

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The analysis of the scenes and the voice-overs of 23 YouTube beauty videos from five channels with the most subscribers in this study attempts to examine the position of these young women in the beauty online community. It aims to investigate whether these beauty gurus hold power through beautifying practices or whether they are subjugated as an object for the male gaze.

It is evident that all beauty gurus empower themselves through applying beauty regimes and sharing their videos as a guide or tutorial for other women who have the same passion. These beauty gurus have the autonomy to choose and control their external appearance and use it as a tool of expressing their voices and intentions and fulfilling their desires. They alternate their make-up looks according to their mood, seasonal changes, their fantasies or imagination, and occasional festivals. Without being dominated by patriarchal beauty and mainstream media, these beauty gurus can experiment with their beauty products to fulfill their desires and promote self-esteem. YouTube also provides online spaces for them to create a variety of wonderful make-up styles and to be acknowledged as beauty experts in the beauty industry. Moreover, freedom in controlling and expressing their physical images allows these beauty gurus to encourage their viewers to beautify themselves to boost their self-confidence and self-satisfaction regardless of the attention from men.

These five beauty gurus embrace their natural physical features, both their prominent features and flaws, and enhance their natural beauty using make-up products as a form of marking their identities and individuality and as a form of resistance to ideal beauty. They present their unique beauty and free themselves from beauty norms that require every woman to conform to.

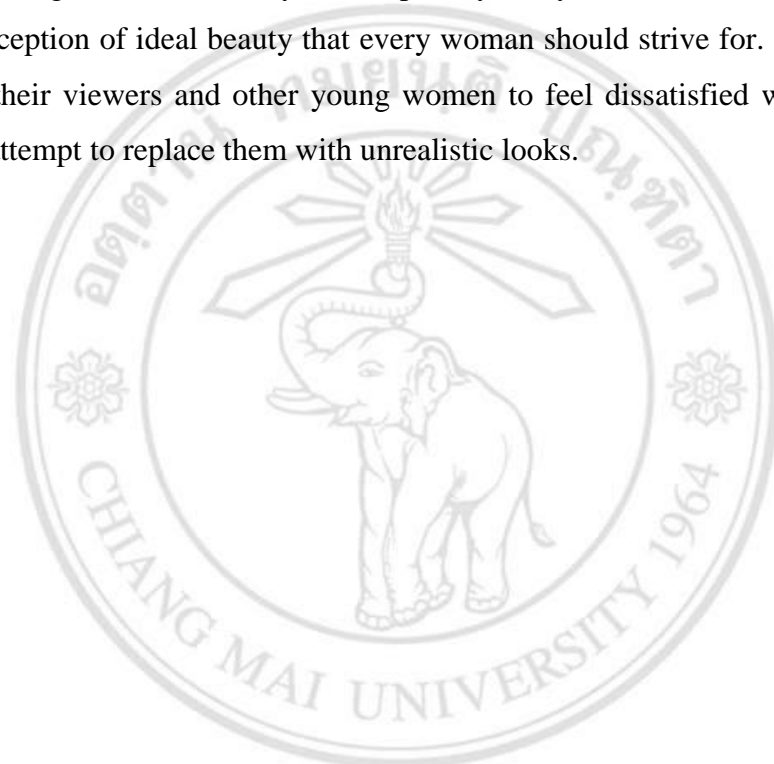
The beauty gurus also demonstrate the diversity in any group of women rather than a single group of women with similarities. The different races and characteristics of the beauty gurus allow them to break through the beauty stereotyping projected by the mass media and to offer more alternatives to unlimited and uncontrolled beauty looks for their followers. They also expand a definition of beauty from a generalized and ideal beauty to an individual beauty based on each woman's physical appearance and characteristic features. Some beauty gurus collaborate with other YouTubers and broadcast beauty videos that indicate how they can negotiate their status and claim their realistic beauty in the beauty community.

These beauty gurus have gone through the process from being ordinary girls to become powerful beauty experts. They have achieved social and financial status after experimenting with make-up, crafting their looks, broadcasting more friendly and approachable beauty videos, and establishing an equal relationship with their followers.

According to the concepts of girl empowerment and third-wave feminism, these five beauty personalities on YouTube affirm that modern women embrace their feminine qualities and utilize social media and informational advances, like YouTube, to free themselves from the dominant beauty norms and to gain power both economically and socially. They also reflect third-wave feminist groups in that they are "coalitional" groups of women with different races, backgrounds, and characteristics and that they are coping with more modern issues, such as equal access to technology, self-esteem, and outer appearance (Snyder 86-87, 186). In addition, these beauty gurus reinforce Emilie Zaslow's statement that, with their feminine side, they do not only become active agents who possess freedom to choose and express their physical appearance, but they also gain access to the centers of beauty and the fashion world (101).

However, there are some traces in beauty videos that the ideal beauty and gaining admiration from others partly control how these beauty gurus look and how they portray themselves to others. In most of the beauty videos studied, there is no indication that these beauty gurus have created the videos to attract the male gaze or to be an object for male desire. However, a small number of the videos give a hint of

female subjugation. Some beauty gurus show that they feel insecure without make-up on their faces and they have to perfectly cover their flaws to reach the beauty standard and then allow others to see their faces, while other beauty gurus reveal that they have to go through painful or harmful beauty regimes in order to possess celebrities' images. Moreover, some duplicates celebrities' make-up and outfits styles by using the same products or wearing the exact same clothes as they do in accordance with the appropriated images of the beauty icons portrayed by the mainstream media and through a perception of ideal beauty that every woman should strive for. This imitation might cause their viewers and other young women to feel dissatisfied with their own features and attempt to replace them with unrealistic looks.



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