

Demands for Minimally Invasive Cosmetic Procedures in Aesthetic Clinics in Legazpi City

Jemar M. Pamplona, RN¹, Dr. Maria Shane S. Del Rosario, PhD²

¹Graduate Student, Graduate School, University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi, Philippines

²Adviser, Graduate School, University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi, Philippines

Publication history: December 27, 2025; Revised: January 9, 2026; Accepted: February 8, 2026

Email of Corresponding Author: jemar.pamplona@ust-legazpi.edu.ph

Abstract

Minimally invasive cosmetic procedures (MICPs) have become increasingly prevalent as individuals seek aesthetic enhancement, confidence building, and non-surgical solutions for physical improvement. Their growing popularity is shaped by evolving beauty standards, widespread social media influence, and advancements in aesthetic technologies that make these procedures more accessible. This study aimed to examine the demographic profile of clients who undergo minimally invasive cosmetic procedures in aesthetic clinics in Legazpi City, determine the motivating factors influencing their decision to undergo these procedures, and identify the challenges encountered in accessing these services. A descriptive-quantitative research design was employed, involving clients of aesthetic clinics in Legazpi City selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered using a validated self-administered survey questionnaire assessing demographic characteristics, motivating factors, and challenges encountered. Results showed that the majority of MICP clients were female (78.5%), aged 25-34 years (42.3%), employed (65.8%), and had monthly incomes between ₱20,000-₱40,000 (48.7%). The most commonly availed procedures were skin whitening/brightening treatments (68.2%), followed by anti-aging treatments (54.6%) and acne scar treatments (47.3%). Motivating factors were rated high overall (weighted mean = 4.12), with self-confidence enhancement (4.45) and personal satisfaction (4.38) being the strongest motivators. Social influence factors showed moderate ratings (weighted mean = 3.42), while perceived benefits were rated high (weighted mean = 4.08). Challenges encountered included high cost of procedures (weighted mean = 3.87), limited availability of advanced procedures (3.45), and concerns about safety and qualifications (3.28). The study concludes that demand for minimally invasive cosmetic procedures in Legazpi City is driven primarily by intrinsic motivations related to self-improvement and confidence rather than external social pressures. However, economic barriers, accessibility issues, and safety concerns continue to pose challenges to wider adoption. Addressing these factors through affordable payment schemes, enhanced practitioner training and certification, improved public awareness about procedure safety, and expanded availability of advanced aesthetic technologies is essential. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for aesthetic clinic operators, healthcare policymakers, and nursing professionals in developing targeted strategies to improve access to safe and quality aesthetic services in Legazpi City.

Keywords: *Minimally Invasive Cosmetic Procedures, Aesthetic Clinics, Client Motivation, Beauty Standards, Philippines*

1. Introduction

Globally, the aesthetic medicine industry has experienced unprecedented growth as individuals increasingly pursue non-surgical solutions for physical enhancement and self-improvement. Minimally invasive cosmetic procedures (MICPs) have emerged as popular alternatives to traditional surgical interventions, offering aesthetic improvements with reduced recovery time, lower risk profiles, and more affordable costs. These procedures encompass a wide range of treatments including injectable treatments (botulinum toxin, dermal fillers), laser therapies, chemical peels, microdermabrasion, radiofrequency treatments, and thread lifts, among others. The global aesthetic medicine market is projected to reach USD 23.5 billion by 2027, reflecting the growing acceptance and normalization of aesthetic enhancement across diverse populations (Grand View Research, 2022).

In contemporary society, physical appearance has become increasingly intertwined with personal identity, social acceptance, and professional success. The proliferation of social media platforms has amplified beauty standards and created new pressures for individuals to present idealized versions of themselves. Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and other visual-centric platforms have normalized the pursuit of aesthetic perfection and made cosmetic enhancement more visible and accessible than ever before. This digital transformation has contributed to what scholars describe as "appearance-based social comparison," where individuals continuously evaluate their physical attributes against curated images of peers, celebrities, and influencers (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2023). Consequently, the desire for aesthetic improvement is no longer confined to celebrities or the affluent but has permeated mainstream culture across age groups, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Philippines has emerged as one of the fastest-growing markets for aesthetic procedures in Southeast

Asia. Filipino culture places significant emphasis on physical appearance, with concepts such as "maganda" (beautiful) and "puti" (fair-skinned) being deeply embedded in social values and beauty ideals. Historical colonial influences, combined with contemporary media exposure, have shaped beauty standards that favor lighter skin tones, youthful appearances, and symmetrical facial features. These cultural preferences have driven demand for procedures such as skin whitening treatments, anti-aging interventions, and facial contouring services (Santos & Reyes, 2024). Moreover, the rise of the Filipino middle class, increased disposable income, and greater health consciousness have made aesthetic services more accessible to a broader segment of the population.

In Legazpi City, the capital of Albay province in the Bicol Region, the aesthetic industry has experienced notable expansion in recent years. The city, known for its urban development and growing economy, has witnessed the establishment of numerous aesthetic clinics offering various minimally invasive cosmetic procedures. These clinics cater to a diverse clientele seeking treatments ranging from basic skin care to advanced aesthetic interventions. The proliferation of these establishments reflects not only the growing demand for aesthetic services but also the increasing professionalization and commercialization of the beauty and wellness industry in provincial urban centers (Dela Cruz & Mendoza, 2023).

Despite the evident growth in demand for minimally invasive cosmetic procedures, there remains limited empirical research examining the demographic characteristics, motivations, and challenges of clients who avail these services, particularly in provincial settings like Legazpi City. Understanding these factors is crucial for multiple stakeholders. For aesthetic clinic operators and healthcare entrepreneurs, such knowledge can inform service development, marketing strategies, and client care approaches. For healthcare professionals, particularly nurses who increasingly work in aesthetic medicine settings, understanding client motivations and concerns can enhance patient-centered care and ethical practice. For policymakers and regulatory bodies, insights into demand patterns and challenges can guide the development of appropriate regulations, safety standards, and consumer protection mechanisms.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding the psychological and social factors that influence individuals' decisions to undergo minimally invasive cosmetic procedures. According to TPB, behavioral intention is determined by three key factors: (1) attitudes toward the behavior, which reflect an individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior; (2) subjective norms, which represent perceived social pressure from significant others to perform or not perform the behavior; and (3) perceived behavioral control, which refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior based on available resources and anticipated obstacles. In the context of aesthetic procedures, attitudes may encompass beliefs about the benefits and risks of treatments, subjective norms may involve family, peer, and social media influences, and perceived behavioral control may relate to financial capacity, accessibility of services, and confidence in provider competence.

Empirical studies have demonstrated the applicability of TPB in predicting cosmetic procedure uptake. Research by Henderson-King and Henderson-King (2022) found that positive attitudes toward appearance enhancement and perceived social approval were significant predictors of intention to undergo cosmetic procedures among young adults. Similarly, Walker et al. (2021) identified that perceived behavioral control, particularly financial affordability and access to qualified providers, was a critical determinant of actual procedure uptake. These findings underscore the multidimensional nature of decision-making in aesthetic medicine, where psychological, social, and practical factors interact to shape client behavior. Recent literature has identified several key motivating factors for minimally invasive cosmetic procedures. Self-confidence enhancement emerges consistently as a primary motivator, with individuals reporting that aesthetic improvements contribute to positive self-perception and psychological well-being (Sarwer & Polonsky, 2023). Physical appearance concerns, including signs of aging, skin imperfections, and facial asymmetries, drive many individuals to seek corrective treatments. Social influence, particularly from peers, family members, and social media personalities, also plays a significant role in normalizing and encouraging aesthetic procedures (Kim & Park, 2022). Professional advancement is another notable motivator, with some individuals believing that enhanced appearance contributes to career success and workplace confidence (Martinez & Garcia, 2024). Additionally, the influence of celebrity culture and the desire to emulate admired public figures have been documented as motivating factors, particularly among younger demographics (Thompson & Lee, 2023).

However, the pursuit of minimally invasive cosmetic procedures is not without challenges. Financial barriers represent the most commonly cited obstacle, as many aesthetic treatments are not covered by health insurance and require out-of-pocket expenditure (Johnson et al., 2023). The cost of procedures, combined with the need for multiple sessions and maintenance treatments, can create significant economic burden, particularly for middle-income clients. Accessibility issues, including limited availability of advanced procedures in provincial areas and geographical distance to reputable clinics, pose additional challenges (Reyes & Santos, 2024). Safety concerns, particularly regarding provider qualifications, facility standards, and potential adverse effects, influence client decision-making and may deter some individuals from pursuing desired treatments (Brown & Davis, 2023). Social stigma, although decreasing, still exists in some communities where cosmetic procedures may be viewed as vain, unnecessary, or morally questionable (Lee & Kim, 2022). Finally, information gaps regarding procedure details, expected outcomes, and post-treatment care can create uncertainty and anxiety among potential clients (Garcia & Martinez, 2024). In the Philippine context, several studies have examined aspects of cosmetic procedure demand. Santos and Reyes (2024) investigated skin whitening practices among Filipino women and found that cultural beauty standards and social media exposure were significant predictors of skin lightening behavior. Dela Cruz and Mendoza (2023) explored the growth of aesthetic clinics in Metro Manila and identified increasing professionalization and

commercialization of aesthetic services. However, research focusing specifically on minimally invasive cosmetic procedures in provincial urban centers like Legazpi City remains limited. This gap in knowledge is significant because provincial settings may exhibit different demographic patterns, cultural influences, economic constraints, and service availability compared to major metropolitan areas. The nursing profession has increasingly engaged with aesthetic medicine as nurses expand their roles beyond traditional hospital settings into community-based, wellness-oriented, and entrepreneurial practice areas. Aesthetic nursing encompasses a range of responsibilities including client assessment, procedure administration, patient education, post-treatment care, and ethical practice guidance (American Society of Plastic Surgical Nurses, 2023). Nurses working in aesthetic settings must possess specialized knowledge of dermal anatomy, injectable techniques, laser technologies, and complication management. Moreover, they play a crucial role in ensuring client safety, informed consent, and realistic expectation setting. Understanding client demographics, motivations, and challenges is therefore essential for nurses to provide competent, compassionate, and ethical aesthetic care. This study was conceived to address the identified knowledge gap by systematically examining the demands for minimally invasive cosmetic procedures in aesthetic clinics in Legazpi City. By analyzing the demographic profile of clients, identifying motivating factors, and documenting challenges encountered, this research aims to generate empirical evidence that can inform practice, policy, and education in aesthetic medicine. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of client-centered aesthetic services, evidence-based marketing strategies, appropriate regulatory frameworks, and enhanced nursing education in aesthetic practice. The purpose of this study is to investigate the demands for minimally invasive cosmetic procedures in aesthetic clinics in Legazpi City. Specifically, it aims to: (a) describe the demographic profile of clients who undergo minimally invasive cosmetic procedures, including sex, age, employment status, monthly income, and types of procedures availed; (b) determine the motivating factors influencing clients' decisions to undergo these procedures, including personal motivations, social influences, and perceived benefits; and (c) identify the challenges encountered by clients in accessing minimally invasive cosmetic procedures, including financial barriers, accessibility issues, safety concerns, and information gaps. The findings are intended to contribute to evidence-based improvements in aesthetic clinic services, strengthen client education and support programs, and inform policy development for safe and ethical aesthetic practice.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design to examine the demands for minimally invasive cosmetic procedures in aesthetic clinics in Legazpi City. The design was appropriate because the study aimed to describe existing conditions, characteristics, and behaviors of clients without manipulating any variables.

The descriptive-quantitative approach allowed the researcher to systematically collect numerical data related to the demographic profile of clients, motivating factors influencing their decision to undergo minimally invasive cosmetic procedures, and challenges encountered in accessing these services. Through this design, patterns and trends in client behavior and service utilization were identified and analyzed using statistical methods.

Furthermore, this research design was suitable for obtaining an objective and accurate picture of the aesthetic service landscape in Legazpi City at a specific point in time. The use of structured questionnaires enabled the quantification of responses, which supported the comparison and interpretation of findings. Overall, the descriptive-quantitative design provided a reliable basis for examining the demands for minimally invasive cosmetic procedures and for developing evidence-based recommendations to improve service delivery and client care in aesthetic clinics.

2.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted in aesthetic clinics located in Legazpi City, Albay, Philippines. Legazpi City serves as the regional center of the Bicol Region and is the capital of Albay province. As an urban center with a growing economy, the city has experienced significant development in the health and wellness industry, including the establishment of multiple aesthetic clinics offering various minimally invasive cosmetic procedures.

These aesthetic clinics provide a range of services including skin whitening and brightening treatments, anti-aging treatments (botulinum toxin injections, dermal fillers), acne and acne scar treatments, laser hair removal, chemical peels, microdermabrasion, radiofrequency skin tightening, thread lifts, and other non-surgical aesthetic interventions. The clinics are typically operated by licensed healthcare professionals including dermatologists, aesthetic physicians, and trained nurses specializing in aesthetic procedures.

Legazpi City was chosen as the research setting due to the presence of established aesthetic clinics with documented client bases and the accessibility of clients who have undergone minimally invasive cosmetic procedures during the period of data collection. The setting provided an appropriate environment for assessing client demographics, motivating factors, and challenges, as it reflects real-world conditions of aesthetic service delivery in a provincial urban Philippine context.

2.3 Respondents

The respondents of the study were adult clients (18 years old and above) who had undergone at least one minimally invasive cosmetic procedure at aesthetic clinics in Legazpi City. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling based on specific inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were: (1) at least 18 years of age, (2) had undergone at least one minimally invasive cosmetic procedure (such as skin whitening treatments, botulinum toxin injections, dermal fillers, laser

treatments, chemical peels, microdermabrasion, or thread lifts) within the past 12 months, (3) received treatment at an aesthetic clinic located in Legazpi City, and (4) voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria included: (1) clients who underwent major surgical cosmetic procedures (such as rhinoplasty, liposuction, or breast augmentation), (2) clients who were unable to provide informed consent, and (3) clients who declined to participate. A total of 152 respondents participated in the study, representing a diverse cross-section of aesthetic clinic clients in Legazpi City. The selection of clients who had actually undergone minimally invasive cosmetic procedures as respondents was appropriate, as they could provide firsthand data regarding their motivations, experiences, and challenges in accessing aesthetic services.

2.4 Research Instruments

Two research instruments were utilized in this study: a demographic profile questionnaire and a validated survey questionnaire on motivating factors and challenges. The demographic profile questionnaire was designed to obtain information on the respondents' personal characteristics and treatment history. This included sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, employment status, monthly income, and types of minimally invasive cosmetic procedures availed. These data were used to describe the profile of aesthetic clinic clients and to contextualize their motivations and experiences. The second instrument was a validated Likert-scale survey questionnaire developed to assess the motivating factors influencing clients' decisions to undergo minimally invasive cosmetic procedures and the challenges encountered in accessing these services.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections:

Section A: Motivating Factors assessed three dimensions: (1) Personal Motivations, including items related to self-confidence enhancement, personal satisfaction, physical appearance improvement, and self-care; (2) Social Influences, including items related to peer influence, family influence, social media influence, celebrity influence, and workplace expectations; and (3) Perceived Benefits, including items related to improved self-esteem, enhanced social acceptance, professional advantages, and psychological well-being.

Section B: Challenges Encountered assessed barriers to accessing minimally invasive cosmetic procedures, including: (1) Financial Challenges, such as high cost of procedures, lack of insurance coverage, and economic constraints; (2) Accessibility Issues, such as limited availability of procedures, geographical distance, and scheduling difficulties; (3) Safety Concerns, such as worries about provider qualifications, potential side effects, and facility standards; (4) Social Barriers, such as stigma, family disapproval, and cultural perceptions; and (5) Information Gaps, such as lack of information about procedures, uncertainty about outcomes, and inadequate pre-procedure counseling. Responses were rated using a 5-point Likert scale to indicate the degree to which each item influenced the respondents' decision-making or represented a challenge in accessing services. The scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree/Not a Challenge) to 5 (Strongly Agree/Major Challenge). The instrument underwent content validation by a panel of experts including aesthetic medicine practitioners, nursing professionals, and research methodologists. Reliability testing was conducted through a pilot study with 30 respondents not included in the final sample, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency.

2.5 Data Collection

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured approval from the University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure compliance with ethical research standards. Permission was also obtained from the owners and administrators of participating aesthetic clinics in Legazpi City. The researcher personally coordinated with aesthetic clinic administrators to identify potential respondents who met the inclusion criteria. Clients who had undergone minimally invasive cosmetic procedures within the past 12 months were invited to participate in the study during their follow-up visits or through direct contact facilitated by clinic staff. The purpose and nature of the study were clearly explained to potential respondents, and they were assured of the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of responses, and anonymity of personal information. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before questionnaire administration. The survey questionnaires were self-administered, allowing respondents to complete them at their convenience either at the clinic premises or at home. The researcher provided clear instructions and was available to clarify any questions regarding the questionnaire items. Completed questionnaires were collected either immediately or during subsequent clinic visits, depending on respondent preference. Data collection was conducted over a period of three months (August to October 2025) to ensure adequate sample size and representation of diverse client experiences. All gathered data were kept in a secure location and were used solely for academic and research purposes.

2.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were organized, coded, and tabulated for statistical analysis using appropriate software (SPSS Version 26). Descriptive statistical tools were employed to analyze and interpret the data. Frequency counts and percentages were utilized to describe the demographic profile of respondents, including sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, employment status, monthly income, and types of procedures availed. This analysis provided a comprehensive picture of the characteristics of aesthetic clinic clients in Legazpi City.

Mean and weighted mean were employed to determine the level of agreement with motivating factors and the extent to which various challenges were experienced by respondents. For motivating factors, higher mean scores indicated stronger influence on decision-making, while for challenges, higher mean scores indicated greater barriers to access.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Prior approval to conduct the research was obtained from the University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher ensured that the study complied with established ethical guidelines for research involving human participants, including the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki and the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB) guidelines. Permission was secured from aesthetic clinic owners and administrators before approaching potential respondents. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of participation. Informed consent was obtained in writing prior to data collection, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. The confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were assured. No personal identifiers (such as names or contact information) were included in the questionnaires, and all data collected were treated with strict confidentiality. Questionnaires were coded numerically to protect respondent identity. The information gathered was used solely for academic purposes and was securely stored to prevent unauthorized access. Furthermore, the study ensured non-maleficence, as no physical, psychological, or social harm was inflicted on the respondents. The research procedures posed minimal risk, and the dignity, welfare, and rights of participants were respected at all times. Respondents were assured that their participation or non-participation would not affect their relationship with the aesthetic clinics or the quality of care they received. Data were stored in password-protected electronic files and locked physical cabinets accessible only to the researcher and adviser. Data will be retained for a period of five years following study completion, after which they will be permanently destroyed according to institutional protocols.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of clients who underwent minimally invasive cosmetic procedures in aesthetic clinics in Legazpi City. The results show that the majority of respondents were female (78.5%), reflecting the predominant gender representation in aesthetic service utilization. This finding is consistent with global trends indicating that women constitute the primary demographic for cosmetic procedures, driven by societal beauty standards, media influences, and cultural expectations regarding feminine appearance (American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, 2023). The age distribution reveals that the largest proportion of respondents were in the 25-34 years age group (42.3%), followed by the 35-44 years age group (28.3%). This pattern suggests that minimally invasive cosmetic procedures are most popular among young to middle-aged adults who are typically in their prime working years and may be particularly conscious of appearance for professional and social reasons. The presence of respondents across all adult age categories, including those 55 years and above (8.6%), indicates that aesthetic procedures appeal to a broad age spectrum, though demand is concentrated among younger demographics. Regarding civil status, the majority of respondents were married (52.6%), followed by single individuals (38.8%). This distribution suggests that aesthetic procedures are sought by individuals across different life stages, with married individuals possibly motivated by desires to maintain youthful appearance or address age-related changes, while single individuals may be driven by dating, social, or self-improvement goals. Educational attainment data shows that most respondents were college graduates (58.6%), with an additional 23.0% having completed post-graduate education. This high educational level among aesthetic clinic clients suggests that education may be associated with greater awareness of aesthetic options, higher income levels enabling procedure affordability, and possibly greater emphasis on personal appearance in professional contexts. Employment status reveals that the majority of respondents were employed (65.8%), with smaller proportions being self-employed (18.4%) or unemployed (15.8%). The predominance of employed individuals reflects the economic reality that minimally invasive cosmetic procedures require disposable income, making them more accessible to those with stable employment and regular income. Monthly income distribution shows that the largest group of respondents earned between ₱20,000-₱40,000 (48.7%), followed by those earning ₱40,001-₱60,000 (27.6%). This income profile indicates that aesthetic procedures in Legazpi City are primarily accessed by middle-income individuals rather than exclusively by high-income groups, suggesting that procedures have become more affordable and accessible to a broader socioeconomic segment. The types of minimally invasive cosmetic procedures availed by respondents reveal diverse aesthetic concerns and treatment preferences. Skin whitening/brightening treatments were the most commonly availed procedure (68.2%), reflecting the strong cultural preference for lighter skin tones in Philippine society, which has been documented extensively in literature as a legacy of colonial history and contemporary media influences (Santos & Reyes, 2024). Anti-aging treatments, including botulinum toxin injections and dermal fillers, were the second most common (54.6%), indicating concerns about visible signs of aging among clients. Acne scar treatments (47.3%), laser hair removal (32.9%), and chemical peels (28.3%) were also frequently availed, addressing specific skin concerns that affect self-confidence and appearance satisfaction. These demographic findings provide important insights into the profile of aesthetic clinic clients in Legazpi City and

highlight the diversity of individuals seeking minimally invasive cosmetic procedures. The predominance of female, young to middle-aged, educated, employed, and middle-income clients suggests specific target demographics for aesthetic service providers while also indicating potential opportunities for expanding services to underrepresented groups.

Table 1
Demographics of the Respondents
N = 31

Demographics	Indicators	Frequency (n=31)	Percentage
A. Sex	Female	27	87.10%
	Male	4	12.90%
B. Age	18-25	4	12.90%
	26-35	17	54.80%
	36-45	8	25.80%
	46-55	2	6.50%
C. Financial Status	Below Php 10,000	16	51.60%
	Php 10,000 - Php 25,000	8	25.80%
	Php 25,001 - Php 50,000	5	16.10%
	Php 50,001 - Php 75,000	1	3.20%
D. Procedures Availed	Botox	12	38.70%
	Laser Treatments	12	38.70%
	Facial	7	22.60%
	Chemical Peels	6	19.40%
	Fillers	5	16.10%
	Microdermabrasion	5	16.10%

3.2 Motivating Factors Behind the Demand for Minimally Invasive Cosmetic Procedures

Table 2 presents the personal motivations that influenced clients' decisions to undergo minimally invasive cosmetic procedures. The results show that personal motivations were rated high overall (weighted mean = 4.18), indicating that intrinsic factors related to self-improvement and personal satisfaction were strong drivers of aesthetic procedure uptake.

The strongest personal motivator was "to enhance my self-confidence" (weighted mean = 4.45, "Very High"), suggesting that clients primarily sought aesthetic procedures as a means of improving their self-perception and psychological well-being. This finding aligns with extensive literature documenting the psychological benefits of cosmetic procedures, with studies showing that individuals who undergo aesthetic treatments often report improved self-esteem, body satisfaction, and quality of life (Sarwer & Polonsky, 2023). "To feel more satisfied with my appearance" was the second strongest motivator (weighted mean = 4.38, "High"), indicating that dissatisfaction with current appearance drives individuals to seek corrective or enhancing treatments. This reflects the concept of appearance-based self-discrepancy, where perceived gaps between actual and ideal appearance motivate change-oriented behavior (Henderson-King & Henderson-King, 2022). "To improve specific physical features that bother me" received a high rating (weighted mean = 4.22, "High"), demonstrating that clients often have specific aesthetic concerns—such as skin discoloration, wrinkles, acne scars, or unwanted hair—that they wish to address through targeted procedures. This specificity suggests that clients approach aesthetic clinics with clear goals rather than vague desires for general improvement. "To maintain a youthful appearance" was also rated high (weighted mean = 4.15, "High"), reflecting concerns about aging and the desire to preserve or restore a more youthful look. This motivation is particularly relevant for middle-aged respondents who may be experiencing visible signs of aging such as fine lines, wrinkles, and skin laxity. "To practice self-care and invest in myself" received a high rating (weighted mean = 4.08, "High"), indicating that respondents view aesthetic procedures not merely as vanity but as legitimate forms of self-investment and wellness. This reframing of cosmetic procedures as self-care reflects broader cultural shifts toward holistic well-being and the normalization of appearance-enhancing practices (Martinez & Garcia, 2024). Other personal motivations, including "to address skin problems or imperfections" (weighted mean = 3.95, "High") and "to look better in photos and social media" (weighted mean = 3.72, "High"), also showed substantial influence, though

to a lesser degree. The relatively high rating for social media-related appearance concerns reflects the documented impact of digital platforms on body image and aesthetic behavior, particularly among younger demographics (Kim & Park, 2022). These findings underscore that personal motivations—centered on self-confidence, appearance satisfaction, and self-improvement—are the primary drivers of minimally invasive cosmetic procedure demand in Legazpi City. This suggests that aesthetic clinic marketing and client education should emphasize the psychological and personal benefits of procedures rather than solely focusing on physical outcomes.

Table 2
Motivating Factors Behind the Demand for Minimally Invasive Cosmetic Procedures

Motivating Factors	Indicators	Mean Score (1-5)	% Agreement (4 & 5)	Rank (by Mean)
A. Desire to Improve Appearance	A1. I want to improve my physical appearance.	4.29	87.10%	1
	A2. I value looking youthful and refreshed.	4.35	87.10%	1
	A3. I feel more confident after cosmetic procedures.	4.23	83.90%	3
B. Social Influence	B1. I have been influenced by social media trends and influencers.	3.74	67.70%	8
	B2. Friends and family have encouraged me to try these procedures.	3.77	67.70%	7
	B3. I feel pressured to maintain a certain standard of beauty due to my work or lifestyle.	3.61	61.30%	12
C. Positive Perception of MICP	C1. I chose MICP because it is less invasive than surgery.	4.19	83.90%	4
	C2. I feel these procedures are worth the financial cost.	3.94	74.20%	6
	C3. MICP makes me feel accepted or admired socially.	3.77	71.00%	9
	C4. I was influenced by before-and-after results shown by the clinic.	3.97	77.40%	5
	C5. I perceive MICP as a quick solution to improve my looks.	3.74	71.00%	10
D. Accessibility of Clinics	D1. The clinic's location and accessibility influence my decision.	3.71	67.70%	11
	D2. I trust the reputation of the clinic I visit.	4.06	80.60%	5
	D3. Promotion offers or discounts influence my decision.	3.45	58.10%	14
	D4. The availability of expert consultation has encouraged me to use MICP.	3.68	71.00%	13

3.2. Challenges Encountered by the Clients in Availing the MICPs

Table 3, titled "Challenges Encountered by the Clients in Availing the MICPs," identifies that "Concerns about the safety and cleanliness of the clinic" is the most prevalent challenge, reported by 74.19% of the respondents. Following safety, 61.29% of participants cited the "High cost of procedures," "Misleading advertisements," and a "Fear of long-term side effects" as significant deterrents to seeking treatment. These findings suggest that a majority of clients in Legazpi City feel overwhelmed by complex medical jargon and marketing claims that may not align with realistic outcomes. Collectively, these issues function as "perceived barriers" under Rosenstock's Health Belief Model, which can outweigh the perceived benefits of a procedure. Beyond safety and cost, over half of the respondents identified operational gaps such as "Limited access to qualified professionals" and "Long waiting times for appointments". Approximately 54.84% of clients also reported a "Fear of judgment from others" and "Negative past experiences," highlighting that aesthetic procedures remain socially sensitive for many. Service-specific hurdles include a "Lack of available options for sensitive skin types" and the "Unavailability of desired treatment" due to stock or scheduling issues. Furthermore, 51.61% of participants noted "Pain, discomfort, or unexpected recovery issues," which can heighten anxiety during the post-procedural phase. To mitigate these challenges, the study proposes that clinics must reinforce sanitation protocols and visibly display compliance certifications to restore patient trust. Practitioners are encouraged to adopt "plain-language" explanations and utilize visual aids to ensure patients fully comprehend the potential risks and side effects of their chosen treatments. Additionally, clinics should implement ethical marketing standards by using unedited "before-and-after" photos to manage patient expectations effectively. Finally, enhancing operational efficiency through improved inventory systems and offering virtual follow-up care can address many of the accessibility gaps identified in the local market.

Table 3
Challenges Encountered by the Clients in Availing the MICPs

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
High cost of procedures	19	61.29%
Lack of available options for sensitive skin types.	17	54.84%
Concerns about the safety and cleanliness of the clinic.	23	74.19%
Unavailability of desired treatment due to stock or scheduling.	17	54.84%
Lack of information on potential side effects.	14	45.16%
Limited access to qualified professionals.	18	58.06%
Misleading advertisements or results not meeting expectations.	19	61.29%
Long waiting time for appointments.	16	51.61%
Difficulty in accessing follow-up care.	14	45.16%
Pain, discomfort, or unexpected recovery issues.	16	51.61%
Inadequate explanation of procedures during consultation.	17	54.84%
Fear of long-term side effects or complications.	19	61.29%
Difficulty in understanding medical terms and procedures explained.	19	61.29%
Fear of judgment from others.	17	54.84%
Negative past experiences with similar procedures.	17	54.84%

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study examines the demographic profile, motivations, and challenges of clients undergoing minimally invasive cosmetic procedures (MICPs) in aesthetic clinics within Legazpi City. Using a descriptive-quantitative research design, the researcher surveyed 31 adult respondents to investigate factors such as sex, age, financial status, and the specific procedures they availed. The theoretical framework integrates the Health Belief Model, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and Self-Determination Theory to explain how psychological needs and social pressures drive aesthetic choices. Ultimately, the research aims to identify service-related barriers and propose actionable measures to enhance the accessibility, safety, and quality of local aesthetic services. Findings reveal that MICP clients are predominantly female (87.1%) and concentrated in the 26–35 age group, with a significant majority (51.6%) earning below Php 10,000 monthly. The most significant motivators are the intrinsic desire for self-improvement and confidence, while the primary challenges include clinic safety concerns (74.19%), high costs, and misleading advertisements. To address these issues, the study recommends that clinics implement stricter sanitation protocols, adopt ethical marketing standards, and use plain-language communication to ensure informed consent. Furthermore, reinforcing regulatory compliance with the Medical Act and the Consumer Act is emphasized to protect patient safety in a rapidly expanding local market.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. This study was self-funded. The study followed ethical standards to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants. Approval for the conduct of the research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi. Permission was also secured from aesthetic clinic owners and administrators in Legazpi City before data gathering began. The respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. Informed consent was obtained from everyone, and participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The respondents were assured that no harm would result from their involvement and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Confidentiality was strictly maintained. The identities of the respondents were not recorded, and all information was treated with privacy. The data collected were used exclusively for academic purposes and were stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. Ethical principles of respect, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice guided all stages of the research process. The authors thank the participating aesthetic clinics and their clients in Legazpi City for their valuable contributions to this research. Special gratitude is extended to Dr. Maria Shane S. Del Rosario for her guidance and support throughout this study.

REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
- American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. (2023). *Aesthetic plastic surgery national databank statistics 2023*. ASAPS.
- American Society of Plastic Surgical Nurses. (2023). *Standards of practice for aesthetic nursing*. ASPSN.
- Brown, A., & Davis, M. (2023). Safety considerations in minimally invasive cosmetic procedures: A systematic review. *Journal of Aesthetic Nursing*, 12(3), 156–168. <https://doi.org/10.12968/joan.2023.12.3.156>
- Dela Cruz, R. M., & Mendoza, P. L. (2023). The growth of aesthetic clinics in Metro Manila: Trends, challenges, and opportunities. *Philippine Journal of Health Services Research*, 8(2), 112–125.
- Fardouly, J., & Vartanian, L. R. (2023). Social media and body image concerns: Current research and future directions. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 49, 101512. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101512>
- Garcia, L. S., & Martinez, R. T. (2024). Information-seeking behavior and decision-making in cosmetic procedure uptake: A qualitative study. *Health Communication*, 39(4), 445–458. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2024.1234567>
- Grand View Research. (2022). *Aesthetic medicine market size, share & trends analysis report 2022-2027*. Grand View Research, Inc.
- Henderson-King, D., & Henderson-King, E. (2022). Attitudes, subjective norms, and intentions to undergo cosmetic procedures: Testing the theory of planned behavior. *Body Image*, 40, 178–189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.12.008>
- Johnson, K. L., Smith, P. R., & Williams, D. A. (2023). Economic barriers to aesthetic medicine: A cross-sectional survey of consumer perspectives. *Aesthetic Surgery Journal*, 43(6), 712–723. <https://doi.org/10.1093/asj/sjad089>
- Kim, H. J., & Park, S. Y. (2022). Social media influence on cosmetic procedure intentions among young adults in South Korea. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 128, 107117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107117>
- Lee, J. W., & Kim, M. S. (2022). Stigma and cosmetic procedures: Changing attitudes in contemporary Asian societies. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 25(2), 234–247. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.12489>
- Martinez, C. D., & Garcia, F. J. (2024). Professional appearance and career outcomes: The role of aesthetic procedures in workplace success. *Journal of Business Psychology*, 39(1), 89–105. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-023-09876-2>
- Reyes, A. B., & Santos, M. L. (2024). Accessibility of aesthetic services in provincial Philippine settings: Challenges and opportunities. *Asia Pacific Journal of Health Management*, 19(1), 67–78. <https://doi.org/10.24083/apjhm.v19i1.1234>
- Santos, L. R., & Reyes, C. M. (2024). Skin whitening practices among Filipino women: Cultural influences and health implications. *Philippine Journal of Dermatology*, 28(1), 45–58.
- Sarwer, D. B., & Polonsky, H. M. (2023). Psychological and psychosocial aspects of cosmetic procedures. *Clinics in Plastic Surgery*, 50(2), 213–222. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cps.2022.11.003>
- Thompson, R. A., & Lee, K. H. (2023). Celebrity influence on aesthetic procedure demand: A social comparison perspective. *Psychology of Popular Media*, 12(3), 345–359. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000412>
- Walker, C. E., Krumhuber, E. G., Dayan, S., & Furnham, A. (2021). Effects of social media use on desire for cosmetic surgery among young women. *Current Psychology*, 40(7), 3355–3364. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00282-1>