

SOCIAL MEDIA IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND SELF PRESENTATION ANXIETY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Social media identity construction is considered to be making, alerting and projecting of own social identities on social media sites. Self-presentation anxiety is associated with fear of being negatively judged by other people. In contemporary digital era, university students are highly engaged in social media platforms, which highlights the need to understand how social media identify construction affects self-presentation anxiety among university students. The main objective of the study is to explore the relationship between social media identify construction and self-presentation anxiety among university students. 152 university students as samples selected through simple random convenience random sampling technique. The tools used in the study were Social-Media Identify Construction is assessed by using social media Engagement Questionnaire (SMEQ) by Przybylski et.al., (2013) and Self Presentation Anxiety is assessed by using Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation scale (BFNE) by Leary (1983). The findings show that social media identification in creating online identity does not operate as a reliable predictor concerning self-presentation anxiety among university-going students. The significance of this research work lies in its attempt to highlight the need for future studies to focus on other relevant psychological factors which may influence self-presentation anxiety.

Keywords: Social media identify construction, self-presentation anxiety, social media, university students

Introduction

In recent years, social media were powerful thing where people are able to express themselves, associate with others and formulate their identities. According to APA Social media forms of digital communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content.

For university students, who find themselves in a defining stage of their personal and social development, these media platforms have become an important part of their journey of discovery and formulation of their identities. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and TikTok provide users with opportunities to design their own images, videos, posts and change their lifestyles that represent who they are or who they want to be. This continuous effort of selecting, processing and sharing of this content has been referred to as social media identity construction which plays a major role in influencing both online and offline identities of users. Since these platforms are public, it means that those who use them experience self-presentation anxiety. This involves a concern for how other people perceive their online identities.

Social media identity construction refers to the deliberate and selective process through which individuals shape their own identity on social media. According to Goffman individuals manage their presentation of themselves with a perspective of manipulating certain impressions, which has a significant role in online platforms where editing, manipulating, and controlling postings are feasible on a social media platform and associations with a purpose of constructing an identity that corresponds with their own aims as well as societal expectations.

Self-presentation anxiety arises when a person fears being negatively evaluated or judged with regards to how they present themselves online, it is also known as fear of negative evaluation. According to Leary and Kowalski, "self-presentation anxiety occurs when a person believes that their self-presentation may fail to live up to societal expectations." University students usually have a hesitation before posting, think about how many likes and comments their postings will get, compare themselves with others and feel as though they must present a perfect picture. This study aims to investigate how the identity construction process on social media was affects, contributes to or predicts self-presentation anxiety among university students.

Review of Literature

Most of the studies were reviewed related to social media Identify Construction and Self-Presentation Anxiety Majority of the studies were founding using social media Identify Construction correlated with other variable and also Self presentation Anxiety correlated with another variable. Here some studies are mentioned to understand the correlation between social media Identify Construction and Self presentation Anxiety. The following studies provide the valuable insights of various research related to social media Identify Construction and Self

presentation Anxiety variable which is utilized to identify the research gap for the current study.

Mariluz et. al., (2023) conducted a study on Validation and Adaptation of the Social Media Engagement Questionnaire SMEQ in Colombian people. The study aims to validate the "Involvement with Digital Social Networks Questionnaire (SMEQ)" in the Colombian population. The sample size of the study was 289 individuals aged between 18 to 62 years. The tools used in the study were Social Media Engagement Questionnaire. Finding of the study is the psychometric properties of the SMEQ questionnaire showed adequate values, which would allow its administration in the Colombian context.

Elena Radu and Farhana Rahman (2025) conducted a study on The Mediating Role of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) in the Relationship between Social Media Engagement and Sleep Disturbance in Teenagers. The study aims to investigate the mediating role of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) in the relationship between social media engagement and sleep disturbance. The sample size of the study was 450 high school students aged 13 to 18 years. The research design used in this study was Descriptive research design. The tools used in the study were The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, the Fear of Missing Out Scale and the Social Media Engagement Questionnaire. Finding of the study is revealed that social media engagement was significantly and positively associated with fear of missing out and sleep disturbance.

Vrinda et. al., (2024) Conducted a study on social media engagement and psychological well-being among emerging adults. The study aims to to explore the relationship between social media engagement and psychological well-being among emerging adults. The sample size of the study was 145 young adults. The sampling technique used in this study was convenience sampling method. The tools used in the study were Social Media Engagement Questionnaire by Przybylski et al., and Psychological Well-being proposed by Celestine, N. Finding of the study is suggest that the nature of social media engagement plays a significant role in influencing psychological well-being.

Peter D'Lima & Andrea Higgins (2021) conducted a study on Social Media Engagement and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in Primary School Children. The study aims to explored primary school children's personal use and views of social media and the social and psychological drivers that may underpin engagement. The sample size of the study was 100 students ages between 9 to 11 years old. The research design used in this study is exploratory research design. The tools used in the study were social media engagement scale and Fear of missing out scale. The Finding of the study convey a strong argument for more in-depth, psychologically informed, primary e-safety curricula addressing peer pressure, self-worth and online interactions with strangers.

Di Xu and Ruoxi (2025) conducted a study on The Role of Fear of Negative Evaluation and Loneliness in Linking Insecure Attachment to Social Media Addiction: Evidence from Chinese

university Students. The study aims to examine how attachment anxiety and avoidance influence SMA through fear of negative evaluation and loneliness. The sample size of the study was 400 Chinese university students. The sampling technique used in this study is stratified sampling technique. The tools used in the study Insecure Attachment scale, Fear of Negative Evaluation scale, UCLA Loneliness Scale and Bergen Social Media Addiction scale. Finding of the study explain that socio-emotional mechanisms underlying Social Media Addiction and extends the application of attachment theory to the digital media environment.

Guo, Y. (2015) conducted a study on constructing, presenting and expressing self on social networks site an exploratory study in Chinese University student's social media engagement. The study aims to understand how Chinese undergraduate students construct, present and express their identities on Social Networking Sites. The research design used in the study is Qualitative research design. The sampling technique used in the study was purposive sampling technique. The sample size of the study is 5 Chinese University undergraduates from 6 different universities from China. The data collected through semi structured interview. The finding of the study shows that Chinese undergraduate used Social Networking Sites to explore and present an idealized version of themselves, influenced by their offline identities and cultural context.

Majeed et. al., (2025) conducted a study on the mediating role of social anxiety between fear of negative evaluation and online self-presentation in young adults: a collectivist cultural perspective. The study aims to examine the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and Online Self Presentation, with Social Anxiety as a potential mediator, within a collectivist cultural context. The sample size of the study was 200 young adults. The research design of the study was cross – sectional design. The sampling technique of the study is convenience sampling method. The Tools used in the study were Brief fear of negative evaluation scale social interaction anxiety scale, presentation of online self-scale. The finding of the study was suggested that individuals with higher levels of FNE are more likely to experience social anxiety which subsequently contributes to more strategic and controlled online self-presentation.

Xiaoli et. al., (2020) conducted a study on Development of the Social Media Engagement Scale for Adolescents. The study aims to develop the Social Media Engagement Scale for Adolescents (SMES-A) and evaluate its reliability and validity. The sample size of the study were 2519 adolescents. The research design used in this study is mixed method. The tools used in the study were Social Media Engagement questionnaire. Finding of the study is suggested that the SMES-A is a reliable and valid measurement to evaluate social media engagement among Chinese adolescents.

Sommerfeld, E., & Dror, C. (2024) Conducted a study on perfectionist self-presentation and problematic social media use serially mediating the link between attachment dimension and

depressive symptoms in adolescent girls. The study aims to examine the serial mediation of perfectionist self-presentation and problematic social media use in the relationship between attachment dimensions and depression among adolescent girls. The sample size of the study was 100 adolescents' girls. The research design used in this study is Inventory by Kovacs, Close Relationships Revised Questionnaire by Brennan et al., Perfectionistic Self-Presentation Scale by Hewitt et al., Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale by and Andreassen et al., finding of the study elucidate mechanisms by which insecure attachment is associated with depression in adolescent girls.

Operational Definition

Digital identity is attitude norms that are blended with technology and includes displaying ethical and appropriate attitude while using electronic environments and receiving information about using electronic environments (Ozkan,2013)

Social media identity construction refers to the intentional process through which individuals create, manage, and present their personal identity on social media platforms through content sharing, self-disclosure, and engagement behaviors.

According to Goff man Self Presentation is defined as individuals' actions to control, shape and modify the impressions other people have of them in a particular setting. Anxiety is an emotion characterized by apprehension and somatic symptoms of tension in which an individual anticipates impending danger, catastrophe or misfortune (According to APA).

Self-presentation anxiety refers to the fear or discomfort experienced by individuals when they anticipate being negatively evaluated by others based on how they present themselves, particularly in social or online contexts.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the level of social media, identity construction among university students
- To identify the level of self-presentation anxiety among university students
- To find out the significant relationship between social media identity construction and self-presentation anxiety among university students
- To find out the significance difference in the mean score of social media identity construction and self-presentation anxiety among university students based on purpose of social media usage.

Hypotheses of the Study

- There is no significant difference in the level of social media identity construction and self-presentation anxiety among university students
- There is no significant relationship between social media identity construction and self-presentation anxiety among university students.

- There is no significant difference in the mean score of social media identity construction and self-presentation anxiety among university students based on purpose of social media usage.

Methodology

Descriptive Research design was undertaken, the survey method was used in this study to choose the participants and a simple random sampling technique was used. 152 University students between the ages of 18 and 26 were selected as samples for this study.

Tools Used

Social Media Identity Construction

Social media Identity Construction is assessed by using social media Engagement Questionnaire (SMEQ). It was developed by Przybylski et.al., in 2013. The scale consists of 5 items; each item has to be rated on an 8-point scale ranging from 0 'Not one day to 7 Every day. Individual scores can be computed by summing response to all 5 items and forms a reliable composite measure ($\alpha = .82$ to $.89$).

Self-Presentation Anxiety

Self-Presentation Anxiety is assessed by using Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation scale (BFNE). It was developed by Leary in 1983. The scale consists of 12 items; each item has to be rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 'not at all characteristic of me to 5 extremely characteristic of me. The scale has 8 straight forward questions and 4 items are reverse scored and the responses are summed into a total score, with higher score indicating severe level of fear of negative evaluation. For item number 2, 4, 7, 10 the ratings have to be reversed. The total score ranges from 12 to 60 where high scores represent severe form of fear of negative evaluation, and vice versa.

Procedure

Social media Engagement Questionnaire (5 items) and the Brief Fear Negative Evaluation Scale (12 items) are used in this study because they provide useful and trustworthy information on publications and research studies. 152 university students were participated between the ages of 18 and 26 are the subjects of this study. First, participants should fill out social media Engagement Questionnaire which measures how individual uses social media platforms in their daily routine. The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation measure was employed to determine the degree of anxiety a person has about being disapproved of or criticized by others. Additionally, they were requested to fill out the required demographic information. Utilizing the survey method, the responses were gathered. In order to establish the strength of the association between young people' perceived social support and their fear of negative evaluation, descriptive statistics were used to score the data. After the data was gathered, the total scores were computed and tabulated.

Result And Discussion

The present research aimed at investigating the association between social media identity creation and self-presentation anxiety among college students. The outcome showed a weak negative correlation between social media identity creation and self-presentation anxiety, which means that the highest participation in identity creation on social media is not related to the increase in anxiety concerning self-presentation.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics – Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Skewness & Kurtosis of Social Media Identity Construction and Self Presentation Anxiety among University students.

Variables	No. of Samples	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social media Identity Construction	152	14.9	14	14	9.48	0.62	-0.51
Self-Presentation Anxiety	152	33.5	34	35	5.24	0.54	1.22

Table 1 provides the data of descriptive statistics on social media Identity Construction among university students. The descriptive analysis revealed in social media Identity Construction, the Mean is 14.9, the Median is 14, the Mode is 14, the SD is 9.48, the skewness is 0.62 which represents the distribution is positively skewed and the kurtosis is -0.51 indicates the mesokurtic. In Self Presentation Anxiety, the Mean is 33.5, the Median is 34, the Mode is 35, the SD is 5.24, the skewness is 0.54 which represents the distribution is positively skewed and the kurtosis is 1.22 indicates the leptokurtic. The descriptive statistics adherence to the normal distribution allows the study to continue.

Table 2 provides the data on the level of Social-Media Identity Construction and Self Presentation Anxiety among University students.

Variables	No of Samples	High	Moderate	Low
Social media Identify Construction	152	30	102	20
Self-Presentation Anxiety	152	22	104	26

The levels were calculated using Mean \pm SD of social media Identity Construction and Self Presentation Anxiety. In social media identify construction the participants who scored 24 and above denote a high level of social media Identify Construction. Self-Presentation Anxiety the participants who scored 39 and above denote a high level of Self Presentation Anxiety.

In social media identity construction, the participants who scored 5 and below denotes a low level of social media identify construction. In Self Presentation Anxiety, the participants who scored 28 and below denotes a low level of Self Presentation Anxiety. In social media identify construction, the participants who scored between 6 to 23 denote a moderate level of social media identify construction. In Self -Presentation Anxiety, the participants who scored between 28 to 40 denote a moderate level of Self -Presentation Anxiety.

According to Table 2, in social media identity construction 30 participants fall under the high level of social media Identify Construction, 102 participants fall under the moderate level and 20 participants falls under the low level. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no difference in the level of social media identify construction among university students" is rejected. To sum up there is difference in the level of social media identify construction among university students.

In Self Presentation Anxiety 22 participants falls under the high-level Self Presentation Anxiety 104 participants falls under the moderate level and 26 participant falls under the low level of Self Presentation Anxiety Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no difference in the level of Self Presentation Anxiety among university students" is rejected. To sum up there is difference in the level of Self Presentation Anxiety among young adults among university students.

Table 3: Mean difference ‘t’ test analysis of social media Identity Construction among university students based on purpose of social media usage.

Variables	Purpose of social media usage	No of Samples	Mean	SD	t value
Social media Identify Construction	Academic	60	14.2	10.2	0.6809 @
	Entertainment	95	15.3	8.97	

Note: @Not significant at 0.05 level, *significant level at 0.05 level, **significant level at 0.01 level

From analyzing the data this table shows the mean score social media identity construction among university students based on purpose of social media usage is 0.6809. It denotes there is significant difference at the level of 0.05. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no significant

difference in the mean score of Social media identify construction among university students based on purpose on social media usage" is accepted.

Table 4: Mean difference ‘t’ test analysis of Self Presentation Anxiety among university students based on purpose of social media usage.

Variables	Purpose of social media usage	No of Samples	Mean	SD	t value
Self-Presentation Anxiety	Academic	60	33	4.8	0.9287 @
	Entertainment	95	33	5.51	

Note: @Not significant at 0.05 level, *significant level at 0.05 level, **significant level at 0.01 level

From analyzing the data this table shows the mean score of Self Presentation Anxiety among university students based on purpose of social media usage is 0.9287. It denotes there is no significant difference at the level of 0.05. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the mean score Self Presentation Anxiety among university students based on purpose of social media usage " is accepted.

The correlation analysis indicated a weak negative and non-significant relationship between social media identity construction and self-presentation anxiety ($r = -0.089$). Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between social media identity construction and self-presentation anxiety among university students is accepted.

Table 5: Correlation between Social Media Identity Construction and Self Presentation Anxiety among University students.

Variables	r value
Social media Identity Construction	-0.089
Self-Presentation Anxiety	

The correlation analysis indicated a weak negative and non-significant relationship between social media identity construction and self-presentation anxiety ($r = -0.089$). Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between social media identity construction and self-presentation anxiety among university students is accepted.

Conclusion

The current research indicated a slight inverse correlation between university students' use of social media for identity construction and self-presentation anxiety. This means that being very active in the process of constructing a persona online does not necessarily result in the person's

becoming more anxious about self-presentation. The results also pointed out that there were no significant differences according to the intended use of social media. Therefore, it can be concluded that other psychological factors like self-esteem, social confidence, and perceived social support might be more powerful in determining self-presentation anxiety. The study calls for further investigations into the relationships among these variables in order to gain better understanding of anxiety related to digital self-presentation.

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