



Liposuction and Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL): New trends in body augmentation and implications for courtship behavior in Nigeria

Emmanuel Nwakanma^{1*}

¹Department of Sociology, University of Port Harcourt, East/West Road, PMB 5323 Choba, Rivers State, Nigeria 510241

* Corresponding author

E-mail address: emmanuel.nwakanma@uniport.edu.ng

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v5i2.16379>

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

cosmetic surgery
liposuction
Brazilian Butt Lift
courtship behavior
Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Liposuction and Brazilian Butt Lift have been identified as the most common cosmetic surgeries performed worldwide. In Nigeria, the appeal and demand for liposuction and gluteal augmentation (Brazilian Butt Lift) has increased with many women opting for it and highlighting its benefits in the media. This study investigates this new trend and its implications for courtship behavior. The study adopts the Self-discrepancy Theory and the Theory of Value as theoretical framework which in adjunct explains the issues associated with body modifications and its implications for courtship behavior. The cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and data were collected using questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and peer-reviewed journals. The study was conducted in four States in Nigeria. The sample size for the study is 410. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The result of this study has shown that whereas women have different psychosocial reasons for opting for cosmetic surgery, this new trend unintendedly impacts the perception of men about women and courtship behavior. The study recommends regular public health education on the ramifications of cosmetic surgeries. Also, there is the need to introduce psychological screening in the procedures for cosmetic surgeries which helps to influence the choices of women on cosmetic surgery.

Citation suggestion:

Nwakanma, E. (2022). Liposuction and Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL): New trends in body augmentation and implications for courtship behavior in Nigeria. *Simulacra*, 5(2), 29–42. <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v5i2.16379>

Introduction

With a vast range of technology to enhance, reconstruct, and beautify the body, cosmetic surgery has become one of the most sought-after medical procedures globally. Studies by Kumar (2022), Tabin, (2022), Bizot (2021), Valina and Sessa (2020), and Madar (2017) have shown that cosmetic surgery, particularly liposuction and gluteal augmentation (popularly known as Brazilian Butt Lift or BBL), has become fashionable in recent times, and a significant portion of global travels for health reasons and medical tourism involves cosmetic procedures. Statistics from the International Society for Plastic Surgery and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons show that there has been an upward surge in demands for cosmetic surgery procedures globally (ASPS, 2020; Valina & Sessa, 2020). Similarly, the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS) (2022); John Hopkins (2019), Moeller-Medical (2019) and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (2018) reveal that demand for cosmetic treatments has not only increased in the last few years, cosmetic facial plastic surgeries and aesthetic procedures such as liposuction (*body contouring*), mastopexy (*breast lift*), mammoplasty (*breast augmentation*), blepharoplasty (*eyelid surgery*), abdominoplasty (*tummy tuck*), rhinoplasty (*nasal reconstruction*), rhytidectomy (*facelift*), and labiaplasty (*vagina rejuvenation*), have today become luxury goods in the medical market place.

According to ISAPS (2022), Michas (2022) and McCarthy (2021), in 2020 alone there were 1,525,197 liposuction procedures recorded across the globe which accounted for 15.1% of the total cosmetic surgical procedures completed in that year; while breast augmentation was the most popular cosmetic surgery worldwide with over 1,624,281 procedures recorded in 2020 also. Eyelid surgery likewise came third

as the most sought-after surgery with just under 1.3 million procedures (Michas, 2022; McCarthy, 2021). In 2019, data from ISAPS (2020) reveal that 11.36 million plastic surgery procedures were completed around the world, which represents a 7.1 per cent increase in cosmetic procedures in 2018, and a 20.6 per cent increase in those in 2015. Statistics from Grand View Research (2022) also show that the market for global cosmetic surgery devices which was valued at USD 2.6 billion in 2021, is expected to expand at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.5% from 2022 to 2030. This indicates an apparent increasing demand for body augmentation procedures globally.

The increasing appeal for cosmetic surgeries is affected by many things; however, common predisposing factors include issues related to dysmorphic disorder, dissatisfaction with body mass or shape, and changing definitions of beauty and appearance in society (Garcia, 2014; Slevic & Tiggemann, 2010; Swami, 2009). Similarly, Valina and Sessa (2020) explained that consideration of cosmetic surgery was significantly predicted by new definitions of a perfect body as presented in media. Kumar (2022) has also noted that trim bodies and big butts have become normalized today, with a lot of media personalities, entertainers and social media influencers promoting it or highlighting the beauty of their new body. Following this, a publication by Vogue Magazine declared that “*We’re officially in the era of the Big Booty*” where a woman’s appeal is largely measured by her body shape, especially the prominence of her buttocks (Madar, 2017; Garcia, 2014). This suggests that body modifications, especially liposuction and BBL, have become aesthetic today and more persons are increasingly requesting them.

The Brazilian Butt Lift is a cosmetic procedure that reshapes the buttocks to highlight either a pear-shaped body or an

'hour-glass' physique. The procedure often requires liposuction, which involves moving fat from various body areas (typically the stomach, thighs, or back) to the buttocks (Kumar, 2022; Tabin, 2022; Stephan, *et al*, 2018). Thus, the buttocks appear well-shaped and prominent with unusually high levels of fat compared to the rest of the body. Women who aspire to have the ideal physique resort to cosmetic surgery to improve their appearance and cover up perceived physiologic flaws (Tabin, 2022; Valina & Sessa, 2020). As exciting as the outcomes are, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons opine that the BBL-related death rate is the highest of all procedures, with fat embolism being the leading cause of death (The Guardian, 2021; This day, 2021).

Kita (2020) and ISAPS (2020) noted that the number of Brazilian Butt Lifts rose by 77.6% since 2015, and liposuction became the second favorite cosmetic surgical procedure in the world, and Silicone implants which were once banned as a health risk are increasing now in popularity with more women opting for implants. Similarly, Tabin (2022), Bizot (2021), Stephan, *et al* (2018), Agullo, *et al* (2011), have found that liposuction and the BBL have become the world's fastest-growing cosmetic surgeries, despite mounting concerns over the health implications of the procedure such as the high mortality rate and implications for fat embolism, kidney and heart problems. Risks and challenges associated with liposuction and BBL include psychological, social and health risks such as unsatisfactory aesthetic results (e.g., contour irregularities, asymmetry body shapes, excessive or unfavorable scarring, etc.), dissatisfaction with surgery outcomes and need for secondary surgeries, risk of addiction, severe nerve damage, anesthesia risks (e.g., shock, respiratory failure, allergic reactions, cardiac arrest, coma, etc.), and in some cases death (ASPS, 2021; Kita, 2020); while the

gains are mainly increased self-esteem, relief from social anxiety and social acceptance, revitalized appearance and younger looks, and a healthier life owing to reduction in body fat and weight (Climan, 2022; Stephan, *et al*, 2018; Agullo, Palladino & Sozer, 2011). Succinctly put, liposuction and BBL are mainly surgical solutions for unwanted body shapes that come with their risks and in spite the unique benefits.

The cosmetic surgery industry has also witnessed a significant increase in activity, recognition and revenue generation in Nigeria, with more persons, particularly women, opting for body shape reconstruction, breast lift and augmentation, labiaplasty, and gluteal augmentation. According to data available to The Guardian (2021) and This day (2021), costing an average of \$5000 or N2.08million, liposuction and BBL are the most requested surgical procedures in Lagos and Abuja where most surgery clinics are located. Whereas the health implications of cosmetic surgeries (including liposuction and BBL procedures) have been widely researched, very little has been done in assessing its social impacts, particularly on human social behavior in Nigeria. For instance, human courtship behavior, (which is basically how humans rationalize the selection of partners for intimate relationships and marriage), is believed to be influenced by several factors including physical appearance, character, intelligence level, mental health, and other social information such as profession, financial status, and social class (Brackett, 2016; Olusola, 2015; Alavi, *et al*, 2014; Oladeji & Ariyo, 2014; Prince, 1961).

In this study, it is hypothesized that, while many women have good reasons for choosing cosmetic surgery, it may be affecting courtship behavior and the chances of having a committed intimate relationship. Specifically, men may be less inclined to be committedly involved with

women who have had body modifications partly because they are aware that the new body is somewhat artificial. In light of this, the purpose of this study was to examine the concerns surrounding the current trend in body enhancement in Nigeria, as well as the consequences for courting behavior. Key objectives of the study include: investigating the common reasons women have for undergoing liposuction and BBL; investigating the psychosocial outcomes of the procedure on women; examining the perception of men about women having body modification surgeries, and assessing how men feel about dating or being in committed relationships with women that have had liposuction or BBL, and analyzing how liposuction and BBL procedures impact on the courtship behavior of men in Nigeria.

Method

The cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this study. The study was conducted in four (4) areas in Nigeria, namely: Lagos State, FCT (Abuja), Rivers State and Kano State. These areas were preferred owing to their cosmopolitan nature and the presence of various cosmetic surgery clinics in the cities. As shown in Table 1, whereas the selected cities have an expansive population with varying annual population changes, data from the National Bureau of Statistics in 2006 put the total male population of Lagos State, Rivers State, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Kano State at 13,073,275. The study employed a combination of non-probability sampling techniques, such as purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Firstly, a sample of 400 was derived from a population of 13,073.275 using the Taro Yamane formula (at a 0.05 error margin). This sample is entirely male and was distributed proportionally across the selected cities (see Table 1). Furthermore, to elicit qualitative data, ten (10) females

who have had at least one type of liposuction or BBL were identified and included in the Interview; thus, making the sample size 410.

Table 1: *Distribution of sample size across selected cities*

S/N	States	Population	Sample size	IDI (Female)
1.	Lagos State	4,719,125	144	3
2.	FCT (Abuja)	733,172	23	3
3.	Rivers State	2,673,026	82	2
4.	Kano State	4,947,952	151	2
5.	Total	13,073,275	400	10

Source: Field survey, 2022; Brinkhoff, 2017.

The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data for this study were gathered through the use of a semi-structured questionnaire based on the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was designed in sections to cover the socio-demographic information of the respondents as well as their experiences and perception of cosmetic surgery. To considerably increase the validity and the generalizability of the research findings, the study combined the questionnaires with In-Depth Interviews (IDI). A pilot study was conducted with 10% of the sample size in one of the States (i.e., Rivers State). Thereafter, adjustments were made where necessary before proceeding with the actual study. The reliability of the quantitative data was determined using Cronbach's alpha which yielded a coefficient level of $\alpha = 0.7$ indicating strong reliability with a high level of internal consistency based on the average inter-item correlation. Secondary data used in the study were extracted from peer-reviewed journals, newspaper publications, online reviews, crowdsourcing sites and trend magazines.

Data collected for the study were analyzed using univariate analysis and descriptive statistics. Methods such as percentage analysis, distribution tables, and charts were used to analyze all variables considered suitable for univariate analysis. Thematic

analysis and narrative analysis were also used to evaluate and present the data from the interviews. It is important to note that the study considered all ethical concerns for a study of this nature and adhered strictly to informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, data confidentiality, non-maleficence to participants, and privacy, as recommended by Nigeria's National Code of Health Research (NCHR) and the Helsinki Declaration of 1964, which governs human participants in human-related research.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic information of the respondents

Table 2: *Socio-demographic information of the Respondents*

Categories	Variables	(Males= 400)		(Females= 10)	
		Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)
Age	18 – 27	68	17.0	2	20.0
	28 – 37	91	22.8	4	40.0
	38 – 47	141	35.3	3	30.0
	48 – 57	100	25.0	1	10.0
Religion	Christianity	197	49.3	4	40.0
	Islam	105	26.3	3	30.0
	African Tradition	64	16.0	1	10.0
	Others	34	8.5	2	20.0
Education level	Primary education	26	6.5	1	10.0
	Secondary education	86	21.5	2	20.0
	Tertiary education	191	47.8	5	50.0
	Others	97	24.3	2	20.0
Relationship status	Unmarried	66	16.5	2	20.0
	Dating	99	24.8	3	30.0
	Cohabiting	68	17.0	3	30.0
	Married	130	32.5	1	10.0
	Others	37	9.3	1	10.0

Source: Field survey, 2022.

As shown in Table 2, the survey respondents were both male (n=400) and female (n=10). The male respondents for the study were largely within the age range of 38 – 47 years, (i.e., 35.3%), and were mostly Christians (49.3%); however, 26.3% indicated that they are Muslims, while 8.5% indicated belonging to other faiths such as Eckankar and Agnostic religion. Most of the male respondents, i.e., 47.8%, have tertiary education, and only 32.5% were married at the time of the study. The female participants selected for the In-Depth Interview, on the other hand, were mostly between the age of 28 – 37 years. Furthermore, 49.3% were Christians, while 26.3% were Muslims. While 47.8% have attained tertiary education, 24.3% have post-Graduate degrees and other professional qualifications. Also, 32.5% indicated that they were married, 24.8% were dating, 17.0% were cohabiting, and the remaining 9.3% of the respondents were either divorced or separated at the time of the study.

Reasons women give for having liposuction and BBL procedures

On the reasons women give for having cosmetic surgeries such as BBL, analysis of data from the In-Depth Interviews revealed four (4) themes, namely:

- 1) Liposuction and BBL are done to improve their beauty and appearance: Some of the interview participants mentioned that the reason for having a procedure was to improve their beauty and appearance. For instance, some of the participants explained that:

"I have always wanted a slimmer midriff, and when the opportunity presented itself, I had to go in for it. However, besides from working on my tummy and waist, I firmed up my, you know... backside... (smiles)" (Omolara, Lagos State, Female, 35 yrs.).

Another participant from Rivers State expressed that:

“This cosmetic thing gives women an opportunity to look better. For instance, this is my third procedure. First, I did a pointed nose, then I had my waist and tummy reshaped., and I can tell I look more attractive now... I feel more alluring” (Boma, Rivers State, Female, 33 yrs.).

- 2) Liposuction and BBL are done to correct perceived physiological flaws: The interviews also revealed that some women had liposuctions and BBL simply to correct perceived bodily flaws. Below is an illustrative account of one of the participants:

“It is true that many people do these surgeries to look prettier; but for me, it wasn’t so. I had tried losing fat through exercise and it wasn’t working. Even though I was attractive to many, I still felt flawed. So, I had to go for a body modification and all the excess fat was moved to my behind” (Jasmine, FCT-Abuja, Female, 43 yrs.).

- 3) Liposuction and BBL are done to improve social networks: Some of the participants also explained that they had liposuction and BBL procedures largely to enhance their social network, including getting certain jobs and fitting into certain social roles. For instance, one of the participants opined that:

“As a social media influencer and a model, there are certain jobs that come to you and you need to fully fit into the physical and social characteristics required. I sell certain products online, such as enhancement products, cosmetics and all that. So, I had to look prim for the representative role (sic)” (Kafayat, Kano State, Female, 38 yrs.).

- 4) Liposuction and BBL are done to meet intimate partner’s needs: Asides from the earlier reasons identified, some

participants also noted that women sometimes do cosmetic surgeries, including BBL, to please their intimate partners. For instance, one of the participants specified that:

“Actually, it is my fiancé that suggested I go for surgery. He preferred me more noticeable in certain places... laughs... so he convinced me to (sic)” (Bintu, Lagos State, Female, 27 yrs.).

Subjective ratings of psychosocial outcomes of liposuction and BBL cosmetic procedures

The survey also examined the psychosocial outcomes of liposuction and BBL cosmetic procedures on women. Thematic analysis of qualitative data from the study revealed two (2) key observations which illustrates how respondents feel about their cosmetic surgery:

- (1) Some women are satisfied with the outcomes of the procedure as it has helped them gain self-esteem, social confidence, and improvement in sexual relationships. For instance, some of the participants noted that:

“I am actually glad that I did the surgery. It was scary at first, but I feel wonderful today. I feel more positively treated by my social circle. When I walk into a place, I’m more confident” (Temidayo, Kano State, Female, 37 yrs.).

“The procedures can be costly and scary, but the outcomes are satisfactory. Women should do what makes them feel good. That is how I feel...” (smiles) (Nkechi, Rivers State, Female, 40 yrs.).

“Post-surgery, I always felt insecure among my peers. I first experimented with enhancement drugs, they didn’t do much, until I tried this. You can see me now... (chuckles)... So, it is quite rewarding. I appear graceful now (sic)” (Belema, FCT-Abuja, Female, 26 yrs.).

(2) However, some others expressed that whereas the cosmetic surgeries were successful, they still felt dissatisfied with the new body or realized that the procedure did not make them exceptional:

“Well, I won’t deny I felt good at first. But at a point I started feeling off... like strange; as if I am different. Sometimes I even feel people mock me for having a surgery; like all the love and admiration are fake... you get? (sic)” (Delight, Abuja, Female, 32 yrs.).

“My intention was to look younger and more, you know, attractive. However, I feel I am yet to get there. If I had the resources, I would do some more. I feel I’ve not gotten the exact looks that I wanted” (Blessing, Lagos State, 49 yrs.).

Perception of men about women having cosmetic surgeries (e.g., BBL)

Table 3: Do you approve of such body beautifying surgeries (e.g., BBL)?

Variables (Age.)	Yes	%	No	%	Maybe	%	Total
18 - 27	11	2.8	49	12.3	8	2.0	68
28 - 37	14	3.5	66	16.5	11	2.8	91
38 - 47	14	3.5	118	29.5	9	2.3	141
48 - 57	8	2.0	86	21.5	6	1.5	100
Total	47	11.8	319	79.8	34	8.5	400

Source: Field survey, 2022.

In line with the aim of the study to assess the impact of liposuction and BBL on

courtship behavior, the survey also examined the perception of men about women who have had such body beautifying surgeries. As shown in Table 3, a majority of the respondents, i.e., 79.8%, indicated that they do not approve of such body beautifying procedures including liposuction and BBL. Only 8.5% were indifferent while 11.8% indicated that they approve of cosmetic surgeries. This goes to show that more men do not approve of cosmetic surgeries, even though it is desirable for some.

Table 4: Do you consider women who have had such surgeries prettier than women with a natural body?

Variables (Age.)	Yes	%	No	%	Maybe	%	Total
18 – 27	9	2.3	50	12.5	9	2.3	68
28 – 37	11	2.8	70	17.5	10	2.5	91
38 – 47	9	2.3	120	30.0	12	3.0	141
48 – 57	9	2.3	75	18.8	16	4.0	100
Total	38	9.5	315	78.8	47	11.8	400

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Similarly, a majority of the respondent also indicated that they do not consider women that have had such body beautifying surgeries prettier than women who retain their natural bodies (see Table 4). Only 9.5% of the respondents indicated that they consider women that have had surgeries prettier, while the remaining 11.8% of the respondents were indifferent. This again reveals that more men are not particularly keen on cosmetic surgeries, except in life-threatening situations.

Table 5: Such cosmetic body modifications will make a woman appear artificial or unnatural

Variables (Age.)	SD	%	D	%	N	%	A	%	SA	%	Total
18 - 27	5	1.3	9	2.3	6	1.5	18	4.5	30	7.5	68
28 - 37	8	2.0	9	2.3	11	2.8	24	6.0	39	9.8	91
38 - 47	9	2.3	8	2.0	11	2.8	53	13.3	60	15.0	141
48 - 57	7	1.8	8	2.0	8	2.0	33	8.3	44	11.0	100
Total	29	7.3	34	8.5	36	9.0	128	32.0	173	43.3	400

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Furthermore, in Table 5, 43.3% of the respondents strongly agree that cosmetic surgeries such as liposuction and BBL done to beautify the body only make the recipient appear artificial or unnatural. Another 32.0% equally agreed while 9.0% were indifferent. Only 7.3% and 8.5% strongly disagree and disagree respectively.

Assessment of how men feel about dating women that have had their bodies modified

On how men feel about dating/courting women that have their body modified, 46.0% and 28.0% of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively that whereas cosmetic surgeries in totally an individual choice, they would prefer their partner(s) without such body modifications. Only 9.5% strongly disagree alongside another 8.3% that equally disagree (see Table 6).

Table 6: While cosmetic surgery is a choice, I prefer my partner without such body modifications

Variables (Rel.)	SD	%	D	%	N	%	A	%	SA	%	Total
Unmarried	7	1.8	7	1.8	6	1.5	17	4.3	29	7.3	66
Dating	10	2.5	8	2.0	6	1.5	22	5.5	53	13.3	99
Cohabiting	6	1.5	9	2.3	5	1.3	18	4.5	30	7.5	68
Married	12	3.0	6	1.5	12	3.0	45	11.3	55	13.8	130
Others	3	0.8	3	0.8	4	1.0	10	2.5	17	4.3	37
Total	38	9.5	33	8.3	33	8.3	112	28.0	184	46.0	400

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Table 7: How do you feel about dating women who have had such cosmetic surgeries?

Variables (Rel. Status)	C	%	SC	%	N	%	Un	%	VU	%	Total
Unmarried	8	2.0	6	1.5	11	2.8	26	6.5	15	3.8	66
Dating	9	2.3	12	3.0	12	3.0	47	11.8	19	4.8	99
Cohabiting	9	2.3	8	2.0	8	2.0	28	7.0	15	3.8	68
Married	11	2.8	10	2.5	8	2.0	54	13.5	47	11.8	130
Others	5	1.3	3	0.8	5	1.3	16	4.0	8	2.0	37
Total	42	10.5	39	9.8	44	11.0	171	42.8	104	26.0	400

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Furthermore, 42.8% of the respondents indicated that they feel uncomfortable (Un) dating women that have had such cosmetic surgeries. Another 26.0% indicated they feel very uncomfortable (VU); however, 10.5% indicated that they are comfortable (C) dating a woman that has had cosmetic surgery, while 9.8% noted that they are somewhat comfortable (SC).

The survey also reveals in Figure 1 that some men see women that are interested in or have had liposuction or BBL cosmetic surgeries as lacking self-esteem (43.0%), having low self-worth (27.8%), and not contented with their natural bodies (19.5%). However, some of the respondents are of the opinion that cosmetic surgery is a private choice (4.5%), and women are free to improve their beauty (5.3%).

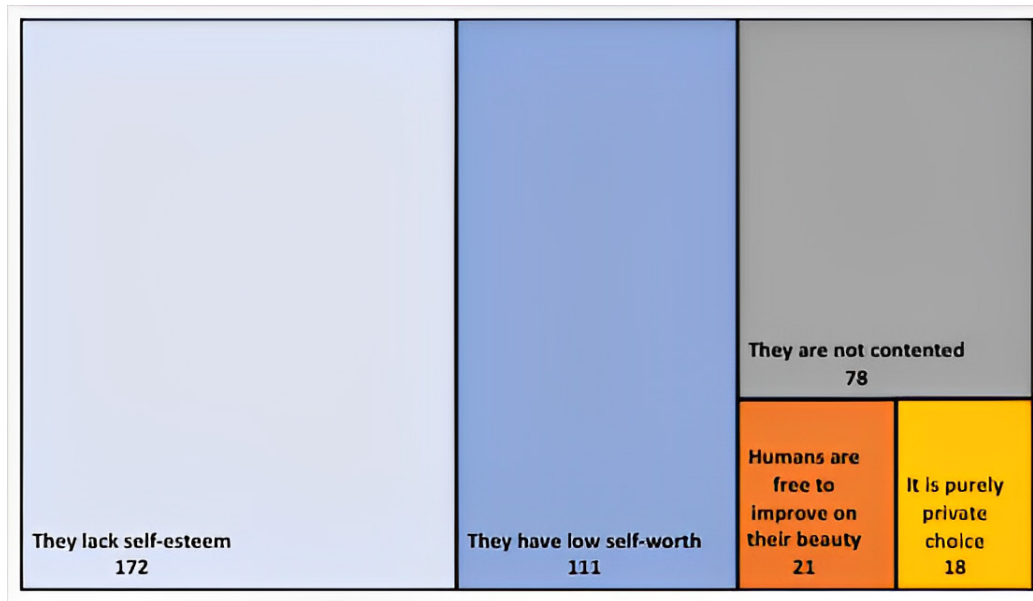


Figure 1: Opinion on women opting for surgeries. Source: Field survey, 2022.

Impact of cosmetic surgery (e.g., Liposuction, BBL) on courtship behavior

Table 8: Do you think this new trend in body beautification may be objectifying women as sex symbols?

Variables (Edu. level)	Yes	%	No	%	Maybe	%	Total
Primary	16	4.0	5	1.3	5	1.3	26
Secondary	61	15.3	13	3.3	12	3.0	86
Tertiary	159	39.8	19	4.8	13	3.3	191
Others	77	19.3	11	2.8	9	2.3	97
Total	313	78.3	48	12.0	39	9.8	400

Source: Field survey, 2022.

On how liposuction and BBL may be impacting courtship behavior, the survey, in Table 8, shows that 78.3% of the respondents indicated yes that the new trend in cosmetic surgeries contributes to the objectifying of women as sex symbols, 12.0% indicated no, while the remaining 9.8% were indifferent.

Table 9 also show that while some of the respondents strongly disagree (11.8%) and disagree (14.5%), 45.0% and 22.0% of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively that whereas men may find women who have had cosmetic body surgeries attractive, they would not consider them for a committed relationship (including marriage).

Table 9: Men may find women who have had body surgeries attractive, but would not consider them for a committed relationship (e.g., Marriage)

Variables (Age)	SD	%	D	%	N	%	A	%	SA	%	Total
18 - 27	10	2.5	11	2.8	6	1.5	12	3.0	29	7.3	68
28 - 37	11	2.8	13	3.3	5	1.3	19	4.8	43	10.8	91
38 - 47	13	3.3	19	4.8	8	2.0	34	8.5	67	16.8	141
48 - 57	13	3.3	15	3.8	8	2.0	23	5.8	41	10.3	100
Total	47	11.8	58	14.5	27	6.8	88	22.0	180	45.0	400

Source: Field survey, 2022.

From the results, it can be seen that the predisposing factors for liposuction and BBL procedures for women include improving beauty and appearance, correction of perceived physiological flaws, improving their social network, need to access certain social roles and jobs, and the need to satisfy the desires of an intimate partner. This finding correlates with observations in the works of Nikolic, *et al* (2013) and Brown, *et al* (2007) that factors predicting the likelihood of demand for aesthetic and unnecessary (non-indicated) cosmetic surgery include poor self-evaluation of measures of beauty and attractiveness, desire to feel more feminine, self-esteem and social acceptance issues, etc. Similarly, Sharp (2008) noted that body dissatisfaction largely contributes to motivation for cosmetic surgeries, while Slevac and Tiggemann (2010) observed that the need to meet social standards of beauty, ageing anxiety and media influence constitutes attitudes toward cosmetic surgery in middle-aged women: body image, ageing anxiety, and the media. The survey also shows that on the psychosocial outcomes of liposuction and BBL cosmetic procedures, some women indicated that they were satisfied with the outcomes of the procedure as it has boosted their self-esteem, social confidence, and sexual relationships. This is also consistent with the findings of studies such as Sharp (2018) and Brown, *et al* (2007) which noted that women largely indicated satisfaction with their procedures. However, as Agullo, Palladino and Sozer (2011) found, some women also expressed dissatisfaction with their new body on realization that the procedure did not make them exceptional.

On the perception of men about cosmetic surgeries and courtship behavior, the survey reveals that whereas some men were disposed to cosmetic surgery, a majority of the respondents indicated that they do not approve of such body beautifying procedures including liposuction and BBL.

The survey also shows that most men agree that liposuction and BBL done to beautify the body only make the recipient appear artificial or unnatural, and they would prefer their partners without cosmetic surgery. A publication by Hindustan Times (2014) equally noted that most men express a preference for natural beauty even though some are attracted to women with cosmetic modifications. Additionally, findings of this study reveal that most men see women that are interested in or have had liposuction and BBL cosmetic surgeries as lacking self-esteem, having low self-worth, and not content with their natural bodies. In comparison, previous studies by Sharp (2018) and Vartanian (2012) equally reveal a relationship between self-discrepancies in women and the preference for cosmetic surgery. Interestingly, the study also shows that liposuction and BBL surgeries impact how men perceive women and the objectification of women as sex symbols. Above all, most men agree that whereas men may find women who have had cosmetic body surgeries attractive, they would not consider them for a committed relationship (including marriage). While different studies have shown similar correlations, studies by Sun (2018) particularly affirm that materialism, self-objectification, and capitalization of sexual attractiveness were significantly positively correlated with cosmetic surgery consideration. This is observed in this study to equally contribute to men seeing women mainly as sex symbols and less fit for committed relationships.

The outcomes of this study find meaning in the Self Discrepancy Theory and the Theory of Value which in adjunct explains how the value people place on their appearance kindles the need to seek body modification surgeries, as well as how society perceives the modification of what is deemed valuable. The Self Discrepancy Theory, as developed by Edward Tory Higgins in 1987, illustrates how internal disagreement and awareness

of one's appearance flaws causes emotional and psychological disorders. For Higgins (1989), the theory provides a basis for assessing how the discrepancies between self-beliefs or self-state representation are related to different kinds of human emotional vulnerabilities and the tendency to seek a camouflage to conceal perceived flaws. Self-discrepancies play an important role in the context of body image (Rodgers & Rousseau, 2022; Heidarzadeh, *et al*, 2019; Maroiu & Maricutoiu, 2017; Vartanian, 2012), and can also have implications for appearance-related behaviors including body dysmorphic disorder (Heidarzadeh, *et al*, 2019; Sharp, 2018; Phillips, *et al*, 2010).

This means that a perceived discrepancy in the real and ideal acts as a stimulus for one to pursue fixing or changing their physical appearance in an attempt to reach their goal of an ideal appearance. The Theory of Value, on the other hand, is concerned with the nature of goodness in general and the processes that determine the value of things. Commonly used in philosophy, economics and sociology, the theory provides the rationale for understanding how, why, and to what degree humans value things and how this perception of 'value' influences choices, acceptance, investments, or satisfaction. The theory can be traced to the works of early scholars such as Thomas Aquinas, Carl Menger, Eugen von Boehm-Bawerk, and other economists and thinkers of the 19th century (New World Encyclopedia, 2020; Hurka, 2010), as a way to explain the concept of 'worth' in the society. Within philosophy, the concept of value is studied in axiology as ethics or what is morally good, while in early Economic thought, it was considered to be synonymous with "importance". In sociology, value refers to the intangible qualities of what is accepted and endorsed by society as good, worthwhile or beneficial. As an abstract noun, 'value' indicates goodness, desirability, or worth. Funk (1999)

noted that value is that property of a thing (either intrinsic to it or ascribed to it by someone) that makes it worthy of realizing or, by extension to the negative, worthy of avoiding or eliminating. How society determines 'value' and the degree to which the perception of value influences human behavior remains in the purview of social research. Funk (1999) and Anderson (1993) in their works have argued that value is created by its relation to what is considered original, real or useful. In this work, the Value Theory is used to explain how society traditionally defines what is desirable about womanhood, and how cosmetic surgeries and body modifications might be affecting these ideals. If the society perceives what is modified as counterfeited or substandard, or at least false, the question then is, will it elicit the same acceptance as what is considered real or valued?

Conclusion

Courtship behavior is a key component of human social behavior and plays a key role in mate selection and marriage. In courtship behavior, humans, especially males, define and find a mate, and thereafter proceed into behavioral rituals that end in intimacy and other levels of commitment. Courtship is the traditional dating period before engagement and marriage (Community Research and Development Information Service, 2017; Acitelli, *et al*, 2001). Courtship in humans, although similar to that of other animals and directed at the same goals, is largely molded by societal values and ideals commonly thought of in terms of custom rather than instinct. As such, courtship behavior or the human mating process encompasses the social and cultural processes that define how a person assesses the suitability of the opposite sex for intimate relationships and marriage. In recent times, and with the new trends in body modification, body shape and

appearance are highly considered criteria in mate selection and courtship. While many men are likely to be attracted to a perfectly shaped cosmetic body, some studies have noted that some men may be averse to artificial beauty and cosmetic surgery (Epie, 2019; Hindustan Times, 2014).

According to findings of this study, whereas women have different psychosocial reasons for opting for cosmetic surgery (especially liposuction or BBL), this new trend unintentionally impacts the perception of men about women and courtship behavior. Except in life-threatening situations, most men, as shown in this study, indicate a strong preference for women without cosmetic surgeries. Understanding this correlation and its implications for society, marriage, and intimate relationships is especially beneficial for women who have body image issues and are considering cosmetic surgery. This study emphasizes that beyond the health implications of cosmetic surgeries, there are varying social implications which departs from previously known information as demonstrated in many studies. As a result, this study recommends that the association of experts in the field of cosmetic surgery should be encouraged to regularly notify the public of the implications and ramifications of cosmetic surgeries beyond the allure on social media. Also, there is a need to introduce psychological screening in the procedures for cosmetic surgeries in Nigeria. This will help women address some psychosocial issues that prompt women in Nigeria to opt for body beautifying procedures.

Acknowledgments

The author thank the research team for their assistance and diligence throughout all aspects of this study.

Declaration of Ownership

This article is my original work.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

Ethical Clearance

This study adhered strictly to all ethical considerations as recommended by Nigeria's National Code of Health Research (NCHR) and the Helsinki Declaration of 1964, which governs the handling of participants in human-related research.

References

- Acitelli, L. K., Kenny, D. A., & Weiner, D. (2001). The importance of similarity and understanding of partners' marital ideals to relationship satisfaction. *Personal Relationships, 8*(2), 167-185.
- Agullo, F. J., Palladino, H., & Sozer, S. O. (2011). Complications of liposuction. In Serdev, N. (Ed.). *Advanced techniques in liposuction and fat transfer. Intech Open*. <https://doi.org/10.5772/24271>
- American Society of Plastic Surgeons. (2018). *Plastic surgery statistics report*. <https://www.plasticsurgery.org/documents/News/Statistics/2018/plastic-surgery-statistics-full-report-2018.pdf>
- American Society of Plastic Surgeons. (2020). *Plastic surgery statistics*. <https://www.plasticsurgery.org/news/plastic-surgery-statistics>
- American Society of Plastic Surgeons. (2021). *What are the risks of liposuction?* <https://www.plasticsurgery.org/cosmetic-procedures/liposuction/safety>
- Anderson, E. (1993). *Value in ethics and economics*. Harvard University Press.

- Bizot, O. (2021). *The BBL surgery 'that only the Kardashians could have' becomes dangerous TikTok trend*. <https://observers.france24.com/en/americas/20211105-brazilian-butt-lift-tiktok-surgery-trend>
- Brackett, K. P. (2016). *Mate selection*. *Wiley online library*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781119085621.wbefs314>
- Brinkhoff, T. (2017). *Nigeria: States and agglomerations*. www.citypopulation.de/Nigeria-Agglos.html
- Brown, A., Furnham, A., Glanville, L., & Swami, V. (2007). Factors that affect the likelihood of undergoing cosmetic surgery. *Aesthet Surg J*, 27, 501–508.
- Climan, A. (2022). *What is BBL surgery? Reasons why people do it*. <https://www.verywellhealth.com/brazilian-butt-lift-purpose-5085904>
- Community Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS). (2017). *"New evidence that humans choose their partners through assortative mating"*. *Biology. Phys.org*. <https://phys.org/news/2017-01-evidence-humans-partners-assortative.html>
- Funk, K. (1999). *Technology and Christian values. Value*. Available at <https://web.engr.oregonstate.edu/~funkk/Technology/value.html>
- Garcia, P. (2014). *'We're officially in the era of the big booty'*, *Vogue*. 09 September. <http://www.vogue.com/1342927/booty-in-pop-culture-jennifer-lopez-iggy-azalea/>
- Grand View Research. (2022). *Liposuction surgery devices market size, share & trends analysis report by product type (Portable, Standalone), By Technology (LAL, UAL, PAL, WAL), By Region, And Segment Forecasts, 2022–2030*. <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/liposuction-surgery-devices-market>
- Heidarzadeh, A., Shahmohammadipour, P., Azzizadeh, F. M., Dehghan, M., & Khorasani, Z. (2019). Body image, self-esteem, and psychological problems among applicants and non-applicants of cosmetic surgery. *PCP*, 7(1), 33-42. <http://jpcp.uswr.ac.ir/article-1-490-en.html>
- Higgins, T. (1989). Self-discrepancy theory: What patterns of self-beliefs cause people to suffer? *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 22, 93-136. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60306-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60306-8)
- Hindustan Times. (2014). *Most men like natural beauty but how natural is it?* <https://www.hindustantimes.com/sex-and-relationships/most-men-like-natural-beauty-but-how-natural-is-it/story-28A7k12G5qKMszYqFXuJ0M.html>
- Hurka, T. (2010). Asymmetries in value. *Noûs*, 44, 199–223.
- International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. (2021). *ISAPS international survey on aesthetic/cosmetic procedures performed in 2020* https://www.isaps.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ISAPS-Global-Survey_2020.pdf
- John Hopkins. (2019). *Cosmetic plastic surgery procedure*. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/treatment-tests-and-therapies/cosmetic-plastic-surgery-overview>
- Kita, N. (2020). *The risks & rewards of plastic surgery: The decision to undergo plastic surgery should not be made lightly*. <https://www.verywellhealth.com/risks-rewards-of-plastic-surgery-2710195>
- Kumar, S. (2022). *The rise and fall of BBL*. Shift London. <https://www.shiftlondon.org/features/the-end-of-an-era-the-bbl/>
- Madar, P. (2016). The era of the 'booty' and the 'burqa'. *Researching Sociology*. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/82291>
- Maroiu, C., & Maricutoiu, L. P. (2017). Self-discrepancies. In Zeigler-Hill V., Shackelford T. (eds). *Encyclopedia of*

- personality and individual differences*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_1503-1
- McCarthy, N. (2021). *The most common plastic surgery procedures worldwide*. <https://www.statista.com/chart/25322/plastic-surgery-procedures-by-type/>
- Michas, F (2022) *Cosmetic surgery - statistics & facts*. https://www.statista.com/topics/3734/cosmetic-surgery/#topicHeader__wrapper
- Moeller-Medical. (2019). *Why is liposuction the second most popular cosmetic surgery?* <https://www.moeller-medical.com/blog/why-is-liposuction-the-second-most-popular-cosmetic-surgery/>
- New World Encyclopedia Value. (2020). *New world encyclopedia*. https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Value,_Philosophical_theories_of&oldid=1036244.
- Nikolic, J., Janjic, Z., Marinkovic, M., Petrovic, J., & Bozic, T. (2013). Psychosocial characteristics and motivational factors in woman seeking cosmetic breast augmentation surgery. *Vojnosanitetski Pregled*, 70, 940–946.
- Prince, A. J. (1961). Factors in mate selection. *The Family Life Coordinator*, 10(3), 55–58. <https://doi.org/10.2307/581478>
- Rodgers, R. F., & Rousseau, A. (2022). Social media and body image: Modulating effects of social identities and user characteristics, *Body Image*, 41, 284-291. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2022.02.009>
- Sharp, A. C. (2018). *The relationship between body dissatisfaction and cosmetic enhancement surgery*. Dissertation. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/5455/>
- Slevec, J., & Tiggemann, M. (2010). Attitudes toward cosmetic surgery in middle-aged women: Body image, aging anxiety, and the media. *Psychol Women Quart*, 34(1), 65-74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2009.01542.x>
- Stephan, P. J., Dauwe, P., & Kenkel, J. (2018). Liposuction: A comprehensive review of techniques and safety. In Peter, R. J., & Neligan, P.C. (eds). *Plastic surgery (Volume 2): Aesthetic surgery*. 4th ed. Elsevier.
- Sun, Q. (2018). Materialism, self-objectification, and capitalization of sexual attractiveness increase young Chinese women's willingness to consider cosmetic surgery. *Front. Psychol*, 9, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02002>
- Swami, V. (2009). Body appreciation, media influence, and weight status predict consideration of cosmetic surgery among female undergraduates. *Body Image*, 6(4), 315-317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2009.07.001>
- Tabin, E. M. (2022). *The popular BBL is getting a major makeover*. <https://aedit.com/aedition/skinny-bbl-overview>
- The Guardian. (2022). *Cosmetic surgeries account for great percentage of medical tourism*. The Guardian Nigeria. <https://guardian.ng/appointments/cosmetic-surgeries-account-for-great-percentage-of-medical-tourism/>
- This Day. (2021). *Nigeria is Africa's plastic surgery hub. Says Pheoby*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/08/17/nigeria-is-africas-plastic-surgery-hub-says-pheoby/>
- Valina, G., & Sessa, A. (2020). Current trends of cosmetic surgical procedures with the general cosmetic surgery fellowships by the American academy of cosmetic surgery. *The American Journal of Cosmetic Surgery*, 37(1), 5–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0748806819852014>
- Vartanian, L. R. (2012). Self-discrepancy theory and body image. In T. F. Cash (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of body image and human appearance*. Elsevier Academic Press.