

LIKE, COMMENT AND SELFie BEHAVIOUR: A PILOT STUDY ON PERSPECTIVES OF YOUNG ADULTS

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Abstract: This paper reports a pilot study that explores the different perspectives on “Like”, “Comment” and SELFie behaviour among young adults and suggests the necessity need to encourage people to have authentic identities in real time with real people. The study relies on data collected through Semi-structured Interview from a small group of social media users from Kerala. The collected data were thematically coded and analyzed quantitatively. The findings and suggestions derived from this study may open new avenue for understanding and the phenomenon of social media engagement in the present context.

Keywords: Like, Comments, Social Media, SELFie, Perspectives.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rogers (1959) believed that humans have one basic motive, that is the tendency to self-actualize – i.e., to fulfill one’s potential and achieve the highest level of ‘human beingness’ we can. For a person to “grow”, they need an environment that provides them with genuineness (openness and self-disclosure), acceptance (being seen with unconditional positive regard), and empathy. In psychology, the past decade or so has witnessed the emergence of a number of specific self theories and the conversion of several major cognitive and behavioural theories into self theories. In this digital age, ever since the beginnings of the Internet, how the self has been constructed and understood in cyberspace has become an area of concern – fulfilling potentials in virtual ways.

In the 1990s the internet looked very different from how it looks today. It was more text based, was slower and had fewer people inhabiting its space. In some ways, it was easier than it is today on the internet to hide and pretend to be someone or something else. The anonymous nature of the internet, some scholars argued, provided opportunities for people to be ‘disembodied’ – that is, to create and experience an online identity that was no longer dependent on or constrained by their physical appearance.

Turkle (1995) was one of the first theorists to consider this idea of disembodiment and selves in cyber space. She named computer a ‘second self’ – the Digital Self. Turkle believed that the internet provide psychologists with a radical new lens through which to consider identity. She took a postmodern view of the self, arguing that people can have multiple selves rather than a unitary, continuous self. Though, the internet is not a homogenous space, and so cannot consider or develop a one-theory-fits-all approach. Clark (1997), for instance, proposed that in the virtual environment, we can exist in either a disembodied or a cyber-spatial form. Rollman, Krug and Parente (2000) wrote that by eliminating time, distance, and body, the architects of the Internet have created an unhindered medium that connects the mind and spirit.

The internet is too accessible and too much a part of people’s lives, making individuals feel overwhelmed and depleted. Virtual worlds offer richer, better lives than reality (Turkle, 2011). While it is normal to be preoccupied with how we present ourselves online, it’s important to distinguish between when it’s a needy purposes or just for fun and when it become a dangerous psychological downward spiral. A complete separation between offline and online selves is not always psychologically healthy.

Need and Significance

Social media is a relatively new phenomenon that has swept the world during the past decade. There is increasing evidence that the internet and social media can influence many psychological downs like depression, low self-esteem, suicide-related behaviour etc. What the motive behind social media usage and suffering anything to be on net via updates are researchable. The present is an attempt towards these ends. It is very important that more studies are done to find the areas that is most affected by social media and to best address different intervention methods.

Objectives

1. To study the posting behaviour in Social media among young adults.
2. To explore young adult social media users like and comment behaviours.
3. To understand the SELFie taking behaviour among young adults.

II. METHOD

The study adopted an explorative pattern through descriptive and observation method with some attempt to intervene into online behaviour. For that the investigators used methods like passive and participant observations of social media posts and responds of youth, and discussions with multimedia experts regarding the use of social media. A total of 460 young adults (age ranges between 18 to 30 years) as participants included in this study, selected through purposive sampling. Among them, 110 were male and 350 female from different education and cultural background included. The condition for participation in this study was individuals having internet access and account in various social media and daily users. Data was collected by assuring confidentiality. The data collected were descriptive in nature. Major themes of the content were derived and percentage analysis were done.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interview was embedded with huge information. Investigators mainly focused to social media involvement, updating behaviour, response consciousness and SELFie taking. The thematically coded responses were analyzed and discussed in diagrammatic forms.

A. Involvement In Social Media

The investigator interviewed and discussed with social media users by enquiring about their involvement in social media. Different reasons were identified and analysed. The identified themes were explained in diagram below.

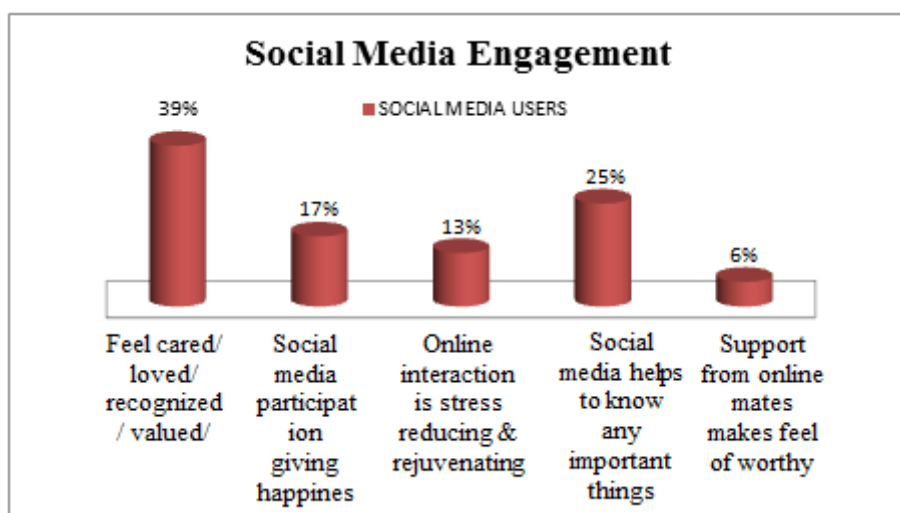


Figure 1: Indicates the response categories of reasons for being Online by social media users

A fairly large percentage of the participants are agreeing with the happiness given by social media participation. They feel cared, loved, recognized, valued and esteemed. A participant opined that “online interaction is stress reducing, rejuvenating and the support attaining from friends and online mates makes feeling of worthy”. Getting as many postings

in Facebook on birthday, anniversary, or other special days and occasions makes many people to think about the wonderful people are in their life. Thus, online social support is the greatest source of happiness and success for being online.

B. Reasons of Posting Self Photos

Investigator intended to explore the reasons for posting self-images of users in social media. Different styles for image posting objectives collected. The responses were tabulated below.

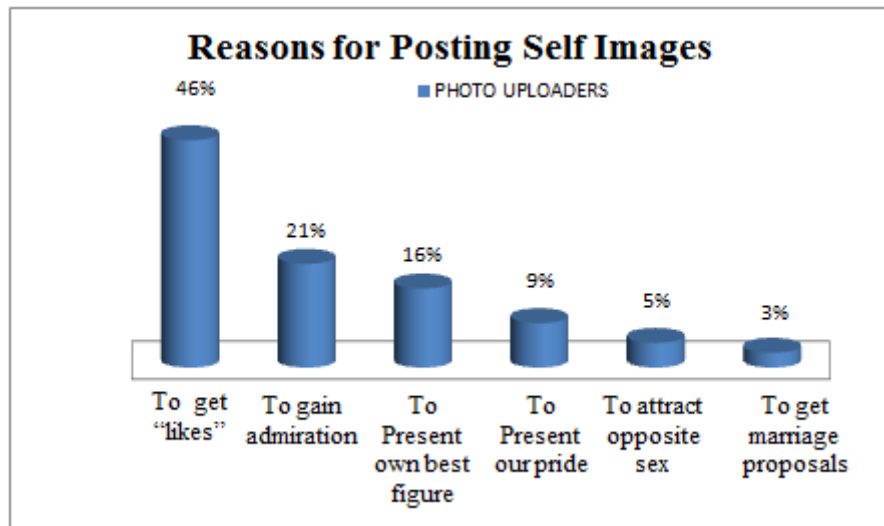


Figure 2: Indicates the response categories of reason behind posting self photos in social media by users

Participants opined that they posts attractive photos in hopes of attracting opposite sex, gaining admiration, presenting our pride and best figure in front of others, getting "likes" etc. The intention of getting marriage proposals also existed. A girl posited that "handsome guys may come with proposals". By using Facebook or other social media they will not miss out any important things as it carries communication purposes.

C. Reasons of updating Social Media Statuses

Investigator queried about the different probes of participants for updating their social media statuses. Various intentions, motives, wishes were accumulated and major themes are discussed below.

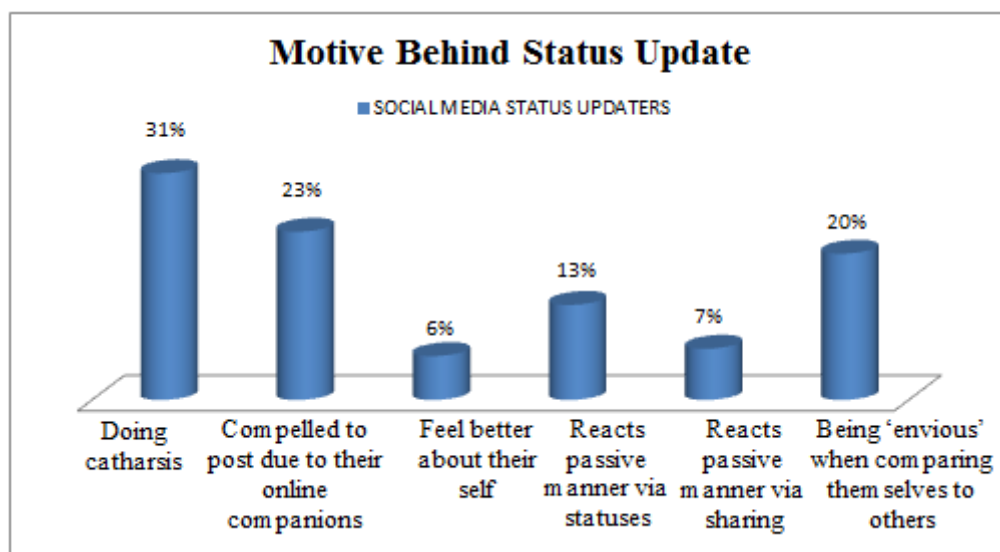


Figure 3: Indicates the response categories of reason status updates in social media by users

Investigator queried about profile picture and status updates in Social Medias. One male participant suggested that *“process of engaging in own profiles by making changes on display picture and status gives feel better about self.”* Some participants opined that they are compelled to post their own experiences, opinions, observations as they overwhelmed by the number of updates and posts from the part of their online companions. Another participant said that *“I admit as being ‘envious’ when comparing myself to others along with competitive social media experiences”*. A male participant submitted that *“Status sometimes does the role of catharsis and out bursting of fully fledged conflicts in my mind”*. Next opinion was *“People who cannot react actively toward social discrimination, violence, anarchism etc. also reacts this passive manner via statuses. In recent scenario, keyboard is the pen and while old generation flight and fight with their pens, we the new generation fights with keyboards”*.

Participants shared some of their social media status updates, are as follows:

“Sorry for what I did to you”, “Missing home... sweet home...”, “You are not only my love, but you are my soul, love you a lot”, “the older I get, the more I realize what really matters in life”, “heavy blasting b’day”, “it’s difficult to keep an innocent mind...”, “Time takes away everything, but a few memories..”, “my daughter is my treasure”, “but I love you, said the knife to the wound”, “be jealous, I have the best cousins!!”, “enjoying parenthood”, “I’m not fighter...but I will fight for what I love”, “I choose to make my rest of life the best of life”, “I’m lucky: I’m in love with my best friend”, “tasting a different flavor of festival”, “actions speak louder than words”, “avoid the persons who spoil your peace of mind..”, “I always with you until my death”, “In education it is easy to attain natural goals, but difficult to satisfy greed and other dreams, “Lord o God...giving my life to you...Make it as u like” etc.

D. Likes & Comments in Social Media

This part mainly focused on the participant’s like and comment seeking behaviour. As per the questions of the investigator, several factors were obtained. Most of them were overlapping. Identified the overlapping data and prominent number of responses was considered for classification and categorization. They are explained below in the figure.

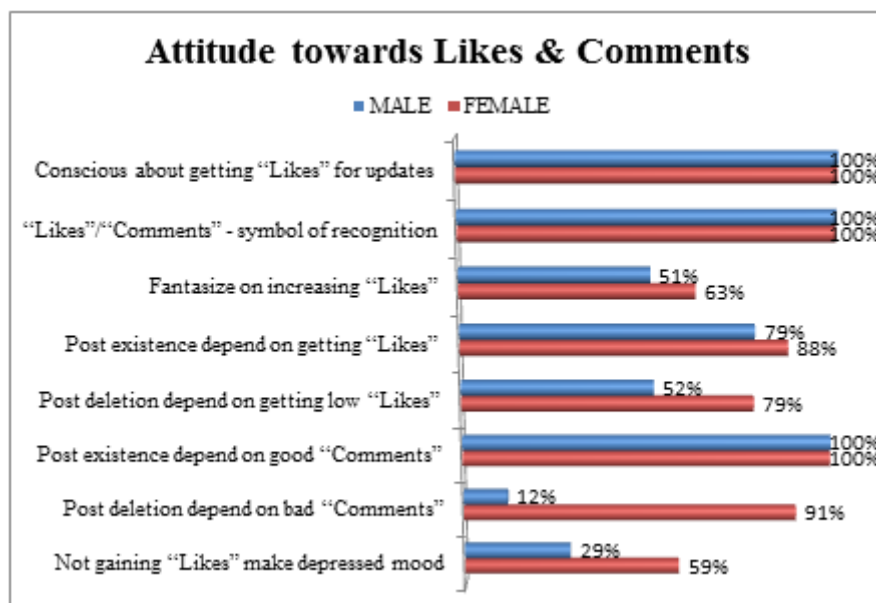


Figure 4: Response categories of young adults about Likes & Comments in Social media

Participants reported that they are frequently thinks about getting “likes” for their updates. A participant said that *“Getting “likes” or good “comments” is a symbol of recognition beyond filtering the quality and give approval”*. Another comment was *“I will check many times my account and fantasize on increasing “likes”*. A female participant posited that *“the existence of a post is dependent on getting “likes”. If one is less scored; it will delete as soon as possible. Also, the pictures which are not gaining likes left me in a depressed mood as because the main intention of uploading itself is scoring “likes”*. These words are in line with Williams (2014), according to him, the more you get connected to social media, the stronger you feel that the items you post – the pictures, for example – are part of your identity and the more likely you are going to view there as your virtual possessions. Also, users with higher Self Esteem spend more effort

adding personal information about their family, education, and their work. Low Self Esteem users continuously monitor their Facebook wall and delete unwanted posts from other users (Williams, 2014).

E. "Like" seeking Behaviour

From the above question investigator directed to ask this specific Question "Why you are much bothered on getting "Likes"? Investigator asked about factors that had encouraged participants for seeking "Likes". Different viewpoints were collected and major themes are discussed below.

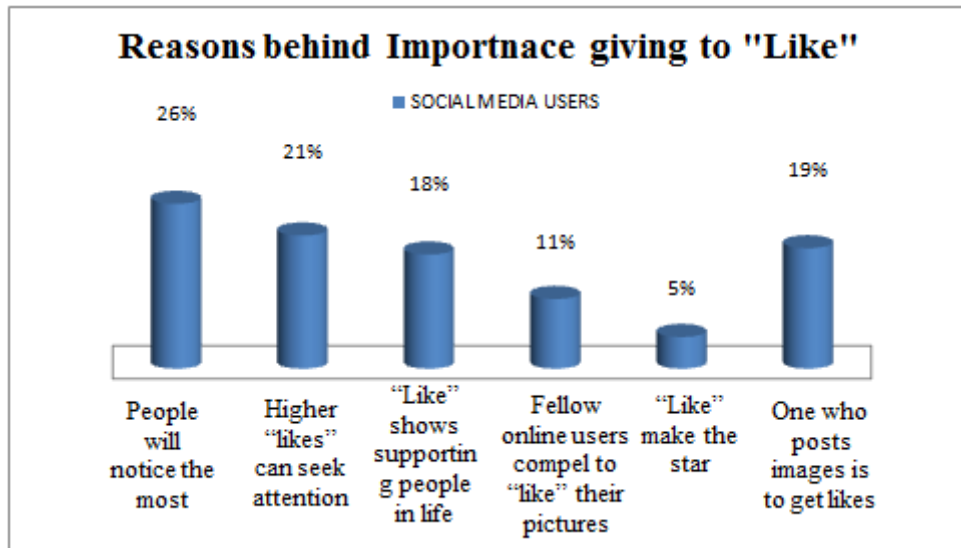


Figure 5: Participant's views behind considering "Like"

When the investigator enquired about the importance of 'likes', one replied that *"the one having higher "likes" seek attention from all. People will check out the most liked picture and thereby they will found by many people and become the star"*.

Many of them shared the experiences of compulsion from fellow online users to give "likes" for their pictures. Some participants said they are not willing to obey the compulsions. One participant commented that *"I now understood enough that one who posts images is merely to get likes. So, even without seeing clearly, I will give "likes"*. Giving "likes" due to sympathizing on other, having few "likes", also reported. One person said that *"whom I angry on will not get any 'likes' from me"*. Few participants said that *"feel anxious while viewing their own profiles versus viewing the profiles of others scored higher on likes, comments and updated. These comparisons make sadness if we get less feedback from others"*. A participant shared that *"there are some tips to increase the likes that tagging the posts, increase numbers of friends etc."*

Some of the participants talked about requisite and relevance of the "dislike" option. Participant communicated that *"Opportunity to give "dislike" is important as considerably as the "like" option. Sometimes giving "dislike" is necessary to limit some posts in Social Medias. Accumulation of irritating or uninteresting posts is usual there. Even though, the chance for misusing the "dislike" option to do personal harassments also anticipated.*

F. "Comments" in Social Media

The importance of comments also discussed with participants. It was found that getting "comments" also make users relief and happy. One participant said that *"there is no problem whether the comments are funny or giggly and it is too interested. Also, it's much better than the simply saying comments like 'good', 'nice', 'well' etc. That will not make any happy because they know it is nice already and that's why it uploaded. Yet, it is not a matter absence of "comments", but "likes" is severe. For a 100 likes, 20 comments are appropriate or satisfactory"*, the ratio explained. So, "comment" is less important than "likes". "Like" is everything.

G. SELFie Behaviour

From the above response from participants that "SELFie get more likes", investigator directed to explore SELFie taking behaviour. This theme was closely related to the social media users self-esteem and motivational attributes to use social media.

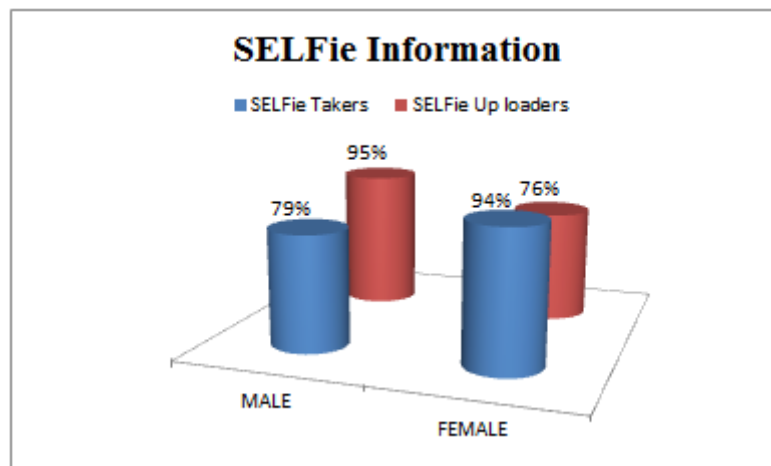


Figure 6: Participant's details regarding SELFiE behaviour

Figure 6 shows the frequency of male and female SELFiE takers as well as social media up loaders. A SELFiE is when a person who takes a photo of themselves using a camera or a phone and posts it on a social media website (Seidman, 2015). Participants opined that *“as SELFiE is a recent trend, it acquires many likes now”*. *“SELFiE is a part of life”* was one comment emerged from participants. Many participants commented that *“takes “SELFiE” as per the dress, costume, makeup, and mood of a day. It will take 6 to 20 “SELFiE” at a time or sometimes more, till get a satisfied one”*. From the table it can see that among girls “SELFiE” up loaders are less in number than the takers. They are little concerned regarding photo publicizing, misusing, no consent from families etc. One of the female Participant posited that *“SELFiE” gives more satisfaction because it gives the image what we expected and the click will stops only when excellent one gets*. In relation with “SELFiE”, another participant suggested that *“there will be no a second person to see and watch us. So there is no need a shame and can poses in any manner which we want. Can delete the ugly ones, then retake and retake is possible and easy without disturbing others. Through sharing images, Present can present in live through SELFiEs”*.

It is an increasingly popular way to share own lives and connect with friends and family and darely the entire world. People who regularly took selfie have low level of confidence regarding their appearance and uncomfortable in their own skin (Business Standard, 2014). The U. K study found that 73 percent of SELFiE addicts surveyed uploaded images on social media. Reporting on reasons behind the self- portrait obsession, Free Press Journal said the most common reasons was to earn likes and appreciation from peers on social media. Other reasons included capturing the moment when they thought they looked their best and conveying their mood through photo (Dingfelder, 2011).

While the selfie phenomenon has taken the internet by storm, the majority of snap-happy young adults admit that behind the smiles is a low self-esteem (Blades, 2014). Yet, Sunder (2015) opposes that people with lower Self Esteem are more concerned with what other people post about them on Facebook.

A GROUPIE is when a person who takes a photo of themselves with other people using a camera of a phone and posts it on a social media website (Difference between, 2018). Among the participants, College people or people from joint families were found giving more preference for groupie. One of the participant opined that *“If putting ‘groupie’, one who post the image will conscious about their self only. In case of others, the vulgarity will check but not impressiveness”*. Participants shared the experiences in such a situation like other people in the same image (groupie) wanted to delete the picture as he or she is less impressive.

For the web users, it is important to make sure that they don't base all their Self Esteem on a few comments or likes on a picture – there's a lot more to a person than their “likes”. It can be fun and it may give a burst of momentary satisfaction. Thus, there is a need to encourage people to have authentic identities in real time with real people is necessary.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concluded with the findings that the process of engaging in own profiles by making changes on display picture and status gives feel better about self. Getting “likes” or good “comments” is a symbol of recognition. One who posts images is merely to get likes. SELFiE gives a kind of satisfaction for users because it can receive more “Likes”. Providing some reasonable limitations on obsessed users social media time, including cell phone time, may a great way to help encourage them to enjoy visiting that digital world, while still remaining alive in this real one.

Generally speaking, individuals are getting addicted to the internet all over the globe. Through various electronic devices like laptops, smartphones, and tablets everyone is glued to the World Wide Web and it has become a part of our work, school, and home. Researches are still working on uncovering the underlying causes of cyber/ social media addiction. The investigations conducting towards Cyber Self/ Digital Self of users will be beneficial for Mental Health professionals, counsellors, as well as cyber psychologists.

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