



Analysis of Personality Traits of Applicants for Cosmetic Surgery

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ABSTRACT

Performing cosmetic surgery on body members, especially on face and mostly on nose, is globally widespread and thus rhinoplasty is commonly practiced in all societies and nations. Each year ten thousands of individuals undergo cosmetic surgery in order to enhance the appearance of their bodies. The objective of this study was to study the personality traits of people who had applied for cosmetic surgery. The sample included 50 participants: 25 applicants for cosmetic surgery and 25 ordinary individuals. All the individuals were examined by NEO personality inventory. The data were analyzed by employing the independent t-test method. The results obtained from the study indicated that applicants for cosmetic surgery do not differ from normal people in characteristics associated with neurosis, desirability, extraversion, and conscientiousness. The results obtained from this research showed a significant difference between the flexibility of the two groups. That is to say, the flexibility of candidates for cosmetic surgery was higher than that of the ordinary people. In sum, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the personality characteristics of these individuals and the ordinary ones.

Keywords: Cosmetic surgery, NEO inventory, Personality trait.

INTRODUCTION

A realistic and accurate mental image is necessary for living a healthy and satisfactory life and coexisting with others. If a person has good feelings about their body, they can more possibly have a positive physical image as well. However, sometimes stress, anxiety, self-critical views, and a low-level of self-worth can change the feeling of a person about their body [1]. This is the reason why many people change their appearance and subject themselves to plastic surgery. People with physical underdevelopment may have an unrealistic image of their bodies and may consider themselves to be inferior to others or think of themselves as poor and incapable creatures. This mental image gradually affects their minds and causes the development of many disorders. This issue is more critical in the adolescence. Adolescents are more concerned with their bodies and pay special attention to their body members. Therefore, physical changes may worry them and they may experience disorders in dealing with such changes [2].

Performing cosmetic surgery on body members, especially on face and mostly on nose, is globally widespread and thus rhinoplasty is commonly practiced in all societies and nations [3]. Each year ten thousands of individuals undergo cosmetic surgery in order to enhance the appearance of their bodies. For instance, in the 1994 report of the American Society for Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery it was stated that the members of this society had undergone more than 390,000 cosmetic operations including liposuction [removal of fat from different parts of the body), breast augmentation, rhinoplasty, and rhytidectomy [3]. In 1997, a study conducted in United States indicated that 56% of women and 43% of men are dissatisfied with their appearance. Moreover, based on the report of the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, the rate of cosmetic operations performed during 1997 to 1999 was increased by 119% in 1999 reaching 4.5 million operations [4]. According to statistics for 2010, Iran hosts the highest rate of rhinoplasty in the world. Based on the available statistics, the practice of rhinoplasty is reducing throughout the world while other resurfacing operations are more increasingly performed. Nevertheless, Iran still has the highest level of applicants for rhinoplasty [5].

One study reported a significant level of mental disorder in such individuals. In this study, people were diagnosed with at least one psychological disorder the most prevalent of which being depression, neurosis, and aggressive-passive personality disorder [6]. Another study carried out by MMPI showed no mental disorder in 50 candidates for rhytidectomy. In addition, clinical profiles (MMPI) of 10 candidates for breast augmentation as well

as the findings of the studies performed on applicants for rhinoplasty were consistent with the aforementioned findings [7]. In an analysis of applicants for rhinoplasty performed by the short form of MMPI test it was indicated that underdeveloped personality, tendency toward isolation and misanthropy, and having difficulties in mutual relations are more common in such individuals [7]. Furthermore, the results obtained from another study carried out by the MMPI-PD test method showed that the narcissistic personality pattern is the most prominent personality trait of candidates for cosmetic surgery [8]. According to Dishman et al. [9], there is a strong and positive relationship between physical image and self-esteem while there is an average inverse relationship between self-esteem and symptoms of depression. Another study indicated that individuals with significant signs of physical image disorder showed a higher level of depression, stress, and anxiety and the rate of suicide was higher among them [10].

Based on the results of the study carried out by Husseini et al. [11] there is no significant difference between the stress of people who experience and people who do not experience cosmetic surgery. Findings of the study conducted by Witacker [12] on the level of depression, anxiety, and physical image of people who had undergone cosmetic surgery showed that they do not significantly differ from ordinary people in these aspects. The results of the research conducted by Alkhader [13] indicated that there is a relation between negative self-assessment, disturbance, general health condition, and especially depression.

Dehqan by the study of the personality traits of patients that had experienced rhinoplasty indicated that these individuals are more extrovert than the others. However, they do not differ from ordinary people in desirability and flexibility [14]. Zojaji et al. [15] studied mental abnormalities in patients seeking rhinoplasty and indicated all patients undergoing rhinoplasty had a personality trait abnormality.

Hypothesis:

First hypothesis: Individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of neurosis.

Second hypotheses: Individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of extraversion.

Third hypothesis: Individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of flexibility.

Forth hypothesis: Individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of desirability.

Fifth hypothesis: Individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of conscientiousness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a cross sectional casual-comparative research. The statistical population for this research included all the individuals who had visited Shiraz surgeons for cosmetic surgery. The sample included 50 participants: 25 ordinary people and 25 individuals who had experienced cosmetic surgery. The samples were selected from the clients of Dr. Sarikhani and Dr. Khosravinezhad offices and Alavi and Farahmand hospitals using the convenience sampling method. Ordinary people who satisfied the criteria for education, age and sex were also selected from the clients of these centers and companies of the patients. All the samples answered the personality characteristics questionnaire .

The revised version of NEO personality inventory (NEO_PI_R) measures five personality factors and six of the characteristics of each factor. These two aspects of the test, that is its five primary factors and thirty characteristics, provide the means for comprehensive analysis of the personality of the adult [16]. Reliability and sustainability of the test (NEO_PI_R) in various countries including Norway, Canada, Spain and Italy has been examined. Haqshenas [17] and Garousi [16] are the two researchers that have performed this test in Iran. NEO personality inventory provides a very good level of internal consistency and reliability in re-examination. Internal consistency coefficient is 86-92% in the scope scale and 56-81% in dimensional scale. The recent study of clinical standing patients suggested that in a 6-month period the re-examination reliability coefficient for the scope marks was 76-84%. Haqshenas [17] also performed this test and standardization procedures on a group of Iranian residents of Shiraz city. His study showed that alpha coefficients for different scales were between 71 to 76%. The guide to the revised version of NEO personality inventory provides evidence that confirm the validity of this test. The reliability of the test performed in Iran was also confirmed [17].

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics: Fifty participants were analyzed in this research. This population included 25 ordinary people and 25 applicants for cosmetic surgery. 23 of the participants that had applied for cosmetic surgery were female and 2 of them were male. The ordinary group consisted of 21 women and 4 men. The participants fell into the 19 to 34 age range. 64% of all the participants had 19 to 23 years of age, 28% had 24 to 28 years of age, and 8% of them had 29 to 34 years of age. All the participants had academic degrees or were studying in academies. The chief results of the research are presented in this section. Table 1-5 show the results

of the t-test and a significant level of neurosis, extroversion, flexibility, openness and conscientiousness in the two groups under study.

Table 1. Results of the t-test and a significant level of neurosis in the two groups under study

Index	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
cosmetic surgery	25	96.98	20.01	48	0.23	0.81
Ordinary	25	95.76	18.43			

Table 2. Results of the t-test and a significant level of extroversion in the two groups under study

Index	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
cosmetic surgery	25	115.68	17.15	48	-1.12	0.27
Ordinary	25	110.04	17.85			

Table 3. Results of the t-test and a significant level of flexibility in the two groups under study

Index	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
cosmetic surgery	25	113.52	14.43	48	-2.64	0.013
Ordinary	25	104.28	11.65			

Table 4. Results of the t-test and a significant level of openness in the two groups under study

Index	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
cosmetic surgery	25	113.28	13.76	48	0.31	0.75
Ordinary	25	111.96	14.95			

Table 5. Results of the t-test and a significant level of conscientiousness in the two groups under study

Index	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
cosmetic surgery	25	15.58	3.11	48	0.11	0.90
Ordinary	25	18.58	3.71			

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis assumes that individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of neurosis. Based on the data presented in Table 1, no difference was found in the neurosis of applicants for cosmetic surgery and ordinary people. Therefore, this hypothesis was not confirmed. The results obtained for the first hypothesis of this research are consistent with the results of the study carried out by Mac Kenny, Waltier, and Abedini Araki [18], who showed that the personality characteristics of ordinary people and people that undergo cosmetic surgery are not different. The results of this study are also in line with the results of the research performed by Witacker [12], who reported that ordinary people and people that undergo cosmetic surgery do not differ with regard to the signs of depression and anxiety. These results are also consistent with the results of the study conducted by Zojaji et al. [15]. In addition, these results are also consistent with those obtained by Husseini et al [11] who showed that the level of stress in the applicant for cosmetic surgery does not differ from that of ordinary people.

The second hypothesis of this research assumes that individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of extraversion. According to the findings presented in Table 2, no significant difference was seen between the extraversion of the members of these two groups. The findings of the present study are not consistent with the findings of Dehqan [14] who indicated that applicants for cosmetic surgery are extrovert.

The third hypothesis of this study assumes that individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of flexibility. This hypothesis is confirmed by the data presented in Table 3. Hence, it can be said the members of these two groups have varying levels of flexibility. Nevertheless, the mean value of the group consisting of the applicants for cosmetic surgery was higher than that of the ordinary group. This suggests that candidates for cosmetic surgery show more negative and positive feelings, openness, and conservativeness than the ordinary participants. However, the findings of this research regarding this hypothesis are not consistent with the findings of Dehqan [14], who reported that the flexibility of the applicants for cosmetic surgery does not differ from that of ordinary people.

The fourth hypothesis of this study, which assumes that individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of desirability, is not confirmed. The results of this study are consistent with the results of the study conducted by Dehqan [14], who indicated that applicants for cosmetic surgery and ordinary people are different in terms of desirability.

The fifth hypothesis of this study assumes that individuals who undergo cosmetic surgery and individuals who do not are significantly different in terms of conscientiousness. In this study no significant difference was

seen in the characteristics of these two groups. Therefore, this hypothesis is also rejected. However, this hypothesis is in line with the study of Husseini et al [11].

According to the obtained results it can be said that applicants for cosmetic surgery do not significantly differ from ordinary people except for their level of flexibility. That is to say, these people show more flexibility and conservativeness than ordinary people in everyday life. They also try to experience new things through their lives. In sum, the findings of the present study are only consistent with the results of a few of the researches carried out using the NEO personality inventory. That is to say, all these findings suggest that there is no significant characteristic difference between the applicants for cosmetic surgery and ordinary people and that these individuals do not suffer from any certain psychological disorders.

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