

**CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE USE OF COSMETICS: THE CASE OF
NJORO SUB-COUNTY, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the Degree in Masters of Arts in Religious Studies of Egerton University**

EGERTON UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER, 2025

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in this University or any other for the award of a degree.

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Recommendation

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father Eliud, my siblings Frida and Edwin. Special dedication to my mum Zipporah who bequeathed vital life skills and supported me to appreciate the astronomic value of education at a very tender age. Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank God for His sufficient grace during my study. I am indebted to Egerton University (Faculty of Arts and Social Science) for facilitating my training. Special thanks go to all the staff of the Department of Philosophy, History and Religion (PHR) who in one way or the other assisted me and for the good relations maintained throughout the study. I owe heartfelt intellectual debts to my supervisors Dr. Joshua Ayiamba and Dr. David Nderitu for their guidance, constructive criticism, patience and their devotion to the work throughout the study. Their readiness to assist has contributed to the success of this work. I also commend my research participants for their immense support in the field. I also thank my enumerators for their help in collecting data during field research. Finally, I sincerely thank my friends for their encouragement and assistance when I needed it most. I highly appreciate my fellow graduate students and all who participated in making my research a success.

ABSTRACT

The use of cosmetic products for beautification has a long history dating back to ancient civilizations. In Christianity, there is a debate about whether using cosmetics aligns with Christian faith and practice. This study set to assess the Christian views regarding the use of cosmetics for beautification in Njoro sub-County in Nakuru County. The study specifically determined the Christian understanding of the biblical teachings concerning the use of cosmetic products, it also examined the traditions of various Christian denominations on the use of cosmetic products and lastly it established the controversy regarding the use of cosmetics by Christians in Njoro sub-County, Nakuru County. It examined the conservative, moderate and liberal Christian views on the use of cosmetic in Njoro sub-County. The target population comprised of Christians from various denominations in the sub-County. Njoro sub-County was picked because of its diversity in terms of the Christian faith comprising the main stream churches, African independent churches, and new religious movements. The study was informed by the Conservative Theory of religion by Paul O'Callaghan and the Liberalism Theory of religion as explained by George Sinclair and Guas Gerald. The study adopted the Cross-sectional Qualitative research design. The research participants included the clergy and members from various churches. A sample of 150 respondents were purposively selected to represent views of the above study population. In-depth oral interviews, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and observation methods were used to collect data. The raw data was cleaned by leaving out information irrelevant to the study. Codes were developed by systematically making line-by-line analysis then highlighting key aspects related to study objectives. The analysis of data was from a comparative approach. The responses were grouped into dominant themes where the perspectives of the conservative, moderate and liberal Christians regarding the use of cosmetics were compared. The findings of this research indicated various standpoint towards the use of cosmetics with some Christians denouncing while others supporting its use and others strive to find a balance between the use and non-use of cosmetics. These differing views were facilitated by different biblical interpretations, church doctrines, cultural norms and historical practices related to cosmetic use. These diverse perspectives further highlight the challenges Christians face in reconciling personal expression with faith-based values, underscoring the importance of open discussions within congregations. This study will add to the knowledge regarding the use of cosmetics within Christian denominations and how to deal with issues that may arise regarding its use rises with its usage.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACK	Anglican Church of Kenya
AIC	African Inland Church
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
PAG	Pentecostal Assembly of God
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
WWCK	World Wide Church of Kenya

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The history of cosmetics dated back thousands of ages to prehistoric development of human existence (Park & Hong, 2024b). In these ancient cultures, cosmetics were made using natural elements like minerals, animal fat plants and oils. Women and men used these products purposed for beautification health and hygiene. Cultural beauty practices have been integral to human civilization from ancient times, serving not only to enhance physical appearance but also to express identity, social status, and spiritual beliefs. Ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome, and India developed sophisticated beauty rituals that combined natural ingredients with symbolic meaning.

The ancient Egypt linked beauty with divine protection and standing in society and therefore bathing in milk and honey to keep the skin healthy, kohl used to make the eyes look good and henna to decorate and conduct rituals were all things that were related to beauty. The rituals were religious too connecting the individual to the higher powers and position in the society. Similarly, the Mesopotamian cultures dwelled on skin treatment with clay and herb mask, aromatic oil and healing and the perfume and the collective spiritual cleansing in the open baths (McMullen & Dell'Acqua, 2023).

Like Greeks and Romans also held that, beauty was related to individual health as well a social image. Skin and hair care was done with olive oil and the herbal teas and luxurious perfumes and fancy hairstyles were used to show power and status. The holistic concept of beauty and wellness is further exhibited by the Romans who came up with the concept of public baths which fused hygiene, relaxation, and socialization. Balanced and natural remedies such as neem, sandalwood and turmeric to treat the skin and promote overall harmony are among the practices that were introduced by ancient India to treat the human body holistically (Jess, 2021).

The cultural attitudes to beauty in African are closely connected with the morals, spirituality and social identity. Beauty in most African cultures is not simply a matter of physical appearance but also the manifestation of goodness, morality, and the ethical conduct of an individual where the identical words can be used to mean beauty and virtue (Balogun *et al.*, 2024). The customary elements of scarification, body painting, and markings on the face, which are taken as symbols of identity, courage, spiritual orientation and social status, support the relation between beauty in appearance and inner power. Natural ingredients such as shear

butter, black soap and minerals are not only used to make it look good, but also to shield and heal (Ikuenobe, 2016). Additionally, beauty practices often carry communal and spiritual significance, such as rites of passage that mark life transitions and connect individuals to their heritage and community (Awoniyi, 2015).

The cosmetics in the traditional Kenyan societies were closely interconnected with cultural beliefs and traditions and served as the means of improving the beauty and at the same time of attaining the significance of identity, social status, and spirituality. These cosmetic activities were usually social and ritualistic, which were surrounded with rites and passing of knowledge between two generations of human beings through ceremonies and passing of knowledge (Nyambura *et al.*, 2013). To illustrate this, using cosmetics in special occasions like festivals, weddings or even initiation ceremonies strengthened social ties and continued cultural heritage. Ancestors were also revered through such rituals and continuity of a culture was preserved, certain colours and patterns had very deep symbolic meanings.

Also Kenyan ethnic communities utilized the cosmetics as a marker of social roles, age and clan affiliation. Indicatively, in the Cushitic and Nilotic society's body markings, scarification and the use of natural tints like ochre, white chalk (nzu) and red clay were part of the traditions of beauty and were also used to honor ancestral figures (Njoroge, 2015). These practices went beyond aesthetics to carry deep cultural meanings, often representing rites of passage, bravery, or belonging to a specific community. Such rituals played a crucial role in reinforcing community identity and social structure.

With these civilizations, we easily observe that beauty was closely connected with health, spirituality and social values, and usually featured elaborate practices, natural substances, and innovative expression. Most of these practices that have stood the test of time dictate the modern standards of beauty and treatments, which stress the classic human desire to obtain beauty not just through the level of aesthetics but also through well-being, self-identification, and culture.

Early Christianity took a keen interest in cosmetics because it interpreted cosmetics as unnatural means of building surface appearance to conceal underlying spiritual and ethical vices. Makeup was sometimes seen as false improvements of the real inner goodness and genuineness. The early Christian traditions often included biblically warnings on excess emphasis on exterior ornamentation and the importance of inner character and spiritual purity over outward decoration (Martin, 2014). This has adopted unending discussions within Christianity regarding the morality of cosmetics, emphasizing on vanity pride and sincerity of faith.

In the current Christian culture the use of cosmetics has also become an issue of concern across numerous denominations. Some Christians face the use of cosmetics claiming that it is against certain religious doctrines and practices. They believe in the natural appearance of the human body founded on the ground that body is God's dwelling place. On the other hand, there are Christians who are open to new ideologies and philosophies on matters cosmetics (Farley, 2020). Thus, some Christians are denounce beauty cosmetics although others have no issue with cosmetics application. However, moderate Christians who contend that the use of cosmetics should be determined by firm conditions (Wooddell, 2010). This means that there are cases where it is proper to use cosmetics and there are other instances where use of cosmetics would be untimely. The moderate Christians also supporter for modest request of cosmetics without causing pointless distress to others especially in sacred environments.

According to Holliday and Taylor (2006), the role of cosmetics in Christianity has sparked ongoing debates about their morality. Some Christians argue that God values internal beauty and the heart far more than outer appearance, threatening against the pride and vanity that can come with makeup. Others see no issue with using cosmetics, as long as it doesn't undermine humility or spiritual priorities. There's also the term "cosmetic Christians," which critiques those who focus more on looking devout or polished in church than on genuine faith (Holliday & Taylor, 2006). The authors state that different Christian traditions and individuals appeal to different religious sources to justify their religious beliefs on the use of cosmetics and to support their arguments in the controversy. Some of them make references to scriptures while others appropriate their choice to religious traditions and personal choices.

In Kenya, Christian values have different views regarding the use of cosmetics and beauty standards. Some Christian groups think the use of cosmetics should not be allowed in the churches (Kinuthia, 2020). For the reason that make-up vary the physical outlook of the human body. Kinuthia further argues that for some Christians view this alteration of the physical look as an act that goes against the nature of God and His creation which 'He was satisfied with.' They argue that in this case, no human is tolerable to alter God's perfect creation. Kinuthia also observes that for some Christians in Kenya, the use of cosmetics is considered as the falsification of one's identity to deceive other people and a denial of their own self existence. He adds that on the other hand, there are churches in Kenya which do not have any issues with the use of cosmetic. For them the use of cosmetics is an individual choice where one can be allowed to use cosmetics to meet their beauty desires.

Jenkins' (2006) declares that there are other Christian denominations and persons who backing the use of cosmetics. He argues that Christians should seek perfection of the physical

outlook and that the church should not define one individual life style. Furthermore, Jenkins opposes that liberal Christians are open to new ideologies and that the idea of cosmetics is something that can be accepted inside churches in Kenya. These two conflicting situations have been arbitrated by moderate Christians who take a middle ground on the use of cosmetics.

Whether it is based on the scriptures, ethnicities or individual choices, the disagreement about the use of cosmetics still stands among Christians. This controversy necessitates the following questions: What is the Christian viewpoint regarding the use of make up? What are the Biblical teachings concerning the use of cosmetics and, what do the church doctrines hold about the use of cosmetics? Following the varying Christian perspectives on the use of cosmetics, it was essential to create a contemporary view on the use of cosmetics in a Christian multidenominational society like the Njoro sub-County, Nakuru County. Njoro sub-County is diverse in terms of Christian faith as it has many and different Christian denominations including the main stream churches, African independent churches, and the new religious movements.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In many African communities, physical appearance is increasingly influenced by global beauty trends. Among Christians in Njoro sub-County, the use of cosmetics remains controversial. A question arises on what are that Christian perspectives towards the use of cosmetics in Njoro sub county Nakuru County? Despite the ongoing debate, little empirical research has been explored on how Christians in this region interpret and negotiate the use of cosmetics in everyday life. This study seeks to fill the gap by assessing Christian perspective on the cosmetics use, focusing on generational and denominational differences. In order to fill the foregoing gap, this study answers the following questions: what is the bible understanding by Christians on the use of cosmetic products? What are the traditions of different Christian's denominations regarding the use of cosmetics products in Njoro sub-County? What are the areas of controversy regarding the use of cosmetics by Christians in Njoro sub-County?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 Broad Objective

The main objective was to explore the Christian views on the use of cosmetics for beautification of the body in Njoro sub-County, Nakuru County.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

This study was done under the following specific objectives:

- i. To determine the Christian understanding of the Biblical teachings on the use of cosmetic products.
- ii. To examine the tradition of various Christian denominations on the use of cosmetic products in Njoro sub-County, Nakuru County.
- iii. To establish the areas of controversy regarding the use of cosmetics by Christians in Njoro sub-County, Nakuru County.

1.4 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

- i. What is the Christian understanding of the Biblical teachings on the use of cosmetic products?
- ii. What are the traditions of various Christian denominations regarding the use of cosmetic products in Njoro sub-County?
- iii. What are the areas of controversy regarding the use of cosmetics by Christians in Njoro sub-County?

1.5 Justification to the Study

Use of cosmetic products for aesthetics purposes has caused controversy in the church. The Conservative Christians are against the whole idea whereas the liberalists argue that there is nothing wrong in using any means of beautification. There are also those who take a moderate stand on the use of cosmetics. However, no detailed study has been carried out to consider views for or against the use of cosmetics for aesthetics purposes in a multi-denominational Njoro sub-county. The current study focused on the detailed explanation on the existing controversy among Christians on the use of cosmetics products in Njoro sub-County.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focused on the use of cosmetics for aesthetic purpose only. The study drew its samples from Christians only, both female and male from Njoro sub-County as the area of study. Njoro sub-County was chosen for this study because as a cosmopolitan society it has diverse Christian denominations from which data can be obtained.

The main limitation of the study was the unwillingness of some respondents to give information relating to the use of various cosmetic products. However, I assured them that the data they give will be used for academic resolution only and will be kept confidential. I explained that the results will be used to generate generalizable knowledge regarding the use of cosmetic product by Christians in Njoro sub County.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Aesthetics: A branch of philosophy that focuses on the meaning of beauty and values.

Beautification: It is the process of improving the physical appearance of someone by use of cosmetics.

Cosmetics: Skin-care products intended to enhance the outlook of the physical body of a human. They are usually prepared from a variety of organic components. Some are acquired from natural sources and others are synthetic. It also refers to a product that is applied to the human body for the purpose of washing, enhancing, boost up attractiveness and changing one's outlook.

Ideology: a thought or set of concepts or view point attributed to an distinct, person or set of individuals, mainly when those principles are upheld for non-purely epistemic drives.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This section covers the literature review, theoretical framework and conceptual framework. It divides the review into various parts and sections based on the specific objectives of the study: The Christian understanding of the Biblical teachings on the use of cosmetics; various church teachings on the use of cosmetics; and controversies on the use of cosmetics by Christians in Kenya. The chapter also presents the theoretical framework and conceptual framework that guided the discussions in the study.

2.2 The Christian Understanding of the Biblical Teachings on the Use of Cosmetic Products

Solomon-Etefia and Onu (2022) explain that cosmetics are usually taken to mean only the makeup products, such as lipstick, mascara, eye shadow, foundation, blush, highlighter, bronzer, and several other makeup product. cosmetics are composed of mixtures of chemical compounds drawn from either natural or synthetic sources meant to be used for beautification of the human body (Solomon-Etefia & Onu, 2022). From their work it is agreeable that cosmetics are intended to improve or change one's appearance. Consequently, these facial cosmetics can be used to cover blemishes, highlight natural features like the eyebrows and eyelashes, add color to the face, or completely alter the face appearance to impersonate another person.

The controversy about the use of beauty cosmetics is vivid in the Bible. This can be clearly drawn from various verses that are both in support of and against the use of facial cosmetics from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament certain specific characters have been used to explain the use of cosmetics. These include one of Job's daughters "Keren-happuch". The name means "Horn of the Black (Eye) Paint" in Hebrew, referring to a container or box used to keep makeup, such as kohl or eye makeup (Job 42:14). Further there are reference from the New Testament such as Luke 7:37-46 which illustrate the use cosmetics such as perfumed oil. Moreover, there are renowned women in the bible like the cunning Queen Jezebel, whom the prophet Jeremiah and Ezekiel portray as a prostitute (Ezekiel 23:40; 2 Kings 9:30; Jeremiah 4:30). Queen Jezebel was said to be in possession of gold, precious stones, and balsam oil which were among the expensive presents carried on her epic voyage to see King Solomon (1 Kings 10:2, 10). 'The balsam oil and the excellent oil' were proudly displayed with the silver and gold when King Hezekiah showed the valuables of his

residence to envoys from Babylon (Isaiah 39:1, 2). From these two perspectives this research will seek to understand the scriptural controversy towards the use and none use of facial cosmetics by Christians in Njoro sub-County.

Certain verses in the New Testament and Old Testament sections of the teaching by the early churches appear to be against the use of cosmetics (Rees, 2023). Rees claims that some Pauline epistles such as the book of Timothy and 1 Peter do quote that our bodies were made in the likeness of God. In 1 Timothy 2:9–10, Paul speaks against cosmetics by appealing to the women folk to dress modestly. "I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and a propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds..." an implication that cosmetics were marked 'evil'.

Rees's work further reviews the topic of women using cosmetics or adornments in Isaiah 3:16-24. He said that the passage describes God's judgment on the women of Zion for their pride and excessive adornment. It foretells a time when their beauty and finery will be taken away, replaced by suffering and humility He further noted that Isaiah 3:16-24 and Jeremiah 4:30 warns women against idolization of ornaments such as cosmetics. Rees said that some women choose not to wear makeup saying that it is more valuable to cultivate heavenly character. Therefore, the New Testament and the Old Testament texts that address cosmetics usage according to Rees helped address the issue of cosmetics and human modesty. This study will seek to establish the influence of biblical principles on Christians who choose not to wear cosmetics for beauty purposes in Njoro sub-County.

The controversy on the use of cosmetics in the scriptures may leave Christians at the crossroad on whether to live by the biblical teachings or to abide by the norms and customs of the cosmetic world (Synnott, 1990). Synnott adds that some Christians are confused as to whether make up is permissible for the people of faith. Nonetheless, the Bible does not give any specific guidelines concerning its use, but biblical principles guide us on its use. Therefore, according to Synnott, it is not improper to appear attractive on the exterior or even to wear adornments designed to enhance one's outward beauty. What is bad according to him is when makeup becomes an idol. For instance, when someone is trying to use outward beauty in a way to seduce, allure, or otherwise manipulate. Synnott (1990) may not conclusively made a stand as to whether support or denounce use of cosmetics but rather he gives various other aspects under which cosmetics is wrongly used. His work gives an insight on grounds on which cosmetics should and should not be used to inform Christians on the use of cosmetics aligned to biblical principles which this study compared to the responses from the Christians in Njoro sub-County.

From the Bible, Proverbs 31:30 teaches Christians that what is on the outside belongs to the world and is transitory. After our physical body perishes, our souls continue to exist. Proverbs serve as a reminder to Christians that "charm is deceptive, and beauty is transient." 1 Peter 3:4-5, further explains that we should in fact place more value on the beauty of the 'inner self'. The unfading beauty of a gentle and peaceful spirit, is of great importance in God's sight. According to Peter, this is how pious women in the past who trusted in God used to decorate themselves. From these scriptural reference concerning cosmetics there is nothing wrong with highlighting our outward beauty (Travis *et al.*, 2000). It is acceptable to gloss your lips, line your eyelids, curl your hair, or wear glittering jewelry but we must always keep in mind that the soul, or inner self, is what matters most. Travis's work impacts this study since it expressed a free will mind while using cosmetics without forgetting the aspects of beauty according to the Bible.

From further studies conducted, the Bible does not deny anyone the value of a good appearance but it places the emphasis on inner beauty over physical beauty (Braun, 2009). Consequently, this study notes that modesty should be the norm when addressing this issue of cosmetics. Although Braun's work places its emphasis on human modesty, more investigations need to be done to get a clear foundation of the Biblical principles that either supports or opposes the use of cosmetics and it helped to find out if such an understanding came up from the responses by Christians in Njoro Sub County.

To conclude, a part of the Bible seems create the impression that what is on the outside is transient and a product of the world that deteriorates Christian spirituality. The argument is not that it is improper to appear attractive on the exterior or even to wear adornments designed to enhance one's outward beauty but the adornment that will make a Christian look different from the way God created them. Other verses in the Bible seems to imply that it is important to glorify God with your body in whatever way you choose, being sure your aim is the proper one, with a view of the eternal rather than the transient, temporary things of today. This study the opinion of the Christians in Njoro sub-County on their understanding of Biblical teaching on the use of cosmetics.

2.3 The Tradition of Various Christian Denominations on the Use of Cosmetic Products in Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County

Teachings on the use of cosmetics from the various denominations are reviewed and will be compared to the responses of the Christians in Njoro sub-County. While some Christians believe wearing makeup is acceptable, others believe that being makeup free and

natural is the best way to please God (Fitzpatrick, 2014). According to Fitzpatrick, many people of faith have differing views on whether individuals should wear makeup and jewelry. The bible never condemns, nor does it even briefly mention either. Therefore, this work aligns with the liberal ideology of ‘freedom’ that opens grounds for freedom of choice by Christians. The study will seek to access the “free will mind” and how it influences the decision of many Christian faithful’s to use cosmetics in Njoro sub County.

Just as Christian men may enjoy donning a sharp suit, a striking tie, or a dapper watch, Christian women can wear makeup with no problem (Synnott, 1990). However, Synnott says that we must keep in mind that, in the grand scheme of things, external appearance is meaningless. This author further implies that, not every woman or man desires to place emphasis on external appearance. Many feels called to push away that side of themselves to concentrate solely on their internal being. Synnott’s observation greatly impacts Christian’s modesty in our modern society because it insists that “Whatever you do, as long as you know what's important in honoring the God-created soul and putting salvation first.” It does not matter if you celebrate or reject outward appearance. Therefore, this study explored the obligations of Christians in Njoro Sub County in honoring God despite wanting to meet their desires. Teachings on the use of cosmetics from select denominations were reviewed and compared to the responses of the Christians in Njoro sub-County.

2.3.1. Seventh Day Adventist and the Use of Cosmetics

According to (Braun, 1996), the Seventh-Day Adventists (SDA) or just the Adventists have inherited a tendency towards a plain tradition. This is because they originate from within several Christian churches that adhered to and promoted simplicity of physical appearance. Braun further notes that recently, well-known Seventh-day Adventist evangelists have preached and written extensively about the subject of adornment. According to Braun the use of cosmetics has since been forbidden by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church from the ancient times up to date. Generally traditional views within the Seventh-day Adventist community reflect a broader understanding of beauty as a gift from God meant for stewardship rather than self-indulgence. This perspective fosters a culture where individuals are encouraged to seek authenticity and inner fulfillment through their relationship with God, rather than relying on external enhancements. This study established further the views of the SDA Church members from Njoro sub-County by understanding the traditions and norms of the SDA Church.

The Adventists who wear make-up are perceived as being worldly (Orero, 2024). Orero says that women from the seventh day Adventist are forbidden from wearing cosmetics which portrays the Church as being rather conservative. In making her own opinion about this, she

takes a position like the one previously pointed out that beauty should not come from outward appearance, rather, it should be that of your inner self which is of great worth in God's sight. This study explored ideas from individual members of SDA Church in Njoro sub-County to determine if all maintained the conservative stand on the issue of use of cosmetics.

2.3.2 Roman Catholic Church Teaching on Cosmetics

The Roman Catholic Church (also referred here as the Catholic Church) raises all categories of stand regarding the use of Cosmetics. Some elements of the church appear to hold a strict conservative adherence to belief about refrain for use of cosmetics (Morgan, 1997). There is also another category of Catholic faith that allow people to be free to use cosmetics while there are some moderate Catholics who maintain that the use of cosmetics for beautification depend on situations and personal preference (Greeley, 2004).

The conservative Catholic stand on the use of cosmetics inspired by the Catechism of the Catholic Church cautions believers not to "idolize physical perfection". According to him the Catholics use of cosmetics is viewed as an alteration of Gods works of creation (Dolan, 1993). From Dolans' work, catholic teachings have no room for liberals' ideologies when it comes to cosmetics thus creating tension between the Catholic liberalist and Conservatist. This study examined the catholic view on the use of cosmetics from the Catholic faithful's in Njoro Sub County.

According to Dunn (2005), some teachings of the Catholic Church portray a conservative stand on the use of cosmetics. Accordingly, the teachings about women who paint their faces with the aid of yellow pigments, black powders or by applying dyes that alters the natural features regard that as an assault to the divine handwork of God, a distortion of the truth (Dunn, 2005) He rather takes a very extreme conservative stand when he points out that cosmetic wearing women will not see God. Meaning that they will go to Hell. He implies that wearing cosmetics is a sin and has grave consequences. In the same like of argument also Jones and his colleagues condemns the use of cosmetics for body beautification (Jones *et al.*, 1990). These authors say this is because cosmetics is used to deceive or create a false mask. It is used completely alter the appearance such that the actual appearance cannot be ascertained. In this case, both Dunn and Jones agree that the act is a sin against God and should not be practiced by Christians which aligns with the conservative traditions of the Catholic Church which was sought from the respondents in Njoro sub-County.

From some Catholic's perspective the sins of the world are too great. These sins which lead most souls to hell, are sins of the flesh (Stobie, 2011). Stobie notes that certain fashions are going to be introduced which will offend our Lord very much. Stobie further elucidates

from the book of 1 Peter that beauty should not come from outward adornment. Instead, Stobie says beauty should be that of your inner self. Stobie's work is impacted this study as it stressed on the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight according to the conservative Christians. This work is significant because it observed the inner beauty being of more importance compared to the outer beauty.

Liberal Catholics tend to embrace a more progressive stance on personal expression, including the use of cosmetics (Schneiders, 2004). Schneiders explains that liberal Catholic's often view cosmetics as a means of self-expression and empowerment. He says that this group generally supports the idea that individuals should have the freedom to choose how they present themselves, including their use of makeup and beauty products. The liberal Catholic's viewpoint on cosmetic usage is important to this study since it brings into line with a broader recognition of traditional views and modern ideals of personal choices, such as using cosmetics, which does not fundamentally conflict with their faith.

Moderate Catholics may hold a more nuanced view. While they may appreciate the aesthetic and personal self-assurance that cosmetics can provide, they might also stress moderation and the position of inner beauty over outward appearance (Hume, 2013). Hume argues that this group often reflects the traditional Catholic teaching that encourages modesty and humility. From Hume's suggestion it clear that while cosmetics can be acceptable, they should not lead to vanity or distract from one's spiritual life. His work enabled to have an open mindset towards the use of cosmetics rather than being judgmental towards the liberals and conservative Christians.

2.3.3. Repentance and Holiness Ministries Teaching on Cosmetics

The Repentance and Holiness Ministry, has a strict doctrine regarding the use of cosmetics by women (Nandi *et al.*, 2015). The church views women's bodies as sources of impurity and temptation, placing the burden of proof of holiness primarily on them (Nandi *et al.*, 2015). They explained that Women are expected to adopt certain mannerisms and practices deemed appropriate for a religious holy life, including covering up to avoid provoking men's sexual desires. Nandi *et al.*, (2015), further explain that Prophet Owuor frequently depicts women as prostitutes and temptresses, suggesting that their appearance can lead men to sin (Parsitau & van Klinken, 2020). They argue that the church's teachings reflect misogynistic underpinnings, placing the responsibility for men's sexual behavior on women and their bodies. By enforcing strict guidelines on appearance, the church perpetuates a culture of body shaming and control, where women's worth is linked to their adherence to standards of modesty and purity.

Backed up with many relevant Biblical scriptures, Vance (1999) claims that ladies from the Ministry of Holiness and Repentance Ministries have been warned to avoid cosmetic products at all cost for it draws them to immorality. The author explains that there are higher chances for any lady to fall into immorality if she applies cosmetic products (Vance, 1999). Moreover, Sanders observes that some of these products are perceived to be harmful to human health. The Ministry of Repentance and Holiness maintains a conservative thought and strongly holds on to its doctrines. For the followers of the church, the use of cosmetics is ungodly and cannot be accepted in their congregation. Christians of the Holiness and Repentance strictly adhere to their conservative norms on the issue of cosmetics that align to this research. The research sought to understand the strict prohibition of cosmetics by Christians of the Repentance and Holiness Ministry and this is backed by responses from the selected participants in Njoro sub-County.

2.3.4. United Pentecostal Church of East Africa Teachings on Cosmetics

Women in United Pentecostal Churches do not allow the use of cosmetics in accordance to the Church guidelines (Lawless, 2005). Lawless notes that Church leaders cite the Bible for this unusual modesty guideline which emphasizes on women modesty. He explores the modesty of women in the church and says that it helps in building the character of a person. Therefore, the alteration of the physical appearance is indeed wrong and deceiving to other people. This work detects human modesty within the United Pentecostal Church. It guided the research to seek more information on the aspects of the conservatism and liberalist Christians concerning the physical outlook of a person in Njoro sub-county.

Believers of United Pentecostal churches believe that holiness starts on the inside but should be reflected on the outside. When a woman is immodest, she thinks of herself as a seductive and acts accordingly (Brown, 1986). To avoid such problems, Brown says that United Pentecostal churches set these modesty guidelines for women which includes the non-use of cosmetic products alongside other rule of modesty. This observation is in line with the traditional Christians norms towards cosmetics though in the absence of modern Christian society who are open to new ideologies towards cosmetics usage. Thus, this observation sought to explore human modesty in the contemporary society it in Njoro sub-County.

2.3.5. Evangelical Church Teachings on Cosmetics

The evangelicals have a liberal thought when it comes to wearing of cosmetics (Hearn, 2002). Hearn further observes that though the Evangelicals have no problem with the use cosmetics but it should not be idolized making one forget the importance of the inner beauty. The use of cosmetics is witnessed in most Kenyan evangelical churches such as the “Oracle of

God” founded by Reverend Natasha who is open to the use cosmetics. Rev Natasha is known to be a brand ambassador of a brand known as “Phoina beauty”. The Evangelical Churches are a clear indication of the rise of liberalist within the Christian society who have challenged the conservative Christian traditions. This study will seek to find out elements of liberal stand on the use foaming the evangelicals in Njoro sub-County.

Some of the issues in Christian religion are controversial. In most cases, religious believers wonder how to go about them since most churches have lost interest on such issues. Fewer Conservatist church will be found handling such controversial issues based on biblical teachings while other churches would prefer letting believers to have their freedom of understanding the church and the out world.

2.4 The Areas of Controversy Regarding Use of Cosmetics by Christians in Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County

The use of cosmetics has long been controversial from a Christian standpoint, generating a range of interpretations and perspectives. These controversies frequently result from varying interpretations of scriptural scriptures, cultural norms, and individual beliefs.

Supplementary studies on the issue of cosmetic and its expression of physical and behavioral outlook has been developed by various other scholars. It is involving as our thoughts, behaviors and interests in physical outlooks remains disturbing (Chochinov, 2006). The author explains that the issues of physical outlook may be seen as unnecessary, but it may be considered as important to other people. He further notes that cosmetic ornamentation is usually discussed in the context of church norms. The church requires norms to function and Christians should choose to live by the religious principles. Chochinov (2006) reasons that it is possible to pervert God's aspirations for people by being overly concerned with laws and regulations. Chochinov says that while principles remain constant across time, circumstances, and cultural variety, standards may alter. However, the author claims that if we understand the role that standards play in the cosmetics issue, then we should be able to appreciate the challenges that have arisen with the use of cosmetics. From Chochinovs’ work therefore, beautification is based on one’s decisions and interceding with God. This dwells on such challenges faced by Christians that will form a good basis to investigate further the different aspects that influence the use of cosmetics by Christians in Njoro Sub County.

The idea of worldliness and modesty is one of the main points of debate. Certain biblical verses, such 1 Timothy 2:9–10, are interpreted by some Christians as forbidding expensive clothing, gold, pearls, or intricate hairstyles, implying that external adornment shouldn't be the

main goal (Brand, 2000). From this viewpoint, the author explains that virtue and inner beauty are more significant than outward beauty. Drawing from Brands' studies, some religious groups consider makeup to be a part of "the world," a means of vanity and seduction. Although brand seems to have a conservative thought on the issues of cosmetics while citing various scriptures, some Christians contend that such interpretations can be unduly restricted and since the Bible makes no specific mention of wearing cosmetics. Brands work is important to this study since it helped address the Christian views of cosmetics from a biblical perspective.

The idea that God resides in the human body and that it shouldn't be changed is another contentious issue (Hamilton Jr, 2006). Accordingly, to some Christians applying cosmetics changes one's physical appearance in a way that is inconsistent with God's creation, suggesting that people cannot modify what God has made flawless. This view therefore frequently results in the conclusion that any kind of aesthetic improvement deviates from God's original plan.

On the other hand, there are Christians who contend that makeup can improve what is already there and restore nature's order, such as by masking acne or scars (McMahen, 2012). This author elucidates that some Christians may have the urge to perfect their physical appearance by applying makeup. This different point of view therefore generated a controversy which will enable an in-depth study on the issue of cosmetics usage on the body as the temple of God.

The intent behind using cosmetics also plays a significant role in the debate. Some argue that if makeup is used with sinful intentions, such as to deceive or attract undue attention, it is morally wrong (Drew-Bear, 1994). The author mentions that since the age of renaissance, Christian figures such as St Augustine condemned use of makeup arguing that it created a false appearance. In contrast, others believe that makeup can be used for personal grooming and to enhance one's appearance without sinful intentions. The author further says that St. Alphonsus Liguori stated that women could follow local customs of wearing makeup without committing mortal sin if they don't have sinful intentions. This study seeks to further investigate the morality of cosmetics usage.

Christian capitalism has glimmered debates about the suitability of using religious subjects in commercial projects. The controversy over cosmetics practice among Christians replicates broader pressures within the faith regarding consumerism and vanity. Many Christians view attractiveness products as possibly conflicting with spiritual values, often associating them with worldly enticements. The rise of cosmetics brands that identify as "Christian" raises critical questions about the legitimacy of intertwining business with religious identity (Minister, 2012).

However, some advocates argue that Christians are called to occupy with all sectors, including beauty, to motivation culture positively. Beaudoin pawns that beauty brands may give women who love Jesus and makeup a place, and that Christians are expected to influence every industry for Christ, including the beauty industry. From Beaudoin's perspective there is no biblical prohibition against makeup, thus allowing for personal appearance within a Christian framework (Beaudoin, 2006). This ongoing dialogue has been crucial for understanding the controversy in the evolving nature of cosmetics, the Christian faith and their economic status in the society.

In conclusion, Christian viewpoint on makeup is nuanced and diverse. Individuals and denominations frequently have different opinions, and there is no one right solution. Because they feel that cosmetics are worldly and take away from inner beauty, some Christians completely shun them. Others see cosmetics as a means of improving oneself and expressing oneself, provided it is applied discreetly and with good intentions. Understanding the fundamental ideas and driving forces, consulting the Bible and one's own convictions for direction, and politely conversing with people who have opposing views are all crucial.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Conservatism and Liberalism Theories of Religion

These theories were propagated by O'Callaghan in 2019. Conservatism theory applies to individuals who are right wing, despite the religious challenges whereas liberalism theory applies to those who are progressive and left wing (O'Callaghan, 2019). This classification makes it simple to recognize, comprehend, and contrast people, positions, and institutions.

In the conservatism theory, people live by certain rules defined by religious doctrines, political incites and further social aspects. O'Callaghan further states that the religious conservative doctrines were established since the early Church to define the religious life of a Christian. These old traditional Christian doctrines were drawn from Biblical teachings and are still in effect in our Church today.

Liberalism on the other hand, is the state where people are open to new philosophies and ideologies. They therefore, divert away from the conservatism by incorporating new ideas into the old systems.

These theories are significant in this study as they address the conservative traditions of the church and the liberal ideologies in the modern Christian society with specific reference to the use of cosmetics by Christians. Conservatism underlines that a part of human society based on certain traditions either religious or human principles hold on to old traditions rather

than embrace new philosophical ideas that blend in the modern world. In this sense the Conservatist Christians have maintained their old traditions of makeup free and a natural look which according to them it is among the proper ways of honoring God.

On the other hand, the liberals are hesitant when it comes to traditions because they believe freedom is a normative requirement. For a Christian believer, the synthesis created between nature and freedom, Christ and the Spirit, hope and faith, and the Christian spirit is and must be a highly personal one (Kohn, 2009). Therefore, to them the use of cosmetics is out a person free will and the church should not dictate Christians' life style.

Moreover, there exists moderate Christians who are neither conservative nor liberalist. This category of Christians chooses to incorporate the modern systems of Christianity into the old traditions or system of Christianity. The moderate Christians in character are not judgmental towards any issue but rather they would choose to be rational towards conflicting issues within the church. In this study the moderate Christians neither support nor oppose the use of cosmetics by Christians. The application of both Conservatism and Liberalism Theories of religion to explore the Christian views about the use of cosmetics for bodily adornment acknowledges the balance brought out by the moderate Christians.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The framework conceptualized the use and non-use of cosmetics as the dependent variable. For this study use and non-use of cosmetic products depends on several factors which have a direct influence on the choice. These factors include the Biblical teachings, Church doctrine and the individual convictions. Due to their direct impact in the choice to use or not use cosmetics, they are the independent variables. However, there are other unseen factors that may influence the choice to use make up or not. Some of them emanate from the influence by religion and others may emanate from certain socio-economic dispositions. They may also influence the factors that determine the choice to use make up or not. These are the intervening variables and include issues like individual spirituality, indigenous cultural beliefs, affordability of cosmetics, prevailing secular ideas about cosmetics, availability of beauty products etc.

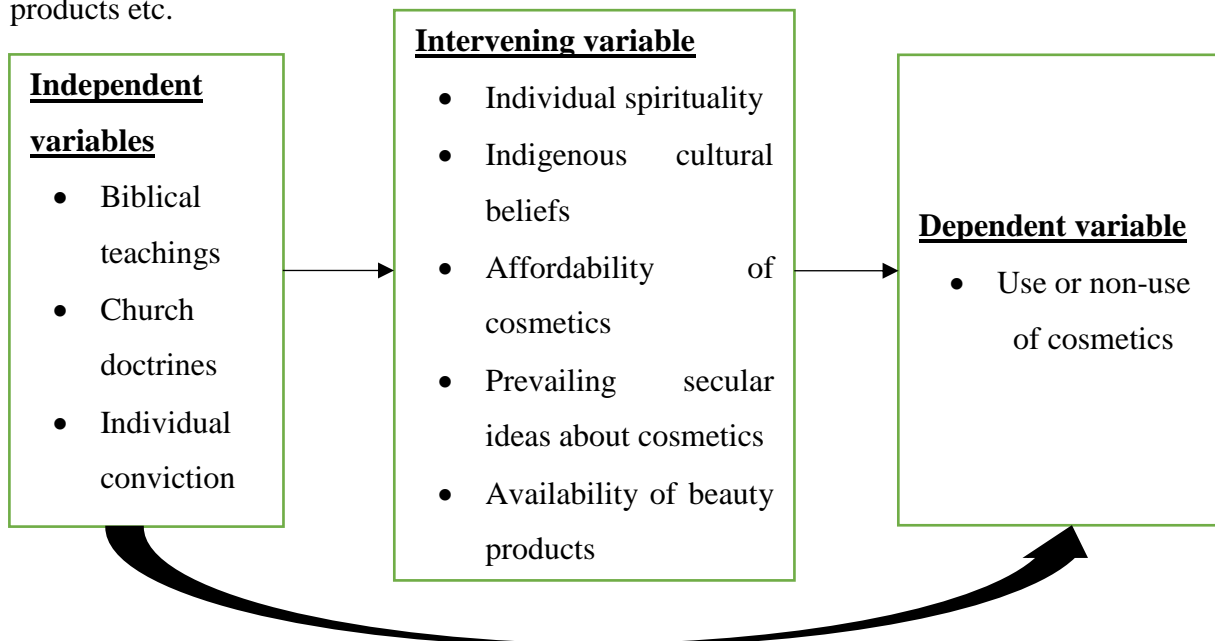


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the description of the study area, research design, and target population. It also covers sampling procedures and sample size, data collection methods, ethical considerations, and data analysis.

3.2 Area of Study

The research was conducted in Njoro sub-County. The respondents were drawn from various churches within Njoro Sub-County. Below is the map of Njoro sub-County and its location in the. Map of the Kenya.

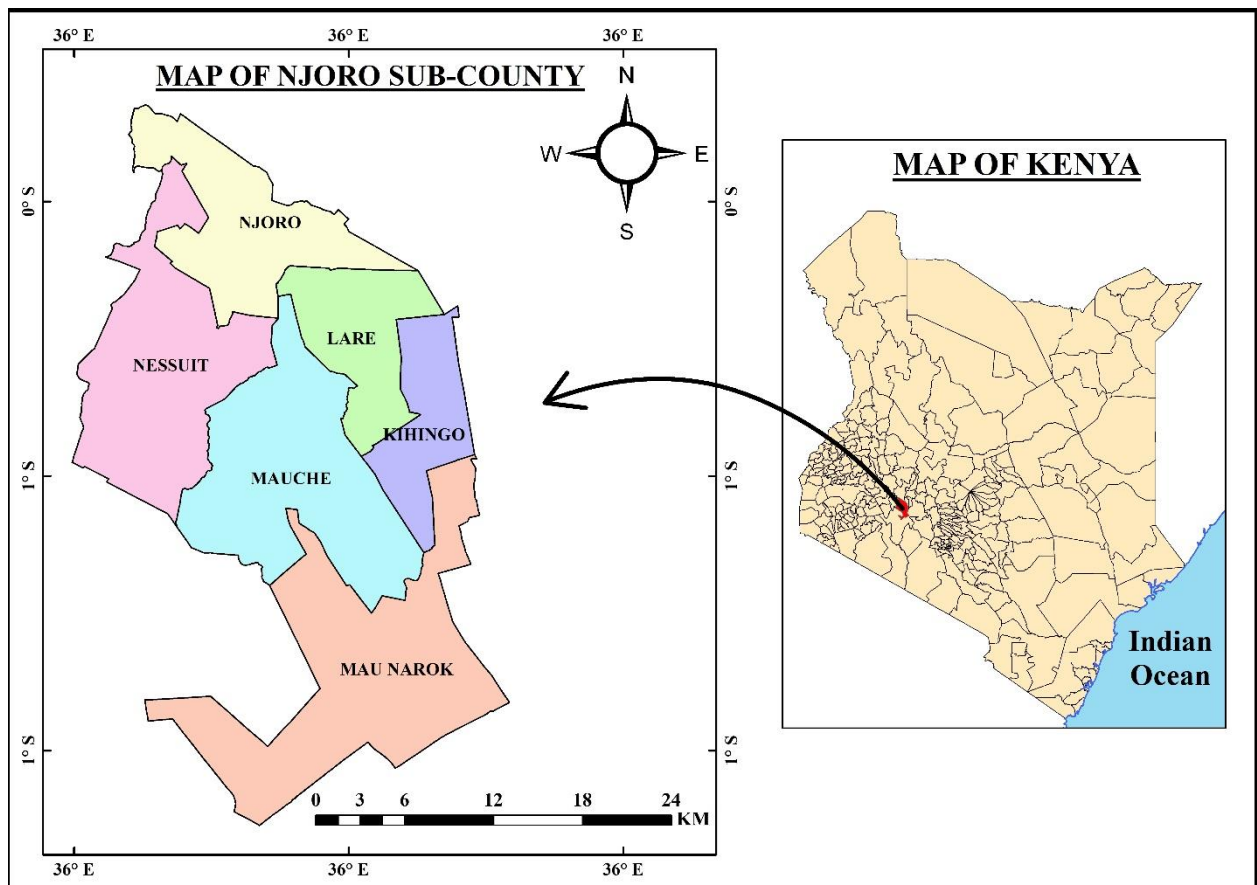


Figure 3.1: Map of Njoro sub-County

Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/maps/kenya-map/>

Njoro sub-County, located in Nakuru County, Kenya, is a multicultural region marked by cultural diversity, driven by commercial activities, industrial enterprises, and the presence of higher education institutions such as Egerton University and the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO). These institutions have nurtured employment

chances for both inhabitants and people from across the country. Agriculture serves as the foundation of Njoro's economy, with the area outshining in the production of maize, wheat, vegetables, horticulture, dairy farming, and timber milling. Despite encounters such as market gluts and inadequate storage facilities, agriculture remains a vital sector with important growth possible. The proximity to Nakuru Town enhances investment opportunities in banking and commerce.

Religious variety is prominent in Njoro sub-County, with Christianity being the leading faith. Denominations such as the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, African Inland Church, Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostal Churches, and others contribute to the community's social cohesion. The sub-county benefits from its strategic location within the South Rift tourist circuit, appealing visitors to landmarks like Lord Maurice Egerton Castle. Strong urban-rural linkages further support agricultural productivity and access to markets. Overall, Njoro combines agricultural strength with educational and industrial activities to sustain its dynamic and culturally rich population.

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design. This design facilitates detailed assessment of the subject matter. Study investigator chose this procedure because it blends the deep evaluation of the Christian views regarding the use of cosmetics. Procedure design is more appropriate because it is easy to work with; the procedure uses methods of evaluation that involve qualitative research designs.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Population

Purposive non-probability sampling technique was used to select suitable participants in this study. The population sample size was determined by purposive choice of relevant participants from the various Christian denominations which were chosen randomly for oral interviews and focus group discussions. The sample comprised 150 Christian participants, drawn as 10 participants from each of 15 denominations selected for this study. The various set of respondents comprised of 2 clergy members from each denomination for oral interviews and at least 8 regular church members to take part in focus group discussions including youths and elderly member from each denomination in Njoro sub-County. This research considered both male and female participants from each of the denominations.

3.5. Tools of Research

Data was collected by using in-depth oral interviews, focused group discussions. Observational method was also considered for this study.

3.6 Research Instrument

Data was compiled through interview guides, focused group discussion guides, observation checklist and secondary data sources.

3.6.1 Structured Interview

Structured interview was selected for this study because they are systematic and objective during data collection. These structured interviews targeted the clergy from each denomination. Interview guide developed a list of 6 questions which were open ended for the oral interviews. The interview questions elicited dialogues and open inquiries, which encouraged sessions of questions that were based on the study objectives. I as the researcher personally conducted the interviews with specific individuals with at least 15 minutes for each individual. These scheduled oral interviews elicited information from respondents, allowing them to give information regarding the different perspectives on the use or non-use of cosmetics by Christians.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

The study used 15 focus group discussions: Each FGD group comprised of a maximum of 8 members purposely selected from each Christian denomination used for this study. The FGD targeted the youth and the ordinary members of the church. The FGDs. were carefully arranged to obtain information from the participants' opinions and perceptions regarding the use of cosmetics by Christians. FGD method is reliable as it allows the researcher to acquire large amounts of information which is also effective for exploration and identification of various aspects while studying the research participants.

3.6.3. Observation

This study also used observation method. A check list was developed for general observation which had specific observable aspects to determine whether Christians wore cosmetics or not. The checklist included the following cosmetics items in the table below that was observed against various denominations.

Table 3.1: Observational Checklist for Use of Cosmetics

Denomination	Cosmetics							
	Lip- stick	Lip- liner	Lip- gloss	Eye- shadow	Eye- liner	Eye- lashes	Mascara	Facial foundation/skin powder

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

Common themes were established from the respondents that guided the analysis which involved a systematic transcription of obtained data from audio taping to written form on paper in exact verbatim report as obtained from the respondents. The main themes that were developed include the acts modesty, vanity, inner virtues, and lastly social and cultural norms which were discussed in relation to the study objectives. This was then keyed into a computer in different categories as follows: interviews with church clergy and focused group discussions with the elderly church members and the youths. Then the raw data was cleaned by sieving and leaving out information irrelevant to the study. Transcription was followed by development of codes. In this case, each group of the transcripts was read systematically making line-by-line analysis identifying and highlighting key aspects in relation to the study objectives. These key aspects are the *in vivo (emic)* coding which were then translated into and compared with analytic (*etic*) coding leading to categorization of similar codes and finally enabled the determination of relevant themes towards the use and non-use of cosmetics in relation to the study objectives. The analysis of data was from a comparative approach. The obtained information was compared to liberalism and conservative aspects of religion towards the use or non-use of cosmetics.

All the data was interpreted and tabulated for quick reference, comparisons, and cross checking before presentation in prose form.

3.8 Validity and Reliability.

A pilot test was conducted in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments and the data collected.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study proposal was submitted to the Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Committee (EUISERC) for ethical review and it was cleared (EUISERC APP/337/2024). Furthermore, research permit from the national commission for science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) was obtained (NACOSTI/P/24/33757). While conducting research the information about the study and aims was explained to the respondents so that they could give informed consent. The researcher also explained about the purpose of study and gave the respondents freedom to voluntarily participate in the study. The respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and understands the findings of the study in relation to its stated objectives. The results are prepared according to each research objective. The conversation participates these findings with existing literature. By aligning the results with the study's aims, this chapter offers a comprehensive understanding of how the research contributes to the field and addresses the key questions posed at the outset.

Observational data discloses that many churches commonly accept the use of cosmetics such as lipstick, lip-gloss, eyeshadow, eyeliner, eyelashes, mascara and facial foundation reflecting cultural norms that link personal grooming to self-esteem and individuality. However, outstanding differences occur among denominations. Some churches approve a conservative stance, avoiding certain cosmetics particularly eye makeup due to doctrinal beliefs highlighting reserve and simplicity. These differences highlight how religious traditions and ethnic values form attitudes toward appearance, balancing external expression with spiritual principles. While many congregations view cosmetics as a natural part of self-presentation, others restrict their use to prioritize inner beauty and humility. This multiplicity shows the multifaceted relationship between faith, identity, and societal trends, suggesting that individual grooming within religious groups is influenced by evolving cultural contexts and theological interpretations. Ongoing dialogue is essential to understand how these dynamics affect community life and individual expression in faith settings.

Table 4.1: Observational Data Collected During Field Study

Denomination		Cosmetics							
		Lip-stick	Lip-liner	Lip-gloss	Eye-shadow	Eye-liner	Eye-lashes	Mascara	Facial foundation/skin powder
African	in church	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Presbyterian	church of east Africa	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Seventh day	Adventist	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	√
PAG		√	√	√	X	X	X	X	√
Roman catholic	church	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Worldwide	church of Kenya	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	√
Winners	chapel	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Repentance and holiness		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gospel outreach	church	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Bible	way church	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	√
Full gospel	church of Kenya	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Baptist Church		√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X
Evangelical Church	of Kenya	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Notes: The symbols (X) were used to mark where the item selected was not observed to be used while symbol (√) was used to identify the cosmetics item that was used during observation.

4.2 Christian Understanding of the Biblical Teachings on the Use of Cosmetic Products

Part of this study was to analyze the Christian understanding of the biblical teachings towards the use of cosmetics. From the various impersonations in the Bible regarding the use of cosmetics, it is thought-provoking to define what ought to be typical practice by Christians. As is evident in the previous Chapter, there are some verses in the Bible that portray use of cosmetics as improper, while in other parts it is described as tolerable practice. This leads to mixed beliefs and debates among Christians regarding use of cosmetics. Some Christians decide to strike the middle ground regarding the practice, thus tagging them as moderates. Due to various stands, detailed areas of disagreements regarding the use of cosmetics arise as pointed out in the previous chapter. The various Christian understanding about the Biblical teachings on the use of cosmetics as obtained from the respondents are discussed here.

4.2.1 Use of Cosmetic is Forbidden in the Bible

Some respondents pointed out that the use of cosmetics for the purpose of beautification is categorically forbidden in the Bible. One of the clergy men quoted Proverbs 31:30 by stating that,

“A person who uses charm to gain favor might not always have genuine intentions or deep character.”

This verse highlights the distinction between superficial attributes and deeper qualities that hold lasting value. Similarly, two participants in two separate FGDs; one at the African Inland Church (AIC) in Egerton Chapel and another one from the PCEA Church in Njoro both referring to the same verse expressed their knowledge about the temporal nature of the human body in the Bible. The AIC participant mentioned that,

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”

The participants at the PCEA FGD explained that:

“The verse highlights the temporary nature of physical beauty and encourages a focus on reverence for God.”

This verse proposes that charm and beauty, while tempting, are fleeting and can be deceptive (Postrel, 2013). Postrel seems to make an equivalent observation regarding the meaning of that verse. He explains that charm often includes superficial traits or behaviors meant to attract or please others. The author makes a reference to the same verse quoted by the respondent from the AIC Egerton above emphasizing that a woman who has a reverent relationship with God is truly worthy of praise without worrying about her external beauty and physical enhancements. Postrel’s suggestion places of interest on the temporary nature of physical beauty and inspires

a focus on reverence for God. This further implied that while physical appearance can be important, it should not overshadow spiritual qualities as implied (Louw, 2015). This underscores the idea that while physical attributes like charm and beauty can be alluring, they are temporary and not the true measure of a person's worth. As an alternative, qualities that reflect a deep-seated reverence for God and a promise to living a life of honesty and kindness are what make a person sincerely worthy.

A clergy respondent from the Pentecostal church referred to a different passage in the Bible, that is, 1 Timothy 2:9-10. He supposed that the verse provided a hint on how Christians should present themselves modestly, graciously and properly. According to this respondent, this is realized by not decorating oneself, with extravagant hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good actions, suitable for women who profess to worship God. The impression of Christian biblical philosophy regarding the use of cosmetics is intensely rooted in principles of simplicity, intention modesty, and heart attitude (Dubay, 1999). This then implied that the Christian notion of modesty ranges beyond external appearance, surrounding a profound, moral, ethical framework spiritual grounds that guides daily life. This is rooted in propriety, humility and self-awareness, inspiring believers to align their actions with faith values and respect for oneself and others.

A Pastor from the Anglican Church of Kenya quoted 1 Peter 3:3-4 and further explained that,

“Beauty should not come from outward adornment. Rather, it should be that of inner self of the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.”

This explains that modesty as defined in the bible, emphasizes a life style that prioritizes inner beauty over outward adornment (Walter, 2024). Therefore, the believers are encouraged to focus on the inner character and connection with God rather than their appearance. To be specific, 1 Timothy 2:9-10 instructs women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, suggesting that true beauty is found in good deeds rather than in extravagant clothing or adornments (Ruether, 2014).

A pastor during interview mentioned that,

“The purpose behind the use of cosmetics and adornments is a vital aspect of Christian teaching.”

He cited 1 Samuel 16:7 which emphasizes that God looks at the heart. The verse additionally explains that it is an indication that the motivation behind one's intentions are significant (Schroer & Staubli, 2017). The authors hint to a question that may arise, for instance, are

Christians seeking to enhance their natural beauty in a way that honors God, or are they trying to conform to societal pressures and expectations? Their deduction is that when Christians consider using cosmetics, they should reflect on their intentions which is one of the principles put across on cosmetic usage.

A church member from the Seventh Day Adventist during a focus group discussion quoted Proverbs 31:30 which states that “Beauty is described as fleeting” meaning it can fade with time. This member explained that,

“Physical appearance is out of choice which can change due to aging or other factors. For example, a woman who cultivates her character and lives with a sense of spiritual purpose maintains a value that goes beyond physical appearance.”

Kreeft (1992) delves into the issue of choices that can help in cultivating inner qualities such as kindness, wisdom, and faith which do not diminish in old age (Kreeft, 1992). He further explains that Christians are reminded to ask themselves critical questions regarding their choices: Do my clothes and cosmetics draw attention to myself or to God? Are they reflective of a heart that seeks to honor Christ?

Similarly, Morrison-Atkins (2021) observes that the Biblical principle of modesty can be applied today by encouraging Christians to dress in a way that is respectful and dignified, avoiding clothing that is overly revealing or provocative (Morrison-Atkins, 2021). Morrison notes that this principle extends to the use of cosmetics, suggesting that while they can be used to enhance one's appearance, they should not be the focal point of one's identity. This aligns with the biblical view that states, "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised" (Proverbs 31:30) that was discussed above.

A clergy man of the Bible way church during an oral interview, talked about the principle of simplicity which complements modesty. He explained that,

“Jesus exemplified a simple life and that Christians are encouraged to reflect that simplicity in their appearance and lifestyle.”

In a different interview another respondent from the Anglican church of Kenya brought up a similar thought when he observed that,

“The use of cosmetics should not overshadow one's identity in Christ or distract one from the core values of simplicity and and modesty.”

This does not imply a rejection of all cosmetics or adornments but rather, as Kumar (2019) puts it's, a call to avoid excessive or ostentatious displays that draw attention to oneself. It is further explained that the essence of modesty is to present oneself in a way that honors God and reflects a well-ordered inner life, persuading believers to avoid conforming to worldly standards of

beauty and fashion (Smith, 2016). Moreover, simplicity and modesty assist as a counter-narrative to the dominant culture of cosmetic usage. By accepting these principles, Christians can present a separate identity that reflects their beliefs and values. This not only honors God but also serves as a witness to others, representing that true beauty comes from inside and is categorized by humility and love.

As noted by a respondent who referred to Mathew 5:22-23;

“An outlook that bring into line with biblical principles includes humility and a desire to glorify God rather than oneself.”

Similarly, Christians and especially women are encouraged to cultivate a "gentle and quiet spirit," which is precious in God's sight (Chetry & Malik, 2023). Accordingly, this suggests that the true adornment of a Christian is not found in external enhancements but in the character and virtues that emanate from a heart transformed by Christ. The author further observes that closure on the issue of cosmetics is that Christians face a challenge when it comes to understanding the biblical concerns towards the use of cosmetics. The article tries to raise the biblical principles concerning cosmetics which ensures that Christians' outward appearance does not contradict their inner commitment to live for God's glory.

A member of the Worldwide Church pointed out to the words of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 which say, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies." This is a popular quotation by many Christians who seek to show the value and worth of the human body. Some Christians disclose that the use of cosmetics should not be a means of drawing attention to oneself or fostering vanity. Instead, it should be approached with a mindset of stewardship, recognizing that one's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (Lamont-Turner, 2024). Information on biblical understanding on cosmetic usage, calls for a balanced approach where cosmetics are used sparingly and with the right heart attitude, reflecting a commitment to modesty and simplicity.

4.2.2 Use of Cosmetics is a Personal Choice

In a different argument, a pastor during an interview from the Evangelical Church observed that,

“The use of cosmetics as a personal choice that does not inherently conflict with Christian values.”

This stance is supported by the belief in moderation and modesty, which is derived from biblical passages that the pastor quoted including: 1 Timothy 2:9-10 which says, "I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with

elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God,"; and 1 Peter 3:3-4 1 which says, "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes, rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight".

In addition, a member of Full Gospel Church emphasized that these verses are interpreted as advocating for a modest and moderate approach to appearance, ensuring that the use of cosmetics does not draw undue attention away from inner virtues (Martin, 2020). Martin says the topic of cosmetics should be approached with a flexible and open-minded perspective. He says that Christians are moving from conservatism progressively towards an open mind when approaching conflicting issues such as use of cosmetics. Christians are reminded on the importance of personal freedom in deciding whether to use cosmetics, if it does not lead to idolatry or an excessive focus on physical appearance.

A clergy man from. Winners Chapel while being interviewed distinguish between enhancing one's appearance and idolizing physical beauty. While mentioning Isaiah 3:16-24, He noted that,

“Cosmetics can be used to enhance natural beauty without becoming an idol, provided that the focus remains on inner character and spiritual growth”.

The cultural and historical context of biblical teachings, recognize that attitudes toward cosmetics have varied across time and cultures (Arthur, 2021). The author says this nuanced understanding allows Christians to respect both traditional and contemporary practices. Ultimately, liberal Christians emphasized the cultivation of inner beauty through good character and deeds, aligning with biblical teachings that prioritize inner virtues over external appearance (Libby, 2024). Moreover, by maintaining this balance, Libby says, some Christians see no inherent conflict between using cosmetics and following Christian teachings, if physical appearance does not become an idol.

In contemporary society, where beauty standards are often dictated by media and cultural trends, the biblical principles of modesty and simplicity remain relevant (Frost, 2003). Frost further argues that Christians are called to navigate these pressures by adhering to the values of their faith. The purpose of the biblical teachings as understood by some Christians regarding the use of cosmetics as upheld by Frost is to encourage believers to resist the allure of excessive adornment and instead focus on what is truly valuable—character, integrity, and a heart that seeks to serve others that corresponds with biblical principles as emphasized by various biblical texts mentioned by some respondents above concerning the outward

appearance. However, there are those Christians who have maintained that matters of physical appearance are personal that they should not be used to measure the central concern of spirituality in Christianity.

4.3 The Tradition of Various Christian Denominations on the Use of Cosmetic Products

This research also sought to explore the tradition of various Christian denominations on the use of cosmetic products. Generally, Christianity teaches that beauty is a quality that God possesses. The Lord is beauty, and He endows image-bearers with the ability to both reflect and experience beauty (Taliaferro, 2012). The author notes that God Himself is the secret to beauty, especially as it pertains to Christians. The source of all beauty in the created world is Him as recorded during research.

A Catechist from the Roman Catholic Church said that, *“All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, especially man, who was created in the image and likeness of God.”* This catechist further argued that being drawn to beauty or finding it attractive is not a bad thing as argued by some Christians. Drawing from his response beauty helps us elevate our hearts and brains from the material to the transcendent realm. Beauty is a transcendental to Truth and Goodness—or at least, depending on the philosopher you ask (Taliaferro, 2012). This report suggests that the unbounded perfection of God is revealed in the myriad perfections of beings, including their truthfulness, goodness, and beauty thus adding value to doctrinal teachings towards the use of cosmetics.

Additional, while reviewing Christian doctrines concerning the use of cosmetics, the examination of attitudes towards cosmetics across different Christian denominations discloses a scale of perceptions, each influenced by cultural context, individual interpretation, theological principles of modesty and personal appearance (Blackwell, 2016). For most churches, the doctrinal alarms towards cosmetics might largely be influenced by the above viewpoints either in backing or in opposing the use of cosmetics.

Likewise, the use or non-use of cosmetics among various Christian denominations in Njoro Sub-County reflects a diverse range of beliefs and practices. Each denomination approaches the topic of cosmetics through the lens of its theological principles, cultural context, and denominational or even individual interpretations of scripture. Below is a discussion of the Christian doctrines and traditional practice of use of cosmetics from the perspective of the Roman Catholic Church, Ministry of and Repentance Church, Anglican Church, African Inland Church, Pentecostal Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Baptist Church, Pentecostal Church of East Africa and Evangelical Church.

4.3.1. Roman Catholic Church

Although the Roman Catholic Church doctrines do not outrightly allow the use of cosmetics, generally participants from the Roman Catholic Church had tended towards a moderate stance. While conducting an FGD among the participants from this church one of them said that,

“The Roman Catholics may not have strict doctrines regarding the use of cosmetic products, but rather they emphasize the importance of modesty and humility.”

This is supported by a Roman Catholic Priest from an oral interview who explained that:

“Njoro, as in many parts of Kenya, Catholic teachings may be influenced by local cultural norms.”

From the observational data in the table above, Roman Catholic's were observed to use some cosmetic items although not in an overly exaggerated manner. This observation revealed that the Roman Catholics use cosmetics in moderation. More analysis of literature further revealed that Roman Catholics might use cosmetics to enhance their appearance but are encouraged to avoid excessive vanity and to focus on inner spiritual growth as part of their culture.

The Roman Catholic Church does not unequivocally prohibit the use of cosmetics; rather, it highlights a sensible approach that prioritizes inner beauty and modesty (Mavropoulos, 2024b). He adds that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that while it is acceptable to enhance one's appearance the intention behind it is crucial. The Roman Catholic custom suggests that cosmetics ought not to be used to create a dishonest impression or to indulge in vanity. Instead, they can be seen to enhance natural beauty, if they are used with the right motives (DeCrane, 2004). The author argues that Church cautions against excess use of cosmetics that may lead to vanity or a distorted self-image, aligning with the belief that one's worth is found in their relationship with God rather than their outward appearance.

On the other hand there are Roman Catholics who adopt a more permissive stance on the use of cosmetics, emphasizing individual freedom and personal within the framework of faith (Mavropoulos, 2024a). He explains that some Roman Catholics view cosmetics as a tool for self-expression and enhancing natural, provided it does not lead to vanity or excessive focus on physical appearance. Unlike conservative viewpoints, which may see cosmetics as intrusive with the holiness of the human body as God's creation, liberal Catholics are more open to modern practices, arguing that Modest and thoughtful use aligns with evolving societal norms. Ultimately, their attitude seeks a balance concerning spiritual values and modern aesthetics.

4.3.2. Repentance and Holiness Ministry

The Repentance and Holiness Ministry led by Prophet David Owuor, strictly opposes the use of cosmetics for body beautification. The ministry teaches that women should avoid cosmetics and any other form of body adornment observing such practices as conflicting to holiness and as potential sources of impurity, lust, and temptation (Brownback, 2010).

A group of local church leaders at an oral interview, including a clergy member and an assistant pastor, highlighted that the Repentance and Holiness Ministry, established by Prophet David Owuor, imposes strict guidelines on the use of cosmetics for women. One of them stated that,

“The doctrine of purity views women's bodies as sacred and requires them to honour their bodies through modest dress.”

The doctrine of purity that views women's bodies as sacred emphasizes honouring the body through modest dress as a reflection of inner holiness and respect for God's design (Parsitau *et al.*, 2020). Further this perspective holds that a woman's body is uniquely sacred because of its capacity to bring forth new life, and thus requires reverence expressed outwardly by modest, dignified clothing that conceals rather than reveals the figure. This explains that women should avoid cosmetics that could enhance their appearance or provoke lustful thoughts in men.

During a focus group discussion, a youth leader from Repentance and Holiness Ministry shared that,

“Prophet Owuor's addresses while discouraging even basic products like Vaseline.”

According to this participant, the perception is that such products make women more tempting and divert them from their spiritual accountabilities.

Another participant added that,

“This stance reinforces harmful cultural and gender dynamics, where women's worth is tied to their adherence to modesty standards.”

Modesty is not about restricting freedom but about embodying a spiritual reality where external dress mirrors internal godliness, promoting self-control, respectability, and a sense of sacredness.

This approach encourages women to dress in ways that avoid provoking lust or scandal, thereby honouring both themselves and others and maintaining the distinction between sexes as ordained by God. The clothing serves as a symbol of the sacredness of the female body and a witness to the wearer's spiritual purity and dignity. Additionally, another participant explained that,

“By applying these bodily appearance guidelines, the church endorses body shaming and restricts personal expression.”

This means that applying strict bodily appearance guidelines can lead to body embarrassing by judging individuals’ appearances and restrictions for personal expression, suppressing independence and fostering idealistic or harmful beauty standards within the church community.

The above discussion suggests that women are expected to control sexual morality within their community. The Repentance and Holiness Ministry highlights a life of simplicity and holiness, encouraging an look that reflects one's obligation to God. Members are heartened to avoid cosmetics that may encourage vanity or draw attention to oneself (Nandi *et al.*, 2015). Nandi additionally perceives the doctrinal teachings of the Repentance and Holiness ministry highlights the significance of inner transformation over outward appearance, signifying that true beauty comes from a heart aligned with God’s will. As such, the use of cosmetics is normally disheartened.

The Repentance and Holiness Church as analyzed from observational data in the table directs that they do not use any kind of cosmetics. Typically they adopt a strict conservative stance towards cosmetics, often viewing them as unnecessary adornments that distract from spiritual devotion this, emphasizing on modesty in both dress and demeanor within the Repentance and Holiness ministry (Parsitau *et al.*, 2020). Their approach towards cosmetics has allowed the studies towards conservative aspects of cosmetics by Christians.

4.3.3. Anglican Church of Kenya

The Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) does not have a publicly detailed official stance specifically on the use of cosmetics for body beautification in the available sources. Though, based on overall assumptions on Anglican traditions and Christian principles, the church likely emphasizes personal freedom in such matters provided that the use of cosmetics does not lead to idolatry, vanity, or an excess focus on physical appearance, aligning with broader Christian values of modesty and inner beauty (Ross, 2012).

A pastor from the Anglican Church of Kenya in Njoro mentioned in an oral interview that Anglicans mostly highlight modesty and inner beauty. He explained that,

“While there are no specific rules regarding cosmetics, members are encouraged to reflect on Christian values in their appearance.”

In a different discussion, an elderly woman shared that,

“Cosmetics usage is influenced by cultures.”

She added that,

“Anglicans in Njoro sub-county may use cosmetics in a manner that respects cultural norms while avoiding ostentation.”

Supporting her statement, a youth member of the church explained that,

“Anglicans focus on maintaining modesty and balancing outward appearance with inner virtues.”

Another member from a different Anglican church in Njoro sub-county stated that,

“Anglican women may use cosmetics as long as it does not conflict with the principles of modesty and humility”.

Aligning with the observation data drawn from the table above, the Anglican Church of Kenya were observed to use certain cosmetics. While the Anglican Church of Kenya acknowledges the cultural significance of personal grooming and appearance, it also encourages members to approach cosmetics with moderation and discernment (Rees, 2023). Rees article brings into line the Church doctrines that cosmetics can be used as a form of self-expression and care for one's body, which is viewed as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). However, Anglicans are also reminded to prioritize inner beauty and character over external appearance (Peters, 2024). Aligning with the moderate stance on cosmetics noticed from observational data the Anglicans emphasis is on maintaining balance between looking presentable and avoiding the pitfalls of vanity, with a focus on modesty and propriety in all aspects of life.

4.3.4. Africa Inland Church

The Africa Inland Church (AIC) mostly highlights on modesty and the significance of inner beauty, bring into line with broader Christian teachings that caution against vanity and the modification of God's creation in ways that struggle with biblical principles. Thus, cosmetic use is tolerable if it respects these limits and does not compromise one's faith or witness (Farley, 2020).

A church elder in a focus group discussion at the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Njoro shared that,

“The church promotes a conservative Christian doctrine with a strong emphasis on modesty and moral conduct.”

This member elucidated that although there are no precise teachings regarding the use of facial cosmetics in Njoro Sub County, the over-all sentiment within the church inspires prioritizing inner beauty and spiritual attributes over outward adornment.

An Assistant Bishop from local diocese of Njoro, during an oral interview, said that,

“Artistic influences play a significant role in shaping individual attitude towards cosmetics within the AIC community.”

Another participant in a focus group discussion observed that,

“Local customs may lead to individuals to view cosmetics as a form of self-expression.”

This participant documented that though, other members might see the use of cosmetics as pointless or possibly contrary to their spiritual obligations.

As a consequence, the judgement to use cosmetics among AIC members appears to vary widely, sparkly personal convictions and differing understandings of modesty within the framework of both their faith and local cultural norms. From observational data in the table above some members were observed to have applied cosmetics. Cosmetics may not be absolute banned within the African Inland Church, but its use is often discouraged in favor of a more natural and modest presentation. The African Inland Church teachings encourage simplicity and modesty in appearance, aligning with broader cultural values that emphasize humility. (Dowsett, 2011). Moreover the Church endorses the idea that true beauty is replicated in one's character and actions rather than in physical appearance (Asproulis, 2012). Members are often directed to shun excessive adornment and to focus on humanizing inner virtues.

4.3.5. Presbyterian Church of East Africa

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa in general adopt a conservative view on cosmetics for body beautification, highlighting that the human body is God's creation and should not be altered artificially, as this may contradict the belief in honouring God's perfect design (Resane, 2021). However, there is some variation among Presbyterians and other Christian groups in Kenya, with some allowing modest use of cosmetics while others strictly oppose it as inconsistent with Christian teachings.

In an oral interview, a clergy member from one of the PCEA Ebenezer noted that,

“Churches in Njoro as well as other Presbyterians congregations place a significant emphasis on personal holiness and simplicity

A local church leader pointed out that,

“Most Pentecostal churches advocate for a conservative approach to personal appearance including the minimal use of cosmetics.”

He added that,

“This practice is seen to maintain focus on spiritual matters rather than worldly distraction.”

An elderly member during a focus group discussion pointed out that,

“The influence of local culture plays a significant role in these practices.”

A local church pastor from PCEA Ng' Ondu made similar observation by saying that,

“The local Presbyterian community in Njoro sub-county often embraces an austere lifestyle, which includes modest dress and a natural appearance.”

Further, a member from the congregation during a discussion explained that,

“Women in Njoro might limit their use of cosmetics as a reflection of their commitment to spiritual purity and modesty.” While there is an emphasis on modesty, many Presbyterians congregations recognize that cosmetics can be a means of self-expression and personal care (Rentas Vega, 2019). Rentas work make straight with Presbyterians’ view towards the use of facial cosmetics which often highlight the importance of the heart intention behind using cosmetics, inspiring members to ensure that their look does not distract them from their witness as Christians.

Further while examining the use and non-use of cosmetics from observational data based on the table above, it was renowned that a extensive range of cosmetics was being used. The Presbyterians’ thus tend to hold a more liberal view concerning cosmetics, permitting for personal choice in their use. Adding to the awareness on doctrinal teachings of cosmetics, the Presbyterians tend to focus on balancing personal grooming with an assurance to spiritual growth and integrity, signifying that cosmetics can be used considerately without conceding one's faith (Stott, 2012).

4.3.6. Seventh-Day Adventist Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church customarily disheartens the use of cosmetics for body beautification, highlighting simplicity and modesty in appearance (Braun, 1996). Braun argues that this stand is rooted in sacred principles and the writings of Ellen G. White, which advocate for inner spiritual beauty over outward adornment. The Church outlooks excessive focus on physical look, including cosmetics and jewellery, as unpredictable with Christian values of humility and self-denial.

In a conversation during a focus group discussion about local religious practices on the use of cosmetics, a member who was a local leader in the church noted that,

“Seventh-Adventist commonly advocate for modesty and simplicity.”

This participant further advised their members to avoid excessive use of cosmetics and instead focus on natural beauty.

A representative during an oral interview explained that,

“In Njoro, Seventh-day Adventist members tend to use cosmetics sparingly, adhering to their principles of simplicity.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church beliefs on use of cosmetics often replicate a holistic view that includes mental spiritual and physical well-being, signifying that cosmetics should not

distract from one's primary focus on God and spiritual growth (Rentas Vega, 2019). Women in this church were observed to use basic cosmetics as drawn from the above table even though they suggest a conservative approach for this case. The Church explains that while applying cosmetics is not inherently sinful, members should be cautious about their use and the message they convey. The Seventh-day Adventist Church frequently implements a conservative attitude towards cosmetics, bringing into line emphasis on health and modesty (Epstein, 2009). According to Epstein in backing the study conducted, the SDAs stress is on upholding a healthy lifestyle and a natural look that reflects one's obligation to God. The Adventists having embraced a conservative thought towards cosmetics are stimulated to avoid unnecessary adornment and to prioritize inner beauty and character over outward appearance.

4.3.7. Baptist Church

The Baptist view tends to allow cosmetics if used in a modest manner and with a hearty focus on godliness rather than vanity, reflecting biblical principles rather than strict prohibitions (Libby, 2024). During an oral interview in Njoro sub-county at the Baptist church, one of the clergy members shared that,

“Baptist church promotes modesty and personal integrity.”

The Baptist Church in general holds a moderate opinion towards the use of, permitting for individual discretion while underlining the importance of modesty (Hammond, 2005). Bringing into line with Hammonds' observation, this clergyman explained that many Baptist congregations encourage women to dress modestly and to avoid excessive adornment, aligning with biblical teachings that prioritize inner beauty and character.

Another member explained that,

“While there aren't strict rules regarding cosmetics, Baptists lay much emphasis on avoiding vanity and keeping a focus on spiritual matters.”

In addition, one of the pastors at a focus group discussion noted that,

“When reflecting on local social norms, Baptists in Njoro tend to adopt a moderate approach to cosmetics.”

The pastor clarified that women in the Baptist church use cosmetics in a way that aligns with their denomination's importance on modesty while also valuing personal principles.

One more participant in the group discussion seconded the pastor's statement and added that,

“The approach allows for individual discretion while maintaining a focus on vanity and spiritual concerns.”

Observational data collected from the table above evidently shows that some certain cosmetic items were practically used. The Church does not outrightly judge the use of cosmetics as seen from observational data, identifying that cosmetics can be a means of self-care and expression. The focus is on ensuring that one's appearance does not become a source of pride or distraction from one's relationship with God. (Kidd, 2005). The Baptist teachings corresponding with Kidd exploration, often inspires members to reflect on one's intentions and motives when applying cosmetics, endorsing a balanced approach that honors both individual choice and biblical values.

4.3.8. Gospel Outreach Ministry

Gospel out Reach Ministry Evangelicals widely promotes discernment and self-reflection, explaining that beauty lies in a Christ-like personality rather than physical augmentations (Wheeler, 2021). A senior pastor at an oral interview Gospel out Reach Ministry mentioned that,

“Evangelicals often interpret scripture individually out of their own personal convictions.”

According to this pastor, this leads to a wide range of practices regarding cosmetics. He gave an example that,

“Some Christians might use cosmetics for expressing identity or to enhance their look, while some shun it to stay true to their individual thought of modesty.”

Religious traditions meaningfully inspire standpoints on cosmetics, with diverse denominations presenting varied clarifications of scripture about beauty and adornment. For example, some conservative Evangelical Christian groups often present a diverse views on the use of cosmetics, considering the wide cultural and religious spectrum within the movement. Many evangelicals accept the use of cosmetics as a personal choice, emphasizing that they should be practiced modestly and with the right purposes (Agnolutto, 2015).

A youth within a focus group discussion, explained that,

“In contemporary evangelical communities there is an increased diversity of views on cosmetics.”

He elucidated that a number of Christians view the use of cosmetics as a individual choice rather than an authoritarian matter of faith. He further added that,

“Many Christians’ thoughts tend to be the purpose and assertiveness behind the use of cosmetics rather than the act itself.”

Evangelical opinions on facial make-ups can range from conservative to liberal, highlighting modesty, cultural context and personal conviction. Everyone's attitude can reflect

their individual opinions, denominational teachings, and interpretation of biblical principles (Offutt *et al.*, 2025).

Generally, data composed from the observation table point to those evangelicals embraced all kinds of cosmetics. They used cosmetics without any limit suggesting a liberal attitude towards the use of cosmetic. Likewise, Mile (2006) notes that most liberal churches may permit cosmetic use, as long as it aligns with codes of modesty and honesty. In this case therefore the interpretation of biblical text related to beauty often leads to differing conclusions about the appropriateness of cosmetics This difference reflects wider religious debates about the role of physical look in the life of a follower and the balance between outer and inner beauty (Miles, 2006).

From the above argument, the evangelicals' traditions that inspires individuals to pay attention on their connection with God and to ensure that their physical look does not outshine their spiritual obligations. A number of evangelical leaders warn against the potential for vanity or interruption, enabling a balanced attitude that honors individual expression and biblical principles. The Evangelicals' insist on promoting a heart attitude that prioritizes inner beauty and character over physical look that was observed while collecting data even although they may have different thoughts concerning the use of cosmetics.

In conclusion, the use of cosmetics amongst denominations reflects a complex interplay between individual identity, theological beliefs and cultural norms. While many worshipers embrace cosmetic use as part of personal grooming practices, some uphold conservative position that limits or prohibits such expressions. This multiplicity underlines the need for continuing negotiation about the role of individual expression in faith backgrounds and how it forms communal dynamics amongst believers. The connection of religion and individual grooming continues to evolve, reflecting broader communal changes while remaining punished in exact cultural and religious aspects.

4.4 Areas of Controversy Regarding the Use of Cosmetics by Christians

Among the objectives of this research was to understand the areas of controversy concerning use of cosmetics by Christians. The use of facial cosmetics has generated significant debate across many religious cultural and social context (Cunningham *et al.*, 1995). This debate often circles around several key areas of controversy including; modesty, vanity cultural norms, religious teachings, gender expectations, economic and social implications. Each of these opinions add to the multifaceted landscape of ideas about cosmetics, mainly within Christian communities.

4.4.1 Modesty and Vanity

Some participants from numerous Churches in Njoro sub-County gave their diverse viewpoints on the balance concerning modesty and vanity. One among these participants at focus group a discussion noted that,

“The use of cosmetics can be a contentious issue, particularly when applied excessively.”

Another participant expressed his concerns by saying that,

“Heavy use of cosmetics might be perceived as vanity and distracting one from spiritual value.”

Vanity became argumentative in the discussion concerning cosmetics. Many religious lessons caution against vanity, looking at it as a form of pride that can divert one's connection with God (Agnolutto, 2015). Agnolutto says the Bible often links vanity with a focus on physical outlook at the expense of unworldly growth. Critics of cosmetic use argue that the desire to enhance one's appearance can lead to an unhealthy obsession with beauty, fostering a culture of comparison and self-criticism (Piazzesi, 2023). On the other hand, some research participants diverged with the above ideas from Agnolutto and Piazzesi. One of them argued that,

“Using cosmetics does not inherently reflect vanity; instead, it can be a form of self-care and personal expression.”

This contrast sparks queries about the motive behind cosmetic use and whether they stem from an aspiration for validation or self-acceptance.

One participant from the Anglican Church of Kenya in an oral interview highlighted that:

“Different Christian denominations have varying teachings on modesty. For instance, Pentecostals and Seventh-Day Adventists often campaign for moderate use of cosmetics to avert vanity, although Anglicans and Catholics tend to embrace a more liberal approach. This variance in interpretation can lead to arguments not only within congregations but also amongst diverse denominations.”

Furthermore, a different participant from the seventh day Adventist church in a group discussion noted that,

“Local practices in Njoro where traditional cultural norms places high value on cosmetics use for social status, sometimes clashes with Christian teachings on modesty. This traditional conflict results in differences on what creates acceptable use of

cosmetics, reflecting the bigger tension between religious values and cultural expectations.

A respondent from the evangelical church pointed out that,

“Traditional practices on Njoro often promote the use of cosmetics for social or ceremonial purposes.”

He noted further that this emphasis on appearance can sometimes clash with Christian teachings that advocate for modesty and simplicity.

4.4.2 Cultural Norms

A pastor at the African Inland Church observed that,

“Locals who carefully adhere to these traditional practices are finding themselves in the limelight, facing scrutiny from those who believe that such practices are at odds with Christian values of modesty.”

Conferring to this pastor the use of cosmetics by Christians carries about pressure reflecting a bigger struggle between upholding one’s identity and observing religious teachings.

In the above replies, modesty is rising as the central up as the central subject of discussions around cosmetics in religious backgrounds. Many Christian congregations emphasize the significance of modesty in appearance as a reflection of inner quality and personality (Jones, 2010). Biblical text such as 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-4 inspire believers to focus on inner beauty rather than outward ornamentation. This perception proposes that unnecessary use of cosmetics may lead to immodesty, drawing attention away from one's spiritual life. Critics argue that cosmetics can create a façade that diverts from honest character, possibly leading to a culture of shallowness (Graydon, 2014). However, advocates of moderate cosmetic use oppose that makeup can improve natural beauty without conceding modesty, provided it is applied considerately and cautiously. This ongoing debate highlighted the individual nature of modesty, which may vary expressively across diverse cultures and communities.

4.4.3 Gender Expectations

A member of the Evangelical Church mentioned that,

“Lately there have been considerable debate about gender specific expectations regarding cosmetic use among Christians not only in Njoro but throughout the country.”

Another member of the Evangelical Church observed that,

“There seems to be a discrepancy in the standards applied to men and women with women often facing more intense scrutiny over their use of cosmetics”.

According to the above participants, gender expectations further implicate the conversation about cosmetics. As such, a participant maintained that,

“Women may face societal pressure to conform to certain beauty ideals while navigating their religious identities.”

Conventionally, cosmetics have been linked with femininity and beauty values that women are often anticipated to uphold. This expectancy can produce a logic obligation for women to use cosmetics to be professed as attractive or conventional (Kwan & Trautner, 2009).

Equally, men may face scrutiny for using cosmetics, as social standards often command that cosmetics is mainly a feminine practice (Komulainen & Hjort, 2017). Nonetheless, studies point out that, there is an developing trend where men are progressively contributing in grooming practices customarily associated with women, representing a shift towards more comprehensive definitions of beauty and self-care (Tseëlon, 1995). Gender lens consequently raises important questions about the implications of cosmetic use for identity and self-expression.

4.4.4 Economic and Social Implications

The economic and social implications of cosmetic use are important, mainly in consumer-driven cultures (Park & Hong, 2024a). Conferring to this author the beauty industry is a multi-billion-dollar market, and the gravity to conform to beauty ethics can lead persons to spend considerable amounts on cosmetics.

A participant in a focus group discussion from the Seventh Day Adventist church shared that,

“Use of costly cosmetics often sparks debates about whether it aligns with Christian values of modesty and simplicity.”

This participant further revealed that certain denominations are particularly sensitive to the economic suggestions of cosmetic use. Contained by the same group discussion another participant went forward to give an example and stated that,

“Some groups advocate for simpler lifestyle and might criticize the spending on high end products as inconsistent with their teachings on living modestly.”

The practice of cosmetics by Christians has economic and social implications (Minister, 2012). Economically, it pushes consumer expenditure in the beauty industry, while raising distress about materialism and financial burdens to follow to beauty standards. Minister explains that ethical consumerism among Christians also endorses bearable and cruelty-free products. Socially, cosmetics can generate cultural tensions with traditional Christian teachings that

highlight inner beauty and modesty, while serving as tools for self-expression and confidence-building.

4.4.5 Economic Influence on the Use of Cosmetics

A church leader within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Njoro Cub County revealed that,

“Where the community has varying economic conditions using expensive cosmetics can be contentious.”

This church leader further explained that,

“People worry such practices might be seen as flaunting wealth which could lead to tension or disagreement within the community.”

In addition, a participant in focus group discussion noted that,

“Economic state of a person highlights broader concerns of balancing personal choices with Christian principles.”

This vitality can generate a series of consumerism, where people feel obliged to invest in cosmetics to uphold their social standing (Bauman, 2013). This change is principal to more debates about accountable consumption of cosmetics and how it fits with Christian values. The economic impact of cosmetics use by Christians is multifaceted, driven by consumer spending, ethical considerations, and professional demands (Francisco Cantón, 2023). Francisco explains that global beauty industry aids from Christian consumers who pursue products aligning with their values, such as moral sourcing, sustainability, and modesty. He adds that this demand has fostered growth in natural and halal cosmetics markets, appealing to both faith-based and broader ethical partialities. Furthermore, cosmetics are often used to improve proficient appearances, contributing to career progression but also generating financial pressures to fit in with societal standards. These dynamics highlight the intersection of faith, commerce, and personal branding in the beauty industry.

4.4.6 Personal Choice and Collective Standards

A catechist from the Roman Catholic Church at focus group discussion said,

“There has been ongoing debate about the personal versus collective standards on cosmetic use among Christians.”

He said that some persons find themselves at odds with the combined expectations set by their denomination or community. This catechist explained that individual struggle often revolves around how carefully one should adhere to reputable norms. At the focus group discussion in the Pentecostal church of Kenya, a youth member expressed hindrance over the tension between individual convictions and collective standards. The participant debated that, *“while*

some denominations encourage individual conscience and allow personal discretion, others have more prescriptive guidelines that leaves less room for personal choices.”

The change in cosmetic usage as noted by the above participants can lead to significant differences about how severely one should follow collective standards on cosmetic use. The tension between personal choice and collective standards has been a critical area of controversy concerning cosmetics. On one hand, people argue that they should have the liberty to express themselves through their appearance, including the use of cosmetics. This viewpoint highlights personal agency and the right to make choices that reflect one's identity (Ramachandran, 2006).

On the other hand, collective standards often decree what is deemed suitable or necessary, influencing individual choices (Arrow, 2012). The interaction from the above statements raises questions about self-sufficiency and conformity, as people navigate societal anticipations while determined to maintain their legitimacy. The challenge lies in finding a balance between honoring personal choice and acknowledging the impact of collective standards on individual decisions.

In Njoro Sub County, the subject of cosmetics usage is mainly pronounced. Individuals who prefer to use cosmetics in ways that deviate from communal anticipations often face scrutiny. This has ignited arguments about whether individual freedom should be appreciated or if adherence to collective norms should take precedence. The discussions reflect a broader struggle to balance individual preferences with communal values within the context of Christian teachings.

From the research that resulted in Njoro sub-County, the debate concerning the use of cosmetics by Christians raised from pressures between modesty and vanity, cultural practices versus religious teachings, gender expectations, economic and social implications, personal conviction versus collective standards, and ethical considerations. These areas of disagreement reveal broader dialogs within Christianity about how to balance individual physical look with spiritual and communal values. As Christians steer these subjects, they must contemplate both their separable beliefs and the teachings of their particular denominations, as well as the cultural context of their community.

In Kenya the absence and presence of cosmetics can be understood as a replication of deeper cultural values and spiritual standpoints within these societies. For example, churches that hold a broader variety of beautifying products may do so as part of a modern clarification of faith that allows for individual expression through appearance. In contrast, those that confine cosmetic use might be influenced by traditional views on modesty and the role of women in worship settings (Bendix, 1967). This pressure between modernity and tradition is mainly

noticeable among younger generations who seek to balance their faith with modern societal norms.

The debate surrounding the use of facial cosmetics among Christians incorporates a range of viewpoints influenced by religious teachings, vanity, modest and cultural norms. (Scruton, 2011). Conservative Christians often understand beautification as a interruption from spiritual quests, arguing that cosmetics embody a superficial focus on outward beauty that can lead to vanity and undermine one's relationship with Christ. Divergently, liberal Christians advocate for the acceptance of cosmetics, highlighting that it can be used modestly and should not dominate inner beauty or character improvement (Dyrness, 2001). They claim that feeling beautiful is a natural wish and can exist with Christian values if advanced with the right mindset.

Moderate Christians approves a more flexible stand, trusting that the choice to use cosmetics should be left to individual decision without harsh doctrinal restraints. This group values personal choice and recognizes that both liberal and conservative opinions have value (Shusterman, 2012). As society progresses, these dialogs remain applicable, stimulating ongoing negotiations about identity, cultural value and self-expression. Ultimately, the discussion reflects broader themes of beauty and truth, showing the complexities Christians face in steering societal expectations while striving to honor their faith and individual convictions regarding cosmetic use.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary and Conclusions

This section provides the summary of the key findings according to the study objectives as obtained from the discussions. This chapter also concludes on the key findings regarding the study. The conclusions lead to recommendations regarding the findings of the study.

5.1.1. Christian Understanding of the Biblical Teachings on the Use of Cosmetic Products

Clearly from the data in this study, Christian viewpoints on cosmetics, observed from a biblical lens, appears to underscore inner qualities, modesty, and the stewardship of the body. The key argument that appeared regarding the first objective in this study is that, while the Bible does not openly prohibit the use of cosmetics, it offers regulatory principles that inspire believers to prioritize personality traits such as humility and kindness over outward appearance. The focus is on divine growth and character growth came up as the main guide towards use or non-use of cosmetics, indicating that any use of cosmetics ought to reflect an inner alteration rather than a quest for external validation. This perception seems to advocate for a balance approach to personal grooming that enhances natural features without falling into vanity or superficiality.

Modesty is an important Biblical virtue that was stated by a good figure of respondents which point to humility and prevention of excessive adornment by Christians. The idea of the body as a temple of the God is an additional aspect that most respondents stated as a Biblical teaching regarding use of cosmetics. They perceived that the biblical teaching stresses the importance of caring for one's appearance as a reflection of the image of God and therefore it should guide Christians against intemperance or a diminish from spiritual morals (Dalton, 2024). The author perceives that the excessive use of cosmetics could endorse vanity, which contradicts the biblical teaching to prioritize inner qualities over transitory external beauty. Therefore, Christians are encouraged to consider their inspirations for using cosmetics, certifying that their choices reflect their spiritual beliefs and prioritize inner character over outward appearance as concluded by various participants from the field data.

5.1.2 The Tradition of Various Christian Denominations on the Use of Cosmetic Products

Different Christian denominations have unpredictable views on the use of facial cosmetics, reflecting diverse explanations of biblical traditions and cultural norms as gathered from this research. For example: The Roman Catholic Church does not have any official teachings specifically addressing the use of facial cosmetics (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995).

From some of the respondents in this study, Catholics adopt a life of modest and devout lives that respect the self-worth of all persons. The overall implication from the study is that, when used correctly and in line with cultural values, the use of cosmetics is commonly seen as a matter of personal preference rather than a moral issue in a moderate stand that the Roman Catholic Church seems to be leaning towards. On the other hand Protestants interpretations on facial cosmetics differ widely across Protestant denominations (Bateman, 2023). The conservative Protestants seems to stress on evading vanity while the moderate and liberals Protestants focus on the disagreement from individual choices on the use of cosmetics.

Cultural backgrounds expressively influence Christian perspectives on cosmetics, with diverse societies giving various interpretations of modesty and appropriateness (Miles, 2006). Miles argues that, as Christians steer these cultural changes are encouraged to reflect on their purpose and inspirations when using cosmetics. The central message is one of moderation is that cosmetics, should not outshine the importance of humanizing inner beauty and character.

In summary, Christian standpoints on the use of facial cosmetics differ broadly, influenced by personal value theological beliefs and cultural contexts. Although there are no general prohibition alongside cosmetics in Christianity, some churches and people highlight modesty and simplicity in appearance as virtues aligned with scriptural teachings. Others view cosmetics to enhance natural beauty and direct personal style, reflecting cultural norms. The acceptance or restriction of cosmetics mainly hinges on the understanding of biblical principles, focusing on humility and modesty. Some Christian traditions permit personal will, guided by discrete faith and community values.

5.1.3 Areas of Controversy Regarding the Use of Cosmetics by Christians

Clearly, in this study the debate over cosmetics use among Christians is deeply intertwined with the concept of modesty, vanity cultural traditions religious beliefs and gender roles. This argument is well elaborated by a number of Christian denominations which expresses interest that unnecessary cosmetic use may be regarded as vanity, detracting from spiritual values Tchatchoua (2023). From the results of this research, groups like Pentecostals and Seventh-Day Adventists have a conservative view regarding the use of cosmetics. The basis of their standpoint is based on justifying perceptions of vanity. Roman Catholics and Anglicans tend to maintain a more balanced perception with a greater prejudice towards liberalism. As such this deviation in beliefs can lead to debates within worshippers and amongst denominations, reflecting wider societal tensions where local cultural practices associate cosmetic use with social status, conflicting with Christian experiences on modesty as debated in the previous chapter.

Gender roles knowingly affects perceptions of cosmetic use, with women frequently facing greater scrutiny concerning their appearance than men as suggested in various discussions during field study. This imbalance raises anxieties about equality and fairness in the context of Christian values and within the larger scope of the society. Additionally, more discussions have appeared concerning the suggestions of cosmetic products, mainly concerning testing practices and their environmental effects (Parens, 2000) As awareness of these ethical issues grows, Christians in Njoro sub-County seems to highly reflect on how their cosmetic choices align with their faith according to the research conducted. Overall, these debates highlight the challenges that Christians face in harmonizing personal appearance through cosmetics with devotion to community values and spiritual teachings.

5.2 Recommendations

Following the discussions in this study, specific recommendations are made based on the objectives of this study. The recommendations are as follows:

5.2.1 Christian Understanding of the Biblical Teachings on the Use of Cosmetic Products

To attentively understand biblical teachings on the use of cosmetics by Christians, it is crucial to inspect relevant scriptures that discuss beauty modesty and stewardship of the body. Certain biblical text encourage Christians to view their external appearances through the lens of spiritual growth and character development, suggesting that any cosmetic use should reflect an inner transformation rather than an expedition for physical approval. Moreover, accessing theological properties and seeking advice from mature believers can offer deeper insights and assist in applying these biblical principles to modern issues related to cosmetics.

5.2.2 The Tradition of Various Christian Denominations on the Use of Cosmetic Products

When exploring the traditions of different Christian denominations about the use of cosmetics, it is vibrant to conduct a wide-ranging review of each denomination's teachings and historical practices related to individual grooming and look. This includes examining certified doctrinal statements, catechisms, and literatures from theologians to gain a clearer indulgence of their views on beauty modesty and stewardship of the body. Recognizing the diversity of perceptions among denominations is important, as explanations of biblical teachings can differ significantly. Some denominations may prioritize modesty and simplicity, while others may emphasize cultural relevance, making it important to avoid oversimplifying or misrepresenting each denomination's position.

5.2.3 Areas of Controversy Regarding the Use of Cosmetics by Christians

When assessing the issues surrounding Christians' use of cosmetics, it is significant to acknowledge that contradictory interpretations of biblical principles often drive these

discussions. Central issues consist of modesty, vanity cultural norms and body stewardship. Moreover, cultural and historical contexts significantly influence these practices, as standards for what is deemed appropriate or modest have evolved over time across different societies.

Social trends and marketing influences increase to the complexity of debates surrounding cosmetics among Christians. The commercialization of beauty and societal pressure to conform to beauty standards can confound Christian views on cosmetic use. Understanding how individual beliefs and spiritual natures can influence denominational and personal choices in use of make-up can encourage an objective scholarly discourse.

5.3 Implications for Future Research

This research unlocks venues for more exploration into the drives behind cosmetic use in spiritual settings. More investigation particularly using a diverse methodology from the one applied here like surveys could be done to improve insights into individual beliefs about beauty, and modesty. Understanding these drives towards cosmetics could provide a more affluent context for understanding perceived behaviors and their implications for identity development in religious communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Informed Consent



Study Title: [Christianity and the use of cosmetics in Njoro sub county Nakuru]

Name of Principal Investigator(s): [Joy Nkatha Gichuru]

Co Investigators: [N/A]

Name of Organization: [Egerton University P.O Box 536-20115 Njoro]

Name of Sponsor: [N/A]

Informed Consent Form for: [Local church area leaders i.e. Bishops and assistant bishops, Church Pastors and Priest, Clergy Men, Church officials and Church Members]

Purpose of study/project:

The purpose of this study is to analyze the Christian views about the application of cosmetic products, examine Christian Biblical teachings and doctrines on the use of cosmetic products, I believe that you best suited to participate in this study due to your vast knowledge and experience as a Christian on various issues concerning Christian living and beliefs.

Who will take part in this study?

This study will involve Christian adults between the ages of 18 years and above in Njoro sub-county because of their experience in church matters and their ability to understand the church doctrines.

How long will the study last?

You will be in this study for 30 minutes (those involved in interviews) or 1 hour 30 minutes (those involved in the focus group discussions). The research will be strict to this time and will not exceed beyond the duration indicated here. The researcher is committed to be punctual on the agreed time and be flexible at your convenience.

Do I have to be in the study? Can I say no?

Participating in this study is your choice. You can choose to take part in this study, or you can choose not to take part in the study. You can also decide to stop being in this study at any time.

Procedure:

The principal investigator will arrange the respondents for focused group discussion into 2 categories who will be the Scheduled a time for every group. Each group will comprise of at least 4 youths and 4 elderly members from each Christian denomination who have an understanding on the biblical teaching towards the use of cosmetics. Guides will be used to interview at least 2 church clergy members from each denomination at the same time. Two of these church clergy will be 1 pastor or priest and 1 member of the church council.

Data collection

[List all procedures including data collection methods] Data will be collected from the groups through a series of questions that will be discussed during the sessions. Oral interviews for focused group discussions will include a series of specific questions that will be asked to particular participant such as the youth and the regular members of the church. A guide will further used to interview bishops, pastors, priests and the other members of church leadership.

Benefits

You may not benefit personally from this study but your participation will contribute enormously to social scientific knowledge related to religion towards understanding the Christian use of cosmetics.

Risks

Loss of confidentiality

In all research involving human subjects, confidentiality of identifiable information is presumed and must be maintained unless the investigator obtains the express permission of the subject to do otherwise. Subjects have the right to be protected against illegal invasion of their privacy and preservation of their personal dignity. In order to minimize the risk for loss of confidentiality, investigators should only collect personal information that is absolutely essential to the research activity. If personal data must be collected, it should be coded as early in the activity as possible and securely stored so that only the investigator and authorized staff may access it. Identities of individual subjects must never be released without the express consent of the subject. In addition, in an investigator wishes to use data for a purpose other than the one for which it was originally collected and the Data are still identifiable (e.g. a code list for the data still exists), the investigator may need to obtain consent from the subjects for

the new use of the data.

Participants' response to question

The danger that results from a participant's reaction to a question posed or subject brought up during fieldwork may be the most prevalent form. It is certainly a fairly typical occurrence in qualitative research, particularly in study on so-called "sensitive" themes, for people to become disturbed or distressed. But depending on the questions or activities of the researcher, research might also elicit various kinds of emotional reactions. When asked insensitive questions, tasks that they feel uncomfortable performing or answering, or themes or tasks that delve into participants' underlying worries, research participants may experience embarrassment, humiliation, or anxiety. If the "true" motives for conducting the research are not disclosed to research participants, they may feel misled or left in the dark. Additionally, if they believe their opinions are ignored or not taken seriously, they may feel devalued. In this case the researcher may want to asks questions that will not emotionally affect the respondents and further create an atmosphere that is friendly to respondents where they will feel valued in every aspect

Publication and dissemination of research

The publication and distribution of research can expose participants to significant dangers. Despite the anonymity, some individuals might not like how they are portrayed in research findings. Following a study of community surveys, it was discovered that several locals had expressed extreme dissatisfaction with how they had been portrayed in media. Respondents may potentially receive undesired media coverage and publicity as a result of such research. Unwanted media attention is a problem that does not only apply to community studies; it can also happen when conducting study on certain institutions, groups, or even types of people. When someone's name is revealed, publication may also carry additional risks, such as backlash from the public, which could occasionally lead to friendship or work losses. The research should practice absolute anonymization by not providing the detail of the respondents to publications in order to protect the responds from publicity.

Disregarding of respondents

It has been noted that research participants can feel used by researchers and that, as a result of participating in research, they might feel ignored or devalued. Methodological grooming is the practice of researchers sometimes engaging in various actions to "manipulate" subjects into participating in study and providing rich data. After the research is finished and the researcher has left the participants' lives, such activities could make them feel used, especially if their expectations of advantages are not satisfied. From such cases the researcher show appreciation to respondents by displaying them that they have been an important part of the research.

Social risks

The potential for alterations in relationships with others that are to the disadvantage of the subject, including embarrassment, loss of respect of others, labeling a subject in a way that will have negative consequences, or in some way diminishing those opportunities and powers a person has by virtue of relationships with others.

Are there any costs for me if I agree to join the study?

Participation in this study is voluntary and as such not reimbursements will be provided. However, the study ensures that it operates at your convenience to avoid any extra costs for you.

Confidentiality:

All reasonable efforts will be made to keep your protected information (private and confidential. Protected Information is information that is, or has been, collected or maintained and can be linked back to you. Using or sharing (“disclosure”) of such information must follow National privacy guidelines. By signing the consent document for this study, you are giving permission (“authorization”) for the uses and disclosures of your personal information.

In handling your personal information, Joy Nkatha Gichuru and associated staff will keep your information in strict confidence, and shall comply with all applicable laws regarding the confidentiality of information. This will include encrypting computer-based files, store documents (i.e., signed consent forms) in a locked file cabinet and remove personal identifiers from study documents as soon as possible.

Contact: Who do I call if I have questions about the study?

Name: Joy Nkatha Gichuru

Cell Phone: +254 703674557

Email: joygichuru93@gmail.com

Questions about your rights as a research subject:

If you want to know more about your rights while participating in this research or if you feel that your rights have been violated you may contact the Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (EUISERC), P.O. Box 536-20115, EGERTON-Kenya, UNESCO Regional Centre for Documentation and Research on Bioethics building, Egerton University, email: eurec@egerton.ac.ke, Phone number: (Chairperson): +254720235707. A research ethics committee is a group of people that review studies for safety and to protect the rights of study subjects.

Consenter statement

I have read the information provided or has been read to me. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and the questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent voluntarily to participate in the project knowing that I have a right to withdraw at any time.

Participant’s Name (Optional):

Signature-----or Thumb print-----

Date:

[In case it the adult is unable to consent and a Legally Authorized Representative (LAR) is consenting on behalf of the participant]

I have read the information provided or has been read to me as the legally authorized representative. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and the questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent voluntarily for the person I am representing to participate in the project knowing that I have a right to withdraw the consent and stop the person I am representing from further participating in the research at any time.

LAR’s Name (Optional):

Signature-----or Thumb print-----

Date:

I the undersigned affirm that the consent has been sought with full disclosure of project details to the participant to consent. (I have explained the study to the extent compatible with the subject’s capability, and the subject has agreed to be in the study)

Name of the presenter (who presented/explained the consent document):
.....

Signature:

Date:

Principal Investigator:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 2: Focus Group Discussion Guide Scheduled for Church Youths and Members of the Church

I am Joy Nkatha Gichuru, a Master's Degree candidate in Religious Studies at Egerton University. You have been specifically chosen to take part in this research study to address developing concerns in the field of cosmetic surgery and other cosmetic procedures such as make-up in the county of Nakuru. Information provided by you will be of importance to makers of the laws and developers of policies in national development. Confidentiality concerning your identity and response will be observed. The information you provide will benefit this study. Your honesty is required while responding to all questions comprehensively. Your participation is highly valued.

Part One: Respondents Background

1. Name (Optional).....
2. Age (Optional)
3. sex Male Female Intersex
4. Residence
County
- subcounty
5. Education background (tick where applicable)
 - a. university
 - b. college
 - c. secondary
 - d. primary
 - e. none
6. Which Christian denomination do you belong to?
 - a. Seventh day Adventist
 - b. Roman Catholic church
 - c. Holiness and Repentance church
 - d. United Pentecostal church
 - e. Full gospel church of Kenya
 - f. Salvation Army church of Kenya
 - g. African Inland church
 - h. Presbyterian church of East Africa

Any other church.....

Part two: Focused group discussion guide

1. What do you understand by the term “cosmetics.”
2. What are the biblical teachings towards the use of cosmetics?
3. What are your views towards the biblical teaching about cosmetics
4. Discuss your church teachings towards the use of cosmetics
5. How do you view the use of cosmetics as a Christian?
6. Should Christians be allowed to wear cosmetics or not?

Appendix 3: Key Informant Interview Scheduled for Church Clergy/ Leaders

Part one: Background information for church Leaders / Clergy

1. Name (Optional).....
2. Age
3. sex Male Female
4. Residence
County
- subcounty
5. Education background (tick where applicable)
 - a. university
 - b. college
 - c. secondary
 - d. primary
 - e. none
6. Which Christian denomination do you belong to?
 - a. Seventh day Adventist
 - b. Roman Catholic church
 - c. Holiness and Repentance church
 - d. United Pentecostal church
 - e. Full gospel church of Kenya
 - f. Salvation Army church of Kenya
 - g. African Inland church
 - h. Presbyterian church of East Africa

Any other church.....

7. Which position do you hold in the church?
 - a) Bishop
 - b) Reverend
 - c) Pastor
 - d) Priest/father/sister
 - e) Church leader

Part two: interview guide for church clergy members

- 1) What is your understanding of the biblical teaching towards cosmetics?
- 2) What teachings does your denomination give concerning the use cosmetic?

3) Is your religious teaching in line with the biblical teachings towards cosmetics?

Yes

No

Give a reason for your answer above.

4) Given the different times and existence of Christianity would you support the idea of cosmetic usage by Christians?

5) Give your opinion on the ongoing controversy on cosmetics usage in Christian denominations between the Christian conservatives who oppose use of cosmetics and liberals who support the use of cosmetics.

6) What solutions would you propose towards the cosmetics controversy within the Christian denominations?

Appendix 4: Checklist for Observational Data

Denomination	Cosmetics							
	Lip- stick	Lip- liner	Lip- gloss	Eye- shadow	Eye- liner	Eye- lashes	Mascara	Facial foundation/skin powder
African inland church Presbyterian church of east Africa Seventh day Adventist PAG Roman catholic church Worldwide church of Kenya Winners chapel Repentance and holiness Gospel outreach church Bible way church Full gospel church of Kenya Baptist Church Evangelical Church of Kenya								

Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance Form from EUISERC

EGERTON

TEL: (051) 2217808
FAX: 051-2217942



UNIVERSITY

P. O. BOX 536
EGERTON

**EGERTON UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS REVIEW
COMMITTEE**

EU/RE/DIR/009

Approval No. EUISERC/APP/337/2024

3rd June 2024

Joy Njatha Gicharu
Egerton University
Egerton
P.O. Box 536-20115,
Telephone: +254703674557
E-mail: joygicharu@gmail.com

Dear Joy,

**RE: ETHICAL APPROVAL: CHRISTIAN VIEWS ON THE USE OF COSMETICS FOR
BODY BEAUTIFICATION: A CASE STUDY OF NDIRO SUB COUNTY, NAKURU
COUNTY**

This is to inform you that the Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is EUISERC/APP/337/2024. The approval period is 3rd June 2024 – 0th June 2025.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consent, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours.

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- v. Clearance for Material Transfer of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://naci.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Raphael M. Ngari
**CHAIRMAN, EGERTON UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS
REVIEW CTTEE**
/R/M/NG/



Appendix 6: Publication

Christian Contest Regarding The Use of Cosmetics for Beautification

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DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2025.v10i07.010 URL: <https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2025.v10i07.010>

Received: 10 June 2025 / Accepted: 13 July 2025 / Published: 24 July 2025

ABSTRACT

Use of cosmetic products for beautification of the human physical outlook is a common practice in the society. This practice has been in existence since ancient civilization. However, the practice has often raised concerns among Christians. Questions have arisen as to whether the use of cosmetics is in line with Christian doctrines. Some Christians argue that the human body is a God's dwelling place not to be interfered with and that use of cosmetics is seen as such one way of such interference. This discussion is part of a study that set to investigate the Christians doctrinal teachings and the practice of use of cosmetic products. The study findings revealed diverse perspectives regarding the subject influenced by various aspects including church and individual interpretation of the scriptural messages, different church doctrines and traditions, personal choices and influences of societal and global cultural systems. Themes that emerged include modesty, vanity, self-expression, cultural norms, personal choice and cost and availability of cosmetics products. Those are factors that are associated with the choice to use or not use cosmetics for aesthetics purposes. Conservative view underlined the idea about enhancing natural beauty while prioritizing inner character. Moderate Christian view centred on the need to balance use of cosmetics and the liberal Christian view emphasized on personal conviction on cosmetic usage. These views reflect challenges in reconciling personal expression with faith-based values regarding the use of cosmetics by Christians.

Keywords: Christianity, Cosmetics, Conservatist, Moderates, Liberalists

Appendix 7: Research Permit (NACOSTI)

 <p>SHIRI WA KENYA National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation</p>	 <p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>
<p>Ref No: 574588</p>	<p>Date of Issue: 11/March/2024</p>
<p>RESEARCH LICENSE</p>	
	
<p>This is to Certify that Mr. JOY NKATHA NKATHA of Egerton University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nakuru on the topic: Christian views on the use of Cosmetics for Body Beautification: A Case study of Njoro subcounty in Nakuru County for the period ending : 11/March/2025.</p>	
<p>License No: NACOSTI/P/24/21757</p>	
<p>574588</p>	
<p>Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>	
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