



The Study of Cosmetic Surgery Addiction Behavior of Female College Students towards the Social Media Application Instagram

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Abstract

“The study of cosmetic surgery addiction behavior of female college students towards the social media application Instagram” is the focus of this research and the data was collected utilizing qualitative research using interviews on 5 female interviewees, who have chances of becoming addicted to plastic surgery and quantitative research using online questionnaires with 133 audiences. The results of the interview, the researcher has found that every interviewee went to plastic surgery for boosting their confidence. The social media has encouraged interviewees to seek improvement in their appearance through plastic surgery. Instagram has the biggest impact comparing to all the social media platforms: all interviewees agree on some level that social media does play a huge role of influencing and encouraging them to get plastic surgery or more plastic surgery if they already did one before as well as it is the platform to gather the information about plastic surgery. The online questionnaires’ results are about nose surgery and it is the most popular among female students to look better (boost self-confident). And they are willing to encourage friends to get plastic surgery. Not to mention most of them think social media played a big role in encouraging them to get plastic surgery.

Keywords: *Cosmetic surgery, social media, instagram*

1. Introduction

“It’s not really ‘addictive’ but when patients are pleased with the results, they are more likely to have additional procedures performed at some other time in their life” (Schuster, 2012) is how the plastic surgeon Ronald Schuster described the cosmetic surgery and answered them in 2012. Cosmetic procedures are decreasing in cost and becoming less invasive as time goes on; thus, it is now much easier for women to alter their bodies. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) over 17 million cosmetic procedures has been operated in 2016 which is a 3% growth compared to 2015 (The American Board of Cosmetic Surgery, 2017). Inside the report also shows sign of growth in both male and female body dissatisfaction and cosmetic procedures, for the purposes of this research, the researcher will focus specifically on body image dissatisfaction and attainment of cosmetic surgery in women. The introduction should put the focus of the manuscript into a broader context. As you compose the introduction, think of readers who are not experts in this field. Include a brief review of the key literature. If there are relevant controversies or disagreements in the field, they should be mentioned so that a non-expert reader can find out about these issues further. The introduction should conclude with a brief statement of the overall aim of the experiments.

Social media becoming the culture phenomenon and the new way of people communicate. The platform also became an advertising hub. One of the interesting parts is the advertising that comes and tries to persuade people to use their product/service including cosmetic surgery by using social media influence. Social media influence is a marketing term that describes an individual’s ability to affect other people’s thinking in a social online community. The more influence a person has, the more appeal that individual has to companies or other individuals who want to promote an idea or sell a product (MD Media LLC, 2018). It is important to examine the possible reasons like social, cultural, and economic behind this steady increase.

Kylie Jenner, the youngest member in the hit reality television show called “Keeping Up with The Kardashians” said “I was 15 and I was insecure about my lips. I have really small lips. And it was like one of my first kisses and a guy was like, ‘I didn’t think you would be a good kisser because you have such small lips” (Weinmann, 2010). This kind of comment leads to insecurity from one of today biggest



celebrity names in the industry and one of the most followed accounts on Instagram (103 million followers as of February, 2018) to the point where she was willing to get her lips fixed and since then all people could focus on her lips. Being one of the biggest social media influencers, the day she admitted to getting them done, Dr. Leah Totton of Dr Leah Clinics told The Independent (Ryan, 2014) her clinic has reported a staggering "70% rise in lip filler enquiries in the last 24 hours". And so many doctors seems to have the same phenomenon, Dr Maryam Zamani, Consultant at Cadogan Cosmetics reported a similar increase: "We received a higher number of enquiries late last night and today than we would normally have."

With such limited research of cosmetic surgery becoming an obsession, especially in younger generations being overexposed to cosmetic surgery, this may lead to addictive behavior in the future. The concept of cosmetic surgery seeking as a process of addiction is being advanced in this paper because not only is this behavior influenced by so many psychological and sociocultural factors, it also, for some, may serve to fill a psychological need similar to that of an addictive behavior or substance. And more specifically, can become a behavioral or process addiction in certain Individuals. "In recent years, the concept of addiction is not only a biological concept that is precipitated from substance abuse, but it also considers cultural, social, and cognitive or psychological influences. Addiction is best understood as an individual's adjustment to his or her environment that is often self-destructive. It represents a pattern of coping through habituation. Rather than being a distinct disease entity, it is thought of more as a continuum of feeling and behavior" (Statista, 2016).

2. Objectives

1. To study and observe the attitudes of female Students of Rangsit University who have a chance of becoming addicted and to find the reason behind this behavior
2. To look into the body and find the dissatisfaction inside them
3. To find how social media was inspiration to the key informant for getting work done

3. Materials and Methods

Research Methodology: this research design is based on a framework of conducting the research questions through quantitative and qualitative data in order to find the answer. The following research design will specify the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing the required information by using questionnaires and interview. The research data was collected by interviewing 5 key informants and 133 audiences for online questionnaires from the female students who may have the addictive behavior towards cosmetic surgery.

Research Materials: since this research used two methods (quantitative and qualitative methods), the main tools that are going to be used to answer the principle objectives of this research are interviews and online questionnaires. The reason why this research paper will use these two tools is because the need to collect the holistic and in-depth information about their personal experiences of cosmetic surgery. This is highly achievable as it will directly interact with individual female students. However, due to time constraints and unmatched schedule with interviewees, this paper has also decided to use questionnaires to reach larger audiences. Hence, questionnaires will help to support the credibility of interviews because reaching the large number of audiences will represent the greater views and experiences about cosmetic surgery.

4. Results and Discussion

Results: according to the results of the interview, the researcher has found that every interviewee went to get plastic surgery for boosting their confidence. They gathered the necessary information from their peers and then later looked on the internet. Every interviewee has positive feelings towards plastic surgery and willing to encourage their peers to have plastic surgery. Cosmetic surgery among female students at Rangsit University are seen through social media and plastic surgery as a new identity and norms. Physical dissatisfaction transition of cosmetic surgery is different between plastic and cosmetic surgery. Plastic surgery in Thailand was also encouraged by family members to go through plastic surgery.



They also agree that social media, especially Instagram has become the factor when making decisions about plastic surgery due to its nature of posting pictures and selfies, which can provoke insecurities in everyone. Not to mention the online marketing and contents related to plastic surgery that has been pushing from the plastic surgery industry through social media. According to the research results of the online questionnaires, most respondents were in their early twenties mostly 21-23 years old. Out of 133 respondents, most of the respondents started their plastic surgery with the nose surgery or nose reconstruction to make them look better. Almost 80% of the surgeries were performed in Bangkok. About 89 respondents have gone through 1 procedure. They gathered most information from social media. And almost half of them willing to say yes on the thought about doing their next surgery with only 20 people said no to it, and face surgery being the next one for their surgery. Over 100 were also willing to encourage their friends to do plastic surgery. Most respondents have no problem after surgery, and those listed swelling as their number one complication. Overall more than 60% of the people were satisfied with the surgery, those who did not point out that the outcome was not what they expected. When asked about their satisfaction before surgery around 65% said 'yes' to feeling stress with the body before surgery. 105 people or almost 80% of respondents agree that social media does encourage people to get surgery.

Discussion: comparing the research findings, the online questionnaires and interviews seem to be that female students seem to start their plastic surgery journey between 18-20 years old. The number one reason female students decided to go on with plastic surgery was meant to make them look better as well as boost their self-confidence. Gathering information about first plastic surgery was different. In the interview most of the interviewees seem to gather them from friends and family members. However, the online questionnaire seems to pick social media over their peers even though some did pick friends and family members. As a result, there seems to be the same case as drastic changes in the public's perception of cosmetic surgery in Thailand, as it is open to the gradual acceptance as more demand has seen in recent years among Thai consumers. Not to mention the most plastic surgeries in the survey was nose surgery in top spot and eyelids surgery came in second place which is similar to the Placid Way article (Placid Way, n.d.).

However social media can trigger the feeling of insecurity and make female students who were high on self-awareness to feel like they would need to get surgery in order to look pretty or camera-ready as similar to Real-Self's survey which recently surveyed about whether social media had any role to play in their decision to choose a cosmetic procedure and they found that almost half of the respondents reaffirmed the influence of social media, with 15 percent responding with affirmation, "Yes," and over 33 percent saying that while they knew they wanted to improve their look, but images on social media made them more aware. The trend of posting images and "selfies" over social network such as Facebook, Instagram, and other social networks had a widespread online exposure for everyone (Creative Take Medical, n.d.).

Research also suggests that social media influence substantially on cosmetic surgery as the survey by the American Academy of Facial and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFRS) have seen a 31 percent increase in patients requesting surgery to look better online (New Orleans Center for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, n.d.). Instagram was one of the biggest social media platform that promotes this kind of habit due to its nature of posting a "selfie" of its users who usually post the best version of the users themselves. It makes the users who consume the content idealize the real situation of real life into something more like a picture-perfect world.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Interview results

The qualitative research findings of the 5 interviewees lead to the answer to the first objective: to study and observe the attitudes of female students of Rangsit University who have a chance of being addicted to plastic surgery and to find the reason behind this behavior, to look into body dissatisfaction inside them and find out how they deal with it, and to find how social media was an inspiration to be a key informant for getting work done. The results from the interview indicate the interviewees on the following issues:



1) Lack of self-confidence, high on self-awareness: the interviewees started their journey in plastic surgery before entering their twenties to boost their confidence. So, the researcher found that most of the women were lacking self-confidence but high on self-awareness which could be able to see from the interview where some interviewees admitted of going through plastic surgery for their career as well as for the photos. By helping shape females with higher confidence, eventually the plastic surgery will not be the first to come to mind when it comes to improving their looks. Maturity is very important as well. By having plastic surgery later in life the patient would understand more about themselves and can tell exactly what they like and do not like in their own body as well as raising more awareness when it comes to considering plastic surgery in the future.

2) Social media increased self-awareness: social media has encouraged interviewees to seek improvement in their appearance through plastic surgery. Due to higher self-awareness in the younger generation from social media and “selfies” it has trended recently.

3) Instagram has the biggest impact compared to all the social media platforms: all interviewees agree on some level that social media does play a huge role of influencing and encouraging them to get plastic surgery or more plastic surgery if they already did one before as well as it is the platform to gather the information about plastic surgery. Due to Instagram’s nature of posting pictures and selfies, it provokes insecurities in human. Not to mention online marketing that has been pushing the plastic surgery industry through the opinions of the interviewees.

4) Family and friends are the number one source of encouragement: even though it is true that social media is the place where the source of insecurity but the peers and family members are the ones who have the biggest influencing power when making decisions related to plastic surgery.

5.2 The Online Questionnaires results

The 133 respondents of the survey were all familiar with plastic surgery with most of them having gone through some sort of plastic surgeries or cosmetic procedures. The results from the poll indicate the female students on the following issues:

- 1) Most female students usually went through plastic surgery before 20s.
- 2) Nose surgery is the most popular among female students.
- 3) Female students went through surgery to look better (boost self-confident).
- 4) Bangkok is the number 1 destination in Thailand for plastic surgery.
- 5) Female students find information about plastic surgery through social media.
- 6) Female students are willing to encourage friends to have plastic surgery.
- 7) Most female students did not face any complications from plastic surgery.
- 8) Most female students are satisfied with their plastic surgery.
- 9) Most female students are dissatisfied with their bodies before plastic surgery.
- 10) Most female students think social media played a big role in encouraging them to have plastic surgery.

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