Research Article

EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF SNAPCHAT FILTERS ON THE INCREASE OF COSMETIC PROCEDURES IN THE UAE

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Abstract

The rise of social media provided many people with platforms to present themselves in the most appealing ways through accessible built-in filters. Often, this results in desirable yet unrealistic beauty standards that could have a tremendous effect on the psychological well-being of young adults. This study aims to examine the consequences that tag along with such usage of filters; specifically, on the Snapchat application and within the region of the United Arab Emirates. The sampled individuals were Emiratis within the age range of 18-35. Two online surveys were sent out to test the extent of this matter; the first focused on young adults' perspectives and experiences, and the second targeted doctors that specialize in the field of cosmetic procedures inside the UAE. The results suggested an unwillingness to acknowledge the negative influence done by Snapchat filters. More so, the claim has been supported by doctors practicing in the UAE, expressing a rise in demand for cosmetic procedures relating to filtered-looks. This study stresses the increase in impact of Snapchat filters among Emirati young adults, with a rise in cosmetic procedures demands in the region relating to poor self-image.

Keywords: Snapchat, Filters, Cosmetic procedures, Self-esteem.

1. INTRODUCTION

As of 2021, more than four billion people use social media worldwide (Dean, 2021). 56.8% of the entire world's population spend nearly two hours of their day using a variety of platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, and more (Dean, 2021). Individuals primarily use these applications to interact and easily communicate with friends and family while others use them to share their own opinions, ideas, and interests. It has become one of the ultimate methods to share knowledge and experiences. Despite the great benefits of social media platforms, they have also opened a gateway to endless consequences. Algorithms of such social networks are built in a way that prioritizes the user's interests over publish time (Golino, 2021). Viewed posts are not set in chronological order; instead, the more time individuals spend engaging with certain content, the more of the same content appears on their screens. This leads to an ongoing addictive spiral to social media (Golino, 2021). Gullible users overindulge in their screen time with no regard or consciousness to the intense damage it causes. Since social media gives a platform to present one's self in their best state, it sets unrealistic expectations onto its users. People present themselves in what they believe to be most appealing, which results in the usage of enhancement applications to further edit their images (Bailey *et al.,* 2020). Applications such as Snapchat and Instagram make this process much more accessible to users with their built-in filters. These filters smoothen the skin, sharpen the nose, and enlarge the eyes which slowly promotes the new beauty standard (Eshiet, 2020). Consequently, it creates an atmosphere where one compares himself to these deceiving appearances. Experts share the concern that the constant exposure to unrealistic beauty standards induces psychological difficulties in relation to self-esteem and self-image (Eshiet, 2020).

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The majority of these concerns are regarding the idea of the inability of persons to view matters in their true state, where their insecurities are highlighted and accentuated. Therefore, individuals utilize cosmetic procedures as solutions to reduce their insecurities.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Past studies within this research topic have not been performed in the UAE. For instance, a study conducted in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, addressed the issue of social media's influence on the decision to undergo cosmetic procedures among females (Alghonaim *et al.,* 2019). Masqood and Sangra (2021) have explored the use of social media in relation to a person's self-concept, self-esteem, body image, and body dissatisfaction. While this research is based in the UAE, it has not searched for primary data, instead it focused on the Netflix documentary "The Social Dilemma." Limited research has been conducted in finding how Snapchat filters influenced the increase of aesthetic procedures in the UAE.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The study aims to investigate the relation between the usage of filters in Snapchat and the increase of cosmetic procedures, specifically in the United Arab Emirates. The study examines the impact these features have on individuals within the age range of 18-35.

1.3. Research Questions

This research paper attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do Snapchat filters affect the increase of cosmetic procedures in the UAE?
2. To what extent do Emiratis resort to cosmetic procedures with the influence of Snapchat filters?

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study examines the rise of cosmetics procedures in the UAE due to the influence of Snapchat filters. There is a gap in research in which studies within this field have not been performed in the region. This is relevant to the United Arab Emirates as it is a country that currently has the highest ratio of plastic surgeons per capita in the world (Chaudhary, 2020). Moreover, Snapchat has dominated social media and communication platforms since it does not limit its users to specific criteria. This research helps spread awareness on the serious dangers that can arise from the usage of Snapchat filters.

1.5. Structure of the Study

Chapter one generally presents the topic of the research by providing background information necessary to understand the subject. It also introduces the statement of the problem, objectives of the research, the research questions, description of the data, methodology, and the significance of the study. Chapter two contains an analysis of information that has been previously studied and introduced to the field of study. It covers the spread of Snapchat, usage of Snapchat filters, the effects of Snapchat on self-image, and how they lead to the increase of cosmetic procedures. Chapter three addresses the choice of data collection in great detail along with the resources being used. Moreover, it explains the research process and the implementation of the method chosen. The data has been collected using the survey method by Survey Monkey, in which online questionnaires were completed. Chapter four presents the primary data that was collected through the use of two surveys targeting young individuals and experienced doctors. It elaborates on the findings, stating clearly the information that was gathered. The quantitative data is utilized from our primary sources, displayed through various figures, and analyzed accordingly. Chapter five concludes the work and summarizes the discussion and analyses. This chapter is crucial in determining the answer to the research question and objective. It comments and theorize on what the findings mean and how they relate back to the aim of this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter introduces background information that suggests the negative relation between Snapchat and self-image. It provides previous studies which collectively analyze the effect of social media on mental health. It starts with a brief overview that discusses the beginning, rapid spread, and usage of Snapchat, moves on to the impact of Snapchat on mental health through self-image and social comparisons, and ends with analyzing the link between lower self-esteem and beauty procedures.

2.1. Overview of Snapchat

Merriam Webster (2021) defined social media as a term used to describe "the forms of electronic communication." Many applications have been created and classified as social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Tik Tok, and more; however, the main focus will be on Snapchat, which is one of the most popular social networking sites in the UAE. Snapchat allows users to exchange and share pictures, videos, and text messages. Despite its similarity to Instagram, a visual-based platform, Snapchat has unique features that clearly sets it apart. "Snaps" or the messages sent are only available for a specific time (Piwek and Joinson, 2016). In other words, the receiver has a limited time to view the content before it becomes permanently inaccessible (Tillman, 2021). This is appealing to individuals since, unlike other sites which record everything, Snapchat erases images and videos and makes them disappear after being viewed, creating a higher level of privacy.

2.1.1. The start of Snapchat

It all started in the hands of three Stanford University students; Evan Spiegel, Reggie Brown, and Bobby Murphy. In the spring of 2011, Spiegel and his co-founders published "Picaboo," the early version of Snapchat, and released it in the IOS App Store (O'Conell, 2020). Later, in September 2011 the app was rebranded and relaunched. The founders intended to provide an application that sends pictures and videos to others without it being constantly available to access (O'Conell, 2020). Additionally, they intended for Snapchat to be a fun and safe space in which the user has the freedom to be authentic. Spiegel (2012) mentions "We're building a photo app that doesn't conform to unrealistic notions of beauty or perfection but rather creates a space to be funny, honest or whatever else you might feel like at the moment you take and share a Snap."

2.1.1.1. The spread of Snapchat: Snapchat has become a fundamental part of many people's lives as they continuously engage with the site. In May 2021, the Global Media Insight (GMI) reported that an average of 3.32 million people were using Snapchat every day in the UAE, which accounts for 33.4% of the entire country's population. Furthermore, it is actively used worldwide by approximately 293 million individuals (Iqbal, 2021). Over the years, several additional features were added to the platform, leading to more attraction by the public. They range from face lenses and geo-filters to "Memories" and "Discover"; Snapchat allows users to customize their content and interact with others innovatively. It leaves space for creative freedom by offering built-in filters, colors, texts, and emojis (Pocket-lint, 2021).

2.1.2. Usage of Snapchat

Although Snapchat primarily focused on private communication with friends and family, it has progressed to offer a variety of tasks. Individuals now use it to share short videos and photos, use the filters provided, and most importantly, discover content (Tillman, 2021). Entertainment outlets or other users share parts of their life for others to view. People can subscribe to specific accounts of their interest and receive their feed; they can find out what others are doing, what they are eating, which clothes they are wearing, and where they are going. Discover is a section on the application that contains stories from publishers, creators, Snap Stars, the community, Sponsored Stories, and more (Snapchat Support, 2021). This page acts as a news feed by keeping the content up-to-date with current events and affairs.

2.2. The Effects of Snapchat on Mental Health

Ranked as the second most detrimental platform for mental health, Snapchat raised valid concerns after a report was published by The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) and the Young Health Movement entitled #StatusOfMind (Welch,

2017). The findings suggested a great deal of vulnerability and social isolation that users must experience when accessing an application that is heavily reliant on images (Hung, 2017). Unfortunately, the #StatusOfMind report is one of the very few studies that include Snapchat's effect when examining the negative relation between social media applications and mental wellbeing. Other studies analyze social media broadly, neglecting Snapchat's direct impact as the third most popular social media application for young adults (Dunn and Langlais, 2020). Dunn and Langlais (2020) conducted a mixed-methods approach to investigate the dark side of Snapchat, and dedicated their research to depression, anxiety, and stress in romantic relationships. They found that participants experienced uneasy feelings from distinct features of the application. For example, users found a stressful time when tracking their significant others or worrying about their own visibility with the location-sharing feature (Dunn and Langlais, 2020). Their study continued to explore Snapchat's influence on the interpersonal relationships between young adults, rather than its impact on an individual's view of themselves. Consequently, the lack of research in this field, particularly in the UAE, motivates future researchers to work towards exploring effects on mental health given the popularity and unique nature of Snapchat.

2.2.1 Self-image

Since the majority of young adults engaging in social media networks divert from using these applications to communicate, and move their focus to appearances, they are prone to body dissatisfaction and disordered eating (McLean *et al.*, 2015). A study that explored links between social media and mental health in Australian preadolescents discovered that participants reported body image concerns and eating disorders but did not account for any depression or social anxiety symptoms (Fardouly *et al.*, 2020). That relation highlights the extent as to which users of such image-based platforms are invested in appearances online. Some of these users might not be aware of the deceiving filters and photo-editing applications that are widely exploited and could fall into the trap of facing distress regarding their self-image.

2.2.1.1. Social media comparison: The theory of social comparison was first proposed in 1954 by social psychologist Leon Festinger (Cherry, 2020). The basic idea behind social comparison relied on the innate drive for self-evaluation through comparisons with others (Festinger, 1954). Festinger (1954) discussed that people tend to make an upward comparison with people they feel inferior to, thus reducing their own self-esteem. This theory can still be implemented in many aspects of the current age of social media. The constant comparisons made using photo-sharing platforms, such as Snapchat, cause many young adults to feel inadequate and less worthy (Welch, 2017). Immature users might find a tendency to compare themselves to misleading images online; building unhelpful patterns of thinking that can result in further self-judgment and self-disappointment.

2.2.2. Self-esteem

The increasing access to social media and related apps, including Snapchat, has ushered in an era where individuals can process their photos in any way to improve their appearance before posting the images online. Wolfson (2018) indicates that although these photo editing tools were commonly used by companies and photographers for altering models' images over ten years ago, they are now easily accessible to everyone. Continued reliance directly relates to diminished self-esteem, leading to cosmetic procedures. Soussi (2021) emphasizes that filtered images are widespread. They interfere with a user's perception of themselves, making them develop a dislike of their real-life appearance. As a result, they gradually establish low self-esteem issues because they become used to the refined and distorted version of themselves. Moreover, May (2018) states that these individuals desire to match the modified images in real life by seeking cosmetic procedures. Their focus is to satisfy their esteems by changing themselves to mirror the filtered perfect images.

2.2.2.1. Beauty procedures: As people become accustomed to seeing their "perfect" images after editing, they become obsessed with the new looks. Rivas (2021) agrees with this observation by reporting a direct link between the use of social media filters and declining self-esteem. The concern is that this aspect affects people of different age groups considering that even individuals below 30 years seek invasive procedures at alarming rates of up to 74% in the United States (American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, 2020). Snapchat has been highly associated with the rise of the cosmetic procedure trend in the modern era. Soussi (2021) indicates that the blame put on Snapchat is understandable, considering that this social media app was the first to familiarize people with image-altering features in real time. Over time, it has advanced its capabilities to enable the user to transform their appearance and create an updated look instantly. Experts have associated continued interaction with these features with the rising body and image dislike cases (Ramphul and Mejias, 2018). Even plastic surgeons confess that their clients request the cosmetic procedure by indicating that they want to look similar to the filtered images they have on Snapchat. This trend has led to the emergence of Snapchat dysmorphia because these Snapchat features induce a deep image dislike and body dissatisfaction (Wang *et al.*, 2020). Soussi (2021) warns that experts should not undermine the effects being triggered by Snapchat filters because the rise in cosmetic procedures demands is a concerning outcome of physiological issues. The various case studies presented by Ramphul and Mejias (2018) demonstrate that Snapchat is actively driving these demands through its body dysmorphic disorder-inducing filters. This trend explains why a significant proportion of people seeking these services claim a desire to "look better in selfies" as their primary motivation (Purtill, 2020). Thus, Snapchat filters trigger a psychological complication leading to the cosmetic procedures trend. Excessive interaction with digitally altered images can gradually trigger negative perceptions of one's body image, eventually leading to weakened self-esteem (Soussi, 2021). This aspect pushes individuals to seek alternative ways of matching their perceived appearances through plastic surgeries. Snapchat is directly blamed for introducing filters that create an impression that individuals are imperfect (Bell, 2016). As a result, the obsession with perfection has led to Snapchat dysmorphia that explains the rise of cosmetic procedures among app users (Hunt, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this study is to examine the connection between Snapchat filters utilization and the increase of aesthetic procedures, notably in the United Arab Emirates.

This methodological approach provides primary data to discover how Snapchat filters impact the rise of cosmetic procedures in the UAE given the minimal research conducted within this region.

3.1. Description of Data

Primary data was collected quantitively through the use of two surveys. The first questionnaire was sent out using Survey Monkey on various social media platforms, acquiring a total of 130 responses; however, 123 participants completed the survey entirely of which 105 were Emiratis. It consisted of three demographic questions concerning gender, age, and nationality. Moreover, it contained eight multiple-choice questions that questioned adults' experiences and opinions about the relation between Snapchat filters and aesthetic procedures. 'Do you think you would ever consider getting a cosmetic procedure to mimic your appearance on filtered selfies?' 'Do you happen to know anyone who has undergone a cosmetic procedure to mimic their appearance on filtered selfies? If so, are they between the ages of 18-35?' are samples of the survey questionnaire. On the contrary, the second questionnaire obtained 25 responses from which 19 have completed the full survey and 18 doctors practice cosmetic procedures in the UAE. The survey entailed five multiple-choice questions and a free-response question where they were able to add any relevant information. It focused on doctors' personal experiences in regards to patients seeking to look like a filtered image, and opinions about this study. Some examples of the questions include: 'How often do you see on your day-to-day practice Emirati patients who want to look like a filtered image?' 'Do you believe that there is a relation between the increase of cosmetic procedures and the usage of Snapchat filters?'

3.2. Methodology

SurveyMonkey, a cloud-based survey tool, was selected among many other online survey tools to collect the required primary data. It was found to be an "extremely user-friendly platform" with data reporting tools that can be adjusted to one's preferences, such as providing the ability to look at individual questions or respondents who answered those questions in a specific way (Graw, 2020). To obtain results, the link to the first survey, targeting young adults' experiences and viewpoints from the age range of 18 to 35, was shared through social media platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram. The Instagram profile on which it was shared contained around 6,900 followers with a demographic that is based in the UAE. On the other hand, the link to the second survey, aimed at doctors that specialize in cosmetic procedures within the UAE, was sent out to their respective Email addresses. A consent form was provided to the participants prior to filling both questionnaires to protect each participant's welfare and ensure their involvement is voluntary. Although both surveys gathered around 155 total respondents, several limitations challenged the process of making the most analysis out of the available data. One of the major restrictions revolved around participants' urge to skip certain, if not all of the questions. If given the opportunity, the researchers will opt for interviewing doctors instead of conducting 5-minute surveys. The interviews would have made up for a greater deal of valid, primary information. Additionally, the structure of Snapchat's 'digital traces' is different than any other social networking site, like Instagram or Facebook (Kosinski, Stillwell, and Graepel, 2013; Lambiotte and Kosinski, 2015). There is no recorded history of any content presented in a certain user's profile, leaving the researchers with the restraint of reliance on other respondents' claims, ones that could potentially be biased.

3.3. Rationale of the Study

The application of a survey questionnaire was ideal for the research environment and setting; moreover, it is the most convenient method of collecting data. According to Researching Society and Culture (2012, p. 184), "Questionnaires are cheap to administer. They allow for greater geographical coverage than face-to-face interviews without incurring the additional costs of time and travel. Thus, they are particularly useful when carrying out research with geographically dispersed populations." The survey refrained from including writing questions as it was found that participants prefer multiple-choice questions. In addition, collected data required simple questions with limited choices of replies in fixed categories. The questionnaire was available for willing participants without a time limit or constraint to allow them the freedom of choice and flexibility. Furthermore, it considers the geographical outline of the research, limiting it to individuals within the United Arab Emirates. The survey also limited the data collection to the age range of 18-35. Overall, the establishment of a target group was done to accurately answer the research question.

3.4. Procedure of the Analysis

SurveyMonkey allowed the researchers a number of analysis tools to make noticeable pinpoint trends and key takeaways. Features like customizable filters and rules made it accessible to view the data patterns and better understand the respondents' point of view or specific factors that drive them. Data was also analyzed statistically through the use of Microsoft Excel, version 16.58 (22021501), to have an organized visual record of all answers to the surveys.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the corpus description, methodology, rationale of the study, and procedure of the analysis. The main objective of the study was to explore the relation between the increase of cosmetic procedures and the usage of filters in Snapchat in the United Arab Emirates. It specifically examined the impact of the relation on individuals within the age range of 18-35. Based on the assigned objectives, the relevance, opinions, and experiences from young adults and specialized doctors within the field were analyzed.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This section presents and discusses the primary data that was collected quantitively through the use of two surveys. The first questionnaire was targeted toward Emirati Snapchat users between the ages of 18 and 35. The second questionnaire was directed toward aesthetic surgeons practicing in the UAE. The data was gathered through SurveyMonkey, a cloud-based survey tool, and was analyzed using Microsoft Excel, version 16.58. The research results are presented in the form of percentages, pie charts, and bar graphs.

4.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between the rise of cosmetic procedures and the usage of Snapchat filters in the United Arab Emirates. The research specifically analyzes the influence of the relation between the usage of filters and cosmetic surgeries. The findings of this paper provide a deeper understanding of how Snapchat filters are a potential factor that leads to the undergoing of cosmetic procedures. Furthermore, this research helps in spreading awareness of the serious dangers that possibly occur from Snapchat filters.

4.3. Data Presentation and Discussion

The data is summarized and presented in the form of frequencies, percentages, and pie charts.

4.3.1 Demographics characteristics of participants

This section presents the demography of the participants in terms of their nationality, age, and gender. The results include the interaction of social media, Snapchat, and Snapchat filters amongst participants.

4.3.1.1. Nationality of participants: In regards to the first questionnaire, the total number of respondents in the 11-question survey was 130; however, 18 of the respondents answered 'No' to 'Are you Emirati', and their responses were removed from the study – in which only 123 participants answered this question. To add, there were a number of participants who skipped multiple questions, automatically making them inadequate for the study, and were removed as well. As for the second questionnaire, only 1 respondent answered 'No' to 'Do you practice cosmetic procedures in the UAE' and their responses were removed from the study, along with those who have not efficiently completed the survey, ensuring complete accuracy. With these factors included, the total number of participants in the first survey sums to 105, and 18 participants in the second survey.

4.3.1.2. Age of participants The first questionnaire targeted individuals aged 18-35, and of the 105 participants, 56 (53.85%) were between the ages of 18 and 23 (see figure 4.1). Only 18 (17.31%) were aged 30-35. In the second questionnaire, the highest range of patients commonly seen in doctors' practice is 35-44 years old at 50%, following 33.3% for those aged 25-34 years old, patients 45-54 years old at 11.11%, and 5.56% are under 18 years of age.
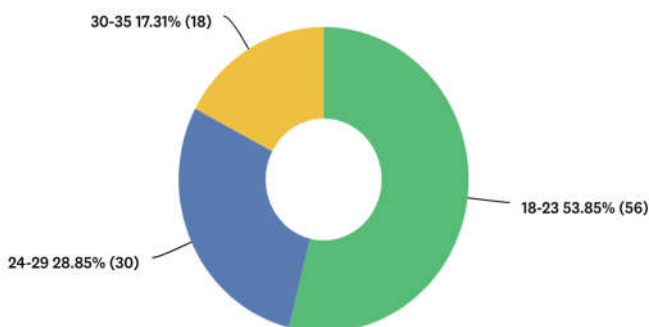

Figure 4.1. Age of participants

4.3.1.3. Gender of participants In the study, 79 (75.24%) of the participants were females and 26 (24.76%) were males (Figure 4.2).
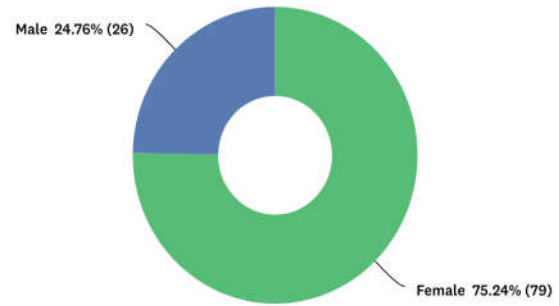

Figure 4.2. Gender of participants

4.3.1.4. Interaction of social media among participants Figure 4.3 indicates that 47 (44.76%) of the participants use social media 4-5 hours per day. More interestingly, 57 (54.29%) answered that they use Snapchat 1-2 hours per day, and 27 (25.71%) answered 3-5 hours. Contrastingly, fewer respondents were either 'extreme' users or rare users of the app, with 10 (9.52%) using Snapchat 6+ hours per day, 7 (6.67%) only a few times a week, and 4 (3.81%) about once a week. The following interval question asked the respondents how frequently they use Snapchat filters when taking selfies. The majority (29.52%) answered 'usually' (Figure 4.4).
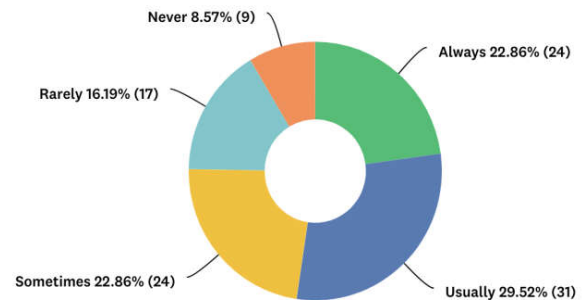

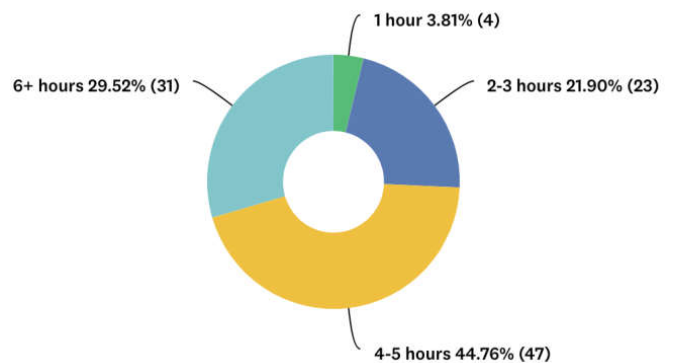**Figure 4.3. Use of social media**

Figure 4.4. Use of Snapchat filters

4.3.1.5. Summary of demographic data Overall, the demographic data of this sample, limited to Emiratis, mostly consists of females and participants aged 18-23. A high percentage of the participants use Snapchat filters when taking selfies, and the majority use social media for more than 4 hours (74.28%). The relation lies between Emirati youth and females with high usage of Snapchat filters. McLean *et al.* (2015) stated that young adults are prone to focusing on their appearance by utilizing such apps leading to body

dissatisfaction. In return, it potentially results in seeking cosmetic procedures to reduce dissatisfaction.

4.3.2 Perspective of participants on Snapchat filters and cosmetic procedures

This section provides insight into the participants' viewpoints on the effects that Snapchat filters have on their decisions regarding cosmetic procedures. It also describes the correlation between the increased usage of those filters and cosmetic procedures within the UAE.

4.3.2.1. Impact on self-esteem: With the interval question in the survey, "Do you find yourself comfortable enough to take a selfie without Snapchat filters?", there was a diverse range of opinions: 24 (23.08%) answered 'extremely comfortable', 28 (26.92%) answered 'somewhat comfortable', 19 (18.27%) answered 'somewhat uncomfortable', 9 (8.65%) answered 'extremely uncomfortable' while 24 (23.08%) were neutral. On the contrary, when answering the question, "What effect do you think Snapchat filters have on people's self-esteem?", 79 (75.96%) believed it has a negative consequence, 16 (15.38%) believed it has a positive impact, and the remaining 9 (8.65%) respondents assumed that it has no effect. When the question was structured in a way that investigated the effects Snapchat filters have on others, the majority of the participants found themselves comfortable enough to acknowledge the negative impact. However, when the question was directed towards one self's comfort with taking a picture without Snapchat filters, respondents went against their own opinion, leaving only a few to admit to being uncomfortable. The disparity in the answers, made by the same respondents, indicates the ignorance and unwillingness to recognize the issue of Snapchat dysmorphia that Hunt (2019) believed to have explained the rise of cosmetic procedures.

4.3.2.2. Resorting to cosmetic procedures: The tenth question of the first survey asked participants if they would ever consider getting a cosmetic procedure to mimic their appearance on filtered selfies. The majority, 69 (66.99%), answered 'no', 30 (29.13%) answered 'yes', while 4 (3.88%) said they already have. Following that, the next question asked the respondents if they know any individual between the ages of 18 and 35 who has undergone a cosmetic procedure to mimic their appearance on filtered selfies. This time, 61 (58.65%) answered 'yes', and 43 (41.35%) answered 'no'. In the second questionnaire, doctors that specialize in cosmetic procedures within the UAE were asked how often they see Emirati patients, during their day-to-day practice, who want to look like a filtered image. A vast majority of the doctors reported having seen a great number of patients resorting to aesthetic procedures to mimic their filtered image (Figure 4.5).
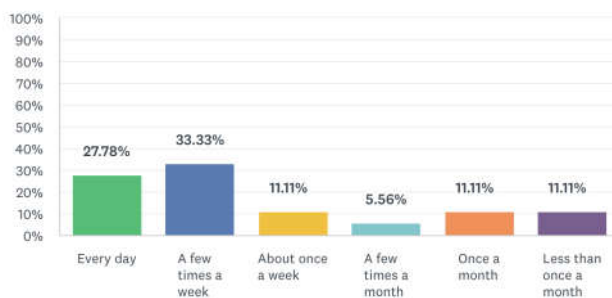

Figure 4.5. Cases that aim to look like their filtered images

While the results of the two questions clash, the responses from the cosmetic doctors' survey further prove the claim. To explain, as the majority believed that they would not consider getting a cosmetic procedure to mimic their filtered selfies, most also answered that they know individuals who have. Moreover, this shows that individuals may not feel comfortable admitting this information when it comes to themselves, considering that it is possibly rooted in insecurities and self-doubt. Seeing as doctors have had multiple patients asking for a filtered look with surgeries, the researchers' claim is evident.

4.3.2.3. Correlation between the usage of Snapchat filters and the increase of cosmetic procedures In the first and second survey, participants and doctors were asked, "Do you believe that there is a relation between the increase of cosmetic procedures and the usage of Snapchat filters?" Respondents of the first questionnaire 35 (33.65%) answered 'strongly agree', 42 (40.38%) answered 'agree', 25 (24.04%) answered 'neither agree or disagree', only 2 (1.92%) answered 'disagree', and none to strongly disagree (figure 4.6). In the second questionnaire, 6 (33.33%) choose 'strongly agree', 5 (27.78%) choose 'agree', and 7 (38.89%) choose 'neither agree nor disagree', and none of them chose 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' as shown in Figure 4.7.
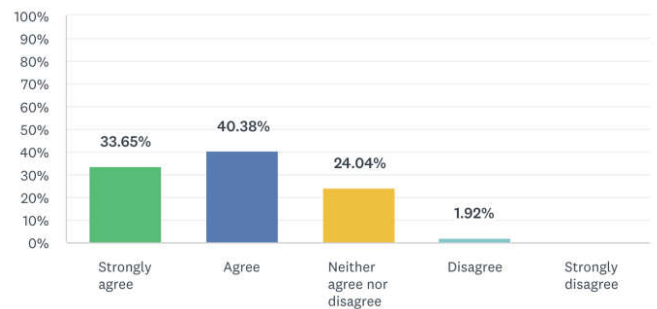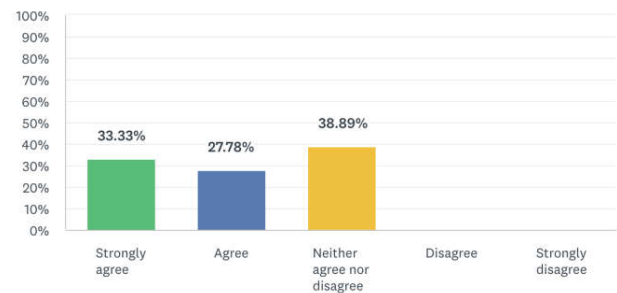

Figure 4.6. Participant's viewpoints

Figure 4.7. Cosmetic Surgeon's viewpoints

The responses to this question, from both parties, raise an alarming concern. Not a single participant strongly disagreed with the idea that Snapchat filters created a dysmorphic relationship with self-image. Moreover, the majority of the doctors within this industry strongly agreed or agreed with the question, highlighting the body dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem that comes along with the obsession with the filtered images on Snapchat (Wang *et al.,* 2020).

4.3.2.4. Increase of demand for cosmetic procedures in the UAE A geographically focused question in the second survey asked doctors whether they think there is a rapid increase in cosmetic procedures performed in the UAE compared to other

countries: 5 (27.78%) responded with 'strongly agree', 6 (33.33%) responded with 'agree', 4 (22.22%) responded with 'neither agree nor disagree', 2 (11.11%) responded with 'disagree', and only 1 (5.56%) responded with 'strongly disagree'. The responses support the findings of Amiri et al. (2021) which state that the UAE maintains its ranking as the third country with most customers undergoing cosmetic procedures in the Middle East region. The demand for cosmetic procedures has also been on the rise with 236 licensed plastic surgeons, making Dubai the so-called "plastic surgery hub"(Amiri *et al.,* 2021). This rapid increase can also be linked to the influence of the media on Emiratis, and a reduction in the stigma surrounding cosmetic procedures making them more acceptable within the UAE's conservative community (Amiri *et al.,* 2021).

4.4. Conclusion

After the analysis of statistical data found through the questionnaires conducted, it can be concluded that there is a strong positive correlation between the increase in demand for cosmetic procedures and the widespread use of Snapchat filters.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the results and the conclusion concerning the relationship between the increase in cosmetic procedures and the widespread use of Snapchat filters in the UAE. Firstly, the section establishes a brief summary of the research findings according to the research questions and objectives. Following, it discusses the implications of the study and provides recommendations for further research in relation to the limitations of the study.

5.1. Summary of the Findings

The targeted sample of this research study mainly consists of female Emiratis, aged 18-23. It has been established that a high number of participants engage in the use of Snapchat filters when taking selfies. The users also spend more than 4 hours of each day on social media applications that provoke self-esteem and body dysmorphic issues, thus causing them to seek permanent beauty altercations. Furthermore, the sample provided insight into the participants' viewpoints and considerations on cosmetic procedures. Majority of the respondents were in denial about acknowledging the negative impact of Snapchat filters on themselves, but admitted to knowing many others who resorted to getting an aesthetic procedure to mimic their filtered-selves. This behavior showcased the lack of awareness that often cases the rise of cosmetic procedures in the region. In regards to the second targeted sample, consisting of doctors that specialize in the field of cosmetic procedures within the UAE, a great deal reported seeing a huge number of Emirati patients during their day-to-day practice that aspire to achieve their filtered image look. Additionally, majority of the doctors strongly agreed or agreed to a question that investigates the relation between the increase of cosmetic procedures and the usage of Snapchat filters in Emiratis. This response sheds light on the disturbing reality of Snapchat filters that tag along body dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem struggles in young adults. The doctors also supported a claim regarding the rapid increase in cosmetic procedures performed in the UAE through a geographically focused question.

5.2. Implications of the Study

Researchers with an interest in the study of the serious dangers of Snapchat filters on Emiratis youth self-esteem and confidence will find the research findings valuable as there is a gap in research in this particular field and region. The data acts as a helpful reference to show the urgency of the matter. Additionally, the results build on existing evidence that states that excessive online interaction with "perfected" face images progressively leads to declining self-esteem; consequently, triggering the Snapchat user to perform cosmetic procedures that alter their face. Furthermore, these results should be taken into account when considering how to moderate the demand for cosmetic procedures in the United Arab Emirates. In all, within this research study, critical new data has been discovered that serves an essential role for the well-being of Emirati youth and community.

5.3. Delimitations of the Study

The reliability of this data is impacted by the participants' bias and ignorance of the true effects Snapchat filters have on oneself. Most participants were unwilling to acknowledge the negative effects when the question was directed towards them, although they were comfortable admitting the negative impact it had on others. This reveals their obliviousness to the footprint it leaves on one's self-esteem. Also, some of the questions asked in the survey questionnaire were rather personal. Despite all reassurance in confidentiality, participants could have been hesitant in sharing such personal information and giving honest answers. If given the opportunity, the researchers would opt for conducting face-to-face interviews to gain a better understanding and ensure the interviewee is more comfortable. However, that was not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions and precautionary measures. The methodological choices were constrained by a limitation in the number of resources within this topic about the UAE, meaning that all of the information and insight about the experience of Emiratis within Snapchat had to be from the researchers' findings, with no background study.

5.4. Further Research

Further research is required to establish the psychological reasoning behind the correlation between an increase in cosmetic procedures and Snapchat filters. It is possible for psychologists in the UAE to conduct the appropriate research methods in regard to this research topic to discover changes in self-esteem, insecurities, or larger issues such as body dysmorphic disorder. Further studies in the seven Emirates could also be conducted since each Emirate has contrasting attitudes and acceptance of cosmetic procedures with different cultural mindsets. This will contribute largely to the field where researchers will be able to explore the variety of the effects of Snapchat filters on Emiratis in the form of a scale. A compare and contrast method could be implemented with such findings. Overall, additional research is necessary to gain an in-depth analysis and understanding of the study.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter concludes and provides a summary of the research findings based on the research questions and objectives. It stresses the significance and value of the findings to the research field. The data of this study may assist

researchers with an interest in the study of the serious dangers of Snapchat filters on Emiratis youth self-esteem and confidence. The findings also act as a helpful reference to show the urgency of the matter. Finally, extensive research is required to gain a further understanding of the researchers' claim.

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