added to the beauty regimen.

In the twenty first century, consumers have access to many different brands and types of make-up. Women as well as men are free to express themselves with cosmetics. Cosmetics retailers such as MAC Cosmetics hire male make-up artists regularly and prefer that they come to work daily with a full face of makeup. Vibrant colors and patterns can be worn on the face without negative reactions from other people. Today, mascara's have even been created to enhance the natural color of one's eye. Colorless foundation is available to consumers that reacts and creates a perfect match with any skin tone once it is applied to the face. Cosmetic procedures such as Botox and Juvederm are popular ways of decreasing the appearance of wrinkles and fine lines on the face. Women can have extensions glued or woven into their hair and even eyelashes if they desire more length. Hair can now be permanently removed with the use of lasers. Plastic surgery has become so common that people have claimed to be addicted to the surgical procedures. It is anyone's decision if they would like to make changes to their body. The possibilities are endless.

THE BEGINNINGS OF AN INDUSTRY

Guerlain was one of the first fragrance manufacturing companies in history. It was established in 1828 and now operates 23 boutiques throughout the world that offer some of the world's most unique and popular fragrances.

In 1995, company reports showed revenue of \$390 million (<http://www.guerlain.fr>).

Coty, Inc. is yet another popular fragrance manufacturer. The company produces cosmetics and other health and beauty aids. Company reports from 1999 showed revenue at \$1.78 billion. At that time, Coty, Inc. employed roughly 8,000 people.

Mary Kay was known as one of the first companies to sell make-up door-to-door as well as one of the largest make-up companies in the United States. Mary Kay specialized in manufacturing more than 200 products including: skin creams, fragrances, cosmetics, dietary supplements and other personal care items. The company was founded in 1963 by Mary Kay Ash. Company reports from 2005 showed revenue at \$2.2 billion and current employees at 3,600.

Elizabeth Arden, Inc. was made popular by the skin creams and various cosmetics it made available in the early 1900's. It is now considered one of the world's leading makers of perfumes and cosmetics. Incorporated in 1911, the company showed sales at \$380.3 million in 2001. At that time, the company employed 1,300 employees.

L'Oreal was established in 1939. Today it one of France's largest companies. L'Oreal manufactures high quality perfumes, cosmetics and skin/ hair products. Its brands are used throughout 150 countries. They include: Lancôme, Maybelline, Garnier, Redken and Matrix. Company reports from 2000 showed revenue at \$11.9 billion with 48,222 employees.

Today, Revlon Inc. is one of the leading cosmetics companies in the United States. It was originally formed as a nail polish manufacturing company in 1932. Today Revlon produces hair, nail and facial products. Company reports from 1995 showed company sales at \$1.94 billion, with 7,000 employees.

These companies offer anything from everyday cosmetics, to soaps and shampoos. Cosmetic application tools are often found in many of these companies. It is not uncommon for the company stores to offer lessons on how to apply and use the make-up that is going to work best for the consumer. What began as people creating their own mixtures and potions in their homes has become the ability for any person in the world to buy any product at virtually any time they wish to do so.

The Internet has opened a new door for manufacturers and consumers alike. Many companies take advantage of the opportunity to sell products online, often with fast and free shipping. Statistics from 2008 showed the key competitors in the cosmetics industry to be: Intimate Brands Inc, Ultra Salon, Cosmetics and Fragrance Inc, The Estee Lauder Companies Inc, L'Oreal SA and E.Com Ventures, Inc. It was estimated that in 2008, the industry earned around \$10,950,000. A US Census Bureau report from 2002 showed that there were roughly 9,014 cosmetics retailers or salons in the United States at the time of the census. California alone accounted for 1,117 of these establishments. In 2002, Business Rankings Annual ranked the top soap and cosmetics companies in the Fortune 1,000. Their findings were based on revenue in millions of dollars and were recorded as follows:

- Proctor and Gamble Co (\$39,951)
- Colgate-Palmolive Co (\$5,715)
- The Estee Lauder Companies, Inc (\$4,376)
- The Clorox Co (\$4,083)
- Alberto-Culver Co (\$2,247)
- The Dial Co (\$1,639)
- Revlon, Inc (\$1,492)
- International Flavours and Fragrances, Inc. (\$1,463)

The same report showed that the top types of cosmetics sold in superstores in 1999 were:

- Lipstick (\$95.3)
- Mascara (\$76.9)

- Nail polish (\$53.7)
- Liquid Foundation (\$49.5)
- Eye Brow and Eye Liner (\$40.9)
- Face Powder (\$36.5)
- Eye Shadow (\$25.9)
- Cream Foundation (\$24.9)
- Nail Polish Remover (20.4)
- Blush (\$17.5)

COSMETIC PROCEDURES

The Rise of Botox

Botox has come to be known as the number one non-surgical cosmetic procedure in the US today. Botox is extremely easy to access with providers such as dermatologists, plastic surgeons, cosmetic physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses and physician assistants. It is common for consumers interested in Botox to attend a consultation with a certified doctor or nurse, in which they will be given an estimate of the amount of Botox they will need. After consulting with doctors, many patients move directly toward the Botox procedure. During the procedure, tiny amounts of Botulinum A are injected directly into the muscle that lies below any given wrinkle that the consumer may wish to erase. The Botulinum A injections temporarily relax the muscle, allowing the wrinkle to fade. After the procedure, consumers can expect smoother looking skin.

In some cases, Botox can even be injected underneath the arm to treat excessive sweating. Botox results usually last for 3-4 months; however after 12 continuous months of treatment, patients often see results that last even longer due to muscle atrophy and loss of the “habit of facial expression”. Botox can be used anywhere on the face and is capable of decreasing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. However, deeper wrinkles often seen on the sides of the mouth that are caused by sun damage and smoking are more difficult to treat.

Dermal Fillers

Dermal Fillers are used to temporarily soften the appearance of deep wrinkles and lines. They can also help in the treatment of small acne and traumatic scars and can even be used to temporarily give patients fuller lips. Consumers today have access to a variety of many different dermal fillers. Popular brands include: Evolence (a collagen-based dermal filler), Radiesse (a calcium-based dermal filler), Sculptra (a synthetic poly-lactic acid), or Juvederm, Perlane or Restylane (all Hyaluronic acid-based). Small injections of dermal filler’s attract and bind water within lines and wrinkles, adding volume to the skin. This softens the lines and wrinkles which causes the skin to look firmer and smoother. After injecting the dermal fillers, it is common for doctor’s to “mold” the gels into the face, or lips until the desired appearance is achieved. Occasional swelling and bruising can occur, however patients do not experience downtime that will take them away from work or common daily activities. Dermal fillers last anywhere between 4-24 months, giving many consumers the younger appearance they desire.

Epidermal Leveling

Another popular choice when it comes to the appearance of softer, firmer looking skin is epidermal leveling. In epidermal leveling treatments, estheticians actually use a surgical blade called the “Epi-Blade” to shave or scrape off the upper layers of damaged skin. The procedure not only removes the top layers of damaged skin, but also aids in the removal of fine hair called “peach fuzz”. During a standard epidermal leveling treatment, a certified esthetician performs facial cleansing and exfoliating prior to the actual treatment. Next, the “Epi Blade” is applied to the skin in a low pressure sweeping manner. After the procedure, consumers are said to have increased absorption of skin products and increased firmness and elasticity of the skin. The treatment is also said to minimize fine lines and wrinkles and correct sun damage and mild acne. To maintain optimal results, epidermal leveling treatments are suggested on a monthly basis and can cost anywhere between \$80 to \$160.

The Fish Pedicure

Another controversial beauty practice is known as the “fish pedicure”. During this pedicure, consumers dip their feet into tanks filled with tiny flesh eating carp in an effort to remove dead skin and calluses.

The fish became a popular alternative to the use of razors to remove dead skin during pedicure treatments. State regulators have raised questions in the use of razors and whether or not they are sanitary, which began creating problems for many salons. The tiny fish that many salons now use instead are actually called Garra Rufa and are often referred to as “doctor fish”. The fish were first introduced in Turkey, but have become extremely popular in many Asian countries. In the states, many salons have experimented with the use of fish in the removal of dead skin cells. The pedicure costs around \$35 for 15 minutes and \$50 for 30 minutes. Consumers begin by placing their feet in the tanks filled with doctor fish. After 15-30 minutes, consumers remove their feet from the water, then receive a standard pedicure, which is often made easier by the new, soft skin the doctor fish have left behind. Although, the procedure is experiencing increased popularity, many still question how sanitary it really is. Communal pools are often used to serve up to eight people at a time. The pools are often seen as unsanitary because small amounts of skin are released during the process. So far, state regulators have made no provisions for the use of fish pedicures. But many county health departments do regulate the pools in an effort to avoid infections.

CONCLUSION

This case offers an excellent vehicle for illustrating the influence that culture has on the individual. Through the years, both men and women have strived to become more attractive. However, the definition of what is attractive is dependent upon where one lives and when one lives. The influence culture and society exercise over the individual, in some cases, are accepted without question or hesitation. When society changes, so does the perception of beauty. That which was considered beautiful one day, may be scoffed at the next. What will be the definition of beauty one hundred years from now? A thousand years from now?

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His research efforts over the past 25 years were instrumental in developing the concepts of value creation in the marketplace. His pioneering findings have been applied in all the courses he teaches. His current work entails tying together his work in customer value and creativity and innovation with product design and development into the concept of building sustainable systems for value creation. He is the author of two books: *Managing Customer Value: Essentials of Product Quality, Customer Service, and Price Decisions and Innovation, Design and Development: Managing Effective Value Creation*. His interest in these topics and in Ireland has forged a strong teaching and research relationship with Dublin City University. An added plus is the highly demanded biannual Irish Nation field trip to Ireland to explore the changing Irish economy and culture.

His research has been published in the *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *Journal of Marketing - Theory and Practice*, *Advances in Business Studies: An Irish Review*, *Review of Business*, *Journal of Business Case Studies*, *Marketing Bulletin* and *Mid-American Journal of Business*, as well as numerous national proceedings.

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TEACHING NOTES

This case provides an excellent vehicle for the discussion of how culture and society influence consumer behavior. For centuries, both men and women have tried to become more attractive based upon how society defines attractiveness at that time. Some interesting points of discussion might be: 1) How and why do cultural views of attractiveness change? 2) Does the cosmetic industry reflect or cause these changes? And 3) What will be considered attractive when their children are in college?

In addition, this case offers the opportunity to discuss product life cycles. As social definitions of beauty change, old products become obsolete and new products must be developed. Students can easily be engaged in conversations about what is trendy today as opposed to only a few years ago. In addition, an interesting discussion can be developed by attempting to predict what will be in vogue next year and beyond.

Another possibility offered by this case is a discussion about perceptions and information processing. How does a consumer view a new cosmetic trend as positive, when the same individual may have perceived that trend as grotesque a year earlier?

Finally, students can engage in a discussion regarding for whom the consumer applies cosmetics. Does the consumer attempt to look more attractive for their own ego or does the consumer use cosmetics to appear more attractive to others, or both?