

Sociology 105-001

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Why Men Don't Wear Makeup

"Hold on one minute, let me put my makeup on before we leave!" Immediately, the image of the person that comes to mind while reading the previous sentence was that of a female, correct? Why is it that people cannot picture men putting on makeup or why is it that people rarely see it happen? There are many different parts to examine when looking at this specific question. Say that a couple are going to dinner. The woman gets ready and puts on her makeup while the man does not put on any makeup, but why is that the case? What role does society play, what role does the man himself play, and what role do women play when analyzing this scenario? Makeup is a gigantic industry in the global market. The total global sales of the beauty industry were worth 483 billion dollars in the year of 2020, with cosmetics making up almost fifteen percent of that number, and it is expected for the global beauty industry to surpass the worth of 700 billion dollars in 2025. So, if the makeup industry is such a powerhouse in the global society, then why, again, is it so uncommon to see men wear makeup? Concepts known as "The Beauty Myth," "Doing Gender," "Hegemonic Masculinity," and the

to why men do not usually wear makeup.

The Beauty Myth, the role that women play when looking at the current situation, is the idea that women are manipulated by men with the idea of what being beautiful is. Men have used the Beauty Myth as a weapon against feminism by not only making women compete with each other, but also by making them go against themselves. They constantly feel the need to change themselves to fit the image of what men think women should look like. The idea of beauty has transformed a lot overtime and across many different cultures, but one thing that has been an almost constant component of the idea of beauty is makeup. Makeup has been used since the times of the ancient Egyptians. Men make women believe that they shouldn't have any marks, blemishes, and acne on their faces. If they do, they are seen as not beautiful. So, women put on makeup not only to hide any of these appearances on their face, but also to make themselves look younger, which is also something that men believe is associated with being beautiful. It can be deduced that one of the reasons men are not commonly seen putting on makeup is because they are not the target of the beauty myth. Men use the beauty myth to stay in power, so they cannot be the target of their own societal manipulation.

Another factor that contributes to why men are not commonly known to wear makeup is a concept known as Hegemonic Masculinity, a role that society plays in the current situation. Hegemonic Masculinity is the ideal image of a man or the most socially dominant idea of a man: how he should act, how he should look, how he should sound, etc. The purpose that makeup serves is the opposite of the image of a man that

the image of a man who is rugged and tough looking. Makeup makes one look clean and neat. The ideal image of a man also is known to be more mature and wiser, and makeup is known to make someone look younger, so it would also go against the concept of Hegemonic Masculinity. The question could be asked, "Why does it matter if someone meets the standards of this form of masculinity and not the others?" Well, hegemonic masculinity has been known to create strong bonds between men and a sense of community. Some men may have to adopt this form of masculinity to "survive" in their society. Going against hegemonic masculinity is the same as going against the collective consciousness, which can have a negative effect on some people.

The biggest factor that influences the reason that men don't usually wear makeup is the concept known as Doing Gender, the role the man himself plays in the current situation. Doing gender is when someone who identifies as a certain gender will fulfill the requirements society sets for that gender. For instance, say that a man and a woman hit a pothole and are now on the side of the road with a very flat tire. If the man does identify as a male, then he will attempt to conform to and fulfill what society requires of him to be a man. So, usually, he will fix the tire in order to conform to those set standards. How does this concept apply to the current situation? Well, makeup is a tool women use in order to fulfill the requirements society has set for femininity. Society wants women to be elegant, young, soft, and fragile, and in order to continue looking this way, women use makeup. Therefore, if someone who identifies as a man were to use makeup, they would be fulfilling the societal requirements for the gender they do not

meet the ideas of the previous concept, Hegemonic Masculinity.

The final concept that influences why men do not commonly wear makeup is the idea of the collective consciousness, the other role that society plays in the current situation. This concept, provided by David Emile Durkheim, is the idea that individuals join or create groups that represent their values, beliefs, and ways, and those groups represent those ideas and provide a place for those individuals to belong. Society itself is a collective consciousness, which is why it affects the current situation. Society's, or the collective consciousness', idea of masculinity and what a man should be like is shown through the concept of Hegemonic Masculinity. So, a man putting on makeup goes against the collective consciousness, and therefore, putting on makeup also goes against their own beliefs. Not only does it go against their own beliefs, but it also goes against the beliefs of their peers. Many people will not go against the beliefs of their peers because they want to belong or fit in, so that is another reason for the idea of the collective consciousness is an influence on why men do not commonly wear makeup. Another way that the collective consciousness can influence why men do not usually wear makeup has to do with the companies that produce makeup as well. Because of the collective consciousness' idea of masculinity, makeup brands and companies do not market towards men. When is the last time a makeup commercial aired on television that had men modeling the makeup? Men don't wear makeup because the collective consciousness is against the idea of it.

The idea of men wearing makeup is not common in society for many reasons. The Beauty Myth enforces the use of makeup by women, but it is also a tool used

themselves. The concept of Hegemonic Masculinity is another contributor to this situation. Men are seen by society as rugged, tough, and mature, which is the opposite image of what makeup creates. The concept of doing gender makes it so that men cannot use makeup because they would not be fulfilling the role of the gender they identify as. Lastly, the collective consciousness creates a need to belong and therefore creates a dilemma where one must either choose to go against the beliefs of the group, such as putting on makeup, or they must conform to the group's beliefs. The collective consciousness also causes the makeup industry to market heavily towards women, which makes it difficult for men to be comfortable with using makeup because they only see women wearing it. So, if men wish to fulfill the requirements society sets for their gender, fit in with their groups, be the ideal man that society wants, and not be the target of a manipulative tool they themselves created, then they will probably choose to not put on makeup, which is why it is not a common occurrence in society.

Citations:

Sickler, John. *Beauty Industry: Cosmetics Market Share, Trends, and Statistics*. Terakeet. July 15, 2021. Accessed October 18, 2021.

<https://terakeet.com/blog/beauty-industry/>