

Promotion of Cosmetic Surgery on Social Media Platforms and Awareness, Self-Esteem and Body Image Satisfaction of Women in Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Lagos State

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Abstract

The desire to undergo and actually patronise cosmetic surgery practices is mostly driven by the pressure to look a certain way and obtain an ideal body deemed acceptable by society as it is seen on social media platforms. Therefore, this study is aimed at investigating the promotion of cosmetic surgery on social media platforms and awareness, self-esteem and body image satisfaction of Women in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State and identify the social media platforms used by women in assessing cosmetic surgery messages. The study adopted the theories of Media Effects, Self-discrepancy and Social Identity. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, the instrument for data gathering was a questionnaire. The sample involved 250 educated women resident in Eti-Osa Local Government Area. Findings from the study showed that personal factors and socio-economic factors predict social media engagement. Women between the ages of 18-25 years willing to undergo cosmetic surgery are at a high level of significance ($r=0.0901$, $p>0.01$). Findings from the study showed that 43% respondents are more aware of cosmetic surgery practices especially Breast augmentation and Liposuction. 56% are of the opinion that Facebook promotes indulging and patronizing cosmetic procedures. 60% of the respondents accessed promotional messages on Facebook and Instagram. There is a significant relationship between access to cosmetic surgery promotional messages on social media and promotion of cosmetic

surgery. Recommendation for the study inferred that women should be more cautious on how they internalize the images they have access to on a daily bases and how an increase in media awareness has to be the first step toward encouraging a healthy relationship between a woman, her body, and her social media network.

Keywords: Women, Body Image, Cosmetic Surgery, Satisfaction, Self–esteem, Social Media Platforms.

Word: 290

Introduction

Social media platforms have fundamentally transformed communication, facilitating real-time interaction and rapid information exchange among extensive heterogeneous audiences. This evolution significantly influences personal and professional relationships, as well as the dissemination of scientific knowledge. On average, individuals engage with social media for over two hours daily, consuming content ranging from family updates to major political events (Smith et al., 2023).

The impact of social media is particularly pronounced in shaping body image perceptions, especially among women. Platforms such as *Instagram* and *Snapchat* frequently display images that promote unrealistic beauty standards, leading to body dissatisfaction and contributing to issues like low self-esteem and eating disorders (Jones, 2022). Research indicates a strong correlation between media exposure and negative body image, particularly among adolescent girls and young women, who are especially vulnerable to social comparison and the internalisation of these ideals (Brown & Tiggemann, 2021).

The Tripartite Influence Model posits that peer groups, parents, and media collectively shape perceptions of beauty (Thompson et al., 1999

& Kylie 2021). The internalisation of societal standards can prompt behaviours aimed at achieving these ideals, even when they conflict with personal identity. This often results in excessive comparisons and the pursuit of cosmetic surgery as a means to conform to idealised body images (Williams & Barlow, 2020).

While some studies suggest that cosmetic surgery may improve self-esteem (Miller, 2023), others indicate that the desire for such procedures frequently arises from low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction (Johnson et al., 2021). The media's portrayal of cosmetic surgery can glamorise and normalise these interventions, particularly among impressionable young audiences. However, the associated risks; physical, emotional, and financial remain significant (Davis & Brown, 2022). Ultimately, the interplay between social media and body image underscores the necessity of critically evaluating media messages and their influence on self-perception and health behaviors.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous studies have established a direct correlation between exposure to idealised body images and negative body image outcomes among females, indicating that increased media consumption leads to heightened dissatisfaction with one's own body. Research indicates that prolonged exposure to media content and the internalisation of thin body ideals intensify the desire to emulate these images, resulting in an increased sense of body dissatisfaction. However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the impact of emerging media forms, particularly social networking sites, on the desire for cosmetic surgery. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where social media's influence is rapidly expanding and remains underexplored.

This study aims to investigate whether exposure to images and viral videos depicting cosmetic body enhancements fosters an increased awareness and desire for cosmetic surgery among young women,

particularly concerning their body image and self-esteem. As the relationship between media consumption and body image satisfaction is complex and multifaceted, understanding this dynamic is essential for developing effective interventions. Moreover, this research adopts a multidisciplinary approach, integrating perspectives from Mass Communication, Psychology, Sociology, Medicine, and Economics. It specifically seeks to assess the level of awareness among women in the Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos regarding the promotion of cosmetic surgery, as well as their attitudes and dispositions related to self-esteem in the context of persistent exposure to social media content that encourages a desire for cosmetic enhancement. By elucidating these factors, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on body image, self-esteem, and the societal implications of cosmetic surgery in contemporary Nigerian culture.

Research Questions

This study provides answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of awareness among women in the Eti-Osa Local Government Area regarding the promotion of cosmetic surgery on social media platforms?
2. How does the promotion of cosmetic surgery on social media platforms affect the self-esteem of women in the Eti-Osa Local Government Area?
3. What is the level of body image satisfaction among women in the Eti-Osa Local Government Area in relation to the promotion of cosmetic surgery on social media platforms?
4. Which social media platforms do women in the Eti-Osa Local Government Area utilise to assess cosmetic surgery messages?
5. What motivations do social media influencers have for promoting the desire for cosmetic surgery among women on social media platforms?

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive survey design of the quantitative type, which is deemed appropriate for observing the relationships between the study's variables and for collecting both primary and secondary data. The suitability of this design lies in its ability to guide data collection and analyse pre-existing conditions without manipulating variables. The population consists of women residing in the Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos, specifically those with access to smartphones and active engagement on at least two social media platforms. This area is notable for the increasing number of cosmetic surgery facilities, with an estimated population of approximately 120,933 women (Wikified, 2021).

A multistage sampling technique was employed, commencing with stratified sampling to categorise the population based on demographic factors. A sample size of 250 educated women was selected based on their usage of social media platforms. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire featuring closed-ended questions designed by the researcher. The questionnaire is divided into five sections:

- **Section A:** Demographic variables, including: age, location, occupation, and marital status.
- **Section B:** Awareness of cosmetic surgery on social media.
- **Section C:** Social media promotion of cosmetic surgery.
- **Section D:** Self-esteem and body image satisfaction.
- **Section E:** Attitudes towards the promotion of cosmetic surgery.

The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the researcher's supervisor and experts in the field, ensuring alignment with the research questions. Reliability was assessed through a pilot test on 10% of the sample size. The researcher administered 250 questionnaires at their workplace, through fieldwork assisted by trained research assistants. Ultimately, 230 women participated in the study. Data were

analysed statistically using descriptive statistics, facilitating clear comprehension of the findings.

Results

This study surveyed a total of 250 respondents, achieving a response rate of 92% with 230 completed questionnaires. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The majority of respondents (49.1%) were aged 18-27, while 16.1% fell within the 47-56 age bracket. This demographic suggests a greater engagement among younger women in discussions surrounding cosmetic surgery.

Of the respondents, 60.4% identified as single, 35.2% as married, and 4.3% as divorced. The predominance of single respondents may indicate a growing interest in cosmetic procedures as a means of self-enhancement. Students constituted the largest group (27.4%), followed by social media influencers (19.6%) and bankers (18.7%). This distribution highlights the significant role that students and influencers play in shaping perceptions regarding cosmetic surgery.

Bachelor's degree holders represented 26.5% of the respondents, while 23.9% held a Master's degree. The educational level of the sample suggests a relatively informed demographic, potentially more susceptible to social media influences regarding cosmetic procedures.

The analysis revealed that 43% of respondents were highly aware of cosmetic surgery, with an additional 46.5% indicating general awareness. In contrast, 10.4% reported being unaware. These findings suggest a strong familiarity with cosmetic surgery, particularly among younger women. Most respondents recognised various procedures, with Breast Augmentation being the most acknowledged.

The data indicated that over half (50.9%) of respondents felt comfortable posting unfiltered images on social media, suggesting a

positive self-image. However, some respondents experienced pressure to conform to social media ideals, with 32.2% expressing discomfort when comparing themselves to popular figures. This duality illustrates the complex relationship between social media and body image among women.

Analysis indicated that Facebook (37.4%) was perceived as the primary platform promoting cosmetic procedures, followed by Instagram (28.3%). This finding underscores the influence of visual-based platforms on cosmetic surgery awareness and desirability. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.901$, $p < 0.01$) between access to cosmetic surgery promotional messages on social media and the likelihood of considering cosmetic procedures. This indicates that social media exposure significantly impacts women's decisions regarding cosmetic surgery.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study highlight substantial awareness of cosmetic surgery among women in Eti-Osa, consistent with international studies that report high awareness levels in female demographics. The data support the notion that exposure to cosmetic surgery content influences self-esteem and body image, with many respondents feeling comfortable in their appearances while acknowledging societal pressures from social media. Moreover, the preference for Facebook as a platform for cosmetic surgery promotions reflects the ongoing relevance of this platform in shaping perceptions. These results corroborate existing literature that demonstrates how extensive time spent on social media correlates with increased interest in cosmetic procedures.

Overall, the study suggests a significant link between social media engagement and the promotion of cosmetic surgery, with important implications for how cosmetic procedures are marketed and perceived

by women in urban settings. This underscores the need for further research into the influence of social media on body image and cosmetic surgery trends.

Conclusion

Social media has profoundly transformed lives by connecting individuals globally, fostering creativity through user-generated content, and influencing social norms. While it has enhanced communication, it has also amplified the impact of traditional advertising, often leading to negative consequences. Unlike traditional media, social media's influence stems from trusted sources, such as peers and influencers, making its effects even more pronounced.

Women, in particular, face intense pressures from social media's portrayal of beauty standards, which often depict unattainable ideals through heavily edited images. This constant exposure can undermine self-esteem and body satisfaction. Historically, young women explored their identities independently, but social media has shifted this experience into a public domain, where milestones are documented and scrutinised by peers and strangers alike. As women navigate these challenges, they experience collective pressure to conform to certain beauty standards, which can lead to harmful outcomes, including a desire for cosmetic surgery and psychological distress. Research on the relationship between social media use and body dissatisfaction remains limited, highlighting the need for greater awareness of its implications.

To address these issues, there is a call for social media platforms and organisations to monitor and regulate content related to body image. Increased advocacy from celebrities and feminist organisations can help challenge the emphasis on narrow beauty ideals. Implementing measures such as symbols on digitally altered images, akin to ratings for violent media, could raise awareness about the dangers of unrealistic portrayals.

Rather than encouraging individuals to abandon social media entirely, an approach that may foster rebellion, efforts should focus on building a supportive community. Women can counteract negative imagery by sharing positive, unedited representations of beauty and promoting dialogue against body shaming. Ultimately, while social media contributes to shaping body image concerns, it also holds the potential for empowerment when leveraged to promote awareness and authenticity.

Recommendations

Social media has become integral to daily life, often overlooking its parallels with in-person peer pressure. It builds on existing psychological and sociocultural dynamics, making it challenging to mitigate its negative effects on women's body image and self-esteem. This study aims to highlight how social media exacerbates female body dissatisfaction and suggests strategies for improvement. Key recommendations include:

- Raising media awareness to foster a healthy relationship between women and their bodies online.
- Encouraging women to share positive media featuring real, unedited individuals.
- Advocating for stricter regulations against body shaming across social media platforms.
- Reducing reliance on filters that distort body image.
- Promoting campaigns that celebrate body positivity.
- Conducting more research on the dangers of idealised body images.
- Collaborating with organisations like the WHO to enhance awareness of body image positivity through influential social media channels.

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