

# Press release



## The beauty world of adolescents – an interview with Ines Imdahl

Frankfurt am Main, 21 April 2017

**Confidence and stability are constants that adolescents long for in their lives, according to a study on behalf of the IKW. Ines Imdahl reveals in an interview what these needs have to do with cosmetics.**

Ines Imdahl, owner and managing director of rheingold salon, carried out an in-depth psychological-representative [study](#) with adolescents and young adults aged between 14 and 21 on behalf of the IKW (German Cosmetic, Toiletry, Perfumery and Detergent Association). The main focus of the study was on the development of self-esteem during puberty; an extremely turbulent period of life with many ups and downs.

As part of the study "Youth undisguised", Ines Imdahl gained an insight into the world of adolescents and found out what preoccupies them.

### **Ms Imdahl, young people today grow up in very different environments. What does this mean for their self-esteem?**

The period of puberty is already difficult enough for adolescents. But the life of many young adults today is shaped by outside insecurities such as the economic crisis, security crisis, job crisis (internship) etc. In addition to these uncertain circumstances, young people also experience many personal crises. These include separations, new partners for their parents, change of school and home but also sometimes neglect or domestic violence. **28 percent** of young people come from broken homes. They feel less loved by their parents (**23 percent**) and hope for a more stable life. To save their image, and to give themselves confidence and a good feeling, a perfect appearance is extremely important for their self-esteem. Cosmetics help with this.

On the other hand, we come into contact with young people who come from almost over protective circumstances and feel particularly well loved and self-confident (**58 percent**). The parents encourage them in the expectation that they will achieve all their dreams. The strong family support leads to high demands and expectations of their own lives.

Whether unstable or over protective environments, they all have in common that their outer appearance is strongly linked to their desire for security. The more well-groomed they appear the better and more confident they feel; a core and important result of the study which initially surprised us.

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**Ms Imdahl, young people seem to be very preoccupied with their appearance these days. Are they simply just superficial?**

I would not like to make that judgement at all. Perhaps controversial, but it is better that adolescents find comfort in their appearance than in drugs. It is true that adolescents place a lot of importance on their outer image. A surprising result from our study shows this particularly strongly. **60 percent** of adolescents stated that they generally believe that it is possible to read a person by their appearance. This way of thinking among young people certainly does not point towards superficiality. It is necessary to view the adolescents' psychological motives behind this statement. Puberty is a very unsettling phase in a person's life which brings with it a feeling of loss of control and this is what the young adults are fighting against. Using cosmetics makes them feel more confident. This is what **85 percent** of participants in the study say. Young people simply want to belong. Having a well-groomed appearance helps them with this.

But even if the appearance plays a key role in the life of pubescent boys and girls, traditional values like family, honesty and reliability are also important for adolescents at this time.

**Ms Imdahl, do beauty routines and product use change for adolescents over time?**

Of course they do. When they enter puberty, these products are particularly popular for adolescents; they help them to get to grips with the physical insecurities linked with puberty. Deodorant and acne cream are bought ahead and are seen as indispensable everyday essentials. While cosmetics that mask something unpleasant are embarrassing for adolescents (these are often used only in secret), they often wear decorative products such as mascara and nail polish from quite an early age. This is all about highlighting a part of the body while distracting from others.

Other cosmetics such as lipstick or shaving products only become important a few years later. Emphasising masculinity or femininity play an important role in this. Although many girls already feel mature enough to highlight their eyes with the right products from an early age, emphasising their lips is seen by most as inappropriate. Young men generally only start to concern themselves with their facial hair when the soft fluff turns into a full beard.

During puberty, both girls and boys experiment with many different body care and beauty products. They go through a number of phases in which various products are viewed as important. After a few years of experimenting, most have finally found their "look" which they feel comfortable and confident in.

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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>