Exploring selfie-posting behaviour of contemporary youth

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ABSTRACT

The increasing centrality of online visual self-presentation might increase youths' appearance-related concerns, problematic monitoring, and photo manipulation. The aim of the present study was to understand the selfie- posting behavior of contemporary youth. To accomplish this a survey questionnaire of selfie posting was developed after doing review of literature, studying previous surveys and expert suggestions. An informed consent was developed by the present researchers. Participants included 120 college-going youths of various age groups between18-28. The snowball sampling method as well as purposive sampling method was used. After collection of data descriptive statistics was used to analyze it. The findings highlight varying degrees of selfie engagement and preferences for seeking assistance in capturing selfies. It also highlights the varied approaches individuals have towards both taking and sharing selfies on social media platforms. The findings suggest that individuals share selfies online primarily to document life moments and connect with others, while their appearance range from confidence and satisfaction to experimentation with new styles or occasional dissatisfaction. Participants' decisions on posting selfies are influenced by various factors such as appearance, mood, and events. They aim to convey emotions like happiness and confidence, with self- esteem influenced by personal achievements, social acceptance, and external validation, among other factors. It also provides insights into individuals' attitudes, behaviors and motivations related to taking, editing, and sharing selfies on social media platforms. This study also illustrates varying attitudes towards beauty standards, self- perception, and the portrayal of natural appearance on social media platforms.

Keywords: Selfie, Selfie posting, Youth, Social media.

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INTRODUCTION

Within the past decade, social networking has become a hugely popular form of online communication, especially among youth. Facebook, Instagram, snapchat are among some of the most widely used social media platforms available and can be accessed via computer, smartphone, computer tablet, and through other forms of technology. Social medias are interactive and allows individuals to create their own personal profiles and share information and photos with users on their social media. So, in recent years, the ubiquity of smartphones and social media platforms has given rise to cultural phenomenon called the selfie. Selfie has gained sanctions in our lifestyle. From celebrities to ordinary individuals, the act of capturing one's own image has become an integral part of daily life.

According to Merriam- Webster, Selfie is an image that includes oneself (often with another person or as part of a group) and is taken by oneself using a digital camera especially for posting on social networks.

According to Cambridge Dictionary, Selfie is a photograph that you take of yourself, usually with a mobile phone, and post on social media.

According to Oxford Language, Selfie is a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically ne taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media.

Most people like taking at least one or two selfies on special occasions, including the older generation. The younger crowd seems to be especially involved in the trend, mainly because teens and the 18-34 demographic are heavier digital users than the older counterparts. Selfies are taken for social media purposes, its then typically uploaded to sites like Instagram,

Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter. The user users connect to their friends/ audiences in completely visual ways.

Origin or History of Selfies

The term selfie itself is probably Australian slang used to describe a self-portrait photograph using Australian lingo. Australians tend to end their words with 'i.e., as they call a barbecue "barbie", a firefighter as a "fire" and a can of beer a "tinnie". So naturally, the word self-photo became the word "selfie" that we all have a love-hate relationship with.

In 2013, the Oxford English Dictionary announced the word "selfie" and it was the "Word of the Year". And gradually, the selfie became a global phenomenon, with people from all walks of life adopting the practice. Celebrities, politicians, and even world leaders embraced the selfie as a way to connect with their audiences and humanize their public image.

Evolution of the Selfie

The selfie culture has evolved over time undoubtedly an unmistakable hallmark of the internet age. Since its inception, selfies have evolved significantly due to advances in technology and changes in social media culture. Initially, selfies were mainly taken using digital cameras or by placing oneself in front of a mirror. However, the advent of smartphones with front -facing cameras revolutionized the way people take selfies. The ability to see oneself in real time on the screen made it easier to capture the perfect shot, leading to the rise of selfie culture.

One notable trend that emerged from the selfie culture was the "duck face", where individuals would 'pout' their lips and create a provocative expression. While this trend has lost some popularity over the years, it showcases how selfies can influence and perpetuate new visual trends. The selfie has become a versatile form of self -expression, with various types and styles emerging over the years. From fun and playful to artistic and meaning, here are some of the different types of selfies:

The Classic Selfies- this is the most common types of selfies, where the person holds the camera or smartphone at arm's length and captures their face or face and upper body.

The Mirror Selfies- Taken in front of mirror, this type of selfies allows the person to show off their full outfit or capture a different angle of themselves.

The Group Selfie- Also known as a "groupie", this selfie involves multiple people in the frame. It is a fun way to capture shared experiences and memories with friends or family.

The Couple Selfie- A selfie taken by two people in a romantic relationship, showcasing their connection and shared moments.

The Travel Selfie- taken in iconic or scenic locations, travel selfies allow individuals to document their adventures with others.

The Fitness Selfie- Popular among fitness enthusiasts, this type of selfie showcases workout progress, body transformations, or gym routines to inspire and motivate others.

The Pet Selfie- Often featuring adorable pets, this type of selfie is a favorite among animal lovers, capturing the special bond between humans and their furry companions.

The Food Selfie- Commonly seen on social media, food selfies capture delicious meals and desserts, showcasing culinary experiences or cooking skills.

The Makeup Selfie- With the rise of beauty influencers, makeup selfies showcase creative and skillful makeup looks, often accompanied by product recommendations and tips.

The Candid Selfie- This type of selfie is taken in the spur of the moment, capturing genuine emotions and unposed expressions, providing a glimpse into the person's daily life.

The Artistic Selfie- These selfies go beyond the typical self- portrait and aim to convey a deeper message or reflect the person's artistic vision. They often involve creative compositions, experimental angles, or unique editing techniques.

These are just few examples of the different types of selfies that have emerged in our selfie- centric culture. However, it's important to remember that the most important aspect of any selfie is personal meaning behind it. Selfies allow individuals to express themselves, celebrate moments, share experiences and connect with others in a dynamic and visual way.

Effects of Selfies

Selfies have become a prominent part of our digital culture, influencing how we perceive ourselves and interact with others. Like any form of self- expression, selfies have both the positive and negative effects:

Positive Effects

- Self -Expression and Empowerment
- Boosting Self- Confidence
- Building Connections
- Documenting Memories
- Spreading Awareness and advocacy

Negative Effects

- Self- Obsession and Validation Seeking
- Unrealistic Beauty Standards
- Comparison and Fear of Missing Out

- distraction and Narcissism
- Invasion of Privacy

Hence, selfies are a way for a subject to control how he or she is presented online, but when overused, they are often viewed as narcissistic. Some people use filters or photoshop to hide physical flaws and gain likes or positive comments over social media. They also may be used by subjects to document daily events and activities. However, as a result of some negative reaction to selfies, parodies have become common. In this case, the subject attempts to look as unattractive as possible by making a funny face or striking an unflattering pose.

Selfie Posting

It is no longer news that social networking sites (SNSs) are now a major platform for communication, as well as for relationship building and management in daily life. SNSs are shown to have significant impact on the social and cultural norms for communication and relationships by serving as a venue for individuals to present themselves, acquire information, and establish and maintain relationships with others.

Taking and posting selfies on social networking sites (SNSs) have gained popularity recently. The recent development of mobile technologies (e.g., smartphones), along with the proliferation of photo- sharing SNSs, such as Instagram and Snapchat, has allowed individuals to present themselves more quickly and easily than ever in the digital social environment. While self- presentation is mostly in the form of textual and visual representation, photos appear to be much more effective for self- expression and impression management.

Selfie posting behavior among youths is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors. Some of the factors are:

Frequency of Posting: Many youths engage in frequent selfie posting on social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, etc. Some may post multiple selfies daily, while others do so less frequently but still regularly.

Motivations

Social Validation: Posting selfies can be a way for youths to seek validation and approval from their peers. The number of likes, comments, and shares on a selfie can contribute to their sense of self-worth and popularity.

Self-Presentation: Selfies allow youths to curate and control their online image, presenting themselves in a way that aligns with their desired identity or the image they want to project to others.

Identity Expression: Selfies serve as a means for youths to express their individuality, interests, and personality traits. They may use different poses, filters, and captions to convey aspects of their identity.

Connection and Social Interaction: Posting selfies enables youths to maintain connections with friends and peers, as well as to interact with them through likes, comments, and direct messages.

Influence of Peer Culture: Peer influence plays a significant role in selfie posting behavior among youths. Trends and norms within peer groups, as well as societal beauty standards and ideals, can shape how and what types of selfies are posted.

Emotional Impact: While selfie posting can provide moments of validation and connection, it can also lead to negative emotions such as anxiety, self-consciousness, and FOMO (fear of missing out). Comparison with others' seemingly perfect or glamorous selfies may contribute to feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem.

Privacy and Security Concerns: Posting selfies on public social media platforms raises privacy and security considerations for youths. They may not fully grasp the potential consequences of sharing personal information and images online, including risks such as cyberbullying, stalking, and identity theft.

Cultural and Gender Differences: Selfie posting behavior may vary across cultures and genders. Cultural norms regarding modesty, individualism, and beauty standards can influence how youths approach selfie posting. Additionally, research suggests that girls tend to post more selfies than boys and may face different social expectations and pressures related to their online image.

Biolcati, R., & Passini, S. (2018), in their study, over the past few years found that social networking site usage has increased rapidly. In the academic literature, some studies have recently analyzed the psychological antecedents of selfie posting behavior to better understand its underlying mechanism. Bodroža, B., Obradović, V., & Ivanović, S. (2022) in their study on online social networks has indicated that it is appropriate to differentiate between active and passive use of these services, especially since they often have reverse effects on well-being. This study focused on Instagram selfies as a specific form of Instagram activity. Chae, J. (2017), in his study explored the predictors of selfie-posting, but rarely investigated selfie-editing, a virtual makeover for online self-presentation. This study, based on social comparison theory, examined a psychological pathway from individual characteristics to selfie-editing behavior through social comparison. Dhir, A., Pallesen, S., Torsheim, T., & Andreassen, C. S. (2016), in their study explains that, recently scholars have started examining selfie-related behavior, with an emphasis on young women. However, little is known about age and gender differences in selfie-taking and posting patterns. Shin, Y., Kim, M., Im, C., & Chong, S. C. (2017), in their study found that the phenomenon of taking and sharing

selfies has become widespread in everyday life. However, previous studies on the selfie have not dealt with the effect of the experience of a selfie. Wang, Y., Wang, X., Liu, H., Xie, X., Wang, P., & Lei, L. (2020), in their study examined whether selfie-posting was positively associated with women's self-esteem and whether this association was mediated by positive feedback and body satisfaction.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the reasons behind editing the selfie before posting on social media among youth

2. To explore the selection criteria behind selfie posting on social media among youth

Participants

Nowadays people take a lot of photos or selfies of themselves at the same time. But they only post what they like the most, while all the photos are their own. This is most commonly seen in today's youth whether it is a girl or a boy. Not only this, sometimes they even need to edit their own photos. In this study, youth were the target participants, which included 120 youths of various age groups between 18-28. Responses were collected through Google Forms. In this survey, purposive sampling as well as snowball sampling methods was used to select the participants.

Inclusion Criteria

Youth knowing basic English language were included.

The individuals falling in the age group of 18 – 28 years were included in this study.

Exclusion Criteria

The survey questionnaire was based on English language, so youth who were not well acquainted with this language were also not included in this study.

The individuals who were less than 18 years of age and more than 28 years of age were excluded from this study.

Tools and Techniques

Different tools and techniques were used in this survey. A detailed description of different tools and techniques used in this study are as follows:

Informed consent

Informed consent was developed by the present researchers and is mandatorily collected from the participants. It was also ensured that they understood the information, that they had the opportunity to ask questions and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. It was also told that the participant's data will remain private and confidential.

Socio-demographic sheet

It is a document or questionnaire used to collect information about the demographic and social characteristics of individuals participating in a study or research. Socio- Demographic sheet contains age, gender, educational level, Employment status, and Personal mobile phone.

Survey questionnaire

Due to unavailability of a standard scale related to selfie posting behaviors, questions were created by the investigators. This survey questionnaire contains 16 questions, in which the questions related to selfie editing and posting were included. The survey questionnaire link was formed with the help of google form.

Procedure

The survey questionnaire was sent to the participants. The questionnaire along with the informed consent and socio-demographic sheet was sent to youths using various social sites like WhatsApp, Instagram, e-mail, etc.

Data Collection

The data was collected by administering the survey on the targeted participants that is youths between 18-28 years. The survey link was created using a Google Forms. The online mode for collection of data was preferred to check the direct relation. Consent was taken from all the participants. Socio-Demographic Sheet was provided to respondents and relevant information was gathered. After that, the responses for each question were collected for the survey. The youth's responses were collected through Google Forms. A total 120 responses were collected, out of which 115 gave their consent to procced and participate in the study and these responses were analyzed further using Descriptive Statistics.

Data Analysis

Main purpose was to explore and primarily understand the need of the study. First, Socio – Demographic Sheet was analyzed for some of the relevant data in terms of frequency, mean, average, percentage, or ratio. Due to exploratory nature of the study, each question was analyzed accordingly to each number of responses quantitatively by cataloguing. Mean, frequency, percentage, and ratio techniques were employed for item wise analysis on current data set and result was drawn. The supervisor along with the researchers reviewed the result and after clarification and identification of the selfie - posting and editing behavior of youth on social media.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The purpose or aim of the study was to understand the selfie editing and selfie posting behavior of contemporary youth. The main focus of this study is to understand the reason behind editing the selfie before posting on social media, to

know the selecting criteria behind clicking more than 2 selfies and posting one of them on social media. Total number of responses came were 120, in which 115 participants were willing to participate in the study.

In all the responses, the participation of females were slightly more than the males as females contributed 53% of the responses while males contributed 47% of the total responses. According to the employment status, large number of students were participated in this study which is 82.6% of the total responses, 12.2% of the participants are employed, 2.6% of the participants are self-employed and 2.6% of the participants are unemployed.

With respect to educational qualification, the participants were divided in several educational background and it was analyzed that 54% of the participants were graduated, 17.4% of the participants were 12th passed out, 13% of the participants were pursuing graduation, 12.2% of the participants were post graduated and the percentage of 10th and 12th passed out were 0.9% each.

Now the first part of the research, starts with the survey questionnaire which dealt with the questions about selfie editing and posting behavior. The first question was about do they like taking selfies or not, so 71.3% of the participants likes to take selfies while 28.7% of the participants don't like to take selfies.

When it was asked about, has it ever happened that they asked someone else in their group to take selfies, then the responses came were 32.2% of the participants always ask someone else in the group to take selfies, 33% of the participants sometimes ask someone else in the group to take selfies, 23.5% of the participants occasionally ask someone else in the group to take selfies and 9% of the participants never ask someone else in the group to take selfies. Apart from this, 1.8% of the participants chosen 'other' option and specified their opinion where they said "very few times because every time I am the taller one", another one said, "never I have done selfies type stupid work".

When it was questioned that how many selfies they take at a time when they start clicking selfies, then it can be seen that 20% of the participants clicks only 1 selfie at a time, maximum number that is 49.6% of the participants clicks 2-4 selfies at a time, very few numbers that is 7% of the participants click 5-7 selfies and 23.5% of the participants clicks selfies until they click a good picture.

Another question was about how frequently do they post selfies on social media, then it was analyzed that, 53% of the participants rarely posts selfies on social media, 33.9% of the participants posts their selfies occasionally, 7% of the participants posts their selfies few times a week and very few

percentages of participants post their selfies Multiple times a day and once a day that is 3.5% and 2.6% respectively.

When it was asked that what motivates them to share selfies online, then the responses were documenting life moments motivates 44.3% of the participants, connecting with others motivates 18.3% of the participants, sharing experiences motivates 29.6% of the participants to share their selfies online. Apart from this 8% of the participants responded on 'other' option and specified their views, where most of them said that, there is no specific reason, while the other said that girls motivate them to share selfies, another opinion was "it's a way to represent myself", and one of them said he don't like sharing their selfies on social media. Some of them said that they agree with all the above options.

When it was questioned that, what do they think about their appearance in the selfie, the responses obtained were, 42.6% of the participants feel Confident and Satisfied about their appearance in the selfie, while 35.7% of the participant think about Casual and natural appearance in the selfies, 15.7% of the participants Experiment with a new style in term of selfie appearance and 4.3% were not happy with how they look in selfies. Apart from this, 1.8% of the participation have different opinion in which one of them said that selfie should be good looking and another one said that he never thought about appearance in the selfie.

In another question, it was asked that how do they decide which selfies to post and which ones to keep private then the participants responded as, maximum number that is 33.9% of participants choose the selfies based on appearance to post on social media. 20% of the participants decide on the basis of mood or emotions in photo, 28.7% of the participants decide on the basis of events or special occasions and 13.9% of the participants randomly select the photos to post on social media. Apart from this 3.6% of them chosen 'others' option and specified their opinion. They said, they decide based on their opinion in which they look good, other said they can't decide. Some of them agreed with all the above options.

What emotions do they aim to convey through their selfies, in this question the responses that were collected are as 53% of the participants aim to convey Happiness through their selfies. Equal that is 15.7% of the participants aim to convey Confidence as well as Bold and beautiful through their selfies, 11.3% of the participants aim to convey thoughtfulness through their selfies. And 4.5% of the participant has chosen 'others' option and specified their opinion where one of them said "look babe how much of happiness you are missing" and other said they can't coney their emotions, while one of them said he try to convey all the above option.

In another question it was asked by the participants that what factor contribute to their self- esteem when it comes to their physical appearance in selfies, they responded as 38.3% of responded agreed with the third option that is both Personal achievement and External validation contribute to their self -esteem when it comes to their physical appearance in selfies. But factor, Personal achievement is chosen by 37.4% of the participants, while 7% of the participants chosen External validation.13.9% of the participants responded on Social Acceptance as the contributing factor to their self-esteem. Apart from this, 3.6% of the participants opted 'others' option and specified their views where they said "happy to be the person I'm", another one said "overall, it is the era of show off so good pictures automatically boost up the self- respect", one of them said "I don't think about physical appearance, as I never clicked selfies". While one of them don't agree with any of the options above.

With respect to the question that how frequently do they engage in editing their selfies before posting them on social media, some different responses obtained such as maximum number (40.9%) of respondent Rarely edit their selfies before posting them on social media. 18.3% of the participants Occasionally edit their selfies, 25.2% of the participants Sometimes edit their selfies, 16.1% of the participants Frequently edit their selfies and some (9.6%) of them Always edit their selfies before posting them on social media.

It was also asked that when they are planning to use filters or edit the selfies then how it enhances or alter the image, the responses are like, maximum that is 47% of the participants uses Light filters for enhancement. Also, 38.3% of the respondent uses no filter for their selfies.10.4% of the participants uses artistic filters for a unique style, very less that is 2.6% participants use extensive editing for a polished look and 1.8% of the participants opted 'other' option and specified their views where one of them said "depends what is the target", and another one said "answer missing".

When the participants were asked that do they believe that the edited version of their selfies is a more accurate representation of themselves than the original, 51.3% of the participants didn't believe that the edited version of their selfies is more accurate representation of themselves than the original and 28.7% of the participants believe that the edited version of their selfies is a more accurate representation of themselves than the original. 17.4% of the participants were unsure about it and 2.7% of the participants had different opinion about it. Where one of them definitely agreed with that the edited version of the selfies is more accurate representation of themselves than the original. While one of them said, "sometimes as camera can't capture accurate photo always due to lack of lighting angle etc." and another

one said "answer missing".

The participants were questioned that do they believe that social media platforms contribute to unrealistic beauty standards, so it is clear that social medias platform contributes to unrealistic beauty standards as maximum that is 37.4% of the respondent agreed and 40.9% of the respondent strongly agreed with the statement. 7.4% of the participants responded on 'neutral'. While 3.5% of the participants Disagree and 0.9% of the participants Strongly disagree with the statement.

When the participants were asked about how satisfied are they with their natural, unedited appearance in selfies, Maximum that is 31.3% of the participants are very satisfied and 41.7% of the participants are satisfied with their natural, unedited appearance in their selfies. 23.5% of the participants responded on 'neutral' while 2.6% of the participants dissatisfied and 0.9% of the participants very dissatisfied with the statement.

When they were asked about how likely are they to post unedited selfies on social media, 13.1% of the participant are very likely to posts unedited selfies, maximum participants that is 34.8% of the participants are likely posting unedited selfies on social medias. 33.9% of the participants responded of neutral. While 7.8% of the participants unlikely posts unedited selfies and 4.3% of the participants very unlikely post unedited selfies on social media.

When the participants were questioned about how do they feel when they see unedited, natural selfies of others on social media, it was analyzed that 62.6% of the participants which is above average, feels inspired when they see unedited, natural selfies of others on social medias. 27% of the participants feels indifferent, 5.2% of the participants feels insecure when they see unedited, natural selfies of others on social media. Apart from this, 4.5% of the participants responded on 'others' option and specified their views. Where one of them said, "if the picture is good no worries, then", while another one said, "I am confused about the strength of the individual to accept himself/herself". One of them said, "disappointed", while another said, "nothing". One of them said, "answer missing".

CONCLUSION

Comparisons with existing studies showed similar findings, such as the desire for ideal online self-presentation and the relationship between selfie-editing frequency and social appearance anxiety. Overall, participants felt inspired when seeing unedited selfies of others, despite the influence of social media on beauty standards.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on research findings, interventions can be developed to promote healthier selfie behavior among youth. These interventions may include educational programs, workshops,

or digital interventions delivered via social media platforms.

Research on the psychological effects of selfie behavior can inform efforts to support the mental health and well-being of youths. Understanding how different aspects of selfie posting and editing relate to variables such as stress, anxiety, depression, and overall life satisfaction can guide the development of targeted interventions and support services.

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