

The Function of Social Media in the Lives of Today's Young Adults

Brahmmanand Sharma, Navita Nathani and Praveen Aronkar
Prestige Institute of Management and Research, Gwalior

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Abstract: In today's digital world, social media, and particularly social network sites, have become a divisive intersection where the majority of the population projects their preconceived notions without any deliberate intent to understand the entire context of a situation. This has the effect of creating a polarising environment. While one half of the story can be explained by all good things such as expanding geographies, breaking cages, patron engagement, and social uprising in areas where there are hindrances by the society but on a broader level has placed social media tool as on a higher stratum, the other half of the story can be visualised on an individual level where influencers, viewers, news promoters, followers, and members of virtual communities where social media has an ascendancy for leveraging the amplification. The exponential growth in the use of social networking sites (SNS) among millennials over the past few years raises the question of whether or not millennials become more narcissistic as a result of their use of social media, which would have implications for both their personal and professional lives. Measures of the NPI-16 and the NPI-40 can provide a researcher with aspects of the theory that are mutually exclusive, but they cannot prove an interrelationship with an external stimulus that moulds, influences, and participates in the personality development of an individual over the course of some period of time. The psychographic profile of the respondents was mapped with their intake of social media and their narcissistic behaviour through the use of a descriptive study that was cross-sectional in nature. This study investigates the fundamental characteristics of narcissism, including Authority, Exhibitionism, Exploitativeness, Superiority, and Entitlement, as well as the interrelationships between these characteristics.

1 INTRODUCTION

Those who suffer from narcissism are always looking for ways to validate their exaggerated sense of self-importance. The story of Narcissus, a lovely young man who falls in love with his own image, is where the word "self-love," also known as "narcissism," originated. Narcissus is said to have been a narcissist. Narcissists, who are characterised by an unwarranted need for admiration, are among the most prolific users of social media. This is because social media may assist narcissists in achieving their goals of being admired by a large number of people, without the need for establishing any sort of intimate connection with those people. Narcissists have a delusion that they are exceptional and unique; as a result, they are always looking for new ways to attract attention to themselves, and they fantasise about achieving celebrity. They attempt to distinguish themselves from others in order to attract attention. Those who have a high level of narcissism are more inclined to

be more domineering in making decisions that are both visible and task-related in order to demonstrate their authority and superiority. They also have a propensity to embrace big behaviours that attract attention, such as making large acquisitions. Narcissism is almost always connected to the characteristics of an individual's personality. Narcissism is defined as "a chronic pattern of ostentation (in fantasy or action), craving for admiration, and lack of empathy" in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV) (American Medicine Association, 1994: 661). The Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV) describes narcissism as "A pervasive pattern of ostentation (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy" (American Medicine Association, 1994: 661). This definition includes nine specific traits - inflated sense of self-importance, fantasies of unlimited success or power, perception of special status, entitlement, exploitation, envy, lack of empathy, arrogance, and excessive need for

admiration - which, when exhibited in combination as a person's dominant behavior, comprise the narcissistic personality (APA, 1994). Narcissism is exhibited by individuals as an ego-defense to maintain fragile self-esteem (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985a), and is characterized by exhibitionism, entitlement and exploitation (Judge et. al., 2009). In the extreme, these behaviors are pathological.

The narcissists have the traits like : Authority, that shows the person's leadership skills and thirst for power, and to dominate. Superiority, that is person's feelings of superiority over others around them. Exhibitionism, people who forever yearn to be admired and be the center of attention, eagerness to ensure they are center of attraction. Exploitativeness, how willing a person is to abuse others in order to meet their own needs and goals. Entitlements, unreasonable expectations of especially, favorable treatment or automatic compliance with one's expectations, are the common characteristics of narcissists. Some people misunderstand narcissism with self-esteem, Professor Twenge points out that narcissism is distinct from the concept of self-esteem. "Someone high in self-esteem values individual achievement, but they also value their relationships and caring for others," she says. "Narcissists are missing that piece about valuing, and caring for their relationships, so they tend to lack empathy, they have poor relationship skills. That's one of the biggest differences, that the communal and caring traits tend to be high in most people with self-esteem but not among those who are high in narcissism."

Panek, Nardis & Konrath (2013) defined Narcissism as "ones affinity to believe one's self to be superior over others, to relentlessly pursue adoration from others, and to participate in egotistical thinking and behavior, and further added that "Narcissism is recognized in the employment of private communication as a way for self-enhancement and self-publicity, and thus due to the obsession with one's self, it inhibits them from establishing lasting intimate relationships". Alloway, Runac, Qureshi, and Kemp, (2014) added that this self obsession can damage an individual's ability to shape healthy, mutually valuable relationships in their personal as well as professional lives.

Twenge (2009) and Campbell (2011), found in their study with more than 15000 respondents, found that the people born in recent generations, like generation x or y or z, scored high in narcissism measures than those in previous generations. They also observed that "increasing narcissism correlated with materialism and a greater desire of money, fame and image". Another researcher found that the millennials

score higher on such traits as extraversion, self-esteem, self-liking, high expectations, and assertiveness, and these traits are too often related to narcissism and entitlement.

Rapid growth in media and technologies that allows society today to engage in social media using more SNS's, has brought an increase in the amount of narcissism in Millennials. According to a news report published in the economic times by IMRB , Internet users in India pegged at 566 million in 2018 and expected to exceed 627 million by 2019, primarily due to the unprecedented growth seen in the rural areas. The report stated that out of the total user base nearly 293 million active users resided in the urban India, while the rest were active users in rural India and 97% of the total users used mobile phone as one of the devices to access internet, with the internet usage being more gender balanced than ever before, due to increased internet accessibility at affordable data costs and more than two-thirds of the active users accessing internet for entertainment and communication. The growing dependence on technology, especially the Smartphone, has allowed users to access any type of social networking sites in no time and with just a few swipes of a finger. A profile on at least one social networking website has been established by more than three quarters of today's Millennials. People typically spend about one hour of their eight-hour workdays on various social media websites. This may seem like a significant portion of the workday, but for Millennials, who spend an average of 1.8 hours a day on social media sites, this proportion is even more significant. An overwhelming majority of people who fall into the high income and upper middle income brackets are active on at least one social media platform. Yet, their major purpose in using the various forms of social media is rather different from one another in a significant way. People use social media to keep up with their favourite brands, chat with friends, gather or share information, follow celebrities, and do a variety of other things. Some of these activities include sharing photos and videos, chatting, and sharing photos and videos. Other activities include following chats, following celebrities, and gathering information.

The term "social media" refers to a group of computer-based technologies that enable users to communicate with one another, share information and ideas, and create online communities. The concept of social media is predicated on the usage of the internet and the provision of users with simple means of electronic communication for the exchange of personal information and other content, such as

movies and photographs. People connect to social media through laptops, personal computers, or smartphones using web-based applications or internet-based software systems, and their primary purpose for doing so is to send and receive electronic messages. Some examples of social media sites are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, in addition to blogs and other websites that feature content that is based on user engagement and user-generated content.

Social media is generally considered as 'Facebook' or 'Instagram'; social media exists online in several forms. Obar *et al.* described social media as having several key facets. Firstly, social media services are (presently) Web 2.0 Internet-based applications. At the core of the social media is the content created by the users themselves. According to the report published by Statista Research Department in June 2019, India accounted for close to 300 million Facebook users in 2018, and with the entry of WhatsApp, its reach extended to all the classes, with 18-25 year-olds used in the most daily. It was found that the current generation is well aware about their social statuses or reputes and they are actively engaging in updating the content and the looks of their profiles. Researchers reported that the "teens expressed Facebook is an extension of their social communication and an essential part of their social life." Duggan & Smith, (2013) found that the youth, especially the teens measured their social standing based on the number of "likes" on their posts and pictures and did not shy from updating, deleting and manipulating their posts and "selfies". The act of taking selfies and posting on their social media accounts have become so popular that these days majority of the smart phone have very high quality front cameras for taking selfies. A google search in December 2019 reported 209 best selfie camera apps for smart phone, such is the craze of selfies.

Millennials tend to use many social networking sites such as Twitter, instagram, snapchat, tik-tok, as a way to escape the drama and pressure they feel on Facebook. Smith & Zickuhr, (2012) in their study found significant correlation in the increasing narcissism and social media consumption in the youth. According to (Przybylski and Weinstein, 2013, Roberts and David, 2016), conclusive results have found lower levels of perceived relationship quality, partner trust, and perceived empathy in the presence of mobile phones. In addition to this, media reports have also commented on the intended and unintended disconnection among people that occurs when people using social media on smartphones (Barford, 2013, Kelly, 2015, Mount, 2015) Narcissists crave the

attention and approval of others and seek out external sources of admiration and attention to help maintain their self-esteem (Campbell et al., 2002; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001).

Social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are an easy route through which people engage in the attention-seeking, self-important behaviors, which is in same line as of narcissists. It is important for narcissists to share their experiences online because they believe all of their friends and followers online are genuinely interested in knowing what they are up to or what they are doing (Carpenter, 2012).

The Research has shown that those who use these types of social networking sites tend to create their online profiles in such a way that it portrays how they want to be seen (Gabriel, 2014). In doing this, the person tends to exaggerate certain character traits, and present a persona that they believe is appealing to the general public (Alloway, Runac, Qureshi & Kemp, 2014). Because of the fact that every user has full control over the information that is displayed on their profile, various social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, make it easy for users to present an unrealistic version of themselves. Previous research indicates that narcissism may be positively related to posting different types of self-promoting content on social networking platforms (Alloway, Runac, Qureshi & Kemp, 2014).

2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The research study aim to determine the use of social-media platform in the millennial generation and understanding, if social media is making this generation more narcissistic. Different authors have proposed different time periods of Millennial generation, but in this research the people who were born between 1980's to 2000's are taken as research target group. The research study provides the answers to important issues like, "Why do millennials use social media, and how is it making them more narcissistic, and how does it therefore influence both their personal and professional life?" Use of various social media platforms has been conceptually unpacked and discussed at length in a variety of scholarly publications. In addition to the qualitative research studies that can be found in the literature, this study also provides the readers with some quantitative results. For the purpose of the study, a questionnaire will be given to around 300 Indians who are between the ages of 18 and 38. The study uses basic traits of narcissism like (Authority,

Exhibitionism, Exploitativeness, Superiority, Entitlement), already established by various other researchers and questionnaire based on these traits and relation between certain behaviour on social media help us to answer some questions of this research. In this research social media platforms referred to are Facebook, Instagram, snapchat, twitter and WhatsApp due to their popularity among the people of the generation in question. The following hypotheses were empirically examined.

Hypothesis 1: Narcissism is positively related to the number of persons followed by the respondents on the instagram.

Hypothesis 2: Narcissism is positively related to the time spent on social media.

Hypothesis 3: Narcissism is positively related to the frequency of updates on social media.

Hypothesis 4: Narcissism is positively related to the age of the respondents.

2.1 Methods

The study involved a survey of 200 Indians between the age of 18 years to 38 years and data was collected on their psychographic profile, Narcissistic Personality Inventory, NPI 16 was used to determine the degree of narcissism in the respondents; they were also asked about their perception and behavior on social media and understand how it impacts their social media consumption.

2.1.1 Measures Narcissism

The respondents were asked to complete the Narcissistic Personality Inventor (NPI 16), which had 2000, 20% were of the birth year cohort of 1980-1990, followed by 9% in 1970-1980 cohort and 11% in the 1960-1970 cohort. Sixty percent of the respondents were male and the rest 40% were female, and there was no correlation between the age and gender of the respondents.

Test of Hypotheses

The sample used for the study was small and the cross-cultural diversity was not taken into consideration. The perception of the survey respondents of their self reported reasons for using social media was assessed using an eight item scale with the Cronbach alpha .796. The results of the correlation analysis indicated a significantly positive relationship between narcissism and the perception of the respondents that the social standing and popularity of an individual was based on the likes s/he gets on their social media; a positive relationship between narcissism and the reason of posting selfies

16 paired statements with each pair with one narcissistic and the other non-narcissistic response. The NPI-16 developed by Ames, Rose, & Anderson, (2006) is a 16-item short-form of the original 40-item NPI (Raskin & Hall, 1979). Ames et al.(2006), in their research described the new NPI-16 as having "notable face, internal, discriminant, and predictive validity and that it can serve as an alternative and shorter measure of narcissism". Narcissistic scores were obtained by adding up all the narcissistic responses, higher scores indicating more narcissistic personality. The Cronbach alpha was .758.

3 SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

Social Media usage was assessed using six statements like how many friends do you have on Facebook, how many followers on Instagram and how many do you follow on instagram, the number of hours spent on social media daily and the frequency of updating posts and selfies. Social Media Behavior: The perception of the respondent's rationale for using social media behavior was assessed by eight items. The Cronbach alpha of the scale was .796.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 200 respondents surveyed, only 147 responses were used for the analysis. Majority (n=88, 60%) of the respondents were born between the year 1990-

and posts on social media as the expectation for the likes; positive relationship between narcissism and the feeling of depression if the individual doesn't get as much likes on social media updates as expected; and also a significantly positive relationship between narcissism and the use of social media or being appreciated more by online peers.

The results from the study found that, Narcissism had a significant, positive relationship with the number of persons followed on the instagram and the number of people the respondents followed on the instagram, hence hypothesis 1: Narcissism is positively related to the number of persons followed by the respondents on the instagram, was supported. However there was no correlation between narcissism and the number of friends on Facebook. The reason could be that with the new social media apps like the instagram, twitter and snapchat etc, the respondents were less active on the Facebook. Also statistical

analysis of the survey responses indicated that there was a significant correlation between the average number of hours spent on social media, hence supporting hypothesis 2. The frequency of posting selfie or status on social media and the NPI narcissistic scores of the respondents were also found to be positively correlated, thereby supporting hypothesis 3. However there was no relationship between the frequency of checking the social media with the narcissistic score, which reinforces our

premise that individuals who are high on narcissism are concerned more with their own posts on social media rather than posts about others.

The hypothesis 4: Narcissism is positively related to the age of the respondents, was tested using ANOVA. The comparison between the mean scores of the respondents on their narcissism NPI scores and the age revealed that there is a significant difference across the respondents regarding their narcissism.

Table 1: Correlations between Narcissism NPI and Social Media Usage.

Correlations						
	NPI SCORE	Number of Friends on Facebook	Number of followers on Instagram	People you follow on instagram - Number	Hours spent on social media - average	Frequency of posting selfie or status on social media
Number of Friends on Facebook	.161	1				
Number of followers on Instagram	.226**	.528**	1			
People you follow on instagram - Number	.254**	.522**	.759**	1		
Hours spent on social media - average	.179*	.266**	.483**	.482**	1	
Frequency of posting selfie or status on social media	.180*	.109	.130	.115	.155	1
frequency of checking online profile	.152	.139	.213**	.231**	.271**	.301**
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Table 2: ANOVA of Narcissism and age of respondents of various age cohorts.

ANOVA					
NPI SCORE					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	218.078	3	72.693	4.106	.000
Within Groups	2514.202	142	17.706		
Total	2732.281	145			

Further analysis using the means plot indicates that the cohort of respondents born between the years 1990-2000, also called as the millennial generation has the highest scores on narcissism. The regression analysis indicated that age along with the social media usage behavior was able to explain 12.9% variance in the narcissism of the respondents. The F

ratio is 10.631, $p < .05$, which shows the strength of the model.

Table 3: Regression Summary of the Dependent and Independent variable.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.360 ^a	.129	.117	4.07843

a. Predictors: (Constant), Age year category, Social Media Behavior

5 CONCLUSION

The concurrent rise in the narcissism and the social media usage and behavior implies that social media has led to an increased narcissism in the social media users, as it gives them an opportunity to promote and self brand themselves by curating their own public-image to gain approval and attention in the public space. Narcissism and Narcissistic personality disorder may be responsible for people's obsession with social media and an impediment in organizational productiveness. However caution should be taken as the results of the study cannot be generalized, not all social media users are narcissists.

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