

Self-Esteem Levels & Selfies: The Relationship between Self-Esteem Levels and the  
Number of Selfies People Take and Post, and the Uses and Gratifications of Taking and  
Posting Selfies

By

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## ABSTRACT

The research examines the relationship between self-esteem levels and the number of selfies people take and post, and the uses and gratifications of taking and posting selfies. For this purpose, 365 undergraduate students were surveyed using questionnaires provided through the online survey tool, Survey Monkey. Survey results indicated that the highest number of selfies is taken by the people with high self-esteem. The study revealed that the highest number of selfies is posted by the people with high self-esteem. Also, the people with low self-esteem levels take and post the lowest number of selfies. The study found a significant relationship between low self-esteem levels and posting selfies to boost self-confidence.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>List of Tables</b> .....	vi
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	vii
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b> .....	2
<b>Origin of Selfie</b> .....	2
<b>Uses &amp; Gratifications Theory</b> .....	3
<b>Looking-Glass Self Theory</b> .....	4
<b>Self-Verification Theory</b> .....	6
<b>Effects of Selfies on Socio-Psychological Characteristics of People</b> .....	7
<b>Self-Esteem Levels and Social Media</b> .....	9
<b>Influence of Posting Selfies on Self-Esteem and its Relationship with the Age, Sex and Education of People</b> .....	11
<b>Relationship between Self-Esteem Levels and People Who Take More Selfies</b> .....	13
<b>Relationship between Self-Esteem Levels and People Who Post More Selfies</b> .....	14
<b>Impact of Selfies on Self-Esteem Levels</b> .....	15
<b>Selfies as Self-Confidence Boosters</b> .....	16
<b>CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY</b> .....	18
<b>Statement of the Problem</b> .....	18
<b>Research Questions and Hypotheses</b> .....	19
<b>Research Methodology</b> .....	20
<b>Data Collection Procedure</b> .....	20
<b>Data Analysis</b> .....	20

<b>CHAPTER IV: RESULTS</b> .....	22
<b>Introduction</b> .....	22
<b>Demographic Statistics of the Survey Participants</b> .....	22
<b>Gender Identity of the Participants</b> .....	23
<b>Age of the Current Survey Participants</b> .....	24
<b>Ethnicity Origin of the Current Survey Participants</b> .....	26
<b>School Year of the Current Survey Participants</b> .....	26
<b>Self-Esteem Level of the Participants</b> .....	27
<b>Data Collection and Analysis</b> .....	27
<b>Relationship between People Who Take More Selfies and Their Self-Esteem Levels</b>	28
<b>Relationship between People Who Posts More Selfies and Their Self-Esteem Levels</b>	29
<b>Uses and Gratifications of Selfies</b> .....	30
<b>H1: People with Lower Self-Esteem Levels Tend to Take More Selfies Than Those</b>	
<b>with Higher Self-Esteem Levels</b> .....	31
<b>H2: People with Low Self-Esteem Tend to Take or Post Selfies to Boost their Self-</b>	
<b>Confidence More Than Those with Higher Levels of Self-Esteem</b> .....	32
<b>CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION</b> .....	33
<b>Demographics of the Participants</b> .....	33
<b>Gender of the Current Survey Participant</b> .....	33
<b>Age of the Current Survey Participants</b> .....	34
<b>Ethnicity Origin of the Current Survey Participants</b> .....	34
<b>School Year of the Current Survey Participants</b> .....	34
<b>Self-Esteem Level of the Participants</b> .....	35
<b>Relationship between People Who Take More Selfies and Their Self-Esteem Levels</b>	35
<b>Relationship between People Who Post More Selfies and Their Self-Esteem Levels</b>	36
<b>Uses and Gratifications of Selfies</b> .....	37

<b>People With Lower Self-Esteem Levels Tend To Take More Selfies Than Those With Higher Self-Esteem Levels.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>People With Low Self-Esteem Tend To Take Or Post Selfies To Boost Their Self-Confidence More Than Those With Higher Levels Of Self-Esteem.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: OTHER RESPONSES FOR USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF SELFIES .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL .....</b>	<b>64</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1	Average of Selfies Taken and Posted by Age.....	25
Table 2	Reasons for Taking or Posting Selfies.....	31
Table 3	Reasons for Taking or Posting Selfies Pivot Table.....	32

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Gender Identity of the Current Survey Participants.....	23
Figure 2	Age of the Current Survey Participants.....	25
Figure 3	Ethnicity Origin of the Current Survey Participants.....	26
Figure 4	School Year of the Current Survey Participants.....	27
Figure 5	Self-Esteem Levels and Number of Selfies Taken.....	28
Figure 6	Number of Selfies Posted and Self-Esteem Levels.....	29

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Taking a picture of yourself without the help of others hasn't been that big of a deal until selfies came into existence. In the past three years, a great number of individuals practiced the trend of taking and posting selfies. Selfies became a very interesting topic for researchers to study and examine because since 2012, the rate of usage of selfie reportedly increased by 17,000% (Bennett, 2014). The phenomenon of selfie was so widespread in 2013 that Oxford Dictionary selected the term as the "word of 2013" (Snooke, 2014).

Keenan (2014) mentions that she had seen people taking selfies at parties, in class, while having food, working out at the gym, and almost everywhere and anywhere. According to Haggard (2014), people believe self-imaging as a way to validate and express themselves. However, other researchers are proposing that being highly involved in the trend can be related to low self-esteem or narcissism (Haggard, 2014).

Researchers found that people with low self-esteem tend to be more involved with the trend of taking selfies, as well as the use of social media to mediate their interpersonal interaction in order to fulfil their self-esteem needs (Varnali, 2015).

Hence, the present study aimed to study the relationship between self-esteem levels and the number of selfies people take and post, as well as the uses and gratifications of taking and posting selfies to further understand the trend of selfie.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A selfie is a picture taken by the person himself without other people's assistance (Haggard, 2014). According to Saltz (2014), a selfie is a fast self-portrait made with a smartphone's camera and immediately distributed into a social network for instant visual communication of where we are, what we are doing, who we think we are and who we think is watching. Many believe that self-imaging is a way in which we validate our existence, although it is viewed to be a projection of narcissism by many as well (Haggard, 2014). Moreau (2014) says that the main reasons people take and post selfies are to get somebody's attention, to show off, out of boredom, to boost self-esteem, and because social media is fun.

Although there are different reasons for somebody to post selfies, this research focused on the relationship between self-esteem levels and the nature of the people who take and post selfies. In this chapter, the researcher will review the literature on the origin of selfie, theories that apply to the selfie culture, impact of selfies on socio-psychological characteristics of people, self-esteem levels and social media, influence of posting selfies on self-esteem and its relationship with the age, sex and education of people, relationship between self-esteem levels and people who post more selfies, and effects of selfies on self-esteem levels.

#### **Origin of Selfie**

In September 2002, Steven Wrighter coined the term "selfie." In September 2002, the Australian posted a photograph of himself in a forum on the website of ABC, the Australian public broadcaster, and wrote:

Um, drunk at a mates 21st, I tripped ofer and landed lip first (with front teeth coming a very close second) on a set of steps, I had a hole about 1cm long right through my bottom lip. And sorry about the focus, it was a selfie (Pearlman, 2013).

The usage of the hashtag “#selfie” first appeared on Flickr in 2004. It took almost a decade to gain public interest and attention. A Google trend study indicated that the selfie culture gained popularity in late 2012 ("A Brief History of the Selfie," 2013). Since 2012, the rate of usage of selfie reportedly increased by 17,000% (Bennett, 2014). The phenomenon of selfie is now so widespread that Oxford Dictionaries selected the term as the "word of 2013" (Sooke, 2014). The trend of taking selfies almost became a daily habit for many people all around the world, and the social media websites became the main places for those people to post their selfies (Moreau, 2014).

### **Uses & Gratifications Theory**

In 1959, Elihu Katz, an American and Israeli sociologist, came up with the uses and gratifications theory approach in order to examine how people are utilizing and using the media. Katz wanted to get away from asking what the media do to people and instead ask what people do with the media. In the early 1940s, many studies examined the way people utilized different media outlets such as classical radio music, radio soap operas and daily newspapers (O’Donohoe, 1994).

According to Katz, uses and gratifications happen in four steps: First, the audience is active, and, therefore, they use the mass media for a specific goal. Second, the audience members choose the media outlet that they believe will make them achieve gratification. Third, the media compete with other sources of media that can provide some satisfaction. Finally, the gratifications that happened from the media bring diversion, entertainment, and

information to the audience (Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973). Even though, Katz applied the uses and gratifications theory to the traditional media outlets such as radio and TV, the theory can be applied to more recent media such as social media and selfies.

The motives behind using selfies or the uses and gratifications of selfies depended on the personality of the individual and also on the self-esteem levels of the individuals (Bui, 2014). According to Papadakis (2014), the individuals who were using selfies more often needed instant gratification and selfie was one other medium through which they could attain it. Also, every individual had their views and needs for selfies (Rutledge, 2013). It depended upon the value an individual adds to their external appearance and presentation. The way a person sees selfies also varies with the culture of that individual (Rutledge, 2013).

### **Looking-Glass Self Theory**

In 1902, Cooley introduced the theory of the looking-glass in his book *Human Nature and The Social Order*. Cooley believes that individual's self is created through the ideas and concepts that others have about them (Cooley, 1902). His theory stated that people learn who they are from others and from their imagination of how they appear to others. As Cooley wrote:

As we see our face, figure, and dress in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and pleased or otherwise with them according as they do or do not answer to what we should like them to be; so in imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it (Cooley, 1902, p.183).

According to Cooley, people tend to use their imaginations to see how they appear to others and what personality they reflect during social interactions and meetings (Cooley, 1902).

According to Howson (2004), mirrors provide us with the visual accessibility to our external appearance of our bodies and faces, and that is exactly how the looking-glass-self theory works. When people start looking at themselves and imagine how they want to appear to others, they go through three stages. First, they picture the way they want to appear to others, for example as intelligent, successful, or strong. Second, they develop that picture alongside the things they already do, for example, the group they belong to, the clothes they wear, or the sports they play. The third and final stage is where people emerge the first two stages to come up with the image of how they appear to others (Gould & Howson, 2015).

Therefore, according to the looking-glass self-theory, people use the self as a mirror, and nowadays, selfies are being utilized as mirrors. According to Warfield (2014) selfies are just like many other new media, they are the convergence of older and newer technologies. Warfield states that people are using selfies as a mirror to reflect the self-image they have in their minds and want other people to see. The technology that made it possible for people to take selfies makes it possible for people to retake the picture as many times as they need to show the world the exact self-image and appearance they want others to see. That's why the looking-glass self-theory relates directly to how people are practicing and using selfies nowadays. According to Nathan Rousseau:

The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind. For example, we are ashamed to seem evasive in the presence of a straightforward man, cowardly in the presence of a brave one, gross in the eyes of a refined one, and so on. We always imagine and in imagining share the judgments of the other man (Rousseau, 2002, p. 4).

If someone represents as confident, people will most likely perceive him that way. If a girl represents as beautiful, people will see her that way as well. Tice (1992) performed a study on 90 introductory psychology students who volunteered to participate. The purpose of the study was to explore whether people can see us the way we want them to see us. The ninety participants were divided into two groups and were asked to portray themselves as either emotionally stable or as emotionally responsive. One group were told that they had to perform the behavior in a highly identifiable public manner while the other group performed the behavior under anonymous conditions. The participants were directed to a room with a one-way mirror. For participants in the public condition, the experimenter indicated that a graduate student will be interviewing them from the room behind the mirror. For participants in the private condition, the experimenter indicated that, although the room contained a one-way mirror, participants would not be observed while they responded to the questions. The results of the study confirmed that participants in the public condition were significantly more likely than participants in the private condition to believe that their behavior (their self-portrayal) could be publicly identified by others.

### **Self-Verification Theory**

Self-verification theory (Swann, 1983; Swann, 1987) stated that people seek verification for self-views. People prefer others to see and validate them as they see themselves. By receiving self-verification, individuals ensure that their beliefs about themselves are sensible, and, therefore, they can predict and exercise some control over their lives outcomes (Chen, 2006). Receiving self-verification gives people the power to smooth social interactions through guiding action and letting others know what to expect from others (Swann, 1983).

People seek self-verification to feel better about themselves (Swann, 1983). When individuals receive self-verifying feedback within a group, feelings that one is accepted and valued by others within the group increases worth-based self-esteem (Bradford, & Lohr, 1987; Burke & Jan, 1999; Ellison 1993). This theory relates directly to the trend of taking selfies because some of the people who are taking and posting selfies on social media do that as a way to receive self-verification from others. Some people confess that they use selfies as confidence boosters. They post selfies to get positive comments and likes, which makes them feel better about themselves (Grabmeier, 2015).

### **Effects of Selfies on Socio-Psychological Characteristics of People**

Some researchers linked the habit of taking a lot of selfies to narcissism, isolation, and even suicide (Bushak, 2015). A poll conducted by the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery found that selfies became a reason for the increasing number of plastic surgeries in the United States (Rees, 2014). The poll conducted annually to analyze trends in facial plastic surgery exhibited an increase in requests for procedures due to patients being more self-aware of looks in social media (Rees, 2014). The Academy's president, Medical Doctor Edward Farnior, also stated that

Social platforms like Instagram, Snapchat and the iPhone app Selfie.im, which are solely image based, force patients to hold a microscope up to their own image and often look at it with a more self-critical eye than ever before... These images are often the first impressions young people put out there to prospective friends, romantic interests and employers and our patients want to put their best face forward (Rees, 2014).

Campbell (2014) reported that trying to take a selfie as many times as needed to get the face to look as perfect as possible could lead to serious mental health problems. He also reported that Thailand government psychiatrist Dr. Panpimol Wipulakorn had warned young Thais who post their selfies on social media but do not receive enough likes and positive feedback of serious emotional problems, which consequently could affect the balance of the nation itself. Beside selfies posing a possible threat to some societies, selfies have been the cause for suicide attempts and deaths. A 19-year-old British teen Danny Bowman tried killing himself by overdosing on pills because he was not satisfied with the quality of his selfies. Bowman said that he spent more than 10 hours every day taking selfies, and because of his selfies addiction, he dropped out of school and stayed at his home for six months. Even though, the chances for similar cases to happen again are very rare, selfies have become the cause of many fatal incidents (Molloy, 2014). In Chicago, 20 out of 23 college students reported social media induced anxiety and stress (Tolly, 2014). Shannon Smith, a Columbia College Chicago student, also mentioned that "I think it adds a lot of pressure to be the perfect person because that's how we can make ourselves look online" (Tolly, 2014). According to the students, the habit of scrolling down in their social media accounts had affected the time they allocated for their studies (Tolly, 2014). Research studies indicated that people who take and post more selfies might be suffering from Body Dysmorphic Disorder. According to psychiatrist Dr. David Veal, "Two out of three of all the patients who come to see me with Body Dysmorphic Disorder since the rise of camera phones have a compulsion to repeatedly take the post selfies on social media sites" ("The 'Selfie' Obsession: A Chronic, Narcissistic Mental Disorder," 2014).

Lately, people been risking their lives to take the most exciting selfies. People tried to take selfies from the top of towers, bridges, skyscrapers, while skydiving, while jumping off a cliff, and while flying airplanes and in most cases, it resulted in nearly fatal or truly fatal situations (“Seriously Scary and Dangerous Selfies,” 2014). Pilot Amritpal Singh, 29, and his passenger were killed in an airplane crash when Singh attempted to take a selfie. He lost control on the airplane and crashed into a wheat field (Hughes, 2014).

### **Self-Esteem Levels and Social Media**

Self-esteem refers to an overall positive or negative evaluation of the self (Rosenberg, 1979). One way of fulfilling self-esteem needs is the use of social media to communicate interpersonally which might provide an opportunity for people with low self-esteem to engage in public behavior with reduced risk of humiliation and reduced social anxiety (Varnali, 2015). Valkenburg, Peter, and Schouten (2006) studied friend networking websites, and their study revealed that about 78 percent of the respondents received predominantly positive feedback from other users of social networking sites, and that positive feedback enhanced the respondents’ self-esteem significantly. In addition, Joinson (2004) reported that those people with low self-esteem exhibited a strong affinity for online communication than did those with high self-esteem. A study conducted by the University of Salford in the UK on social media's effects on self-esteem and anxiety reported that 50 percent of their participants (298) revealed that their use of social networks like Facebook and Twitter has made their lives worse (Indvik, 2012). According to the study, the participants revealed that their self-esteem was affected when they compared their accomplishments to those of their online friends. The results indicated that the participants also suffered in their workplaces due to their "online confrontations." In essence, the study demonstrated that social media caused



low self-esteem and anxiety (Soltero, n.d.). In another study conducted by the University of Pittsburgh and the Columbia Business School, the researchers reported that positive comments on social media could boost self-esteem (Soltero, n.d.).

Vogel, Rose, Roberts, and Eckles (2014) examined the impact of temporary exposure to social media on self-esteem. The researchers used a correlational approach in which the study 1 examined whether the frequent Facebook use is associated with lower trait self-esteem and study 2 examined the impact of temporary exposure to social media profiles on state self-esteem and relative self-evaluations. In study 1, the results indicated that the participants who used Facebook most often had poor trait self-esteem. This result was mediated by an increase in exposure to upward social comparisons on social media. The results of study 2 revealed that the participants' self-esteem and relative self-evaluations were low when then the target person's profile had upward comparison information.

Varnali (2015) conducted a research to understand self-disclosure behavior on social networking sites (SNS). The study measured willingness to disclose personal information on SNS, self-esteem, SNS affinity, self-disclosure, honesty of self-disclosure, subjective norm, self-monitoring skills, and public self-consciousness. The study involved 1294 participants. The results demonstrated that the people who have low self-esteem use social networking sites to enhance their self-image. According to the study, this attitude helped them overcome the feeling of inferiority through strengthening their social identity. On the other hand, people with high self-esteem tended to make fewer, but more honest, self-disclosures. In another study conducted at the University of Waterloo, Forest (2012) examined the self-esteem levels of people and their social networking behavior. The study found that people with low self-esteem, who are normally hesitant to self-disclosure and who have difficulty

maintaining satisfying relationships considered Facebook as an appealing venue for self-disclosure. Also, a study to explore the relationship between social comparison orientation (SCO), Facebook use, and negative psychological outcomes indicated that the participants with high SCO had low self-esteem (Vogel, Rose, Okdie, Eckles, & Franz, 2015).

### **Influence of Posting Selfies on Self-Esteem and its Relationship with the Age, Sex and Education of People**

People use social media for many reasons such as to get information and news, entertainment, or a way to communicate with others (Williams, Crittenden, Keo, & McCarty, 2012). Therefore, individuals will find the best social media outlet that suits them the most to fulfill their needs and make them achieve gratifications (Lariscy, et al., 2011). According to Moreau (2014), young people (18-34 years old) were found to be more involved in the selfie trend than the older people (35 years old and above). The reason stated was that the teens and the people at the age between 18 and 34 years use digital media more heavily than older people. The selfie statistics indicated that about half (47%) of adults were taking selfies. About 40% of people aged between 18 and 34 admitted to taking selfies at least once per week. At the same time, women are believed to take selfies 1.3 times more than men (Bennett, 2014). Randy Hoder, a *New York Times* parenting column Motherlode ((Murphy-Gill, 2014) stated that

Girls, in particular, seemed to be always posing—in some cases vamping—for the camera: hair swept back, hand on hip, dressed just so. In at least a few instances, they looked as if they were auditioning for a Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue, clad in bikinis that left little to the imagination (p.17).

Brumfield (2013) says that people are following the trend of taking selfies including celebrities, and politicians. American comedian, television host, actress, writer, and television producer Ellen DeGeneres took a selfie during the Oscars of 2013, and that selfie became the world's most retweeted post of all time (Brumfield, 2013). Tifentale and Manovich (2014) investigated the trend of taking selfies by conducting a study in Bangkok, Berlin, Moscow, New York, and Sao Paulo with a sample size of 3200 photos/selfies. The results of the study indicated that taking and posting selfies on social media is a young people's sport. The study also found a significant relationship between the sex of the people and the number of selfies. The results indicated that women tend to take and post more selfies than men (Manovich et al, 2014).

Murphy-Gill (2014) also mentioned that girls are more vulnerable to feel less beautiful than other girls of the same age and consequently a lowered self-esteem. He indicated that teen age girls receive messages stating "If you're not naturally beautiful by normal standards, [the expectation is that] you have a lot of work to do (p.18)." According to Gill, such messages force girls to feel very low about themselves. Consequently, teenage girls spend more time and money to look beautiful and post those selfies in social medias to gain attention and a boost to their self-esteem levels.

Bennett (2014) also mentioned that "selfies are narcissistic, humble-braggy, slutty, too sexy, a "cry for help," or yet another way for girls' to judge each other (or seek validation for their looks) (p.1)." According to a survey by Dove, 63 percent women believe in social media and teens and young women use social media more often and in more ways than men on almost every site, from Facebook to Instagram to Tumblr (Bennett, 2014). A research study conducted on children aged between 11 years and 16 years in three European countries

(Italy, UK and Spain) indicated that girls were addicted to likes, and hence they post semi-naked selfies (Mascheroni, Vincent, & Jimenez, 2015).

Sorokowski et al. (2015) conducted a study on 1296 Polish men and women aged between 14-47 years. The purpose was to study the selfie-posting behavior and its association with narcissism among men. The results of the study indicated that women posted more selfies of all types than men. The results also demonstrated that the relationship between narcissism and selfie-posting were stronger among men than women. Weiser (2015) studied a representative sample of 1204 men and women to examine the association between narcissism (a personality trait characterized by inflated self-views and attempts to seek attention and admiration from others) and the frequency of posting selfies on social networking sites. The results indicated a significant relationship between narcissism and selfie-posting frequency. Also, the relationship between narcissism and posting selfies was found to be independent of age.

### **Relationship between Self-Esteem Levels and People Who Take More Selfies**

Selfies are an indicator of low self-esteem, social dependence, or attention seeking behavior (Peek, 2014). Voucher Cloud, a money saving application conducted a study to examine the relationship between self-esteem and the people who take more selfies (Blades, 2014). The study involved 2,071 British men and women between the ages of 18 and 30. The results revealed that 39% of the participants preferred taking pictures of themselves rather than their family, partner or pets. The results indicated that the participants were found to have low self-esteem, and they confessed “having prudish inhibition and insecurities about their physical attributes.” When asked about how they felt about their appearance and relationships, only 13% of the participants mentioned that they felt confident in their skin and

60% admitted to having low self-esteem. Hence, it is construed that the number of selfies and self-esteem levels were indirectly correlated (Blades, 2014).

### **Relationship between Self-Esteem Levels and People Who Post More Selfies**

According to Seiter (2015), posting selfies reflects high self-esteem levels, and it might also enhance one's self-esteem because such photos typically emphasize one's ideal and controlled image. Researchers say that posting selfies might boost self-esteem, as individuals could select the way they wish to present themselves. Apart from that, the people who post more selfies might also receive more social support or positive social feedback (Seiter, 2015). At the same time, posting selfies in social media may foster low self-esteem because one may compare oneself to others, and there is a possibility that one may receive negative, or no, social feedback (Barry, Doucette, Loflin, Rivera-Hudson, & Herrington, 2015).

Barry et al. (2015) examined the association between narcissism and self-esteem with the posting of self-photographs ("selfies") on a popular photo sharing social networking site ("Instagram"). The study involved 128 undergraduate students (19 males, 109 females) ranging in age from 18 to 43. The study revealed that a relatively high proportion of selfies that were oriented towards highlighting physical appearance was more common in individuals with fragile self-esteem. However, there was no significant relationship between self-esteem levels and the number of posts of selfies. Also, it appeared that individuals with low self-esteem may be as willing as those with high self-esteem to post selfies on social media sites (Barry et al., 2015).

### **Impact of Selfies on Self-Esteem Levels**

Selfies are a double-edged sword. For some people, posting selfies is a self-confidence booster, and for others, selfies are the reason that makes them feel bad about their lives and having insecurities about their appearances. According to Murphy-Gill (2014), most teenagers spend considerably more time and money to look attractive to others and consequently, boost their self-esteem. A selfie generation female teenager says, "what you look like is what's defining you. It's like you're defined by how pretty you are. This is me because this is what I look like (Murphy-Gill, 2014) (p.17)." Further, the Today/AOL Body Image survey indicated that about 55 percent of girls and 34 percent of teen boys feel that social media makes them feel more self-conscious about their appearance. About 58 percent teen girls say, "seeing pictures of other people living glamorous-looking lives on social media makes me feel bad about myself (p.1)." Compared to girls, only 19 percent of teen boys had the same reaction (Dahl, 2014).

According to a research published in *Computers in Human Behavior*, selfies are meant to attract attention and they might also give others an insight into one's personality (Bushak, 2015). In a research study conducted at Lin Qiu of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, researchers analyzed 123 selfie-taking participants. All the participants used a popular Chinese microblogging website, Sina Weibo. The results of the study indicated that a person's selfie depends on that person's personality (Qiu, Lu, Yang, Qu, & Zhu, 2015).

A study found out that some of those who post their selfies on social media use selfies as self-esteem booster (Grabmeier, 2015). People control how they are portrayed in their social network profile and hence they were able to increase their self-esteem momentarily

(Gonzales & Hancock, 2011). Although selfies enhance a person's self-esteem, its increased use was found to decrease life satisfaction (Wilcox & Stephen, 2013).

### **Selfies as Self-Confidence Boosters**

People who use selfies most often believe that selfies could boost their self-confidence. The number of positive comments and likes that one receives for their selfies was reported to influence the level of one's self-confidence, especially in the people with low self-esteem. According to Carol (2013), a psychologist, the people with low self-esteem posts more selfies to have a boost in their self-confidence. Ordas (2014) also mentioned that selfies are one of the powerful tools that help a person feel good about himself or herself. This indicates that selfies have the power to increase one's self-confidence. Ordas (2014) also stated that

As someone who has low self-esteem, partaking in a small self-portrait project helped me build a little bit of confidence while improving my photography skills. Somehow, it was a way for me to channel all the doubts and insecurities I had in just a few snaps. It allowed me to get used to my face a little bit, even to the point of finding a little bit of beauty in it.

According to Walker (2013), selfies have the capacity to boost the self-confidence of a person. New researches have also suggested that clicking and posting selfies could be an empowering activity and also helps young people to develop their identity, and boost confidence and self-esteem (Your Love for Selfies Could Actually Empower You, Boost Confidence and Self-Esteem, 2015). Annabelle (2014) also mentioned that selfies could help enhance one's self-confidence. Many psychologists have also ascertained the fact that, selfies,

when used in moderation is healthy, and boost one's self-confidence and thereby, their self-esteem (Yadegaran, 2013).



## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this quantitative study is to identify the relationship between self-esteem levels and the number of selfies people take and post, and the uses and gratifications of taking selfies. In order to comply with the objective, the researcher conducted surveys using questionnaire through the online survey tool, Survey Monkey.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

People who are addicted to the usage of selfies are prone to mental health problems (Murphy-Gill, 2014). Vogel, Rose, Roberts, and Eckles (2014) examined the impact of chronic and temporary exposure to social media-based social comparison information on self-esteem. The researchers used a correlational approach in which the study 1 examined whether frequent Facebook use is associated with lower trait self-esteem and study 2 examined the impact of temporary exposure to social media profiles on state self-esteem and relative self-evaluations. In study 1, the results indicated that the participants who used Facebook most often had poor trait self-esteem. This result was mediated by an increase in exposure to upward social comparisons on social media. The results of study 2 revealed that the participant's state self-esteem and relative self-evaluations were low when then the target person's profile had upward comparison information.

Apart from affecting the mental health, selfies have also affected the self-esteem levels of its users. Selfies have become an indicator of low self-esteem, social dependence, or attention seeking behavior (Peek, 2014). Studies have found that people who takes more selfies have very poor self-esteem levels (“Selfie Addicts Have Low Self-

Esteem: Study,” 2014). Contrarily, posting selfies reflects high self-esteem levels. Researchers have mentioned that selfies boost one's self-esteem because such photos typically emphasize one's ideal and controlled image (Barry, Doucette, Loflin, Rivera-Hudson, & Herrington, 2015). It is conceived that posting selfies might boost self-esteem, as individuals could select the way they wish to present themselves. Apart from that, people who post more selfies might also receive more social support or positive social feedback (Barry, Doucette, Loflin, Rivera-Hudson, & Herrington, 2015). Though there are many researches on selfies and self-esteem levels, very few have studied the impact of self-esteem levels on selfies and also the relationship between the self-esteem levels and the trend of taking and posting selfies (Soltero, n.d.). Hence, the researcher will fill the gap in the literature, and the results of the study will introduce awareness regarding who takes selfies seriously and spend hours on it (Murphy-Gill, 2014).

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study.

RQ1: Who takes more selfies, people with lower or higher self-esteem?

H1: People with low self-esteem levels tend to take more selfies than those with high self-esteem levels.

RQ2: Who posts more selfies, people with lower or higher self-esteem?

H2: People with low self-esteem tend to take or post selfies to boost their self-confidence more often than those with high self-esteem.

RQ3: Why do people take or post selfies?

## **Research Methodology**

The researcher used quantitative survey method approach to study the impact of self-esteem levels on selfies. In this study, the researcher first measured the participants' self-esteem levels using a predetermined instrument, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, which has presented high ratings in reliability areas; internal consistency was 0.77, minimum Coefficient of Reproducibility was at least 0.90 (Rosenberg, 1979), and then asked participants questions related to selfies. The researcher analyzed the relationship between self-esteem levels and the number of selfies people take & post, and the uses and gratifications behind taking and posting selfies. The quantitative research method also involved collecting data in an objective unbiased manner. The researcher used quantitative research approach as it measures consumers' behaviors, opinions, knowledge, or attitudes and the relationship between the variables.

## **Data Collection Procedure**

A target population of 365 students between the ages of 18-24 years old were surveyed using the online survey tool, Survey Monkey. To collect data using Survey Monkey, the researcher visited six classes, made a short presentation about the study, and then provided students with the link to the survey.

## **Data Analysis**

The researcher analyzed the data using a correlational research design to study the relationship between the two variables. The quantitative correlational study could determine whether a relationship exists between the level self-esteem and the number of selfies people take and post, as well as the reasons why people take and post selfies. The independent variable for this research is the level of self-esteem and the dependent variables are the

number of selfies people take, the number of selfies people post, and the reasons why people take selfies. For the Research Question 1 and Research Question 2, the researcher divided the self-esteem scores into three categories, “low, normal, and high.” According to Rosenberg, a score between 0-15 is low, 16-25 is normal, and 26-30 is high (Rosenberg, 1979). After categorizing the scores, the researcher ran a descriptive statistics test to get the mean for the number of selfies each category takes and posts. Finally, for the third research question, the researcher simply looked at how many times any of the reasons for why people take or post selfies were chosen.

For hypothesis 1, which stated that people with lower self-esteem levels tend to take more selfies than those with higher self-esteem levels, the researcher used regression statistical test to identify if a relationship exists between these variables and, if so, to quantify the direction and strength of that relationship and the size of the correlation coefficient determines the strength of the relationship (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). For hypothesis 2, which stated that people with lower self-esteem levels tend to take or post selfies to boost their self-confidence more than those with higher self-esteem levels, the researcher used Pivot-Table in order to measure the likelihood of people with low self-esteem to choose “to boost self-confidence” as their reason for taking or posting selfies, in comparison to people with high self-esteem, and then ran a Chi-Square test to determine whether the relationship is statistically significant.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

#### **Introduction**

In order to identify the relationship between self-esteem levels and the number of selfies people take and post, and the uses and gratifications of taking or posting selfies, the researcher conducted a quantitative study at the college utilizing a survey. The researcher employed an online questionnaire (Appendix B) as the survey instrument to collect data. The study population comprised of 365 undergraduate students. The researcher identified students between the ages 18-24 years. The researcher recruited the participants in person at their classrooms and requested the participants to complete the online questionnaire after signing the consent form (Appendix A).

The researcher collected and analyzed data on the demographics of the participants (age, gender, ethnicity origin and school year). Also, data on the relationship between people who take more selfies and their self-esteem levels, the relationship between people who post more selfies and their self-esteem levels, and the uses and gratifications of selfies were analyzed.

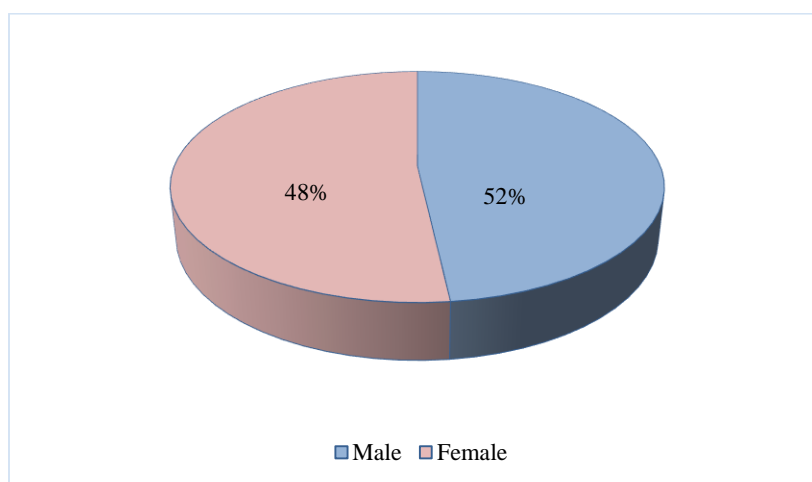
#### **Demographic Statistics of the Survey Participants**

The demographics of the participants were determined by the age, gender, ethnicity origin and their school year. The researcher surveyed a sample of 365 undergraduate students from different genders, age groups, races, and school years. The results on the demographics of the participants are summarized below.

### Gender Identity of the Participants

The genders of the students who participated in the study are presented in Table 1. Out of the 365 students who participated in the study, 52% (189) were males and 48% (176) were females. Figure 1 contains the description of the gender identity of the current survey participants.

By running a simple descriptive statistics analysis, it was found that male participants take an average of 7 selfies and post an average of 1.4 selfies per week. On the other hand, female participants were found to take an average of 8.5 selfies and post an average of 1.4 selfies per week.



*Figure 1.* Gender Identity of the Current Survey Participants (%) (N = 365)

### **Age of the Current Survey Participants**

The age of the students who participated in the study varied from 18 years to 24 years, and the number of students who belonged to this age group is presented in Table 2. Of the 365 participants, 52.8% of participants were 18 years old, 21.1% of participants were 19 years old, 14.8% of participants were 20 years old, 6.6% of participants were 21 years old, 2.2% of participants were 22 years old, 1.6% of participants were 23 years old, and 0.82% of participants were 24 years old. The analysis of the age group of the participants indicated that most of the participants (89%) were in the age group between 18 - 20 years. Only 11% of the participants were found to be in the age group between 21 - 24 years. Figure 2 presents the graphical representation of the number of student participants in each age.

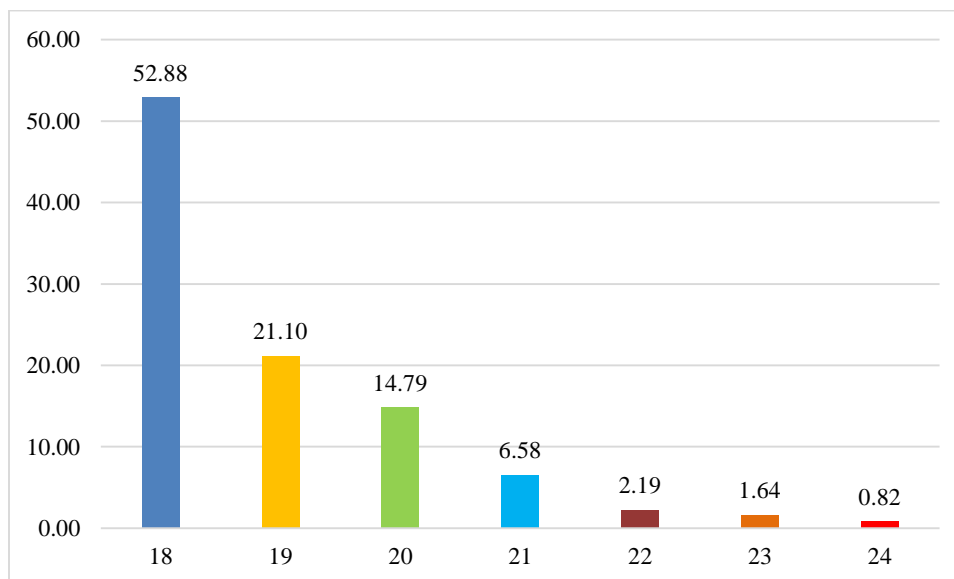
To determine whether or not a significant relationship exists between the age of participants and the number of selfies they take and the number of selfies they post, the researcher ran a regression statistical analysis. The results indicate that there is no significant relationship between the age of participants and the number of selfies they take ( $p = 0.05$ ), neither between the age of participants and the number of selfies they post ( $p = 0.06$ ).

The average number of selfies each age group take and post per week is represented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Average of Selfies Taken and Posted by Age*

Age	Average of Selfies Taken	Average of Selfies Posted
18	10	2
19	5	1
20	6	0.4
21	7	1
22	3	0.4
23	9	2
24	3	0.3

*Figure 2. Age of the Current Survey Participants (%) (N = 365)*



### Ethnicity Origin of the Current Survey Participants

Figure 3 presents the ethnicity origin of the students who participated in the survey. The results indicated that about 70% of the participants were Whites/Caucasians, 20% were Blacks/African Americans, 3% were Asians/Pacific Islanders, 3% were Hispanic/Latino, 0.82% were American Indians and 0.54% were Middle Eastern, 2% were of other ethnicity origin and 0.82% preferred not to answer the question.

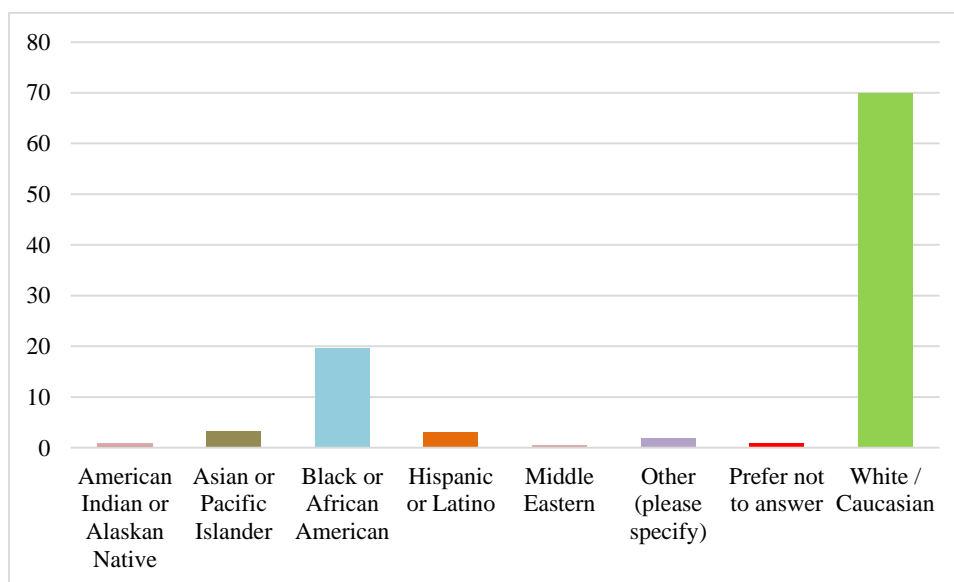
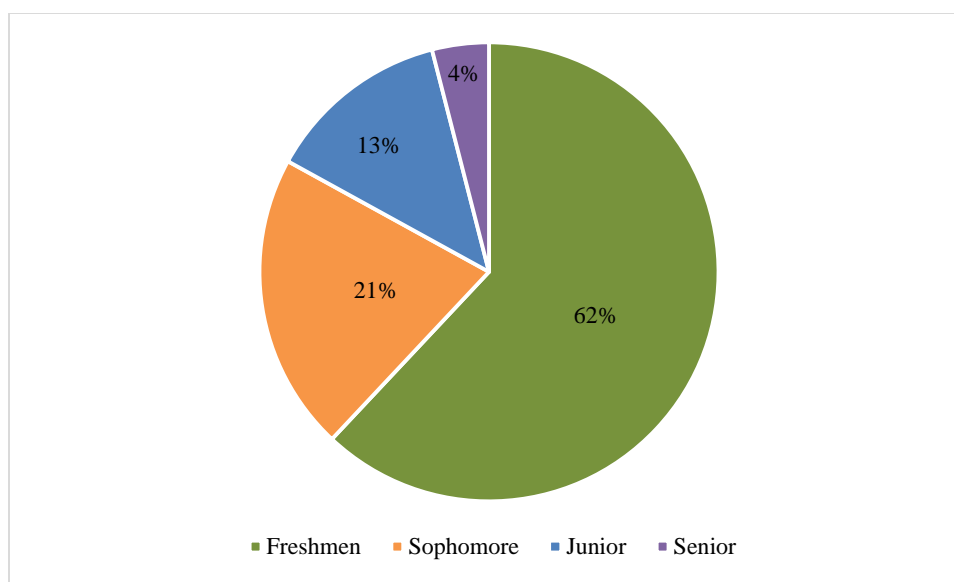


Figure 3. Ethnicity Origin of the Current Survey Participants (%) (N = 365)

### School Year of the Current Survey Participants

The school year of the 365 undergraduate students who participated in the survey is presented in Figure 4. The results indicated that majority of the participants were freshmen (62%), 21% were sophomores, 13% were juniors, and 4% were seniors.



*Figure 4.* School Year of the Current Survey Participants (%) (N = 365)

### **Self-esteem Level of the Participants**

The average self-esteem level of the participants was analyzed. The results indicated that the mean self-esteem score of the participants was 20.72, which according to Rosenberg is considered within the normal self-esteem range (Rosenberg, 1979).

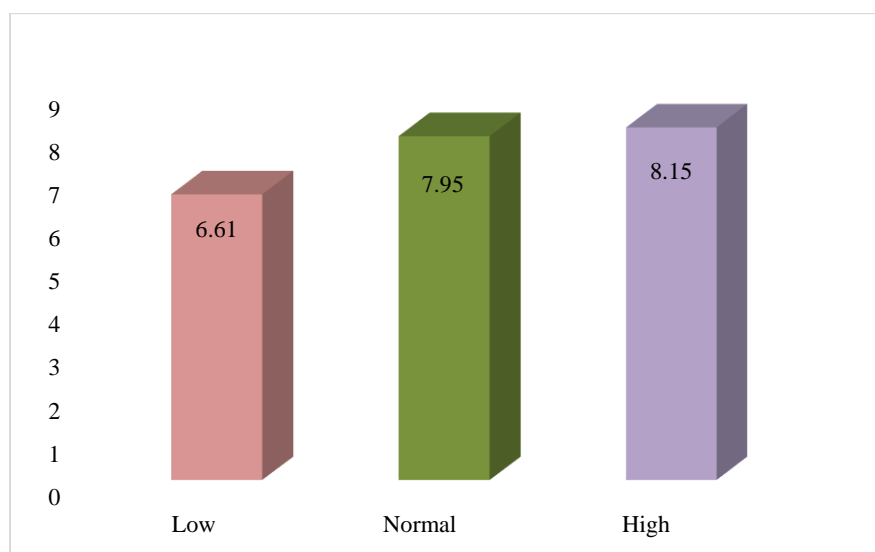
### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The self-administered internet-based survey distributed by Survey Monkey yielded the required data for testing the research hypotheses. The utilization of Microsoft Excel enabled the analysis of descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used to analyze the respondent demographic information included percentages. The descriptive statistics used to analyze the research variables included means and standard deviation. The statistical tests used to analyze the variables included the regression statistical test, in order to find whether a correlation exists between the variables, and the Pivot-Table along with a Chi-

Square test, enabling the ‘goodness of fit’ statistic. The data analysis procedures facilitated the testing of the research hypotheses to answer the research questions.

### **Relationship between People Who Take More Selfies and Their Self-Esteem Levels**

Figure 5 presents the results for the Research Question 1 that is the relationship between the people who take more selfies and their respective self-esteem levels. The results indicated that on an average, the people with low self-esteem took about 6.61 selfies. Similarly, the people with normal self-esteem took 7.95 selfies and those with high self-esteem took 8.15 selfies. Apparently, it could further be seen from Figure 5 that the lowest number of selfies was taken by the people with low self-esteem, and the highest number of selfies were taken by the people with high self-esteem.



*Figure 5. Self-Esteem Levels and Number of Selfies Taken*

### Relationship between People Who Posts More Selfies and Their Self-Esteem Levels

The results for the Research Question 2, on the relationship between the number of selfies that people post and their corresponding self-esteem levels are presented in Figure 6. From the table, it could be seen that the people with low self-esteem posted on an average of 0.88 selfies, while, the people with normal self-esteem posted 1.36 selfies. At the same time, people with high self-esteem posted an average of 2.03 selfies, which is nearly two times more than the number of selfies posted by the people with low self-esteem. From the results, it could also be seen that the highest number of selfies was posted by the people with high self-esteem (Figure 6). Also, the people with low self-esteem levels posted the lowest number of selfies (Figure 6).

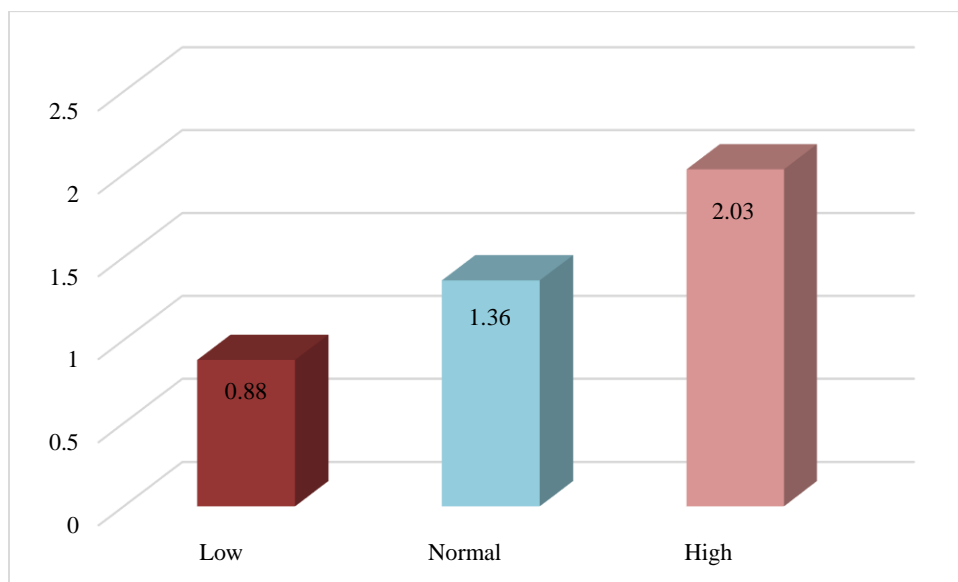


Figure 6. Number of Selfies Posted and Self-Esteem Levels

### **Uses and Gratifications of Selfies**

To find out why people take or post selfies, that is, the uses and gratifications of selfies, the participants were asked to choose an option from the list namely, 1) because I feel better when I get likes; 2) because I feel better when people leave positive comments; 3) because it is entertaining, everyone I know is doing it; 4) I don't; 5) to boost my self-confidence; 6) to kill time; 7) to show how good looking I am; 8) to show how stylish I am; 9) to show how successful I am; and 10) other reasons. The results on the uses and gratifications of selfies are presented in Table 2. The results indicated that about 33% of the participants did not practice the trend of taking or posting selfies. About 18% of the participants had various other individual reasons (see Appendix C). The results also indicated that about 15% of the participants posted selfies because they felt it was entertaining, and 10% participants posted selfies to boost self-confidence. From the results, it could also be seen that about 6.3% of the participants posted selfies to show their good looks and only 4.6% posted selfies to kill time. From the table, it was also found that about 4.38% of the participants posted selfies because they felt better when they got likes and 2.73% of the participants posted selfies because they felt better when they received positive comments. It was also found that 3% of the participants posted selfies to show their style and a negligible amount of people (0.82%) posted selfies just because everyone they knew was doing it.

From the results, it was found the highest number of participants did not practice the trend of taking or posting selfies, followed by the people with other specific reasons. Only very few people were posting selfies because everyone around them was posting selfies. However, 10% of the participants mentioned that they posted selfies to boost their self-confidence (Table 2).

Table 2

*Reasons for Taking or Posting Selfies*

Reasons	Number of Participants
Because I feel better when I get likes	16 (4.38%)
Because I feel better when people leave positive comments	10 (2.73%)
Because it is entertaining	55 (15%)
Everyone I know is doing it	3 (0.82%)
I don't	121 (33%)
Other (please specify)	66 (18%)
To boost my self confidence	37 (10%)
To kill time	17 (4.6%)
To show how good looking I am	23 (6.3%)
To show how stylish I am	11 (3%)

### **H1: People with Lower Self-esteem Levels Tend to Take More Selfies than Those with Higher Self-Esteem Levels**

The result on hypothesis 1 that people with lower levels of self-esteem tend to take more selfies than those with higher levels of self-esteem is summarized below. The result indicated that the people with high self-esteem posted the highest number of selfies. It could also be seen from the result that the  $p$ -value = 0.09. This indicates that there is no significant

relationship between the number of selfies taken and the self-esteem levels. The results from Pearson Correlation Coefficient ( $r = .0354$ ) also indicates the same.

## **H2: People with Low Self-Esteem Tend to Take or Post Selfies to Boost Their Self-Confidence More Than Those with Higher Levels of Self-Esteem**

The results of the Chi-Square test for hypothesis 2 which states that people with low self-esteem tend to take or post selfies to boost their self-confidence more than those with higher levels of self-esteem indicated a significant relationship ( $p = 0.0083$ ) between low self-esteem levels and posting selfies to boost self-confidence. According to the pivot table, people with low self-esteem are 19.35% more likely to choose “to boost my self-confidence” than the people with higher levels of self-esteem (8.25%). The results of the pivot table and Chi-Square probability are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

### *Reasons for Taking or Posting Selfies Pivot Table*

<b>Reasons for Taking &amp; Posting Selfies</b>	<b>Low Self-Esteem</b>	<b>Not low Self-Esteem</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Other	80.65%	91.75%	89.86%
To boost my self confidence	19.35%	8.25%	10.14%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

P = 0.0083

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study on the impact of self-esteem levels on selfies and the relationship between self-esteem levels and the number of selfies people take and post, and the uses and gratifications of taking and posting selfies was conducted through a survey that involved 365 undergraduate student participants. The survey participants were full-time students and each participant was surveyed using the questionnaires provided through the online survey tool, Survey Monkey. The results about the demographics, research questions and hypotheses that were presented in the previous chapter are discussed below in detail.

#### **Demographics of the Participants**

The results on the demographics of the participants namely, gender of the participants, age of the participants, ethnicity origin of the participants, and school year of the participants were analyzed and were discussed below.

#### **Gender of the Current Survey Participants**

Three hundred and sixty-five undergraduate students participated in the survey. From the results on the gender of the students who participated in the study (Figure 1), the proportion of male participants was found to be slightly higher than female participants, even though, women tend to take more selfies than men (Tiftentale & Manovich, n.d.; Murphy-Gill, 2014; Sorokowski et al., 2015). The researcher found that female participants actually take selfies 1.3 times more than male participants, which actually corresponds to previous study. Bennett (2014) also found that women take selfies 1.3 times more than men.



### **Age of the Current Survey Participants**

The target population involved students between the ages 18-24 years old (Figure 2). The target population was chosen between the above mentioned age groups because the teens and the people at the age between 18 and 34 years were found to use digital media, specifically selfies, more heavily than their older counterparts (Moreau, 2014). The study found that the highest number of selfies taken and posted per week was by 18 years old participants. Manovich et al. (2014), in their study on the style of selfies also indicated that men and women between 20 years and 30 years, especially the ones in their early twenties take and post selfies the most. A similar apprehension has already been raised by Bennett (2014) and Glum (2015).

### **Ethnicity Origin of the Current Survey Participants**

The highest number of participants belonged to White/Caucasian ethnicity, followed by Black or African Americans (Table 1). Though the number of White participants was relatively more than the other participants, the ethnicity origin of the participants does not affect the number of selfies being taken or posted as taking or posting selfies was found to be a common behavior across the world and is not specific to a particular ethnicity origin (Manovich et al., 2014).

### **School Year of the Current Survey Participants**

The majority of the students who participated in the survey were freshmen, followed by sophomores, juniors and seniors (Figure 4). The involvement of more freshmen in the survey could be attributed to the fact that most freshmen were teenagers, and such teenagers make up the population who take or post selfies the most compared to the students in other school years.

### **Self-Esteem Level of the Participants**

The Rosenberg's self-esteem scores range between 0 and 30. A self-esteem score between 0 and 15 indicates low self-esteem; 16 to 25 indicates normal self-esteem levels; and 26-30 indicates high self-esteem levels (Rosenberg, 1965). Low level of self-esteem could be linked to behavioral problems, poor school performance (Orth & Robins, 2013), depression, social anxiety, loneliness, alienation, etc. (Leary, 2004). However, the present study found that the participants had an average self-esteem score of 20.72, which according to Rosenberg's self-esteem scale is in the normal range.

### **Relationship between People Who Take More Selfies and Their Self-Esteem Levels**

Based on the results, the study found that the people with low self-esteem took the lowest number of selfies and the people with high self-esteem took the highest number of selfies (Table 2). The decrease in the number of selfies with the decrease in self-esteem levels could be attributed to the fear of low, negative or no social feedback or likes to one's selfies (Carol, 2013). Since social media fosters low self-esteem through the inherent opportunity to compare oneself to others, people with low self-esteem tend to take less number of selfies than those with high self-esteem (Barry et al., 2015). Another possible reason for the decrease in number of selfies with self-esteem could be that they disliked their bodies. Tomko (2015) also reasoned this decrease in number of selfies by stating that the people did not like to see their photos with not-so-attractive bodies in social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Further possibility for this decrease in the number of selfies could be their low self-confidence ("Selfies and its psychological and mental effects," 2015).

From the results, it could be seen that the people with high self-esteem took the highest number of selfies. The results imply a positive relationship between self-esteem and social media use (Donchi & Moore, 2014). People with high self-esteem are encouraged to take more selfies, which in turn, also enhances the self-esteem of that person. Similar apprehension had also been noted by Barry et al. (2015).

### **Relationship between People Who Post More Selfies and Their Self-Esteem Levels**

The study revealed that people with high self-esteem post the highest number of selfies per week, which according to Menza (2015), it could be due to the fact that people with high self-esteem use selfies as a platform for self-expression and allows them to share their emotions (Menza, 2015). Another reason could be that people with high self-esteem take pride in their appearance, setting goals and reaching them, and being able to accept both praise and criticism and hence, an increased self-esteem levels (Schwartz & Conley, 1998). However, the highest number of posts indicated that such people post frequent selfies because they need constant attention, social validation and they rely too much on the response of others to maintain their high self-esteem (Rutledge, 2013).

Rutledge (2013) also mentions that excessive and increasingly provocative act of taking selfies is a form of behavior in people who try to get attention. People with high self-esteem get a momentary self-esteem boost every time they receive a positive comment or likes for their posts. The person who posts more selfies could also be involuntarily crying for help (Rutledge, 2013). Another possible reason could be that people who post more selfies and have high self-esteem are narcissistic, and they tend to seek self-verification more often. Barry et al. (2015) also noted that narcissistic people have high self-esteem, and they constantly seek self-verification from others. In an attempt to satisfy their narcissism, such

people use social media to post selfies and get self-verified from the likes and positive comments (Barry et al., 2015). Similarly, Sorokowski et al. (2015) also identified a strong relationship between narcissism and posting selfies. Another probable reason could be the feeling of insecurity. Barakat (2014) state that "a more insecure person is going to post staged or sexualized photos, and they're going to do it so much that they become consumed by it and the comments they receive." Such people who posted more selfies also tried to construct a desirable persona (Barakat, 2014).

### **Uses and Gratifications of Selfies**

The results on the uses and gratifications of selfies (Table 2) indicated that about 18% of the participants had varied reasons for using selfies. Also, the participants did not have any one particular common reason to use selfies (see Appendix). Every individual had their own views and needs for selfies as the value that one adds to beauty varies with the culture of the individual (Rutledge, 2013). From the results, it could be possible that the people who were more active on using selfies in social networks wanted to gratify their need of feeling connected with their friends and relatives (Bui, 2014). It could also be possible that the participants posted selfies to build relationships with the person with whom they want to build or maintain their relationships (Bui, 2014).

The results (Table 6) also indicated that posting selfies was entertaining (15%). The reason might be that participants need some media to release their tensions. According to Bui (2014) some people found that posting selfies in social media helps them release their tensions and hence consequently entertained them (Bui, 2014). Although posting selfies was just entertaining for some participants, 10% participants posted selfies to boost self-confidence. Previous studies have also confirmed that posting selfies on social media boosts

one's self-confidence and thereby, their self-esteem (Grabmeier, 2015; Dahl, 2014; Fosco, 2014). Though the participants mentioned various reasons for posting selfies, the primary reason is that it instantly gratifies the students' need for integration, social interaction, information and understanding of their social environment (Tanta, Mihovilovic, & Sablic, 2014).

### **People with Lower Self-Esteem Levels Tend To Take More Selfies than Those with Higher Self-Esteem Levels**

The results of the survey indicated that the hypothesis that people with lower self-esteem levels tend to take more selfies than those with higher self-esteem levels was not supported. The survey results demonstrated no significant relationship between the number of selfies taken by the participants and their self-esteem levels. Similar results had been observed by Barry et al. (2015). Even though the lack of significant associations between self-esteem and posts of selfies was contrary to our hypothesis, it appeared consistent with some prior research on other social media sites. For example, Forest and Wood (2012) found that individuals with low self-esteem did not differ from those with high self-esteem in their amount of Facebook use. One possible reason for no significant difference could be that the people with high self-esteem also posted an equal number of selfies as the people with low self-esteem levels. It might be possible that the people with low self-esteem may be as willing as those with higher self-esteem to post selfies on social media sites because it provides an alternative to in-person self-disclosure in a safe, controlled setting (Varnali, 2015) but, did not have the confidence to post more selfies.

### **People with Low Self-Esteem Tend To Take or Post Selfies to Boost Their Self-Confidence More Than Those with Higher Levels of Self-Esteem**

The results of the survey showed support for the hypothesis that people with low self-esteem tend to take or post selfies to boost their self-confidence more than those with higher levels of self-esteem. The survey results indicated a significant positive association between low self-esteem levels and posting selfies to boost self-confidence. Ordas (2014) mentions that selfies are one of the powerful tools that help a person feel good about himself or herself. This indicates that selfies have the power to increase one's self-confidence. Ordas (2014) also stated that

As someone who has low self-esteem, partaking in a small self-portrait project helped me build a little bit of confidence while improving my photography skills. Somehow, it was a way for me to channel all the doubts and insecurities I had in just a few snaps. It allowed me to get used to my face a little bit, even to the point of finding a little bit of beauty in it, para. 9.

Furthermore, researchers have also suggested that clicking and posting selfies could actually be an empowering activity and also helps young people to develop their identity, and boost confidence and self-esteem ("Your Love for Selfies Could Actually Empower You, Boost Confidence and Self-Esteem," 2015). Annabelle (2014) also mentioned that selfies could help enhance one's self-confidence. Many psychologists have also ascertained the fact that, selfies, when used in moderation is healthy, and boost one's self-confidence and thereby, their self-esteem (Yadegaran, 2013). Another possible reason is that the act of posting selfies helped the people with low self-esteem to avoid difficult public situations where one may undergo humiliation or harassment. Another possible reasons could be that people with low

self-esteem strived to remain active in social media in order to avoid the risk of public humiliation and also to reduce social anxiety (Varnali, 2015).

Another reason could be that people with low self-esteem posted more selfies to boost self-confidence because they could control how their image is being portrayed in social media (Booker, 2015). Booker states that these people edit their images to the level of their imaginary perfect person they always wanted to be and post them in a way they receive positive comments and likes from their friends or any other person for whom the selfie was intended to. This indirectly boosts their self-confidence. Such self-confidence that they gain by posting edited self-pictures as selfies is just a momentary boost and is not real (Rutledge, 2013).

### **Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research**

The study involved a slightly higher number of male participants than female participants between the ages of 18-24 years old. Though the study involved participants from different ethnic origins, taking and posting selfies was not confined to one particular ethnicity. The study also found that people with low self-esteem took an average of 6 selfies per week, and people with high self-esteem took an average of 8 selfies per week. The decrease in the number of selfies with the decrease in self-esteem levels could be attributed to the fear of low, negative or no social feedback or likes to one's selfies (Carol, 2013). The study also found that people with low self-esteem posted an average of 0.88 selfies per week, and people with high self-esteem posted an average of 2 selfies per week. The reason that people with high self-esteem tend to post more selfies than people with low self-esteem could be because they needed constant attention, social validation and they relied too much on the response of others to maintain their high self-esteem and in most cases, it had resulted in a

narcissistic behavior in people (Rutledge, 2013). The study also found that people with low self-esteem are 19.35% more likely to choose “to boost my self-confidence” than the people with higher levels of self-esteem (8.25%).

Various limitations may exist in this study, however the main limitation could be the sample size. When comparing the results of the study to previous studies, it might be seen that the low number of participants in the sample could have affected the results of hypothesis 1. Especially that previous works found results that contradict with this research results. Another limitation was that the empirical data on the topic of selfies are quite limited to date.

Future research ideas include conducting the same study on a larger sample size to see if the results will vary or remain the same. Another future research topic will be to study the effects of selfies on self-esteem. The researcher would like to find out whether or not selfies have the power to increase the levels of self-esteem.



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## APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX A**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

- By proceeding, you consent that you are at least 18 years of age.
- Your identity will be completely confidential.
- The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a correlational relationship between the level of self-esteem and the practices of taking and posting selfies.
- You will complete a 23 questions survey, which should take about five minutes to complete. It includes demographic questions about your gender, age, ethnicity, and year of college, which will help determine any other correlations. The survey also includes the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, which is a well-researched acclaimed scale to measure self-esteem.
- The benefits of this study will give insights on whether the level of self-esteem plays a factor in the practices of selfies. Factors such as the number of selfies taken and posted, as well as the uses and gratifications of taking and posting selfies.
- There are no projected risks or discomforts anticipated for this survey. If you are uncomfortable answering any of the questions you are able to withdraw from the survey at any time, in which case your answers will not be recorded. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Contact information

Abdullah Alblooshi

812-391-9363 aja3i@mtmail.mtsu.edu

**APPENDIX B**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

\* 1. Do you consent and wish to continue?

Yes

No

\* 2. What is your gender?

Female

Male

\* 3. How old are you?

\* 4. What is your ethnicity?

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian or Pacific Islander

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

White / Caucasian

Middle Eastern

Prefer not to answer

Other (please specify)

\* 5. What year of college are you in?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduate

\* 6. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
----------------	-------	----------

Strongly Disagree

\* 7. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
----------------	-------	----------

Strongly Disagree

\* 8. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
----------------	-------	----------

Strongly Disagree

\* 9. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
----------------	-------	----------

Strongly Disagree

\* 10. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
----------------	-------	----------

Strongly Disagree

\* 11. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
----------------	-------	----------

Strongly Disagree





20. Do you post selfies?

Yes

No

\* 21. If you do take selfies, how many selfies do you take per week?

\* 22. If you do post selfies, how many selfies do you post per week?

\* 23. Why do you take OR post selfies? "Choose the most relevant to you"

I don't

Everyone I know is doing it

Because it is entertaining

To kill time

To show how good looking I am

To show how stylish I am

To show how successful I am

Because I feel better when people leave positive comments

Because I feel better when I get likes

To boost my self confidence

Other (please specify)

## APPENDIX C

### OTHER RESPONSES FOR USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF SELFIES

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No.	Other Reasons
1	To show my family what I'm doing while I'm off living my life.
2	To post a picture of my girlfriend and me on social media so that I can be sweet, I suppose.
3	To let my parents know I'm still alive
4	I feel good about myself that day.
5	It makes me feel good about myself
6	I don't post selfies. I send selfies over snapchat though.
7	Self expression
8	Usually to show off something new like a hair color or a place I've been
9	Because I look like I put effort into that day
10	To see how good my outfit/makeup is
11	For snapchat
12	I usually just take them so that I can see what I look like.
13	I only take selfies for snapchat. I do not post selfies on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
14	to send back and forth to my boyfriend or friends
15	to have a picture to put with a story
16	Just to do it

---

17 I like to feel like i am apart of something bigger.

18 I like to dress myself up for them

19 My friend posted the only selfie of me that's on the Internet

20 I guess to update people on how I look or update a profile picture.

21 Facebook pic

22 I prefer the way they look to when other people take my picture. I only use  
them for profile pictures.

23 to send a snapchat

24 Normally it'll just be a stupid face that is funny

25 special occasion, when I feel good, or I think I look really nice

26 for snapchat

27 To let my friends and my family that I can't see every day know how I am  
and what is going on in my life

28 Because i want to

29 To create and have memories that will last.

30 I take them when I am in a exotic or cool place, like climbing or diving,  
etc.

31 To update my picture look, and show my self confidence

32 Snapchat

33 To document my journey ...or a moment

34 Because I choose to

35 For a professional profile picture only.

---

- 36 To communicate via snapchat.
- 37 Because I liked the picture so I posted the picture.
- 38 I like expressing myself and representing myself well on social media.
- 39 To create memories or show others a specific moment/thing that I would like them to see
- 40 I take selfies to show various facial expressions on snapchat to help communicate and reinforce my message.
- 41 Mostly for fun, or mock friends of mine but I send them privately. I do not post them publicly.
- 42 Just as a way to get a conversation going.
- 43 Because it's funny
- 44 To interact with people
- 45 I take them for snapchat just because my rear camera doesn't work so selfies are the only way I can use the app
- 46 I take selfies when I'm feeling more attractive than usual or when I'm having a really good day. I personally like to capture that moment and feeling. I usually keep them for myself, but if I post it, that's because I want my followers to bask in the moment as well. I'm always smiling in them. That's an image I can put out into the world and have control over. Of course it doesn't hurt when people have positive feedback.
- 47 I mainly only take selfies in a place of great interest to myself and others to show that I have been there. Other than that I normally talk through
-

snapchat when i take selfies. those selfies are taken just to post words with them

- 48 So my family and friends can see what's going on in my life.
- 49 To update appearance to friends on social media
- 50 i send them to my friends
- 51 It's an easy way to document life and to a stockpile of memories
- 52 Sometimes, I just feel like taking one.
- 53 I feel that since it is my social media page, I am entitled to post whatever I want, regardless of trends.
- 54 To get a picture of me at some event that is memorial, so I will be able to remember the event. Or usually I take a selfie and send it to one of my brothers as an inside joke.
- 55 So people know what I look like
- 56 I only take and post selfies when I am somewhere special.
- 57 There is no real reason cause I don't do it often. Most the time it is just when I feel like it.
- 58 To capture the moment that im in
- 59 Selfies are FUN to take! I love to make different facial expressions!!!
- 60 I just like to take good pictures of myself. It does make me feel good. I feel blessed knowing I have good features and am thankful for that, but not over confident about it.
- 61 I only take selfies when sending them in a Snapchat. Taking selfies is bad
-

unless you are taking them on snapchat where it is a form of communication. The only other acceptable time is when you don't have a mirror and you need to make sure that there is nothing on your face. If you take selfies just to look at yourself than it is pathetic. If you post selfies of yourself on Facebook, twitter, or instagram than you are just asking for attention. Taking a selfie with a go pro with a bunch of people in it because no one will take the picture for you is ok but other than that it is bad.

- 62 It shows my family and friends what I am up to since they are in Pennsylvania
- 63 to keep my social media updated
- 64 For humorous reasons usually
- 65 I want to keep all of my friends and family updated on what I am doing.
- 66 AND HIS NAME IS JOHN CENA
-

## APPENDIX D

### IRB APPROVAL

**IRB**  
**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**  
 Office of Research Compliance,  
 010A Sam Ingram Building,  
 2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd  
 Murfreesboro, TN 37129



#### EXEMPT APPROVAL NOTICE

9/8/2015

Investigator(s): Abdullah Alblooshi  
 Department: Mass Communication  
 Investigator(s) Email: aja3i@mtmail.mtsu.edu  
 Protocol Title: "The Effects of Self-Esteem on Selfies "  
 Protocol ID: 16-1034

Dear Investigator(s),

The MTSU Institutional Review Board, or a representative of the IRB, has reviewed the research proposal identified above and this study has been designated to be EXEMPT.. The exemption is pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b) (2) **Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations**

The following changes to this protocol must be reported prior to implementation:

- Addition of new subject population or exclusion of currently approved demographics
- Addition/removal of investigators
- Addition of new procedures
- Other changes that may make this study to be no longer be considered exempt

The following changes do not have to be reported:

- Editorial/administrative revisions to the consent of other study documents
- Changes to the number of subjects from the original proposal

All research materials must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify, change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board  
 Middle Tennessee State University

NOTE: All necessary forms can be obtained from [www.mtsu.edu/irb](http://www.mtsu.edu/irb).



9/11/2015

Investigator(s): Abdullah Alblooshi  
Department: Mass Communication  
Protocol Title: "The Effects of Self-Esteem on Selfies"  
Protocol Number: #16-1034

Dear Investigator(s):

I have reviewed your research proposal identified above and your requested changes. I approve of the following change:

1. Recruiting participants from mass communication department rather than psychology department.

Please note that any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615)494-8918 or [compliance@mtsu.edu](mailto:compliance@mtsu.edu). Any change to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB before implementing this change.

According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol and needs to complete the online training. If you add researchers to an approved project, please forward an updated list of researchers to the Office of Compliance *before* they begin to work on the project.

Sincerely,

Office of Compliance  
Middle Tennessee State University

Template Revised March 2014

MTSU Compliance Office  
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