

Cosmetic Transparency: Social Penalty and Rewards of Disclosing Cosmetic Procedure Consumption

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Abstract

The rise of cosmetic procedures enables transformative yet hard-to-detect physical changes, posing a dilemma for consumers: should they conceal or disclose their consumption history? The current paper proposes gender-based differences in how cosmetic procedure disclosure is evaluated. Female evaluators reward transparency, perceiving it as a marker of authenticity, whereas male evaluators penalize disclosure, judging authenticity through adherence to an unaltered or natural state. These effects are moderated by factors such as the type of disclosure (self vs. third-party), situational context (romantic vs. professional), and the identity of the target (ordinary consumers vs. public figures). The findings offer practical implications for consumers, influencers, and marketers in the beauty and wellness industries, guiding strategic transparency to build trust, make informed decisions, and enhance consumer well-being.

Track: Consumer Behaviour