CO-RELATIONAL STUDY OF SELFIE AND SELF-ESTEEM; WOMEN USING SELFIE ON SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE LOCKDOWN IN INDIA

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Abstract

The self-esteem of an individual narrates the story of self-worth and how much that individual values himself or herself. India as a country is advancing; we are living in an internet era where almost every individual is having a Smartphone. Covid-19 Lockdown has triggered the use of smartphones and internet consumption. Women in India are still struggling through the patriarchal society where they face many issues on a daily basis. They face both psychological and mental health issues and one of the major mental health issues faced is lower levels of self-esteem in women. Social media consumption of women has increased and with that also increased the selfie clicking and posting by women on social media which are affecting their self-esteem. The following paper is an attempt to study the self-esteem of the women who are using Facebook, clicking, and posting selfies on social media platforms. Six selfie factors were explored and a correlation between self-esteem and selfie factors was studied and presented.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Selfie, Covid-19, Women and mental health, Women and social media

Introduction

Women and their behavior vary from society to society as it depends on many factors like culture, education, economic background, power system, etc. The social media usage and self-presentation of women on social media also affect these behaviors highly (Öze, 2018). The popularity of Selfie is increasing day by day and has become an integral part of our lives. Selfies are liked to be clicked by both men and women but their popularity and usage are more in women as compared to men. In a study where 5000 phone images are analyzed, it was found that women use 8.6 times more selfies as compared to men, as women love to document their lives 5.4 times more as compared to men (Thomson, 2020). Women are more expressive and emotional and they find selfies as a mode to express themselves, it even helps them document the timeline of their lives. The use of selfies is helping women document and express themselves but this mode of expression and self-documentation is also bringing with it many psychological as well as social issues. Many studies show that women who are clicking selfies and using social media for posting them are facing many anxiety issues and these issues are further becoming a reason for body image-related problems, for example, feeling physically less attractive (S.Mills, Musto, Williams, & Tiggemann, 2018).

Further, these issues accelerate in the problem of lowering self-esteem in women. Selfies are becoming one of the reasons for lowering the self-esteem of women who are using them for show-off and other reasons on social media. Studies show that for social image-building selfies are used and further they seriously affect the personality, self-esteem, and confidence level of women using them (Biolcati, 2019). With covid-19 pandemic the communication

and its role have been revised, and the use of social media, the internet, and smartphones have increased. Connectivity with the internet has helped people isolated at home to connect with the outer world, and deal with boredom; anxiety, etc but at the same time certain problems related to social media usage has increased (González-Padilla & Blanco, 2020).

The following paper is an attempt to find out the effect that selfie clicking and posting behavior have on the self-esteem of women using them on social media, especially on Facebook. Six factors related to selfie-posting behavior were derived and a correlation with the self-esteem of the women using them is studied. The following study was conducted during the Covid-10 pandemic lockdown.

Theories, selfie and self-esteem

Social comparison theory: according to social comparison theory an individual connects socially with other people and collects information about these individuals, compares self, and does a self-analysis to rate their self higher or lower according to these comparisons (Festinger, 1954). Research clearly shows that self-comparison and representation on social media based on such comparisons not only affect self-esteem but also affect cognitive tasks and behaviors related to it (Toma, 2013). A study conducted on youngsters and their Facebook usage shows that social comparison also leads to a high level of neuroticism amongst people (GwendolynSeidman, 2013).

Social comparisons especially by the use of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram etc affect self-esteem levels and make one socially anxious. These comparisons could be downward or upward i.e. considering someone superior or inferior to self (Jiang & Ngien, 2020). Both the comparison no matter whether it is downward or upward can lead to social anxiety that one does by comparing the content they can access on the social media platforms.

Use and Gratification theory: Use and gratification is a very important communication theory that helps to understand user behavior when it comes to communication on various media platforms. When it comes to social networking sites the gratification that one gets is remarkably high and the user is posting the content according to the intention of this gratification that he/she is receiving (Hossain, Effects of uses and gratifications on social media use: The Facebook case with multiple mediator analysis, 2019). By studying Use and gratification one can find out five 'W' and one 'H' of the reasons behind the choice of a particular media or content by people i.e. why people choose a particular media and not alternative media. It also helps in explaining and identifying the motives of users and the kind of gratification that one gets out of one particular media (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011).

Self-esteem: Self-esteem is one's ability to evaluate one-own self of his or her self-worth and this evaluation is based on the beliefs that one has about oneself, like how good, honest, bad, loyal, etc one thinks he or she is (Hewitt, 2009). Talking about basic human needs self-esteem is also included, as according to Abraham Maslow it forms the basic human need as people want to be respected by others. These needs are in the form of recognition of one's

hard work or success, admiration of looks, assets, lifestyle, etc. It may even vary in form of self-love, confidence that one has, and achievements in form of skills, etc (Maslow, 1997).

Selfies are known to promote levels of narcissism amongst people. This self-love on social media in the form of self-representation has not only proved to increase the narcissism level it correlates with self-esteem too. Research studies show that this self-promotion on social media is increasing anti-social activities in people, people are getting angry with others if they fail to comment, dislike, leave any negative comment or criticism on their photograph, and status; It shows a negative relationship between this behavior and self-promotion (J.Carpenter, 2012). People with low esteem display social media behavior like writing hateful comments, trolling, updating pictures and content about their romantic partners, etc One of the reasons behind this is that these people want to attract more attention and want to feel good by all the like, comments they receive (Davis, 2016).

Women, Selfie and Self-Esteem

Women in Indian society have always been idolized in certain manners as we follow a patriarchal system in our society. Advertisers and marketers have also triggered and stereotyped the image of the women and created "the ideal women" a myth which has affected not only the personalities of women who don't fall under that category but it has also affect women socially and psychologically (G.P. & Unnithan, 2017). Selfie is also one of the factors which have added to increasing the stereotype created by the market about this ideal women image. All women who click a selfie wants to look beautiful; the following is evident by the increased use of filters and apps that enhance a selfie, high angle shots, filters that clear the skin and make one fair, filters that enhance the jaw-line and eyes are very popular and comes with a promise that they can make one beautiful like a celebrity. Researchers show that these selfie-clicking behaviors and using these filters for posting selfies on social media are leading to many psychological problems like increasing social sensitivity and further becoming the reason for low self-esteem levels in individuals (Shin, Kim, Im, & Chong, 2017).

As it has become evident that women are using selfies extensively so the mental issues related to selfies are also faced more by women. The usage of the internet and mobile phone has increased during the covid-19 pandemic in the entire world and with it, the usage of selfies has increased amongst women too (News18Buzz, 2021) (Subudhi & Palai, 2020). In an exploratory research, it was found that women identify selfies as body image projection, tools to form a social image, and a yardstick for ideal body type. Selfies are used to project an unreal image by the use of filters and other editing applications and features which is generating confusion and that is creating a fake personality (Grogan, Rothery, Cole, & Hall, 2018).

As selfies provide instant gratification it is believed that selfies can boost self-esteem and confidence with the number of likes, comments, etc one gets as it provides validation. It is also found that selfies are used to convey happiness and to show beauty, especially by millennials (Pounders, Kowalczyk, & Stowers, 2016). But the following in the long run has negative effects and could lead to affecting the self-esteem levels of an individual.

Research Objectives and Hypothesis

Self-esteem correlates with the selfie-clicking behavior of women using social media platforms. The objective of this research was to understand the factors which formulated these selfie clicking behavior and to find out the correlation that exists between those factors and self-esteem. The following are the hypotheses formed for the research and which were further tested.

H1: The use of selfies for social image construction on social media correlates with self-esteem.

H2: The self-esteem of women is also affected by the selfie-posting behavior.

H3: The gratification that women get by posting selfies also affects their self-esteem.

H4: The dual personality created by posting the selfie also affects the self-esteem of an individual.

H5: The body image presentation through selfies affects the self-esteem of women using social media.

H6: Selfie-clicking behavior is strongly correlated with self-esteem.

Research Methodology

The following research is women-based research where a survey was conducted on an (N=400) sample. The following samples are Facebook users who click and use selfies as a mode of communication on this social media platform. The following survey was conducted during July-august 2020, the Covid lockdown period because of which an online survey mode was conducted. The Snowball sampling method was chosen and the survey was given to 50 people through a convenient sampling method and they were asked to pass on the survey further. The survey was conducted on Indian women, from the age group of 16-60 years. To Introspect the issue and for deeper understanding expert interviews were also conducted. The experts were divided into four categories: social media experts, photography experts, psychology experts, and communication experts.

Rosenberg self-esteem scale: There are many standardized tools for measuring self-esteem levels amongst people. One of the popular and effective tools used in social science research is Rosenberg's self-esteem scale developed by Morris Rosenberg. The following is a ten-item Likert scale of four. The scale was divided into has 0 to 3 scores where zero is equal to strongly disagree to 3 is strongly agree. A score less than 15 indicate a less self-esteem levels ("Rosenberg Self-esteem scale") (Rosenberg, 1965). The following scale is used in the research to measure the self-esteem levels of the women who participated in the survey.
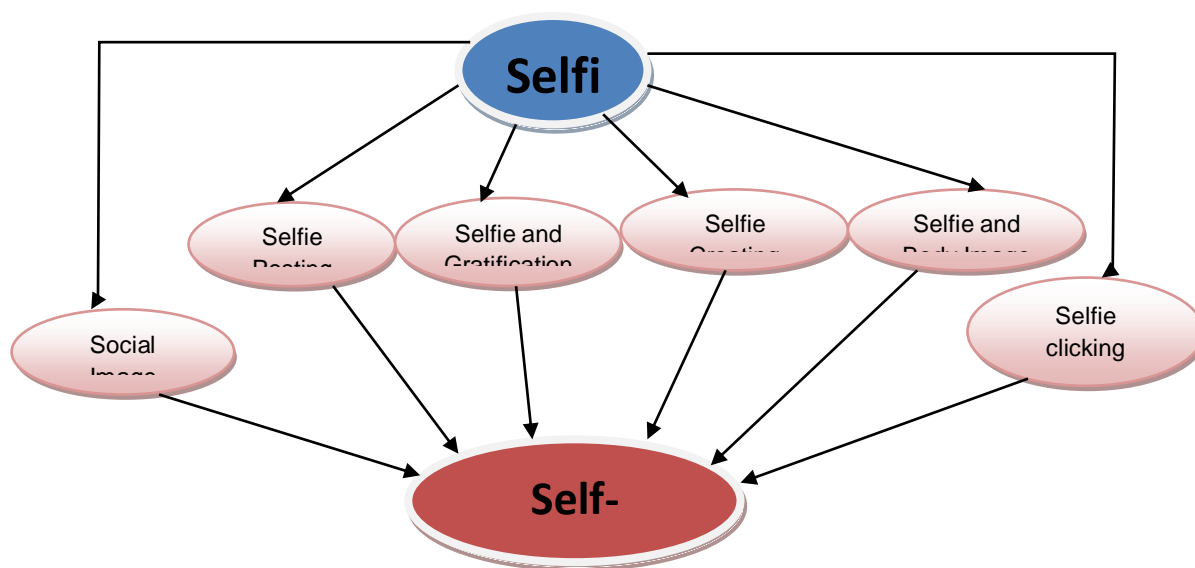
Figure 1: Conceptual Frame work

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the research based on which the questionnaire was developed. Selfie clicking and posting behavior on social media were driven by the six factors i.e. Social image construction, selfie posting behavior, selfie and gratification, Selfie creating dual personality, selfie and body image, and selfie clicking behavior.

The questionnaire was developed with a self-esteem scale in part A which consisted of ten questions and Part B of the survey consisted of forty-four four questions based on a Likert scale of seven. After applying Exploratory Factor Analysis the above-stated six factors were formed. A correlation between the self-esteem scale and these six factors was carried out.

The research data were analyzed with the use of SPSS 20. The data was collected by snowball sampling technique. As the research was conducted at the time of the Covid-19 lockdown, researcher used Google forms to fill the survey digitally.

Results and Discussions

In a sample of (N=400) **Figure 2** shows the age of the respondents according to the demographic statistics it was found that the majority of the women who participated were from the age group of (21-30) years 40%, after that age group <=20 were 23%, 31-40 year were 21% and >40 were only 7%. So the research was dominated by young women. **Figure 3** looking into the statistics of family types of these women, the majority belonged to the nuclear family =69%, then joint family 29%, and lastly only 4% were who were living alone. **Figure 4** shows the education data of these respondents majority of them were graduates 44.3%, followed by the women with graduation 31.3%, 15.5% who have done 12th, 10th pass were 0.8% and lastly, the one with Ph.D. were 4.0% and another category was 4.3%. **Figure 5** shows the demographic in terms of occupation, the majority of the women

who participated are students i.e. 44.3%, 29.8% are working women doing service, 10.5% were homemakers, 10.3% unemployed, and 5.3% doing business.
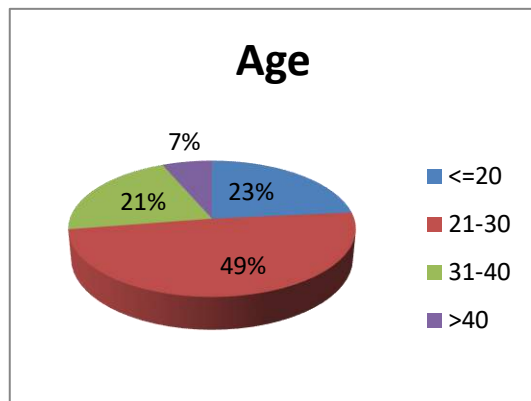
Figure 2: Demographics (age)   Figure 3: Demographics (Family Type)
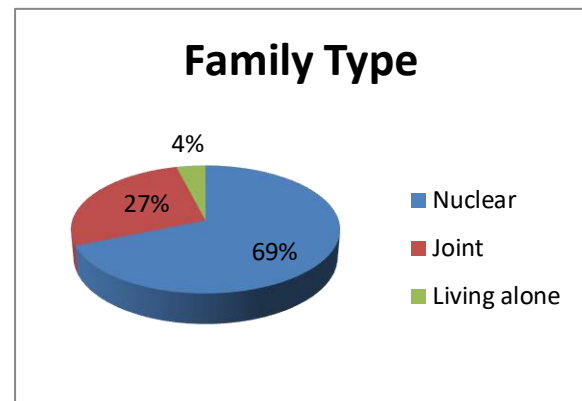

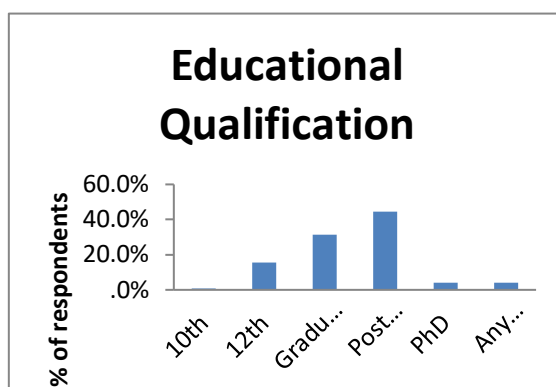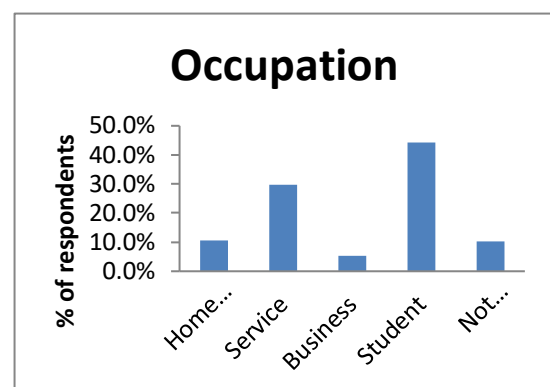Figure 4: Demographics (educational qualification)   Figure 5: Demographics (Occupation)

The Pearson correlation data shows the correlation statistics, **table 1** shows the correlation self-esteem has with the six explored selfie factors. By observing table 1 one can interpret that self-esteem is negatively correlated with the social image construct that one does with the help of selfie posting over social media i.e. (p=-0.002) the following could be understood more, as a person uses selfies to build a particular kind of social image with the help of selfie over social media the following will affect the self-esteem of a person negatively. The following proves H1 true as the use of selfies on social media by posting them on social media for social image construction correlates with self-esteem but this correlation is negatively associated.

H1: The use of selfies for social image construction on social media correlates with self-esteem.

 Observing the statistics to find out whether H2 stands true one can interpret that as (p=0.045) which shows no significant correlation with self-esteem which says that selfie-posting behavior like posting more or fewer selfies, frequency, etc does not affect the self-esteem of

an individual in this case, especially women. So the H2 stands null self-esteem of women is not affected by the selfie posting behavior.

H2: The self-esteem of women is also affected by the selfie-posting behavior.

Table 1 statistics shows that the correlation value of self-esteem versus selfie and gratification was (-0.053) which means that self-esteem shares a negative correlation with the gratification that one gets out of posting a selfie i.e. more a person gets gratification by posting a selfie on social media and use it as a tool for gratification the more the person's self-esteem is affected negatively. According to social media and psychological experts, selfie posting and sharing give instant gratification as people like and comment but the following gratification hampers one's self-esteem negatively and is unhealthy for the person. Hence the H3 also stands true the gratification that women get by posting a selfie also affects their self-esteem.

H3: The gratification that women get by posting selfies also affects their self-esteem.

Further, the Pearson correlation shows that self-esteem is also negatively correlated to selfie creating dual personality (p=-0.007) the following suggest that selfie is used by women on social media which is causing dual personalities and these dual personalities are causing a negative impact on the self-esteem level of individuals. Self-esteem is negatively affected as the dual personality created is different from the real personality of the woman. So the H4 is also true.

H4: The dual personality created by posting the selfie also affects the self-esteem of an individual.

Table 1 Pearson correlation

Pearson Correlation						
Correlations						
	Self Esteem	Factor-A Social Image Construction	Factor-B Selfie Posting Behavior	Factor-C Selfie and Gratification	Factor-D Selfie Creating Dual personality	Factor-E Selfie and Body Image	Factor-F Selfie clicking behavior
Self Esteem	1	-.002	.045	-.053	-.007	-.059	-.030
Factor-A Social Image Construction		1	.317[**]	.324[**]	.170[**]	.229[**]	.176[**]
Factor-B Selfie Posting			1	.084	.129[**]	.178[**]	.102[*]

Behavior							
Factor-C Selfie and Gratification				1	.133**	.093	.047
Factor-D Selfie Creating Dual personality					1	.088	.036
Factor-E Selfie and Body Image						1	.145**
Factor-F Selfie clicking behavior							1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

Looking at the statistic by observing table 1, self-esteem is negatively correlated to both selfie-body image and selfie-clicking behavior. The following data suggest that posting selfies are causing body image where women are trying to portray a body that is closer to their ideal body type. According to experts, Women are trying to showcase themselves as slimmer and fairer by the use of applications and filters, and the following is leading to low self-esteem levels in these women. It is also noted that when women are clicking more selfies and are conscious about clicking selfies, the following is also lowering their self-esteem levels of the women. Hypothesis H5 and H6 also stand true.

H5: The body image presentation through selfies affects the self-esteem of women using social media.

H6: Selfie-clicking behavior is strongly correlated with self-esteem.

Conclusion

Many studies have shown from time to time that extensive use of social media and the internet has led to addiction and become a cause of psychological, physiological, and social behavior problems (Hou, Xiong, Jiang, Song, & Wang, 2019). Social media and communication experts interviewed worry that likes, shares, and comments have become a very important factor in people's life. The moment one clicks a selfie and uploads it on social media platforms the wait for validation in form of several likes one gets and comments starts, people are getting in the loop of checking and re-checking their notifications which are adding to the anxiety and addiction of social media, certain application and expression/self-presentation medium like a selfie.

The research ended with the conclusion that the self-esteem levels of women are affected by the usage of selfies on social media platforms like Facebook. Communication experts believe that selfie-and its posting give instant gratification to a person but it is very short-lived. To regain that gratification women start to post more selfies, and post them after treating them with image manipulation applications, filters to look good and present the better side of themselves which many times is unreal.

Six out of five selfie factors formed have negative correlation with the self-esteem of the women who participated in the survey. These selfie factors were Factor-1 selfie used to create a social image, Factor-2 selfie and gratification, Factor-3 selfie creating dual personality, Factor-4 selfie and body image, and Factor-5 lastly selfie clicking behavior. It was found that the use of selfies for social image construction on social media has a negative correlation with self-esteem. People use selfies for social image projection but the case where the image projected is unreal or projecting self that is created with manipulation; in that case, it can hamper one's self-esteem. It was also found through the study that the self-esteem of women is not affected by the selfie posting behavior hence the hypothesis formulated was null, it is not the posting behavior that affects the personalities it is the other factors mentioned in the study that has shown the effect.

The gratification that women get by posting selfies also affects their self-esteem. It was founded through study that it has a negative correlation and psychological experts and photography experts also commented that the gratification one gets out of posting a selfie on social media is instant but it is not only short-lived but the following turn into addiction as one craves for more such attention that one gets and this attention that one gets is superficial which becomes difficult to understand. Psychological experts said that many people are filling the voids like loneliness; attention etc that they have in their real life through this and this gratification cannot compensate for real-life problems which many times become hard to understand.

Selfie also causes dual personalities and it affects real personality by affecting self-esteem levels negatively. Apart from this, it was also found in the research that body image presentation through selfies affects the self-esteem of women negatively using social media and lowers the confidence level that these women have towards their body as they idealize a perfect self. And lastly, Selfie usage behavior is strongly correlated with self-esteem in a negative way as more people are involved in clicking selfies where a person does not stop by clicking one selfie, but clicks more than one and wants to attain perfection in their selfie to be posted in this case the self-esteem levels are affected.

Selfie and social media are used extensively by women and with this pandemic it usage has increased. This mode of expression and sharing information, documentation of life etc is very effective but the following should be done by understanding the drawback and limitations it brings with it. By following a balanced approach one can attain maximum benefits through using selfie on social media and mental as well as physical health problems could be avoided.

Limitations and future scope

The research was conducted during the time of the pandemic and the data was collected through Google from so the impact that data collected through one-to-one interaction was missing. The confusion that respondents may have or the misinterpretation of questions cannot be solved. The research was gender-based and was conducted on women and does not cover the same issue from the point of view of men is also one of the major limitations of the study.

With Covid-19 lockdown, the use of the internet and social media has increased and with this even the mental issues related to using social media and selfies, this research will further be developed to make a standardized tool where people can do a self-analysis if the use of social media and selfie is increasing and put a self-check.

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