

Selfie Addiction and Narcissism as Correlates and Predictors of Psychological Well-being among Young Adults

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This study examined the relationship between selfie addiction, narcissism and psychological well-being as well as the predictive role of narcissism and selfie addiction in young adults. Using correlational research design, a sample of 250 young adults with age range 19-35 ($M = 23.51$, $SD = 3.63$) was approached using non probability purposive sampling. Participants completed Selfie Addiction Scale (Aruguman, 2018), Narcissism Personality Inventory-16 (NPI-16; Ames, Rose & Anderson, 2006) and Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff, 1995). Selfie addiction had positive relationship with narcissism and negative relationship with one dimension “environmental mastery” of psychological well-being. Narcissism was found to be negatively related with psychological well-being. Regression analysis showed that narcissism was a significant negative predictor of psychological well-being. Furthermore, results of independent sample t-test revealed that scores on selfie addiction was higher in boys but narcissism and psychological well-being was high in girls. The findings of the current study may provide important information to young adults, parents, counselors and therapists regarding selfie addiction .

Keywords: selfie addiction, narcissism, psychological wellbeing

The desire of expressing oneself is a natural human need. Young people depend on their peer’s ratings and assessments, which make them search for ways of showing themselves to the world. Nowadays young population is busy most of the time in clicking self-pictures and uploading them on social media, these self-pictures are known as selfies. Taking selfies is now become a norm. We can see people taking selfies everywhere, with smartphones in their hands, be even at home restaurants, in malls, or in public places. While some people use to take photos to keep a record of their memories, others want to take selfies all the time. This obsession with clicking selfies is a serious disorder which is called ‘Selfitis’ which is quite alarming. The rapid spread of a selfie affected adolescents’ and youngster’s minds and created a new form of addiction to the selfies. Constantly clicking selfies and uploading them on social networks is becoming a typical behavior and people are doing it more frequently. Excessive posting of selfies is associated with increase in narcissism. And being narcissistic would have an impact on psychological well-being of people (Lobo, 2016).

Selfies can be defined as self-representation or portraits which are taken from mobile phones in order to appreciate physical appearance of one’s own self. We speak of selfie addiction when selfies are clicked excessively, on daily basis, with little struggle to stop clicking

them (Arumugam, 2018). The APA has defines it as: “obsession to click pictures of themselves and post them on the social media platforms to increase self-worth or self-esteem”. In recent times, a new fashion of taking selfies has evolved. In September 2002, Steven Wrighter coined the term selfie (Alblooshi, 2015).

Worldwide, clicking selfies has become unavoidable part of our day to day lives. In Pakistan, introduction of smartphones contributes in improving the key techniques of people. Furthermore, a radical change has come in life style of people due to technological advancement in features of smartphones such as advanced camera, access to internet and touch screen. Individuals purchase smartphones according to their priorities. Due to technological advancement we do not have to get our photos in printed form; instead we can see our favorite photo whenever we want. Which in turn take your to world of fascination from memories that led us to crave for “Selfities (Arumugam, 2018).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), published by American Psychiatric Association in 2013, it defines narcissism as “the self-admiration and appreciation that is characterized by tendencies toward fantasized talents, grandiose ideas, exhibitionism, and by interpersonal relations that are characterized by defensiveness in response to criticism; lack of empathy, feelings of entitlement, and exploitativeness.” Selfies are the medium of promotion for people. Some scholars exclaimed that excessive selfie taking and posting behavior can result in harmful demeanors for example narcissism, egotism and rapaciousness (Sorokowski, et al., 2015).

As stated in DSM, narcissistic people are overwhelmed with brilliance, beauty, success, dreams, power and authority. Narcissists live in a relational phase with ostentatious behavior. They need appreciation and attention from other people. Narcissists have characteristic that they wanted to view positive and concrete traits in their personality such as having power and authority; and being beautiful and physically attractive (Mehdizadeh, 2010). Above described characteristics of narcissistic people illustrate the reason that why narcissist tend to take excessive amount of selfies. Primarily, narcissistic people are usually very concerned about how they look physically (Remiker & Baker, 2008). Narcissists love to wear beautiful clothes or emblaze their bodies in a provoking and eye-catching way. They want other to be attracted towards them and they imagine in their own minds that other people find them attractive. Due to these characteristics, they derive pleasure by taking a lot of selfies. By doing this they can control how they wanted they to look in pictures and how they want others to perceive them. Basically, selfies are blarneying photos that people use to impress others (Vazire, Naumann, Rentfrow, & Gosling, 2008).

Psychological well-being is an interpersonal and intrapersonal degrees of constructive agility including a person’s affiliation with other people and point of views of oneself including personal growth and mastery (Ryff, 1995). Psychological well-being is also defined as a condition of psychological resilience in which an individual has the ability to utilize his sentimental and intellectual potentials; and optimal performance so that an individual can achieve daily goals of life (Asad et al., 20218).

Social rank theory and Social comparison theory illustrate that social environment plays a significant role in describing Social Networking Sites (SNS) behavior of young people. These theories suggest that young people who belong to certain peer group tend to click and upload selfies on social media accounts. Reason is that that there is high comparison and

competition in peer groups and every individual wants to look better than other individuals (Tandoc, Ferrucci, & Duffy 2015).

According to the narcissism dynamic self regulatory processing model, narcissistic people behave in a way by which they get positive remarks from others. Narcissistic people primarily use social media accounts because they wanted to maintain positive and magnificent sense of self (Morf, Torchetti & Schürch, 2011). Some writers and journalists argued that narcissistic people are so much indulged in clicking selfies that they forget their surroundings. That's why some writers referred it as selfish act. Some authors also suggested that selfie addiction leads to narcissism and it have negative affect on relationships with other people (Lee & Sung (2016).

Sociometer theory illustrates acceptance and rejection have an effect on psychological well-being of people including self-esteem. If someone gets like on his selfie so, it might be a sign of acceptance which leads to increasing psychological well-being and self-esteem of that person. Whereas if a person do not gets likes on his selfie then it might be a sign of rejection which negatively effects psychological well-being and self-esteem of that person (Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

Charoensukmongkol (2016) conducted a study to examine 4 characteristics of a person that may describe reason of clicking selfies. These characteristics are: loneliness, narcissism, seeking behavior, attention- self-centered behavior. Findings from regression revealed that reason of taking selfies and all above described characteristics are positively related.

Longobardi et al., (2020) conducted a research to assess the social media usage on selfie obsession and psychological well-being. Results of study revealed that no gender difference exists in psychological well- being, selfie obsession and social media usage. Women are mostly utilizing their potential that also leads household wellbeing other than individual growth (Haram, Shams & Gohar, 2021). A negative relationship was found between psychological well-being and social media usage while a positive relationship was found with selfie obsession.

Coulthard and Ogden (2018) in their study examine the effect of uploading selfies and getting feedback on Instagram on wider dimensions of their psychological well-being of young adults. There were 3 conditions which proceed for seven days: no selfie-posting; posting selfies with feedback; posting selfies without feedback. Results revealed that intervention has no effect on mood or self-esteem. Greater appearance satisfaction was found in those who post no selfies as compared to those who post selfies (irrespective of feedback). While, greater face satisfaction was found those who post selfies and get feedback. Study concludes that the effect of selfies depends on which dependent variable is measured and when.

Rationale

Selfie is as much as an interesting phenomenon of self-portrait in this new technology period as a tool for building up the self-esteem and self-awareness. Selfies have modified communication in the social surrounding. It has changed communication and leisure time on social networking sites and consequently lessened the face-to-face communication. Instead of living in the present moment and enjoy, people are documenting it only to relive it on the media screen. The real moment was lived through the screen of smartphone in the first take and probably not even truly enjoyed or experienced. Taking selfies has become a norm. Selfies also have changed our perception about ourselves. The perfect representation that even obviously

false has become more important than communicating deeper quality and content. Further, characterized with the time where adults putting their efforts for freedom or competence and it directly associated with development of explicit and implicit self-esteem (Naeem, Tariq & Mubeen,2021).

There is one of the new goal of social excellence. The rapid spread of a selfie affected teenagers' and adolescents' minds and created a new form of addiction to the selfies. Constant taking selfies and uploading them on social networks is becoming a typical behavior and young people are doing it more frequently. Excessive posting of selfies is associated with increase in narcissism (Magner, 2018). And being narcissistic would have an impact on psychological well-being of people. Selfies has emerged few times back so limited researches are done on different age groups of people to know the effect of it on the personality of individuals and on psychological well-being. So, this study aims to investigate that how selfie clicking and posting is related to narcissism and psychological well-being in young adults.

Objectives

Following are the objectives of current study

- To analyze the association between selfie addiction, narcissism and psychological well-being in young adults.
- To find out selfie addiction and narcissism as predictors of psychological well-being in young adults.
- To explore gender differences in selfie addiction, narcissism and psychological well-being in young adults.

Hypotheses

Following are the hypotheses of current study

- There is likely to be a relationship between selfie addiction, narcissism, and psychological well-being in young adults.
- Selfie addiction and narcissism are likely to be the predictors of psychological well-being in young adults.
- There are likely to be gender differences in selfie addiction, narcissism, and psychological well-being in young adults.
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Methods

Research Design

Correlational research design is used. The research investigates the relationship between selfie addiction, narcissism, and psychological well-being in young adults.

Sampling Strategy and Sample

Sample of 250 participants, using non-probability purposive sampling strategy, including both males and females (as per g power formula) aged 19 to 35 years, who have smart phones, social media accounts and are active users were taken from different institutes of Lahore, Pakistan.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants of the Study (N=250)

Characteristics	M (SD)	f (%)
Age (years)	23.51(3.63)	
Gender		
Male		122(48.8)
Female		128(51.2)
Marital Status		
Married		48(19.2)
Unmarried		202(80.8)
Family System		
Nuclear		176(70.4)
Joint		74(29.6)
Socio-Economic Status		
Lower Class		2(0.8)
Middle Class		228(91.2)
Upper Class		20(8)
How often do you take selfies?		
Daily		123(49.2)
Weekly		70(28)
Occasionally		57(22.8)
Do you have social media account?		
Yes		250(100)
No		0(0)
How often do you share selfies on social media?		
Daily		
Weekly		103(41.2)
Occasionally		100(40)
		47(18.8)

Note. M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; f=frequency; %=percentage

Demographic Information Sheet

Demographics consist on information like initials of name, age, gender, education, marital status, socioeconomic status, number of selfies taken per day and number of selfies share on social media etc.

Selfie Addiction Scale. This questionnaire was devised and validated by Aruguman and Nagalingam in 2018. This is 10 items questionnaire, based on Likert Scale and the Scoring is given accordingly (Strongly Agree-5 to Strongly Disagree-1). The score varies from minimum range of 10 points to 50 points. Scores between 0-20 represents normal, 21-30 represents mildly addicted, 31-40 represents moderately addictive and 41 to 50 represents severely addicted people. The Cronbach’s alpha of this scale was .75.

Narcissistic Personality Inventory-16 (NPI-16)

It is developed by Ames, Rose and Anderson in 2006. The NPI-16 is brief scale of subclinical narcissism with internal, discriminant, meaningful face, and predictive validity. It consists of sixteen pair of statements. For each pair participant have to select the one that best reflects his/her personality. The internal consistency of measure is verified and Alpha reliability of scale was .72.

Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale

Psychological well-being scale was developed by Ryff in 1995. This scale consists of 18 items. Each item rated on 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 as strongly agree to strongly disagree. The PWB scale has 6 dimensions. Autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance are the subscales of

this scale. To calculate scores of each subject, combine scores of all subscales. Higher scores indicate higher levels of psychological well-being. The reliability coefficient of every subscale and the whole scale was above .69.

Procedure

First, topic was selected and approved by the board of the studies. After approval of the topic, scales were selected and permission was taken from the authors. Tools were administered on research participants who fulfill the inclusion criteria and data was collected by researcher. Data was collected from different institutes of Lahore. Instructions were given to the participants and asked the participants to fill the questionnaires. All the ethical considerations were ensured. Informed consent was taken. They were given the right to withdraw from study at any time and were assured that their identity will be anonymous and responses to questionnaires would remain confidential.

Results

Data analysis initiated with the reliability analysis using Cronbach's alphas of all the scales. In the second step, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to assess the correlation between demographics and study variables. Hierarchical Regression Analysis was run to check the predicting role of selfie addiction and narcissism for psychological well-being in young adults. Mediation through Regression was used. At last Independent sample t-test was run to find out gender differences in study variables.

Reliability Analysis

Following are descriptive and reliability analyses for each assessment measure along with actual and potential ranges of the variables shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities of Selfie Addiction, Narcissism and Psychological Well-Being.

Variables	K	M	SD	α	Range	
					Potential	Actual
Selfie Addiction	10	25.65	7.91	.89	10-50	10-45
Narcissism	16	9.35	4.31	.86	0-16	0-16
Psychological Well-Being				.83		
Autonomy	7	25.24	7.13	.73	7-42	7-39
Environmental Mastery	7	23.95	8.02	.69	7-42	7-54
Personal Growth	7	25.11	6.71	.69	7-42	7-39
Positive relations with others	7	26.84	6.83	.73	7-42	7-41
Purpose in Life	7	23.16	8.35	.70	7-42	7-52
Self-Acceptance	7	25.08	7.35	.76	7-42	7-38

Note. k=No. of Items; M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; α = Cronbach alpha value

The table 2 showed the means, standard deviations, number of items, reliabilities and action and potential ranges of assessment scales. The reliability analysis of each scales was carried out using Cronbach's Alpha. All scales showed high internal consistency range from .69 to .89.

Pearson product moment correlation analysis was carried out to assess the relationship between selfie addiction, narcissism and psychological well-being in young adults. Table 3 shows the result of this analysis.

Table 3

Correlation between Selfie Addiction, Narcissism and Psychological Wellbeing (N=250).

NOTE: p<.05=, p<.01=***

Variables	Selfie Addiction	Narcissism	Psychological Wellbeing	Autonomy	Environmental Mastery	Personal Growth	Positive Relations in Life	Purpose in Life	Self-Acceptance
Selfie Addiction	--	.23**	-.10	-.79	-.16*	-.02	-.07	.04	-.06
Narcissism		--	-.16*	-.06	-.10	-.15**	-.15*	-.06	-.04
Psychological Wellbeing			--	.59**	.59**	.63**	.62**	.45**	.63**
Autonomy				--	.15*	.28**	.32**	.13*	.24**
Environmental Mastery					--	.29**	.25**	.06	.27**
Personal Growth						--	.35**	.08	.29**
Positive Relations							--	.06	.27**
Purpose in Life								--	.14**
Self-Acceptance									--

Findings showed that selfie addiction is positively correlated with narcissism. It means that people who are more selfie addicted have more tendencies to be narcissist, egoistic and self-centered. Selfie addiction is negatively correlated with only one dimension of psychological well-being which is environmental mastery. It means that people who are selfie addicted are less likely to manage the responsibilities of daily life. Moreover, narcissism has negative relationship with psychological well-being particularly with personal growth and positive relations. It means that people who are narcissistic are less able to use their cognitive and emotional capabilities and they do not perform well in society. It also suggests that narcissistic people have difficulties in having warm and trusting relations. They are less concerned about other people. They lack empathy and affection.

It was also hypothesized that selfie addiction and narcissism would be predictors of psychological well-being. To assess this hypothesis multiple hierarchical regression analysis was performed. Results are reported in table 4.

Table 4

Linear Regression Analysis predicting direct effect of Selfie Addiction and Narcissism on Psychological Well-Being in Young Adults (N=250)

Variables	Psychological Wellbeing		
	B	β	SE
Constant	3.13***		5.98
Selfie Addiction	-.22	-.07	.21
Narcissism	-.87*	-.15	.39
F(2, 247)	3.83		
R ²	.03		

Note. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, SE=Standardized Error, β= Standardized Coefficient

The results of Linear Regression analysis have indicated that the overall variance experienced by the model was accounted for 3% with $F(2, 247) = 3.83, p < .05$. The analysis showed that selfie addiction did not significantly predict value of psychological well-being ($\beta = -.07, p > .05$). While narcissism negatively predict the value of psychological well-being ($\beta = -.15, p < .05$).

It was moreover hypothesized that there are likely to be gender differences in selfie addiction, narcissism and psychological well-being in young adults. Independent Sample *t*-test was run to assess the gender differences. Results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Independent Sample t-test Measuring Gender Difference in psychological well-being (N=250).

Variables	Male	Female	t (248)	p	Cohen's d
	(N=122)	(N=128)			
	M(SD)	M(SD)			
Selfie Addiction	28.39(7.11)	23.03(7.76)	5.69	.00	0.72
Narcissism	10.07(3.99)	8.66(4.49)	2.62	.01	0.33
Psychological Wellbeing	145.17(27.72)	153.43(23.27)	-2.56	.01	0.32
Autonomy	24.75(6.88)	26.73(7.36)	-1.09	.29	0.28
Environmental Mastery	22.86 (7.72)	25.00(8.18)	-2.12	.04	0.27
Personal Growth	24.59(7.27)	25.59(6.13)	-1.18	.24	0.15
Positive Relations	25.62(7.63)	28.02(5.76)	-2.81	.01	0.36
Purpose in Life	23.23(9.38)	23.09(7.28)	.13	.89	0.17
Self-Acceptance	24.12(7.96)	26.00(6.62)	-2.03	.04	0.26

Note=Mean, SD=standard deviation

To find out the gender differences on selfie addiction, narcissism and psychological well-being an Independent sample *t*-test was run. For selfie addiction narcissism and psychological well-being equal variances were assumed. Findings showed that there were significant gender differences between males and females on selfie addiction, narcissism, and psychological well-being and in three of its subscales including environmental mastery, positive relations and self-acceptance with small to medium effect size. Males showed more selfie addiction as compared to females. While females scored high on narcissism, environmental mastery, positive relations, self-acceptance and overall psychological well-being as compared to males. Talking about sub-scales of psychological well-being, no gender differences were found in autonomy, personal growth and purpose in life. While females scored higher on environmental mastery, positive relations, and self-acceptance than males.

Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the association between selfie addiction, narcissism and psychological well-being in young adult. The results revealed significant positive relationship between selfie addiction and narcissism and negative relationship between narcissism and psychological wellbeing dimensions. Previous studies like Joy & Venkatachalam (2019), found out that there are significant positive relationship between selfie addiction and narcissism. According to that research, significant relationship was found between narcissistic features and number of selfies clicked on per day, choose poses for taking selfies, and edit selfies before uploading and un-tag themselves from group selfies. Significant relationship was

found between narcissistic features and Posting of selfies on facebook (Sukhdeep, Maheshwari & Sharma, 2018).

Sharma, Ranjan and Kohli (2021), found that selfie addiction and psychological well-being are negatively correlated with each other. In demographics age also negatively linked with psychological wellbeing (Naseer, Mubeen & Farooq, 2021). The results of present research showed negative relation of selfie addiction with one dimension of psychological well-being which is environmental mastery which may be due to the cultural differences. As no correlation was found with other dimensions of psychological wellbeing.

Present research also revealed that narcissism has negative relationship with psychological well-being. Previous research like Wirtz and Rigotti, (2020), also found that narcissism is negatively and significantly correlated with psychological well-being. People who are narcissistic are less able to use their cognitive and emotional capabilities and they do not perform well in society. Narcissistic people have difficulties in making gratifying and trustworthy relations with others. Findings of correlation analysis were consistent with previous researches, so hypothesis was accepted.

Regression analysis showed that narcissism is significant negative predictor of psychological well-being. Many previous researches and articles suggested that there is a unique relationship between narcissism and less psychological well-being. Factors of low psychological well-being may include presence of negative emotions, life dissatisfaction, lack of social connectivity, incompetence to have feelings that connect a person with others, lack of appreciation to others and lack of sympathy (Bai et al., 2021; Lauzon, 2018; Stellar et al., 2017; Ryan, Bernstein & Brown, 2010)

Results of independent sample t-test revealed that there are significant gender differences in selfie addiction, narcissism and psychological well-being. Males scored higher on selfie addiction as compared to females. While females scored high on narcissism and psychological well-being as compared to males. Results of present study are in line with previous researches. Results from previous researches illustrate that there is no clear evidence regarding gender differences in selfie taking. Dhir and his colleagues in 2017 reported that females upload more selfies on their online accounts than males. But in contrast Guo and his colleagues in 2018 reported opposite results. Similarly, based on an article found on CNN, men are more likely to take more selfies at the age of 40 than women and vice versa for younger ages. According to researches women become more insecure at the age of 40, while men become more self-confident and want to reassure they are still young. That's why men take more selfies in later age (Wallace, 2014).

Further according to present study, females scored high on psychological well-being as compared to males. A study conducted by Matud, Curbelo & Fortes in 2019 goal to explore the coorelation between gender and psychological well-being in adult. Results revealed that males have higher self-acceptance and autonomy than females while females have higher personal growth and positive relations than males. In current study women also scored higher in environmental mastery, self-acceptance and positive relations than men. Therefore, results of present study are in accordance with previous researches.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to investigate the association between selfie addiction, narcissism and psychological well-being in young adults by using quantitative method to generalize the findings on a large population. The study confirms that selfie addiction has significant positive relationship with narcissism and selfie addiction has negative relationship with one dimension of psychological well-being which is environmental mastery. Narcissism has negative relationship with psychological well-being particularly with personal growth and positive relations with others. Narcissism was a significant predictor of psychological well-being. Significant gender differences of independent and dependent variables were also examined. Males scored higher on selfie addiction as compared to females while females scored higher on narcissism and psychological well-being than males.

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