



## PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF BODY ENHANCEMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION ADS IN OWERRI MUNICIPAL

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### ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this study is to examine public perception of body enhancement and reconstruction ads in Owerri municipal. The objectives of this study are to; ascertain the level of exposure of residents of Owerri Municipal to social media, examine the level of awareness of Owerri Municipal residents on social media ads on body enhancement and reconstruction, and evaluate the perception of body enhancement and reconstruction ads among residents of Owerri Municipal. The survey research design was adopted for this study with a population of 174,200. The Wimmer and Dominic online sample size calculator was used to arrive at a sample size of 384. The multistage sampling technique was utilized for the distribution of questionnaires as the instrument for data collection. This study was anchored on the self-efficiency theory and the innovative and adaptive theory. The findings of this study revealed that at 45% residents of Owerri municipal are highly aware body enhancement and reconstruction ads on various social media platforms. Further findings also revealed that respondents perceive body enhancement and reconstruction as a measure through which young women engage to attract attention to achieve success on a grand mean of 3.6. This study concludes that respondents' perception towards body enhancement and reconstruction have favorably been impacted by their level of awareness and exposure. This study therefore, recommends that body enhancement by social media influencers has a notable remark on the increased patronage of the brands they endorse.

**Keywords:** Body enhancement, Owerri municipal, public perception, Reconstruction

### Introduction

Cosmetic surgery is defined as elective procedures that focus on enhancing appearance through surgical and medical techniques. The ability to permanently enhance the natural body shape and size through cosmetic surgery has typically been stigmatized, making it taboo to discuss even with friends and family (American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 2020).

Statista (2021) explained that “in the 1990s, many cosmetic surgery patients wanted to look like celebrities. In the 2000s, a cultural shift toward reality television created a new category of ‘stars’ who became models for cosmetic surgery (e.g the Kardashians). Today, people’s desires for an idealized version of themselves are being motivated by social media influencers, for whom cosmetic surgery is quite common and has played an integral role in establishing these human brands”. Statista (2021) further points that “human brands refer to individuals whose career, public appearance, and endorsements are carefully controlled to enhance their personal appeal and distinguish them from others”.

Bhardwaj et al., (2024), explained that “social media marketing generated \$9.7 billion in 2020 largely as a result of SMIs who brokered brand endorsements with the intent of affecting consumer

decision making. Compared to traditional celebrities, consumers feel 3 more connected with influencers, creating a sense of interpersonal intimacy and a desire to imitate them.”

With the evolution of the ideal female body and the appearance driven nature of influencer marketing, it is not surprising that influencers may elect cosmetic surgery services to maintain a consistent, enduring brand image. The literature has recognized the importance of influencer characteristics when engaging in influencer marketing (Vrontis et al., 2021). Thus, it is important for marketers to consider how the outcomes of cosmetic surgery services (i.e., body enhancement) are perceived by consumers, and in turn, impact an influencer endorsed brand.

In today’s society the importance of physical appearance as dictated by the media is arguably more persuasive than ever, especially among younger people and through newer forms of media such as Social Networking Sites (SNS) (Walker et al., 2019).

Holak and Coravin, (2024) explained that “Instagram is a free social networking platform, allowing users to edit and share photos and videos through a mobile app. In comparison to other SNS, such as Facebook and Twitter, Instagram revolves around images and less so on the written text. The visual, picture-orientated nature of SNS, especially Instagram, encourages users to view and comment on the pictures that other users display on their profiles”.

One’s physical appearance can play an important role in whether other users look at and comment on these pictures. Hence, how we are perceived on SNS can influence the perception of our appearance and, in some instances, may encourage people to want to do something about it (De Vries et al. 2014). It is against this backdrop that the researcher intends to investigate public perception of body enhancement and reconstruction ads in Owerri Municipal.

## **Research Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the perception of body enhancement and reconstruction ads among residents of Owerri Municipal. Thus, this study seeks to;

1. Ascertain the level of exposure of residents of Owerri Municipal to social media.
2. Examine the level of awareness of Owerri Municipal residents on social media ads on body enhancement and reconstruction.
3. Evaluate the perception of body enhancement and reconstruction ads among residents of Owerri Municipal.

## **Empirical Review**

A study carried out by Park and Allgayer (2017) was aimed at investigating the effects of cosmetic surgery advertising on perceived benefits, risks, acceptance of cosmetic surgery and attitudes toward cosmetic surgeons. Findings of this study revealed that exposure to cosmetic surgery advertisements was positively related to perceived benefits and surgery intention, but not related to perceived risk. This study concluded that surgeon's education and training, price, financing options, before-and-after photos of patients, patient testimonials, surgeries/procedures available, risks of surgeries/procedures, hygiene-related practices, medical emergency preparedness, and consultation information were rated as helpful. This study recommends that further studies should be carried out to better educate the public on body enhancement.

Also, Ashikali et al. (2017) examined the impact of cosmetic surgery advertising on women’s body image and attitudes towards cosmetic surgery. This study found that exposure to cosmetic surgery

advertising led to increased dissatisfaction with weight and appearance. Further findings revealed that consideration of undergoing surgery was higher in women exposed to advertising containing risk information. This study concluded that advertising for cosmetic surgery impacts women's body image negatively, and information provided in such advertising impacts attitudes toward surgery differently.

Lefebvre and Cowart (2021) carried out an investigation on influencer body enhancement and brand endorsement. Findings revealed that cosmetic surgery services were acceptable when internally motivated but may signal inauthenticity. Further findings revealed that consumer interest in an endorsed brand was negatively impacted by body enhancement, with perceived morality as the underlying mechanism. This study concluded that body enhancement by social media influencers has a notable impact on the increased patronage of the brands they endorse.

Interestingly, Candice et al. (2021) in their study evaluated the effects of social media use on desire for cosmetic surgery among young women. The findings showed that viewing images of females who have undergone cosmetic enhancements affected young women's desire for cosmetic surgery, especially if they spent a significant amount of time on social media, followed many accounts, and were less satisfied with their appearance. This study concluded therefore that social media to a large extent influence women's perception negatively on body enhancement products. This study recommends that government, and reliable agencies should build measures to checkmate publications in social media.

Zhao (2021) titled his study "the influence of media exposure on young women's intention to undergo cosmetic surgery: A third person perspective" with its aim to examine how cosmetic surgery media exposure influences young women's behavioral intentions of undergoing those procedures. Findings of this study revealed that exposure to social media contents on plastic surgery influence people's perception negatively to undergo plastic surgery and this is contingent on one's perceived body esteem. The study recommended that there should be more public enlightenment program to increase awareness of the dangers of cosmetic surgery.

Quittkat et al. (2019) carried out a study titled "body dissatisfaction, importance of appearance, and body appreciation in men and women over the lifespan". The aim of this study was to explore different aspects of body image in the general German-speaking population and to compare men and women of various ages. Findings revealed that body dissatisfaction was higher in women than in men and was unaffected by age in women, and importance of appearance was higher in women than in men. The study concluded that men's and women's body image are dissimilar and appear to vary across different ages.

Beatriz et al. (2023) carried out a study with the aim of examining body perception and frequency of exposure to advertising on social networks among adolescents. This study found that exposure to advertising by influencers on social networks is directly related to lower satisfaction with their bodies. This assessment is based not so much on individual reasons related to health or personal well-being, but rather on fundamentally social reasons, and considers that physical appearance is a determining factor for social success. Therefore, this study recommends that there is need to study in more detail the beliefs that directly affect adolescents' self-esteem to improve their critical competence in the face of this idealized content.

Naif et al. (2019) initiated a study that was aimed at examining public adults' perception of cosmetic surgery in Saudi Arabia. The findings of this study revealed that attitudes differed by gender, age, and other demographic characteristics: men and younger individuals (18-29) showed the lowest score for likelihood to pursue cosmetic surgery, whereas women and older individuals (40-50) ranked the highest on total scale scores. This study concluded that there is a diminished perception of cosmetic surgery among adults in Saudi Arabia.

In same vein, Kasmaei et al. (2020) examined the role of attitude, body image, satisfaction and socio-demographic variables in cosmetic surgeries of Iranian students. The findings of this study revealed that socio-demographic variables, body mass index, gender, family revenue, father's job, marital status, mother's job, and fathers' literacy level were the predictors of intention for cosmetic surgery. Educational and psychological interventions are recommended to create body satisfaction, to develop positive attitudes toward one's body, and to develop negative attitudes toward cosmetic surgery and the side effects. Apparently, providing an environment for physical activity and exercise, especially for girls would help the students in losing weight, remaining in shape and attenuating the tendency toward cosmetic surgery.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

This study was anchored on this persuasive theory called the Self efficiency Theory and Innovation Adoption Theory (IAT). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to do tasks and actions about their well-being and life. It is the belief a person has in their ability to succeed. According to research and scientific innovation society (2024), posit that this theory was propounded by Albert Bandura. Albert Bandura, a Canadian American psychologist, and professor noticed that people had belief in their ability to impact their own situations. He believed that self-efficacy impacts an individual's coping methods and the way they work towards their goals and dreams.

The relevance of this theory to the study remains the fact that people especially female will continue to patronize body enhancement and reconstruction products as long as they see it as good and beneficial to them.

Riverola et al. (2016) explains that the innovators are the first group who choose to adopt an innovation or product as soon as they see it. They are extroverts, aggressive, venturesome and expeditious. The early adopters are diligently careful and are guided by respect. They are naturally the leader of their peerage or opinion leaders whom their constituency look up to, to make critical purchase decisions. Then the early majority is independent consumers who, although conscious of taking purchase risks, forbid being the last to adopt innovation; even though they are not opinion leaders on their own. The late majority is skeptical and risk-averse consumers who choose to adopt a product or service when they are sure that the adoption of the innovation wouldn't hurt. Finally, innovation is adopted lastly by the laggards.

The relevance of this theory to the study is that the choices of individuals will always be influence by the stance of certain opinion leaders. This implies that when one's favorite celebrity or opinion leader endorses these advertised body enhancement products, there are high chances of the product acceptance in the society.

### **Methodology**

The research design used for this study is the survey research method. The population of Owerri Municipal according to National Bureau of Statistics (2022) is 174,200, therefore, to ascertain the sample size of the population, the Wimmer and Dominic online sample size calculator was used to arrive at a sample size of 384 with the confidence level at 95% and margin of error at 5% The questionnaire was the instrument for data collection and the multi stage sampling technique was adopted for the distribution of the instrument.

**Data Analysis**

The researchers distributed 384 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents to which 382 copies were returned meanwhile, two (2) copies were not returned.

**Research Question One:** What the level of exposure of residents of Owerri Municipal to social media?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	113	30
High	157	41
Moderate	83	22
Low	29	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey (2024)

The analysis of data above revealed that there is a high level of exposure of residents of Owerri Municipal to social media platforms on an average of 41%.

**Research Question Two:** What the level of awareness of Owerri Municipal residents on social media ads on body enhancement and reconstruction?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	113	30
High	173	45
Moderate	67	18
Low	29	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey (2024)

Data of analysis on the table above revealed that most respondents are highly aware of social media ads on body enhancement and recreation as a result of their level of exposure to social networking sites on an average of 45%.

**Research Question Three:** What the perception of body enhancement and reconstruction ads among residents of Imo state? N= 382

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
I think these ads on body enhancement and reconstruction build inferiority complex among women who do not have such figures naturally.	267	110	5	0	3.6	Accepted
I believe body enhancement and reconstruction boost women confidence and drag much attention to themselves and the brand they represent.	259	123	0	0	3.6	Accepted

Somehow enhanced and reconstructed body helps young ladies climb the ladder of success faster as attention is drawn to them.	271	108	3	0	3.6	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.6</b>

**Source:** Field survey (2024)

**Variables:**

SA= Strongly Agree 3.3-4.0, A= Agree 2.5-3.2, D =Disagree 1.8-2.4, SD= Strongly Disagree 1-1.7.

**Decision Rule:** the mean value for decision is 2.5. Therefore, if the calculated mean is between 1-2.4, the researcher will reject the item posed but if the calculated mean is between 2.5-4.0 the researcher will accept the item.

The analysis of the table above revealed that on a grand mean of 3.6 residents of Owerri municipal opines that enhanced and reconstructed body helps young ladies climb the ladder of success faster as attention is drawn to them. This implies that physical appearance is a determining factor for social success.

**Discussion of Findings**

The data of analysis revealed that there is a high level of exposure of residents of Owerri Municipal to social media platforms on an average of 41%. This implies respondent always navigating through the various social networking platforms very often. This finding tallies with that of Beatriz et al. (2023) which found that exposure to advertising by influencers on social networks is directly related to lower satisfaction with their bodies. Candice, et al (2021) in their study evaluated the effects of social media use on desire for cosmetic surgery among young women also found that viewing images of females who have undergone cosmetic enhancements affected young women’s desire for cosmetic surgery, especially if they spent a significant amount of time on social media, followed many accounts, and were less satisfied with their appearance.

Analysis of data revealed that most respondents are highly aware of social media ads on body enhancement and recreation as a result of their level of exposure to social networking sites on an average of 45%. This is similar to that of Park and Allgayer (2017) which aimed at investigating the effects of cosmetic surgery advertising on perceived benefits, risks, acceptance of cosmetic surgery and attitudes toward cosmetic surgeons. Findings of this study revealed that exposure to cosmetic surgery advertisements was positively related to perceived benefits and surgery intention, but not related to perceived risk. Similarly, the findings of the study of Ashikali et al. (2017), revealed that exposure to cosmetic surgery advertising led to increased dissatisfaction with weight and appearance. This further explains the stance of the innovative and adaptive theory which explains that the choices of individuals will always be influence by the activities they are exposed to consistently.

The analysis of data revealed that residents of Owerri municipal opines perceive that enhanced and reconstructed body helps young ladies climb the ladder of success faster as attention is drawn to them. This implies that physical appearance is a determining factor for social success. This connote with that of Candice, et al (2021) which revealed that viewing images of females who have undergone cosmetic enhancements affected young women’s desire for cosmetic surgery, especially if they spent a significant amount of time on social media, followed many accounts, and were less satisfied with their appearance. Zhao (2021) also found that exposure to social media contents on plastic surgery influence peoples’ perception negatively to undergo plastic surgery and this is contingent on one’s perceived body esteem. This explains the relevance of self-efficient theory which remains the fact that people especially

female will continue to patronize body enhancement and reconstruction products as long as they see it as good and beneficial to them.

### **Conclusion**

In line with the findings, we therefore conclude that the level of exposure of Owerri municipal resident to social media channels is high. This high level of exposure to social media has transcended into high level of awareness of body enhancement and reconstruction (cosmetic surgery) product as a result of the ads they are exposed to. What this means is that as a result of the level of awareness on body enhancement and reconstruction, residents of Owerri municipal now perceive that body enhancement and reconstruction helps young ladies climb the ladder of success faster as attention is drawn to them. This means that physical appearance is a determining factor for social success. We can also draw the conclusion that respondent's perception towards body enhancement and reconstruction have favourably impacted by their level of awareness and exposure.

### **Recommendations**

In light of this, the following suggestions were made;

1. Because the respondents have been actively exploring all social media platform, there is a high degree of exposure to social networking sites. This study recommends that there is need for adequate censorship of social media contents and also more detail studies on the beliefs that directly affect adolescents' self-esteem to improve their critical competence in the face of this idealized content should be made.
2. In line with the second result, it was recommended more social media awareness campaigns should be organized by regulatory bodies to enlighten the public on the various risks involved in body enhancement and reconstruction products.
3. The data of analysis revealed that respondents perceive body enhancement and reconstruction enables young women achieve success faster. This study therefore, recommend that body enhancement by social media influencers has a notable remark on the increased patronage of the brands they endorse.

### **Limitations to the Study**

The limitation of this study is based on the fact that only survey method was adopted for data collection. Based on these limitations, it is suggested that further findings should be done where consideration should be given to a mixed method research design where the researcher will both qualitative and quantitative data to enable in-depth analysis of the issue of discourse. Also, researchers undertaking studies in this area should consider examining candidates' motive of body enhancement.

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