

A Study on Frequent Selfie Users and Narcissism among College Students

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ABSTRACT

Background: Selfie a generalized expression for a "self portrait", has become a fad among today's youth. People love to take and post their selfies even when they are in critical situations or any annoying surroundings. For example, when someone met with an accident, people take pictures, rather than calling ambulance. **Aim:** This study aimed to investigate the narcissism and selfie users among college students of Coimbatore, India. **Materials and Methods:** Descriptive design was adapted. Conveniently selected 100 post graduate students were assessed on selfie usage and narcissism. **Results:** Study found that 67% of the students moderately using selfie and 50% of the students had narcissism. Narcissism had a significant relationship with selfie usage. **Conclusion:** Study concluded that majority of the college students who were taking selfies and uploading them on social networking sites after editing them had more narcissism. Study recommends that early screening followed by appropriate interventions are required for selfie takers to avoid psychological problems in future.

Keywords: Selfie usage, narcissism, students

INTRODUCTION

The popularity of selfie is tremendous. Different people may have different attitude towards selfie. Some people love selfie, some people hate selfie, but selfie is still tremendously popular. Selfie a generalized expression for a "self portrait", has become a fad among today's youth. But its invention is actually very old. In around 1839, Robert Cornelius took the first "selfie". He called it the "first light picture ever taken." It was actually one of the first human portraits ever.^[1] In recent years, selfie taking has become an incredibly popular activity often going viral online when sharing via social media.^[2] Oxford English Dictionary describe selfie as a "photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smart phone or webcam and shared via social media."^[3]

From a psychological perspective, the taking of selfie is a self-oriented action that allows users to establish their individuality and self-importance; it is also associated with personality traits such as narcissism.^[4]


Recent study found that young women consider selfies to be authentic expressions of identity.^[5] By contrast, recent study found that selfies are associated with a lack of authenticity. They also concluded that young men and women identified both positive aspects (e.g. independence, memory, relatedness, and control/self-staging) and negative aspects (e.g., illusion/fake, threat to self-esteem, and negative impression on others, and bad picture quality) of selfies.^[6]

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Narcissism is an excessive admiration and unrealistic positive view of oneself and physical appearance. A narcissist has a lack of regard for others and solely concentrates on what benefits them.^[7] Study have suggested that posting selfies on social networking sites by the excessive use of sharing photographs, statuses and friends in self-promotion has correlated with self reporting narcissism.^[8-9]

Adolescents are often the first group to adopt new technology because at the younger age it's easier for them to pickup new things. Their social media habits and media consumption are changing the way of young people's communication, learning, sleep and exercise. The main reason for its usage among college students is a media influence, peer pressure, getting admiration from others and getting attention from others. Since, media influences; there are many ill effects of taking more selfie: loss of their self esteem, attention seeking behaviour, self-centred behaviour, loneliness and not considering others, etc. The present study was intended find out the association between the narcissism and selfie usage.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive design was used to assess the narcissistic personality features among 100 conveniently selected post graduate college students in Coimbatore. Students who had access to use smart phone and clicking selfies on regular basis were included in this study. Following research tools were used in this study: I. Socio-demographic profile sheet to collect personal data of the respondents like age, gender, religion, family type, and family income. II. Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) by Andreassen et al. to assess selfie addiction of short-version of BFAS has 6 basic criteria, where items were scored on the following: 1.very rarely 2. Rarely 3.sometimes 4. Often and 5. Very often; scoring "often" Or "very often" On at least four of the six items may suggest the respondent is addicted to selfie. The symptoms of this addiction resemble those of drug addiction, alcohol addiction and social medias like selfie, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter. So we can use this BFAS to all above mentioned addiction. III. Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI- 40), developed by Raskin and

Hall^[11] was used to measure narcissism of college students. It consist 40 pairs of statements and each item in a pair of statements, one considered narcissistic, the other non-narcissistic. NPI consists of seven sub-scales were: Authority, e.g. 'I have a natural talent for influencing people'; Exhibitionism, e.g. "I will usually show off if I get the chance"; Superiority, e.g. "I am an extraordinary person"; Entitlement, e.g. "I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve"; Exploitativeness, e.g. "I find it easy to manipulate people"; Self-Sufficiency, e.g. "I like to take responsibility for making decisions"; and Vanity, e.g. 'I like to show off my body'. The obtained scores were categorized in three categories: No narcissistic features (0-19 score), moderate narcissistic features (score range 20-30) and severe narcissistic features (score range 31-40). Appropriate descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data through SPSS -21.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic details

Variable	Variable category	Percentage
Age	20 – 22 years	88%
	23 – 25 years	12%
Gender	Female	21%
	Male	79%
Residence	Urban	61%
	Rural	39%
Type of selfie	Individual selfie	41%
	Group Selfie	59%
Usage of selfie	Uploading	77%
	Editing	56%
Type of shot	Head/ face shot	29%
	Body shot	5%
	You with your surroundings	40%
	You with your friends	26%

A total of 100 participants completed the survey. The age ranges of participants were 20 to 25 years. Majority of the participants were male (79%), Hindu (82%) and belonged to urban area (61%) having family income Rs.15000 per month respectively and they were day scholars (60%). The participants were representative of different courses of the college with majority (30%) studying commerce. Around 59% of the participants preferred to take selfie with their friends, less than half (46%) of participants preferred to take selfie with their surroundings. More than

half of (77%) participants upload selfie on social media and 56% of participants edit their selfies before posting them on social media. The demographic details of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 2: Level of Selfie Usage

Selfie usage	Percentage
Low (Below 9)	11%
Moderate (9-17)	67%
High (Above 17)	22%

Table 2 shows the percentage of the participants' level of selfie usage. The findings indicated that 67% of participants taking selfies moderately scored between 9 -17.

Table 3: Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Narcissistic personality features	Percentage
No disorder (6-19)	50%
Slight disorder (20-30)	50%

Table 3 shows the percentage of the participants' level of narcissistic personality disorder. Majority of the participants (50%) having slight disorder scored between 20 -30.

Table 4: Level of Narcissistic Personality Dimensions

Dimensions	No disorder (%)	Slight disorder (%)
Authority	36	64
Exhibitionism	67	33
Superiority	46	54
Exploitativeness	57	43
Vanity	52	48
Self-Sufficiency	68	32
Entitlement	74	26

Table 4 shows the percentage of the participants under each dimension of narcissistic personality disorder. The findings indicated that participants scored high in authority (64%) and least in entitlement (26%).

Table 5 shows the association between selfie usage and narcissistic personality disorder of participants by using chi-square test. The findings indicated that there is significant association (p value is .010) between both variables.

Table 5: Association of Level of Selfie Usage and Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Selfie usage	Narcissistic Personality Disorder		Total
	No Disorder	Slight Disorder	
Low	32	35	67
Moderate	10	1	11
High	8	14	22
Total	50	50	100

chi-square value = 9.134^a df=2

Level of significance= <.01

Table 6 shows the correlation between selfie usage and dimensions of narcissistic personality features of participants. The findings indicated that there is a significant relationship between vanity, self-sufficiency and exhibitionism & selfie usage.

Table 6: Correlation of Selfie Usages and Dimensions of Narcissistic Personality

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Selfie usage	1							
2.Authority	-.061	1						
3.Exhibitionism	.296**	.153	1					
4.Superiority	.175	.127	.142	1				
5.Exploitativeness	.116	.104	.128	.154	1			
6.Vanity	.067	.110	.181	.329**	-.019	1		
7.Self-sufficiency	.061	.230*	.167	-.063	-.010	.063	1	
8.Entitlement	.011	-.065	.110	.075	-.160	.193	.117	1

*. significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**.. significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

The present study reveals that there is a significant relationship between selfie usage and narcissism (50%) and there is a possibility of developing narcissistic personality in the person who takes selfies frequently. Actively and frequently taking selfies and uploading in social Medias can negatively affect student's careers. Similarly, a study done on 2013 showed that posting of selfies on different social networking platforms encouraged their narcissism and selfish behaviours.^[12]

The result of present study concurs with a similar study^[13] which showed that narcissism, as well as the Leadership/Authority and Grandiose Exhibitionism facets, but not Entitlement/Exploitativeness, exhibited positive and significant associations with selfie-posting frequency. In our study, the results found that there is significant

relationship between exhibitionism type of narcissistic and selfie usage.

The present study concurs with a similar study^[14] which showed that relationship between narcissism and self-promoting behaviours on social media (e.g., posting selfies), individuals who score high on four narcissism sub-scales (Self-sufficiency, Vanity, Leadership, and Admiration Demand) will be more likely to post selfies to social media sites than the individuals who exhibit low narcissism. In our study the results found that there is significant relationship between self-sufficiency, vanity type of narcissistic and selfie usage.

The present study reveals that adolescents take group selfies (59%) and individual selfie (41%), uploading their selfies (77%) and editing their selfies (56%). Similarly, a study done on 2015 showed that adolescents were found to be more likely to take own and group selfies, post own selfies, and use photographic filters.^[15]

Recommendations: Awareness about negative effects of selfie usage is an emerging need. Awareness should start from family level, school level, and college level. Mental health professionals, psychiatrists, physician, psychiatric social workers come forward to create awareness to regarding selfie usage and narcissistic personality disorder to the society. At school and college level, the teachers and professors teach the moral values to the students, so, that the students give importance to others, nature and environment rather than their own self.

Study recommends that early screening followed by appropriate interventions are required for selfie takers to avoid psychological problems in future. The results are expected to help in making plans regarding awareness programme for safe ways of clicking selfies.

Limitations: Even though some research limitations need to be mentioned. As descriptive data were used in the analysis, despite qualitative study could be best for more in-depth analysis. Data were only collected from a student sample from a one college. There are number of variables/factors related to high selfie taking behaviours like, narcissism, low self esteem and obsessive

compulsive disorder etc., nevertheless the present study concentrates only on narcissism.

CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that majority of the college students who were taking selfies and uploading them on social networking sites after editing them had more narcissistic traits. Majority of the college students (50%) had narcissistic traits from moderate to severe which may be a warning sign. This present study gives an insight to the adolescents' perspective towards selfies and narcissism.

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Editors Note: This study was done as a post-graduate dissertation (by the first author) under guidance of the second author. In spite of various methodological limitations this was considered for publication in the journal to encourage such attempt by PG level non-clinical social workers and also to keeping in view of the gravity of the topic where PSW have an important role to perform and also to encourage authors from various institutions across the country.

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