EDITORIAL

The "Nip and Tuck" Service Framework:

Bright and Dark Side of Beautification/Modification Services

Rodoula H. Tsiotsou and Phil Klaus

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to propose a conceptual framework of beautification/modification services, to introduce the special issue on the topic "*Mirror, Mirror on the Wall! Examining the Bright and Dark Side of Face and Body Beautification/Modification Services*" and to provide a future research agenda.

Design/methodology/approach – Building on the available literature, we developed the "Nip and Tuck" service framework of beautification/modification services depicting the motives, benefits, and outcomes while it identifies current industry trends.

Findings – We explore the antecedents and consequences (positive and negative) of consuming face and body beautification/modification services and integrate these in the "Nip and Tuck" service framework. In the framework, we acknowledge the critical role of new technologies such as augmented reality apps and the internet in enabling and transforming beautification/modification services into commodities. The framework also identifies the benefits consumers seek and derive from these services while it recognizes current trends that shape the industry. We conclude with a set of future research directions that arise from the framework and the articles in the special issue.

Practical implications – The attained insights are useful to managers of beautification and modification services seeking to understand and satisfy their customers' needs while securing their well-being.

Social implications – Understanding the role of beautification and modification services in consumers' well-being is essential for business managers and policymakers.

Originality/value – The authors propose a novel, "Nip and Tuck" framework of face and body beautification/modification services and its key antecedents and consequences while considering both their bright and dark sides.

Keywords: Face and body beautification/modification services, Augmented reality, Customer engagement, Beauty addiction, Well-being

Paper type: Conceptual paper

1.   Introduction

Historically, humans have been collectively preoccupied with beauty. The nature of beauty itself has been the focus of aesthetics, a major field of study in western philosophy, and has occupied numerous philosophers, from Plato to Kant. According to Plato, beauty does not exist in this world but the world of ideas. Plato's view of appearance was that beauty was only a natural asset and nothing more. In essence, Plato advocates that the beautiful external appearance of a person is in no way related to the image of our inner world (inner beauty). Socrates believed that the person possessing external beauty would suffer like a short-lived tyrant. On the other hand, Aristotle supported that a man's outward beauty is "the most important qualification, far more than the best letter of recommendation." Current research confirms that this is the case nowadays by empirically supporting that appearance can affect an individual's success in the society (Dilmaghani, 2020; Gu & Ji, 2019).

Beauty has traditionally been counted among the ultimate values, with goodness, truth, and justice. Since ancient times, people have been using beauty services: the Egyptians used dark eyeliner and were the first to mark their bodies with tattoos; Cleopatra was taking baths in donkey milk to preserve her vitality and beauty; Greeks and Romans used to visit hammams to accomplish beauty and wellness. For

the most part, these rituals were conducted by women and were relatively secret: one had to uphold the idea that beauty was natural and effortless, not an artifice.

So how has the beauty industry, as old as the idea of beauty itself, become not only mainstream but also lauded as one of the key service sectors? This is particularly notable when traditional service industries are struggling and in extremely challenging times for the retail industry. However, growth in the beauty service industry has boomed in recent years, in a trend that many links to a broader generational trend of attention to physical well-being. Nowadays, Aristotle's perspective on beauty prevails, boosting beautification and modification services worldwide. Beauty and modification services gradually rose (Williams, 2020) as individuals worldwide grew increasingly conscious of how they 'appear' on their virtual office during the COVID-19 pandemic (Meeson, 2020). Remarkably, the Millennials are often quoted as being the main drivers behind the meteoric growth of the beauty segment. The beauty industry is, in fact, quite broad: it includes services such as beauty, hair, nail salon (Epstein and Fitzgerald, 2009; Mancini et al., 2018), wellness centers, spas (Manideep, Reddy, and Reddy, 2018), barbershops, medical spas/injections, massage, waxing, permanent makeup, lashes, blow-out services, plastic surgery services, tattoo shops (Jha, 2016), etc. In the United States alone, the beauty services sector employs over 670,000 people, and its job growth outlook is faster than average, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021) data at a rate of 13% (2016-2026). The industry was worth $532.43 billion in 2017 and is expected to reach a market value of $805.61 billion by 2023.

The rise of new beauty technologies and services, the internet, and social media propelled the beauty industry forward and changed customer behavior in the related services. How beauty professionals and consumers learn about, buy and experience beauty services is changing faster than ever. Augmented reality apps, social media, and online influencers have replaced reality T.V. and lifestyle magazines in recent years, serving as beacons of beauty ideals for women and men (Dobson, 2015). At the same time, there is a dark side in the industry that transforms customers into vulnerable human beings making them captives of vain hopes. Therefore, the purpose of this special issue is to examine the challenges and complexities of beautification and modification services and advance our knowledge in this service industry.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. We first present the "Nip and Tuck" service framework that considers key industry trends and influences while it identifies key motives, benefits, and outcomes of both the bright and the dark side of beautification/modification services. We conclude by briefly presenting the articles of the special issue and offering avenues for service researchers for further research in this dynamic and diverse industry.

2.   The "Nip and Tuck" Service Framework– The Bright and the Dark Side of Beautification and Modification Service

Our "Nip and Tuck" service framework, though, through our own research and interest in the field, and sparked by countless discussions, highlights the two sides of the beautification and modification industry that are as integral as aspects and experiences these services deliver – the bright and the dark side. We conceptualize both positive and dark aspects of consumers' motivations, benefits, and resulting outcomes. This allows a more holistic, complete understanding of the beautification and modification services while permitting the inclusion of megatrends in the industry. First, we examine current beautification and modification services trends and integrate the positive aspects and challenges into the proposed "Nip and Tuck" service framework.

2.1 Current Trends in Beautification and Modification Services

Reality TV gives us a glimpse into both the opportunities and challenges of beauty and modifications services. While once we watched the 'positive' impact plastic surgery can have, we see shows where plastic surgeons are trying to find their self-esteem and health again after some disastrous outcomes of having surgery abroad or being conducted by less than qualified or certified 'professionals.' Viewers might wonder why some of these patients did opt for the surgeries in the first place. Listening to their testimonials ranging from (from perhaps the viewer's perception) ludicrous to gut-wrenching motivations why they hope(d) corrective surgery might increase their quality of life is, if nothing else, revealing.

As social scientists, we have a duty to not only explore, and the authors who contributed to this special issue did an excellent job doing so, the antecedent and consequences of using beauty and modification services. We need to expose the

underlying themes that drive human beings to expose themselves to the risks associated with beauty and surgical interventions, especially if these are not founded on physical and required needs to increase their physical and emotional well-being.

Commoditization/democratization of beautification and modification services. One megatrend influencing the industry is what we label the "commoditisation or democratization" of beauty and modification services. This term refers to the fact that both new procedures, such as the less-invasive and more-convenient Botox injections, and surgical interventions, permit more people to gain access to beauty modifications that were once reserved for the rich and famous. These opportunities, especially the access to these services abroad, allow the rise of several, often severe challenges for the users of these services. One most common one is the misconception of the qualification and expertise of the person delivering the service according to a perceived standard. Regulations, and more importantly, consumer rights in other countries might not be equal to one's country of residence. Thailand and Costa Rica, for example, attract customers of plastic surgery with prices being on average of a third of the price for the same procedure in the U.S. (e.g., a facelift costs $7,500 -$15,000 in the U.S. whereas $3,500-5,000 in Costa Rica). Thus, if all goes well, Thailand and Costa Rica appear as more than the suitable alternatives with first-class medical facilities and certified specialist surgeons.

However, what if something goes wrong? For example, well-document cases highlight that if dissatisfied customers sue the hospitals and surgeons for negligence and malpractice in Thailand, it is rare that these cases are successful, and even less likely that the courts decide that damages would be paid. This explains why doctors pay in Thailand significantly less for insurance than their U.S. colleagues. In turn, this clarifies why medical costs are much lower. In addition, the police often seek advice from the Thai Medical Council. The council is composed of representatives of the medical industry, with arguably little incentive to expose wrongdoing by their colleagues. Moreover, the international hospital certification does not involve allegations of malpractice, making it incomparable with other certifications.

Men, the new target of the industry. Another of the new trends relates to a shift from a traditional female customer-catering industry towards more (all) *gender* equality. Not long ago, men thought about counteracting grey hair with some color as the only suitable (or acceptable) form of 'appearance enhancement.' Nowadays, we

accept that beauty modification is suitable for anyone who desires it, and men are going in for more noticeable improvements in their looks.

According to the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons, 12 percent of all cosmetic surgery procedures are now performed on men. Another group, the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery says that men account for slightly more than 33 percent of all new facial interventions. Today's men desire many procedures their female counterparts have been comfortable with for years, such as facial reshaping and liposuction. Plastic surgeons around the globe note the increase of male patients, often accompanied by their partners. It also appears that the motivations and psychological effects of plastic surgery are indistinguishable between the genders. In a way, male customers of beauty-enhancing services encounter similar experiences as female customers: they are concerned about their looks and try to appear younger.

Cobias – Human plastic surgery guinea-pigging. This service industry is complex, and the example of the Brazilian market shows that the grey area is hard to explain and comprehend. In the U.S., only medically necessary, not aesthetic surgery, is covered by insurance. In Brazil, patients have the "right to beauty." Plastic surgeries are free or low-cost in Brazilian public hospitals, and the government subsidizes almost half a million surgeries per year. While this sounds enticing, the reality, the dark side, looks slightly different, and patients refer to themselves as "cobaias" (guinea pigs) for the medical residents who would operate on them. Women in Brazil perceive that living without beauty is an even higher risk. This is due to a *culture* where beauty is a central requirement for the job market, finding a spouse, and essentially for chances to better their lives. Plastic surgery waiting times in public hospitals, which could be years, confirm the importance of meeting the 'essential beauty requirements.'

Medical residents in training carry out most surgeries in Brazilian public hospitals. Most surgical innovations are tested here, too, to test and define the methods before being offered to wealthier patients. However, if these attempts go wrong, the typically low-income patient has very little chance of retribution or amendment. It seems that they assumed all the risks. Due to this lack of regulations or opportunity to be very creative, Brazilian plastic surgeons are trailblazers in their field, delivering a reputation as the best in their field. This, in turn, leads to desirable perceptions, while their human 'Guinea pigs' might suffer tremendously. An excellent

example, we believe in the double-edged sword of beauty and modification services. One central thought arising from our observations is that we need to take a closer look at what drives people to face and body modifications in the first place. Next, we pick up this thought by identifying the causes and the effects of these desires and perceptions.

2.2   *Beautification/Modification Services – Motives, Benefits, and Outcomes*

Some see the boom in cosmetic surgery due to new, more sophisticated procedures, safer anesthetics, and the desire for self-improvement. Others credit - or blame - a narcissistic culture with its craving for instant gratification, youth, and perfection, and its fear of aging and death. The darkest observers see the trend as the profit quotient of human self-loathing.

In our proposed "Nip and Tuck framework" (Figure 1), we highlight the challenging and multifaceted nature of beautification and modification services. We delineate this industry by exploring the motivations and benefits service users are looking for, and the outcomes of their choices and behaviors. According to Roux and Belk (2019), the body is a topia – an unavoidable location that one must inhabit – where consumers attain ontological stability by engaging in transformational behaviors such as beautification to obtain their ideal utopia. Several motives guide consumers to achieve certain benefits associated with these service experiences.

Motives. With the proliferation of social media, consumers have increased their preoccupation with scrutinizing every part of their bodies and engaging in exhausting aesthetic labor (Lazar, 2017). How other people react to consumers' face and body influences their sense of self (Orbach, 2017). The new reality supported by contemporary technologies has increased the *struggle between the real self, the ideal self, and the socially expected self* (ought self) (Higgins, 1989) and may influence consumers' *self-esteem* (Jin *et al*., 2019) negatively. The social media environment feeds off an individual's *self-esteem* with the positive engagement of others through 'likes', 'shares', or 'comments' on photos or videos (Ashman *et al*., 2018; Tsiotsou, 2021). Furthermore, AR beauty apps such as L'Oréal's smart mirrors and Youcam are becoming the "dressing room" before cosmetic procedures enabling consumers to envision themselves by trying on different versions of themselves (Javornik *et al*., 2021).

Hedonic motives and the acquisition of positive emotional outcomes drive consumers to beauty and modification services (Petersen et al., 2018). When consumers imagine doing a beauty or modification procedure, they envision desirable outcomes invoking positive emotions toward an anticipated physical state (Boulton and Malacrida, 2012). For example, research shows that consumers use cosmetic medical treatments to *enhance their appearance*, increase a sense of *self-image or self-perception, improve personal and social relationships, and increase work success* (Jonzon, 2009).
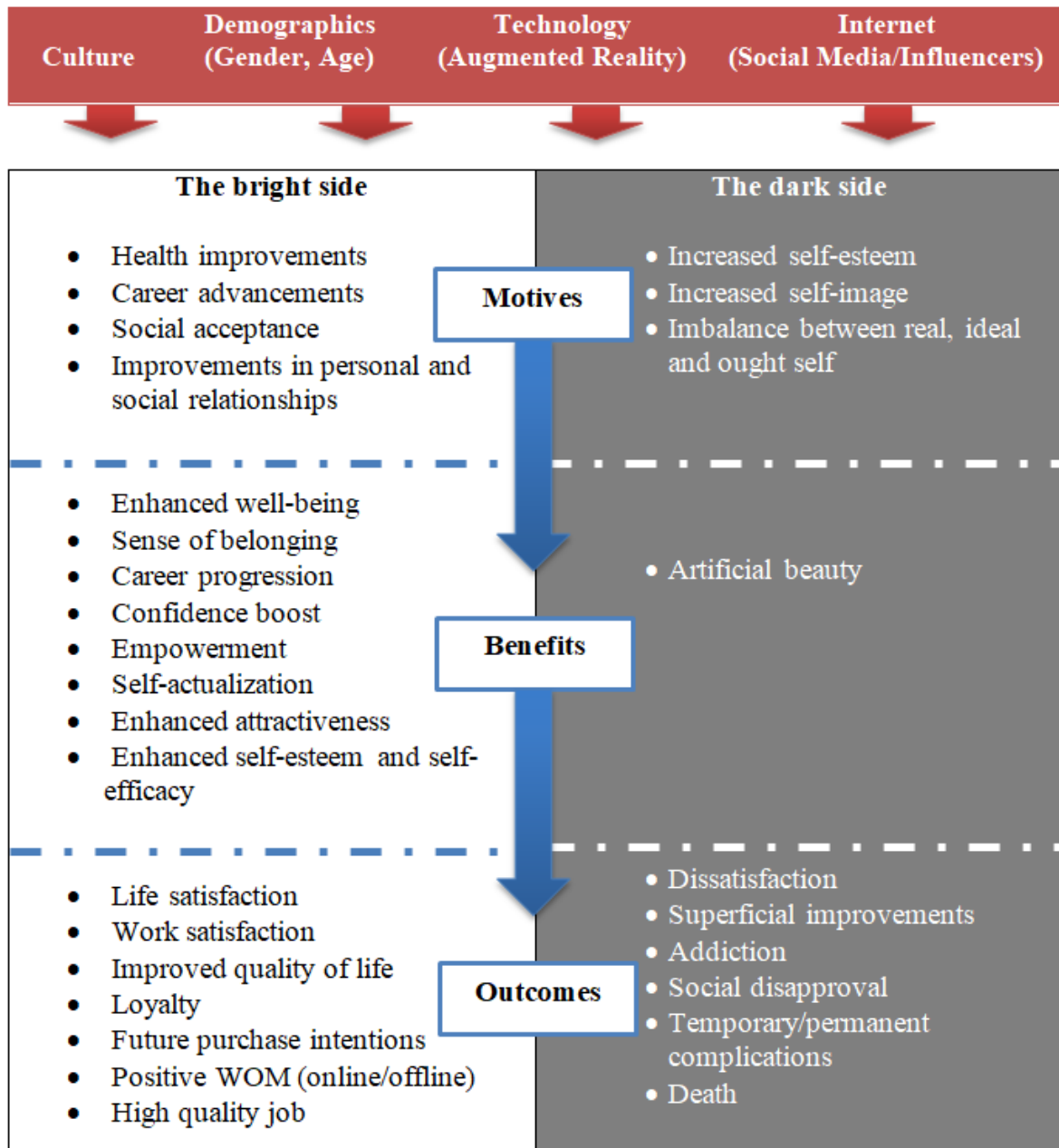
Figure 1. The "Nip and Tuck" service framework of beautification and modification services

Benefits. Constant bombardment by media and social media of ideal face and body images has led to the commodification of beauty and modification services and turned them into mainstream services that *empower* consumers. Thus, consumers get involved in a re-negotiation process about their face and/or body identity to achieve a number of benefits. After face or body beautifications/modifications, individuals feel

refreshed and more *confident* about themselves, developing an icon of who they *are* and *how* others see them (Gill and Elias, 2014). Consumers can accomplish an *idealized self* and attain *self-actualization* through this symbolic consumption of beauty and modification services (Shouten, 1991). Even the virtually via A.R. apps beautified self can be seen as a manifestation of *self-worth* and *confidence* (Bessière et al., 2007), two desirable qualities in the quest for beauty (Madan et al., 2018). Research shows that self-esteem and self-efficacy mediate the negative effects of self-assessment on the decision of young women to undergo facial cosmetic surgery (Yin et al., 2016).

Outcomes. In the post-experience phase of beautification/modification services, consumers typically evaluate and may co-create content relevant to their physical and digital experiences (Flavian et al., 2019). Here, if consumers are *satisfied*, they will decide if they want to *continue using these services* (Yee et al., 2009) or *recommend them to others or engage in positive W.O.M.* offline and/or online (Tsiotsou, 2019). However, ontological threats may prompt consumers to pursue more radical changes such as modification services (e.g., cosmetic surgery) (Samper et al., 2018).

Nowadays, consumers are striving for an enhanced face and body image because they believe it will improve their *mental, emotional, and financial well-being*. However, longitudinal studies indicate that although consumers are more satisfied with their appearance five years after cosmetic surgery, their self-esteem and mental health were not improved or improvements were marginal (Soest et al., 2011). Consumers may acquire beautification/modification services become more attractive socially and at work. Research shows that more attractive individuals secure *higher-quality jobs*, measured by a number of fringe benefits such as a pension, paid sick leave, paid vacation, paid parental leave, insurance, supplementary medical and dental insurance, and compensation plan, which increases their well-being (Dilmaghani, 2020). According to Diener et al. (1995), the positive association between physical attractiveness and well-being is primarily due to consumers' capacity to employ their range of resources to perform adaptive behavior, which is influenced by their views of beauty. Essentially, consumers may reflexively evolve and consciously monitor their biological age by combining adaptive behavior in the quest of beauty with firm-generated services, thus increasing their feelings of *security and well-being* (Giddens, 1991; Askegaard et al., 2002). However, when consumers invest too much in

extensive beauty work, either transformative (significantly altering appearance) or transient (lasting for a short time), they may be *socially disapproved*. Specifically, research shows that others perceive these consumers of poorer moral character due to their extensive effort to misrepresent their true selves (Samper et al., 2018). "Thus, rather than investing less effort, consumers may engage in a self-presentational strategy wherein they construct an appearance of naturalness to signal a low effort to others, thereby augmenting their attractiveness" (Smith et al., 2021, p. 1).

Murphy et al. (2009) showed that psychological problems before surgery predicted minor enhancement in self-esteem and lower satisfaction with the overall appearance and surgical results six months afterward. When consumers experience feelings of self-discrepancy – misalignment of the actual and ideal self (Higgins, 1989) either in A.R. apps (known as "the Zoom effect") (King, 2020) or after a surgical procedure, resultant *feelings of inferiority* negatively impact their self-esteem and well-being (Moretti and Higgins, 1990). Moreover, when consumers fall into "the tyranny of beauty", the use of beautification/modifications services turns into an *obsession and addiction*. In particular, discrepancies between consumers' actual and desired self steer them towards more extensive beauty work, potentially impacting their psychological (e.g., compulsive bodily surveillance), social (e.g., a judgment of moral character), and physical (e.g., cosmetic procedure addiction) well-being (Kim et al., 2014; Madan et al., 2018; Samper et al., 2018). However, research also shows that consumers who are enthusiastic about the outcomes of a cosmetic operation will eventually return to their ideal image and happiness set-point (Sood *et al.,* 2017). As a result, they require more stimulation to get the same emotional reaction, resulting in a loop of recurrent engagement and addictive behavior (Sheldon and Lyubomirsky, 2012). As previously mentioned, such maladaptive pursuits provide temporary relief at the expense of long-term satisfaction, which ultimately decreases well-being. This is not to say that all consumers undergoing cosmetic surgery defer to maladaptive behavior. Rather than, at some threshold, consumers will employ more dysfunctional behavior that leads to feelings of insecurity, dissatisfaction, and decreased well-being.

Mowen et al. (2009) showed that women are, sometimes, willing to jeopardize even their health in their quest to meet idealized beauty standards. For example, several complications have been reported from plastic surgeries, such as breast augmentation and eyelid surgery. These include *temporary complications* such as hematoma, seroma, and infections and *permanent complications* such as nerve

damage, vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, and organ damage (Schaefer, 2019). Moreover, it has been reported that there are approximately 100 cosmetic surgery-related *deaths* per year in the U.S., indicating the high risk of these services (1 in 50,000 outpatient procedures) (Zuckerman, 2017).

We have argued that in addition to the positive outcomes, there are many dangers behind the beauty. The philosophical view of external beauty seems to be confirmed today, with many modern tragic heroes in the places of the old ones. As the industry grows and diversifies with new technologies and the internet, societal beauty standards are shifting to artificial and manufactured representations of beauty. This new reality has increased the struggle between the real, the ideal, and the socially expected self (ought self) (Higgins, 1989) and enhanced consumers' vulnerability by severely threatening their physiological and psychological health. Therefore, more research is needed to provide an in-depth understanding of both the bright and dark side of the beautification/modification industry, identify new developments and practices, and explain how these influence consumer behavior. Moreover, research is needed to guide marketing managers of beautification and modification services in better serving their customers while following safety procedures and keeping high ethical standards.

4. The Articles in the Special Issue

In this special issue on the *Bright and Dark Side of Face and Body Beautification/Modification Services*, we are thrilled to present six papers by 21 authors from seven different countries (U.S.A., Colombia, Australia, Taiwan, U.K., China, and Pakistan) who contribute insights to the complex beautification and modification services. The selected papers cover diverse topics using various theories, contexts (online and offline), and research methodologies (quantitative and qualitative).

The special issue starts with Rosenbaum, Jensen, and Ramirez's (2022) viewpoint titled "*Forever young: Gay men and cosmetic medical treatments*". The authors explore innate and socio-cultural forces that lead gay men to purchase invasive and noninvasive cosmetic medical treatments. According to evolutionary theory, the male inclination to judge a partner's sexual appeal based on physical appearance and youth stays consistent among gay men. Gay males are portrayed as

physically handsome and youthful by socio-cultural conventions, such as media images. Homonormative values that define appearance range from hyper-masculinity to hypo-masculinity among gay men, with each extreme pushing gay men to embrace differing beauty standards. Moreover, physical, surgical, cosmetic, and pharmacological procedures to maintain their youthful and fit looks are top concerns for gay men as they age. Because gay men's desire for physical beauty and youth remains consistent as they age, they are a major target market for cosmetic medical treatment providers. As a result, the viewpoint lays the groundwork for future research on instinctive and societal norms that lead customers to acquire aesthetic medical procedures and professional services in general.

The second article by Sood, Quintal, and Phau (2022) is entitled "*Through the looking glass: Perceiving risk, control and emotions in hedonic engagement with cosmetic procedures*". The authors developed a segmentation typology according to the risk profiles of cosmetic procedures patients by tracking their emotional state (positive and negative emotions). Based on the results of three empirical studies on consumers having Botox or transplant or liposuction, the paper explores how perceived risk operates on emotional states and adaptation that impact their behavior and manifest their well-being. In particular, the authors proposed an empirical framework that explores emotions, desire, and intentions toward re-engagement with the above-mentioned beautification/modification procedures. Specifically, the study identified four risk segments: Timid Image Seekers, Daring Image Crafters, Approval-seeking Socialites, and Mainstream Image Adopters. Tracking user emotions indicated significant differences before, after, and toward a following cosmetic procedure in each user risk segment. Furthermore, the proposed framework predicted user re-engagement with cosmetic procedures for each segment.

The third article is by Liu and Ling (2022) and is titled "*Keep fighting or give up: an investigation on consumer regret following repetitive failures in body management services*". Based on attribution theory, the paper investigates consumer regret over repetitive failures in weight loss services as well as its antecedents such as overeating and insufficient exercise, and consequences such as rumination and reflection (two mechanisms for coping with negative emotions). At the same time, it examines moderating factors such as failure experiences and required effort. The authors also investigated how rumination and reflection affect persistence intention. The results of three surveys on consumers reveal that overeating contributes to regret

more saliently than does insufficient exercise. The effect of regret on rumination (thoughts about continuing to blame oneself and giving up the pursuit of goals) is stronger than on reflection (thoughts about learning from prior failures and willingness to try again), and greater reflection results in higher persistence intention. Moreover, the authors show that the effect of insufficient exercise on regret and regret on rumination are augmented with cumulative failure experiences, whereas required effort enhances the impact of regret on reflection.

The fourth article by Rodner, Goode, and Burns (2022) is entitled *"Is it all just lip service?": On Instagram and the normalisation of the cosmetic servicescape*". The study unpacks essential theorizing on the self in a digitally mediated context and the aesthetic labor of influencers. The authors illustrate how digital applications that use augmented reality photos to superimpose surgery on customers' sense of self influence their decision to self-actualize the ideal self through cosmetic operations. The growth of face-filter as 'catfish' self, endorsement of servicescape influencers, the conspicuousness of body projects, and reframing of suffering are all discussed in this article. The authors adopted a dual-qualitative approach by combining a netnographic research with interviews. Specifically, they analyzed material from Instagram posts and interviews with women who have undergone or hoped to undergo cosmetic surgery. The authors show the negative effects of social networking sites on users' well-being, using Instagram's 'lip service' as an example, while they discuss future trends in (unattainable) beauty ideals and the advent of post-human influencers.

The fifth article of the special issue authored by Lefebvre and Cowart (2022) is "*An investigation of influencer body enhancement and brand endorsement*". Customer perceptions of cosmetic surgery services and the influence of improved bodily appearance on consumer interest in an endorsed brand are investigated in this study via the lens of perceived morality. The authors focused their investigation on body augmentation rather than face aesthetics to determine whether influencers with surgically improved bodies generate less interest in endorsed brands than those with natural bodies. The interpersonal resemblance is investigated as a boundary condition, and perceived morality is a theoretical foundation of the observed impact. The authors conducted three studies using a qualitative survey and two quasi-experiments to test three hypotheses regarding the portrayals of social media influencers with a cosmetically enhanced appearance across two brand categories, adult beverages, and fashion accessories. Their findings support that those social media influencers with

bodies appearing cosmetically enhanced elicit lower evaluations for an associated brand based on their perceived immorality. This effect has been found to be moderated by the level of interpersonal similarity an individual experiences with the influencer.

The last article of the special issue is by Butt, Ahmad, Muzaffar, Ali, and Shafique (2022) and is titled "*W.O.W., the makeup A.R. app is impressive: A comparative study between China and South Korea*". Combining the Technology Acceptance Model (T.A.M.) and the Information System Success Model (I.S.S.), the paper focuses on understanding the quality of content and information that A.R. beauty apps provide to customers to influence their satisfaction and ongoing intentions using them. Specifically, the article examines the direct of A.R. content quality, system quality, and service quality on perceived ease of A.R. app use and their indirect effect on satisfaction and continuous intention to use the beauty A.R. app. The authors conducted two studies, one using a sample from China and one from South Korea, to test their proposed conceptual model. Overall, their findings confirm the structural model being tested, although country differences were identified when the two samples were compared.

5. Future Research Recommendations

In our "Nip and Tuck" service framework, we focus on what is causing and motivates consumers to consider these services in the first place. We question if these services can really and fully address and satisfy the causes and challenges, making them desirable. In other words, are face and body beautification/modification services truly working on the problem's cause, or just on the effects? Have we become so fetishistic about such limited beauty standards? Is our culture hurting people's psyche, driving them into plastic surgery to survive, as the Brazilian example shows, or complying with standards magnified and reinforced by society and social media? Is aesthetic surgery solving feelings of being awkward, different, unsuitable, or even undesirable? Moreover, if yes, how long will these effects last? When do we need the next aesthetic fix for a new emotional low? How can one keep these up? The resulting rise of addiction to plastic surgery is well documented. We go as far as saying that beauty modifications are simply covering bigger, underlying issues. These underlying issues are better suited to a different kind of medical services, the mental health services. In

an ideal world, we would love to see medical and mental health services working together and finding a suitable solution for every consumer looking for aesthetic surgery. Together, we believe that most of the dark sides and offerings might lose their appeal and that by working on the causes of these perceptions and desires, we create a healthier and happier society where our appearances are not dominating human well-being.

One major issue identified in our "Nip and Tuck" framework is the lack of a sound and holistic conceptual framework of beautification/modification services that will consider all sides and contexts. The bright and dark side of our "Nip and Tuck" framework illustrates the association (positive and negative respectively) between beautification/modification services and consumers' mental, social, and financial well-being. Thus, research on beautification/modification services and their ambivalences is strongly related to the Transformative Services Research (TSR) stream, which is becoming increasingly important in the services literature (Rosenbaum et al., 2011). While TSR has paid limited attention to these services, it is beyond any doubt that they may improve or diminish consumers' well-being and have the potential of transforming them into vulnerable individuals (addicts). Specifically, beautification/modification services may influence both eudaimonic (development of personal capabilities) and hedonic (joy and happiness) well-being, and therefore, they should be included in the TSR agenda.

In addition, while each paper of the special issue identifies specific further research themes and implications for theory around their individual contexts, we also encourage researchers to explore the following broader issues such as:

- The role of personal characteristics (e.g., personality, locus of control, and risk-taking) and social aspects (e.g., social comparison, social support, and social pressure) on the consumption of beautification/modification services and consumers' well-being and quality of life.
- The application of new technologies (A.R. and A.I.) in the development of beautification/modification services
- How do consumers co-create transformative value in beautification/modification services? What is the role of other actors?
- The role of the aging in the consumption of beautification/modification services

- Cultural, gender, and sexual orientation differences in the purchase process of beautification/modification services.
- The benefits of all actors involved in the dark side of the beautification/modification services

In sum, the special issue includes articles with an original perspective and advanced thinking on beautification/modification services. This special issue features one viewpoint and five articles of 15 submitted manuscripts to present leading thoughts and practices on the topic. We call for more research in beautification/modification services and for researchers to keep a critical eye while being aware of the ethical dilemmas these types of services can produce and how these dilemmas impact individual and societal well-being.

References

Ashman, R., Patterson, A., and Brown, S. (2018), "'Don't forget to like, share and subscribe': Digital autopreneurs in a neoliberal world", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 92, pp.474-483.

Askegaard, S., Gertsen, M.C. and Langer, R. (2002), "The body consumed: Reflexivity and cosmetic surgery", *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 19 No. 10, pp. 793-812.

Boulton, T.N., and Malacrida, C. (2012), "Women and cosmetic breast surgery: weighing the medical, social, and lifestyle risks", *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 22, pp.511-523.

Butt, A.H., Ahmad, H., Muzaffar, A., Ali, F., and Shafique, M.N. (2022), "W.O.W., the makeup A.R. app is impressive: A comparative study between China and South Korea", *Journal of Services Marketing,* Vol. 36 No. 1, DOI:

Diener, E., Wolsic, B. and Fujita, F. (1995), "Physical attractiveness and subjective well-being", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 69 No. 1, pp. 120-129.

Dilmaghani, M. (2020). Beauty perks: Physical appearance, earnings, and fringe benefits. *Economics & Human Biology*, 38, pp.1- 15. doi:10.1016/j.ehb.2020.100889

Epstein, S. S., & Fitzgerald, R. (2009). *Toxic Beauty How Cosmetics and Personal-*

Care Products Endanger Your Health... and What You Can Do About It: Benbella Books Inc.

Giddens, A. (1991), *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford university press, Stanford

Gill, R., and Elias, A. (2014), "'Awaken your Incredible': Love your body discourses and postfeminist contradictions", *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, Vol 10 No. 2, pp. 179-188.

Hamermesh, D. S. (2011). *Beauty Pays Why Attractive People Are More Successful* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Higgins, E. T. (1989), "Self-discrepancy theory: What patterns of self-beliefs cause people to suffer?", *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 22, pp.93-136.

Javornik, A., Marder, B., Pizzeti, M., and Warlop, L. (2021), "Augmented self - The effects of virtual face augmentation on consumers' self-concept", *Journal of Business Research*, DOI:10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.03.026

Jha, M. R. (2016). *The Global Beauty Industry Colorism, Racism*, and the National Body. New York: Routledge.

Jonzon, K. (2009), "Cosmetic medical treatments: why are we so obsessed with beauty—Is it nature or nurture?", Plastic Surgical Nursing, Vol. 29 No. 4., pp. 222-225.

King, R. (2020), "The Zoom effect: Why plastic surgery and cosmetic procedures might be more popular because of the pandemic", Available at: https://fortune.com/2020/10/03/zoom-calls-plastic-surgery-cosmetic-procedures-botox-fillers

Lefebvre, S. and Cowart, K. (2022), "An investigation of influencer body enhancement and brand endorsement". *Journal of Services Marketing,* Vol. 36 No. 1, DOI:

Liu, Y-F. and Ling, I-L. (2022), "Keep fighting or give up: an investigation on consumer regret following repetitive failures in body management services", *Journal of Services Marketing,* Vol. 36 No. 1, DOI:

Mancini, L., Figliomeni, M., Puccinelli, C., Romanelli, C., Volpi, F., D'Angelo, A. M., . . . Marcheggiani, S. (2018). A descriptive survey on microbiological risk in beauty salons. *Microchemical Journal*, 136, 223-226. doi:10.1016/j.microc.2017.02.021

Manideep, A. S., Reddy, S. K., & Reddy, P. S. (2018). Competitiveness of Indian wellness industry: a conceptual analysis. *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics*, 118(24), 1-15.

Moretti, M.M. and Higgins, E.T. (1990), "Relating self-discrepancy to self-esteem: The contribution of discrepancy beyond actual-self ratings", *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 108-123.

Murphy, D.K., Beckstrand, M., Sarwer, D.B. (2009), "A prospective, multicenter study of psychosocial outcomes after augmentation with natrelle silicone-filled breast implants", *Annals of Plastic Surgery.* Vol. 62, pp. 118–121

Petersen, F.E., Dretsch, H.J. and Loureiro, Y.K. (2018), "Who needs a reason to indulge? Happiness following reason-based indulgent consumption", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 35, pp.170-184.

Rodner, V., Goode, A., and Burns, Z. (2022), "Is it all just lip service?": On Instagram and the normalisation of the cosmetic servicescape". *Journal of Services Marketing,* Vol. 36 No. 1, DOI:

Rosenbaum, M.S., Jensen, J., and Ramirez, G.C. (2022) viewpoint titled "Forever young: Gay men and cosmetic medical treatments*", Journal of Services Marketing,* Vol. 36 No. 1, DOI:

Rosenbaum, M.S., Corus, C., Ostrom, A.L., Anderson, L., Fisk, R.P., Gallan, A.S., Giraldo, M., Mende, M., Mulder, M., Rayburn, S.W., Shirahada, K. and Williams, J.D. (2011), "Conceptualisation and aspirations of transformative service research*", Journal of Research for Consumers*, Vol. 19, pp. 1-6.

Samper, A., Yang, L.W. and Daniels, M.E. (2018), "Beauty, effort, and misrepresentation: How beauty work affects judgments of moral character and consumer preferences", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp. 126-147.

Schaefer, A. (2019), "10 of the most common plastic surgery complications" Available at https://www.healthline.com/health/most-common-plastic-surgery-complications

Sheldon, K.M. and Lyubomirsky, S. (2012), "The challenge of staying happier testing the hedonic adaptation prevention model", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 38 No. 5, pp.670-680.

Schouten, J.W. (1991), "Selves in transition: Symbolic consumption in personal rites of passage and identity reconstruction", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 412- 425.

Smith, R.K., Yazdani, E., Wang, P., Soleymai, S., and Ton, L.A.N. (2021), "The cost of looking natural: Why the no-makeup movement may fail to discourage cosmetic use," *Journal of the Academy Marketing Science* https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-021-00801-2

Sood, A., Quintal, V. and Phau, I. (2022), "Through the looking glass: Perceiving risk, control and emotions in hedonic engagement with cosmetic procedures", *Journal of Services Marketing,* Vol. 36 No. 1, DOI:

Von Soest, T., Kvalem, I. L., Skolleborg, K. C., and Roald, H. E. (2011), "Psychosocial changes after cosmetic surgery: A 5-Year Follow-Up Study", *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, Vol. 128 No. 3, pp. 765–772.

Sood, A., Quintal, V. and Phau, I. (2017), "Keeping up with the Kardashians: consumers' intention to engage in cosmetic surgery", *Journal of Promotion Management*, Vol. 23, pp.185-206.

Tsiotsou, R.H. (2021), "Identifying value-creating aspects in luxury hotel services via third-party online reviews: a cross-cultural study", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-04-2021-0207

Tsiotsou, R.H. (2019), "Rate my firm: cultural differences in service evaluations", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 33 No. 7, pp. 815-836. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-12-2018-0358

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2021). Occupational Outlook Handbook. Available at https://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/barbers-hairstylists-and-cosmetologists.htm

Yin Z, Wang D, Ma Y, Hao S, Ren H, Zhang T, Chen W, Fan J (2016), "Self-esteem, self-efficacy, and appearance assessment of young female patients undergoing facial cosmetic surgery: a comparative study of the Chinese population," *JAMA Facial Plastic Surgery*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 20–26.

Zuckerman, D. (2017). What would Wendy Davis do? The REAL threat to women's health. Available at https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-would-wendy-davis-do_b_3672484