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Selfie Addiction: A Theoretical Reading of Its Causes and Effects

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Abstract

Our world today is witnessing considerable technological development and progress in various fields, accompanied by the widespread use of social media. The emergence of smartphones and different types of cameras represents one form of technological development whose uses have increased considerably in recent years. With their growing integration into our daily lives, they have been accompanied by the phenomenon of self-photography, or what is known as the “selfie,” which has become widespread across different parts of the world and among different age and social groups. This phenomenon involves taking a personal photograph of oneself at a specific time and in a particular situation, with the possibility of editing it and publishing it on social media and sharing it with others. In some cases, this may develop into addiction, becoming a repeated daily behavior characterized by a strong desire to take selfies, publish them on social media, and become excessively preoccupied with editing and posting them without boredom, with the aim of self-expression. This may result in several negative effects, such as low self-esteem, time wastage, and physical harm. Accordingly, this research paper seeks to shed light on the nature of selfie addiction and its symptoms, the various psychological causes underlying its emergence, and its resulting effects.

Keywords: selfies, addiction, selfie addiction, low self-esteem.

Introduction

The emergence of social networking sites has facilitated communication among individuals in its various forms through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp, whether via computers or smartphones, which have become means of self-expression, building social relationships, and sharing different types of knowledge and experiences with others through audio or visual messages, such as photographs and videos, or written messages in the form of texts and comments.

Over the past decade, social networking sites have become a popular means of communication, particularly among young people. Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook are among the most widely used platforms, as they allow individuals to create personal profiles and share information and photographs within their social networks. With the development of digital photography and social media platforms, taking selfies, or self-photography, quickly became part of popular culture (Saber & Al-Shafie, 2024, p. 130). Thus, individuals take selfies using smartphones or cameras, either alone or with others, and share them through social media. The attention given to the various comments received and the strong desire to publish these photographs, sometimes involving spending long hours editing and posting them for documentation purposes, may lead individuals to become caught in the grip of addiction.

Self-photography, or the selfie, has become a global phenomenon or even a global obsession practiced by everyone, with selfies being taken at any time and on any occasion, including inside operating rooms. Digital photography has also become a means of transmitting news and events immediately as they occur. In some cases, many people may put their lives at risk because of excessive enthusiasm and recklessness when taking selfies, believing that the resulting photographs will be distinctive (Abd Al-Nabi, 2022, p. 9). At the global level, taking selfies has become an integral part of everyday life. In India, the emergence of smartphones plays a major role in enhancing individuals' practical technologies. In addition, the increasing availability of features such as touch-screen interfaces, Internet access, and high-quality cameras has brought about a radical change in lifestyles among individuals regardless of their age (Nagalingam et al., 2019, pp. 694–695).

1. Problem of the Study

Addiction is a psychological problem that has negative effects on individuals and society. With the technological development witnessed by our world today, another type of addiction has emerged, namely Internet and smartphone addiction, which has in turn contributed to selfie addiction through individuals spending long periods taking personal

photographs, either alone or with others, sharing and posting them on social media, and experiencing a strong desire to do so while making modifications and adding effects through filter applications and Snapchat in order to appear in the best possible way.

Self-photography, or the “selfie,” is no longer merely a self-portrait. Rather, it is a phenomenon that has accompanied the widespread integration of smartphones into everyday life and has become extensively prevalent throughout the world, constituting an obsession for many people of different ages. The emphasis on individuality and the expression “I am here” is part of human nature. Forty thousand years ago, human beings left handprints on cave walls, decorating their surfaces. Thus, the desire to be remembered and to capture or document a part of one’s existence is natural (Al-Luhaiyani, 2021, p. 540). Self-photography, or the “selfie,” and sharing photographs on popular social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are considered among the major contributors to the rise of narcissistic behavior among the Millennial generation. Millennials are defined as those born between 1982 and 2004, and they are described as more self-centered and less empathetic than the previous generation, while also posting their personal photographs more frequently (Al-Luhaiyani, 2021, p. 541).

Studies indicate that many individuals who take selfies are keen to appear at their best and in the form they consider appropriate and wish to display in the photograph, thereby representing their selves. This may influence individuals’ search for the image in which they can find satisfaction with their external appearance and with how they will look in the photograph. This is achieved by editing the photograph through the digital technologies available on smartphones and through the proliferation and diversity of applications such as Snapchat, Facetune, and other applications. The use of selfies, image-filtering features, and various applications has created an obsession within society, particularly among adolescents and young people, to make their external appearance look satisfactory, which may lead to body dysmorphic disorder (Al-Momani & Al-Omari, 2022, p. 74). Although accurate data and statistics on the prevalence of the selfie phenomenon worldwide are not available, several studies have been conducted to determine its prevalence. For example, Vats’s (2015) study indicated that approximately 40% of adolescents, young adults, and adults worldwide suffer from selfie syndrome (Abd Al-Ghani & Ibrahim, 2023, p. 171).

According to recent statistical analyses by mobile-phone companies, 92 million selfies are taken every day worldwide. Likewise, according to findings reported by a number of research centers, approximately 55% of Millennials share their personal photographs on social media. The enthusiasm for taking selfies has also increased to the extent that individuals have become willing to put themselves at risk for their personal photographs in order to obtain more and more likes on social media. Such selfies are digital photographs taken of oneself using a digital camera or smartphone camera, at arm’s length or with a selfie stick. They may be individual or group photographs and are shared on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and others. A selfie also involves making gestures that convey different impressions to different individuals, societies, and viewers (Saber & Al-Shafie, 2024, p. 130). More than 130 million photographs and videos were published on Instagram under the hashtag #selfie, and more than 439 photographs and videos under the term “selfie” were published on Instagram in June 2014. This demonstrates that smartphones and social media are no longer merely means of producing selfies; they have also become effective means for some individuals to construct their identities and indicators of their distinctiveness (Al-Sharifin & Al-Wahaibi, 2018, p. 3).

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of selfies taken and posted online. Estimates indicate that young people, such as Millennials, devote one hour per week to taking selfies and that they will take as many as 25,700 selfies over the course of their lives. Furthermore, an article recently published in *Forbes* indicated that adolescents experience considerable pressure to keep up with their peers and celebrities, and that such pressure affects the image they feel they must present online through selfies. In addition, since adolescents today are vulnerable to becoming victims of cyberbullying, understanding the impact of cyberbullying on adolescents’ behavior is a priority for various school campaigns (Fastoso et al., 2021, p. 365).

In the same context, a 2017 study by Safina indicated that approximately 90% of adolescents, as well as more than one million people, take selfies every day. The results of a survey conducted in Britain indicated that 35 million people take selfies every day and that more than 50% of them reported taking selfies using their smartphones. The results of a survey conducted by a mobile-phone company also indicated that three-quarters of young people, particularly those aged between 18 and 24 years, usually take selfies. The survey further indicated an increase in the number of people taking selfies from 29% to 91% in 2006 (Hassan & Al-Badawi, 2020, p. 243).

In addition, Krishna Murthy’s (2013) study aimed to identify the purposes for which selfies are taken. The study consisted of a sample of 120 male and female students in India. The findings showed that 35% of the students posted selfies on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram in order to receive likes and comments from their friends, while 51.67% of the students viewed selfies as a means of connecting with oneself and evaluating one’s body image. Meanwhile, 11.6% of the students reported that taking selfies was enjoyable.

Nizar’s (2018) study on selfie addiction and its relationship with narcissistic personality disorder aimed to investigate the relationship between selfie addiction and narcissistic personality disorder and to examine the significance of gender differences in the relationship between selfie addiction and narcissistic personality disorder among students at Al-Mustansiriyah University. The study employed a selfie addiction scale and a narcissistic personality scale and included a sample of 400 students. The results revealed a statistically significant correlation between selfie addiction and narcissistic personality disorder. They also showed no gender differences in selfie addiction and no gender differences in narcissistic personality disorder.

Similarly, Rehab Yahya Ahmed's (2019) study on the behavior of posting selfies on social networking sites and its relationship with certain personality disorders among a sample of university students aimed to examine the correlation between selfie-posting behavior on social networking sites and certain personality disorders, including narcissistic, psychopathic, and histrionic disorders. It also sought to identify gender differences in selfie-posting behavior and in narcissistic, psychopathic, and histrionic personality disorders. The study involved a sample of 334 students with a mean age of 21.3 years. The researcher used a selfie-posting behavior scale developed by the researcher, a narcissism scale developed by Abdel Qader et al. (2012), and scales for psychopathic and histrionic personality disorders developed by the researcher. The results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between selfie-posting behavior and each of overt and covert narcissistic personality disorder, psychopathic personality disorder, and histrionic personality disorder. The study also found statistically significant differences between males and females in selfie-posting behavior, covert narcissism, and histrionic personality disorder, in favor of females, whereas the differences were in favor of males in overt narcissism and psychopathic personality disorder.

Maryam Al-Luhaiyani's (2021) study on self-photography, or the selfie, as a predictor of narcissistic personality among secondary-school teachers and students in Makkah aimed to identify the levels of self-photography and narcissistic personality, determine the relationship between them, examine the extent to which selfie behavior could predict narcissistic personality, and identify differences in the levels of selfie behavior and narcissistic personality according to the study variables. The study employed a descriptive predictive approach. It also used the Selfie Scale developed by Balakrishnan and Griffiths and the Narcissistic Personality Scale developed by Rose, Ames, and Cameron. The study was conducted on a sample of 480 individuals, comprising 255 male and female teachers and 220 male and female students. The results indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between narcissistic personality and selfie behavior across its six dimensions. A positive relationship was also found between narcissistic personality and the six dimensions of selfie behavior. The results further showed that narcissistic personality could be predicted through self-photography, which accounted for 22% of the variation in narcissistic personality among teachers and 31% of the variation among students. The findings also revealed statistically significant differences between students and teachers on the selfie and narcissistic personality scales, in favor of students. No statistically significant differences were found between males and females on the self-photography and narcissistic personality scales. However, statistically significant differences were found on both scales according to age group, in favor of the younger age group. In addition, statistically significant differences were found on the self-photography and narcissism scales according to the number of times photographs were posted and edited using filters, in favor of those who posted more frequently and those who always edited their photographs.

In light of the foregoing, selfie use begins as a form of entertainment and recreation through which an individual, whether an adolescent or an adult, shares photographs, particularly photographs documenting adventures such as taking pictures from high places or dangerous locations, and posts them on various social media platforms. This may develop into an obsession with and addiction to selfies for the purpose of attracting attention, as well as a new means of expressing and representing the self through the poses adopted by the individual while taking the photograph and the modifications made to it so that it appears in a form that the individual believes represents them. Therefore, this research paper seeks to examine selfie addiction more deeply and the various effects it produces, which leads us to raise the following questions:

- What is meant by selfie addiction (self-photography)?
- What are the psychological causes underlying selfie addiction (self-photography)?
- What are the effects resulting from selfie addiction (self-photography)?

Selfie addiction is one of the phenomena that has spread as a result of smartphones and technological development, with the emergence of applications such as filters and Snapchat that allow individuals to take photographs and modify them so that they appear as the best possible image, and then share them through social media. The process of taking selfies is not, however, a new phenomenon.

If you go to the most beautiful place in the world, you will find people taking many photographs, but they are photographs of themselves. We may think that selfies are a recent phenomenon, but the term "selfie" first appeared in the Oxford Dictionary in 2013 and quickly became the Word of the Year. Nevertheless, selfies date back to the emergence of photography. The first selfie was taken in 1839 by the American Cornelius (Abd Al-Shafi, 2020, p. 386). In 1914, the Russian Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna took a photograph of herself in front of a mirror to send to a friend, thereby becoming one of the adolescents who took a photograph of herself. In 1984, the first Polaroid camera was sold, enabling users to hold it at arm's length, which encouraged individuals to take more self-photographs. In 2002, the term "self-photography" first appeared on an Australian Internet forum held on September 13 (Hassan & Al-Badawi, 2020, p. 242). According to the Oxford Dictionaries (2013), the term "selfie" was first coined in 2002 on the Australian online forum ABC Online by a university student who posted a self-photograph of an injury to his lip. The published self-photograph is distinguished from a self-photograph in general by the act of posting it (Al-Luhaiyani, 2021, p. 539).

2. Concept of the Selfie (Self-Photography)

The word "selfie" is derived from the English word "self," meaning the self. The term "selfie" refers to photographing oneself. It emerged with advances in smartphone technology, particularly smartphones equipped with front-facing cameras and high-quality display screens, as well as with the spread and development of social media. Recent estimates indicate that millions of selfies are posted on social media every day as a means of self-expression. The number of selfies uploaded to Instagram has reached 193 million, while Instagram contains approximately 238 million photographs classified under the hashtag #selfie (Al-Momani & Al-Omari, 2022, p. 76).

A selfie is defined as a self-photograph, usually taken with a camera or mobile phone held in one's hand or supported by a selfie stick. It is often shared on social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. It is usually attractive and gives the photograph an informal appearance (Al-Luhaiyani, 2021, p. 540). It is also a personal photograph that an individual takes of themselves using a camera or a smartphone equipped with a digital camera, and then posts on social networking sites to use it as a profile picture, document their presence in a particular place, record their presence alongside particular people, or express a particular psychological state at a specific time and place. Such a photograph is usually spontaneous and informal. The individual takes it by holding the camera in their hand and directing it toward themselves, and may also use a selfie stick to obtain a wider viewing angle for taking the photograph (Abd Al-Qader, 2018, pp. 829–830).

Meanwhile, Sorokowski et al. (2015) define the selfie as self-photographs of an individual, either alone or with others, taken with an ordinary camera or a mobile-phone camera held at arm's length and usually shared through social networking sites (Ahmed, 2019, p. 86).

It can be said that a selfie is the process of taking a personal photograph in an attractive manner, either with a smartphone or a camera, and sharing it through social networking sites for the purposes of enjoyment or entertainment, sometimes reaching the point of addiction and an inability to abandon this behavior.

3. Forms of Selfies

Barry, Doucette, Loflin, Hudson, and Herrington (2015), Sung et al. (2016), and Arpacı (2018) identified a number of forms of selfies, including:

a. Couple Selfie: These are photographs taken with one's romantic partner, constituting an explicit public declaration of the existence of an emotional relationship between the two individuals.

b. Friend Selfie: These are photographs taken by an individual with their best friend in places or locations that are preferred by both parties, with the friend being someone close to the individual.

c. No-Makeup Selfie: This is a type of selfie in which the individual appears without makeup. This form of selfie has become widespread in recent times among fashion models and artists, who believe that it demonstrates their self-confidence and their deep sense of their natural beauty without the need to wear makeup.

d. Gym Selfie: These are photographs taken in gyms, with the aim of displaying muscles and attracting girls.

e. Animal Selfie: These are photographs taken with animals that individuals care for.

f. Integration Selfie: These are photographs taken by an individual with a number of other people, whether at work or within the family, with the purpose of displaying the individual's integration with others.

g. Ideal Selfie: This refers to an attempt to produce ideal photographs in an appropriate form without any imperfections in the image. This may reach the point where the individual uses such a photograph as their profile picture.

h. Duck Selfie: This type of photograph has become highly widespread. It involves an individual or a group of individuals making a mouth gesture resembling a duck's mouth, which subsequently became known as the duck selfie.

i. Holiday Selfie: These are photographs taken during holidays, whether at tourist destinations, in hotels, or on yachts, with the purpose of showing off and boasting about a luxurious lifestyle (Ahmed, 2019, p. 89).

4. Concept of Selfie Addiction

Researchers have differed over whether excessive selfie-taking should be considered a disorder that leads to addiction. Some believe that addiction is the most appropriate term to describe the condition of people who spend long periods taking personal photographs of themselves and spend even longer periods editing these photographs and posting them on social media. This group emphasizes that it is not appropriate to describe behaviors as addictive merely because individuals spend a long time taking photographs and posting them on social media. Others argue that there is no such thing as selfie addiction, but rather what is referred to as selfie-image disorder (Nizar, 2018, pp. 224–225).

Other academics, however, have taken a somewhat uncritical position in asserting that "selfie addiction" exists. For example, Shah (2015) argues that selfie-taking behavior "classically fits" the criteria for addiction, but subsequently fails to specify what those criteria are. He then states that anyone who takes more than 3–5 selfies per day "can be considered ill," and that spending more than five minutes taking a single selfie or more than 30 minutes per day taking selfies "can also be considered an illness" (Griffiths & Balakrishnan, 2018, p. 4).

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has also been reported as officially confirming what many people had previously believed: that taking selfies is a mental disorder. This disorder is referred to as "selfitis" and is defined as an obsessive-compulsive desire to take photographs of oneself and post them on social media as a means of compensating for low self-esteem and filling a gap in intimate relationships (Kela, 2017, p. 15839). The term "selfitis" is currently used to describe an obsession with selfies and the desire to take a selfie and post it online in an attempt to compensate for low self-esteem and fill a gap in intimate relationships (Abd Al-Nabi, 2022, pp. 10–11).

There are several terms used by researchers to refer to the concept of selfie addiction, including selfie obsession, selfitis, and selfie-image addiction. The present study will adopt the concept of selfie addiction, which falls within the broader category of Internet addiction.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) defined selfie addiction as an obsessive-compulsive desire to take a self-photograph and post it through social media as a means of compensating for a lack of self-esteem and reducing the gap in intimate relationships (Al-Sharifin & Al-Wahaibi, 2018, p. 8). In the same context, Singh and Tripathi (2017) described it as a form of obsessive-compulsive behavior that drives an individual to take a photograph of themselves and post it on social networking sites (Hassan & Al-Badawi, 2020, p. 242).

Selfie addiction can be defined as a type of addiction that causes an individual to spend long hours taking personal photographs of themselves using a smartphone or camera, accompanied by a strong desire to post these photographs on social media and make modifications to them.

5. Levels of Selfie Addiction

Selfie addiction is identified at three levels:

5.1. Mild Level: The individual takes self-photographs at least three times a day without posting them on social media (Ahmed, 2022, p. 265). Lakshmi Vektermann (2019) also referred to what he called the threshold level, defined as taking photographs of oneself at least three times a day without posting them on social media (Abd Al-Nabi, 2022).

5.2. Acute Level: The individual takes photographs of themselves at least three times a day and posts each of the photographs on social media (Ahmed, 2022, p. 265).

5.3. Chronic Level: This is a condition in which the individual is unable to control their self-photography throughout the day and posts photographs on social media more than six times a day (Ahmed, 2022, p. 265). It also involves an uncontrollable urge to take selfies continuously and post them on social media more than six times a day (Abd Al-Nabi, 2022, p. 11).

6. Symptoms of Selfie Addiction

Research on the topic of the selfie is still relatively recent, and in-depth studies that broaden scientific knowledge of this phenomenon remain limited. Although selfie-related behavior is not mentioned in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), behaviors associated with self-photography (selfies) may resemble certain symptoms of addiction, such as persistent and uncontrollable behavior, the desire to continue the activity, repetition of the activity, the amount of time spent engaging in it, dependence on the activity and difficulty giving it up, and its effects on social life in the pursuit of taking an ideal self-photograph. Approximately 200 self-photographs may be taken per day. This behavior interferes with individuals' daily life activities, such as going to school or going on outings with friends (Abd Al-Nabi, 2022, p. 10).

Shah (2015) also indicated that taking selfies corresponds to the commonly recognized criteria of forms of addiction, such as electronic gaming and Internet addiction, because it produces a series of reactions that include taking personal photographs and uploading them to a social media platform, as this becomes an enjoyable and important activity for the individual. It also involves waiting for friends' comments and taking photographs as a means of escaping problems and alleviating negative moods and painful emotions resulting from fear and depression, which may lead to addiction. This led the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to confirm that taking selfies constitutes a psychological disorder and to refer to it as selfie addiction (Al-Momani & Al-Omari, 2022, p. 77). Young indicated that this type of addiction is characterized by a person remaining occupied with it for 38 hours per week for the sake of pleasure (Nizar, 2018, p. 225). Among the most important symptoms of selfie addiction are that taking self-photographs is considered an enjoyable and important activity for individuals and has high commemorative value; eagerness to take self-photographs in every situation regardless of its danger; preoccupation with the poses adopted when taking selfies; following the latest selfie poses posted on social media and imitating them; keeping selfies from every situation; feeling happy about being able to document all memories through self-photographs; spending long periods of time every day taking selfies; feeling happy when obtaining the greatest possible number of likes on social media; being unable to stop taking and posting selfies; experiencing sadness and irritability when reducing or stopping selfie-taking; becoming irritable when others interfere with taking selfies; responding forcefully and impulsively after being prevented from taking self-photographs; spending long periods editing self-photographs before posting them on social networking sites; experiencing an internal force attempting to prevent the person from taking self-photographs; showing no concern about imminent danger in some situations as a result of taking self-photographs in dangerous places and positions; experiencing sadness when stopping photography and posting on social media; preferring selfies to real-life situations; preferring friends who support selfie-taking; and disregarding social customs and traditions when taking and posting self-photographs (Nizar, 2018, pp. 228–229).

It can be said that selfie addiction resembles Internet addiction and electronic gaming addiction as described in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), through the persistent and repeated use of selfie-taking, becoming preoccupied with it until it becomes one of the enjoyable and important activities in the individual's life, and experiencing distress when unable to take personal photographs, accompanied by a strong desire to post them on social media and subject them to a series of modifications so that they become the best possible images. There may be many psychological factors underlying this selfie-related behavior.

7. Causes of Selfie Addiction

The motivations underlying selfie addiction vary, including psychological causes. The psychological reasons behind users' obsession with selfies and photography in general include a lack of self-confidence, particularly with regard to personal aspects such as beauty and appearance. This is reflected in displaying such photographs on social media, where users attempt to present their beauty in a way they believe gives them strength and confidence, particularly when their photographs receive likes from friends and followers. In this way, they attract the attention of others and gain some psychological strength to compensate for their lack of self-confidence and their feelings of worthlessness and marginalization (Abd Al-Nabi, 2022, p. 11).

Studies indicate that many individuals who take selfies are keen to appear at their best, in the form they consider appropriate and wish to display in the photograph and that represents their selves. This may lead individuals to search for the image in which they can find satisfaction with their external appearance and with how they will look in the photograph. This is achieved by editing the photograph through the digital technologies available on smartphones and through the proliferation and diversity of applications such as Snapchat, Facetune, and other applications. The use of selfies, image-filtering features, and various applications has created an obsession within society, particularly among adolescents and young people, with making their external appearance look satisfactory, which may lead to body dysmorphic disorder (Al-Momani & Al-Omari, 2022, p. 74).

This was confirmed by Abd Al-Qader's (2018) study in Algeria on the psychological causes underlying users' obsession with selfies and photography. These causes include a lack of self-confidence, particularly with regard to personal characteristics such as beauty and appearance, which is reflected in displaying photographs on social media. Users attempt to present their beauty in a way they believe gives them strength and confidence, particularly when their photographs receive likes from friends and followers. In this way, they attract the attention of others and gain some psychological strength to compensate for their lack of self-confidence and feelings of worthlessness and marginalization (Al-Luhaiyani, 2021, pp. 540–541).

According to psychiatrist Dr. David Veal: "Two out of every three of the patients who come to see me with body dysmorphic disorder since the emergence of camera-equipped phones have a compulsive desire to take repeated selfies and post them on social media" (Kela, 2017, p. 15839).

Among the psychological factors that may contribute to making an individual addicted to selfies are a low self-image, feelings of inadequacy, and a lack of self-confidence, particularly with regard to physical appearance. These factors may lead the individual to compensate by taking photographs of themselves and making a series of modifications through applications such as Snapchat and filters in order to appear in the best possible image. This relieves the anxiety and tension associated with dissatisfaction with their physical appearance. On the other hand, selfie-taking may increase self-confidence and feelings of satisfaction, particularly when comparing the original self-photograph with the photograph taken after modifying it and adding numerous enhancements through applications, together with receiving positive comments or likes on the self-photograph posted on social media.

A person who takes selfies continuously and excessively at different times is also described as having an unhealthy personality. Such an individual seeks self-satisfaction rather than the satisfaction of others and therefore works to beautify the self and attribute qualities to it that it does not deserve. Excessive self-love is among the most dangerous conditions a person may fall into. When an individual's passion for the self reaches a pathological level, it may turn the person into a selfish individual who thinks of nothing but themselves and becomes opportunistic and exploitative. Such a person may develop an excessive desire for positions and authority from which they derive power and through which they can control others. Moreover, a person may become so absorbed in self-love that they develop grandiose ideas that make them believe they are the strongest, most beautiful, most intelligent, and best, while considering others less powerful, less beautiful, and less intelligent. Consequently, they may permit themselves to exploit and ridicule others and may even go as far as belittling them (Abd Al-Shafi, 2020, p. 287).

This is consistent with the study by Sun and Lee, Kim and Choi (2016), which indicated a role for personality disorders in the widespread behavior of posting selfies, particularly narcissistic, psychopathic, and histrionic personality disorders (Ahmed, 2019, p. 81). This is also supported by Singh and Lippmann (2017), who argued that understanding the psychology of selfies and their consequences is important for both individuals and the societies in which they live. They stated that taking selfies can sometimes be "inconsiderate of others," particularly when "getting the perfect shot" becomes an obsession. They also indicated that excessive selfie-taking can become "an annoying obsession and may be associated with different personality traits," such as psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism. "Narcissistic individuals display feelings of superiority but often also conceal self-doubt. Those with psychopathic traits have little empathy regarding harm to others. Individuals with Machiavellian traits achieve their desires with diminished ethical standards. All three use social networking sites that allow photographs to be posted and edited. Individuals with low self-esteem and/or obsession and/or hyperactivity sometimes exhibit high rates of selfie-taking" (Griffiths & Balakrishnan, 2018, p. 4).

The pathological personality traits of a person addicted to selfies or experiencing personality disturbance may lead them to engage in this behavior through excessive involvement in taking personal photographs in order to admire themselves and exaggerate their appearance as ideal and beautiful images worthy of praise and admiration through the various comments received on social media platforms. This is particularly evident in the narcissistic personality, which may use this behavior to compensate for a distorted self-image that the individual attempts to compensate for in real life through excessive self-admiration and excessive selfie-taking in order to present themselves to others, friends, and followers as a unique personality whose photographs resemble no one else's.

The histrionic personality seeks attention through exhibitionism when taking selfies in high or dangerous places, in pursuit of attracting the attention of others and sharing the photographs on social media. The psychopathic, antisocial personality, characterized by selfishness and self-love, may manifest these characteristics through excessive personal photography in pursuit of admiration, as well as through exploiting selfie-sharing and the financial gains obtained from comments and interactions by followers on social media platforms.

8. Effects of Selfie Addiction

This type of addiction leads to numerous negative effects. Selfie-taking initially begins as a form of entertainment and gradually develops into a habit and then into addiction. The consequences of selfie-taking include poor performance at work, peer pressure, unwanted stress, unhealthy family relationships, conflicts, and so forth. It may also lead to complications such as lower back pain, cervical spondylitis, awkward positioning, confusing body posture, frozen shoulder, tennis elbow, and others (Kela, 2017, p. 15836).

Some argue that selfies cause more harm than benefit and are associated with death. There have been reports of deaths and injuries resulting from taking selfies because dangerous locations attract selfie-takers, and when such photographs are shared, others may imitate them and expose themselves to danger. There have been victims in various countries because of selfies. In 2018, according to an article published by the BBC, 259 individuals lost their lives while taking selfies. In India, it was found that three out of every four deaths occurred because of selfies, particularly among those under 25 years of age (Saber & Al-Shafie, 2024, p. 131).

Selfies may potentially cause addiction, psychological disorders, and even suicide. In February 2014, Hong Kong Marathon officials took the initiative to ban selfie-taking during the race because of injuries that had occurred during the 2013 marathon, when runners stopped to take selfies, causing congestion among the participants and resulting in bruising and injuries (Kela, 2017, p. 15839).

Selfies also have numerous other negative effects. They contribute to many psychological, social, and physical problems. Selfie-taking is considered an indicator of narcissism, and individuals who take selfies have lower self-confidence, lower self-esteem, lower social attractiveness, greater social sensitivity, and lower openness to new experiences. Furthermore, it causes individuals to waste time and effort, particularly in editing their photographs before posting them (Saber & Al-Shafie, 2024, p. 131).

Selfie-taking can also cause individuals to harm themselves. A prominent example illustrating the seriousness of this phenomenon is the case of Danny Bowman, a 19-year-old who remained confined to his home for six months, spending more than ten hours a day taking 200 selfies per day. This led him to stop attending school, withdraw from his friends, and eventually attempt suicide. Psychiatrist David Veal diagnosed Danny's condition as body dysmorphic disorder resulting from his dissatisfaction with his body image (Al-Momani & Al-Omari, 2022, p. 77).

Taking and posting self-photographs on social media or exchanging them with friends may increase the level of body-image disturbance, as posting photographs leads individuals to compare themselves with others in terms of physical appearance, skin color, appearance, and body size. This may increase levels of depression and stress, as well as body-image disturbance. Physicians indicate that, since the emergence of smartphones, two out of every three patients who attend clinics have body-image disturbance and dysmorphic disorder. Some argue that selfies are responsible for leading young people and adolescents to seek cosmetic surgery, which has witnessed an increase in the number of individuals undergoing such procedures, particularly among selfie-takers. For example, rhinoplasty increased by 10%, eye surgery, particularly eyelid surgery, increased by 6%, and hair-transplant surgery increased by 7% in 2013 compared with previous years (Hassan & Al-Badawi, 2020, p. 247).

In the study "Science Links Selfies to Narcissism & Low Self-Esteem," it was revealed that individuals who regularly take selfies may exhibit signs of depression, and the condition may develop into addiction that is difficult to overcome, particularly when the number of selfies taken becomes associated with increased interaction from friends and relatives with the photographs on social media. What is referred to as obsession then begins to develop, driving individuals to photograph themselves in every situation. This results in an accumulation of negative effects when there is no interaction with these photographs, leading some adolescents to attempt suicide or seek psychological treatment for their addiction to this phenomenon. Others have experienced severe depression and loss of appetite as a result of receiving no interaction or limited interaction with the photographs they post (Abd Al-Qader, 2018, pp. 831–832).

In addition, the findings of Mills et al. (2018) indicated that excessive self-photography leads to increased levels of anxiety and stress, decreased self-confidence, and a reduced sense of physical attractiveness. Cohen et al. (2018), meanwhile, found that selfie-takers experienced eating disorders, including bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa, as well as body dissatisfaction. Al-Sharifin and Al-Wahaibi's (2018) study also indicated that selfie-takers experienced emotional instability (Hassan & Al-Badawi, 2020, p. 236).

Furthermore, selfies may reinforce social and class conflict, as they often express imitation of celebrities and stars rather than the presentation of one's true self. They constitute an artificial, unreal, and unnatural image and may also threaten self-esteem through negative comments from others about the photograph, thereby creating a negative impression of the individual's personality among others (Abd Al-Ghani & Ibrahim, 2023, p. 170).

Other forms include deceiving others and pretending: there is a concerning phenomenon associated with self-image, namely the disappearance of the natural image and people's tendency to use unreal (fictitious) images, such as those of a beautiful girl or a handsome young man, or to assume fictitious names with the aim of attracting and deceiving others and establishing fictitious relationships with them. This leads to the creation of a fictional and superficial world for the individual and the formation of superficial, unreal relationships, which may result in the individual becoming involved in numerous problems (Hassan & Al-Badawi, 2020, p. 248).

Selfie addiction produces many negative effects, including physical effects such as a curved back and pain in the head and neck, as well as death resulting from the dangerous poses that individuals addicted to selfies attempt to capture. Such behavior may sometimes lead to physical injury or death. It also has psychological effects, such as low self-esteem, which is a factor contributing to selfie addiction and may also result from repeatedly examining and enhancing the captured image before posting it on social networking sites. Negative reactions from others, including negative comments, ridicule,

and provocations, may lead to feelings of frustration, despair, and depression. In addition, body dysmorphic disorder may develop as a result of dissatisfaction with one's appearance, increasing fears and obsessive concerns about physical appearance after taking selfies. This may lead the individual to repeatedly seek the services of beauty experts and cosmetic surgeons in an attempt to overcome these concerns.

Conclusion

Individuals derive pleasure from taking personal photographs and sharing them with their friends and others after editing them to become the best possible images with which they can show off before others, particularly when they receive positive comments on social networking sites. This encourages them to continue engaging in this activity until it becomes part of their daily interests, eventually making them vulnerable to addiction, known as selfie addiction, through excessive selfie-taking. The addicted individual becomes highly concerned with selecting an appropriate location and the optimal pose for taking the photograph, spending long hours editing the image before posting it on social networking sites. This may lead to numerous psychological effects, such as low self-esteem, depression, and, in some cases, suicidal behavior, thereby necessitating psychological intervention. Such intervention may seek to help individuals recognize that developing self-confidence and self-acceptance does not depend on taking selfies, but can be achieved through other means, such as participating in cultural and scientific clubs and developing photography skills by redirecting them from selfies toward other areas, such as photographing landscapes. It is also important to reduce selfie use by setting a specific amount of time for its use and reducing the number of hours devoted to selfies, as well as refraining from posting personal information, photographs, and videos on social networking sites, particularly Facebook and Twitter, as such practices may cause harm to individuals addicted to selfies. Relaxation techniques may also be practiced when experiencing distress or discomfort due to not using selfies, while ignoring various negative comments made by social media users.

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