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Psychological Well-Being and Self-Esteem of Updaters: Understanding People Who 'Post' Themselves On Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The primary aim of this investigation was to compare the psychological well-being and self-esteem of individuals who frequently update their personal information on social media with the individuals who either do not post or post little of their personal information on social media. The former set of people has been mentioned as 'updaters' and later as 'non-updaters' in this study.

Materials and methods: 416 students from five universities of Punjab, were administered relevant questionnaires (viz. Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale and Rosenberg self-esteem questionnaire). The Mann Whitney U test was applied to the data with the help of SPSS statistics to test any significant differences.

Results: The findings of the study suggested both psychological well-being and self-esteem to be significantly higher in non-updaters than updaters. The reasons have been discussed in the light of previous research in this investigation.

Conclusion: Frequent posting on social media might not necessarily mean a healthy psychological well-being and self-esteem of updaters, which often is contrary to the information

Keywords: Social media, updaters, non-updaters, self-esteem, psychological well-being, updates, posts.

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Introduction

Today, social media significantly impacts how we live. We communicate, interact, and express ourselves to others and, sometimes, even to ourselves through social media. We depend on social media to stay updated with friends, family, and current global events. The way that individuals connect and communicate has changed due to social media. Social media

has changed and will continue to affect our lives.

Status updates

Social media has seen considerable changes in recent years as platforms have continuously added new features to improve user connection and engagement. The advent of "stories" and updates on

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platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook has been one of the most noticeable developments (Kang et al., 2019a). These stories provide users with a sense of immediacy and closeness that standard postings do not, enabling them to submit brief, ephemeral content that vanishes after 24 hours. The capability to "go live" on social media platforms is another feature that has gained significant usage. Users can communicate with their followers in real-time by using this function to broadcast live video content (Kang et al., 2019c). Users now have a more dynamic and appealing way to express themselves by sharing their ideas, feelings, and even song lyrics with their followers.

Psychological well-being

The concept of "psychological well-being" describes a person's overall sense of satisfaction and joy in life. While some academics focus on the lack of troubling mental health conditions like anxiety, loneliness, depression, and stress, others draw attention to the occurrence of healthy mental conditions like positive affect, cognitive analysis of one's life as gratifying, having a meaningful purpose, or enhanced mental health. The three models that define well-being are subjective, psychological, and composite well-being. Overall, psychological well-being is a multifaceted concept made up of various characteristics, including autonomy, purpose in life, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth, and good relationships with others (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995)

Self-esteem

It is a person's total perception of their own value and acceptance. It is an individual's entire sense of self-worth or personal value. It is a crucial component of mental health since it has a big impact on how people see themselves and how well they can handle obstacles in life (Baumeister & Leary, 1995a). A variety of detrimental effects, including sadness, anxiety, and social isolation, are linked to low self-esteem (Baumeister & Leary, 1995b). On the other side, having a solid sense of self-worth is associated with favorable outcomes like improved relationships, mental health, academic and professional performance, and mental health (Baumeister, 1999)..

NEED OF THE STUDY

This research discusses whether the habit of posting social media updates shows a difference over people's self-esteem and psychological well-being. This study will serve as a foundation for future investigations and will put forward the need to investigate the psychological issues rising due to overuse and misuse of personal information posting on social media platforms.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This investigation was concerned with the study of uploading personal information on social media. In this study, personal information pertains to postings that do not have any significance to the viewers since it is not adding to the knowledge base of anyone, nor is it spreading any kind of awareness in society. The primary aim of this investigation was to compare the self-esteem and psychological well-being of individuals who post their personal

information on social media with those who either do not post or post little of their personal information on social media. In order to conduct this investigation, the former group of individuals were labeled as updaters, and the later group as non-updaters. The following were the main objectives of this study:

1. To compare the psychological well-being of updaters and non-updaters.
2. To compare the self-esteem of updaters and non-updaters.

HYPOTHESES OF STUDY

H₁: There will be significant differences in the psychological well-being of updaters and non-updaters.

H₂: There will be significant differences in the self-esteem of updaters and non-updaters.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study had ex-post facto research design. 'Updating' on social media was the independent variable, whereas 'psychological well-being' and 'self-esteem' were the dependent variables.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of students from five universities of Punjab. Participants were recruited within the age range of 21-35 years, doing post-graduation and Ph.D. in various streams. Snowball sampling method was used to arrive at the sample. The participants were those who are using social media actively and those who have tried using social media. All participants had complete familiarity with social media. In total, the sample for this study consisted of 416

subjects, divided into two groups: updaters (N = 196) and non-updaters (N = 220).

Materials

General information seeking questionnaire (Self-made)

A self-made questionnaire asking participants about their consent for participation, demographic details, general activity behavior of updating, the kind of information the participants post on social media, etc., was used at the first step of the study.

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale:

The 42-item Psychological Well-being (PWB) Scale, developed by psychologist Carol D. Ryff in 1989, was used. The reliability of this scale has been found to be 0.82. Further, the correlation coefficient of this scale with Satisfaction with Life, self-esteem, and Happiness and Self-esteem was also found to be: 0.47, 0.46, and 0.58, respectively, which were also found to be statistically significant ($P < 0.001$) (Asghar et al., 2008).

Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale

The 10-item Rosenberg self-esteem scale, developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, was used. The reliability of the RSES is 0.86 (Tinakon & Nahathai, 2012). Using known groups, the test shows concurrent, predictive, and construct validity. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the RSE have strong correlations with one another. The RSE also has a predicted correlation with measures of anxiety and depression.

Procedure

Before the actual start of the study, a self-made general information questionnaire asking participants about their consent, demographic details, general activity

behavior pertaining to updating, the kind of information the participants post on social media, etc., was administered to the participants online through email or WhatsApp. Based on the responses given on this questionnaire, the 416 participants enrolled in this study were either posting 'only' personal information on social media or not posting anything on social media. On the basis of frequency of updating per week, through the use of the median split technique, the sample was divided into two groups. The upper-frequency group was considered as 'updaters' and the lower-frequency group as 'non-updaters'. Abiding with ethical guidelines and psychological principles, both groups were administered the psychological well-being and self-esteem scales. Finally, the data obtained were subjected to suitable analysis for comparing the groups on psychological well-being and self-esteem.

RESULTS

The first step for this study was to segregate the entire sample into two groups: updaters and non-updaters. To divide the entire sample median split technique, based on the frequency of updating per week, was used. Following is the outcome of the median split technique:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	196	47.2	47.2	47.2
	1	98	23.6	23.6	70.8
	2	40	9.7	9.7	80.6
	3	12	2.8	2.8	83.3
	4	12	2.8	2.8	86.1
	5	23	5.6	5.6	91.7
	6	12	2.8	2.8	94.4
	7	23	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	416	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows the total number of samples and the cumulative frequencies according

to the frequency of updating personal information from not updating to updating seven times a week. Through the median split method, the participants were divided into two groups; below 50% (here 47.2 in the table) were considered non-updaters (showing the frequency of '0' in the table), and above 50 scores were considered updaters (offering ranging from frequencies 1 to 7 in the table). Thus, the low-frequency group was considered as non-updaters (N = 196) and the high-frequency group as updaters (N = 220).

Normality tests

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PWB	.106	416	.041	.959	416	.023
SE	.106	416	.044	.959	416	.016

The table shows the values of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk for Psychological well-being as 0.041 and 0.023 and for Self-esteem, 0.044 and 0.016 respectively. These values are less than 0.05; hence the distribution of data for both variables is not normal. The data is negatively skewed for psychological well-being. The values of Skewness and Kurtosis are -.624 and -.180, respectively. The data is positively skewed for self-esteem. The values of Skewness and Kurtosis are .576 and -.330, respectively. The tests showed that the data is not normally distributed, and hence only non-parametric techniques could be used to analyze this data. Hence Mann-Whitney U Test was used to make comparisons.

Mann-Whitney U Test

Table 3 Ranks				
	Frequency Of Updating	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
PWB	0	196	53.63	1787.00
	1	220	23.61	849.00
	Total	416		
SE	0	196	51.89	1768.50
	1	220	23.81	867.50
	Total	416		

Here the number '0' indicates the non-updaters, and the number '1' indicates updaters. The table shows that the mean rank score of psychological well-being for non-updaters is to be higher (= 53.63) than the updaters (=23.61). Similarly, the mean rank score of self-esteem for non-updaters (=51.89) is found to be higher than updaters (= 23.81).

Table 4 Test Statistics		
	PWB	SE
Mann-Whitney U	104.000	127.500
Wilcoxon W	849.000	871.500
Z	-6.123	-5.912
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
a. Grouping Variable: Frequency Of Updating		

Table 4 clearly indicates $p < 0.05$ for both variables. This suggests the presence of significant differences in the means of both variables.

Thus the result obtained from the Mann – Whitney U test shows a significant difference in the psychological well-being and self-esteem of updaters and non-updaters. Therefore, accepting both the hypotheses of the study.

DISCUSSION

There are many studies in agreement with this result. Previous research has shown that social comparisons drawn from social media platforms had an adverse effect on people's psychological well-being and made them feel worse about their life

(Steers et al., 2014). Social media platforms frequently encourage social comparison, in which people assess themselves with others (Jan et al., 2017). People who often update their personal information could be more exposed to the adorable moments in others' lives, resulting in feelings of inferiority, dissatisfaction, and diminished psychological well-being. Constant exposure to others' seemingly ideal lifestyles can skew views of reality and foster irrational expectations, leaving people sad or unsatisfied with their lives. Previous studies show that the FOMO (fear of missing out) and psychological well-being of social media users are negative connections; those with high FOMO will have low psychological well-being (Reer et al., 2019).

There are many studies associated with social media usage, but very few studies talk about the psychological context of updating. This current study significantly argues that the self-esteem of people who update their personal information on social media is significantly less. Another study showed a negative correlation of self-esteem with personal information posting (Tazghini & Siedlecki, 2013). One study showed the relationship between self-disclosure in social media and loneliness. More lonely people disclosed their personal information than connected people (Al-Saggaf & Nielsen, 2014). People with loneliness have low self-esteem (Salkic, 2020). People portray themselves online, intending to create idealized online personas, which enables people to deliberately display positive, glamorized versions of themselves online rather than in face-to-face encounters

(Walther et al., 2008b). By carefully choosing and editing the content they release, users of social media are encouraged to offer an idealized picture of themselves. Because of this, persons who often update their personal information on social media may experience a decline in self-esteem as they become more conscious of the discrepancies between their true selves and the idealized selves they project online. People who constantly update their personal information could look for approval from others and depend on the comments to make them feel more confident. However, it can damage one's self-esteem if the needed affirmation is not obtained or the reaction is unfavorable or inadequate. Decreased self-esteem may result from a continual desire for approval and a fear of criticism by others.

Overall, in the end, it could be said that whether it is affecting us or not, whether it has any implication on personality or not; but still what constant is the fight for today's generation to post the prettiest pictures and the most unique stories of theirs on social media. Why are we trying to display a self that is not our authentic self? The updaters seem to be under this constant fight of real versus the ideal. Or some might be using the defense of reaction formation, doing the complete opposite of what one is experiencing, just like a study that has found that couples who post more about their relationship on Facebook have insecurity issues (Hutchinson, 2015). The unconscious applicability of this defense mechanism seems to exist in social media. People tend to show their happy faces by hiding their actual emotions. If this is the case, those people could be having less of both

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psychological well-being and self-esteem. If this updating frequently is becoming a habit for this generation, it needs to be researched more and even more. This study was an attempt towards this.

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