

REVIEW ARTICLE

Selfitis – An Emerging Psychological Disorder In Youth Population Of Punjab

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Received: 11 April, 2022

Accepted: 09 May, 2022

ABSTRACT

Introduction - Photography is seen as a powerful means of expression, as a symbolic language to express what cannot be said in words, and as a stimulator of emotions and behaviors about which often are not aware. The term the word "selfie", is declared as the "word of the year" by the Oxford English Dictionary. Selfie fever has taken a new dimension known as 'selfitis'.

Aim and objectives - To assess the selfitis behaviour and level of the selfie syndrome and find out significant association of selected background variables with selfie syndrome (level of selfitis) among youth population in Punjab.

Methodology - It is a descriptive cross sectional study carried out among the youth population of Punjab from age group 18 - 30 years who visited the out patient department of Deshbhagat hospital, Punjab.

This study was conducted during the year of 2020 among 200 youth population who were selected by using convenience sampling. A Self structured questionnaire on Selfitis behavior scale and structured questionnaire used to collect the data from participants.

Results – The findings showed that 70% of study subjects suffering from acute selfitis, whereas 20% chronic and 10% borderline. Among them 80% like to take selfies sometimes, 11% rarely and 9% regularly take selfies

Conclusion - The findings demonstrate that the majority of study subjects had borderline level of selfitis basically termed as behavioural addiction. The findings are an issue of concern, as such uncontrolled desire can cause varied psychological consequences that may also lead to selfie-deaths in adolescents.

Key words - Adolescents, addiction, selfitis, social media.

INTRODUCTION

Technological products considerably influence human life in the digital age, especially those that have become a part of everyday life. Nowadays, people communicate with smartphones, which are the most important among these technological products, and access and share information.

Currently, it is very easy to communicate and access information since such a habit has been added to the repertoire of human behavior. Therefore, it is not surprising to see people taking selfies almost everywhere. Taking selfies has become a part of everyday life, especially for young people¹.

According to literature, taking a selfie is defined as taking a person's self-image. Since smartphones both have a camera and easy access to photo editing programs, young people can take selfies, edit selfies, and share them on social media networks with no time and space limits².

Recently, scientists have been trying to answer the following question: What makes selfies so attractive to young people? An answer may be that young people take selfies to socialize and become popular³

While this answer is rational, it cannot be sufficiently descriptive on an important issue because that answer does not help experts understand that people are putting themselves in danger when taking selfies. In recent days, news about people injuring themselves while taking selfies has been frequently featured in the media⁴.

That is why researchers are making intensive efforts to uncover the variables associated with selfie behavior. Some time ago, there was a fake news story on social media. According to this news, 'selfitis' (selfie addiction) was identified as a psychiatric disorder in the DSM. However, the American Psychological Association (APA) soon denied the claim in the news⁵. This fake news stated that selfitis was a distinct mental disorder associated with narcissism and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Although this fake news has been rejected, a number of researchers have indicated that excessive selfie taking may be a psychopathology reported that selfie addiction might lead to several problems for young people, including accidents, suicide, plastic surgery, skin damage, and loss of self-confidence⁶.

As per the news article published in Hindustan Times, India is reported to have the top rank related to selfie deaths. Selfie obsession or in other terms addiction is more prevalent among youth as they want to attain self-importance, seek acceptance among peer group, or have a fear of rejection and most importantly want to attract the opposite sex for budding new relationships^{7,8}.

This topic was selected to assess the level of selfitis among youths visiting the out patient department of Deshbhagat university, Punjab so that the pattern of selfitis can be determined. In this study, the severity and related factors were observed. Very few studies have been reported on this topic which is yet a novice area in research.

METHODOLOGY

The present study used a qualitative approach and an exploratory survey design to identify the prevalence of selfitis among youth population of Punjab between 25 to 45 years with average age of 26.41 years. The study conducted in the year 2020 screening done through the Selfitis Behavior Scale. Prior permission taken from the owner of the tool for the implementation in the study.

The SBS scale is a 20 item likert scale. The answers can be rated as 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=not sure, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree. The sum total of the answers of all the 20 questions will determine the level of selfitis as ***0-33 borderline, 34-67 acute and 68-100 chronic***.

Data collected from 400 subjects. Among the 400 subjects there was 200 males and 200 females. All the study subjects were explained about the purpose of the study and assured for confidentiality. They gave their consent for participation in the study. All the subjects were asked to fill the questionnaires in the presence of the researchers. Data collected and analysed by frequency percentage to find out the prevalence of selfitis.

Statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Programme (SPSS) version 17.0. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the demographic variables and the selfitis score was obtained based on the scoring of their responses.

RESULTS

The SBS is a five point like scale consisting of two negative response (strongly disagree and disagree), one neutral response (not sure) and two positive response (agree and strongly agree).

The distribution of subjects based on distribution of gender and age is shown in fig 3 & 4

TABLE 1 – Prevalance Of Selfitis

Level Of Selfitis	Score	Frequency N - 400	Percentage %
BORDERLINE	0 – 33	40	10%
ACUTE	34 – 67	280	70%
CHRONIC	68 – 100	80	20%

Table 1 showing out of 400 study subjects, 70% having chronic, 20% acute and 10% borderline selfitis.

The five most common purpose of taking selfie among study subjects are, taking selfie provides better memories about the occasion (85%), taking selfies as trophies for future memories (38%), taking selfie gives a good feeling to enjoy environment (28%), taking selfie improves mood and makes feel happy (17%) and using photo editing tools to look better than others (10%).

Whereas the five least common purpose of taking selfie are, to gain enormous attention, more acceptance among peer group, feel more popular, become a strong member of peer group, feel detached from peer group and each of the purpose scored 3%.

Figure 1 Shows 20% subjects having chronic, 70% acute and 10% borderline selfitis.

Figure 2 Shows 7% youth taking selfies regularly, 67% sometimes and 26% rarely taking selfies.

Fig 1 – Prevalance Of Selfitis

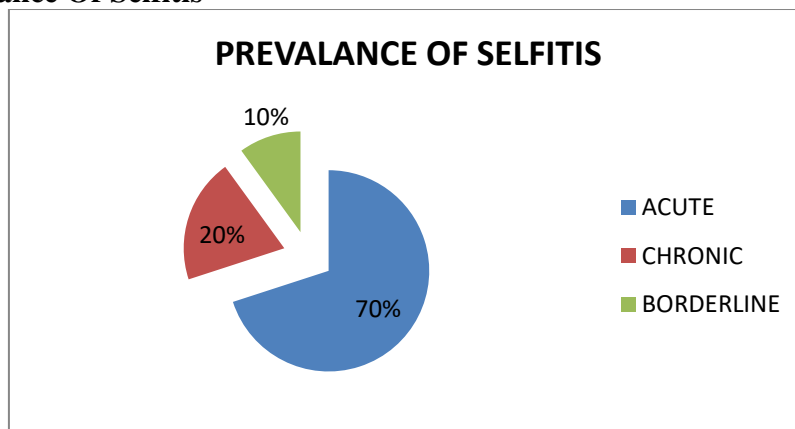


Fig 2– Frequency Of Taking Selfies Among Subjects

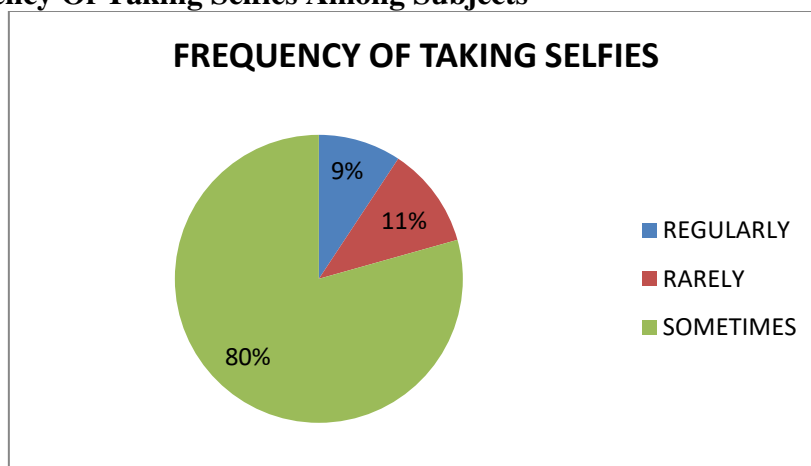
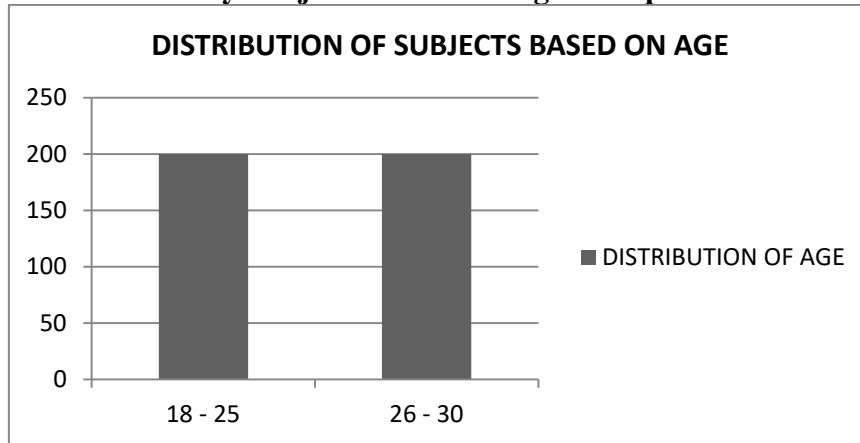
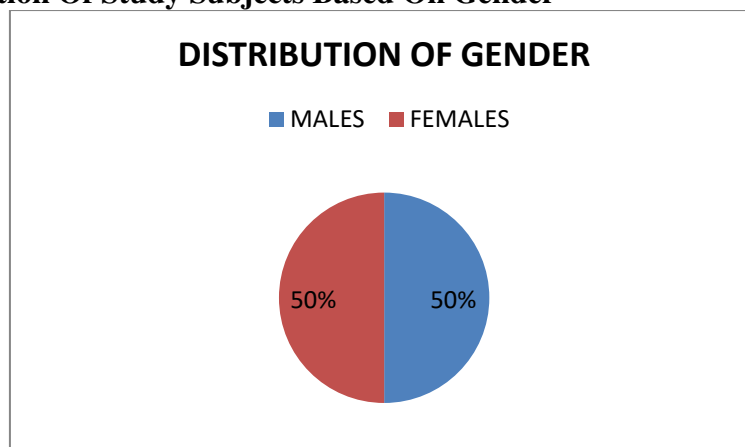


Fig 3 – Distribution Of Study Subjects Based On Age Group**Fig 4 – Distribution Of Study Subjects Based On Gender**

DISCUSSION

The study findings showed that according to age and gender, which is equally distributed. The study comprised of 200 males and 200 female subjects.

The present study is an attempt to explore the selfitis behaviour among youth subjects of age group from 18 – 30 years. Four hundred study subjects participated in the survey. There was very limited number of studies conducted in this regard.

The findings (Table 1) of the present study revealed 20% study subjects having chronic, 70% acute and 10% borderline selfitis. The finding is in accordance with the study conducted by *Singh et al.* which found majority of (70.5%) subjects had moderate selfitis followed by (29.50%)⁹

9% study taking selfies regularly, 11% sometimes and 80% rarely taking selfies (Figure 2) which is in contrast to the findings of the study conducted by *Veena. G et al* that reported 65% of respondents take selfies regularly 20% sometimes, 10.83% rarely and 4.17% of respondents never take selfies¹⁰.

The five most common purpose of taking selfie among STUDY SUBJECTS are, taking selfie provides better memories about the occasion (9- 10%), taking selfies as trophies for future memories (8%), taking selfie gives a good feeling to enjoy environment (8%), taking selfie improves mood and makes feel happy (7%) and using photo editing tools to look better than others (6%). Whereas the five least common purpose of taking selfie are, to gain enormous attention, more acceptance among peer group, feel more popular, become a strong member of peer group, feel detached from peer group and each of the purpose scored 3%. Similar result were also found in the study conducted by *Janarthanan Balakrishnan et al, Singh et al and Veena.G et al*^{9,10,11}

LIMITATIONS

Like any of the study this study also has its limitations. All the data were self-report and are subject to many well-known biases like social desirability and memory recall.

The sample was a convenience sample therefore is a non-representative of other populations and cultures.

The majority of the sample (90%) was below the age of 30 years; therefore, further research should attempt to examine the selfitis across different age groups and populations using more representative samples.

CONCLUSION

The present study has proved that selfie syndrome is dominantly developing craze of modern era due to increased digitalization, easy access to internet and inexpensive gadgets with internet access.

From the present study it is concluded that the majority of study subjects have acute selfitis. Therefore, if awareness increasing measures not taken then this majority group may become chronic and the present study is helpful to develop awareness and provide a baseline information.

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