




Gender Differentials in Self-Esteem of Adolescents with Selfie Addiction

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ABSTRACT

An investigation was planned during the year 2016 to observe the effect of selfie addiction on self-esteem across two genders and locales. The data was collected from 360 rural and urban school going adolescents (studying in 10th, 11th and 12th grades) using Self-Structured Selfie Addiction Checklist consisting of three levels: borderline (0–4 scores), acute (5–9 score) and chronic (10–14 scores) in addition to Self-Esteem Inventory to assess three levels of self-esteem. The study was conducted in schools of Ludhiana District, India in the year 2017. The results showed that in the case of borderline selfie addiction, a larger proportion of girls in comparison to boys had low self-esteem, while higher number of boys in contrast to girls demonstrated a high level of self-esteem. At the acute and chronic levels of selfie addiction, no gender differences were discovered. This shows that boys in comparison to girls had higher self-esteem. Moreover, across all three levels of selfie addiction, urban boys exhibited higher self-esteem than urban girls, although no significant gender differences were found in rural adolescents. The findings showed that boys had better mean scores of self-esteem than girls.

KEYWORDS: Adolescents, gender, photographs, selfie, selfie addiction, selfitis, self-esteem, smartphones

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Data Availability Statement: Legal restrictions are imposed on the public sharing of raw data. However, authors have full right to transfer or share the data in raw form upon request subject to either meeting the conditions of the original consents and the original research study. Further, access of data needs to meet whether the user complies with the ethical and legal obligations as data controllers to allow for secondary use of the data outside of the original study.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Selfies are pictures of oneself shot with a mobile phone or a camera. It is also a practice—a gesture delivering different impressions to various persons, societies, and viewers. Nowadays, selfie posters are attaining popularity on social networking sites leading to uploading of millions of selfies on various social networking sites. A limited literature is available about how selfies exhibit the personalities of the persons who clicks selfies or how others perceive the personalities of others based on selfies. This gesture of taking selfie may be diminished, improved or transformed by social media censorship, social censure and the sender's original intent can be misread (Wade, 2014; Kaur and Vig, 2016).

Taking “selfies” is now officially classified as a mental illness by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). Selfitis is a disorder in which a person has an obsessive-compulsive need to snap images and posting them on social networking sites to regain the lost self-esteem and bridge the gap in closeness (Oppong et al., 2022). According to the American Psychological Association, there are three levels of the disorder namely borderline selfitis, acute selfitis and chronic selfitis. In the first level (borderline selfitis) people clicks their own pictures at least three times in 24 hours but do not post them on social media sites, while in the second level (acute selfitis) people click their own selfies at least three times in 24 hours and post each image to social networking sites and lastly in third level (chronic selfitis) people have irresistible craving for clicking their selfies and uploading them on social networking sites more than 6 times in 24 hours (Varma et al., 2020). Hence, users should be made aware and educated regarding the harmful use of mobile phone use as it affects mental health (Ganguly 2011).

There have been various studies showing relationship between selfies and self-esteem. The snap-happy young adult's whose selfies are widely spread on the internet agreed that behind their smiles, there is a low self-esteem (Kaur et al., 2018). Individuals with low self-esteem click about 6 selfies on an average in a week, on persons with high self-esteem took an average of 8 selfies week (Alblooshi, 2015). A survey conducted at Sion Hospital revealed that the majority of selfie addicts were females among school students who were insecure and self-obsessed (Pal, 2015).

A significant relationship has been reported between people's gender and how many selfies they took along with the findings that women takes and upload more images than men (Manovich et al., 2014). Further, a strong connection between low self-esteem, narcissism, loneliness, self-centeredness and attention looking behaviour and selfie addiction has been also recognized. Getting involved in taking selfies is an indicator of an individual's lacked confidence further resulting in other

psychological problems. Additionally, unreasonable and progressively provocative clicking selfies is behaviour to seek attention. Just like with other forms of socially unexpected behaviour, the attention which is sought through selfie is not the one which a person really needs. This behaviour can be understood as unconsciously crying for help (Rutledge, 2013). Results of a study conducted by Mubeen (2022) revealed that selfie addiction was higher in boys whereas girls had better psychological well-being as compared to boys. Social media give rise to anxiety and stress in college going students (Tolly, 2014). A 21-year-old female argued that her nose was defective, despite the fact that it was fine. Regularly sharing photographs to social media sites, peer influences, and the “selfie culture” have all contributed to this narcissistic traits bordering on mental illness (Anonymous). Keeping in view the above discussion the present research was carried out to explore the gender differences in self-esteem of rural and urban adolescents across 3 levels of selfie addiction.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Participants and setting

The study was conducted at Kalghidar Academy, Village Jaspal Bangar, Dashmesh Public School, Village Gill, Greenfield Public School, Village Sudhar, Bhartiya Vidhya Mandir Senior Secondary School, Kitchlu Nagar, Greenland Public School, Chandigarh Road in the year 2016. A complete list of all rural and urban public schools of Ludhiana district was procured from office of the District Education Officer. Two urban and three rural public schools were randomly selected and the concerned teachers were contacted to obtain the data of the students in matriculation and high school. These students were given self-constructed Selfie Addiction Checklist consisting of three levels: borderline (0–4 scores), acute (5–9 score) and chronic (10–14 scores). From this checklist data, 180 rural and urban adolescents each were equally distributed across 3 levels of selfie addiction i.e. borderline (n=60), acute (n=60) and chronic (n=60) using random quota sampling technique. Further, the sample was equally distributed over the genders (boys n=30 and girls n=30). Adolescents from each addiction group were also given a Self-Esteem questionnaire to assess their self-esteem.

2.2. Measurements

2.2.1. Self-structured selfie addiction checklist

A checklist of 14 items was prepared to identify rural and urban adolescents across three levels of selfie addiction i.e. borderline (0–4 scores), acute (5–9 score) and chronic (10–14 scores). After pre-testing on sample of 15 non-sampled adolescents randomly selected, the reliability of the checklist was calculated by using split-half method and

it was found to be 0.96. For rural adolescents, the checklist was translated in vernacular language.

2.2.2. Self-esteem inventory

The evaluation of self-esteem of adolescents of rural and urban areas was done using Adult form of Coopersmith (1986). The inventory consists of 25 items and is designed to measure evaluative attitudes towards the self in academic, family, social along with personal areas of experience. For rural adolescents, the inventory was translated in vernacular language. Self-esteem was studied across three levels i.e. low (0-8 scores), average (9-17 scores) and high (18-25 scores).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It has become so popular to take pictures of oneself with mobile device or webcam that a new term has been

coined as selfie (Singh and Lippmann, 2017). But it has been found that there has been an obsessive craving to take photos of one’s self and post them on social media as a way to make up for the lack of esteem and to fill a gap in intimacy (Kaur and Vig, 2016). A current study on selfie has shown that both males and females use selfies for self-presentation reasons and for the identification of gender (Katz and Crocker, 2015). However, gender differences exist in the way self-presentation is made through selfies; for example, Qiu et al. (2015) witnessed that females are more likely to take selfies than males. So, an investigation was planned to see the gender differences in self-esteem of adolescents with selfie addiction. The gender differences in self-esteem of adolescents across various levels of selfie addiction are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Gender differences in self-esteem of adolescents across various levels of selfie addiction N=360

Levels of self-esteem	Levels of selfie addiction								
	Borderline			Acute			Chronic		
	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)	Z-Value	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)	Z-Value	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)	Z-Value
	f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)	
Low	0 (0.0)	4 (6.67)	2.03*	2 (3.33)	4 (6.67)	0.84	2 (3.33)	2 (3.33)	0.00
Medium	37 (61.67)	45 (75.00)	1.57	51 (85.00)	51 (85.00)	0.00	58 (96.67)	58 (96.67)	0.00
High	23 (38.33)	11 (18.33)	2.43*	7 (11.67)	5 (8.33)	0.61	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0.00

*Significant at (p=0.05) level. Figures in parenthesis denote %

The gender difference across various levels of selfie addiction indicated that in case of borderline selfie addiction higher number of girls (6.67%) in contrast to boys showed significantly (Z=2.03; p<0.05) low level of self-esteem, while none of the boys had low level of self-esteem. Further, significantly (Z=2.43; p<0.05) a greater number of boys with borderline selfie addiction (38.33%) had high level of self-esteem as compared to girls (18.33%). No significant gender differentials were found at acute and chronic level of selfie addiction. It could be concluded that high self-esteem was observed in boys in contrast to girls. These results can be related with the results of Duggan and Smith (2013) who found that adolescent boys (about 52%) expressed online that they have had an experience through a social media that enhanced their confidence. A study on adolescents (11-16 year-old age group) in European countries namely Spain, UK, and Italy revealed that girls are obsessed with getting more likes, and they post semi-nude photographs (Mascheroni et al., 2015). Moreover, Madden (2013)

reported that 91% of the people surveyed had posted at least one selfie online. They account for almost 33% of all photos taken in 2014 by people between the ages of 25-33. Moreover, a connection between poor self-esteem and selfie addiction was reported (Table 2).

shows mean scores and standard deviation (Means±S.D.) of self-esteem of boys and girls across various levels of selfie addiction. The analysis of mean scores of boys and girls indicated that in case of borderline selfie addiction no gender differentials were observed. However, boys (13.71±2.39) with acute selfie addiction had higher mean value against mean value of girls (12.69±1.95). This difference was found to be statistically significant. In case of chronic selfie addiction, the mean value of boys with low(8.00±0.00) and medium(11.88±2.08) self-esteem was found to be significantly higher than girls. This indicated that whether the self-esteem was low or medium, boys had better mean scores of self-esteem than girls. These results can be correlated with findings that around 60% of females

Table 2: Gender differences in mean scores (\pm S.D.) of self-esteem of adolescents across various levels of selfie addiction N=360

Levels of self-esteem	Levels of selfie addiction								
	Borderline			Acute			Chronic		
	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)	t value	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)	t value	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)	t value
Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD		Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD		Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD		
Low	0.00 \pm 0.00	6.75 \pm 0.96	0	7.50 \pm 0.71	7.50 \pm 1.00	0	8.00 \pm 0.00	6.50 \pm 0.71	4.21*
Medium	14.70 \pm 2.28	14.53 \pm 2.19	0.38	13.71 \pm 2.39	12.69 \pm 1.95	2.16*	11.88 \pm 2.08	10.67 \pm 1.47	3.02*
High	18.83 \pm 1.15	19.09 \pm 0.94	0.58	19.43 \pm 1.27	19.40 \pm 1.95	0.07	0.00 \pm 0.00	0.00 \pm 0.00	0

*Significant at ($p=0.05$)

suffer from 'selficide' without realising it (Sharma, 2017). Moreover, an investigation by Saxena (2017) showed that the women who were found to have selfie-addiction also had low self-esteem and almost 50% of them got annoyed if they were not able to take a good selfie. The selfie addicts

were also found to have insomnia, increased feelings of loneliness and also showed signs of narcissism.

The locale wise gender differentials in self-esteem of rural adolescents across various levels of selfie addiction are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Locale wise gender differentials in self-esteem of rural adolescents across various levels of selfie addiction N=180

Levels of self-esteem	Levels of selfie addiction								
	Borderline			Acute			Chronic		
	Rural Boys (n=30)	Rural Girls (n=30)	Z-value	Rural Boys (n=30)	Rural Boys (n=30)	Z-value	Rural Boys (n=30)	Rural Boys (n=30)	Z-value
	f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)	
Low	0 (0.00)	1 (1.11)	1.01	1 (1.11)	0 (0.00)	1.01	2 (2.22)	0 (0.00)	1.44
Medium	18 (20.00)	22 (24.44)	1.10	24 (26.67)	25 (27.78)	0.33	28 (31.11)	30 (33.3)	1.44
High	12 (13.33)	7 (7.78)	1.39	5 (5.56)	5 (5.56)	0.00	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0.00

*Significant at ($p=0.05$) level. Figures in parenthesis denote %

No significant ($p>0.05$) gender differentials were found across all the 3 levels of selfie addiction and self-esteem. Similarly, a study by Dutta et al. (2016) reported that selfies were taken by 42.6% of respondents on a regular basis and no gender difference was noticed. The investigation showed that girls (18.1%) and boys (15.2%) clicked more than four photographs every day on average.

The locale wise gender differentials in self-esteem of urban adolescents across various levels of selfie addiction are shown in Table 4.

The data revealed that significantly ($Z=2.09$; $p<0.05$) a greater number of boys with borderline selfie addiction

(12.22%) had shown high level of self-esteem as compared to girls (4.44%). However, in case of acute selfie addiction significantly ($Z=2.07$; $p<0.05$, $z=5.94$; $p<0.05$) a greater number of girls were found with low (4.44%) and medium (28.90%) level of self-esteem as compared to boys. In contrast, significantly ($z=7.01$; $p<0.05$) a greater number of boys (30%) had shown high level of self-esteem as none of the girl was found with high self-esteem. In chronic level of selfie addiction significantly ($Z=2.82$; $p<0.05$) more number of girls (31.11%) showed medium level of self-esteem as compared to boys (21.11%). In contrast, significantly ($Z=3.67$; $p<0.05$) a greater number of boys with chronic level of selfie addiction (12.22%) had high level of self-

Table 4: Gender differentials in self-esteem of urban adolescents across various levels of selfie addiction N=180

Levels of self-esteem	Levels of selfie addiction								
	Borderline			Acute			Chronic		
	Urban Boys (n=30)	Urban Girls (n=30)	Z- value	Urban Boys (n=30)	Urban Girls (n=30)	Z- value	Urban Boys (n=30)	Urban Girls (n=30)	Z- value
	f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)	
Low	0 (0.00)	3 (3.33)	1.78	0 (0.00)	4 (4.44)	2.07*	0 (0.00)	2 (2.22)	1.44
Medium	19 (2.11)	23 (25.56)	1.13	3 (3.33)	26 (28.90)	5.94*	19 (21.11)	28 (31.11)	2.82*
High	11 (12.22)	4 (4.44)	2.09*	27 (30)	0 (0.00)	7.01*	11 (12.22)	0 (0.00)	3.67*

*Significant at ($p=0.05$) level. Figures in parenthesis denote %

esteem and none of the girl was found with high level of self-esteem. It could be concluded that urban boys across all the three levels of selfie addiction had better self-esteem as compared to urban girls.

4. CONCLUSION

The large proportion of girls was having low self-esteem in comparison to the boys. Moreover, girls clicked selfies to prove their self-worth. It could be concluded that urban boys across all the three levels of selfie addiction had better self-esteem as compared to urban girls.

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