

**Research Article***Copyright © All rights are reserved by Ryuen HIRAMATSU*

The Relationship between Makeup Behaviour and Narcissistic Personality in Thai Adolescents

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A narcissistic personality is characterized by self-focus and a desire for admiration. It significantly influences makeup behaviour, particularly among young Thai men and women. This study aims to investigate this relationship and draw a comparison between Thai and Japanese men and women.

Narcissistic personality traits present themselves in various behaviours, including excessive self-absorption and a strong desire for attention and admiration. Moreover, these traits often impact interpersonal relationships and self-presentation strategies with makeup behaviour serving as a common factor for self-expression and enhancement. This study conducted an online survey to investigate the link between narcissistic personality and makeup behaviour among Thai university students using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-35) and makeup behaviour assessment. Participants were asked to rate their engagement in makeup-related activities, such as makeup application, skincare routines, and fragrance usage. Statistical analyses were employed to examine correlations between narcissistic personality traits and makeup behaviour. Results revealed gender disparities in makeup behaviour, with women exhibiting higher levels of engagement in makeup, cleansing, and skincare compared to men. Narcissistic personality traits, particularly the need for attention and a sense of grandeur, significantly influenced makeup behaviour. Furthermore, men with higher praise for the body tended to prioritize skincare and fragrance, while women with strong leadership and praise for the body tendencies exhibited increased makeup usage. In conclusion, this study speculates that self-assurance regarding one's appearance could be associated with an assertive mind-set and a conscious desire for self-improvement in one's physical presentation. Furthermore, this study offers valuable insights into human behaviour and self-presentation strategies, with implications for future research and practical interventions aimed at promoting psychological well-being and self-expression.

Keywords: Makeup behaviour; Narcissistic personality; Thai adolescents; Gender difference**Introduction**

Narcissistic personality is a personality trait characterized by a focus on oneself, positive feelings about oneself, such as confidence and a sense of superiority, and a desire to maintain these feelings [1]. Fromm argued that narcissistic personality traits are present in everyone and that they are necessary for human survival [2]. However, the term is often used with nuances of vanity and superficial beauty. Kernberg listed characteristics of a pathological narcissistic personality such as excessive self-absorption, enormous

ambition, grandiose fantasies, immoderate reliance on praise, and a strong desire for glory, power, and beauty; he highlighted that these characteristics manifest through a lack of empathy and the ability to love others, a chronic sense of emptiness, and the exploitation of others [3]. Furthermore, individuals with a high level of narcissistic personality exhibit characteristics such as a desire to attract attention from others and being conspicuously full of confidence [4], as well as being strongly extroverted, egotistical,

competitive, aggressive, and lacking in empathy [5]. Gabbard identified the existence of narcissistic personality types, such as the oblivious narcissist, who pays no attention to those around them, and the hyper-vigilant narcissist, who is overly concerned with the reactions of those around them [6]. However, Okano argued that the two types are not clearly distinguishable and change cyclically through emotional experiences of sin or guilt [7].

Narcissistic personality is primarily observed from puberty to adolescence and is increasing among adolescents [8,9]. Young individuals have a strong attachment to fashion because it supports them emotionally, emphasizes intimacy with their peers, and allows them to create their own values and intimately express themselves, all of which are believed to be related to a narcissistic personality [10]. Fashion, in this case, includes not only clothing but also makeup.

In a study of narcissistic personality and its relationship to makeup, Torii and Torii found that women with a high narcissistic personality tended to use eyeliner and nail polish to make themselves more noticeable [11]. Torii and Torii also found that women with highly narcissistic personalities were greatly interested in makeup and had a moderate self-evaluation of their natural appearance [12]. Regarding the relationship between self-grooming behaviour and narcissistic personality in men, Torii found that the more proactive a man is with self-grooming, the higher his narcissistic personality is; moreover, men who are highly concerned with their appearance and have no objection to having their unadorned faces seen in public are more likely to have a narcissistic personality and be highly self-assertive [13]. In a comparison between men and women concerning the relationship between specific makeup behaviour and narcissistic personality, Hiramatsu found that men's makeup behaviour was determined by 'narcissistic personality', with the subscales being determined by 'leadership' and partially by the 'need for attention', while women's makeup behaviour was determined by 'narcissistic personality', with the subscales being partially determined by 'leadership', 'self-conviction', and 'need for attention' [14].

However, the lifestyle, behaviour, and values of a group differ depending on the culture, society, and environment that the group belongs to. In a comparative examination of the makeup consciousness and makeup behaviour of young Japanese and Thai men and women, Hiramatsu found that the structure of makeup consciousness ('conformity', 'individuality', 'sympathy') and makeup behaviour ('skincare', 'makeup', 'cleansing', 'fragrance') was broadly similar between Japanese and Thai individuals; however, the makeup consciousness that determined makeup behaviour differed. The makeup behaviour of Thai men was determined by the makeup consciousness of 'conformity', 'individuality', and 'sympathy', whereas the makeup behaviour of Japanese men was regulated by 'individuality' and 'sympathy'. The makeup behaviour of Thai women was regulated by the makeup consciousness of 'conformity', 'individuality', and 'sympathy', whereas the makeup behaviour of Japanese women was determined by 'individuality' [15]. Furthermore, in a comparative study of self-consciousness and other-consciousness in determining the makeup behaviour of young Japanese and Thai men and women, Hiramatsu found that the makeup behaviour of Thai men and women was generally determined by public-self-consciousness, with Thai men's makeup

behaviour partially determined by imaginal-other-consciousness; Japanese men's makeup behaviour being partially determined by private-self-consciousness, external-other-consciousness, and imaginal-other-consciousness; and Japanese women's makeup behaviour being partially determined by internal-other-consciousness [16]. Therefore, differences between Japanese and Thai individuals can be observed regarding makeup consciousness, self-consciousness, and other-consciousness, which determine makeup behaviour. Consequently, it can be hypothesized that the relationship between makeup behaviour and narcissistic personality differs depending on the culture, society, and environment to which a group belongs.

Following Hiramatsu [14,15], this comparative study examined the relationship between makeup behaviour and narcissistic personality in young Thai men and women, by comparing them with Japanese individuals.

Materials and Methods

Survey methods, period, and participants

An online survey was conducted among students at a national university in Bangkok, Thailand, from July 2022 to January 2023, using Google Forms. As an ethical consideration, the purpose of the study, the fact that responses were voluntary, and that no individuals would be identified, were clearly stated at the top of the Google Form. To create questions in the Thai language, a Japanese individual, who completed graduate school in Thailand and spoke Thai at a native level, translated the question items from Japanese into Thai. Before being used, the equivalence of the question items was confirmed by multiple Thai individuals.

The sample comprised 83 men ($M = 19.96$ years old, $SD = 1.49$) and 305 women ($M = 19.96$ years old, $SD = 1.17$).

Survey contents

1) Makeup behaviour

To determine real-world makeup behaviour, 20 makeup behaviour items were selected and participants were asked to respond to how frequently they performed each makeup behaviour using a five-point scale, ranging from (1) 'never' to (5) 'always', and scores were calculated.

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare defined the type of behaviour that 'makeup' refers to as follows: 'The term 'cosmetic' as used in this Act refers to items which are intended to be used on the human body by rubbing, sprinkling, or other similar means, aiming to clean, beautify, and increase the attractiveness, alter the appearance, or to keep the skin or hair in good condition, which has mild effects on the human body' [17]. However, this study followed Hiramatsu's definition of makeup, which provided a more detailed definition based on reality [18]. The 20 items selected included: makeup behaviour related to decoration such as foundation, eye shadow, and hair styling; makeup behaviour related to skin care such as lotion and cream; and makeup behaviour related to fragrance such as perfume and deodorant.

2) Narcissistic personality

The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-35), developed by Konishi, et al. [19] was used. Considering the characteristics of

narcissistic personality disorder from the perspective that it exists as an extension of narcissistic personality, this scale was created to measure the narcissistic personality of healthy individuals. It comprises five subscales: 'need for attention', a strong expectation that by presenting oneself as desirable, others will pay attention; 'sense of grandeur', the perception of oneself as someone with abilities superior to others; 'leadership', a proactive attitude of seeking to fully and clearly express one's opinions and thoughts; 'praise for the body', indulgence in and confidence in one's own body; and 'self-conviction', a positive and confident view of oneself regarding the actions one takes. A higher total score on the items indicates a higher level of narcissistic personality. To examine the relationship between makeup behaviour and narcissistic personality, this study analyzed not only narcissistic personality but also its constituent subscales.

Participants indicated the extent to which each item applied to them using a five-point scale, ranging from (1) 'does not apply' to (5) 'applies', and scores were totaled. Excluding items that were inappropriate from the standpoint of internal consistency, such as 'I am not a modest person' and 'I want to show off my body to others', simple scores (a method of summing the scores of items that loaded highly on each subscale and dividing the sum by the number of items to make each subscale clearer) were calculated and used as analytical data (need for attention: $\alpha = .78$, sense of grandeur: $\alpha = .75$, leadership: $\alpha = .80$, praise for the body: $\alpha = .76$, self-conviction: $\alpha = .67$, narcissistic personality: $\alpha = .92$). To examine sex differences, after confirming equality of variance with Levene's test, performing

an Aspin-Welch t-test for items with unequal variance and a Student t-test for other items indicated that men were significantly more conscious of a 'sense of grandeur' than women.

3) Demographic information

Participants were asked to provide their age and gender. Regarding gender, sexual minorities were taken into consideration and three options were set: male, female, and other. In this study, only data from respondents who answered male or female were analyzed.

Results

The structure of makeup behaviour

To determine the structure of makeup behaviour, a principal component analysis was conducted based on the average ratings. The selection of principal components was based on the Kaiser-Guttman criterion of a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0.

As a result (Table 1), the first principal component was named 'makeup' because items such as 'eye makeup' and 'base makeup' contributed significantly ($\alpha = 0.83$). The second principal component was named 'cleansing' because items such as 'nose pack' and 'facial pack' contributed significantly ($\alpha = 0.80$). The third principal component was named 'skincare' because items such as 'moisturizing lips' and 'sunscreen' contributed significantly ($\alpha = 0.78$). The fourth principal component was named 'fragrance' because items such as 'deodorant' and 'perfume' contributed significantly ($\alpha = 0.70$).

Table 1. Makeup behaviour (principal component analysis, equamax rotation)

	1	2	3	4
	Makeup	Cleansing	Skincare	Fragrance
Eye makeup	0.75	0.09	0.27	0.17
Foundation	0.75	0.12	0.31	0.09
Eyebrow trimming	0.71	0.19	0.28	0.03
Manicure	0.57	0.28	0.10	0.30
Piercings/earrings	0.57	0.17	-0.12	0.31
Hair colour	0.55	0.52	0.00	0.18
Nose packs	0.11	0.85	0.20	0.10
Face packs	0.21	0.80	0.29	0.15
Oil control	0.17	0.77	0.20	0.08
Hair removal	0.23	0.35	0.27	0.02
Lip moisturizer	0.38	0.11	0.72	0.08
Sunscreen	0.13	0.31	0.68	0.21
Facial moisturizer	0.16	0.30	0.67	0.15
Facial treatment	0.25	0.11	0.62	0.27
Facial cleansing	0.16	0.28	0.46	0.18
Scalp cleansing	-0.01	0.11	0.31	-0.08
Deodorant	0.09	-0.08	0.09	0.82
Perfume/cologne	0.13	0.07	0.17	0.77
Moisturizing hands, feet, elbows, and knees	0.01	0.40	0.31	0.60
Hair styling	0.32	0.19	-0.29	0.56
Eigenvalue	3.14	3.01	2.85	2.39
Cumulative contribution ratio	15.68	30.73	44.98	56.95
α	0.83	0.80	0.78	0.70

These four principal components were used to calculate the simple scores (a method of summing the scores of items that loaded highly on each subscale and dividing the sum by the number of items to make each subscale clearer) and used as data for the analysis.

Gender differences in makeup behaviour

To examine gender differences in each principal component

of makeup behaviour, after confirming equality of variance with Levene's test, an Aspin-Welch t-test was performed for items with unequal variance, and a Student's t-test was conducted for other items.

The results (Table 2) indicated that women were significantly more likely than men to exhibit 'makeup' ($t(297) = -9.69, p < .001$), 'cleansing' ($t(298) = -5.80, p < .001$), and 'skincare' ($t(71.62) = -6.41, p < .001$) behaviour.

Table 2. Gender differences in makeup behaviour (t-test)

	Male		Female		T-value	Significance criteria
	M	SD	M	SD		
Makeup	1.74	0.83	3.09	1.01	-9.69	***
Cleansing	2.55	1.07	3.35	0.93	-5.80	***
Skincare	3.32	0.93	4.15	0.69	-6.41	***
Fragrance	2.90	0.89	2.93	1.00	-0.20	

*** $p < .001$

Narcissistic personality that determines makeup behaviour

To clarify the 'narcissistic personality' that determines makeup behaviour, a simple regression analysis with makeup behaviour as the dependent variable and 'narcissistic personality' as the explanatory variable was conducted.

Men (Table 3) showed a significant correlation between 'skincare' ($\beta = 0.35, p < .05$) and 'fragrance' ($\beta = 0.45, p < .001$), whereas women (Table 4) showed a significant correlation between 'makeup' ($\beta = 0.31, p < .001$), 'skincare' ($\beta = 0.19, p < .01$), and 'fragrance' ($\beta = 0.17, p < .01$).

Table 3. Narcissistic personality tendencies that determine makeup behaviour (men, forced entry)

	Makeup	Cleansing	Skincare	Fragrance	
	β	β	β	β	
Narcissistic personality	0.17	0.20	0.35	*	0.45
R^2	0.03	0.04	0.12		0.20

*** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Table 4. Narcissistic personality tendencies that determine makeup behaviour (women, forced entry)

	makeup	cleansing	skincare	fragrance	
	β	β	β	β	
Narcissistic personality	0.31	0.09	0.19	0.17	**
R^2	0.10	0.01	0.04	0.03	

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$

Subscales of narcissistic personality that determines makeup behaviour

To clarify the subscales of 'narcissistic personality' that determine makeup behaviour, multiple regression analysis was performed using a stepwise variable selection method, with makeup behaviour as the dependent variable and each subscale of 'narcissistic personality' as the explanatory variables.

Among men (Table 5), 'praise for the body' ($\beta = 0.30, p < .05$) was significantly selected on both the 'makeup' subscale, as well as 'skincare' ($\beta = 0.50, p < .001$), while for 'fragrance', the most significantly selected answer was 'leadership' ($\beta = 0.56, p < .001$). Among women (Table 6), 'leadership' ($\beta = 0.28, p < .001$) and 'praise for the body' ($\beta = 0.42, p < .05$) were significantly selected for 'makeup'. Meanwhile, 'praise for the body' was significantly selected for all three other subscales: 'cleansing' ($\beta = 0.23, p < .01$), 'skincare' ($\beta = 0.30, p < .001$), and 'fragrance' ($\beta = 0.30, p < .001$).

Table 5. Narcissistic personality tendencies that determine makeup behaviour (men, stepwise)

	Makeup		Cleansing		Skincare		Fragrance	
	<i>B</i>		<i>B</i>		<i>B</i>		<i>B</i>	
Need for attention								
Sense of grandeur								
Leadership							0.56	***
Praise for the body	0.30	*			0.50	***		
Self conviction								
R^2	0.09				0.25		0.27	

*** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Table 6. Narcissistic personality tendencies that determine makeup behaviour (women, stepwise)

	Makeup		Cleansing		Skincare		Fragrance	
	<i>B</i>		<i>B</i>		<i>B</i>		<i>B</i>	
Need for attention								
Sense of grandeur								
Leadership	0.28	***						
Praise for the body	0.42	***	0.23	**	0.30	***	0.30	***
Self conviction								
R^2	0.27		0.05		0.09		0.09	

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$

Discussion

Makeup behaviour

The structure of makeup behaviour had four principal components: 'makeup', 'cleansing', 'skincare', and 'fragrance'. Consistent with previous studies, these results correspond to the purpose of makeup, which is to care for and decorate the skin [18].

With women performing 'makeup', 'cleansing', and 'skincare' more than men, gender differences in makeup behaviour were noted in all principal components except for 'fragrance', which was performed equally among both sexes. These results, which emphasise differences in makeup behaviour between young Thai men and women with the exception of 'fragrance', are similar to those of Hiramatsu [15].

Narcissistic personality that determines makeup behaviour

When examining whether makeup behaviour can be determined by 'narcissistic personality', this study found that men with higher

'narcissistic personality' tended to value 'skincare' and 'fragrance'. Furthermore, women were more likely to use 'makeup', 'skincare', and 'fragrance', which are associated with a higher 'narcissistic personality'. Previous studies reported that individuals with high narcissistic personalities are highly interested in appearance; however, the results of this study indicated that the higher the narcissistic personality, the more the individual performs makeup behaviour to manipulate impressions, albeit partially. The concept of narcissistic personality is generally believed to originate with the ancient Greek myth of Narcissus, a young man so taken by the beauty of his own body that he brought about his own death. However, speculations have been made regarding the desire to use makeup to make oneself appear more attractive. These speculations may have led to the finding that 'narcissistic personality' did not specify 'cleansing' for cleaning the skin as it does not comprise decorative makeup; moreover, any change in appearance from cleansing is difficult for others to identify.

Incidentally, one reason why winter clothing sells well in hot Thailand is that workers want to show off that they work for

successful companies where the air conditioning is so strong that they require warm clothes [20]. Owing to uniforms being a status symbol in Thailand, even nurses have been found to wear uniforms to work, not to maintain hygiene, but to demonstrate their status [21]. Such behaviour is likely influenced by narcissistic personality, and further detailed studies are required.

To determine the relationship between makeup behaviour and 'narcissistic personality', an examination of how makeup behaviour is determined by the subscales that make up 'narcissistic personality' found that men wore more 'makeup' when their 'praise for the body'-consciousness was higher. While most men do not wear 'makeup', it is assumed that those who do are confident about their body and appearance, and wear 'makeup' to make themselves appear attractive. Furthermore, the higher their 'praise for the body'-consciousness, the more they tended to practice 'skincare'. Similar to 'makeup', it can be inferred that these individuals are confident in their own bodies and appearances, and practice 'skincare' to make themselves appear more attractive. Additionally, higher 'leadership'-consciousness was associated with valuing 'fragrance'. A proactive attitude of attempting to fully and clearly express one's opinions and thoughts can be paraphrased as self-assertiveness, and it is surmised that individuals use 'fragrance' to olfactorily express their self-image through space, to make a widespread impression on others.

Among women, higher levels of 'leadership' and 'praise for the body'-consciousness were associated with wearing 'makeup'. 'Makeup' is decorative, colorful, and expresses individuality. Therefore, it can be surmised that women use makeup for self-assertion, as part of fully and clearly expressing their opinions and thoughts, and simultaneously being confident in their body and appearance, to make themselves appear more attractive. 'Cleansing' was practiced more by individuals with higher 'praise for the body'-consciousness. Given that women who have confidence in their own bodies and wear 'makeup' to present themselves attractively also practice 'cleansing' to remove the makeup, it can be speculated that they are doing 'cleansing' because they are concerned about dirt on their skin. 'Skincare' was practiced more by women with higher 'praise for the body'-consciousness. Thai individuals, similar to Japanese individuals, tend to desire white skin (whitening), with beautiful skin being a status symbol [22]. Therefore, it can be assumed that those who are more confident about their bodies are more likely to take care of their skin. 'Fragrance' was practiced more by women with higher 'praise for the body'-consciousness. 'Fragrance' is not visual makeup; however, it is makeup that expresses one's image through a spatial extension via the olfactory sense. Therefore, it can be assumed that they are confident in their bodies and appearances, and use 'fragrance' to make themselves appear more attractive.

Makeup behaviour for both men and women was generally determined by the two subscales of 'leadership', which indicates a proactive attitude of trying to fully and clearly express one's opinions and thoughts, and 'praise for the body', which indicates an indulgence in and confidence in one's own body. Sugawara pointed out that confidence in both their unadorned and made-up faces is what drives women to actively wear makeup [23]. However, Nakao

pointed out that younger women are more likely to want to use makeup to make themselves appear beautiful and to enjoy changing their appearance by applying makeup [24]. Therefore, this study speculated that confidence in one's appearance may be related to a proactive attitude and consciousness of wanting to change one's appearance; however, additional detailed studies are required.

Future Studies

Even though Hiramatsu found that the makeup behaviour of Japanese individuals was determined by 'narcissistic personality' [14], this study found that this is only partially true for Thai individuals, and the subscales that determine makeup behaviour differ. Therefore, future studies should examine the generalizability of these findings in more diverse samples and examine their relationship to makeup consciousness.

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Conflict of Interest

Author declare no conflict of interest.

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