Levels of Self-Monitoring, Self-Expression and Selfie behavior among selected Filipino Youth
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ABSTRACT
The study explores the relationship between the self-monitoring behavior and self-expressiveness on the selfie behavior among Filipino youth. Quantitative, specifically correlational design was used as research method and several survey scales were disseminated using purposive sampling on selected youth aged 16-18 years old. There were (n=160) participants, (n=115) female and (n=45) male. The result shows a significant relationship with the level of r value = .540 between self-monitoring behavior and selfie behavior. Findings, further found out that there is a significant relationship but, comparably weaker relationship between the selfie behavior and self-expressiveness as implied by an r value of .376. It is an indication that belongingness and appropriateness are most likely two among the many possible predictors of selfie behavior among selected Filipino youth. The study concludes that self-monitoring behavior influences selfie behavior of the respondents and at the same time consider selfie as freedom to self-express. Keywords: Selfie behavior, Self-monitoring, Self-expression, social media, body image, conformity

One of the trends today is taking selfies. It is believed that Self-portrait or selfies have been practiced many years ago. It just happens that there are increasing number of people who use the word “selfie” whenever they take pictures of themselves through the influence of social media. According to Wilson (2014) the City of Makati, Philippines ranks the highest number of people, taking selfies with 258 selfie-takers per 100,000 people. This article is an implication that Filipinos were a huge fan of selfies.

Selfie behavior or taking selfies are not always advantageous, problems with personal relationships and decrease in intimacy may be encountered when an individual shares too much photos on social media (Houghton, 2013). In some instances, according to Silverman (2013) selfies are one of the components of cyber bullying that can lead into degradation of an individual. Youth who takes selfies is often believed to be a sign of getting approval from their peers by posting it to social media like Facebook and Instagram, and once they failed to gain or attract attention and approval they desire from peer group, it often lead to cyber bullying.

There were reported cases of inappropriate selfies on funerals, fire incidents and even in suicidal situation and most of them are teenagers (Levin, 2014). This alarming situation is an indication that selfies are not as simple as it looks. Selfies can develop problems with personal relationship and even bullying. Since not all people think the same, some might see selfies as acceptable while some are not, which is an indication of the problems ahead.

Self-monitoring and its influence
Self-monitoring is an action of an individual influenced by external cues as to what is socially appropriate (Sher & Thompson, 2007). Then again, according to Sher & Thompson (2007) self-monitoring is associated with conformity. It has been found that a high Self-monitoring person can easily cope and appropriately connect into new social connection and those who are low Self-monitoring person do tasks as they wish, independently and doesn’t conform. Self-Monitoring behavior are often visible during teenage years, because it is the time were they often feel peer pressures and their sense of belongingness. Hoffman, Sussman, Unger & Valente (2006), discussed that friends' smoking behavior overtly influences adolescent smoking. In addition Longan (2014) asserted that peer pressure plays an important role on
decision making on what to choose or to follow based on what is present on social media like Facebook and Twitter. On one study conducted by Teunissen, Spijkerman, Prinstein, Cohen, Engels, & Scholte (2012) showed that, peer influence has been a predictor of willingness to drink alcohol through adolescents depending on the high status and low status peer group. In relation to taking selfies, Mascheronni, Vincent & Jimenez (2015) stated that women who takes provocative selfies are basis of peer pressure by means of being called perfect. Moreover to Soderstrom (2014) found that active Instagram users especially women showed that the biggest factor of selfie fascination was to get confirmation.

**Self-expression among youth**

Self-expression is an idea of one's own personality traits, feelings, or ideas (Kim & Chu, 2011). Self-expression among youth varies in different forms. For instances, some youth use blogs as their way of self-expression (Argamon, Koppel, Pennebaker, & Schler, 2007) and some use tattoos as an expression of their uniqueness (Tiggeman & Golder, 2006). Self-expression, Self-concept and communication overtly influence social media used Sponcil & Gitmu (2012). In relation to selfie, Murray (2015) said that self-expression became a powerful means of selfie fascination among women on their teens to early 20’s, encouraging them to share their special moments on their lives. In addition, Nguyen (2014) showed that selfies particularly on women influences their emotional state, including handling rejection, criticism, comparison to others and independence. According to Allen (2015) youth who takes selfies reflects duality, insecurity, and a freedom of expression and communication gap between adolescents and adult and still views selfie as merely a passing fad.

**Selfie behavior among youth**

Photos, specifically selfies might actually a reflection of an individual personality. In fact there were several studies that showed and discussed some influences based on the amount of selfie takes and even in social media used. For instance, a case of 19 years old student Danny Bowman develop body dysmorphic disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder due to excessive selfie takes for more than 200 selfie per day (Aldridge & Harden, 2014). Then again, Ong, Ang, Ho, Lim, Goh, Lee, & Chua (2011) found that the amount of selfie upload on social media influences Extraversion and narcissism tendencies. Another study who agreed to that by (Eftekhar, Fullwood & Morris, 2014) showed that uploaded photos through social media like Facebook predicted neuroticism and extraversion tendencies. Additionally, the findings of Sorokowski et al (2015) shows that men are higher to perform narcissistic tendency than women who take selfies. Their study shows that the link between narcissism and selfie-posting behavior is comparatively weak among women than men, and provide novel insight into the social motivations and functions of online social networking. Moreover, Kirschner & Karpinski (2010) showed that the amount of the time a certain individual is active on social media might actually result negatively self-concept. Another study, Klein (2013) particularly on the body image of women from taking selfies and using social media may result from eating disorder among college female students.

**Synthesis**

Many of the literature found stated that self-monitoring behavior were most likely to influence youth’s behavior (Sher & Thompson, 2007) including handling decisions (Longan, 2014) and also by means of being called perfect (Mascheronni, Vincent & Jimenez, 2015). Then again, studies about self-expression among youth stated that youth express themselves in various ways like blogs (Argamon, et. al., 2007), social media sites (Allen, 2015) and even tattoos (Tiggeman & Golder, 2006). Moreover, literature about selfie mostly talks about its influence on body image of certain individual (Eftekhar et.al 2014; Ong et. al 2011). For instance, some
literature about selfies stated that abusive selfie takes may result to develop body dysmorphic disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (Aldridge & Harden, 2014) and narcissistic tendency (Sorokowski et.al 2015).

However, this study deluded into knowing the level of selfie monitoring behavior, self-expression including the selfie behavior among selected Filipino. Also, this study aimed to quantify the relationship between self-monitoring behavior and self-expressiveness on the respondents’ selfie behavior. Thus, the study would like to answer the following questions: (a) what is the level of self-monitoring and self-expression among the respondents? (b) What is the level of selfie behavior among respondents? Lastly, (c) is there a relationship between self-monitoring and self-expressiveness among the selfie behavior of the respondents?

Method
Research design
The study used correlational design that allows the researcher to clearly and easily see if there is a relationship between variables (McLeod, 2008). It was used since, it would like to find out if there is a relationship between self-monitoring behavior and self-expressiveness on youth’s selfie behavior on a larger scale of participants. The study used several survey scales for gathering data more specifically on selected teenagers.

Participants and Sampling
There were teenagers (n=160) who participated throughout the study, females (n=115) and males (n=45) from Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, Paranaque and San Pedro, Laguna. The current study used purposive sampling technique. Respondents were selected based on the set criteria which is from age 16-18 years old and must be a selfie taker. In order to be considered as a selfie taker, respondents must claimed that they take selfie at least once a day or more.

Instrumentation
Question about the level of selfie behavior was included on the survey scale such as, “how often do you take selfies daily?” Norms of the question were based on the overall scores of the participants.

Revised Self-Monitoring Scale. The present study adopts Snyder’s (1974) Self-Monitoring Scale. The 25 items true or false format scale was revised in order to be appropriate and understandable by the respondents. It was revised into 14 items 4 point Likert scale from 1 being strongly disagree and 4 being strongly agree. This scale was used to measure youth’s behavior on how they conform or behave appropriately in new social situations. The scale contains 9 positively phrased items and 5 negatively phrased items (reversed score). Sample items were: “I’m particularly good at making people like me”, for positively phrased and “I feel a bit awkward in a group work” for negatively phrased items. Reliability and validity was presented on the revised scale with a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of (γ=.756)

Revised College Self-Expression Scale. The present study adopts Galassi, DeLo, Galassi, & Bastein’s (1974) College Self-Expression Scale thus, it was revised in order to be appropriate and understandable by the respondents. The 50 items Self report inventory was simplified by reducing the 5 point scale into 4 point scale and reduced it into 19 items which also designed to measure the level of self-expressiveness of college students. The Scale contains 11 positively phrased items and 8 negatively items. Sample items were: “I easily compliment and praise others” for positively phrased items and “I avoid social contact in fear of saying or doing something wrong” for negatively phrased items. Reliability and validity was presented on the revised scale with a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of (γ .729).

Procedures
First, the researcher looked for qualified participants on different establishments, schools
and neighborhoods throughout Muntinlupa, Las Pinas and Parañaque and San Pedro, Laguna. In order to be consider as a qualified participants, they were first asked about their age and if they were a selfie taker at least once a day.

Then, all willing participants were informed first upon receiving the printed copies of the survey questionnaires personally. These several questionnaires includes information about their selfie behavior, the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder, 1974) and Self-Expression scale (Galassi et. al, 1974).

**Data analysis**

The present study used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to analyze the gathered data. The researcher used frequency distribution to summarize the data that has been gathered. It is used in order to display the frequency of various outcomes in a sample. After distributing all data, Pearson correlation was used to analyze all the data. It is used in order to determine the correlation of Self-monitoring and Self-expression among the selfie behavior of Filipino youth.

**Results and Discussion**

**Research Question 1. What is the level of self-monitoring behavior and self-expressiveness of the respondents?**

This table shows the number of all participants, the mean and the standard deviation of level of self-monitoring behavior and level of self-expression. This includes the interpretation of the analyzed data both level of self-monitoring behavior and level of self-expression among the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>( \bar{x} )</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of self-monitoring</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>34.58</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of self-expression</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>46.49</td>
<td>12.72</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean and standard deviation for the self-monitoring behavior among selected respondents is (\( \bar{x}= 34.58, SD=8.29 \)). Moderate result indicates that most of the respondents act based on what they think that is appropriate and decide on where they feel belong. Still, moderate result implies that most of the respondents understand the limits of their appropriateness and belongingness.

On the other hand, the mean and standard deviation of self expressiveness among respondents is (\( \bar{x}=46.49, SD=12.72 \)). The result is also moderate indicating that the respondents were moderately self-expressive. It is an implication that selected Filipino youth express themselves only and if they have to.

Sher & Thompson (2007) found that high Self-Monitoring behavior were easily to cope and appropriately connect into new social connection while low Self-Monitoring behavior are a kind of person who do tasks independently and doesn’t conform. Thus, this suggest that moderate result is an indication that respondent appropriately connect to find sense of belongingness into new social situation.

Self-expression among youth varies in many ways. Several studies indicates that blogs (Argamon, et. al., 2007) and tattoos (Tiggeman & Golder, 2006) are components of self-expression among youth. Since, many of the participants got a moderate result, level of self-expressiveness among respondents can be considered adequate, which means that selected
Filipino youth these days express themselves only if they have to. Moderate result also indicates that there is a limitation among the respondents to express themselves in appropriate manner. This can be compared to Sponcil & Gitmu (2012) statement which says that Self-expression, Self-concept and Communication overtly influence social media use. In relation to selfie, Allen (2015) youth who takes selfies reflects duality, insecurity, and a freedom of expression and communication gap between adolescents and adult and still views selfie as merely a passing fad.

**Research Question 2: What is the level of selfie behavior of the respondents?**

This table presents the number of all participants, the mean and the standard deviation of the level of selfie behavior among the respondents. This includes the interpretation of the analyzed data of the level of selfie behavior among all the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Selfie-behavior</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>160</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean and standard deviation of the selfie behavior of the respondents is ($\bar{x}=6.17$, SD=5.02). Since, many of the participants got an average result, it indicates that selfie behavior among respondents is still adequate compared to other cases of levels of selfie behavior. Most of the studies concluded that the level of selfie behavior could harm an individual when it was not well handled.

There are participants who said that they take almost 20 selfies per day and the lowest is 1 selfie per day but the mean average of selfie takes of the youth are more or less 6 selfies per day which can be considered as average. Selfie’s may have a positive effect on certain individual, it may give confidence and self-esteem but too much may also develop negative effects like narcissism and Selfie addiction, as in the case of D. Bowman excessively take 200 selfies per day which develop body dysmorphic disorder and obsessive compulsive tendency (Aldridge & Harden, 2014)

**Research Question 3. Is there a significant relationship between Self-monitoring behavior and self-expressiveness on youth’s selfie behavior?**

This table represents the relationship between Self-monitoring and Selfie behavior. The r-value, p-value and its interpretation were included to determine the correlation between Self-monitoring and Selfie behavior among the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Monitoring and Selfie behavior</th>
<th>r-value</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.540</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that there is a moderate significant relationship between the respondents self-monitoring behavior and selfie behavior with an r-value =.540 and a p value =.001. This result indicates that their act of taking selfies are influenced by their peer group.

Several studies agreed towards this result. Soderstrom (2014), found that the biggest factor of selfie fascination in Instagram is to get confirmation for other people. Findings of Hoffman (2006) added that teenage years is the time where they find their sense of belongingness. By taking selfies they were able to fit in within their respective peers because
everyone else takes selfies; even vices like smoking Hoffman (2006) and alcoholism Teunissen (2012) had been influential to youth because they think that they would look cooler, tough and boost their self-esteem. This study suggested that taking selfies are actions of social conformity to be accepted by peers.

This table represents the relationship between Self-expression and Selfie behavior. The r-value, p-value and its interpretation were included to determine the correlation between Self-expression and Selfie behavior among the respondents.

Table 4. Relationship between Self-expression and selfie behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>r-value</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Expression and Selfie behavior</td>
<td>.376</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, table 4 found that there is a significant relationship between selfie expression of the respondents and selfie behavior as indicated by an r-value = .376 with a p-value = .001. The result indicates that freedom of expression influenced the level of the selfie behavior among selected Filipino youth but still, self-expression indicates a weaker relationship than self-monitoring.

The relationship between Self-expression and selfie-behavior which indicates that self-expression or freedom of expression to influence the selfie behavior of the respondents is comparably weaker than self-monitoring and selfie behavior. It is an indication that appropriateness and belongingness is most likely the predictor of selfie behavior other than self-expression. In addition to that, another study also agreed that the fascination of women who highly takes selfies is more likely a self-expression on whom they wanted to view themselves. This characteristic of extraversion in the study of Ong (2011) showed the correlation between extroverted behavior and selfie to social media are correlated.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

There were positive correlation both between self-monitoring of selfie behavior and self-expression with the level of selfie behavior among respondents. The study concludes that both self-monitoring and self-expression predicts selfie-behavior of the respondents. The result shows that self-expression has comparably weak relationship than self-monitoring. It indicates that most of the time, youth who takes too much selfie is more likely to show belongingness and appropriateness to social situations. These results suggest that taking selfies are used as the respondents’ freedom of expression through social media.

The current study only focuses on two factors that can influence selfie behavior of a certain individual. For researchers, future studies about selfies can be done using experimental design. Gender differences about selfie behavior may be a variable for a deeper understanding about selfies. Most importantly, future researcher may also focus on comparative studies on how selfie influences adults and adolescents.

**References**

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