

The Online Looking Glass: The Study of Self Esteem and Narcissism on Social Media



***Juliet Dinkha**

American University of Kuwait, Kuwait

Submission: October 02, 2017; **Published:** October 13, 2017

***Corresponding author:** Juliet Dinkha, American University of Kuwait, Kuwait; Tel: (965) 2224-8399 X 3767 Email: jdinkha@auk.edu.kw

Introduction

This paper investigates the effects of social media on self-esteem and the expression of social media activity as a form of narcissistic behavior. The research duplicates the study conducted in Canada entitled *Self-Presentation 2.0: Narcissism and Self-Esteem on Facebook* by Soraya Mehdizadeh B Sc and published in *Cyber psychology, Behavior, and Social networking* 2010.

In that study, Mehdizadeh investigated the effects of self-esteem and narcissism found on Facebook by examining and surveying 100 users of the social media platform. Online social networking sites have revealed an entirely new method of impression management and self-expression on social media acts as a medium for studying self-image and as a platform for communicating low self-esteem. Psychologists describe self-esteem as a person's overall evaluation of their self-worth; while narcissism is defined as persistent displays and patterns of self-importance Mehdizadeh 2010.

The study focused on the narcissistic personality disorder as an overriding theory. According to Mayo Clinic Staff 2011, narcissistic personality disorder is characterized by dramatic and emotional behavior. The disorder's symptomology may include believing that one is better than others and that one is special, but at the same time that same person is easily hurt and rejected, expecting constant praise and admiration, and has fragile self-esteem. In our research, we attempt to ascertain if we can observe these characteristics based on what is posted on Instagram on a wide sample of users. We derived our sample from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. We used these two countries because they have some of the highest penetration of social media in the world and the study of the effects of social networking on the population, especially among the youth is a subject matter that demands exploration.

Furthermore, media and effects in the Middle East are understudied fields and our research will contribute greatly to understanding of the Arab world and the consumption of social media. The study was interdisciplinary and utilizes psychology and mass communications to examine how narcissism and self-esteem are expressed on the social networking app Instagram, which is a widely used social networking site in both countries. Self-esteem and narcissistic personality self-reports were collected from 200 Instagram users from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (100 males and 100 females) and all respondents ranged from 18-25 years. All participants gave permission to be added on Instagram and agreed to have their pages coded for the research.

After agreeing to participate in this research study, Instagram owners were administered a brief four-part questionnaire. The first section required demographic information, including the participant's age and gender. The second section addressed their Instagram activity; it required respondents to indicate the number of times they checked their Instagram page per day and the time spent on Instagram per session. The remaining sections assessed two psychological constructs: self-esteem and narcissism. Prior to administering it to the participants, this questionnaire was pre-tested by distributing it to 40 people before minor tweaks were made to make the questionnaire more straightforward and relevant to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure the participants' self-esteem. This 10-item test measures self-esteem using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Example items include: 'On the whole, I am satisfied with myself' and 'I take a positive attitude toward myself'. The original reliability of this scale is 0.72. This measure has gained acceptable internal consistency and test-retest

reliability, as well as convergent and discriminate validity. The Narcissism Personality Inventory (NPI-16) was also used. It is a short, efficient, and a valid mean to measure narcissism. It is composed of 16 questions.

Five features of the Instagram page were coded for the extent to which they were self-promoting: (a) The biography section, (b) The profile picture (c) The first 20 pictures, (d) The frequency of uploading pictures, (e) Captions under photos. For the purpose of this study, self-promotion was distinguished as any descriptive or visual information that appeared to attempt to persuade others about one's own positive qualities. For example, facial expression (e.g., striking a pose or making a face) and picture enhancement (e.g., using photo editing software) were coded in the profile picture and uploaded pictures. The use

of positive adjectives (e.g., amazing, sexy, super), self-promoting mottos (e.g., 'I'm so fabulous'), and positively descriptive hash tags were also noted. We validated our sample by using two teams of raters to determine consistency and agreement on the representation of these five features across our sample.

By probing the relationship between this new medium, the two phenomena, and the cultures at hand, our goal was to understand the relationships between technology, culture, and the effects on self-esteem. Several informal studies in blogs such as Psychology Today in the west presume that a high rate of selfies and photo editing are associated with an inflated self-esteem. While it may be true in the west, our study proves otherwise in Kuwait Myers 2013. As we have postulated, our results could be correlated to the nature of the society itself.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License
DOI: [10.19080/PBSIJ.2017.06.555705](https://doi.org/10.19080/PBSIJ.2017.06.555705)

Your next submission with Juniper Publishers will reach you the below assets

- Quality Editorial service
- Swift Peer Review
- Reprints availability
- E-prints Service
- Manuscript Podcast for convenient understanding
- Global attainment for your research
- Manuscript accessibility in different formats

(Pdf, E-pub, Full Text, Audio)

- Unceasing customer service

Track the below URL for one-step submission

<https://juniperpublishers.com/online-submission.php>