

THE REASONS NARCISSISTS PORTRAYED THEMSELVES ON FACEBOOK

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Abstract: *The increased use of Facebook has transformed the way people interact. People can use the Facebook to upload photos, share photos and create profile pictures easily and, to most users; it offers a simple way of spreading opinions. In fact, photo uploads receive 84% more link clicks than text and link posts, and 104% more comments than the average post. Therefore, this study was conducted to explore how narcissists visualize themselves in Facebook. From this study, the question of how they are portraying themselves in Facebook and why they are uploading and sharing photos in Facebook will be discovered. Data were collected through focus group discussions and were analyzed using a thematic analysis. A total of 20 respondents were selected using simple random sampling from different age. The results showed that most respondents used their own photo to visualize themselves in Facebook. In addition, these results showed that respondents tend to use photograph not only to portray their looks, but also to highlight the things and qualities that were important for them besides to get an attention. Implications for research and practice are discussed.*

Keywords: *Narcissists, Facebook, Visualize, Self, Attention*

Introduction

Sharing photos, especially on Social Networking Sites (SNS), have risen significantly and become most popular online activities especially in Facebook (Abraham, Suhara, and Sato, 2018). Facebook has transformed the way human interact. People can use Facebook to upload photos, share photos and create profile pictures easily and sometimes it offers a simple way of spreading opinions. Facebook is a social networking service launched on February 4, 2004 and the site remains free for anyone to join.

Every day, Facebook's 1.15 billion user base uploads an average of 350 million photos, culminating to a total of 250 billion photos uploaded since the site's launch (Smith, 2013).

Facebook has previously cited the 350 million daily numbers, but its photo library has grown slightly from February when it reported a total of 240 billion images (Robertson, 2013). Photos express important social information in numerous online domains (Ellison, Heino and Gibbs 2006; Kapidzic 2013; Whitty, 2008). Of the photos shared online, selfies seem essentially to contain the most explicit elements of flamboyance and self-propagation.

Literature Review

Definition and concept of Narcissism

Certainly, selfies have been described as “a symptom of social media-driven narcissism” (Pearlman 2013). It is reflecting the intuitive assumption that the taking and posting of such photos represent self-promoting ploys by the self-absorbed. Empirically, however, based on (Morf and Rhodewalt 2001) selfie posting and its association with narcissism has been largely unexplored. It is because narcissists are motivated to gain others' attention and respect to maintain their exaggerated self-views.

Looking at photos in social media offers a fresh perspective on understanding how narcissists are portraying themselves in Facebook and why they are uploading and sharing photos in Facebook. According to (Mehdizadeh 2010), narcissists would select photos which they thought were attractive to upload and write descriptions that enhanced and promoted themselves on Facebook in order to receive positive feedback from the public.

Meanwhile, another researcher (Quentin Fottrell, 2016) found a social media is primarily a tool for staying connected rather than self-promotion. He also found there was one notable exception: The more people changed their profile picture, the more likely they were to report narcissistic traits. Posting, tagging and commenting on photos on Facebook were associated with respondents' self-reported narcissism for both men and women. According to Seidman (2015), narcissists were more likely to post about their achievements and use Facebook as a way to get validation from others, for such is their desire; to get validation. Narcissists were also more likely to post about diet and exercise,

Instead, according to Reese, Zieger-Behnken, Sundar, & Kleck (2007) those viewers perceive users as being more popular, sexy, attractive and self-confident if their profile includes a larger number of friends. Previously, research has shown that self-presentation diverges according to environment. Researches representing those personal demographics may impact in a way users construct online identities. Definitely, age and gender act as strong identity markers in offline perspectives, with solid social norms communicating how to “act your age”. It is not startling that in anonymous online environments, gender and age-specific social norms may also be at work.

There has been research about age comparison in Facebook self-presentation. Livingstone's (2008) research on 16 adolescent students found that the younger participants among them constructed their identities through visually elaborate and individualized profiles, while older adolescents preferred an aesthetically plain profile appearance.

As an online entity, Facebook leaves itself open to the possibility that its users display their idealized, rather than accurate, selves through their profiles. This has been referred to as the idealized-virtual identity hypothesis (Back et al. 2010). In order to test this hypothesis, Back and colleagues measured the extent to which Facebook profiles reflected actual personality rather than self-idealization. Participants' ideal self-ratings, assessed through the

Ten Item Personality Inventory (Rammstedt and John 2007), were compared to observer ratings of participants' Facebook profiles. Observers were able to accurately infer the personality characteristics of the Facebook users in the study, suggesting that participants were expressing and communicating real personality rather than promoting idealized versions of themselves (Back et al. 2010). The study found that impressions made independently from Facebook profiles for all personalities were accurate.

While the old adage, "a picture is worth a thousand words" gained favor nearly a century before the advent of social media sites, the saying was never more applicable than it is today, in the notion that our complex selves can somehow be miraculously conveyed with just a single still image posted to social media sites, such as Facebook. Based on Piekiewicz (2013) research, postings to social media sites generally portray who we would like others (and ourselves) to perceive us to be. Because so often many of our "friends" rarely if ever come face to face with us or even converse with us verbally, we can craft an idealized image and present it to the world as complete reality. People tend to post themselves, smiling engagedly, using only the best, most flattering photographs, crafting an idealized image and presenting it to the world as a complete reality.

Based on (Park et al., 2009) personal statuses through SNSs are actively sought out by users of these sites. Respondents to the study conducted by Park et al. (2009) found that they used Facebook groups in order to present themselves as cool or as a mean to develop their career. Tufekci (2008) stated all SNS allow users to expressive their social network via links between their profile page and other profiles. Profiles linked to each other in this manner are called friends. Profile owners also express an online persona through pictures, words and page composition, as well as through data fields where information ranging from favorite books and movies to sexual orientation and relationship status (single, in a relationship, etc.) is indicated. This study is to examine how narcissist users present themselves through Facebook.

Methodology

Researchers chose the method of focus group discussions to get a better understanding on the issue how they visualize themselves in Facebook and why they are uploading and sharing photos in Facebook. This method is also used to gain a better understanding to explore the issue. Researchers believe that the use of qualitative methods will find unexpected findings. Through focus group discussions, researchers chose a group of respondents with certain features to provide discussions. The features were provided from Facebook's respondent who gave permission to involve in this discussion. A total of 20 samples were selected and these were divided into three groups. The number of samples for each group of six to seven has been to create a group dynamic and to allow each member to participate without leaving any involvement of members in the discussion later. The sample was 60% females and 40% was males. The age's average of participant was 20 years old.

The characteristics of the selected members of the group are based on the concept that they have the characteristics of homogeneity in their background but not homogeneity in their attitude (Goldman, 1962; Corfman, 1995). Merton, Fiske and Kendall (1990), shows that the size of the groups set out in group discussions based on two considerations which cannot be so great as this will hinder the participation of members of the group in discussions or not so small that it failed to get the desired result. The focus group discussions transcripts were analyzed using a qualitative Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This involved initial coding,

grouping of codes into themes using the analytical method of constant comparison and, eventually, candidate themes were reviewed and refined.

Analysis and Results

How narcissists are portraying themselves in Facebook

This chapter is concerned with how narcissists users present themselves to others through Facebook. Much of that content is photographs, links, and textual information that social media users post to present an online self. Self-presentation is generally considered to be motivated by a desire to make a favorable impression on others, or an impression that corresponds to one's ideals. As such, self-presentation is centrally involved in impression management and the projection of an online identity (Schlenker 1980). Research has shown that people's online self-presentations differ in various ways.

The results show that, narcissists love to selfie and upload on Facebook. Selfie is a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website. At the core, we take pictures of ourselves and post them online for other people to see, to like and to comment on.

With social media, it's easier than ever to idolize our favorite artists and literally watch them live their lives from our phone: one photo, video or tweet at a time. Taking selfies has become so common that it's now uncommon if someone doesn't. Typically, people take multiple selfies and only post the best one (some post them all). There are some feedbacks from respondents as proof:

"I posted a picture of my face and 24 people liked it! Wow! Maybe they think I'm cool, good-looking, and fun or maybe they want to date me!"

"Lot of people take selfies because it's easy to get your best snap, it's cool and trendy on social media, so I'am!"

"To me personally, selfie is a fun way to capture a moment with friends and family or to show them what I am doing."

So they get inundated with the best photos of their friends and family, who all eagerly desire to be accepted and loved as well, and this can lead them to compare their selves. So they try harder to take a better selfie (to get more likes and comments) and the cycle continues. Tag friends in status and posts is another way of narcissists portrayed themselves on Facebook. Tagging is one of the most popular features on Facebook which gives Facebookers the ability to identify and reference people in photos, videos and notes. Today, the management is adding a new way to tag people and other things they are connected to on Facebook- in status updates and other posts from the Publisher. It's another way to let people know who and what they are talking about. Friends they tag in their status with photo updates will receive a notification and a wall post linking them to their post.

"I'm tagged my friends in on my photo newsfeed to let them impress and comment it!"

"The majority of photos I'm tagged in are funnies or awesome that people just want me to look at!"

"I had eggs for breakfast this morning!" (status with eggs visual)

"MMMMM!" "Going for a run!" (With visual)

"It's raining." (Raining photo)

This is called oversharing photos on Facebook. Some people find it easier to be their "true selves" online, and by posting a lot on Facebook will get users the attention they seek. The result of this study has shown that more narcissists disclosed their personal information, photos, relationship information and address than "connected" people.

Why narcissists upload and share photos in Facebook

The question why narcissists continue to upload and share their own photos in Facebook should be explored. Is there an underlying need for attention from others that somehow motivates people to do this? The results showed that respondents tend to express positive emotions in photo. According to them, people post photos because they want positive affirmation about the way they live and wanting to show how good they are at stuff because people are determined to become good at stuff. This is the reason why social networks especially Facebook become extremely popular in the first place, that people need to engage with each other in the social sphere. It quickly becomes clear that many people upload their photo as a boost to their self-esteem. Every like, share and positive comment is a boost to their confidence and self-esteem as evidenced here:

"I share photos to let the world know what I am doing."

"I like for other people to see how I'm looking and the things I like."

"I like sharing pictures because to compare myself to others."

"In a sense, there is idea that what is being put up on Facebook is what you want others to know about you."

"I share photos on Facebook to disclose happenings around me."

The results also showed that respondents tend to use photograph not only to visualize their looks, but also to highlight the things and qualities that were important for them. They upload photo in order to present themselves, communicate with family and friends and entertain themselves by looking at the profiles of others. This result is correlated to study done by Vazire, Naumann, Rentfrow and Gosling (2008), their findings suggest that physical appearance reflects narcissists' personality, preoccupation with good looks, and desire to be the center of attention, and serves as a vehicle with which to promote their status. It is also related to Mark Zuckerberg (2012) on Facebook IPO, "People sharing more - even if just with their close friends or families creates a more open culture and leads to a better understanding of the lives and perspectives of others". A study, conducted by Gwendolyn Seidman (2015), examines how people use Facebook to express their "true selves." The true self is a concept first named in 2002-the idea that we possess qualities we'd like to be recognized for, but that we normally find ourselves unable to express in day-to-day life.

"For me it's two reasons. One: to share my photo with friends and family and Two: to have them all in one place."

"I share photos to remember the best times I had in my life in that's something I don't never want to forget about because anything can happen at any time so you just want to remember while there gone so you want never forget them".

"I think that sharing photos online is good because it is good that you can share stuff with your friends and family."

"I share photos on Facebook to share something important with family and friends."

However, one finding surprised the researchers. The reason why narcissists upload photo is in a way an expression to call out for attention. Attention seeking can be described as the sentiments of getting attention and importance from others. Therefore Facebook have become just a place to create a fake self-image, to please the ego and desperately seeking attention. It's the most attention seeking thing people can possibly do.

"Simply it's a sign of a desire to gain attention".

"Just an effort to fill an empty space of inner self!"

"Personally, I think that most people share their pictures just to get attention, they want 'likes' and comments on their profile picture of themselves".

"Some people upload provocative pictures for attention".

"Or maybe as a way to get attention. I know I do it for the attention."

"Simple, to share something that interested them, in plain words to show off".

It's clearly stated by respondents that they upload and shared photo is to seek attention and validation from others. There are people who share the smallest of all things that happened in their day to day life on Facebook by clicking the pictures and post them on Facebook just to grab attention. People want too much attention from their friends and family. The present study showed similarity with a study conducted by A. Malik et al. (2016), which determines the gratifications of Facebook-based photo sharing. A total of six photo sharing gratifications are identified, namely: affection, attention from their friends and family. The present study showed similarity with study conducted by A. Malik et al. (2016), determine the gratifications of Facebook-based photo sharing. A total of six photo sharing gratifications are identified, namely: affection, attention seeking, disclosure, habit, information sharing, and social influence.

Conclusion

Facebook has billions of active users including narcissists who are active on social media as these platforms allow them to engage in exhibitionistic, attention-seeking, and self-promoting behaviors. Researchers have discovered trends of sharing photos on social media among narcissists can have a positive impact. It exposes people to the lives of others, their good times and bad times. Of course, some might point out that the perceived increase in picture oversharing is nothing more than that: a perception. In other words, it's not that there's an eruption of people willing to bare everything online; it's that those who do typically post more status updates and garner more exposure on news feeds. In future research, additional variables like demographic (age, gender and level of education) could be analyzed further to understand which of these variables affect narcissistics in photo sharing activity on Facebook.

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