



**ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF
URBAN WOMEN IN THAILAND TOWARD
FACIAL COSMETIC SURGERY**

BY

MISS CHIRANYA PROHMCHUM

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN MARKETING
(INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM)
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ACCOUNTANCY
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2014
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INDEPENDENT STUDY

BY

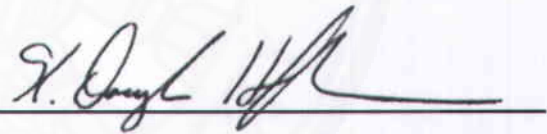
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ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF URBAN WOMEN IN THAILAND
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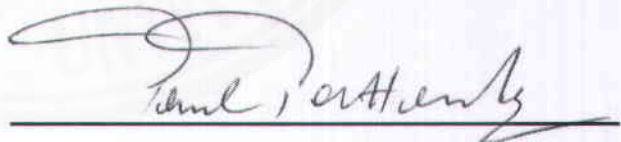
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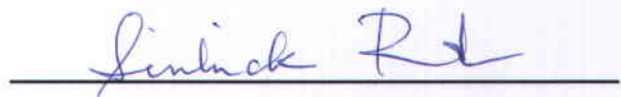
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| Thesis Title | ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF URBAN WOMEN IN THAILAND TOWARD FACIAL COSMETIC SURGERY |
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ABSTRACT

Objective: To examine psychological factors which motivate the needs of Thai urban women in undergoing facial cosmetic surgery: The ideal beauty of facial concept, the perception toward beauty and cosmetic surgery, also those perceived risks and influencers in decision-making process.

Method: This study is based on qualitative method; for secondary research, the desk research was used as the preliminary study to understand the big picture. For the primary research, 20 female participants; age between 20 - 35 years old, living Bangkok or Bangkok Vicinity and never undergone facial cosmetic surgery, either had and had not been considering in having one; have involved in the in-depth interview sessions.

Result: The ideal beautifulness of Thai people' natural faces has changed by a number of influences that gradually standardized. The major perceived physical and social risk and the key influencers are celebrities, friends and families, lovers, and users' reviews, where this definitely does impact to perception of Thai women. Four segments were classified based on psychological factors. The first two segments focus on natural beauty or inner beauty while the other two highlight each group that expecting something from facial cosmetic surgery. One group wishes for the social and career privilege, and another regards their self-confidence enhancement.

Keywords: cosmetic surgery, facial cosmetic surgery, Thai women

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Miss Chiranya Prohmchum

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The cosmetic surgery is the medical procedure with the goal to enhance patients' appearance by improving each proportion and increasing its aesthetic appeal. The practice could be performed at every part of body (*American Board of Cosmetic Surgery, 2014*). However, this study will only focus on the area of *facial cosmetic surgery*.

Nowadays, cosmetic surgery becomes highly popular. Numbers of people who consider in undergoing ones are dramatically increasing. According to US Cosmetic Surgery Association, the number of cosmetic surgery patients has been rising more than 80% from the last ten years.

The similar trend also happens in Thailand. Despite of its controversial topic among Thai society for years, the cosmetic surgery industry was reported by Thailand Chamber of Commerce as one of leading industry in 2014 with an escalating growth rate at 15-20% annually and not limit to the fast growing number of services providers that supporting in conjunction with this rising demand.

Studies suggested that this phenomenon has happened as a result of attitude and perception toward facial cosmetic surgery in the society that obviously changed dramatically. It has become a more acceptable subject; comparing to society' perception in the past that was concealed. There are numbers of people who want to own *beauty premium* - the benefit from being beauty. They are unsatisfied with their appearance and they believe that changing physical appearance will lead to success and better quality of life. As a result, facial cosmetic surgery becomes their solution of life.

However, facial cosmetic surgery is not fully acceptable by all members in the society, still there are people who are not agree with idea of putting themselves into unnecessary health risk, in order to alter their natural physical appearance. Therefore, the questions are on the attitudes and the perceptions behind those two types of people:

What are the factors that motivate one group to undergo cosmetic surgery, while the another group are not convinced by the same idea.

This study is aimed to examine contemporary topic in academic marketing, focusing on social issue –“attitudes and perceptions of urban women in Thailand toward facial cosmetic surgery” with the sub – objectives to be achieved as follows:

1. To understand urban women’s attitude and perception toward “beauty”;
2. To understand urban women’s attitude and perception toward cosmetic surgery, from positive and negative perspectives.
3. To investigate customers’ journey from decision-making process, given the motivations, the sources of information, the influencers and the perceived risks.

This report is composed of knowledge from recent academic studies of related topics, research methodology papers, key findings from in-depth interviews and conclusions at the end.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEMPORARY TOPIC DESCRIPTION

2.1 Cosmetic Surgery Industry in Thailand

Cosmetic surgery industry was reported as one of leading industry of Thailand in 2014 by Thailand Chamber of Commerce with the total market valued at 10\$ Billion in October 2013 and continuously growing rate at 15-20% in recent years (*Sanoachitt, 2013*). Moreover, Tourism Authority of Thailand has forecasted that tourism would generate revenue more than 60\$ Billion, given the medical tourism i.e. health care and cosmetic surgery that will play as key roles. Owing to the high quality of service as well as the price that relatively lower when compared to the same performing centers in other countries, especially South Korea where the cost is much higher. It could be said that Thailand has already had the ability, the competency and the potential to become the Surgical Hub of Asia (*Komchudluek, 2013; Mcot, 2014*)

However, one of the major factors contributing to the industry growth is the increasing volume of consumers' demand that is derived from their changing attitude, perception and social environment over period of time. According to Psychiatry Association Thailand's article, the proportion of females from the last 25 years who felt unsatisfied with their physical appearances has been increasing about 3 times: from 23% to 56% which is relevant to the finding indicated that the majority of sample group who showed their interests in undergoing cosmetic surgery are females. *Pliner and team* also found that females did concern about their dietary consumptions, body weights, shapes and faces more than males in spite of their lower self-esteem in appearance.

2.2 The Trend

According to report from Faculty of Psychology, Chulalongkorn University, this phenomenon occurred because people, nowadays, has become more materialism, and treated their body as an object. By improving physical appearance, the self-esteem would be increasing as well. Furthermore, society acknowledged people who had undergone

cosmetic surgery better than the past. Especially among celebrities who had surgery and success in their career, they become opinion-leaders to new generations that cosmetic surgery is not just for elderly who want to prolong youth like it used to be in the past anymore. The biggest group that shown interest to undergo cosmetic surgery aged between 27 25 years old accounted for $\frac{1}{4}$ of total number of people who interested in having surgery (*Jarugosol, 2011*) The majority of people who had done cosmetic surgery were the one who had income between 25,000 – 15,000 THB (*Positioning, 2012*) This finding indicated that people in early adult stage and people in middle class were the ones who unsatisfied with their physical appearance most. They also perceived that there was social advantage involved in being physically attractive which is called “*beauty premium*”.

2.3 The Beauty Premium - Benefit of Being Beauty

Studies show that good-looking people get hired more than ones who were not. And also The London Guildhall University survey found that attractive women earn money approximately 11% more than women of average look. (*Baer, 2014*) According to Business Insider’s article and "Why Beauty Matters," University of Michigan, this phenomenon happened because of the following Employers’ Bias;

1. Good-looking employees are more talented. In the experiment, employers tend to pay salary to good-looking candidate 10.5% higher than unattractive candidates.
2. Good-looking people are more sociable, so they are doing well when making contact with employers and have higher communication skills as well,
3. Physically attractive employees are more confident than the one with average look; they are also more mentally healthier and having higher leadership skill.

2.4 Ideal Beauty Perception in Thailand

Although there are scientific theories state that definition of beautiful face is universal and can be explained with some specific rules, such as symmetric face shape and proper distance between two eyes; still, each society in the world has their own

aesthetic standard of ideal beauty. For example, people in western country prefer full and plump lip since it is perceived as the sign of youth and healthy, while the thinner lip surgery is one of the popular surgery practices in Thailand (*Jarugosol, 2011*)

In addition, these preferences could be changed over time due to a cultural and sociological impact. According to Thailand Antropology Physical database, the most facial appearance of Thai people is originally big, short and flat nose, big and wide jaw, and shorter face comparing to current Chinese people and Mongol people (*Sanjai, 2001*) For the skin, the natural complexion of Thai woman is yellow and brown, while women in palace who were considered ideal beauty in the past usually have brighter brown complexion since they did not have to work outdoor unlike working class such as servant or farmer(*Paka-anong, 2014*)

However, as a result of Hollywood effect in the past and also South Korean waving trend in Thailand, the natural facial features of the local Thai people nowadays are not aligned to the ideal beauty standard nowadays. Many Thai women who are not satisfied with their original face and need to improve their appearance have to put very much effort, from soft limit: such as wearing make-up; doing facial treatment, to hard limit: that is undergoing facial cosmetic surgery.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Two types of exploratory research were conducted in order to acquire basic and in-depth information in each objective. The selected qualitative methods are as follows:

3.1 The Secondary Research: Desk Research

The desk research was used as the preliminary study to understand the big picture of industry e.g. market size, market growth, key players in the industry, market trend, governmental policies that might affect the industry, and also to further explore on consumers' perception and behavior, especially information searching behavior and impact of the influencers in social network.

3.2 The Primary Research: In-Depth Interview

To achieve all objectives and deepen the understanding, the primary in-depth interview sessions was conducted with 20 participants. They were selected as the representatives of two segments:

- a. The Positive Attitude, i.e., the one who was considering doing facial surgery (10 participants)
- b. The Negative Attitude, i.e., the one who was not considering doing facial surgery (10 participants)

3.2.1 In - Depth Interview Outline

| Topic | Question |
|--|--|
| Part 1. General demographic background | - Age, education, marital status, career, income |
| Part 2. Attitude and perception toward "Beauty" | - What is your definition of beauty? - Any role model? Why? - What is the importance of beauty |

Part 3. Attitudes And Perceptions Toward “Facial Cosmetic Surgery”

Screening question: “*Are you considering doing facial cosmetic surgery?*”

A. “YES, I am considering doing facial cosmetic surgery” = Positive Attitude

| | |
|--|--|
| The attitudes and perception toward facial cosmetic surgery, The motivation | - What is your opinion toward facial cosmetic surgery? - What are the benefits / values of facial cosmetic surgery? |
| The decision making process | - What are the sources of information? - Which one impact most? Why? |
| The perceived risk | - What prevent you from doing facial cosmetic surgery? (Monetary / Social / Physical /Psychological risk?) |

B. “NO, I am not considering doing facial cosmetic surgery” = Negative Attitude

| | |
|---|--|
| The attitudes and perception toward facial cosmetic surgery | - What is your opinion toward facial cosmetic surgery? - What do you think about the other who did facial cosmetic surgery? - Why are you not interested in doing facial cosmetic surgery? |
|---|--|

Part 4. Self Esteem Evaluation

The set of 10 Likert scale questions from “Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale” was used as the last part of interview session, in order to evaluate the level of self-esteem of participants and examine the correlation between the self-esteem level and their attitudes. The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

Appendix A: Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

3.2.2 Sampling

Due to time constraint, whereas the nature of qualitative research and the type of topic that could be perceived as a sensitive topic, the judgmental sampling process was carefully selected. All of participants had to pass the qualification criteria and were willing to share their opinions on each particular question.

The qualification

1. Gender: Female only
2. Age: 20 - 35 years old
3. Geographic: Bangkok and Bangkok Vicinity (i.e. Pathumthani, Nontaburi, Nakhon Pathom and Samut Prakarn Province)
4. Other qualifications: Never completed any types of facial cosmetic surgery, including:

A. Facial Contouring:

Nose Surgery, Double Layer Eyelid Surgery, Cheek Enhancement, Cheek Implant, Cheek Bone Reduction, Chin Enhancement, Chin Implant, Mandibular Angle Reduction, Ear Reshaping, Lip Filler, Lip Enhancement, and Lip Reshaping

B. Facial Rejuvenation:

Facelift, Forehead Lift, Thermage, Eyelid Lift, Neck Lift and Brow Lift

While excluding these following procedures;

C. Skin Rejuvenation:

Laser Resurfacing, Botox® and Filler Treatments

(American Board of Cosmetic Surgery, 2014; Henshaw, 2012)

The reason that types of facial treatment mentioned above (C.) was not considered as “facial cosmetic surgery” is that they give a non-permanent outcome so the risk, associated physically and psychologically in decision making, is much lower and incomparable with completing the non-undoable types of surgery.

3.2.3 Data Collection

1. Collecting data from 20 samples:
 - A. 10 samples of those who considered doing facial cosmetic surgery.
 - B. 10 samples of those who never consider doing facial cosmetic surgery.
2. Each individual participant was interviewed separately.
3. Face-to-face interview and telephone interview were conducted, depending on the individual's convenience.
4. The show card of facial treatment types which are categorized as facial cosmetic surgery was shown (for face to face interview) or described (for telephone interview) to participants at the beginning of interview session, in order to re-assure that the interview would be done under the same understanding and standardized setting.
5. The voice recorder was used in order to collect all quotations.
6. The interview will take approximately 30 – 45 minutes per session.

CHAPTER 4

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Key Finding From Secondary Research

a. The Most Popular Types of Facial Cosmetic Surgery

According to the research conducted by Mahidol University with the sampling size of 400 respondents, the most popular types of surgery are 1. Nose Surgery (76%) 2. Double Eyelid Surgery (7%), Chin Surgery (7%), and Cheek Surgery (7%).

b. Top Three Reasons That Women Undergo Cosmetic Surgery

- Not satisfied with physical appearance, want to improve it.
- Want to look beautiful like celebrities, 73% of samples reveal that presenters play important role in decision-making.
- To enhance self-confident and personality.

c. Physical Appearance and Self-Concept

Prof. Jarugosol has mentioned Sarwer & Crer's research findings revealed that people measure the physical appearance of their own in two ways;

1. Importance to life (Body image valence - orientation component)
2. Self-evaluation: level of their physical attractive (Body image value - evaluation component)

As a result, people who own high score from number (1): having an idea that the physical appearance is important, tend to pay high attention on themselves, and their self-esteem mostly come from physical appearance. People who think that physical appearance is important but perceived that they are not physically attractive are the group who likely consider in doing cosmetic surgery most. While people who think that physical appearance has low importance, their self-esteem and self-concept tend to be defined by other values of living instead. (*Jarugosol, 2011*)

d. Self-Concept & Impact of Media

According to the social comparison theory, human used to learn and self-evaluate their capacity by comparing themselves to their peers such as siblings and friends. Yet, nowadays Media do impact on human perception directly since they continuously present picture of ideal beautiful women. As a result, more and more women become dissatisfied with their physical appearance and tend to evaluate themselves lower than reality, since they did compare themselves with celebrities instead of common people.

4.2. Key Finding From Primary Research: In-depth Interview

4.2.1 Demographic

General information of 20 participants is summarized as follows;

a. Age and Marital Status

All participants are female, age between 20-35 years old.

10 participants are single, 6 are of them in the relationship but not marriage, and 4 people are marriage.

b. Career and Level of Income

There are 13 participants working in private organizations, 5 people are entrepreneurs and two people are currently studying master's degree and un-employed.

The average individual income is 35,000 THB/month.

c. Level of Education

About half (9/20) of participants have graduated or have been studying Master's Degree.

4.2.2 Definition of Beautiful Face

When the respondents were asked to give example of their beauty idol, most of them mentioned the name of Thai celebrities and also international celebrities from South Korea, China and Hollywood. Although the saying goes, "beauty is in the eye of beholder", but seems like the majority of participant shares similar perception and concept of ideal beauty as follows;

a. Face shape

Most of participants perceive that face shape play important role in determining overall appearance. Specific face shape will go along with specific hairstyle. The oval and slim face is the ideals shape that participant most preferable. While the most un-preferable face for some participants is square face with big jaws.

“You can see from stars and celebrity both Thai and Asian, most of them have oval or heart shape face. It looks beautiful and feminine”

“The women with oval shape face can have any hairstyle”

However, some of participants prefer round face. They perceive that it give the sense of youth. “The woman with round face always looks like a girl, no matter how old she is, she will look younger than women with oval or oblong face”.

“The woman with slim and oval face maybe beautiful but the woman with round face and chubby cheek is cute”.

Many participants want to change their face shape. Some of them chose to do orthodontics treatment or wear brace. While a few of participants are considering having reconstructive surgery to own V-Line or so called V-shape face, that is the oval and slim shape, narrow down to sharp end at the chin.

“Almost every South Korean actress has V-Shape faces, it looks feminine and it is a must”

b. Skin complexion

Most of participants prefer pink and pale skin, and think that it is highly important beauty factor in their mind. “White skin looks more generous and clean”

“Although, you do not have beautiful facial element but with white skin you still looks good and outstanding”. Since naturally skin of Thai people is yellow and brown, unlike mixed blood Thai and Chinese who have pale skin, Many participants show that they have strong intention to own such kind of pale skin, or at least make it lighter, since they perceive that there are lots of advantages from having pale skin.

“Woman with white skin looks good in any color of costume, unlike woman with dark skin, if we wear some vivid color such as green and red, we will be teasing for sure”

“Thai men like women with pale skin”

None of participants prefer dark brown skin, and only few of participants prefer having light brown skin but with some condition. “Brown skin can create “healthy & sporty” look, like if you playing a lot outdoor sports, but you also got to have fit and firm body as well”

“Women with brown skin are more photogenic than pale, especially when they have piercing face.”

c. Mouth

Many of participants prefer the mouth that is not thick, wide and not projective, some respondents said that, there are ancient belief that women with wide mouth and mole at the corner are the nasty woman who like to gossip. While the ideal mouth is called “Krajob Mouth”, which the upper lip is thinner than the bottom one, and obviously has shape as cupid bow.

A couple of respondents also considers doing krajob mouth, they are not satisfied with current mouths that they perceive quite too thick and expect that krajob mouth will make their face looks more beautiful and feminine. But they are still in their decision-making process since they also aware of its high physical risk.

“My upper lip is quite too thick, it makes my face me look like up-country woman”

“I am thinking about doing lip surgery but heard that it is very painful and take long time to recover”. The second rank preferable is small and thin mouth since some participants believe it represents cuteness and youth.

d. Nose

Most participants perceived that nose is very important part of the face with has highest impact on overall facial composition since it locates at the middle of the face”.

Flat and big nose that is naturally Thai nose are totally un-preferable.

“Flat noses make you look like woman from up-country”

Many participants prefer to have thin nose with high nose bridge and small nostril as well, which is actually can be seen from Western people and South Korean Celebrities.

“I don’t like my nose especially when smile, It’s too big and shape like Chom-poo (rose apple) it make me look like lady boy”

“I want to have thinner nose and sharp nose tip just like Kim Tae Hee (South Korean Model)”

Moreover, the most of participants who considered doing surgery said that nose was the very first thing they want to do since they perceived it is a common thing, least physical risk comparing to other type of cosmetic surgery. It's least painful and undoable. “If I do cosmetic surgery, higher nose bridge will be the first thing I do”

“Inserting silicone into the nose is not dangerous, many of my friends did it before and if you do not like it you can remove it and get the new one”

e. Eye

Most of participants prefer to have their eyes big and round, they also prefer double eyelid and long eyelashes, since they believe that those types of eyes are the beautiful and appealing. Many participants who are mixed blood, Thai and Chinese, and have small eyes reveal that they have to put a lot effort to make their eyes bigger and attractive.

“I do not like my eyes at all, they are very small, I have to spend about half an hour every day, first big-eye contact lenses to make iris look bigger, then eyelid sticker to create double eyelid, then all makeup from eye shadow, eyeliner, fake eyelashes and mascara.”

“I'm thinking about having double eyelid surgery, it will make my makeup consumes much less time.

4.2.3 Perception toward Beauty and Surgery

a. Internal Beauty Appreciator

This segment does not consider doing cosmetic surgery, although many of them do not categorized themselves as beautiful women. This segment has a concept about *internal beauty*. They believe that it is the real beauty of a person, although it is not observable. The inside-out beauty is composed of many aspects such as good mind, personality, attitude, talents and confidence. They also believe that internal beauty is more important than physical beauty since it is more valuable, last longer than physical beauty and cannot be bought with money. Besides, they believe that they are not inferior to prettier women.

“You cannot surgery your attitude”

“Smart guys may date pretty woman but they would marry nice woman”

“Day by day, you getting older and losing your beauty but good mind does stay”.

Some participants believe that focusing on physical beauty is not the way to real happiness, it also distract that person from the real value that is far more valuable.

Although most of participant said that they are neutral and do have nothing offended the surgery or people who obtain it, some participants actually have negative attitude but just not say it directly. However they admit it when the projective technique was used and the question was changed to “If you WERE a man, would you go on a date with a woman that has been doing surgery or the one who has not? Why?”

Some participants said that they would chose the prettier or sexier ones while some participants said that they will chose the woman who has no surgery, and the reason is that they women who did surgery are ambitious, self-centric and less sincere.

“I feel they are wannabe type, and they think too much about themselves”

“If you chose to lie to yourselves, how can you be sincere to other people?”

This group tends to has highest self-esteem score at the score of 23 (from 0-30)

b. Natural Beauty Appreciator

This segment tends to not consider doing cosmetic surgery. Many of participants believe that there is other ways to enhance beauty yet remain being natural such as facial treatment or wearing make-up.

“Make up is already magic, if you are good enough, no need to do any surgery”

A few participants are natural caretaker, they believe that eating healthy food, doing exercise and enough resting is crucial for being beauty, prolong youth and owning good skin. This segment also value authenticness and they perceive that being themselves is what suitable for them most.

“You are not born to be perfect, you just born to be you”

“Surgery is a fake beauty, I’m ok if that person did only one or two spots not the whole face, then she became just like walking plastic”

“I’m afraid that if I have surgery my offspring will look totally different from me, and she/he will have to do surgery again”

Some participants aware that cosmetic surgery is risky and dangerous not just during and after the process but it also create health effect in long term.

“How could you know it is safe enough? Or nothing happening when you get old? It is foreign substance in your face, not natural thing.”

In addition, most of participant said that they are not anti-cosmetic surgery, since it is personal choice but a few participants said that they are fine with doing cosmetic surgery if the person who does it is celebrity, not their close friends or family.

“I admire actors or actresses who had surgery, it mean they put effort to their jobs, but if anyone in family or my friend do so, I cannot help but feeling creepy”

This segment has an average self-esteem score the score of 20.5 (from 0-30)

c. Career Privilage and Social Acceptance Seeker

This segment considers that doing cosmetic surgery empowers the goal of life in becoming successful and making a lot of money. They believe that physical appealing is the advantage; and good looking is a factor that leads to better career opportunities, such as getting higher salary, better job, or getting promotion. Since employers have more power in selecting people with good profile than in the past and it is simple that people like to help or work with good-looking colleagues

“If you want to work in some service business such as banking, flight attendant, being good-looking is a must.

“Do you know that more than half of flight attendants I know have undergone cosmetic surgery, the most popular types are nose and double eyelid, and also breast implant?”

Many of participants also perceived that beautiful people are good at making new connections because they could effortlessly draw attention automatically create positive feeling toward people who contact with them.

“Internal beauty is also important, but you can denied that when in the first met, physical beauty have impact most”

Many participants think that surgery is very common since numbers people had done it before. It is believed that despite the risks, it is still safe enough if choosing to have a surgery with an expertise doctor at a reliable hospital. One participant mentioned

that doing surgery is an action of courage since that person put their effort in reaching their goal; despite all the risk it takes.

“You know you will be gossiped, you know that it hurts and there is nothing can be 100% guaranteed the outcome but you still go for it, I think that is quite brave”.

This segment has an average self-esteem score at the score of 21.3 (from 0-30)

d. Self-Fulfiller

This segment tends to consider doing cosmetic surgery. Some participants are unsatisfied with their physical appearance or some part of their face and have that feeling or have been teased by others since childhood. They also perceived that surgery is the way to “fix” those weak points. While a few of participants perceived that they are already good-looking, but surgery is capable of “correcting” the imperfect points and make them even more beautiful. This segment also expects that attractive physical appearance will lead them to higher social acceptance and more chance to be attractive to opposite sex as well.

“Beautiful girls are so lucky; they always have men who interested in them”

“I once lost my ex-boyfriend to a flirty pretty girl, I always say he made such a stupid choice, but still I sometimes wonder if I am more beautiful will he came back to me?”

They do not think that having surgery is losing self-identity, on the contrary, undergoing surgery is developing better version of them.

“I do not think I am going to lose myself before or after doing the doubled eyelid surgery, I will still be me.”

“Surgical beauty is better than natural ugly”

This group has an average self-esteem score at 20 (from 0-30), which is slightly lower than the other groups.

However, the opinions of participants from the above segments could be changed over time. For example, some participants which are members of segment a. Internal beauty seeker and b. natural beauty appreciator reveal that they used to have the same attitude as members of segment d. Self-Fulfiller and Social Acceptance Seeker - they used to be interested in cosmetic surgery, but with various factors they decide not to do

so, for example their family or boyfriend not allow. Then they told themselves that cosmetic surgery was not necessary.

4.2.4 Perceived Risk

All participants aware that undergoing facial cosmetic surgery is a procedure that requires high self-involvement and also high perceived risk that is derived from at least one in these four factors;

a. Physical Risk

Physical risk is a major factor that prevents participants who are considering undergoing cosmetic surgery to complete the practice. Although they did try to lower the risk by selecting expert doctors or good hospital, but still, unpleasant situation can happen all time, during or even after the surgery procedure, for example;

The pain: Facial cosmetic surgery is painful and torture process and also takes times to recover. Some of participants said that some kind of surgery required no anesthetic to deliver better outcome. Besides, different types of surgery give different level of pain.

“I want to do thinner lips but doctor said it even hurts more than nose surgery”.

The unexpected situation during the surgery procedure: e.g. the implant rejection, the infection, blood clots, heavy blood loss in rare case or any surgical accidents that can be harmful and create intense physical damages.

The unsatisfied outcome: No any surgeon, even the best ones, can perfectly guarantee the perfect outcome. Because it depends on various factors such as the patient's health condition, patient's original facial structure, after surgery treatment process, or the communication mistake between doctors and patients can occur. For some type of surgery, the outcome is rectifiable, e.g., nose surgery, but the removal process is more painful than the first time. In addition, for some types of surgery, the outcome could not be fixed or it might even get worse, for example, lip surgery, if it is too thin than expected, patients have to bear with the result.

“When you get older and skin becomes thinner, that might impact cosmetic surgery part, in many cases; the silicone was getting outside the nose skin or moved to the wrong position”.

b. Psychological Risk

The perception of the physical risk can lead to psychological risk. Many participants said that they are scared of unsatisfied outcome, it will make them feel guilty and anger toward themselves, especially if the outcome is even worse than before surgery. They will blame themselves and have to intensely suffer from regret.

Few participants have seen or experienced that new face can make patients feel alienate to themselves. “If that part cannot be done anything again, you have to stay with a stranger’s face that you hate.

c. Social Risk

Many participants are concerned about being criticized and not fully acceptable by their society, including their family members, lover, friends and colleagues. Some feel that it is uncomfortable to deal with their boss and colleagues.

“It takes at least two weeks to recover from nose surgery, I will have to stay at home and I have no idea how to ask my boss”

Some participants do not want to reveal it to the society, if they undergo facial cosmetic surgery. They perceive it as a shameful and embarrassing thing to do.

“I really do not want to be topic of gossip in my office, I know I should not care about them but I just do not like that feeling at all”

While some participants afraid that other people will not like the outcome. Especially in the case that family, friends or lovers do not support them to have surgery. A participant said that she knew a woman who did double eyelid, then broke up with her boyfriend right after that because he liked girl with single eyelid and he felt like he already lost his girlfriend after she did it.

“Surgery hurt but it even hurts more, when they say you become less beautiful”

d. Financial risk

Some participants concerns about monetary factors, they said that facial cosmetic surgery cost a lot of money, and the cost even goes higher in removing or fixing process.

“New nose will cost you approximately 15,000 - 40,000 THB but to fix, it might cost you ten times higher”.

Most of participants are quite low price sensitive. Despite the limited budget; they want to choose the best surgeon they can afford. And for many participants, it takes time to have enough money, especially if they need famous surgeons.

“I want to do a nose with Dr.Somsak (a well-known professional from having many celebrities as his patients) and it cost me 4 months of my salary, so I need time to collect it that much.”

4.2.5 Key Influencers

According to high risk involved, most participants need to spend time for a while in decision making to undergo facial cosmetic surgery or not, and which hospitals or surgeons to be selected. Following are the influencers and their impact toward participants.

a. Celebrities

Many participants take celebrities as their beauty role model, their inspiration and influencers, especially when that celebrity looks very good, successful, and it is revealed to society that he or she had completed cosmetic surgery before. Therefore celebrities become impactful motivation; some participants do compare themselves with actress in the media, thinking that they are not beautiful enough and start to think about facial cosmetic surgery. “My friend once shows the picture of Yuna (South Korean Singer) to a surgeon and told him that she wanted her nose exactly like that, but the doctors refused to do so, he said that it’s not suitable with her face and her original nose.”

Furthermore, celebrities are the also the reference and information sources, they can enhance the credibility of surgeons or hospitals who had serviced them. As the result, those service providers effortlessly become famous and well known among the targets.

“I once considered doing nose job with the surgeon who did it for Aum Patchara (Thai Actress) but the price going up very high and the queue is extremely long so I just gave up”

b. Family, friends and boyfriend

Most participants have family friends or boyfriend as the source of information or key influencers. Some participants said that most of the time friends will act as supporters and encourage them to undergo cosmetic surgery, especially friends who had experience of undergoing facial cosmetic surgery or known other people who did it before. They will become high credible and reliable sources of information, supporting in terms of basic information, experiences, and recommend surgeons or even take them to that particular hospital.

Family and boyfriend are also the powerful influencers who may be supporting on the financial. And if either family or boyfriend are not allow, there is a very high chance that participant will decide not to undergo surgery, since they want to avoid having conflict with family or boyfriend. Unlike friends, friends can convince them not to do, but cannot stop them if they really want to.

“I’ve been thinking about having cosmetic surgery for a while, but I am not daring to ask my parents for permission yet”.

“My boyfriend said I am looking great already and do not want me to do anything with my face. If I do, he may not like it and never get used to it”.

c. User reviews

From information searching, to evaluating of alternative stage, online communities and online reviews have an important role in shaping attitude and perception toward facial cosmetic surgery, or those particular service providers. Almost every participant who considers undergoing facial cosmetic surgery, or even participants who currently not consider have seen the online reviews before. Besides some participants decided not to do surgery, after seeing review of the procedure, or the cases that damage occurred.

The websites that are most mentioned by participant are community websites that contain review from real past users. The more positive amount of feedback, the more credibility that particular hospitals, clinics or surgeons will gain. Some participants already have the list of surgeons that they interest in their mind, after checking numbers

of past users' reviews. In addition, few participants perceive that it is more convenient and comfortable to ask personal question or looking suggestion in online community than asking their friends and the content of answers are richer as well.

d. Physiognomy

Two respondents mentioned "physiognomy" which is ancient Chinese philosophy about face reading and its impact on life. In one case it prevents that participant from undergoing nose surgery since it against the believe, "Physiognomy doctor told me that I have the nose of lion (big and round tip), if I get my nose changed I will lose my power and become poor"

While another participant was considering undergoing eye surgery, to make her life better: "I want to lift up my eyelid. Now I have sad eyes, it means I will have such suffering life".

e. Surgeons and hospital staffs

Most of participants who consider undergoing will search for information from the online review or talk with the experienced first, and then they need to visit surgeon before making decision. Many participants perceived that surgeons and nurses' advice are most reliable, since they are expert and have high credibility.

"I have seen from my friend, she had strong intention to own western nose but when surgeons told them to do it another way, she followed that advice"

"I once wanted a new nose but the surgeon I chose said that my nose is already great and asked me if I wanted a condominium in my nose? I was really disappointed. But if anyone I know wants to do nose surgery, I will definitely recommend this surgeon- he is such a talent and ethical man"

However some participants said that they wanted to talk with more than one surgeon or hospital before making decision, to find the doctor that understand what their need best and can deliver it in acceptable conditions - waiting time, after surgery services and price.

CHAPTER5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

To summarize, the ideal beautiful face for most participants is to own big and round eyes, a thin nose with high nose bridge, small or krajub-shape mouth, all on oval and slim face with pink-pale skin complexion.

Facial cosmetic surgery is a solution for some women who are dissatisfied by their physical appearance and want to improve it. This industry has been rapidly growing in recent years, and also becoming more acceptable than the past. However, many women do not want to reveal to other people that they have undergone cosmetic surgery, since they are afraid of being criticized. This can indicate that facial cosmetic surgery has not been fully accepted by the society yet.

The study found that participants could be classified into 4 segments based on psychological criteria: attitude toward beauty, attitude and perception toward facial cosmetic surgery, and self-concept as well. Those segments are;

a. Internal Beauty Appreciator

They believe that internal beauty, which is composed of good mind, personality, attitude, talents and confidences, is the real beauty of a person.

b. Natural Beauty Appreciator

They value authenticity and perceive that being original is what suitable for them most.

c. Career Privilege and Social Acceptance Seeker

Being successful is the goal of life for this segment. They believe that physical appealing could bring higher level of social acceptance, also leads to better career opportunities.

d. Self-Fulfiller

This segment highly values attractive physical appearance, they believe that cosmetic surgery could enhance their self-confidence. And higher chance to be attractive to the opposite sex as well.

The major factor that prevents participants who consider undergoing facial cosmetic surgery is the perceived risk. Since facial cosmetic surgery is a high-involvement practice, the perceived risk is going high as well. And it is composed of at least one of these following factors:

a. Physical risk: Such as unpleasant outcome, the pain from surgical practice, health effect, is major type of risk that prevents participants who considering doing cosmetic surgery to complete the procedure.

d. Psychological risk: The perception of the physical risk can also lead to psychological risk. Many participants said that they were scared of unsatisfied outcome. It can make them regret terribly suffers because they will feel guilty, upset and anger toward themselves.

c. Social risk: Being criticized and not fully acceptable by their society, including their family members, lover, friends and colleagues is such an unpleasant idea to many of participants.

d. Financial risk: Some participants did concern about monetary factors, they said facial cosmetic surgery cost a lot of money, and the cost even goes higher in removing or fixing process. Most of participants are quite low price sensitive. Although they have limited budget, they will try to choose the best surgeon they can afford.

Furthermore, most participants need to spend time for a while in making decision whether to undergo facial cosmetic surgery or not, and which hospital or doctors to be selected. The influencers that impact this decision making process are as follows:

a. Celebrities: Many participants perceive celebrities as their beauty role models, inspirations and influencers, especially when they look very good and being successful after undergoing cosmetic surgery.

b. Family, Friends and Boyfriend: Many participants said that most of the time, friends will be supporters and encourage them to undergo facial cosmetic surgery. While family and boyfriend are also powerful influencers, also they may support in terms of financial. And participants feel that they need to ask for permission from family or boyfriend prior to making a decision, in order to avoid any conflicts that may occur.

c. User reviews: Online community and online review have an important role in shaping attitude and perception toward cosmetic surgery or that particular service provider, almost every participant who considered undergoing cosmetic surgery or even the person who currently not considered doing surgery anymore have seen the online review

d. Physiognomy: Ancient Chinese philosophy that still impacts some people's attitudes and motivates them to undergo facial cosmetic surgery or prevents them to do so.

e. Surgeons and Hospital Staffs: Most of participants need to visit doctor before making decision. Some participants perceive that doctors and nurse advices are even more impactful than the experience, since they are expert and own high credibility

For managerial implication, understanding potential customers and non-customers insight is extremely crucial for designing marketing programs appropriately. The key differences between those two groups of participants are summarized in the following table:

| <i>Considering undergoing surgery)</i> | <i>Not considering undergoing surgery</i> |
|---|--|
| <p><u>Perception toward beauty</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All participants highly valued physical attractiveness. - They perceived that there were numbers of social privileges from owning attractive appearance. | <p><u>Perception toward beauty</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They valued internal beauty (attitudes, talents, and personality) over physical beauty. - They also valued natural beauty and authenticity. |
| <p><u>Attitude toward cosmetic surgery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cosmetic surgery could lead them to greater success in life and love; also they would be happier with higher level of self-confidence and self-esteem. - Some believed that surgery is the way to "fix" their weak points. | <p><u>Attitude toward cosmetic surgery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They perceived that people who undergone cosmetic surgeries are ambitious and less sincere. - Also had lower self-esteem than who is satisfied with original version of their appearance. |

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They perceived people who undergone cosmetic surgeries were brave enough to take risks and determined in self-development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They believed that there are other alternatives rather than cosmetic surgery to enhance physical attractiveness, yet remain being natural, such as facial treatment or wearing make-up. |
| <p><u>Perception toward physical risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some participants perceived that the level of risk is high. Unsatisfied outcome and hurtful process was the main reason for their hesitation. - Some perceived that the level of physical risk was acceptable because many people have undergone before. And think that it could be lowering by good preparation and information searching. | <p><u>Perception toward physical risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They perceived that level of physical risk was extremely high. Also they were unfavorable with the idea that surgical outcome could be worse than natural faces. - Cosmetic surgery could cause serious health problems and many side effects in long term as well. |

Limitation of the Study:

Since the selected topic is quite sensitive, there is probability that the result may contain some participants' bias, or some participants were not willing to reveal their true opinions for the interview. However the researcher tried to overcome this problem by adopting projective technique, in order to understand their real insight at best. In addition, due to time constraint, the sampling technique employed in this study is judgmental sampling, at the size of 20 participants, with quite similar demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Therefore, this study might not be able to represent every characteristics of total population, but hopefully it will be able to provide some ideas, which is useful for further studies.

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APPENDIX A

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|----------------------|----------|-------|-------------------|
| 1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. | | | | |
| 2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. | | | | |
| 3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. | | | | |
| 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people. | | | | |
| 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of myself | | | | |
| 6. I take a positive attitude toward myself | | | | |
| 7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself | | | | |
| 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself. | | | | |
| 9. I certainly feel useless at times. | | | | |
| 10. At times I think I am no good at all. | | | | |

For items 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7:

Strongly agree = 3 Agree = 2 Disagree = 1 Strongly disagree = 0

For items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10

Strongly agree = 0 Agree = 1 Disagree = 2 Strongly disagree = 3

BIOGRAPHY

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