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Beauty across cultures: Comparing makeup styles, colors, and perceptions between Emirati and Chinese women

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ABSTRACT

Culture, traditions, and social expectations play an important role in determining beauty and makeup standards. Thus, the purpose of this research project is to examine and compare the difference between Emirati and Chinese women in terms of makeup styles, colour preferences, and beauty perceptions. Data were collected by means of online survey questionnaires sent to Emirati and Chinese women living in the UAE, followed by the demonstration of proper makeup made by a professional makeup artist. In total, 48 people took part in this study. Data were statistically analyzed using SPSS software; descriptive statistics were used for quantitative data, whereas thematic analysis was performed for qualitative information. As a result of this research, cultural discrepancies between Emirati and Chinese women in terms of makeup preferences were identified. Namely, it was discovered that Emirati women like more bold and luxurious makeup, which implies extensive contouring, exaggerated eye makeup and dark lipstick colours. In its turn, Chinese women tend to prefer more natural and gentle makeup including soft colours, slight contouring and light lipsticks. Besides, the analysis showed that culture significantly influences choices related to makeup both among Emiratis and Chinese. Specifically, it was found that beauty standards and makeup styles are mainly affected by Instagram, TikTok, Xiaohongshu and YouTube. As a result of thematic analysis, it could be said that such concepts as confidence, cultural identity, self-expression, elegance, natural beauty and happiness were strongly associated with beauty. From this study, it became clear that there is no one universal beauty standard. Instead, beauty standards are socially constructed and culturally specific. Although globalization leads to the spread of beauty trends across the world, each culture preserves its unique perception of beauty. However, there is a limitation of the study: a small number of participants and limited geographical location. Future research may address this problem by analysing larger samples and other cultural groups.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The study of the previous cultures shows the base of our current state of the society. “The culture of the past is not only the memory of mankind but also our buried life, and study of it leads to a recognition scene, a discovery in which we see, not our past lives, but the total cultural form of our present life” (Frye, 1973, p. 346). Studying past cultures clarifies the foundations of our ideas and institutions, emphasising the impact of history on modern life and society. It also offers significant insight into the elements influencing our present and future.

Beauty and makeup techniques are deeply rooted in cultural, social, and economic contexts. Different cultures may have very different ideas about what is attractive, fashionable, and appropriate to wear on the face. Makeup is used to show off and highlight unique features. It has many uses, but its main one is to highlight or change a person's features. You can change the shape of your face completely by where you put your blush or contour. There are, however, makeup styles that will help show off your features (“Between the East and West: Makeup Trends Across Cultures”,2014).

For example, the beauty industry of the United Arab Emirates is growing very fast. This includes tradition, luxury, behaviour of customers and changing generational values affects the makeup preferences of women. China makes strong beauty trends which is strongly connected to the beauty standards, social media and the local cosmetic industry. Culture and traditions also play an important role in the use of makeup. Emirati women have used kohl for many years as a part of their beauty traditions "A peek at a centuries-old Emirati ritual," 2021). These practices show the modesty, beauty and cultural identity. Gulf beauty styles generally focus on highlighting facial features like cheekbones and jawlines.

Statement of Problem

Chinese and Emirati women use and apply cosmetics in different ways, revealing personal aesthetics as well as profound cultural, societal, and physical differences. Despite both nations being situated in Asia, their historical and cultural traditions and beauty ideals exhibit significant differences. Previous studies have investigated the way in which Emirati women express their identity through cosmetics, especially with Western beauty brands (EuroMed Press, 2012, p. 370). Various studies have analysed Eastern and Western makeup trends (“Between the East and West: Makeup Trends Across Cultures”, 2014) or examined the evolution of Chinese aesthetic principles in connection with overarching Eastern and Western beauty standards (Wu, 2023).Nevertheless, there is a lack of research that specifically compares Emirati and Chinese women, particularly regarding the impact of traditional cultural values, colour symbolism, facial features, and regional community influences on their cosmetics preferences. This establishes a clear gap in the literature: although both cultures have been analysed separately, there is a lack of research that investigates the similarities and differences between them, although they are both experiencing exposure to global beauty media and engagement through international markets. Comprehending this gap is significant, as it offers new perspectives on the evolution of beauty practices among various Asian cultures, supports culturally aware beauty education, and guides the beauty industry to create products that honour cultural identity and unique aesthetic requirements.

Objectives of the study

The study aims to examine and distinguish the makeup styles, colour preferences, and beauty perceptions of Emirati and Chinese women while investigating the impacts of cultural and traditional values on their beauty practices. It examines how cultural expectations, concepts of modesty, femininity, and the symbolic significance of colours affect makeup choices in both cultures. The study examines how regional factors impact daily makeup routines and occasion appearances, emphasising the role of local surroundings in shaping unique beauty styles.

Furthermore, the study intends to investigate the influence of face features on application techniques and colour selection among Emirati and Chinese women by examining common traits, including skin undertones, eye shapes, and facial structures. It seeks to comprehend how global beauty influences, such as social media trends, combine with local values to determine changing beauty preferences.

Research questions

1. How do regional trends and local community influences shape makeup styles, colour preferences, and beauty perceptions among Emirati and Chinese women, and why do these trends differ despite shared exposure to global beauty media?2. What impact do social norms and traditional cultural values have on the makeup looks based on Chinese and Emirati women? 3. In what ways do the facial characteristics of selected Emirati and Chinese women affect their colour preferences and application techniques?

Significance of the Study

This study examines the beauty perceptions among Chinese and Emirati women within their distinct cultural

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contexts, rather than regarding global standards. Cultural norms and societal expectations heavily influence people's opinions towards and use of makeup. This report underscores the significance of local values (De Mode Global, 2024). People from different cultures have different beliefs about what is beautiful, and these ideas might influence how they see themselves and other people (Jurnal Sains Sosial, 2018; CosmeticsBet, 2023). People that work in the beauty industry, like makeup artists, fashionistas, anthropologists, and sociologists, could find this study useful. This resource will assist them in creating products that look appealing on individuals with various skin tones, face shapes, and cultural preferences. The study shows that women wear makeup to feel positive about themselves and show who they are. It talks about self-esteem and self-expression, but it also talks about how important it is to have a range of cultures and how different countries have different opinions about what is beautiful (De Mode Global, 2024; CosmeticsBet, 2023).

Structure of the Study

Chapter one provides a description of the study. It starts with the introduction and statement of the problem, which highlights the areas with limited research. It also outlines the aim of the research, which is to compare makeup styles, colors, and perceptions between Emirati and Chinese women. It also highlights questions driven by curiosity about this topic, and ultimately the significance of the study. This chapter concludes with an overview of the study's structure.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Distinct cultures have different perceptions of beauty standards. That is shaped by the culture, tradition, society, customs, religion, and the impact of social media in that region. Makeup is an important aspect of beauty cosmetics, which is a medium for women to express themselves, confirm their identity and display their social status. In different cultures, makeup is also an important tool for women to realize their self-expression, identity formation and social presentation (Jones & Kramer, 2016). It enables them to express their features, enhance their comfort, and reveal their ideas to meet specific beauty standards. The literature review is presented in relation to the title of the study. The following main themes are examined: cultural beauty ideals and cosmetics use, colour symbolism, stigmatisation of beauticians and beauty work, and mass media and globalisation. This chapter analyses relevant studies regarding the beauty standards for each culture, makeup styles and applications, the influence of colour symbolism on makeup styles, and the perception of makeup and its social significance, particularly among Emirati and Chinese women. This review is organized topically to compare (a) beauty ideals, (b) application practices, and (c) colour symbolism across Emirati and Chinese contexts.

2.2 Cultural Beauty Ideals

The cultural and regional factors often shape beauty standards. In many Asia cultures, smooth skin and hair are delicate features that are often emphasized: however, in African cultures, bold features and natural hair are mainly emphasized. Experts claim that beauty is shaped by the diversity of cultures and the values of society (Swami, 2015). Different standards for beauty exist across the globe because one single universal rule does not define what people find attractive. The diversity between cultures encourages us to appreciate different traditions and reduce the dominance of one cultural beauty standards over others ("Women's Journal", 2025).

2.2.1 Emirati Beauty Ideals

Emirati women facial features include hazel eyes, long pointed nose, sharp chin, full lip, wide forehead, and a tan skin tone (Mary Robertson, 2023). Traditional beliefs of beauty standards like large eyes with kohl and radiant skin. However, the influence of global trends and social media is changing the Emirati beauty standards. Historical accounts show that Emirati women were highly conscious of their appearance. Modesty practices, including veiling, draw attention to the most visible feature: the eyes (POA PRO, 2025).

In the UAE, the burqa is a decorative, rigid cloth mask that covers the nose, eyebrows, and occasionally the mouth, while leaving the eyes uncovered ("Khaleej Times", 2025). Eyes are regarded as the most important feature of Arabian beauty standards, referred to as "windows to the soul". The lasting use of kohl in Arabian culture arises from cosmetic enhancement, health advantages, and protected beliefs. Kohl is not just considered makeup; it is a cultural artefact that has layers of meaning.

In Emirati culture, the ideal hair for a woman was to be black, long, thick, and shiny. Henna was used to colour the hair and strengthen it. Emirati women usually follow cultural practices to cover their hair with a hijab (headscarf). Although women cover their hair in public for religious reasons, they still take good care of it. Arabian beauty traditions hold radiant, healthy, and well-maintained skin in high regard. Even though global influences are changing how people think, comments

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from modern times show that some people still prefer tan skin. (POAPRO, 2025).

Women wear makeup as a form of self-expression and artistic influence. The Women in the UAE choose to express themselves through makeup rather than hair styling or clothing (Lizzie Sexton, 2023). Women in the UAE prefer dark, glamorous looks, including dark eyeliner (kohl), long lashes, contouring, and rich lip colours.

2.2.2 Chinese Beauty Ideals

Ancient China firmly established aesthetic principles in traditional and cultural contexts. Pale skin, small lips and mouth, a delicate jawline, and almond-shaped eyes with long lashes were all considered desirable features throughout several dynasties. Chinese beauty standards today are still influenced by these old notations. The Tang dynasty introduced the use of white face powder as a symbol of wealth and status. Since then, light skin has been a permanent preference in modern days (Verot, 2025).

In China, fair skin has always represented beauty. Within the nation of China, a strong desire for fair skin is observed among the inhabitants (Li et al., 2018). Because individuals want to keep their skin light, sun avoidance behaviours are practiced frequently. Umbrellas and protective clothing are used by people for the purpose of shielding themselves from the sun while they are outside. Tanning is not a prevailing trend in China; rather, lighter skin is considered more desirable (Tania Yeromiyan, 2024).

The V-shaped face with a pointed chin can be traced to ancient China, where it was regarded as delicate and feminine; this style remains highly sought after by women today. A significant aspect of the Chinese beauty standard is possessing large, wide eyes. They signify purity, youth, and transparency, alongside an adherence to traditional principles. The rising popularity of K-beauty and Japanese beauty methodologies has transformed the use of products such as double eyelid tape and face masks among individuals in China. Korean dramas and pop music have popularised the concept of "glass skin"—a clear, radiant, and flawless complexion in China's skincare industry (Verot, 2025).

Long, black, and glossy hair has always represented beauty and femininity. Traditional hairstyles were frequently intricate and denoted social standing, emphasising the significance attributed to hair as an indicator of beauty and health (Magixo, 2025).

Chinese beauty trends focus on taking care of your skin and getting a healthy, glowing complexion. Chinese beauty trends usually go for a lighter foundation to get a more natural and flawless look. To look young and delicate, Chinese beauty trends often use soft and pastel colour schemes. Chinese makeup trends often focus on enhancing characteristics in a subtle and natural way (Yang, 2024).

2.3 Makeup Styles and Application Practices

“Makeup practices vary widely across cultural contexts, and the ways women apply cosmetics reflect deeper values related to identity, femininity, modesty, and social presentation” (De Mode Global, 2024). Emirati and Chinese women view makeup as a significant cultural activity; however, the styles, colours, and procedures employed by each ethnicity vary.

2.3.1 Emirati Makeup Styles

The dramatic and appealing makeup style distinguishes Emirati beauty globally. In the UAE, makeup transcends simple enhancement of features; it embodies confidence, style, and cultural pride. It draws inspiration from both heritage and modern designs (Susanna, 2025).

Traditional Emirati beauty standards are gaining popularity as women from all over the world want to emulate the glowing skin and distinctive eye makeup that are characteristics of the Emirati style. People believe that having clear, dewy skin is a sign of wellbeing and excellent health. Although flawless skin is the foundation of Emirati cosmetics, the eyes have always been the focal point (Beauty of Emirati Makeup, 2025).

In the UAE, bold and creative makeup styles are nothing new. This year, bold lips are at the top of the list. Deep reds to bright corals are some of the bright colours that are making a statement. These colours not only make your features look better, but they also indicate that you are fashionable and confident (Kaebykendrah, 2025).

Emirati women like to do their eyes in bright colours and with detailed patterns. Using metallic eyeshadows and bold eyeliners are just some of the ways to show off your creativity with eye makeup (Kaebykendrah, 2025). The dramatic eye is what makes this look stand out the most. It was made with Arabic makeup techniques, like thick, tight lining with kohl, which was initially utilised to protect the eyes in the desert. (Beauty of Emirati Makeup, 2025). Women look attractive with defined contours and smoky eyes. The Gulf beauty style emphasises pretty eyes, which is made up of thick eyeliner and long lashes (“Gloss, Gold, & Ghutra”, 2025).

This year, full, natural brows are in style. Instead of over-plucking or shaping your eyebrows excessively, the aim is to improve their natural shape (Kaebykendrah, 2025).

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Emirati women prefer a full, arched brow to frame their show-stopping eyes. This style has been popular all over the world (Beauty of Emirati Makeup, 2025).

Emirati beauty procedures include contouring methods that make the cheekbones and jawlines stand out. Beauty companies all around the world have made products that fit this style due to the sculpted look (Gloss, Gold, Ghutra, 2025).

A well-defined lip in a rich, warm colour ties the look together. (Beauty of Emirati Makeup, 2025). When picking a lip shade, think about your skin colour. People with fair complexions look good in berry or mauve colours. People with medium skin tones can wear everything from classic red to warm orange. Rich plums and wine colours look wonderful on people with darker skin tones (Kaebykendrah, 2025).

2.3.2 Chinese Makeup Styles

Since ancient times, women in China believed that cosmetics were extremely essential. They aspired to enhance their appearance and believed that applying makeup was a daily necessity. They favoured a pale complexion, applied eyeliner around their eyes, and wore red lipstick. In China, women began to embrace a natural, effortless, and elegant appearance (Cosmetics in China, 2022).

Chinese makeup trends focus on looking delicate, natural, and young. Chinese beauty trends usually avoid using heavy contouring, bright colours, or striking eye looks like Emirati makeup does. Instead, the purpose is to look intriguing, delicate, and effortlessly beautiful (Yang, 2024).

Over the years, Chinese makeup has evolved to meet modern beauty standards while keeping its cultural history. From the natural beauty of ancient dynasties to the latest trends on Douyin, Chinese makeup significantly evolved over time. ("How to Do Chinese Makeup", 2025). Douyin makeup is a popular Chinese makeup style that is becoming more popular around the world. It usually includes sparkling eyeshadow, a bright pink blush, and a smudged lip colour (Sara Li, 2023).

Traditional Chinese aesthetics prioritise sophistication and understated embellishment. The classic aesthetic emphasizes:(a) a pale, radiant complexion,(b) straight, feathery eyebrows,(c) subtle, rosy cheeks,(d) delicate eye definition, and(e) soft, gradient lips.

To achieve the luminous look that is typical Chinese beauty, it is necessary to use a bright base. Using a lightweight foundation gives a dewy look. Avoid excessive contouring; instead, focus on achieving an even skin tone ("How to Do Chinese Makeup", 2025). This process mimics real facial shadows to create subtle sculpting, unlike the apparent cheekbone stripes that are popular on Instagram (Emma Brooks, 2025).

The natural form of Chinese-style brows is either straight or softly arched. Don't use shapes that are too pointy or excessively large ("How to Do Chinese Makeup," 2025). This look has brows that are only slightly arched and fuzzy, which frame the face without taking over (Emma Brooks, 2025).

In China, makeup artists use subtle definitions instead of bright colours. A signature look is when you just apply one neutral shadow that is slightly darker than your skin tone (Emma Brooks, 2025). Neutral colours are preferred for the eyes, including gentle taupe, dusty roses, or peaches. A little touch of shine makes things look polished. A thin layer of mascara is applied on the lashes ("How to Do Chinese Makeup", 2025).

The popular gradient lip (also known as 'popsicle lips') is a common characteristic in Chinese makeup (“How to Do Chinese Makeup”, 2025). The gradient lip typically begins with a darker colour in the middle and transitions to a lighter colour that complements it (Emma Brooks, 2025).

2.4 Colour Symbolism and Makeup Preferences

Colour symbolism significantly influences beauty, with various cultures providing various meanings to colours. These interpretations affect cosmetic choices, emotional connections, and the societal approval of specific appearances (Aslam, 2006).

2.4.1 Colour in Emirati Cultural Beauty

Arabian makeup focuses on attractive eyes. Metallic eyeshadows in gold, bronze, and copper have become trendy recently (Susanna, 2025; Vogue Arabia, 2025; Palat, 2025). These deep, warm colours reflect the sun in the desert. They combine well with the cultural concepts of luxury, events, and historical Arabian styles (Gulf News, 2025). Gold is a symbol of luxury and celebration, which enhances how important gold jewellery is in Emirati culture (Etcoff, 2011).

Dark eyeliner and kohl are crucial to Emirati beauty traditions because they have profound historical meaning for enhancing eyes, protecting them, and other religious beliefs (The National, 2011; Ghazal, 2011; Abu Dhabi Culture, n.d.).

Emirati women usually like to use bold lip colours. Deep crimson, burgundy, and berry colours are necessary for formal occasions and celebrations (Al Hinai, 2012; Khosla, 2025; Sensient Beauty, 2023). The bold lip colours look

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wonderful with metallic eye makeup, and they changed the way fashion shows are all over the world. The mix of dramatic eye makeup and bold lips shows how people use traditional makeup techniques, as well as how people use the latest beauty trends. This indicates how culture, tradition, and modern trends are all used to define the Emirati beauty standards.

2.4.2 Colour in Chinese Cultural Beauty

The Five Elements theory in Chinese philosophy explains why colours are important. For instance, green or blue stands for wood (growth and life), red stands for fire (joy and celebration), yellow stands for earth (well-being, and stability), white stands for metal (purity and melancholy), and black or blue stands for water (depth, wisdom, and transformation) (Ray S, 2025).

In Chinese culture, colours are more than just things you can see; they have a deeper meaning and are important to the value of the society. In Chinese culture, red stands for happiness, good luck, and wealth. Cultural beliefs suggest it keeps bad luck and evil spirits away, which is why it is popular during important events like weddings and the Chinese New Year (Winston Simon, 2024).

Chinese women prefer soft colours like pink, peach, and delicate nudes instead of bright red. These colours are connected to being young, pure, and innocent (Soho in China, n.d.). The gentle colour schemes show that most people prefer peace, harmony, and simple beauty in their daily lives. Although it has a strong symbolic effect, red is only used for special occasions and holidays.

2.5 Perceptions of Makeup and Social Significance

Recent scholarship suggests that cosmetic practices function as culturally situated forms of identity expression shaped by social norms and media influences (Swami, 2015). It is a common way for young people to change themselves and improve their bodies just because of the society surrounding them. Makeup can affect social connections, the way you feel about yourself, how you express your personality, and how you fit in with a group (Youyou Ma, 2024).

2.5.1 Makeup and Identity Expression

An Individual perception of beauty, both personal and external, significantly influence their self-esteem and identity. Cultural beauty standards might influence an individual's self-esteem. Makeup can reflect a woman's identity, self-image, and societal role. In both cultures, it encourages individualism while indicating conformity to cultural norms. Women in the UAE often wear makeup to make their eyes and other noticeable features stand out. That portrays their intelligence and elegance (Shiseido, 2023). Emirati ladies frequently apply kohl during weddings and celebrations to enhance their eyes, embodying ethnic heritage and individual style (The National News, 2015).

In China, makeup is all about showing off your style and keeping up with the latest trends, as well as keeping your skin looking young and healthy (Make-Up.ae, 2021). Many young ladies use a "dewy skin" foundation and gradient lips to get the look that social media influencers. This combination creates a young and fashionable look (Tong Global, 2023).

2.5.2 Makeup and Social Expectations

In many cultures, women may use makeup to show who they are while still following the rules and expectations of society. The UAE and China have social standards that dictate what kinds of makeup are appropriate. Islamic ideals and customs shape Emirati culture, which prioritises modesty. Women who wear abayas or hijabs can still wear makeup: it is acceptable in the society to express their identity. In the UAE, makeup is used to make natural features look better while still following traditional rules of modesty (The National News, 2015; Abu Dhabi Culture, n.d.).

In China, many organizations have standards about what makes an individual appear appropriate. Wearing excessive or overly heavy makeup may result in a dishevelled appearance or result in conflict with colleagues. Makeup helps women show who they are while also fitting in with what society expects of them, especially in public or formal situations (China Daily, 2024).

2.6 Influence of Media and Globalization on Beauty Standards

The globalization of digital media has enabled the cross-cultural exchange of beauty standards and makeup trends. Modern makeup trends, influenced by celebrities and influencers, frequently exceed geographical boundaries (DE MODE, 2024).

Cultural exchange has changed beauty standards around the world. The University of Oregon Blogs says that different cultural values help people accept and appreciate differences. This cross-cultural interaction may expand beauty standards. However, it can also make trends more important than cultural standards. When cultures interact, they influence each other's norms, which makes people more accepting but also raises questions about authenticity and respect (Women's Journal, 2025).

2.6.1 Social Media and Influencers in the UAE

Luxury brands and local celebrities heavily influence the beauty choices of Emirati women. Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat are social media platforms that transmit trends, makeup tutorials, and reviews that affect local shoppers (UAEStories.com, 2025; Favikon, 2025; PS Market Research, 2025).

A Television host “Diala Ali” talked about the influence of social media and how it set unrealistic beauty standards that can affect negatively to the self-esteem of an individual “Seeing airbrushed photos and pictures of models who look perfect has hurt users' self-esteem and made them obsessed with finding impossible beauty standards." She said, "It is important, especially for young people, to know that not everything they see in social media is real and accept themselves as they are" (Dubai Press Club, 2019).

2.6.2 Social Media and Beauty Trends in China

Xiaohongshu and Douyin are the most popular Chinese social media platforms that create new trends. Xiaohongshu offers unique and limited products. Young women are mostly influenced by product reviews, cosmetics tutorials, and content creators (CosmeticsChinaAgency, 2025). Companies are using makeup reviewers and influencers on these platforms to engage clients and gain their trust (Sekkei Digital Group, 2025).

Douyin has significant influence through combining short videos with live shopping. This enables artists to showcase their creations and convert views into instant sales (China Briefing, 2025). These sites also illustrate current trends, like sustainability, the use of advanced technologies, and homemade treatments(WEI ZHENG, 2025).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a clear explanation about how beauty is seen in different cultures and religions. It compares the Emirati and Chinese women in terms of their makeup style, choice of colour, and beauty ideas. The study mainly aims to understand how culture and tradition have a strong influence on the beauty standards and use of cosmetics. Culture has a strong impact on how people think about their appearance and beauty practices. The research clearly identifies both the similarities and differences between the two selected groups.

A mixed method research design was used in this study. Surveys, numerical data, and open-ended questions played a very necessary role in collating all the required information in this study for the participants. This method allowed all researchers to understand both the general patterns and personal opinions. With the help of using different research tools it makes it even easier to find the main connection between the culture and beauty habits. Along with this, this study also gives a clear explanation about the research design, sample population, and data collection methods. All the ethical guidelines were followed during the entire research process. Overall, it can be said that this chapter strongly helps in explaining how beauty routines and cosmetic preferences are shaped by the cultural background among Emirati and Chinese women.

3.2 Description of Data

Research in this study relied mostly on primary data, because information was gathered by directly from human subjects through digital questionnaires and physical makeup demonstrations. Primary data was utilized so that researchers could gain direct knowledge about personal stories, cultural views, and makeup rituals of the people involved.

About 50 participants were involved in the research, which included Emirati women and Chinese women between the ages of 18 and 40 years, along with one professional makeup artist. The gathering of information was carried out over approximately two weeks using digital sites and social media networks.

Around 20 questions were included in the survey questionnaire, which contained multiple-choice items, Likert-scale tasks, and written responses. The focus of these questions remained on the habits of makeup application, chosen aesthetics and hues, cultural beauty thoughts, and how society affects choices of cosmetic products.

Along with the survey, a physical makeup demonstration was performed by a professional makeup artist on one Emirati woman and one Chinese woman. The demonstration identifies variations in makeup methods, choices of pigments, highlighting of face parts, and styles that are shaped by cultural beauty standards (Pink, 2013). Direct observation is the most effective method to record the subtle changes in technique.

Information that was gathered for the project contained both Quantitative data and Qualitative data. To ensure that the comparison and analysis between the two groups of people was clear, all the data were arranged into tables, charts, and graphs (Swami, 2015). Visual data tools are effective in comparing the two cultural groups.

3.3 Research Methodology

3.3.1 Type of Research

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This study used a mixed-methods approach to compare the cultures of Emirati and Chinese individuals. By combining statistical data with descriptive research methods, the study was able to provide a more profound understanding of the cultural significance of beauty and facial decoration habits. The statistical data allowed us to make comparisons between the two groups, while the descriptive information provided context and insight into the meanings behind the numbers. As experts have noted, a mixed-methods design is particularly useful for gaining a comprehensive understanding of a research problem, as it brings together the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The descriptive responses also helped to inform the statistical data, providing a richer understanding of the findings and adding depth to the analysis (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013). By using this approach, we were able to explore the complex and nuanced aspects of beauty and facial decoration habits in both Emirati and Chinese cultures.

3.3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design where the data was collected at one point in time. The design was chosen for this study as it allows the comparison of make-up practices and beauty standards between the Emirati and Chinese women. Cross-sectional studies can be utilised to describe and explain the pattern, similarities and differences of certain attributes or variables among population or groups, which is appropriate for cultural comparison studies (Setia, 2016).

3.3.3 Population

The study participants consisted of a group of Emirati and Chinese women located in the UAE. The criteria used to choose participants for the study were culture, age and make-up practices. In a social research study, it is very important to have a representative sample of the population studied. This is evident for this research in which the participants belonged to different ethnicities, ages, beauty standards and make-up customs. (Markus & Kitayama, 2010).

3.3.4 Sample

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants who met the study criteria. The criteria for the participants were met and approximately one hundred Emirati and Chinese women participants were recruited from the UAE. All participants were in the age group of 18-40 years.

All the study participants gave their consent to participate in the study. As has already been mentioned, this study adopted a convenience sampling strategy that aimed at recruiting participants who possessed the desired knowledge required for cross-cultural comparison (Palinkas et al., 2015).

3.3.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The data was collected through an online survey that was distributed through various social media platforms. This method was highly successful in engaging participants from diverse cultural backgrounds. The questionnaire was composed of fixed choice and open-ended questions to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. The participants were allowed to choose more than one option for each fixed choice question, in addition to expressing their opinions through comments on the scale, which considered personal beliefs and cultural values. Online surveys are a prevalent method of research. They are easy to administer, very convenient ,and can easily reach a large sample from a wider area as compared to offline surveys. (Evans & Mathur, 2018).

3.3.6 Rationale of Methodology

The study adopted mixed-methods research design. The quantitative aspect of the study was used to empirically compare the beauty practices of the respondents using mean comparison between the two groups. The qualitative aspect was used to gain insight into the cultural meaning associated with beauty practices and the personal experiences of the respondents. The mixed-methods design in this study was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the beauty practices among the respondents by incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data.

Surveys were used to collect information from a significant number of individuals. A practical makeup demonstration was conducted to show the cultural differences in makeup application.

Most of the research in the survey employed mixed-methods methodologies. This preference for mixed-methods approaches in cross-cultural studies could be attributed to the views that the validity and reliability of cross-cultural studies can be ensured by mixed-methods designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Guest et al., 2013).

3.4 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 Survey Questionnaire

The data was collected through an online survey that was distributed electronically on the social media networks and online educational websites. A few Emirati women, Chinese women and a beauty expert completed the online survey. The survey that was distributed to participants had approximately 12 questions. Most of the survey questions used a Likert scale from 1 to 5 where 1

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was strongly disagree and 5 was strongly agree. There were a few multiple-choice questions, and there were a few open-ended questions. A Likert scale of measurement is a scale designed to show discrete or continuous measurement of attitude and opinion (Likert, 1932; Boone & Boone, 2012).

The questionnaire included the following sections:• Demographics (age, education level, and cultural background)• Makeup usage (frequency, products, and occasions)• Color preferences (lipstick, eyeshadow, and foundation tones)• Beauty perceptions (cultural standards and media influence)

3.4.2 Practical Makeup Demonstration

One skilled cosmetic professional applied makeup to one Emirati women and one Chinese women during an actual display. Since the actual display occurred, the straightforward viewing of variations in methods, item selections, shade balance, and facial attribute improvements became possible. Many researchers believe that cultural beauty ideals influence these choices. Detailed notes from the viewing session were recorded so that this qualitative information supports the survey findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

3.4.3 Open-Ended Responses

Individuals who joined the research provided answers to questions related to how individuals perceive beauty and the way culture impacts makeup practices. Personal experiences and cultural values were revealed through these responses. These responses provide insight to help understand the way individuals think about beauty.

Data that came from the qualitative responses was looked at with thematic analysis. Patterns and themes were found in the information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Experts claim that thematic analysis helps to see the structure of the data because the method looks for things that repeat.

3.4.4 Data Analysis Methods

The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were employed to compare the participants responses from the two different population groups namely, the Emirati and the Chinese.

Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Codes were derived from participant responses to open-ended questions and key phrases and words were identified within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data was then re-read, re-coded and re-organised into main themes.

Mixed-Methods Analysis is a research methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate research questions or phenomena. Mixed-methods analysis is a research methodology that provides both descriptive statistics and data analysis from the empirical studies to reach a comprehensive understanding of the research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

3.4.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis process moved forward through several specific actions. At the start, the survey responses were gathered and put in order within data sets. While the survey responses were ready, the quantitative data were put into the SPSS software for the analysis. Calculation of the frequencies and percentages was completed so that the numerical values remained clear. Tables, charts, and graphs were utilized so that the data could be shown. It has been observed that the qualitative responses were looked at carefully and put into themes. Cultural differences and patterns were found, and the meanings were explained because the information from the people was diverse. This structured process ensured accuracy and reduced errors in analysis. Correctness was achieved because the orderly data analysis process made sure the analysis was fair for both types of information.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology used in the study to investigate cultural differences in beauty standards and make-up between Emirati and Chinese women. The study employed mixed-methods research methodology, which includes quantitative part by using a survey on the participants answers and qualitative part by getting answers from the open-ended questions as well as the makeup practical demonstration.

The study employed cross-sectional design, used purposive sampling method and described the data using both descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The methods and approaches used in this study were considered relevant and suitable to address the research question and to yield comparable evidence across cultures.

Chapter 4: Findings & discussions

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter demonstrates the analysis and interpretation of the data collected for the report on cultural effect and makeup preferences within Emirati and Chinese respondents. The main aim of this chapter is to evaluate how cultural background influences makeup choices, beauty discernment, and product preferences,

with the effect of social media on beauty trends. The data were further gathered by questionnaires which were allocated to respondents from multiple cultural backgrounds (Bondarenko et al., 2022). A total of 48 responses were evaluated through using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This report also used two datasets obtaining Emirati and Chinese respondents. Various statistical methods further used including frequency analysis, descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, as well as thematic analysis were applied for interpreting the findings.

Moreover, Tables and percentages charts have been used to show the demographic profile and makeup preferences of respondents (Bondarenko et al., 2022). Additionally, thematic analysis has also been utilized to analyses respondents' personal understanding of beauty. The results in this chapter are then organized as per the research objectives and questionnaire sections. The analysis also helps in understanding the similarities and characteristics among Emirati and Chinese beauty standards along with how social media assist in modern makeup trends.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Cultural Background	Frequency	Percentage
Emirati	24	50%
Chinese	24	50%
Total	48	100%

4.2.1 Cultural Background

The study has allocated questionnaires to a total of 48 respondents from two significant cultural groups. From the total of the 48 participants, 24 respondents were Emirati and 24 respondents were Chinese. That overall created an equal representation of two cultural backgrounds within the study.

The overall results suggest that Emirati and Chinese participants were equally represented in the research. That well maintained participation helped in enhancing the reliability of the comparative analysis among the two cultures. Equal representation further helped in the study to critically address the variations and similarities in makeup preferences, beauty perceptions, with social media influence within the respondents. Moreover, as the study focused on cross-cultural beauty standards, obtaining the same number of participants from each group allowed the research to confirm fairness and declined sampling bias.

4.2.2 Age Group

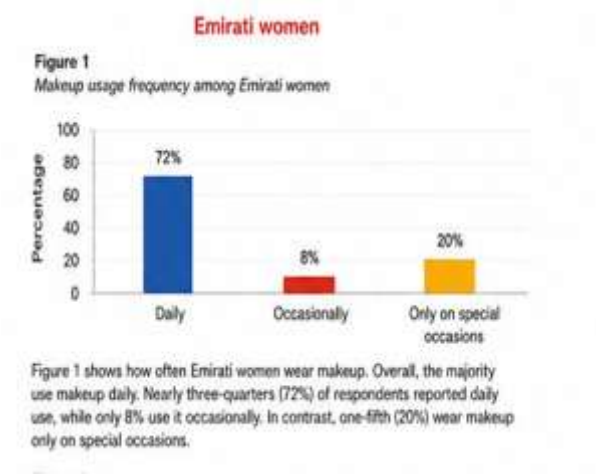
All the respondents were categorized into three different age categories, such as 16–22 years, 23–30 years, and 31–40 years, for investigation how age affects makeup preferences as well as beauty-related behaviors across respondents.

Age Group	Emirati Frequency	Emirati Percentage	Chinese Frequency	Chinese Percentage	Total Frequency
16–22	11	45.80%	8	33.30%	19
23–30	5	20.80%	9	37.50%	14
31–40	8	33.30%	7	29.20%	15
Total	24	100%	24	100%	48

The findings mainly highlight that most of the Emirati respondents belonged to the 16–22 age group, and most of the Chinese respondents fell under the 23–30 years category. That mainly suggests that younger individuals are more involved in makeup trends and beauty-related processes. Younger respondents are also greatly exposed to social media platforms with beauty tutorials and global fashion trends being increasingly shared (Umoren, 2025). The inclusion of mature age groups offered a deeper understanding of how makeup perceptions vary across respondents from different age categories and cultural backgrounds.

4.2.3 Frequency of Wearing Makeup

Respondents were questioned how often they wear makeup. The responses of Emirati and Chinese respondents are presented below for comparison.



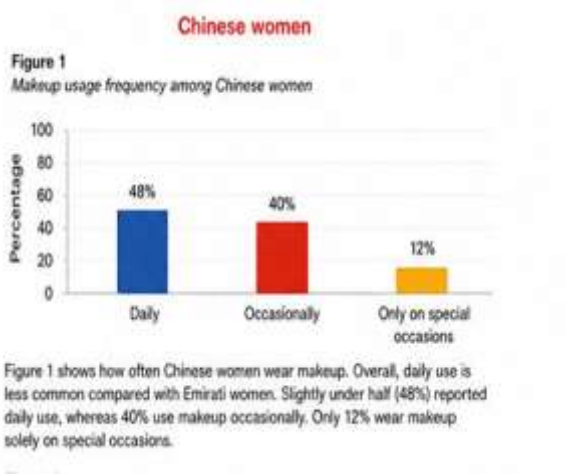


Figure 1. demonstrates the frequency of makeup use within Emirati and Chinese women. That mainly suggests Emirati women use makeup more frequently than Chinese women. Across Emirati participants, daily usage demonstrates the biggest proportion at 72%, and just 48% of Chinese respondents reported daily use.

Everyday makeup usage was more frequent within younger respondents and those highly engaged with beauty trends on social platforms. That outcome reflects that makeup is not anymore restricted to festive occasions but is greatly combined into daily lifestyle and fashion practices.

4.3 Makeup Preferences and Cultural Influence Analysis

4.3.1 Occasions for Wearing Makeup

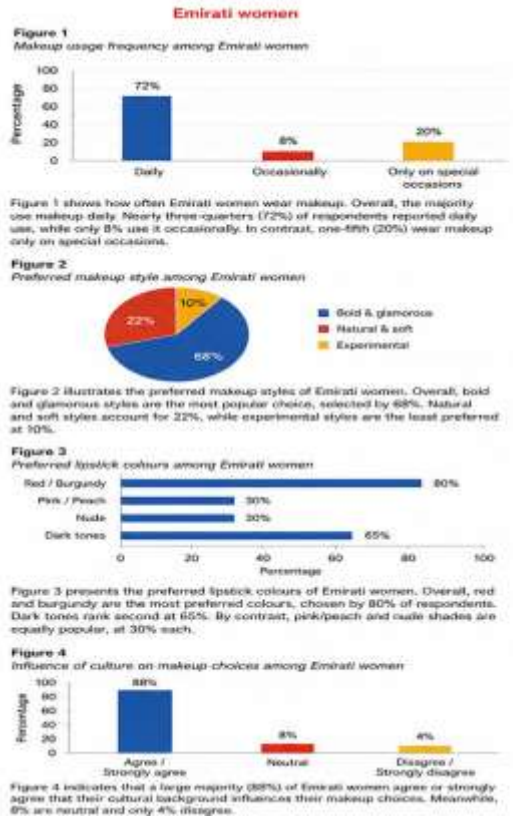
Occasion for Wearing Makeup	Emirati Mean	Chinese Mean
Occasions for Wearing Makeup	1.87	1.96

Participants chose different occasions for wearing makeup, such as daily routine, social events, as well as weddings or celebrations.

Descriptive Statistics							
Cultural Group	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emirati	24	2	1	3	32	1.33	0.565
Chinese	24	2	1	3	39	1.62	0.711

The outcomes reflected that social events and daily routines have been the most common occasions for wearing makeup within the cultural groups. Emirati respondents increasingly linked makeup with weddings, celebrations, and formal gatherings because of the cultural traditions highlighting glamour and elegance within social occasions. Chinese participants also mainly preferred makeup for casual social environments and daily routines. All responses mainly highlighted their preference for practical and natural beauty improvement instead of dramatic event-focused makeup. The findings showed that cultural practices and social lifestyle trends majorly affect the aim and frequency of makeup usage.

4.3.2 Preferred Makeup Style



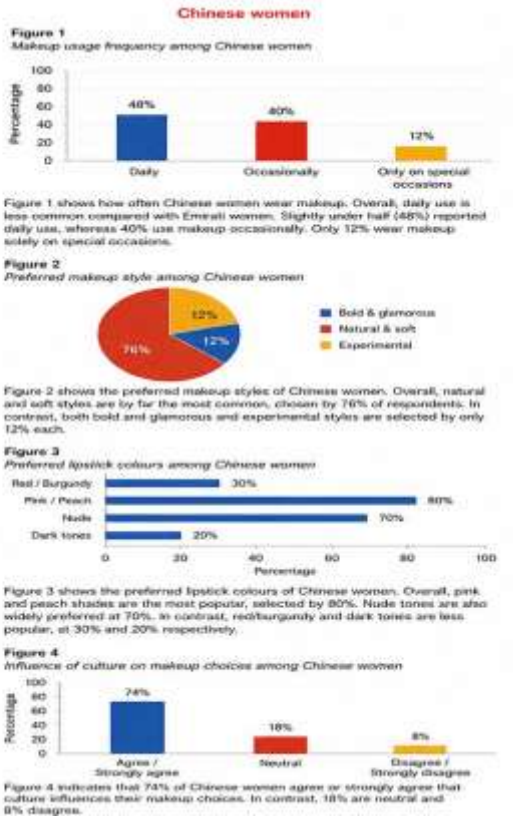


Figure 2. shows most Emirati respondents (68%) are interested in bold and glamorous makeup styles, however, only 12% of Chinese women chose this option. Conversely, 76% of Chinese respondents seek natural and soft makeup, in comparison with 22% of Emirati respondents. Experimental patterns are comparably low in both groups.

SPSS results reflected variances in makeup style perceptions among Emirati and Chinese participants, with significant differences in mean scores.

Preferred Makeup Style	**Emirati Mean**	**Chinese Mean**
Makeup Style Preference	1.5	2.08

Descriptive Statistics							
Cultural Group	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emirati	24	2	1	3	36	1.5	0.659
Chinese	24	2	1	3	50	2.08	0.504

The lower mean score of 1.5 for Emirati respondents suggests great preference for glamorous styles including bold eye makeup, contouring, and defined facial features. Chinese respondents, however, show subtle makeup styles prioritizing on clear skin, light colors, and minimal enhancement with 2.08 means core. Those trends highlight how makeup functions as an expression of culturally shifted aesthetic preferences.

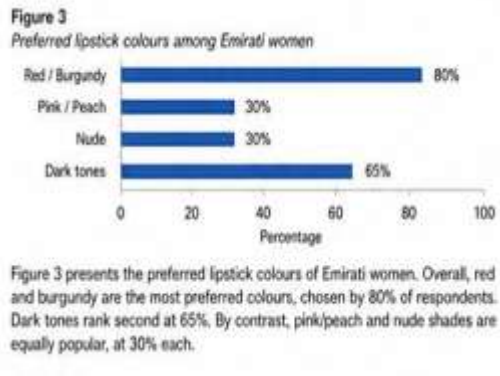
4.3.3 Preference for Heavy Contouring

Preference for Heavy Contouring	**Emirati Mean**	**Chinese Mean**
Heavy Contouring Preference	4.25	1.75

Respondents rated their perceptions for heavy contouring on a scale from 1 to 5.

Descriptive Statistics							
Cultural Group	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emirati	24	4	1	5	102	4.25	1.032
Chinese	24	2	1	3	42	1.75	0.737

Respondents noted their perceptions for heavy contouring on a scale from 1 to 5. The SPSS descriptive statistics highlighted clear variations among Emirati and Chinese participants. Emirati participants reflected a high mean score of 4.25 with a total sum of 102, suggesting strong preference for heavy contouring methods and makeup styles. The standard deviation further was 1.032, which reflects gradual variation in responses. The minimum score was 1 and the maximum score was 5, with a range of 4. However, when compared the Chinese respondents highlighted a lower mean score of 1.75 with a total sum of 42, suggesting preference for natural and minimal contouring styles. The standard deviation was 0.737, along with responses ranging from 1 to 3 and a range of 2.



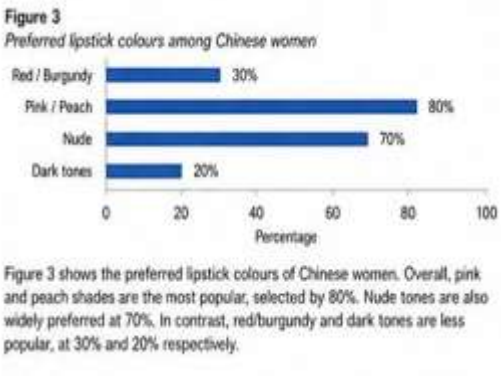


Figure 3. illustrates the distribution of color preferences within all respondents. Specifically, Emirati women mainly prefer darker and richer tones, conversely, Chinese women prefer lighter and softer shades. Emirati respondents frequently selected colors such as red, burgundy, plum, gold, and bronze. Conversely, Chinese participants highlighted a preference for pink, peach, nude, with pastel tones. Participants selected their preferred lipstick shades in these questions.

Preferred Lipstick Colours	Emirati Mean	Chinese Mean
Lipstick Colour Preference	2.83	2.38

Descriptive Statistics							
Cultural Group	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emirati	24	6	1	7	68	2.83	2.14
Chinese	24	3	1	4	57	2.38	0.875

The findings suggest remarkable variances in lipstick color preferences among Emirati and Chinese respondents. The higher standard deviation of 2.14 further suggests major differences in color preferences across the Emirati group. Conversely, Chinese respondents highlighted better consistent perceptions, with a smaller range of 3 and a lower standard deviation of 0.875.

4.3.5 Preferred Eye shadow Colors

SPSS outcomes represented variances in eye shadow color perception among cultural groups.

Preferred Eyeshadow Colours	Emirati Mean	Chinese Mean
Eyeshadow Colour Preference	1.79	2.87

Descriptive Statistics							
Cultural Group	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emirati	24	3	1	4	43	1.79	1.103
Chinese	23	3	1	4	66	2.87	1.1

The results suggest great variations in eye shadow colour preferences within Emirati and Chinese respondents. Chinese participants noted a greater mean score of 2.87 in comparison with 1.79 across Emirati respondents, which reflect interest for more varied eye shadow shades. Two of the groups also obtain a similar standard deviation of approximately 1.10, highlighting gradual variation in responses. Chinese respondents have shown a higher total sum of 66 in comparison with 43 across Emirati respondents. The results further indicate that Chinese respondents were not more diverse and experimental eye shadow colours, and Emirati respondents wanted more specific and culturally effected shades.

4.3.6 Cultural Influence on Makeup Choices

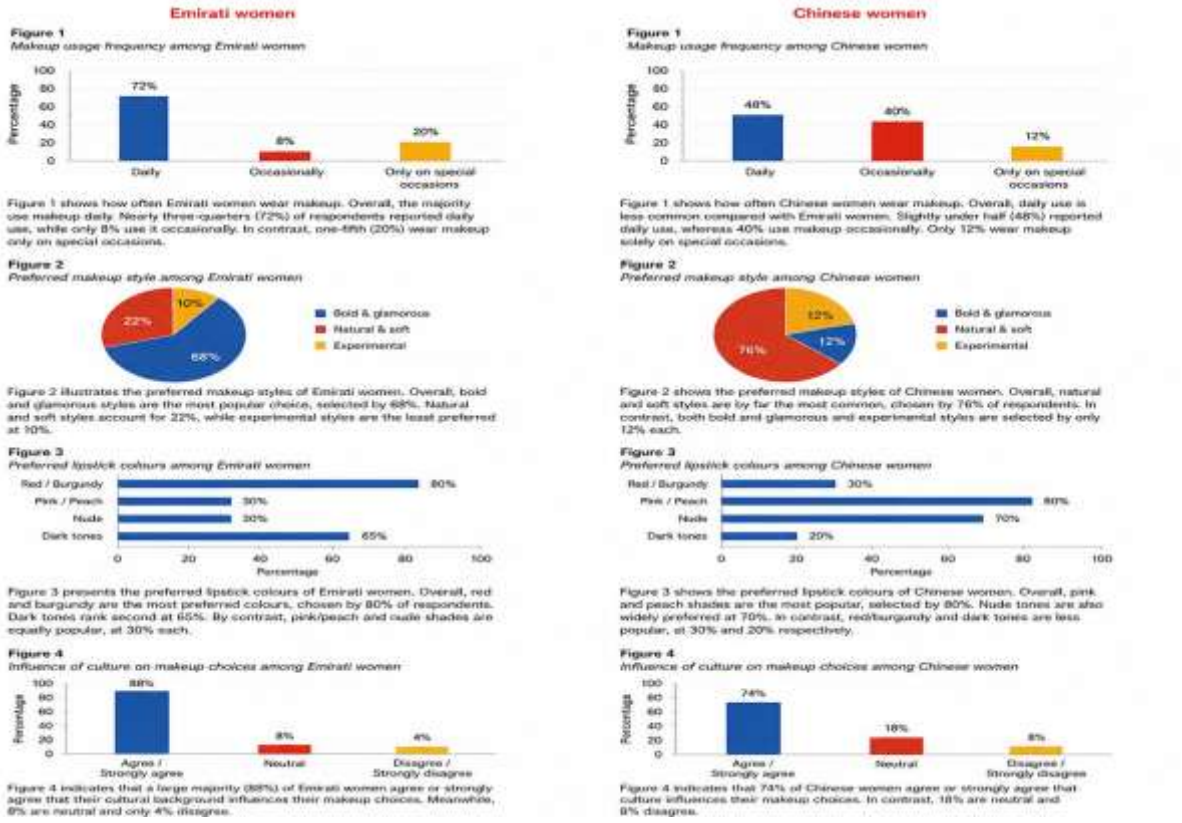


Figure 4. reflects the respondents' responses to the statement: "My culture influences my makeup choices". A significant portion of the two groups agreed with this statement. Overall, 88% of Emirati respondents agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 74% of Chinese participants. Whereas, Chinese respondents reflect natural beauty, skincare, simplicity, with minimal makeup as cultural beauty ideals. These results suggest that culture holds a major role in shifting preferences of beauty and makeup practices. Cultural values also affect not only product choices yet, the meaning linked to beauty and self-presentation.

4.4 Social Media Influence on Makeup Preferences

4.4.1 Influence of Social Media

Social Media Influence	Emirati Mean	Chinese Mean
Influence of Social Media	1.79	2.21

Respondents were asked if social media affects their makeup choices.

Descriptive Statistics							
Cultural Group	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emirati	24	2	1	3	43	1.79	0.977
Chinese	24	2	1	3	53	2.21	0.884

The results demonstrate that social media greatly affects makeup preferences within participants. Emirati respondents highlighted robust impact from social media beauty content in comparison with Chinese respondents. Even many of the respondents if fully agreed or partially agreed which social media platforms influence their makeup styles, product choices, with beauty routines.

Beauty tutorials, influencer suggestions, celebrity trends, with online beauty communities majoring in career modern makeup perceptions. Younger respondents have also been specifically affected by online beauty patterns because of continuous exposure to visual social media platforms. All the results mainly highlight that social media is becoming a major factor in transforming modern beauty standards within cultures.

4.4.2 Most Influential Social Media Platforms

Respondents selected the platforms which affect them the most.

Most Influential Platforms	Emirati Mean	Chinese Mean
Platform Influence	1.96	3.17

Descriptive Statistics							
Cultural Group	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emirati	24	3	1	4	47	1.96	0.859
Chinese	24	4	1	5	76	3.17	1.761

Instagram and TikTok appeared as the most effective social media platforms within participation. Emirati participants highlighted robust perceptions for Instagram and TikTok because of their popularity in the Middle East beauty with fashion segment. Chinese respondents also often chose Xiaohongshu as a major beauty inspiration platform as it is greatly used among Chinese beauty and skincare communities.

YouTube has also been addressed as a major source for makeup tutorials and beauty education. The results reflected that social media platforms assist majorly to the globalization of beauty patterns along with still suggesting cultural variances in platform usage.

4.5 Thematic Analysis

Question: “What does beauty mean to you?”

Themes Identified	Observation
Confidence	Most frequently mentioned
Natural beauty	Highly mentioned among Chinese respondents
Elegance and cultural identity	Strongly mentioned among Emirati respondents

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Self-expression	Common among younger respondents
Inner happiness	Frequently associated with beauty

Thematic evaluation was conducted on respondents' answers related to their personal understanding of beauty. Various major themes pampered from the responses.

The thematic analysis highlighted that beauty is understood by variances within cultural groups (ARAB, 2023). Confidence was also a frequently mentioned theme, with respondents connecting beauty to self-esteem and positivity. Chinese respondents also highlighted natural beauty, simplicity, as well as minimal makeup styles. Emirati participation linked beauty with elegance, cultural identity, along with glamorous presentation. Self-expression was frequent among younger participants who responded to makeup as creativity and individuality. Inner happiness has also been seen as commonly linked with beauty and confidence.The thematic analysis highlighted that beauty is understood by variances within cultural groups (ARAB, 2023). Confidence was also a frequently mentioned theme, with respondents connecting beauty to self-esteem and positivity. Chinese respondents also highlighted natural beauty, simplicity, as well as minimal makeup styles. Emirati participation linked beauty with elegance, cultural identity, along with glamorous presentation. Self-expression was frequent among younger participants who responded to makeup as creativity and individuality. Inner happiness has also been seen as commonly linked with beauty and confidence.

4.6sConclusion This section critically evaluated the connection among cultural background with makeup preferences within Emirati and Chinese respondents through SPSS evolution, descriptive statistics, and thematic analysis. The results demonstrated major variances, where Emirati participants mainly preferred bold and glamorous makeup styles, heavy contouring, and dramatic eye makeup, with diverse lipstick shades. On the other hand, the Chinese participants reflected interest in natural makeup looks, softer colours, minimal contouring, with subtle beauty enhancement.

The study overall reflected that social media critically affects beauty trends with makeup preferences within respondents. Platforms including Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, as well as Xiaohongshu also hold a significant role in shaping makeup preferences along with beauty awareness. In addition, the thematic analysis also reflected that beauty was majorly linked with confidence, self-expression, elegance, cultural identity, natural appearance, as well as inner happiness within two of the cultural groups.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1. Summary of findings

The findings linked to the study vividly describes that cultural background functions in shaping up of make-up styles, preferences linked with color, and aid in generation of beauty perception of the Emirati, and Chinese women. The outcomes depict consistent, and strong differences between the two major groups.

Emirati participants can be seen to be biased towards glamorous, and bold makeup styles as that of heavy contouring, dramatic makeup which are mainly linked with the darker, and richer colors s demanded by most of moder generation of young people. On the other hand, Chinese participants can be seen to find natural, and sister make up styles with subtle features. All data insights are aligned with the precious reassured validating that beauty standards are impacted by aesthetic traditions, and values linked with cultures of people (Swami, 2015; Yang, 2024).

Besides this, self-expression, identity and confidence of both cultures can be associated with beauty make ups. However, the expression differs across the cultural contexts. Emirati women associated beauty with the elegance criteria along with cultural identity, and the strong visual impacts. On the other hand, Chinese women have simplicity criteria with beauty, appearances, and harmony. This bolsters the idea that beauty-based perceptions are constructed rather than being of universal nature (Aslam, 2006; Swami, 2015).

Further, social media impacts make up preferences in both the segments or groups. TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube set the global diversity in makeup trends in unique manners (De Mode Global, 2024).

Hence, despite differences religion, culture, and varied forms of global impact make up choices.

5.2. Implications of the study

The study highlights the role generated by cultural diversity in the generation of beauty standards. The study shows that makeup should not be treated solely as custom choices, but it should be also treated as objects linked with cultural identification criteria. Social expectations, and personalized experiences can be seen to be generating influences on the very process (Swami, 2015).

The study findings can advantage make-up artists, researchers, and the beauty industry. Beauty is influenced by symbols, social aspects and coral traditions (Aslam,

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2006). Cultural inclusivity criteria is a very important part, and parcel of the diversity criteria of makeup business services.

5.3. Delimitations of the study

The study population is limited to a chosen set of Emirati, and Chinese women with an age group between 18 to 40 years the Middle Eastern region of the UAE. The size of the sample and the time frame are vital for satiation of the research targets with cross-cultural comparisons.

The research has concentrated on makeup styles, and varied forms of preferences which has provided a wide analysis of the concern context discussion.

In addition, the validity of the research findings can be seen to bolster the use of both quantitative, and qualitative or mixed research analysis to get a clear overall idea of the research topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

5.4. Further research

Further research should investigate the relevance of geographic boundaries and cultural preferences in the process of enchantment of make-up services, and around the globe. Styles, sociocultural preferences add different meanings to beauty levels or standards. Moreover, diverse skincare routines and extensive use of digital services also have a great impact on the makeup services in close auction with cross-cultural criteria as aligned with the context of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

5.5. Conclusion

In summary, culture plays a major role in the generation of quantitative and qualitative diversity of make-up services along with acts born by perceptions, and other factors. Further, iteration of the cultural identification criteria with varied standards of globalization also emirates impact on the conceded services.

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