

A Comparative Study on Beauty Consciousness of Japanese and French University Students

Kumiko Ishimaru

Osaka University, Postgraduate, Faculty of Language Sciences, Nantes University

The aim of this study is to analyze the difference between French and Japanese university students regarding beauty consciousness.

A survey on makeup, skincare practices, and beauty consciousness was conducted in France in January 2007, and again in Japan from June to July 2007.

The subject group consisted of 126 French (18-22 years old, Average: 19.3 years old) and 123 Japanese (18-24 years old, Average: 19.1 years old) female university students.

Quite unexpectedly, some common denominators were found for the two countries: The most important makeup item for them is mascara. Other kinds of eye makeup are also important for both. French and Japanese students admire many of the same cosmetics brands, and their expenditure on cosmetics is approximately the same.

However, there were also differences between answers of two countries. 70% of French students like getting a tan and 90% of Japanese students dislike it. The cosmetics they use the most on a daily basis are perfume for French students and mascara for Japanese students. Among skincare products, moisturizing products (lip balm, cream) are important for French students, but cleansing products are more important for Japanese students. The French students' predominant criteria for cosmetic selection are quality and effect, and for Japanese are ease-of-use and packaging or colour. Concerning advertising copy aimed at a certain country's women (e.g., "This product is made for Japanese women"), most French students were unfavorable toward it (e.g., "strange", "ridiculous", "discriminatory", "unpleasant"), and the majority of Japanese students were positive about it (e.g., "good", "safe", "happy").