

# Narcissism, Self-Esteem and the Number of selfies people post on Social Networking Sites

Ayesha Azmat<sup>1</sup>, Sobia Sahibzada<sup>2\*</sup>, Laraib Munsif<sup>3</sup>, Sumyya Gul<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Absayn University Peshawar, Email: [ayshaazmat1500@gmail.com](mailto:ayshaazmat1500@gmail.com),  
Contact No: 03365355600

<sup>2\*</sup> Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Absayn University Peshawar, Email: [sobia.sahibzada@yahoo.com](mailto:sobia.sahibzada@yahoo.com)  
Contact No: 03318882202

<sup>3</sup> Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Absayn University Peshawar, Email: [LaraibMunsif@outlook.com](mailto:LaraibMunsif@outlook.com)  
Contact No: 03339794854

<sup>4</sup> Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Absayn University Peshawar, Email: [sumyya.hassan92@gmail.com](mailto:sumyya.hassan92@gmail.com),  
Contact No: 03335328082

**\*Corresponding Author:** Sobia Sahibzada

\*Email : [sobia.sahibzada@yahoo.com](mailto:sobia.sahibzada@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

This study explores the relationships between selfie posting frequency, narcissistic tendencies, and self-esteem among males and females on social networking sites. A sample of 100 participants from Peshawar, consisting of 50 males and 50 females, was surveyed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) and the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (1976). Analysis of the data revealed that males post selfies more frequently than females, supporting the first hypothesis. Contrary to the second hypothesis, the results showed that males exhibit significantly higher narcissistic traits compared to females. Additionally, self-esteem scores did not significantly differ between genders, which contradicts the third hypothesis. These findings suggest that while there are differences in selfie posting frequency, narcissistic tendencies and self-esteem do not show significant gender-based differences in this context. The results have implications for understanding gender differences in social media behaviors and their psychological impacts.

**Key words:** Selfie, Self-esteem, Narcissism, Social Networking Sites.

## Introduction

The craze for clicking and posting selfies on social networking sites is increasing nowadays. Selfie means to portrait oneself and present it on social networking sites. On social networking sites people present themselves for the approval of others through selfie posting. Leary, (2013), and Foucault (2014), argue that selfie is a display of one's self and the basic purpose of it is to gain other's attention.

After clicking selfies and sharing on Facebook and Instagram people also have an urge that others like their selfies. In 2014, Haggard defined selfie as a photo which is clicked by person without taking help from others. Saltz (2014) stated that smartphones made it easy for everyone to portrait themselves easily and share with their online peers. The phenomena of selfie clicking and sharing has become very popular among almost all ages.

According to Kemp (2014), with the increase in the rise of different social apps the trend of sharing online pictures is developed which is known as selfie. Lenhart (2010) stated that people post selfies to attract other people's attention; they even post about different places, food and many more. Presently social media is a largest medium of connection between people. Through social networking sites people are engaged into different social activities with their friends and family (Kuss and Graffiths 2011). According to Pew Research Centre, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is full of texting scrolling and selfie clicking and posting.

Murphy-Gill (2014) explains that girls, usually posing for selfies include hair swept back, hand on hips wearing best outfits. Brumfield (2013) suggests that the trend of selfie culture is equally popular among all ages, comedian, television host, actress, writer, celebrities, and politicians are too involved in selfie clicking and posting.

In 2013, television producer Ellen DeGeneres clicked his selfie during Oscar's awards and that selfie became world's most sharing post. The study conducted by Tifentale and Manovich (2014) in Bangkok, Berlin, Moscow, New York, and Sao Paulo to find out the trend of clicking selfies with sample of 3200 selfies. The research result reveals that young people are more involved in clicking and posting selfies and sharing them on social accounts. A significant relationship was also found between the sexes and number of selfies. The study result shows that women click more selfies than men.

Facebook and Instagram are the two most popular social networking sites all over the world. People are using social networking sites on their cell phones and laptop and stay connected all the time with their online peers. Instagram is an online social site which is specifically designed for selfie lovers. The co-founder and CEO of Instagram stated in 2011 that they have designed this app to change ordinary simple and everyday scenes into unique way and capture them in a digital form. The hashtag is unique and new function that only appears on Instagram, so users put #hashtag on their posts and search things easily with hashtag.

This app has also become very popular in Pakistan after Facebook. Facebook is most popular social site in Pakistan, people share their videos, update about their life events and post selfies on their accounts. People are easily connected with each other via personal profiles, blogs, groups and different pages. Facebook is available in 70 different languages and is a popular app all around the globe. As of recent reports, the number of users in Pakistan for this app has reached approximately 12 million. Of these users, 3.5 million are female, and 8.5 million are male. According to Carpenter (2012), social media platforms provide a significant space for self-promotional content.

Narcissism can be defined as a trait of personality and unrealistic positive view about oneself, (Bufferardi & Campbell, 2008) it included different traits such as physical appearance social popularity and intelligence. According to (Ong et al., 2011) people who are narcissistic are very active on social networking sites and display a different amount of self-promotional content through profile pictures (Mehdizadeh 2010).

Self-esteem can be defined as an individual's overall sense of worth and personal values. According to Carl Roger (1959) basically there are three different parts of self. Self-image is how we see ourselves. He defined Ideal image as a person's thinking that he could be like that but in many cases the way we see our self-do not really match the way we want to see ourselves. Rutledge (2013) said that selfies provide opportunities to its user to become a director, producer, and actor of their own story. According to Fiestein (2014), if a user posts a selfie on Instagram and just receives 30 likes he could feel that he is ugly, becomes embarrassed and wants to delete that picture. If he receives 100 or more likes on the picture, he feels good about himself. Selfie improves our social relations and status. The individual feels good when he gets and sees a positive comment on his post like gorgeous, or you are looking so nice, beautiful, awesome etc.

Green (2014) said that selfies help females to improve their self-esteem. The strategies of posting selfies are smart ones because in this way an individual portrays his/her own self for others. Cooley (2014) stated that clicking and posting your own images is the best way to monitor yourself and your goals as well. According to Seiter (2015), posting selfies on social networking sites reflects a high level of self-esteem because individuals decide how they want to present themselves in front of others.

### **Aims and objectives**

- To find out the relationship between narcissist tendencies, self-esteem and posting selfie among participants on social networking sites.
- To examine the selfie posting differences among males and females.

### **Hypotheses**

- The narcissistic tendencies will be high among males as compared to females who post selfies on social networking sites.
- Self-esteem of females will be high as compared to males who post selfies on social networking sites.
- There will be a significant difference among males and females in the frequency of posting selfies on social networking sites.

### **Rationale of the study**

The purpose for selecting this topic is to understand why selfies are clicked and how selfies cause narcissistic personality features in selfie lovers. This study was designed to find out how selfies impact on individual's self-esteem, and further to explore how selfie posting increases narcissistic traits in users who post selfies on social accounts such as Facebook and Instagram. The selfie clicking and posting trend has increased, as many researches have been just focused on selfie addiction, but very limited number of researches focused on the impact of posting selfies on users' self-esteem and narcissism. Although there are different reasons for people to click and post selfies, this research focused on the relationship between self-esteem level and narcissistic traits.

### **Methodology**

#### **Sampling**

The present research was based on correlation design. 100 participants were selected from Peshawar. Participants were equally divided into two groups, in which fifty were male (n=50) and fifty were female (n=50). The age ranges for participants were 19 to 35 years. Purposive convenient sampling techniques were used for data collection. For this study only those participants were targeted who post their selfies on social accounts such as Facebook and Instagram.

## Instrumentations

For this study demographic information sheet and two questionnaires i-e, Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (1969) and The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (1979) was used for data collection.

## Demographic Information sheet

The demographic information sheet consisted of participants names, age, educational qualification, accounts on Facebook, and Instagram, and posting selfies on their accounts either every day, once a week, or once a month,

## Self-Esteem Scale

Rosenberg (1965) developed this scale to measure one's self-esteem. The scale consisted of 10 questions to know about people's present feelings and their emotions about themselves. Five items of the scale (1,2,4,6,7) are positively measured and the remaining five items (3,5,8,9,10) are reversely scored. The score of 30 shows highest level of self-esteem, while score 15-25 shows normal range of self-esteem and 15 score and below them show low level of self-esteem. The scale has a high reliability with Cronbach's alpha of .88.

## Narcissistic Personality Inventory

The inventory is developed by Raskin and Hall (1979) for the estimation of narcissism as an identity attribute, a usually utilized measure of non-clinical narcissism. It is based on 40 questions, designed to be used on normal population. Participants answer each question by picking one of two statements. The Narcissistic Personality Inventory has 7 subscales which evaluate: power, exhibitionism, prevalence, exploitativeness, vanity, independence and entitlement. The sum of the scores can go from 0 to 40 with higher scores demonstrating more prominent levels of narcissism. This inventory has high reliability with Cronbach's alpha of .83.

## Procedure

For data collection only those participants were approached who posted selfies on Facebook and Instagram on daily basis, within a week, and once a month. Participants were contacted at their institutions and workplaces and explained about the purpose of this research. Participants were requested to participate in research. Participants were assured that this data will be only used for research purposes and were assured about them confidentially of information. Participants were thanked after completion of the questionnaire.

## Results

**Table 1 Chi-square Test and Descriptive Statistics for males and females for posting selfies (N=100)**

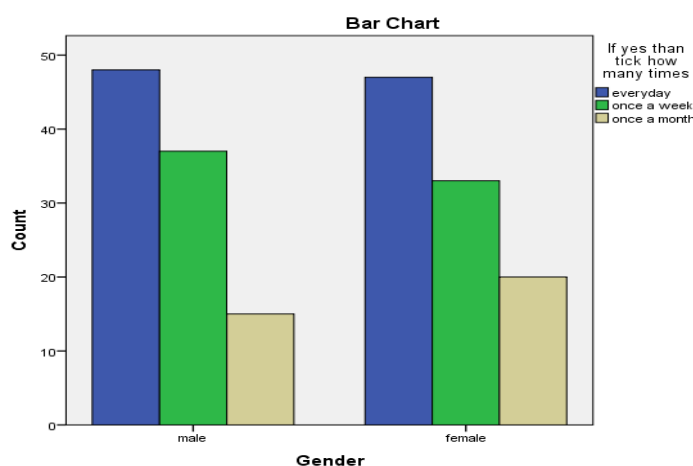
Posting Selfie Frequency	Everyday	Once a week	Once a month
Males	48(24%)	37 (18.5%)	15 (7.5%)
Females	47 (16.5%)	33 (23.5%)	20 (10.0%)

$$\chi^2 = 4.683^*, df = .2$$

Table explains the difference among male and female in posting selfies on social networking sites. As a table shows that there is a significant difference among male and female in posting selfies. Males post more selfies on daily bases, and once a week as compared to females, while female post more selfies in once a month as compared to males.

## Graph

Frequency of male and female in posting selfies on social accounts



The above graph indicates the difference among male and female in posting selfies on social networking sites.

**Table 2 Mean differences among male and female on narcissism (N=100)**

Variables	Males		Females		t (198)	p	95% CI		Cohen's D
Narcissism	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
	23.55	9.38	21.06	7.16	2.10	.03	161	4.81	.29

The result shows that there is a significant difference in narcissistic tendencies among males and females.  $t(198) = 2.10$ ,  $p < .05$ . Males with higher narcissistic traits ( $M = 23.55$ ,  $S.D. = 9.38$ ) post more selfies as compared to females ( $M = 21.06$ ,  $S.D. = 7.16$ ).

**Table 3 Mean differences in level of self- esteem among male and female (N=100)**

Variables	Males		Females		t (198)	p	95% CI		Cohen's D
Self-esteem	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
	21.63	5.91	25.71	21.64	1.80	.07	8.51	.34	.25

Note: M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, CI= Confidence Interval LL= lower Limit, UP= Upper Limit,

The result shows that there is not a significant difference in self- esteem among males and females,  $t(198) = 1.81$ ,  $p > .05$ .

### Discussion

The predominant aim of this study was to know whether selfie posting increases narcissistic traits among people and how its impact on their self-esteem. Much research is available in western culture, but very few and limited are available in Pakistani context. For this purpose, this study was designed to fill the gap.

The result of the study showed that males post selfies on their account on daily bases and once a week more whereas females post more selfies on their account in once a month. Qiu et al (2015), also stated that female also like to click selfies than males like to do but males post more selfies than females. This study also indicated that both males and females use selfie for their self-presentation.

Katz and Crocker (2015) suggested that gender differences show the way people present their self via selfies posting on social networking sites .Maovich (2014), also found that females click more selfies and like to post on a social networking site as males do. Previous research shows that females post more selfies (Alone, group, and with partners) when they were compared with males (Sorokowskal et al,2015). Cao and Halloran (2014), in study found that females click selfies that are more personal in nature when they were compared to males. According to Weiser (2015), both male and female are equal in posting selfies on social account.

Vogel et al. (2014) said that female may be very selective about their online presence, which could result in less frequent but more selective selfie posting. Moreover Lange (2014) stated that women post less selfies on social account due to privacy concerns and image management which could results more deliberate posting.

The second hypothesis of the study was that male with high narcissistic tendencies post more selfies than females. Previous research also supported this hypothesis like fox and Rooney (2015), found in study that men spend more time on social networking sites and before posting selfies apply different filters to enhance their beauty to look more attractive. In another study conducted by (Sorokowskal et al,2015) found that posting selfies and narcissistic traits were high among males when compared with females.

Miller et al. (2011) said that narcissistic individuals engage in such behavior to enhance their self-image such as posting selfies on social media platforms to gain more attention from their peers specifically males are aligning with current findings where higher narcissism is associated with posting more selfies'. Marwick (2013) also mentioned in this study that social media use can be differ by gender, men are more likely to engage in self-promotional behaviors such as most frequent posting of selfies.

The results showed that there is a no difference in males and females' self-esteem on posting selfies on social accounts. Yildiz (2016), said women who score high on self-esteem post more selfies than men and Justin Peo (2015), stated that females with high on self-esteem shared more selfies on Instagram.

Lee et al. (2015) found that female post more selfies and engage in social comparison than male. This might be due to societal demands and gender norms that give more emphasis on appearance and self-presentation for female.

Dhir, Pallesen, and Torsheim (2016) discussed that posting selfies can temporarily boost self-esteem through positive comments on selfies while on the other hand it may also increase anxiety and self-doubt if they received negative comments. This dual effect underscores the complex relationship between selfie posting and self-esteem.

### Conclusion

This study was carried out to investigate the relationship of selfies on individual's self-esteem, and narcissistic features who click and post their selfies on social networking sites. The analysis of the results of this study indicated significant and noticeable difference between men and women self-esteem and narcissism through selfie posting on social networking sites. Based on results of present study, it is concluded that men are more narcissistic than females and post more selfies on daily

basis to gain more attention and appraisal from others. It is also indicated by the results that females and males with high self-esteem post more selfies on social networking sites. It is also noted that self-esteem and narcissism are interrelated variables. It means that one who scores high on self-esteem may also score high on another variable.

### Limitations and Suggestions

1. The first limitation of the study was that data was collected from Peshawar with small sample size. For future research data must be collected nationwide to get more accurate results.
2. This study only focuses on two social apps Instagram and Facebook while future research could include other social apps such as Snapchat and Twitter in their study.
3. For future research it's recommended to include children in samples because nowadays children are more involved in social apps and act of clicking and posting selfies and explore how selfie affects their self-esteem and increase narcissistic traits in them.

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