

NARCISSISM AND SELFIE BEHAVIOUR: GENDER DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between narcissism and selfie behaviour amongst male and female samples. Narcissism was indexed in terms of exhibitionism, sense of superiority and vanity. Data was collected from 144 MBA students (73 male and 71 female). The results indicate that the total sample showed no relationship between narcissism and selfie behaviour as well as selfie behaviour with three indices of narcissism. The same was found to be true when sample was divided on gender basis. When gender differences were examined, female sample clicked significantly more selfies than their male counterparts while male respondents scored significantly higher than their female counterparts on vanity. Rest of the differences were insignificant.

Introduction

Of late, there has been a growing interest in the study of narcissistic behaviour and its effect on the intensity of self complexity. Narcissism is a personality trait generally conceived of excessive self love. This personality trait has emerged out of Greek mythology. Accordingly, Narcissus rejected the desperate advances of the nymph Echo and fell in love with self after seeing his reflection in water and finally changed into the flower that bears his name Narcissus. Research has identified a number of measurable behaviours as symptoms of narcissism. It reflects itself in pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration and exaggerated sense of self-importance (Oltmannset.al.2006). They seem to exploit others and have an overwhelming sense of self worth that often annoys others. They tend to overestimate their accomplishments and expect others to lavish them with praise. They show hostility and get irritated if attention is denied to them resulting in never returning the favours (Sedikides, 1993). Recently there has been tremendous amount of media attention surrounding the issues relation to narcissism. So much so that some authors have refereed it as "Narcissism Epidemic" (Twang and Campbell, 2009).

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Given its significance research has been conducted in the near past on narcissism and its effect on some significant social interactions. For example, Mehdizaden (2010) conducted a study to examine its relationship on face book. Correlation analysis revealed that high narcissism was found to be associated with greater on line activities. However, significant differences were noted between the male and female samples. Yet in other study, Byrne and Obrien (2014) collected data from 147 undergraduate psychology students. They were asked to rate someone they knew well who was most similar to narcissistic prototype (a target) and their (respondents) behaviour towards the target. Their results show significantly more interpersonal problems with the target and more revenge and avoidance behaviour of sample towards the target. In a more recent study, Errasti, et.al.(2017) collected data on 503 pupils of third grade consisting of 272 boys and 231 girls between the ages of 12-17 years. They found positive relationship between narcissism and social networking. Comparisons across samples have also caught attention of many researchers. Questions have been raised on the long-term effect of a particular discipline of study on the narcissistic behaviour. In a study by Westerman et.al. (2010) they

found that the business management students are more narcissistic than psychology students. It was explained that business students display a surprising sense of entitlement and inflated expectations. It was also found that business graduates show negative behaviour of particular importance to employing organisations such as white collar crimes, aggression and risky decision making.

Given the growing awareness about narcissistic behaviour and its uncertain repercussions, Emmons (1987) has suggested three emerging trends. These are (1) increasing narcissism in society, (2) a growing tendency to accept responsibility for success and denial for failure outcome and (3) narcissism as a clinical entity. To some extent the trend suggested by Emmons seems to support the description of narcissism as given in American Psychiatric Association (2013). Accordingly, narcissists show personality disorder with symptoms like interpersonally exploitative and taking advantage of others to achieve one's goal.

Of late selfie behaviour has become a popular passion to a large number of people. Historically, however it began during 1520s when artists created self-portraits paintings by standing in front of mirrors. The first recorded use of the word selfie (short of self-portrait) was made by Nathan Hope of Australia who posted the photo with a message "sorry about the focus, it was a selfie in 2002". The oldest existing photo selfie is thought to be by 30 year old Robert Cornelius who took it outside his lamp shop in Philadelphia, USA in the year 1839 (Times of India, 2017) In the year 2013, selfie was selected as "word of the year" by Oxford Dictionary.

Selfie is defined as self portrait photo of oneself through digital camera or smart phone. It is an opportunity to communicate a version of themselves through social media and enhance self disclosure, a kind of identity announcement. Selfie behaviour may also represent a totality of a person's thoughts and feelings with reference to one self as an object. Golomb (1992) has suggested that selfie behaviour may be an indication of the fear of external criticism and their own doubts about themselves. More recently Balakrishnan and Griffiths (2017) have studied "Selfitis" (a genuine mental condition) and found that it operates at three levels. These levels are Borderline (taking 3 selfies a day but not posting on social media) and Acute (taking 3 selfies a day and posting on social media) and Chronic (uncontrollable urge to take selfies and posting on social media more than six times a day). There seems to be some murmur

about the negative aspects of selfie behaviour as there is a growing concern of the cost of taking selfies on potentially dangerous places such as railway tracks, bridges and other locations that could be dangerous for life.

While there are number of newspaper articles about selfie behaviour and narcissism, empirical research is very limited. Two recent studies have examined the relationship between narcissism and selfie behaviour. Sorokowski et al. (2015) collected data from 1296 Polish men and women and found that women posted more selfies than men. However, the link between narcissism and selfie behaviour was stronger in men than in women. In another study, Charoensuk-Mongkol (2016) collected data from 300 Thai students between the ages of 21-24 and found that narcissism was found to be significantly associated with selfie liking. Yet in another study Lee and Sung (2016) studied the relationship between Narcissism and Selfie related Behaviour on a sample of 315 Korean respondents. They found that the respondents with higher score on narcissism evaluated self-posting behaviour favourably. The value of coefficient was found to be .31 which is significant at .05 level of significance. Narcissism was indexed in terms of attention seeking behaviour, self-centered behaviour and loneliness. This study was carried out to examine gender differences in the relationship between narcissism and selfie behaviour amongst Indian students. Following hypotheses were proposed:

1. There would be positive and significant relationship between narcissism and selfie behaviour for the total sample.

2. Both male and female respondents would show significant and positive relationship between narcissism and selfie behavior.

3. The individual scores of male and female samples would be significantly different on selfie, narcissism and its components.

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected on 174 first year MBA student between the ages of 21-23 (73 male and 71 female). They were asked to indicate the number of times they flick selfies during a week and respond to 15 items on narcissism on a 6-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Narcissism was indexed in terms of exhibitionism, sense of superiority and vanity. Items measuring these traits were taken from the original questionnaire developed by Raskin and Calvin (1979).

Exhibitionism generally refers to a person's behaviour intended to attract attention and display his/her power and physical appearance. It was measured by seven statements. Sense of superiority as a personality trait refers to a feeling of being better than others verging on arrogance and a need to be complemented as an extraordinary and special person. For purpose of this study it was measured by 5 statements. Vanity refers to an excessive admiration and pride in one's own abilities and appearance particularly in one's body and looks. It may lead to frequent use of mirror to see how one looks. Vanity was measured by 3 statements.

RESULTS

To get a single score on the three indices alpha correlations and inter-item correlation were calculated. Exhibitionism was measured by seven statements. The alpha correlation revealed a significant value ($r = .994$, $df = 173$, $p > .01$). Hence the scores on seven items were added to get a total ranging from 7 - 42. Similarly the alpha value for feeling of superiority was found to be significant ($r = .997$, $df = 173$, $p > .01$). The individual scores on five statements were added to get a single score ranging from 5 - 30. In case of vanity since there were three statements, inter item correlations was calculated. The values are given below:

Statements 1 and 2 $r = .998$

Statements 1 and 3 $r = .997$

Statements 2 and 3 $r = .998$

Since all three values are statistically significant, the individual statement scores were added together to get a single score of vanity which Ranged from 3 -18.

Since, narcissism was indexed in terms of exhibitionism, sense of superiority and vanity, it became necessary to examine the inter correlations amongst them to get a single score of narcissism. These values are presented below

Exhibitionism vs. Superiority $r = .354$

Exhibitionism vs. Vanity $r = .261$

Superiority vs. Vanity $r = .294$

All the values are statistically significant beyond the conventional levels of significance. Hence their individual totals were added to get a single score of Narcissism ranging from 15 - 90.

To examine the relationship between narcissism and selfie behaviour correlations of co-efficient were calculated for total sample for the total score of narcissism

and selfie behavior as well as with the three indices of narcissism. The values are given in Table 1

Table 1
(Values of correlations)

Variables	R- values	Significance
Selfie/Narcissism	.071	n.s.
Selfie/Exhibitionism	.082	n.s.
Selfie/Superiority	.098	n.s.
Selfie/Vanity	-.064	n.s.

Results in Table 1 show that none of the values of r are significant suggesting thereby that selfie behaviour has no relationship with either the narcissism or its various indices rejecting the hypothesis that there will be a relationship between narcissism and selfie behaviour. To further explore these relationships coefficients were calculated by gender. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
(r values by gender)

Variables	Male	Female
Selfie/Narcissism	.114	.071
Selfie/Exhibitionism	.082	.076
Selfie/Superiority	-.015	.160
Selfie/Vanity	.091	-.122

All the values in Table 2 are insignificant suggesting there by that gender differences do not account for any relationship between selfie behaviour and narcissism and its various components. The hypothesis that male and female differences would be found between selfie, narcissism and its various components is also rejected.

The final hypothesis implied gender differences in selfie behaviour, narcissism and its components. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3
(Gender differences)

Variable	Male		Female		t-value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Selfie	8.19	10.171	14.46	14.741	2.978**
Narcissism	51.19	8.873	49.61	9.296	1.066
Exhibitionism	21.62	4.763	20.83	5.127	0.952
Superiority	19.54	3.570	19.64	4.505	0.210
Vanity	10.03	10.027	8.09	6.947	1.976*

** $p > .01$ * $p > .05$

The results show that female click more selfies as compared to male sample. The difference is statistically significant. On the other hand, male score significantly higher than female on vanity. The rest of the comparisons are statistically insignificant.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to see if there is a positive and significant relationship between narcissism and selfie behaviour in general and for male and female respondents independently. The results show that there is no relationship between narcissism and selfie behaviour for sample as a whole and when divided by gender. This suggests that narcissism and selfie behaviour as personality traits are independent of each other. The results are rather different from the other studies conducted in Poland and Thailand (Sorokowski et. al., 2015 and Charoensuk-Mongkol, 2016).

Is it possible that the independence of narcissism and selfie behaviour may have been caused by mutually exclusive forces? Selfie behaviour perhaps is the result of peer pressure, a fear factor that one may lose friends if one is not able to keep up with the expectations of the peer group. On the other hand, narcissistic tendencies might have evolved through a long period of child rearing practices of over involved parents leading to over pampering. These may be the causes of over estimating one's accomplishments, a feeling of grandiose, need for admiration and an exaggerated self worth. These areas may be worth further explorations.

The hypothesis that male and female respondents would show significant differences on selfie behaviour is supported. Female respondents click significantly more selfies per week as compared to their male counterparts. Selfie as mirror provides a mobile facility for female to constantly check their degree of presentability in general or to significant others. It is a means to achieve self satisfaction. While there are no significant differences between male and female respondents on narcissism, exhibitionism and sense of superiority, male score higher on vanity as compared to their female counterparts. As far as vanity is concerned, given the nature of statement, they are more likely to be rated higher by male respondents than women because of the physical exposure and masculinity realization that may come more easy for male than for female population.

Irrespective of gender differences or for that matter its lack of association with selfie behaviour, narcissist suffer from lack of critical reflection, particularly those

going through business education. This is particularly important as the sample for this study consisted of students pursuing management education. Tomkins and Ulus (2015) feel that undermining critical reflection is a form of narcissism. To bring the critical reflection alive, it is necessary to make definitions and explanations more concrete and accessible to business students. This is particularly so because people with high narcissistic behaviour are very sensitive to injury from criticism or defeat. A definition or explanation is an attempt to give a second chance to injured ego.

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