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Mirror, Selfie, Society: Age and Gender Influences on Selfitis Behavior

Abstract:

Selfitis, described as the compulsive inclination to capture, edit, and post selfies, has emerged as a behavioral concern in contemporary digital culture. Young adults are particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon due to their heightened social media engagement, identity exploration, and peer influence. The concept of “selfitis” is not recognized as an official diagnosis, but research indicates that it represents a behavioral manifestation of underlying psychological issues rather than being a standalone condition. The obsessive and compulsive need to take and share selfies is often linked to low self-esteem, where individuals seek external validation to compensate for feelings of inadequacy.

The present study investigates selfitis behavior among 150 students aged 18–25 years, including both male and female participants pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate education. Data were collected using the Selfitis Behavior Scale (SBS) developed by Balakrishnan and Griffiths (2018), which assesses six domains: environmental enhancement, social competition, attention seeking, mood modification, self-confidence, and social conformity.

An analysis of the responses showed a notable gender difference, with more female participants than males. The age range of the participants also exhibited wide variation. We used ANOVA to determine if there were significant differences in selfitis behaviours based on age and gender. Our results indicate a significant gender difference in selfitis scores, along with notable variations across different age groups. Females typically exhibit a higher incidence and frequency of selfitis compared to males. They often score higher in terms of selfie addiction and experience greater appearance anxiety related to their selfie behavior. Although some studies report no gender differences or even a higher prevalence among males in certain samples, these findings are less common.

Keywords: Selfitis, selfies, gender differences, age, and digital behavior

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