

Self versus Silicone: How identity motives influence the preferred breast reconstruction technique

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Abstract

Women who lose a part of their breast to survive breast cancer face the important decision about whether and which reconstruction to undergo. Currently, two main reconstruction techniques exist: the autologous technique (reconstruction using own tissue) and the prosthetic technique (reconstruction using synthetic materials). We provide empirical evidence that women prefer autologous over prosthetic reconstruction, partly because their own tissue stays closer to the self than synthetic implants. Moreover, women believe autologous breast reconstruction is more helpful in restoring their identity than prosthetic reconstruction. As such, this research does not only contribute to a better understanding of consumer preferences in this important medical decision context, but it also more generally contributes to the identity literature by providing empirical evidence for the proposition that the body is an essential part of consumers' identities.

Keywords: *breast reconstruction; identity; autologous*

Track: Consumer Behaviour