

Grandiose Narcissism And Social Media Usage: An Exploratory Study Using The Narcissist Personality Inventory

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Abstract

21st century is named as a century of technological revolution, especially in the field of internet and social media. Social media has become an integral part of our lives. Where the usage of social media has increased, the Narcissistic behavior among people has also increased. People have become more self-centered and victim of self-love and self-praise. Social network sites have a strong impact on self-esteem of users. The present research is aimed to study the relationship between social media usage and narcissistic behaviors of social media users. Narcissist Personality Inventory (NPI-16) was used to measure the Grandiose Narcissist traits among social media users. The results show that social media platforms are great facilitators for the people who have narcissistic behavior because they can pretend to be on social media whatever they want. The findings indicated that use of high and multiple social networking sites can lead to self-promotion and narcissist behavior. The findings of research suggest that social media is primarily a tool for self-promotion.

Keywords: Social media, Grandiose Narcissism, self-love, self-praise, Narcissist Personality Inventory

Introduction:

Human traits of self-love and self-praise can be or sometimes cannot be predicted on the basis of behavior, but human behaviors are somehow consistent with the literature available on narcissism. Narcissism is a trait in which a person needs extra admiration and approval from others. Social media might be the potential amplifier of narcissism (Twenge & Campbell, 2015). The people who have better chance to present themselves in front of public on social media are more likely to be narcissistic. So those people who are famous and are frequently coming on

televisions are likely to have those traits (Young & Pinsky, 2006). Moreover, the research evidence clearly demonstrates that narcissism is a strong personality trait that leads to aggressive behavior. Narcissistic people are more aggressive when they face criticism (Twenge & Campbell, 2003; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). The blend of high self-esteem and high narcissism results in the profound aggression. According to Buffardi and Campbell (2008) "Narcissists use Facebook and other social networking sites because they believe others are interested in what they're

doing, and they want others to know what they are doing.”

An attitude of magnificent and exaggerated portrayal of self-image supplemented by the sense of power, but lack of understanding, sympathy and empathy is defined as Narcissism (American Psychiatric Association, 2022).

However, the researchers are still confused regarding the conceptualization of narcissism (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010). Clinical psychologists are more focused on the “Vulnerable Narcissism”, having the symptoms of emotional disturbance, experiencing the feelings of disgrace and hopelessness, when the exaggerated image of self-image is rejected by others (Miller, Widiger, & Campbell, 2010). While the “Grandiose Narcissism” refers to the sense of grandiosity, magnificence and power without any embarrassment and depression. Majority of Grandiose Narcissist are famous celebrities, high achievers among students and also the criminals (Westerman et. al., 2012; Hepper et. al., 2014).

The present research is aimed to analyze the association between grandiose narcissism and social media. Grandiose narcissism it is identified by high self-esteem, interpersonal supremacy and inclination to overvalue one’s qualities (Zajenkowski et. al., 2018). According to American Psychiatric Association, (2022) “It is a sense of grandiose and inflated self-image accompanied by the sense of entitlement and lack of empathy.” It is easy to get opportunities on Social Networking Sites for self-presentation (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011).

Similarly, there might be high chances of superficial friendships and easy access for narcissism to pretend what they want to be on SNS. Therefore, it is expected that people who have more online contacts and online friends are more narcissist in nature, as these virtual friends can satisfy the narcissists’ need of self-praise and

self-love. Therefore, SNSs can serve as a stimulating factor for emergence of narcissism among social media users by establishing an exaggerated and fake image far from (Al Omoush, Yaseen, & Alma’Aitah, 2012).

Facebook is the leading social networking site, with 2.7 billion active users, followed by Instagram and Twitter with more than two billion users each. The total population of the world is about 7.7 billion, among which at least 5 billion are online (Statista, 2022). It shows that about one third of the world population is social media users, whereas, more than half of the world population is user of internet technology (Ospina, 2019). Previous studies have proved that youth is more engaged in usage of social media as compare to old age people. A report of Pew Research Center (2018) states that 85% of young social media users use Youtube, 72% use Instagram, 69% percent are active on Snapchat, 51% use Facebook and 32% of teens use twitter.

Recent studies conclude that youth in US and China are found to be more narcissistic than old age people (Twenge et. al., Cai, Kwan, & Sedikides, 2012). A decline in the “dispositional empathy” among college students in US has been observed. One reason behind this behavioral change among youth is increased usage of electronic media and social media (Campbell & Twenge, 2015). The researchers are more focused to study the social media as a predicting factor of narcissism. It is observed that narcissist people post more pictures of themselves, which are attractive and glorified, on facebook (Panek, Nardis, & Konrath, 2013; Rosen et. al., 2013). Studies proved that narcissist people have a long list of facebook friends with a shallow and artificial relationships. They often try to exploit their online friends (Campbell & Miller, 2011). Ryan and Xenos (2012) concluded in their research that facebook users are more narcissists than non-users. Fox and Rooney (2015) also established in their study that t the trait self-

objectification, narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy are some major personality traits of social media users. However, few studies shows that usage of social media may create endorsement of positive self-views (Gentile et. al., 2012).

Additionally, emerging media has changed our life trends and provided us more opportunities to present ourselves in an enhancing and attractive ways (Saleem, Parveen & Charles, 2022). Twenge and Campbell (2009) argued that anything in present in our cultural values can influence the individual's psychology. Further they argued that anything which enables person to enhance and present his image in a better way more than justified by the reality can be the potential cause of amplifying and rise of narcissism in the recent decade.

1.1. Research Objectives:

Following are the research objectives of this research:

1. To find out if there is any relation between narcissism and social media usage.
2. To find out if social media usage creates narcissism.

1.2. Research Questions:

RQ1: Do people use social media for the satisfaction of their self-love?

RQ2: Are males more narcissistic than females on social media?

RQ3: Is there any difference of narcissism level exist between students of social sciences and natural sciences?

RQ3: Do heavy users of social media are more narcissist than light users?

1.3. Variables:

Independent variable is the variable which can be controlled and is free from any impact. It affects the dependent variable. The independent variable in this study is "social media usage"

Dependent variable is dependent on the independent variable. In present study, 'Narcissistic behavior' is taken as the dependent variable.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Measures

Narcissistic personality inventory-16 (NPI-16) scale was used to measure the level of narcissism among respondents. According to Ames, Rose, & Anderson (2006) the Narcissistic Personality Inventory-16 (NPI-16) is short version of the original Narcissistic Personality Inventory". It consists of sixteen statements with two sub-statements. The respondents are supposed to select one sub-statement that is more suitable. The NPI is considered as one of the most reliable and measuring scale of (Corry et. al., 2008; Raskin and Hall, 2016).

2.2. Target population in this study was undergraduate university students from cities of Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar, from Department of social sciences and natural sciences. A total of 199 respondents were taken, including both male and female. The age group is not strictly defined due to difficulties may arise in data collection, but it is expected that all participants are adults, i.e., above 18. The purposive sampling technique was used in selection of sample. Undergraduate students, who were social media users and belonging to different social sciences and natural sciences subjects were included in the survey.

2.3. Procedure

As confidentiality of the collected data was the main concern of the participants in this study. We have planned to collect the data in

anonymous way. The researcher first told the respondents that the research was aimed to study personality traits of undergraduate students of social sciences and natural sciences, and they were chosen due to their status. Furthermore, a verbal consent from participants was taken to record their responses. The identity of respondents was not disclosed to ensure the privacy of individuals.

3. Results

3.1. Demography

The data analysis shows that total participants who took part in the study were 199, out which 63% of the participant’s population was female, whereas there were only 37% participants were male.

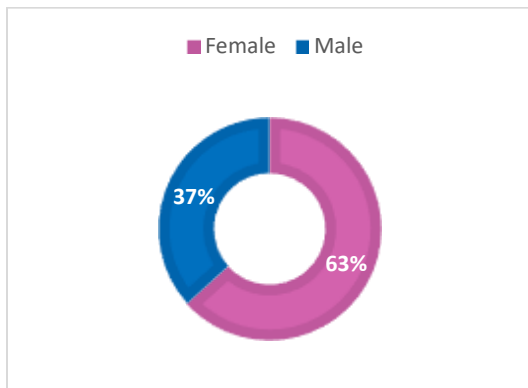


Fig 3.1.1. Gender

Figure 3.1.2 shows that out of total 199 participants, 26% were the students who belong to natural sciences and 74% belongs to social sciences.

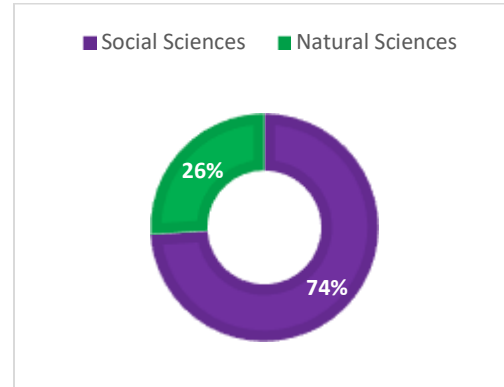


Fig 3.1.2. Subjects

3.2. Social media usage:

Five questions were asked from respondents regarding their habits of social media usage. The results are given as below:

Figure 3.2.1 shows that regarding social media platform utilization, facebook is at the top with 80% of respondents, followed by Instagram with 76.70%, Snapchat with 53.30%, twitter with 25.60% and other platforms with of respondents opted for the option of Twitter and only 27.80% opted for the other options.

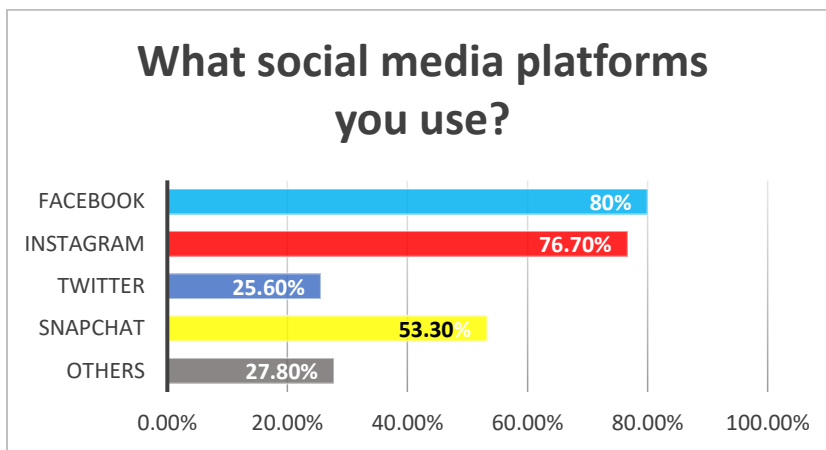


Fig. 3.2.1. Popular Social Media Platform

Fig 3.2.2 shows that 25% of the participants spend more than six hours, 29% spend almost four to six hours, 28% spend two to four hours daily. Whereas, 25% of the respondents spend one to two hours daily.

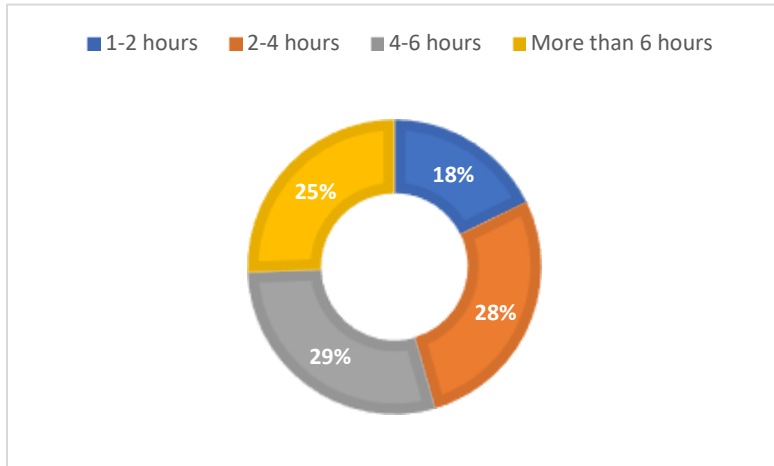


Fig. 3.2.2. Time spent on social media

Figure 3.2.3 shows that 35% of respondents post on social media after few months, 27% of the respondents post after every few week, 18% of the respondents post on their social media

platform on weekly basis, 4% respondents post on daily basis and 7% post multiple times a day. Whereas, 9% respondents have never posted on their social media platform.

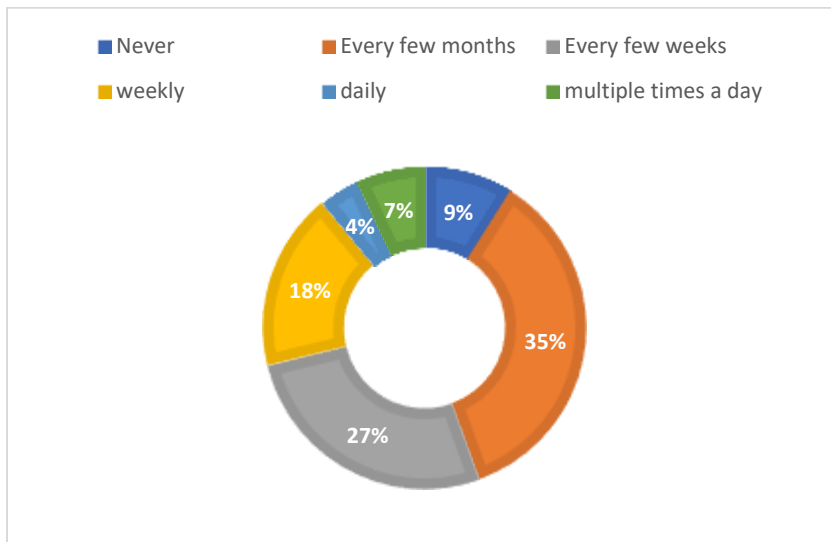


Fig. 3.2.3. Frequency of post on social media

Figure 3.2.4 shows that 33% of respondents use social media to connect with people, 27% of the respondents use social media to get latest news and trends, 23% of respondents use social media for the browsing purpose, 9% of respondents use

social media to develop professional contacts, 6% use to share pictures and video and only 2% respondents use social media to make new friends.

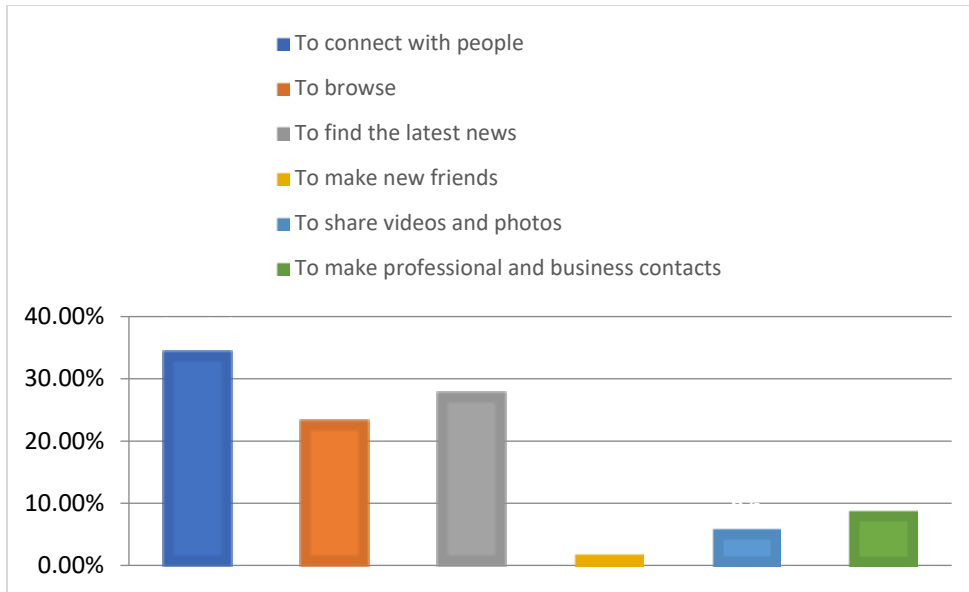


Fig. 3.2.4. Purpose of social media usage

Figure 3.2.5 shows that 6% of the respondents strongly agree and 15% agree that they feel satisfaction with the likes and comments on their social media platform’s content. 48% of

respondents are neutral. Whereas, 25% of the respondents disagree and 6% strongly disagree that the personal satisfaction is associated with the likes and comments on social media posts.

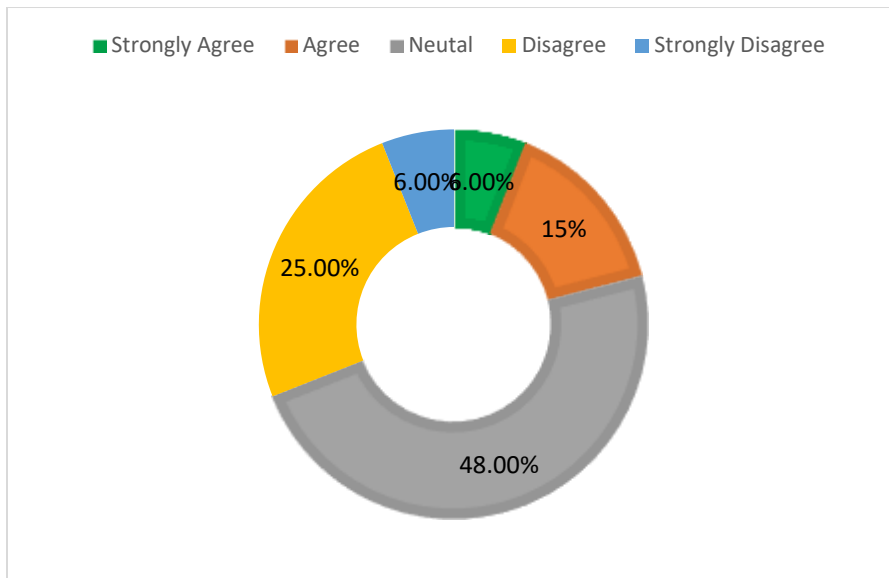


Fig. 3.2.5. Likes on social media posts and satisfaction

3.3. Narcissistic personality inventory-16 (NPI-16).

The sample of 199 respondents were tested on Narcissistic personality inventory-16 (NPI-16).

Table 01

The 16 pair of statements score ranges from 0-1, i.e., from low to high scale. As per NPI-16, the narcissist people have a score .5 or high.

| NPI Score Mean | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----|------|--------|
| S. No | Sample | All | Male | Female |
| 1 | All Respondents | .5 | .59 | .41 |
| 2 | Social Sciences Students | .38 | .41 | .36 |
| 3 | Natural Sciences Students | .4 | .37 | .44 |

The table 01 shows that the mean value of group of 199 respondents is .5, which shows that 1 from every 5 respondents have narcissist behaviors. The value is higher among males, .59, whereas, NPI value is lower among females, .41 which shows that males are more narcissist as compare to females. Similarly, among social sciences, value of NPI score is high among males as compare to females, i.e., .41 and .36 respectively. Whereas, among natural sciences students, females have a high NPI score of .44 as compare to the males with NPI score of .37.

4. Discussion:

This research was designed to find the impact of social media on users that assist developing narcissistic behavior in them. Many studies have found the positive result between grandiose narcissism and the number of contacts on SNSs. The present study shows that respondents who are heavy users of social media, who daily spend 4 or more than 4 hours on social media, have high NPI value. This shows that people with more narcissist trait use more social media, as the likes and comments from their virtual friends provide satisfaction.

The second part of questionnaire was aimed to analyze the social media influence and addiction among people. The previous researches show that females are more vulnerable in developing addictive behavior toward internet. According to previous researches, women are more addicted to social media as compare to men (Andreassen, 2015; Griffiths et. al., 2014), and it has been suggested that women are more inclined to develop addictive behaviors towards activities involving social interaction (Andreassen et. al.,

2013). The present research revealed that 28% of respondents were heavy users of social media with an average daily use of more than 6 hours. Among them, 61% were females and 39% were males. The routine of social media posting was found as 35% respondents used to post after few months, 27% of the people opted for the option of every few week, 8% of the people used to post on weekly basis; whereas, 9% people have never posted on their social media platform, 4% respondents post on daily basis and 7% respondents post multiple times a day.

The third part of questionnaire was composed of 16 statements of NPI-16 scale. Each statement has two options with a score of 0 and 1. 0 is for narcissism inconsistent options and 1 is for narcissism consistent options of each statement. Thus the maximum score is 16 and minimum is 0. Respondents with a score of 8 and NPI value 0.5 or more have narcissist traits and behavior. High score of NPI depicts high value of grandiose narcissism.

In NPI-16 analysis, it was found that the female respondents, who were natural sciences students, had more narcissist qualities as compare to males. However, among social sciences students, males had higher NPI value. This shows that there is a difference among male and female regarding the grandiose narcissism, i.e., self-love and self-esteem.

Similarly, the NPI value of natural sciences students is higher than the students of social sciences. This shows that natural sciences students have more narcissist behavior as compare to the social sciences students.

The overall results show that about 70% of the participants have shown less characteristics of narcissism as they said they never wanted to become center of attention and only 30% of the participants showed the tendency of developing narcissistic behavior. However, it is interesting to mention that these 30% people were heavy users of social media who spend 4-6 or more than 6 hours on social media. This shows that there is a positive correlation between social media usage and narcissist behavior. Narcissist behavior is observed among those respondents who use more social media or heavy usage of social media develops a narcissist behavior.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that there is a relation between narcissist behavior and social media usage. The people who use more social media, post multiple times daily have a high value of narcissism. The likes on pictures, status and other information shared on social media provides satisfaction to narcissist people. The virtual appreciation gratify the need of self-love and self-praise, which are main traits of Grandiose Narcissism.

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