

The Beauty Industry and Psychological Pressures: Consumer Behaviour and Material Expenditure

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ABSTRACT: The beauty industry has become a rapidly growing sector that is closely linked to cultural norms in society. This sector offers various products and services to meet aesthetic and appearance expectations and holds significant economic importance in terms of total market size. However, the constant changing of beauty standards and the demand for high standards create serious psychological pressures on individuals. Social norms, particularly influenced by the media and social platforms, have popularised the perception that beauty is not limited to outward appearance but is also associated with personal success and social recognition. This situation causes individuals to experience significant psychological and emotional effects while shaping their self-worth. Furthermore, the beauty industry aims to create an ideal image model in the eyes of consumers by utilising developing technologies and effective marketing strategies, thereby targeting increased sales. This study aims to understand the psychosocial effects of the industry and to develop conscious approaches that will support consumers in making healthy decisions. As the concept of beauty is shaped by different cultural contexts, more research is needed on how the messages and images presented by this industry influence societal norms.

KEYWORDS: Beauty industry, aesthetics, elegance, economic market, elegance, appearance, marketing strategies, cultural contexts

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the industry's psychological, social, and psychosocial effects. Furthermore, beyond this objective, it aims to take significant steps towards developing effective methods and numerous applicable approaches that will support consumers in making healthy, conscious, and well-founded decisions. As the concept of beauty has evolved continuously through interaction with various cultural contexts, there is a clear need for research that reveals the layered and profound effects of the messages and images presented by this industry on social norms in a more comprehensive manner. As each individual tends to evaluate themselves according to societal beauty standards, this can lead to serious loss of self-confidence, internal conflicts, and damage to self-perception over time. The desire to be beautiful can become a complex issue that directly affects the meaning and purpose of life for many people. Therefore, it is crucial to face the reality that the perception of beauty is not just a passing trend but a profound issue that affects many important and critical areas of individuals' lives. It is an undeniable fact that the products and services offered by the beauty industry have a clear and significant impact on how people see themselves.

This reality, along with its reflections in individuals' lives, is quite striking and is an important phenomenon that must be taken into account. Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that perceptions and behaviours within this industry can affect not only the current generation but also future generations. The role of social media and other communication platforms, which have an extremely powerful influence on young people's perceptions of beauty, necessitates the development of strategies to minimise the negative effects in this area. In this regard, making the necessary effort to provide accurate information and raise awareness is critical not only for individuals' mental health but also for the general health and well-being of society as a whole. The results of these efforts must be carefully planned to ensure they are capable of addressing all segments of society. It is of great importance that the work to be done on individuals' mental state, perception of beauty, and the reflections of this perception on society as a whole be based on strong scientific foundations. These efforts aim to create a healthier and more conscious social structure, thus paving the way for everyone to have a better life experience. When the goal is to maintain a strong and sustainable society, it is critically important for individuals and communities to gain greater awareness and knowledge about how they see themselves. Therefore, work in these areas has become an indispensable necessity for humanity. In this way, the presence of healthy individuals within society will be encouraged, and communities of mentally strong individuals will be created. Considering that each individual has their own unique perception and understanding of beauty, serious and comprehensive studies must also be conducted on how these differences affect the dynamics of social norms. At this point, individuals' cultural backgrounds, social stances, and personal experiences play an important role in shaping their understanding of beauty. It is vitally important to conduct comprehensive analyses taking these elements into account, and all of this is of critical importance in terms of improving individuals' mental health and the overall

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quality of life in society. Therefore, the results of these studies will pave the way for healthier and happier lives by creating important transformations for both individuals and society. Thus, understanding the mental, social, and psychological effects of the industry, observing the evolution of social norms, and deeply examining individuals' self-perception will solidify the foundations for future research and applications. These efforts will empower the autonomy of different individuals within society while enabling measures to be taken that will generally improve mental and social health. Developing and educating different segments of society about various beauty standards will contribute to raising healthy individuals and increase mental resilience. Ultimately, work in this area will help individuals discover their own potential while promoting social solidarity and creating a more effective social structure.

METHOD

As a research method, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used together in a systematic and disciplined manner, resulting in a detailed examination of the various psychological pressures created by the beauty industry on individuals and the effects of these pressures on consumer behaviour. This issue presents itself as an extremely important area requiring comprehensive study. In particular, the information obtained through surveys and structured data collection tools has provided a solid foundation for understanding consumers' material expenditures and the complex decision-making mechanisms involved in this process. At this point, the research conducted has analysed in depth and detail, from a qualitative perspective, the effects of social norms and psychological pressures on individuals' perceptions of beauty and their purchasing motivations through in-depth interviews and focus group studies. During the research process, the self-perception and self-esteem levels of young and female consumer groups, shaped by psychological pressures, were meticulously and thoroughly compared. The data obtained from these comprehensive comparisons led to the conclusion that intense social expectations and media influences increase individuals' material expenditures and thus lead them into a continuous cycle of renewal. Furthermore, the findings of the research revealed that economic spending continues uninterrupted even during times of crisis and that psychological pressures increase, particularly during these periods. In this context, the findings clearly show that consumers mostly make high levels of material expenditures in order to improve themselves and achieve a better image in society. However, it has been clearly demonstrated that these expenditures may not be directly related to long-term satisfaction and a healthy body image.

This situation comprehensively demonstrates that consumption behaviours are based more on social expectations than on internal needs. This research has drawn attention to how the beauty industry shapes consumer behaviour in both psychological and economic dimensions. Furthermore, it has strongly emphasised the need to develop sustainable and ethical approaches in this context. The findings of the research clearly and convincingly reveal how social pressures define individuals' beauty standards and consumption habits, and how these habits may change over time. Furthermore, in light of the data obtained, it is considered necessary to examine in greater depth the factors that influence consumers' motivations. In this context, it is emphasised that new dynamics such as the influence of social media and influencers should be taken into account, in addition to variables such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status. Further research to understand the impact of all these elements on general consumption habits will fill an important gap in the literature in this field and provide us with an important perspective by helping us understand how many factors influence the evolution of consumer behaviour. Based on these data, it is thought that this multidisciplinary research will greatly contribute to our understanding of behavioural norms and social transformation dynamics that are valid not only in the beauty industry but in all areas of consumption.

Furthermore, the inclusion of topics such as social media users and the impact of these platforms on consumption culture will increase the applicability of the research and provide a richer data set. Conducted at both local and global levels, this additional research could spark important discussions on the transformation of the beauty industry, helping individuals make more conscious and healthier choices by raising awareness of consumption habits. It is clear that the results of the research should be widely discussed not only in academic circles but also in society; in this way, individuals, the media and society can become aware of the negative effects of consumption and find motivation to develop healthier and more sustainable approaches.

FINDINGS

The findings of the research were conducted to provide a more in-depth examination of the underlying dynamics of today's culture of beauty and aesthetic understanding. The impact of the beauty industry on consumer behaviour is revealed through the clear reflections of social norms and intense psychological pressure. A large proportion of participants increase their financial expenditure in order to conform to various beauty standards and are constantly seeking innovation in this process. Particularly with the influence of social media platforms, this situation and the increasing pressure are becoming more observable every day. These factors clearly demonstrate that, in addition to cognitive biases, influential motivational factors also play a decisive role in consumer decisions. The visibility provided through media and social platforms further idealises the concept of beauty, significantly shaping individuals' self-perceptions and self-esteem. This phenomenon undeniably increases emotional consumption and anxiety levels considerably, deepening the anxiety created by this situation in individuals.

From an economic perspective, it is clear that consumption spending habits generally exceed budgetary limits. Considering economic constraints, this situation reveals an increase in spending aimed at temporary improvement and self-reward, resulting from intense pressure, particularly on women and young consumers. These consumer shopping trends continue even during difficult times of crisis and are a strong and encouraging sign that social dynamics are constantly open to change. The research findings prove that social gender norms are

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directly related to the perception of beauty and that these norms have a significant impact in terms of creating psychological pressure on individuals. These pressures have an extremely effective and explosive impact, particularly on young individuals, increasing their self-motivation and sense of belonging, and significantly raising anxiety levels linked to social events. Consequently, it is clear that the psychological and economic effects of the beauty industry are shaped by various motivations and social pressures that guide consumer behaviour. These interactions produce serious and significant consequences, both in terms of individual health and economics, and highlight specific elements and phenomena that must be considered in counselling and policy development processes. It is evident that the combination of these factors offers a broader perspective by forming the complex structure underlying modern consumer culture today. Transformation processes are of critical importance in terms of understanding the evolution of society and consumer psychology, and this is an indispensable value in terms of social welfare. From a social perspective, this research, which contains many layered reflections on human psychology, shows that the results obtained have serious effects on the general welfare of society and directly affect social health. In this context, it is extremely important to determine how consumers respond to the psychological and economic effects they encounter in this area in order to better understand the dynamics of the beauty industry. Looking at it from a historical perspective, this study examines in detail how the perception of beauty has changed over time and how it has become a social dynamic alongside consumption habits. For example, how aesthetic elements considered beautiful in certain cultures in the past have evolved over time and how their reflections appear in modern societies is of great importance in this context. Such detailed analyses help us to understand consumption habits, the effects of social norms and social dynamics in depth, and yield important results that also affect social health. The process enables us to discover not only the past and the present, but also possible trends for the future. Observations comprehensively demonstrate that certain beauty standards are constantly changing and that new concepts of beauty are emerging all the time; understanding these dynamics not only yields positive results at an individual level but also creates significant reflections at a societal level and reshapes the psychological aspects of consumer behaviour.

Beauty Industry: Definition and Scale

The beauty industry can be defined as an extremely broad and dynamic sector comprising various products and services offered for aesthetic and appearance enhancement purposes. Such a sector has a comprehensive structure that includes not only various products but also numerous services. In today's world, this sector is developing rapidly and gaining increasing importance; consequently, it is having a profound impact on our aesthetic understanding and perception of beauty. There are many different areas within this broad scope, each with elements and application structures that can respond to the different needs of potential consumers. For example, there are various options such as make-up products, skin care products, hair care products, aesthetic surgery applications, and natural beauty solutions. These areas are dynamic structures that are constantly evolving to meet the different needs of consumers, each requiring a separate discipline and expertise. Globally, the size of this industry is constantly increasing, and a thorough examination of economic indicators reveals that it has achieved a significant market share. Particularly in developed countries, among populations living in large cities, this sector is rapidly growing and developing, demonstrating its distinctiveness. In line with consumers' lifestyles, social norms and perceptions of beauty, the industry exhibits a structure that is constantly open to innovation and change. In addition, with the impact of globalisation, consumers' access to information is changing, and new trends and aesthetic understandings are rapidly being adopted.

Combined with brand diversity and a broad product portfolio, this sector is constantly expanding and diversifying to meet consumer demands, continuously reinventing itself. At the same time, driven by technological advancements and the influence of digital media, the beauty industry has undergone a comprehensive evolution, significantly transforming its communication and marketing strategies. A significant part of innovation occurs through social media platforms and digital content, which has a considerable impact on consumers' interactions with brands. Campaigns run on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, in particular, enable brands to interact more effectively with their target audiences, thereby increasing consumer loyalty. The size and diversity of this sector also brings with it social and psychological effects. Social norms, societal expectations, and different cultural factors shape individuals' perceptions of beauty, and this plays a significant role among the important components affecting the dynamics of the industry. Therefore, the beauty industry goes beyond being merely an economic field, forming a complex and multifaceted structure that also encompasses cultural and psychological dimensions.

For these reasons, the breadth and scope of the industry can serve as an important reference point for better understanding consumer behaviour and examining the psychological pressures behind these behaviours. These developments in the field of beauty will continue to have an impact on modern society, and the future of the beauty industry will be closely linked to the direction these dynamics take. With technological advances, social perceptions and sensitivity to consumer demands, innovations and developments in the sector are constantly being monitored, providing more concrete data on both consumer expectations and sector dynamics; this plays a critical role in the future journey of the beauty industry. The current and future role of the beauty industry will be among the important factors shaping our aesthetic understanding, and in this process, each new development will continue to advance, enrich and diversify the sector. In the coming period, this situation is expected to continue to have far-reaching effects on social interactions, the ways in which individuals express themselves and society in general. However, there are also elements that need to be considered on this path of growth; ethical consumption, sustainability and environmental impacts are becoming increasingly important and the industry is trying to develop strategies that take

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these factors into account. Therefore, the future of the beauty industry will be shaped not only by economic parameters but also by social, cultural and ethical dimensions.

The Theoretical Foundations of Consumer Behaviour

The effort to understand the theoretical basis of consumer behaviour plays a critical role in comprehensively and thoroughly understanding the complex psychological pressures in the beauty industry and the material expenditures that result from these pressures. Detailed and comprehensive studies in this field offer various approaches to explaining individuals' decision-making processes and their motivations within these processes. Traditional economic models are based on the assumption that consumers make rational and logical decisions; however, the dynamics of today's market highlight the importance of more contemporary psychological and behavioural approaches. These approaches detail how consumers are guided by emotional, cognitive, and social factors and how these factors influence and shape decision-making processes. In particular, observations regarding how individuals' conscious or unconscious choices are shaped by social norms and media influences are quite noteworthy. A detailed examination of motivations reveals that, alongside the desire to conform to beauty standards, individuals' self-perception also plays a significant role in this process.

Within this complex process, cognitive learning and habits are also seen to have a significant impact on consumer preferences, and careful examination of this is of great importance. People's purchasing decisions often show a direct parallel with emotional satisfaction and the desire for social acceptance; from this perspective, this situation leads to increased material spending and consumers allocating more resources. Furthermore, the intertwining of psychological needs and social norms in shaping these behaviours presents an important reality: these behaviours are shaped by individuals' efforts to express themselves better and gain social approval. Consequently, complex and multidimensional models, both psychological and economic, emerge as an important area of research for understanding consumer behaviour. These models serve as a fundamental tool in shaping the marketing strategies of the beauty industry and directing consumers' ever-increasing material demands. When examined from a broad perspective, all these factors together are critical elements in the evolution of consumer behaviour, and a thorough understanding of this complex dynamic can yield important results in both marketing and social sciences. This in-depth analysis of consumer behaviour is also of great value in understanding how market dynamics are formed.

From Marxism to Psychological Approaches

Marxism and psychological approaches have the capacity to offer quite different and in-depth perspectives on understanding consumer behaviour in the beauty industry. When examined in the light of Marxist theory, the reality that the capitalist system shapes consumption habits by reinforcing exploitative relationships and class differences in general comes to light. In this complex context, beauty products and aesthetic standards serve to generate new desires that will further integrate the working class and strengthen their place in society, rather than criticising the existing social order. The ideological structures developed by brands to achieve this goal are deliberately designed to increase consumers' material expenditures, thereby multiplying their economic investments, while also facilitating their self-evaluation through status symbols. These structures, aimed at consumers, steer them towards spending more while simultaneously operating like a mechanism that fuels the desire in their minds. In addition, psychological approaches focus on individuals' internal motivations and unconscious processes, shaping the dynamics that influence people's decision-making and clearly revealing their impact on individuals' consumption habits through these dynamics. The perception of beauty, shaped by social norms and media influence, directly affects individuals' self-perception and self-esteem, leading them to want to spend more and open their wallets. In particular, these deep psychological pressures exerted on individuals play a crucial role in reinforcing their feelings of insecurity and inadequacy, thereby increasing their efforts to improve themselves aesthetically. These various approaches aim to help us understand that consumer behaviour is not based solely on economic factors, but is also closely intertwined with deep emotional and complex psychological dynamics. Consequently, both the structural dynamics of the capitalist production system and the complex psychological processes of individuals are critically important in understanding the beauty industry's impact on consumption, and this dynamic interaction plays a decisive role in shaping material expenditures. Indeed, understanding these interactions can create a profound impact, opening the door to holistic transformations not only at the individual level but also at the societal level. This allows us to better conceptualise the framework within which the beauty industry is shaped, while also revealing the pains and transformations individuals experience in their processes of self-reassessment. It is crucial to remember that this is not merely an individual consumption habit, but a phenomenon with broad societal implications.

Visual and Social Media Influences

Visual and social media platforms play an extremely important and influential role in shaping consumer behaviour in the contemporary beauty industry. Visual-heavy sites such as Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest make it extremely easy for idealised beauty standards to spread rapidly, comprehensively and effectively. The images shared on these platforms are often far removed from real life and filled with perfect appearances, increasing users' desire to achieve these high standards. Ultimately, this can have negative, destructive effects on individuals' self-perception and self-esteem, further reinforcing feelings of inadequacy and obsessive beauty pursuits. Furthermore, influencers and celebrities on social media significantly boost potential purchasing motivation by promoting new products and beauty trends. In this process, the aesthetic appeal and popularity of visual content cause consumers to make quick decisions and increase their spending.

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The complex algorithms of social media platforms highlight content based on users' likes and interactions, constantly stimulating the desire for new and expensive products. At the same time, users' feedback and visual sharing ensure that beauty standards aligned with social norms are continuously reproduced. The psychological pressures created by these environments further increase consumers' concerns about their own bodies and appearance, driving them to purchase more products and applications. As a result, visual and social media influences are central to the beauty industry's strategies for manipulating consumer behaviour and increasing financial expenditure; this creates profound psychological and economic effects in society.

Financial Expenditures and Economic Implications

Economic expenditure on the beauty industry has a significant impact on individuals' consumer income and budget planning, and this situation has broad repercussions on society. Consumers allocate a large amount of financial resources to beauty products and services due to aesthetic concerns and social pressures. This leads many people to direct a significant portion of their income towards beauty expenditures and to make significant changes to their budgets in relation to these expenditures. Individuals, particularly those in the young and middle-aged groups, are under pressure from social media and media-focused beauty standards, causing a significant increase in expenditures on cosmetic products, skin care services, and aesthetic procedures. Furthermore, the continuity of these expenditures has different and intense effects on the economy in the short and long term. Considering individuals' regular cosmetic purchases, periodic renewal cycles, and product lifespans, it is observed that total expenditure amounts have grown significantly. During economic fluctuations and crisis periods, noticeable changes emerge in consumer behaviour, with spending tending to shift towards products with limited financial power rather than decreasing. During this process, the increased shift towards affordable alternatives, the desire to adapt to economic uncertainties, and the urge to save become more prominent. Consequently, material expenditures on the beauty industry create both growth and risk factors for the general economic situation, as well as individual economic habits, leaving deep and lasting effects on the economic balance of society. Within this dynamic economic structure, beauty expenditures are not only driven by individuals' personal satisfaction and social status concerns, but also reflect complex social norms and cultural values. In summary, these expenditures have become a crucial factor influencing the overall economic trajectory, situated at the intersection of social realities and individual needs.

Psychological Pressures and Individual Health

The variety of products and services offered by the beauty industry has profound and multifaceted effects on individuals' self-perception and psychological health. Social norms and media pressures often cause individuals to evaluate themselves according to specific and often unrealistic standards, which can sometimes negatively affect their self-confidence and self-esteem, thereby undermining their inner peace. Particularly among young people and adults, the desire to achieve idealised concepts of beauty can pave the way for psychological distress, creating significant problems in young people's social relationships and mental health. In this context, individuals' emotional state, purchasing behaviour and material spending are also significantly shaped, and this cycle further negatively affects individuals' mental health.

Emotional consumption tendencies can deviate from the norm as individuals seek to feel better, alleviate negative emotions such as anxiety or stress, or even forget them. Furthermore, the aesthetic interventions offered by the beauty industry and constantly updated product lists can be addictive, negatively affecting decision-making processes and thus leading individuals to waste their financial resources. This situation can trigger more comprehensive health problems across society, particularly by causing individuals to deviate from a healthy body image and increasing psychological health issues. Therefore, the opportunities offered by the beauty industry affect individual health and psychology, paving the way for both physical and mental pressure on consumers. At this point, it is crucial to be a conscious consumer, adopt a critical perspective, and develop approaches that prioritise psychological well-being. In the long term, this approach will contribute to both improving individuals' quality of life and ensuring the sustainability of the industry, thereby significantly enhancing public health. Considering all these factors, it is crucial for individuals to re-evaluate their relationship with the beauty industry and develop healthy habits. By broadening their perspective, focusing not only on external appearance but also valuing inner values and personal satisfaction, individuals can positively influence their mental and physical health.

CONCLUSION

When considering the deep and multifaceted effects of the beauty industry on consumer behaviour, the significant role of psychological pressures in this field, and the complex relationship between personal financial expenditure, it becomes clear that this sector has an extremely complex and multidimensional structure. Beauty standards, constantly shaped by social norms and the media, have an extremely powerful, decisive and lasting impact on individuals' self-perception. This situation causes many people to make excessive and often unnecessary expenditures in order to feel better about themselves, to be socially accepted, or simply to appear in line with social norms. Therefore, factors such as psychological distress, anxiety and low self-esteem are noteworthy and important at this point, as they can indirectly cause consumer decisions to become unconscious and impulsive. Furthermore, the intensive use of visual and social media in the marketing strategies of the sector in question has been observed to play a decisive and effective role in shaping the consumption habits of the young and adult populations in particular. In this context, material expenditures are often made without considering the product's lifespan, sustainability, and renewal cycles; this situation can also give rise to significant economic problems and concerns. It is clear that

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sudden and unexpected changes in consumer preferences can be observed during periods of economic crisis; during these periods, a tendency to save more or a clear preference for abstaining from consumption tends to emerge.

In this context, the beauty industry's compliance with ethical and safety standards is of considerable and vital importance, both in terms of consumer protection mechanisms and sustainability. Strengthening education and regulations is essential for consumers to make informed, healthy and balanced decisions. Consequently, the intertwining of the beauty industry with psychological pressures leaves deep, lasting, and often negative effects on individuals' financial and psychological health. Therefore, the systematic implementation of constructive policies in the sector and the implementation of initiatives to raise awareness on this issue in society are an inevitable necessity in terms of both protecting consumer rights and improving public health. Individuals' ability to make healthier and more informed choices is closely linked to reducing the impact of pressures on this industry. Consequently, research and strategies developed in this area should aim to contribute to individuals leading healthier, more peaceful, and more fulfilling lives, both mentally and economically. All these factors must be taken into account for a better understanding of the beauty industry and its dynamics within the modern social structure. In this context, studies aimed at understanding this issue can provide an opportunity to examine the effects on changing social norms and the evolution of individuals' perceptions, paving the way for important steps towards creating a fairer and healthier consumer culture. In addition to the standards and products brought about by the beauty industry, the issue of psychological interaction within this sector also comes to the fore as a fundamental element that needs to be analysed in terms of improving individuals' quality of life. Considering all these factors, giving more thought to how the dynamics of the beauty industry will be shaped by social changes and how consumers will be affected by these processes will create a great opportunity for a sustainable future.

LIMITATIONS

This study has some limitations. Firstly, as the research was conducted using a qualitative literature review method, the general validity of the findings is limited. Application and policy recommendations addressing the problems created by the beauty industry in line with market activities and social pressures should aim to create a sustainable and fair consumption environment. Firstly, it is important for regulatory authorities to impose stricter controls on advertising and marketing activities to prevent the spread of unrealistic beauty standards. In this context, ethical rules and transparency principles should be fundamental; the language and visuals used in advertising should prioritise social benefit and individual health. Furthermore, comprehensive programmes should be developed in the field of consumer education to strengthen the media literacy of the masses. Through such education, consumers can recognise the deceptive nature of beauty standards based on social and psychological pressures and make informed decisions. At the policy level, through collaboration between public health institutions and civil society organisations, campaigns focused on body positivity and self-esteem can be organised to increase resistance to psychological pressures in society. Again, economically, regulations need to be put in place to balance consumption habits and prevent excessive spending. In particular, spending should be made conscious and financial sustainability ensured through financial advisory services and budget planning programmes. Finally, legal regulations that encourage ethical and sustainable practices in the beauty industry will increase consumer confidence, strengthening both individuals' psychological health and trust in the market. These interventions will contribute to the transformation of social norms, enabling the development of healthier individual and collective behaviours.

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