

Press release



Cosmetics: A girl thing? Not anymore ...

Frankfurt am Main, 10 November 2016

Boys like football and girls are sensitive. There are still lots of clichés about the typical roles for boys and girls. What is the situation in the field of cosmetics and personal care products?

Are boys really such strangers to care products as is often claimed? And what differences are there when it comes to the use of the products?

Whatever may lie behind traditional gender roles, in an in-depth psychological-representative [study](#) on behalf of the German Cosmetic, Toiletry, Perfumery and Detergent Association (IKW), it became clear that boys have caught up a lot in terms of cosmetics and personal care. It is true that young men still frequently associate the term "cosmetics" with decorative cosmetics, i.e. "products for your face and nails". But just like young women, young men also value a well-groomed appearance – both closely associate their external appearance with their own self-worth. The smarter they look, the better and more confident they feel in themselves.



For example, at the first signs of puberty, boys and girls alike start to use care products which help to tackle spots, greasy hair or the smell of perspiration. Boys no longer leave the house without a daily shower, washing their hair and using a deodorant. In the case of hairstyling they actually outdo the girls and are considerably more adventurous where their haircuts are concerned. **50 percent** of boys use hairstyling products at least once a day.

In the process of growing up, increasing importance is given to products such as deodorant, shampoo, etc. which are intended to emphasise individual personality and increase attractiveness. The development of one's own masculinity or femininity is becoming increasingly more important. For example, young men are investing more time and effort in looking after their beards. Ever since men started to wear beards again, many young men have devoted more attention to the care of this distinctive sign of their own masculinity. After all, the abundance of the beard is a clear sign of whether you are still a mummy's boy or are already a big guy.

For their part, girls use products such as lipstick, eyeliner and mascara to emphasise their femininity. They deliberately use mascara to attract the attention of others. **67 percent** apply mascara at least once a day and many actually own several products. And when it comes to nail varnish, girls have whole treasure chests full of different colours, so that they can always look their best, right down to their finger tips.

And what about the emotional world of young people? Are emotions still the exclusive realm of the girls?

Here again the study shows that boys have outgrown traditional gender roles. For boys, emotions are a newly discovered component of their own personalities. They are increasingly facing up to their feelings and no longer leaving the field of the emotions solely to the girls. Values also play an important role in the lives of boys. **81 percent** of the males taking part in the study state that their family is very important to them. **79 percent** say that they would like to have a family of their own.

Whereas the boys turned out to be more thoughtful than expected, the girls were surprisingly less interested in an individual's personality or values. Many girls simply wanted to be considered nice and friendly. "Actually all you want is to look good. I want to hear, you're wearing nice clothes and you look good. You get rewarded for the effort," says one girl. The smart overall impression is the defining ideal.

For both boys and girls there is a deep level of uncertainty with regard to love and the associated relationships. Puberty is a very unsettling phase in the life of young people. It is often experienced as a chaotic, uncontrolled condition, and not only with regard to personal appearance. Their best friend is almost more important than a close romantic relationship. Friends seem to provide more security and reliability than a relationship can sometimes offer. For that reason, **52 percent** prefer to rely on the security of a friendship rather than on "uncertain relationships".

This is what young people say:

"Friends are more important than relationships. Relationships change, friends remain friends for a lifetime."

"I can't talk about everything with my boyfriend, but with my best friend I can."

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Youth undisguised

The self-perception and self-esteem of adolescents and young adults

An in-depth psychological-representative study from rheingold salon compiled for IKW – German Cosmetic, Toiletry, Perfumery and Detergent Association

Young people are currently not only struggling with uncertainties due to unusual mood swings and burgeoning sexuality. On a social and familial level, they likewise experience sort of a loss of control. The adolescents try to counter this basic feeling of insecurity by their very own strategy: they attach increasing value to their appearance.

rheingold salon has examined on behalf of the German Cosmetic, Toiletry, Perfumery and Detergent Association the development of self-esteem in adolescents and young adults aged between 14 and 21 years. What role is played by a neat appearance for the self-esteem of young people? What influence does taking care of their appearance have on the self-esteem of young people? And in how far can cosmetics and beauty products support young people in their self-discovery? The first depth psychological representative study on the transition to adulthood provides answers to these exciting questions. Within the framework of the qualitative polling, group discussions and individual in-depth interviews were conducted with altogether 56 adolescents and young adults aged between 14 and 21 years. For the representative quantitative survey 1,012 adolescents and young adults aged between 14 and 21 years were surveyed.

<http://www.ikw-youthstudy.org/>

About IKW

The German Cosmetic, Toiletry, Perfumery and Detergent Association, with headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, was founded in 1968. It represents the interests of more than 400 companies from the fields of beauty and home care on a national and European level. With sales revenues of almost EUR 18 billion, the member companies cover approximately 95 percent of the market and employ a workforce of approximately 500,000 people.

IKW is the contact partner for its member companies, ministries, public authorities, consumers, institutions and associations as well as for the media as far as scientific, regulatory or business topics are concerned. Experts from the beauty care and home care departments within IKW provide competent answers to questions concerning skin and hair care, beauty and self-esteem as well as hygiene and cleaning.

More information on <http://www.ikw.org>