Photo Filter Lived Experiences of Early Adult Females with Facial Enhancement

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the reasons behind the use of facial enhancement procedures by young adult women, their experiences with them, and the effects they had on their self-esteem and self-image. A qualitative methodology was applied, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon. The thematic analysis of data was used in transcribing participant responses, coding, coming up with themes, going over themes, and writing up the findings. The study revealed that participants expressed themselves or represented their feelings or moods at the time through the use of photo filters. These edited images were shared on social media, where participants would get likes, comments, and other responses that created overwhelming feelings of contentment and joy. Participants' use of photo filters was influenced by social media, motivated by their careers and finances, by their desire to be more visible, and by their sense of self-worth. The results of the study showed that participants' self-esteem and self-image were improved by photo filters. Their self-perception and sense of self-worth were altered by the way photo filters improved their appearance. Photo filters also reinforced their positive self-perception. Remarkably, three of the four participants said they knew what looked good on them and that they intended to get facial enhancements in the future. Overall, the study indicates that young adult women's self-esteem and self-image may benefit from the use of photo filters. The results emphasize how crucial it is to take into account how social media and cultural influences shape ideals of beauty and body image.

Keywords: photo-filters, enhancement, positive self-perception, self-esteem, self-image, self-worth,

INTRODUCTION

Almost all messaging and social media apps have integrated photo filters as one of the core features of their platforms. A photo filter is a software feature that changes the appearance of an image by changing the colors, brightness, contrast, tones, textures, and adding special effects to a photo ("Image filter," n.d.). Popular apps such as Messenger, Instagram, and Snapchat were the first social media platforms to introduce photo filters which are now widely used by many people around the world. Before, filters consisted of just tone and color changes, but with the introduction of augmented reality, people can now add accessories, makeup, and costumes.

Augmented reality (AR) uses technology to superimpose sounds, text, and graphics on the world we see through our smartphone cameras (Emspak, 2018). AR was first used in the scientific community for virtual education and space exploration. It was later used in video games like Pokémon Go and Ingress, where people can immerse themselves in a virtual world of catching monsters or going on quests. Social media apps then picked up the technology for their camera features. People are now able to add moving graphics, floating text, and interactive costumes to their pictures. More recently, advanced technology was used to add a feature wherein people can now alter their face shape and appearance. The broadness of the jaw, the sharpness of the chin, the slant of the eyes, the shape of the nose, and even the thinness of the face can be changed. This feature makes them unrecognizable in their photos compared to real life because of the drastic changes in their looks.

Photo filters are used by almost all social media users. The most common photos that people apply filters to are selfies. A selfie is "an image taken by oneself using a digital camera especially for posting on social networks ("Selfie," n.d.). Selfies can also be pictures taken with another person or as part of a group (also known as a "group"). Selfies are the most common type of pictures posted on social media. On every social media site, you go to, you will see selfies of famous people, friends, family members, and acquaintances.

As with every new technology, there are setbacks to the popular use of photo filters. Even though social media has many benefits like enabling connectedness and making communication easier, it also reveals people's focus on their appearance. The use of social media often leads to an obsession with physical appearance, and people who are obsessed often participate or engage in appearance-related photo activities (Cohen, Newton-John, & Slater, 2017). In these activities, these people want to look their best while doing things or will often post pictures of themselves pretending to do an activity but in reality, are just posting a selfie for "likes." They apply filters to enhance their appearance to make everything seem perfect. People could also have concerns about their appearance, which in turn will lead to a lowered body image and self-esteem (de Vries, Peter, Nikken, & de Graaf, 2014).

Self-image is "the idea, conception, or mental image one has of oneself ("Self-image," n.d.)." On the other hand, self-esteem is "a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value ("Self-esteem," n.d.)." Because their self-image and self-esteem are affected, they often turn to photo filters to enhance their appearance. They usually edit their photos using color correction, retouching wrinkles and blemishes, and even editing their face or body to appear thinner. But because of the excessive use of filters, a person becomes unrecognizable and looks like a completely different person. This can lead to problems such as body dysmorphia and deception towards other people.

In this study, the researchers explored and investigated the lived experiences of early adult females who use photo filters, the factors why they use these, and the effects of using photo filters on their self-esteem and self-image.

Statement of the Problem

This research explored and investigated the lived experiences, the factors, and the effects of photo filters on the self-esteem and self-image of early adult females with facial enhancement.

More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of early adult females with facial enhancement who use photo filters?

2. What are the factors that led the early adult females with facial enhancement to engage in photo filters?

3. How do photo filters affect the self-esteem and self-image of early adult females with facial enhancement?

Related Literature

Photo Filters

Since 2013, the word "selfie" has been included in the Oxford Dictionary, which defines it as a picture of oneself posted on social media, usually taken with a smartphone or webcam. Users can edit their selfies with photo filters on social media sites like Instagram and Snapchat to highlight their self-presentation. Researchers Hong et al. (2020) examined Instagram posts containing the hashtag "selfies" and discovered that users may edit their appearance to present an idealized version of themselves in order to curate their posted selfies in order to get likes and attention from others. Overuse of photo filters can be deceptive since it modifies one's appearance to conform to socially acceptable ideals. With the advent of social media sites like Instagram, youth communication has changed due to the rise of technology. Users can apply filters to their photos and

videos on Facebook and Snapchat. Users can present an edited version of themselves more easily with the help of filters, which can change colors, add makeup and accessories, and modify facial features.

Younger people are more likely to use these platforms and filters to improve their online presence, according to studies. According to Bakhshi et al. (2015), smartphone users have access to a variety of photo filters that can alter, adjust, or age photos. The study also identified two categories of filter users: amateur photographers who alter their images with bolder effects, and professional photographers who use softer effects for correction. The study found that photos with filters have a higher chance of being viewed and commented on by other users. Vendemia (2019) investigated the relationship between photo filters and feedback and women's self-objectification and body image issues. The study discovered that women's self-objectification is significantly impacted by comments they receive about how they look in selfies. According to Kee (2011), damaging beauty standards are perpetuated by media, including ads, magazine covers, and model images, which causes issues with body image in both men and women. Because of the possible harm that can result from unattainable beauty standards, some countries have thought about regulating the use of retouched photos in the media.

Self-esteem

According to Hill and Denman (2016), self-esteem affects what users post on Instagram. Participants with average self-esteem posted the most provocative photos, while the participants with high self-esteem along with borderline-low self-esteem posted more goofy and filtered photos. Social media has indeed resulted in upward social comparison however, this motivates users to do and be better with their confidence. The upward social comparison does not result in lowered self-esteem; in fact, it results in an improvement in users' social and self-esteem (Hene, 2015). According to Goldstraw and Keegan (2016), it is common knowledge that Instagram is a very popular social media application owned by Facebook. This social media app was already being used most in popular sports and fitness brands. These influencers and fitness coaches use Instagram to advertise their products and services. They also offer inspirational training advice to users. The popular "fitspiration" trend has an impact on young female users' self-esteem. Female users are more inclined to post their photos on social media to inspire others to also do the same. So, there is a positive impact, especially in boosting fellow females' self-esteem and confidence. For Barry and Doucette (2015), taking selfies also has a different effect on personality like narcissism, and self-esteem can be affected by selfies. It may affect how you look at yourself, in which you may feel like you are very perfect. Posting edited selfies can be positive but there is still a negative side. It can boost one's self-esteem and self-confidence, but too much confidence in oneself is harmful, especially when the photos one posts of himself or herself do not look like one's real self.

Borges (2011) focuses on the effects of enhanced photos on teenagers' self-esteem and the transformation of advertisement product evaluation. Adolescents compare themselves to models seen in commercials which are enhanced by computer editing apps to look attractive. The ideal beauty standard to look perfect makes teenagers not satisfied with their bodies and leads to eating disorders or psychological disorders. It can lead to a reduction of self-esteem and has negative effects on self-perception of how attractive they are. This ideal of beauty is impossible to attain for if it was only modified by photo-editing software. Borges' study confirms that enhancing photos increases product purchase intention and willingness to pay. As well as text warning implicating it was "artificial" or the photo was edited, it can eliminate comparison and negative effects on self-esteem.

Pham (2018) stated her own experience with internalization and based her standard on the use of Photoshop. With the rise of technology over time, software began to emerge and changed the way we see reality. Certain alterations of an individual's appearance came in hand which enables people to conform to the standard of beauty. It made it easy and available for people to manipulate their photos by slimming the body, contouring, removing pimples, etc., to perfect one's flaws. Through this concept of photoshopping, adolescents can be affected by the way they see their skin or body causing them to have low self-esteem and eating disorders.

Pham's paper argued that Photoshop among female adolescents leads to varying levels of internalization of beauty standards and body-related issues through social media or social networking sites. The result shows that because of the popularity of social media, photo-based activities have become more and more common.

Female adolescents tend to manipulate their photos before posting it on social media. Like other studies, frequent self-photo manipulation on adolescents is associated with greater body concerns and beauty ideal internalization. The result indicates a fascinating "bi-directional and mutually reinforcing" relationship between photo-related activities on social media and dissatisfaction with Photoshop. The more female adolescents are concerned with their appearance the more they will be likely to manipulate their photos to show a more perfect selfie on social media.

Solomon conducted a study in 2016 that sought to investigate the social media experience of young adult females and the influence of media content. The findings of the study revealed that the commonness of illusive media content influences how females use social media. Being exposed to social media content brought about questions of one's personal and social status and body image issues. The study revealed that the media may contribute to individual experiences of low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction.

Results of the thematic analysis conducted by Chua and Chang (2016) revealed that there is a gap between teenage girls' self-beliefs and perceived peer standards of beauty. Teenage girls often have low self-esteem and insecurity, which are further increased by their quest for peer recognition and social status. They believe that their peers are the basis of their self-esteem, with their peers being their audience and judge. They compare themselves to their peers and this comparison is what shapes their perceptions and presentation of beauty.

However, in a Philippine study conducted by Limjuco and Vasay in 2016, they found out that students from the University of the Immaculate Conception do not give importance to feedback and comments from other people in their Facebook posts. Things and photos that they publish online speak little of their real selves. The students' online activities on Facebook do not influence their self-esteem. This may be different for other countries such as first-world countries like the USA, as too often they are more focused on their physical and social appearances, whereas in the Philippines these are not given that much importance, especially for teenagers.

Self-image

Social comparison is a key element of selfie posting (Briggs, 2014). Briggs conducted a thematic analysis study which revealed that the appraisals of our bodies changed as a result of online interactions with others on social media. He discovered that people objectify their own and other people's bodies in selfies, and social comparisons with hypothetical "ideal" bodies influenced how they evaluated their bodies.

The recent behavioral trend among Social Networking site users is using photo editing applications (Lee, M., & Lee, H., 2019). Edited photos of female users protect themselves from insecurities and have positive feelings toward their bodies. On the negative side, media pressure promotes having a thin body and issues with body satisfaction. Lee and Lee (2019) recommend that edited photos should be "retouched/manipulated" as disclosure texts. Advertisements in Israel, France, and the United Kingdom have been regulated using Photoshop on their models. It was even proposed as a law in France that "photographieretouchée" should be added as a label on their commercials. Lee and Lee stated that using photo filters is an easier and more accessible way to manage one's appearance compared to dieting and cosmetic surgery. An individual may feel more confident and comfortable to meet the expectations of others.

Kleemans, et al (2016) conducted a study that investigated whether Instagram photos hurt the body image of female adolescents. They found out that those with a higher tolerance in social comparison are more vulnerable. Exposure to manipulated Instagram photos leads to lower body satisfaction than non-manipulated photos. The body image of girls with lower tolerance compared to others is equal after exposure to the original or filtered photos. In short, girls with higher tolerance to make social comparisons had the lowest body image, specifically after being exposed to filtered photos. Duffy (2019) examined the relationship between photo editing on social media in general and with individual images and variables of personality. The observer as well as the participants in this study evaluated three of the many photos shared on their Instagram accounts and completed body image, self-perception, and narcissism self-report tests. The result shows that the sample engaged in some photo editing on social media and generally indicated positive body and self-esteem. The result demonstrated that the more people are dissatisfied with their bodies, the more they manipulate their

photos. Editing the specific parts of their body such as faces and stomachs have been associated with their negative feelings about these parts. High reports of body dissatisfaction were hypothesized to be positively correlated with the overall photo editing frequency. Removing or blurring blemishes or skin imperfections was the most frequent editing recorded by the participants. Other editing techniques commonly used were the application of makeup to their photos before posting them online, teeth whitening, and cropping parts of the body out of the photos. The manipulation or editing of their photos became a routine after taking a selfie.

Fox and Vendemia (2016) stated that social media users enact selective self-presentation as they select, edit, and post photographs of themselves such as selfies to social networking sites for an imagined audience. The strong focus of photos on the users' physical appearance, may aggravate established socio-cultural pressures on body image and may result in a tendency to compare one's body with others. This research measured the participants by asking how often they used three approaches to enhance their appearance: first, cropping or cutting parts of themselves out of pictures; using photographic filters; and lastly, using Photoshop or other software or applications for image editing. The researchers explored men's and women's photographic self-presentation and social comparison on social networking sites. In this context, body image and social comparison played an important role as variables.

The findings indicate that by manipulating or editing photos, women make more effort than men to create a socially desirable physical attractiveness online. This behavior was also influenced by negative body image and propensity to social comparison which can allow the participants to restore self-esteem or elicit positive peer feedback. Those who appear to socially compare can feel a need to uphold or meet the beauty standards set by others or achieve the same level of attention as others (e.g., receiving "likes"' on a photo). Women were also affected more negatively than men by checking out attractive pictures of others. Women were already more likely to compare their bodies to others in society and to feel negatively about them, as the objectification theory would have us believe. Women may experience more negative emotions than men due to social expectations surrounding appearance, which may be exacerbated by information that is readily visible on social networking sites, such as comments, likes, or responses to other people's uploaded photos. Fox and Vendemia came to the conclusion that social comparison can be sparked by both the images themselves and the comments that are made in response to them.

Roca (2018) conducted a study in which results show that women think how their physical appearance and body attributes are important in their portrayal of themselves on social media. Women are more concerned about how their physical appearance may get reactions and approval from other people on social media. They also compare their physical appearance to other women. Failing to comply with beauty ideals and getting a low number of 'likes' and positive comments made women feel insecure and ashamed of their bodies. For people especially teenage girls who are exposed and expected to comply with beauty standards, a high self-image is important for their growth and confidence. In an exploratory study conducted by Schedin and Armelius in 2008, they discovered that people with a positive self-image exhibited and expected more positive behaviors from both themselves and others. They also recalled more positive and fewer negative events in their lives and evaluated their lives more positively.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of social comparison has been widely used as a tool to understand how social media-related activities and peer comments or reactions can affect the expectations of individuals regarding their bodies, which may impact their self-esteem and self-image. This theory was proposed by Festinger suggesting individuals evaluate their self and views by comparison. By comparing ourselves to others, we might get the idea that we are not good enough and we look for the next thing: using photo filters to enhance our appearances. People may find assurance and validation of how attractive they are through social media because it is "appearance-focused content" (Chang, 2019).

Conceptual Framework

This study explored and investigated the lived experiences of early adult females with facial enhancement who use photo filters, factors that led them to engage in photo filters, and how the photo filters affected their self-

esteem and self-image. The diagram below shows the flow of the study of early adult females with facial enhancement who use photo filters. Their lived experiences, factors, and effects of photo filters on their self-esteem and self-image.
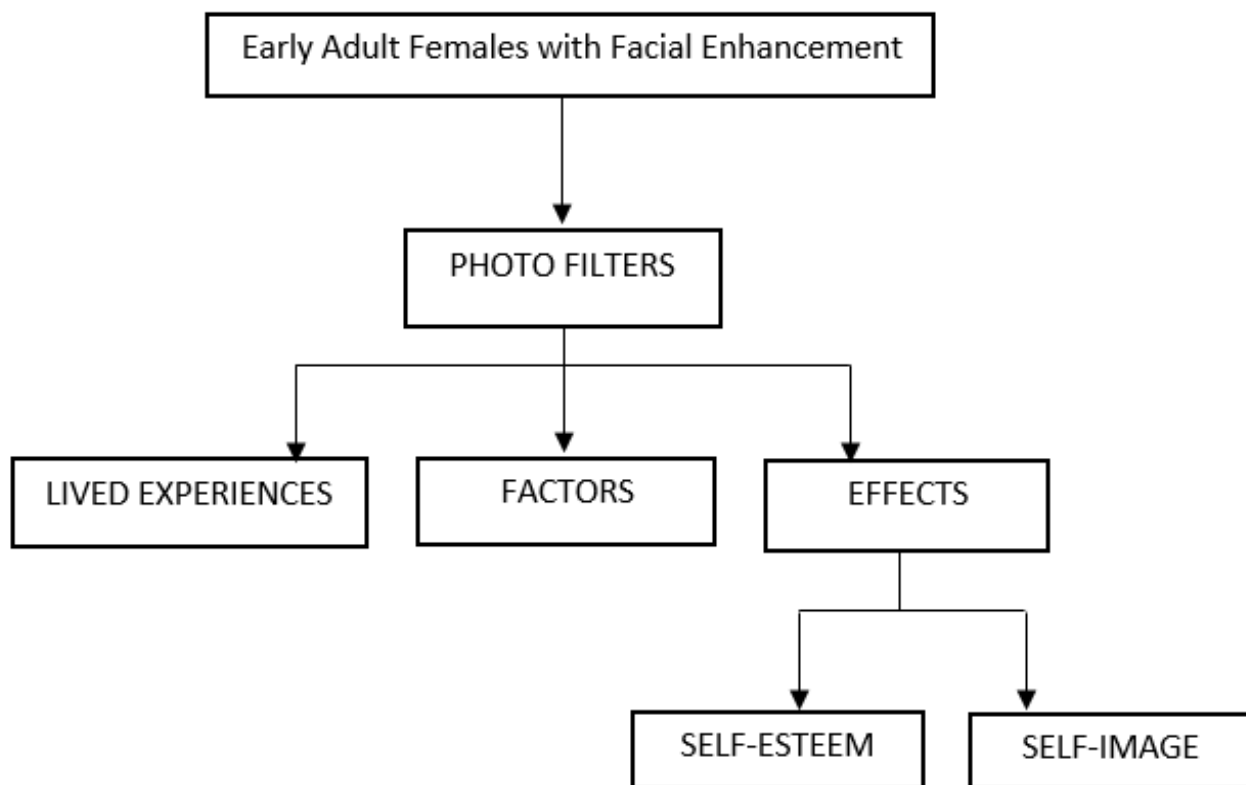
Figure 1. Diagram showing the flow of the study of early adult females with facial enhancement who use photo filters.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method was used in this study specifically the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research design that allowed the researchers to have a detailed examination of a certain phenomenon or lived experiences of the participants which is their photo filter experiences. It also involved the factors that led them to use photo filters and how it affected their self-esteem and self-image. The researchers followed Smith and Osborn's IPA method. Their method consisted of 6 steps: (1) constructing a research question and deciding a sample; (2) collecting data; (3) constructing the interview schedule; (4) interviewing; (5) analysis; and (6) conclusion.

The researchers have selected females with age ranges between 20 and 40 years old. The researchers focused on 4 individuals who used photo filters and have been through facial enhancement procedures, either surgical or non-surgical. Surgical procedures include face lift, nose lift, contour, and fat reduction while non-surgical procedures include eyelash lift/curl, lip pigmentation, top/lower eyeliner, Korean BB glow, Korean BB blush, and Korean glass skin. The following criteria were used in selecting the participants: (a) ages 20-40 years old working women who can afford facial enhancement; (b) with facial enhancement; and (c) female.

The researchers used purposive sampling to select participants who could provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon being studied. It involves a group of individuals who are knowledgeable about or experienced a phenomenon of interest (Palinkas, 2013). It is highly subjective and determined by the qualitative researchers generating the qualifying criteria each participant must meet to be considered for the research study. The researchers studied early adult females who use photo filters in their selfies and have been through facial enhancement procedures either surgical or non-surgical.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What are the experiences of early adult females with facial enhancement who use photo filters?

Validation from Others. The participants used photo filters for validation from others. It involved others' perceptions, multiple reactions, and self-happiness. The opinions of others played important roles for the participants. How others perceive them will likely impact how they treat and view themselves. They became more conscious about their appearances, used filters that were suitable and appreciated by others, and focused more on enhancing facial features based on others' preferences. With the help of photo filters, people can now easily present an idealized version of themselves online in an effort to win over others. According to research by Fox (2017), people present a carefully edited version of their lives on social media sites like Instagram primarily in an attempt to win approval from other people. One important tactic in this process is the use of photo filters, which let users alter their look, mood, and feelings to project a more appealing and appealing online persona. Vendemia (2019) posits that an individual's self-perception can be significantly influenced by the feedback they receive from others on social media, wherein likes and comments function as a means of affirmation and validation. Results revealed that participants' conscious view of others towards them (others perception) was evident in responses like:

"…ano kayang tingin ng ibang tao sakin? Ayun yung nafefeel ko para sa sarili ko na, nacoconscious ako kung anong tingin ng iba…"

"…kapag ikaw babae ka, kapag napupuri ka, sempre, parang nakakataba din ng puso. Na may nakakapansin sayo na ang ganda mo ganyan. Feeling mo talaga ang ano mo, iba yung dating mo talaga nun kapag ganun…"

"…especially sa mata. Uhm, kasi ang sa mga tao ang una nilang tinitignan, kahit ang chaka chaka mo, basta ang ganda ng mata mo…" "… ahm nagfocus ako kasi ano e parang sinasabi kasi ng iba na parang asset ko ngay yung mata ko…"

In addition, posting selfies with filters on is also part of their photo filter use which received positive feedback from others such as comments, likes, and reactions than natural ones. In this way, they feel attractive, happy, and overwhelmed.

"…kapag pinopost ko yun mga ganun sa social media,mas maraming naghaheart, naglalike ganun.." "…ganun. Kapag kunwari uy you look., parang ang ganda mo naman, ganun ganern, pero yun nakakataba ng puso, wow ako maganda? (laugh) parang ganun…"

This can result in a vicious cycle of self-objectification, where people put their outward look before other facets of who they are. According to Roca (2019), using photo filters is also associated with higher levels of body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem, especially in young women. Additionally, the steady barrage of carefully chosen photos on social media can perpetuate negative attitudes toward body image and self-acceptance by creating unattainable beauty standards. Feelings of inauthenticity and a loss of connection to one's actual self can also be exacerbated by the dependence on photo filters as a way to get approval from others. In the end, it's critical to acknowledge the psychological effects of photo filters and the pressure to project an idealized online persona, as well as to advance a culture that prioritizes self-acceptance and authenticity over surface-level approval. By doing this, we can endeavor to develop a more encouraging and welcoming online community that values uniqueness and encourages positive body image.

Photo Filters as a Coping Style and Creative Self-expression. The use of photo filters may help the participants express themselves and represent the moods or feelings they may have at the current moment. Results showed that participants use photo filters as a coping strategy to control their stress and emotions. Kleeman (2018) claims that using photo filters can be a self-soothing technique that helps people momentarily forget about their anxiety and emotional suffering. People can feel more in control and empowered when they edit their photos to show a more idealized version of themselves. This is especially helpful for people who are dealing with issues related to body image or low self-esteem. According to Kleeman's research, using photo filters can also help people process and control their emotions healthily. This is known as emotional regulation.

Photo filters were also used to cover up the things we wanted to hide or the opposite of what we felt. It can also be used to showcase the best version of ourselves to other people. These is evident in the following responses:

"…I guess it's suitable for myself, parang ganun. Yung itsura ko, ganon, bumabagay..." "…Oo naman, I mean, I think not all photo filters enhance your eyes. So, oo…"

"…Kasi minsan, we use photo filters to make people see na, wala kang, ano, alam mo yun, dinadamdam sa buhay mo. Parang, "ahh you look good, you look extra good." Parang wala kang problema no? Ganon. Nasa tao din kung pano nila papaniwalaan yung photo filter na ginamit mo. Pero usually, it's used to cover up something…"

The use of photo filters may help the participants express themselves and represent the moods or feelings they may have at the current moment. However, it was also used to cover up the things we wanted to hide or the opposite of what we felt. It can also be used to showcase the best version of ourselves to other people.

"…For me, it's ano, expression nalang din na meron akong pinapakitang side ko, e. I'm an artist, I'm a make up artist. I do this and I do that, ganun, kaya etoyung gusto ko ipakita…"

"…Para sakin ah kasi since merong katulad nyan na merong grado yung mata ko parang gusto ko may lense din ako, mas gusto ko lense kesa sa, sa glasses ganon…"

Using photo filters to alter and control how one presents themselves can also help people deal with feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability. Furthermore, using photo filters can foster a sense of creative expression and self-expression, which is especially advantageous for people who experience anxiety or depression. Ultimately, photo filters can be used as a complex coping mechanism that gives people a sense of comfort, control, and self-expression, as demonstrated by Kleeman's research. By recognizing the positive psychological effects of photo filters, we can endeavor to advance a more complex comprehension of their function in our lives.

Participants used photo filters for validation from others and as a coping style. Validation from others entails other's perceptions, multiple reactions, and self-happiness. On the other hand, it was used as a coping style such as physical/emotional coping and creative self-expression. According to Manikonda, users of social media platforms such as Instagram which was mainly used by the participants in this study can be a way to express themselves and get more interactions with other people (Myers, 2018) by posting photos on these platforms. By this, they were able to get more likes, comments, and reactions, especially to their photos with filters applied. The participants are likely to become conscious of their appearances and choose what is suitable for them based on other's preferences. Roca (2018) said that women are more concerned about how their appearances may get reactions and approval from other people on social media. In addition, they feel good about themselves, happy, and overwhelmed by how other people appreciate their filtered photos. Collins said that users of photo filters use filters to evoke a certain look that best reflects them (Myers, 2018) which is the same as to our participants' way of expressing themselves. They used specific photo filters to channel or express themselves and represent what they feel at the moment.

What are the factors that led the early adult females with facial enhancement to engage in photo filters?

Influence of Social Media. Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat greatly influenced the participants to engage in photo filters. It brought them urges and interests especially in this modern generation as it offers different kinds of filters that can enhance one's appearance. It is also part of the trend and a lot of people are using it including social media personalities.

"…Ahh, syempre social media influence number one, right? Hence, technology. Ayan, that's when I got interested in photo filters…"

"…Kasi yun yung pinaka sa mga application, parang yun yung pinaka na hook talaga yung mga tao. Syempre the more na mas madaming filters. mas maganda.Tsaka syempre trending din sya,…"

"…Nakikita ko sya kasi sa mga ano, sa mga facebook story or sa instagram story. Mga ganun, parang uy ang ganda netong filter na to ah…"

"…Mas maraming gumagamit ng instagram, usually yun yung ginagamit ko…"

The use of photo filters has been greatly impacted by the widespread use of social media, as many people now rely on them to present a well-curated online persona. Roca (2019) claims that people are under pressure to meet society's standards of beauty due to a culture of visual perfectionism brought on by the constant barrage of idealized and Photoshopped images on social media. Consequently, a lot of people edit their appearance to conform to social norms by using photo filters to attain this perfection. According to Roca's research, social media sites like Instagram—where users frequently compare themselves to others and feel under pressure to present an idealized version of themselves—have a major influence in the continued use of photo filters.

Career and Economic Reasons. The prevalence of photo filters can also be attributed to the influence of career and financial considerations, as people try to project a polished and professional image when interacting with others online. Vendemia (2020) claims that the rise of the gig economy and the significance of social media presence in the job search have increased demand for visually appealing profiles. Many users have enhanced their online personas with photo filters. Furthermore, according to Vendemia's research, photo filters are especially popular among freelancers and entrepreneurs who view them as a means of building credibility and drawing in new customers. Vendemia's claim is evident in the participants' responses below:

"…It saves time and energy, alam mo yon? Like, for me ah, kasi uhm as a make up artist, parang, because it doesn't feel good if you look bad. Alam mo yun. Parang maganda rin ipakita mo sa tao na pati sa sarili mo, magaling ka mag ayos. Parang ganun. So sakin, parang to save all my energy na mag ayoseveryday. Eh, more on lashes lang naman yung problema ko. Gusto ko mataang nag popop up kasewalanamanakong problem saibang part. So ayun yung pinalagay ko. Ayun lang…"

"…Nag ta trabaho ako, tas mag selfie ako, ganyan. Di ko na kailangan mag ayos kasi andun na ka kaagad, eh. I ki click mona lang yun…"

In addition, a lot of people depend on photo filters to make sure their online presence is polished and unified due to the pressure to uphold a consistent brand image across social media platforms. Overall, the impact of economic and professional factors on the use of photo filters emphasizes the important part that visual presentation plays in the current digital era. The participants, particularly those who were employed, valued their time and avoided feeling as though they had to wear makeup every day in order to look nice. Thus, one of the greatest ways to ensure that they look good in pictures while conserving time, energy, money, and effort is to use photo filters.

Increase Physical Presence. The widespread use of photo filters is also a result of the growing desire for social connection and physical presence in the digital age. Fox (2017) asserts that the emergence of virtual communication technologies has resulted in a feeling of detachment and solitude, prompting numerous people to pursue visual methods to restore a sense of closeness and presence. Photo filters and facial enhancement are intended to enhance one's appearance and facial features that is why the participants developed an interest in it:

"…yun nga again sabi ko kanina, hindi lahat ng photo filter in-eenhance yung mata mo. Sometimes it's just the skin or the color of your hair or whatever diba? So, hindi yon. I used photo filter regardless meron akong pilik mata or wala…"

"…Kaya naging interested ako sa photo filters, na e-enhance nya kasi yung appearance ng tao…"

"…Ang pinakahinabol ko din yung sa may cheeks. At tsaka lalo na yung sa eyelash, kasi sa totoo lang wala talaga akong pilik mata…"

They engage in photo filters because they are aware that it can enhance any of their facial features and appearances, especially their flaws or imperfections:

"…Na eenhance yung buong features ng mukha o dahil sa mata…"

"…Kasi..ayun talaga yung gusto ko e like nakakapagpabuhay kasi ng matayung eyelash extension…"

"…Nakakapag pa enhance pa din lalo ng mga itchura natin ganon…" "…Kaya mag filter pa din ako sa mukha…"

Because of this, people are now using photo filters to give their online personas a sense of physical presence and emotional connection. This idea is further supported by Vendemia's research (2020), which reveals that users of photo filters are more likely to report feeling a stronger sense of connection with others online—even when they are not physically there. In general, the impact of physical presence on the utilization of photograph filters highlights the human desire for connection and community in the digital age.

Photo Filters for Satisfaction. Another important factor influencing the use of photo filters is people's desire for self-expression and satisfaction, as they try to present an idealized version of themselves. Photo filters, according to Borges et al. (2017), can be viewed as a type of "digital self-expression," enabling people to showcase a carefully chosen version of themselves that represents their idealized sense of identity. This idea is further supported by Pham's (2018) research, which shows that using photo filters can help one feel more valuable because users report higher levels of body satisfaction and self-esteem. Similar with Pham's results, participants' responses also showed this idea:

"…Lighten ng skin, which is gusto ko naman talaga. Tapos madalas yung coloured eyes…"

"…Na may mga times na gusto mo na yun nalang lagi yung, yun nalang yung gamitin mong camera, na ayaw mo na mag camera na parang normal camera, ganun…"

"…Mag picture picture ka. Ganon. So yung parang pagro routine ganon. Parang kaya nakaka enganyo na mag picture tas masasabayan pa ng yung quality ng camera mo,yung quality nung filter parang pasok na pasok sa selfie mo…"

"…Ah satisfying siyakasi. Syempre lahat naman tayo mga babae parang gusto natin is confident tayo sa sarili natin…"

Furthermore, photo filters can be used to temporarily relieve and satisfy negative emotions like anxiety and depression, according to research by Borges et al. (2017). Overall, the impact of satisfaction on the application of photo filters emphasizes how intricate and varied digital self-presentation is. The participants, who are using photo filters, are happy. By using it, they were able to achieve the looks and attractiveness they had always wanted. They were happy with their level of confidence after achieving their personal goals.

Social media plays a big role in why people use photo filters on their pictures. Since the introduction of various photo filters by Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram, filtered photos have become common in profile pictures, selfies, group pictures, etc. The participants mentioned that it was social media platforms such as Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram that piqued their interest in using photo filters. One participant also mentioned that seeing filters on others' photos made her want to use filters because she thought that the filters used were beautiful. All participants claimed that it was social media photos that influenced them to use photo filters. In a study entitled "Why We Filter Our Photos and How It Impacts Engagement," a reason why people use photo filters is that "filters help users give their photos a fun and unique look that they could not capture through the camera" (Bakhshi, Shamma, and Gilbert, 2014). Because of various effects from photo filters like stickers, makeup, 3D effects, animations, and background effects, people got enticed in using photo filters. The researchers also mentioned that filtered photos often had more views and comments compared to those with no filters applied. This implies that because the photo got the attention of viewers, people felt encouraged to post photos with filters rather than normal photos. For some people like working women, time, energy, and money

are important. Therefore, it is convenient for them to use photo filters when taking selfies as these saves them the energy and time of putting makeup on and saved money since photo filters are free and available on any applications. One participant mentioned that when she took selfies while working, she did not have to put makeup on and let filters do the work for her face. Another participant said that by using photo filters, she did not have to buy makeup and thus saved money in doing so. Another factor is that photo filters can enhance appearance and that one participant's imperfections became perfect. According to Lee, M., & Lee, H., (2019), edited photos of female users protect themselves from insecurities and have positive feelings toward their bodies. Obviously, having photo filters on enhances one's physical appearance. But aside from this, using photo filters also made the participants more aware of their physical looks and made them see the flaws that can be enhanced soon. On the other hand, they are also aware that photo filters enhance their looks and improve their physical imperfections. In an article (Snapchat dysmorphia: Depression, cosmetic surgery and addiction, 2019), a cosmetic surgeon claimed that before, patients used celebrities' faces as references but nowadays, they use their selfies with filters applied to them. They are aware of what they want to change on their faces and know what will look good on their faces. Photo filters give the participants satisfaction as they engage in it. They were able to attain their desired appearances and attractiveness by using it. They achieved what they wanted for themselves and were satisfied with being confident.

How do photo filters affect the self-esteem and self-image of early adult females with facial enhancement?

Photo Filters Enhance Self-esteem and Self-image. It has been discovered that the usage of photo filters significantly affects a person's sense of self-worth and self-image. Briggs and Hill (2017) claim that the capacity to alter and modify one's appearance using photo filters can increase self-esteem because people can showcase a more attractive and self-assured version of themselves. Moreover, applying photo filters can provide people a feeling of empowerment and control over their digital persona, enabling them to create their own online identities. According to Denman's (2018) research, this sense of control can be especially helpful for people who might have trouble with body dissatisfaction or low self-esteem because it gives them a momentary escape from their negative self-perceptions.

"…Syempre nakaka boost ng, ano ng, ayun like kanina, self-esteem ganun, the way I see myself. Both of it nakaka boost siyapero at the same time…"

"…Ayun I feel confident with a heart char, (smile with laugh) nagiging confident ako…" "…100 percent kapag naka filter…"

"…Nakikita mo din yung, uhm, worth mo. Kahit papanokasi, saganungparaan, may mga nakaka appreciate sayo. Ganyan. Yung mgataong nag gi give sayo ng ano, nang comment na parang ang gandamongayon. Mgaganun…"

According to Briggs and Hill (2017), when people feel seen and valued by others, self-esteem can rise as a result of this validation. In addition to offering a sense of escape, photo filters enable users to momentarily put their fears behind them and submerge themselves in a happier online community. According to the research, using photo filters can have a significant impact on a person's self-esteem and self-image by giving them a feeling of empowerment, control, validation, and escape. Denman's research (2018) suggests that this sense of control can be particularly beneficial for individuals who may struggle with body dissatisfaction or low self-esteem, as it provides a way to temporarily escape from negative self-perceptions. Photo filters benefit the participants both in their self-esteem and self-image. It boosted their self-esteem and changed the way they see themselves. By using it, the participants were able to look good and feel confident. They also achieved their desired appearances and attractiveness which in turn made them see their self-worth or value. How the participants judge and evaluate themselves may be affected by photo filters. Whether to self-evaluate to improve themselves or do the things that can enhance their faces or appearances. Photo filters will also give the participants an idea of which ones are good for them and see what part of their faces can still be improved and/or enhanced.

Photo Filters Strengthen Positive Self-evaluation. By enabling users to present a carefully chosen version of themselves that aligns with their idealized self-image, photo filters have been shown to support positive self-evaluation. Denman (2018) posits that the utilization of photo filters to edit and manipulate one's appearance can result in a more positive self-evaluation, as people can project a more attractive and confident version of themselves. This can be especially helpful for people who might have low self-esteem or body dissatisfaction because it gives them a momentary break from their negative self-perceptions and a chance to project a more positive image.

"…Meron pa ba ako iimprove sa positive na sinabi nila, mga ganon…"

"…It enhances my confidence. ahm, tapos, parang. Pag naka photo filter kasi ako parang makikita ko yung, kung ano yung kaya ko pang i-enhance sa sarili ko…"

"…Nag boost yung self confidence ko, nag ka buhay yung mukha ko dahil sa mga facial enhancement na yan which is dulot ng photo filter…"

According to Denman's (2018) research, those who used photo filters had higher levels of body satisfaction and self-esteem, indicating that the use of filters can have a long-lasting effect on how someone views themselves. Additionally, people who use photo filters may feel proud of themselves and accomplished because they are happy with how they look online. All things considered, the use of photo filters can be a potent tool for bolstering positive self-evaluation since it gives people a sense of empowerment, control, validation, and success. How the participants judge and evaluate themselves may be affected by photo filters. Whether to self-evaluate to improve themselves or do the things that can enhance their faces or appearances. Photo filters will also give the participants an idea of which ones are good for them and see what part of their faces can still be improved and/or enhanced.

As the photo filters helped the participants achieve their desired look, their self-esteem and self-image improved and enhanced. They became more confident in themselves and saw their value and worth. Goldstraw and Keegan (2016) said that female users are more inclined to post their photos on social media to inspire others to also do the same which may have a positive impact as it can promote boosting fellow females' self-esteem and confidence. Using photo filters also enables the users to examine her and evaluate which feature needs to be improved, which filter will look best or will improve this feature, and which enhancement procedure is best for them. One participant mentioned that her face became alive because of the facial enhancement procedure she underwent which she did because of using photo filters.

SUMMARY

The researchers were able to answer the problem statements by analyzing the interviews of the participants. Various themes were found from their responses which answer the aims of the study, which are to understand the lived experiences of early adult females with facial enhancement who used photo filters, find the factors that led the participants to use photo filters, and how photo filters had affected their self-esteem and self-image.

For the participants, they used photo filters to seek validation from others. Other people's reactions and perceptions towards them are important to them. They became conscious of themselves and were influenced by people's comments and reactions. Using photo filters made them feel good about themselves and in turn, made them undergo facial enhancement procedures. Using photo filters also became a coping style for them. They coped with their moods and feelings by using filters that changed their physical appearance. In this way, specific filters they used represent their current emotion and promote body positivity. They used filters to express themselves and used different filters depending on their mood and current situation in life.

Different factors led the participants to use photo filters. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat influenced them to continuously use photo filters in the photos they post on the platforms. Another factor is that using filters reduces or eliminates the time they take to apply makeup on their faces for their photos. Using photo filters is convenient for them since it saves a lot of time, effort, and money on their part.

Photo filters also made the participants aware of their physical imperfections and made them use these filters which cover up their flaws and enhance their physical appearance. They also attained self-satisfaction when using filters because they were able to achieve their desired appearance which made them feel attractive and confident.

Since the participants were able to achieve their desired appearance, their self-esteem and self-image were enhanced. They felt more confident and were able to find their self-worth. Their perceptions of themselves changed as well as how they think others perceive them. They were also able to evaluate themselves on what should be improved with their physical appearances, what will look good on their faces, and what enhancement procedure is good for them.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study's findings, it can be said that a variety of factors may influence someone to use photo filters, and that doing so can enhance one's sense of self-worth and self-image.

A person's awareness of their physical presence, self-satisfaction, social media, career, and financial considerations are some of the factors that influence their use of photo filters. People who are constantly exposed to social media may start copying other people's photos and using well-liked photo filters on these sites. Additionally, using filters helps people save a ton of time, money, and effort when trying to look good on camera. Additionally, they desired to hide their physical flaws from view by adding filters to their photos. This helped them feel better about themselves because their vulnerabilities were hidden. Using photo filters also helps people feel better about themselves. They valued themselves more as a result of feeling more self-assured. They feel more attractive and confident, which has an impact on both how they think others see them and how they see themselves. They also realized that they were flawed physically and that there was nothing they could do about it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A quantitative method can be used as an approach since almost all of us use photo filters. Several participants can give a different perspective on photo filters.
2. With a quantitative approach, future researchers can explore how photo filters and facial enhancement correlate with each other. They can search for more individuals who underwent facial enhancement and whether photo filters are their reference for enhancement. Also, comparison between the differences between individuals who use photo filters and those who prefer without them.
3. The participants in this study are working women. Future researchers can explore other age groups and those with different standings in life to gain more insights and rich data on the subject.
4. On the other side of the spectrum, the lived experiences of other genders regarding photo filters can also be explored and how it benefits them is also recommended for future study.
5. **Investigate the mental status of future participants using intended psychological assessment if there are manifested abnormalities for early prevention.**

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