Selfie-Taking and the Undergraduates of Ajayi Crowther University

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Abstract

Over a period of time, technological advancement has given us a new Addiction Disorder. Selfie is a photo of yourself that you take, typically with a Smartphone or webcam. The study was carried out to investigate the use of selfies by the undergraduates of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo. A sample of 350 undergraduates were selected from a population of 2064 undergraduates through simple random sampling method. Using William Swann's Self-Verification theory and Katz and Blumler's Uses and Gratification theory, data gathered were analyzed to reveal findings such as the fact that Ajayi Crowther Undergraduates spend more than enough time on selfie taking for reasons outside their academic engagement. The study thus recommended that University Authorities and parents all over Nigeria should advise students to spend much more time on their academic pursuit rather than selfie taking.

Keywords: Selfie, Undergraduates, Academic

Introduction

Several studies have explored the use of selfies though most of these studies are basically focused on the Youth (Tifentale & Manovich, 2014; Abdullah, 2015; Uma & Evangeline, 2017; Oduba, 2017; Onyedire, 2019) who are discovered to be profusely engaging themselves online. In addition, they selectively redefine their use of the social media to build social networks (Singh, Amiri & Sabbarwal, 2017), make disclosures and obtain self-gratifications such as self-fulfillment, esteem, importance, fame, and social well-being (Ngonso, 2019). In view of these, scholars had described them as those addicted to online interactions, and always connected online (Ngonso, 2019), probably, to make and sustain relationships, find jobs, business opportunities and disclose self-information.

"Selfie" is a modern phenomenon of the 21st century. It is a practice that became ubiquitous with the advent of the internet-enabled cell phone. The act of sharing "cartes de visite," or compact sized photos dates to the 1860s. In 1880, the photo cubicle was introduced, and this prompted people to capture self-photographs just as they do today (Volpe, 2013). The discovery of the self-timer in the 1880s gave room for any human being capturing a photograph to set their camera and put themselves in the shot within a timeframe of 5 to 10 seconds. (Michae, 1995). This is understood to be the beginning of what is at present known as a selfie or self-photograph.

The slang expression "selfie," first appeared in 2002 in an online post from Australia and was selected by Oxford Dictionary as the word of the year 2013. A selfie is a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a Smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website (Day, 2013). Saltz (2010) defined a selfie as a fast self-portrait made with a smartphone's camera and immediately distributed into a social network for instant visual communication of where a person is, what he or she is doing, who they think they are and who they think is watching. In other words, a selfie is any photograph taken with a smartphone or a webcam and uploaded to a social media to communicate one's perceived identity. The selfie reflects the present state of emotions, activities, or cognitions. Selfies have become a new medium for self-expression and self-presentation. Selfie is therefore a means of communicating with an audience. Selfie culture on the other hand refers to the digital picture sharing behaviour. The first ever selfie was taken by an amateur chemist and photographer Robert Cornelius in 1839, He was reported to have produced a daguerreotype of himself with a camera at the back of his family store. Over the years, the technological advancements in photography and the social media have further popularized the selfie culture. The invention of the self-timer in the late 1880s allowed for any individual taking a photograph to preset their camera and allow themselves 5 to 10 seconds to get into a shot. That was believed to have introduced the concept of self-photography. Today, cameras have evolved to the level of sophistication that it can fit into mobile devices like the smartphones. This has made self-photographs easier, more convenient, and handier. Then in recent years, the flock of social media platforms has added its contributions to information sharing. Technology has given rise to the 21st -century self-portrait, which is the selfie (Gorichanaz, 2019).

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey. The descriptive statistics aim to summarize a sample, rather than use the data to learn about the population that the sample of data is thought to represent. A descriptive research design is more investigative and focuses on variable factors.

Research design attempts to describe the procedure to be used to ensure reliability and validity of data.

Study Population
The population of this study is made up of 150 undergraduates from the faculty of Law,75 from the faculty of natural sciences and 125 from the faculty of communication and media studies. The research focused on the selected Faculties in Ajayi Crowther University whose undergraduate students have been observed to engage actively in selfie taking selfies on different smart devices.

Sample Size
The sample size for this study was segmented from the population of the selected case study area.

With the use of Yamane (1973) formula:

n =N/1+N(e2)

Where n = Sample Size

N = Accessible Population

e = Level of significance

Sampling Technique
The multi -stage probability sampling technique was adopted for the study. In the first stage, the purposive sampling technique was used to select the faculties. In the second and last stage, simple random sampling was used to select the participants from the faculties.

Research Instrument
The research instrument for data collection for this study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire proper is preceded by an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the research and assuring the respondents that their responses will be kept confidential, anonymous, and used strictly for academic purposes. The questionnaire was designed based on the Likert's5-point measuring scale, the original format. In this format, 5 is assigned to "Strongly Agree", 4 is assigned to "Agree", 3 is assigned to "Uncertain", 2 is assigned to "Disagree", while 1 is assigned to "Strongly Disagree"

Literature Review

Amurao and Castronuevo (2016), in their study entitled "Selfie Behavior and Narcissism among selected females" state that selfies make up 30 percent of photos taken by people among the age groups between 18-24. The survey is undertaken among 100 female mobile users through online questionnaire. Descriptive analysis, correlation, percentage, and purposive sampling are the tools used for analysis. The study throws light on the fact that the growing trend of taking smartphone selfies is linked to mental health conditions that focus on a person's obsession with looks. Psychiatrists have revealed that "Two out

of three of the patients come with Body Dysmorphic disorder since the rise of camera phones compel to repeatedly take and post selfies on social media sites.

Wickel (2015) carries out a study aimed to investigate how social media has modified the developmental and behavioral personalities, and how social media, specifically the act of taking and posting selfies, is deemed to be a main contributor to the rise in narcissistic behaviors in recent generations. The study highlights that 73.5% of 93 Elon University respondents reported that they check or update their online profiles more than five times a day, 90.2% of the participants reported that they post pictures of themselves to social networking sites for the sole reason of receiving "likes" and comments from their online friends, (87.8%) responded that the use of social networking platforms as a way to maintain and build social relationships has changed how society interacts and perceives others 55% of participants agreed that posting of selfies to different social networking platforms encouraged their narcissism and selfish behaviors

Nemer and Freeman (2015) in their research findings suggest that self-portraits were done to project the voices of some of the inhabitants in poor and marginalized regions. In all these ways, selfies were embedded in marginalized users' everyday lives and perceived as a pathway to a more promising future. The study also identifies that use and adoption of digital technologies among these marginalized users were not motivated by a shallow acknowledgement of their desire for entertainment but rather were situated in a contextualized reality.

The study revealed that practices of understanding, interpreting, and experiencing selfies are embedded in dense sociocultural contexts. The selfie users observed and interviewed in this study were living in marginalized areas (i.e., the favelas of Gurigica, Itararé, and São Benedito in Brazil) that were under constant surveillance by powerful drug lords.

Sorokowski (2015) in his study examines three categories of selfies: own selfies; selfies with a romantic partner; and group selfies. Women posted more selfies of all types than did men; women's selfie-posting behavior was generally unrelated to their narcissism scores. The findings of the study provide the first evidence 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. Study included a total of 748 people (355 women and 393 men) aged between 17 and 47 years (M = 21.64; SD = 3.41). The participants were recruited from various university campuses across Poland.

Nguyen (2014) explores how female users identify the act of uploading selfies as an expression of external affirmation or as an act of empowerment in terms of redefining beauty standards that are reinforced in society. The findings of the study show

that it is advantageous for social work clinicians to study adolescents and their behaviors on Instagram to understand the motivation behind the usage and the relationship to their self-esteem, especially for those whose work involves daily contact with young children and adolescents. The results of this study show that the usage of Instagram to share selfies has a minimal impact on their perceived sense of self-worth.

Tajuddin, Hassan and Ahmad (2016) In their study "A Study of selfie and its impact" note that popular social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Instagram have been called the public display of connection, and give people opportunities to satisfy the need to socially identify with others who share similar interests. These social media enable the users to snap photos on their mobile devices, transform or enhance the image, and upload to their friends as a way of documenting the moment.

Gilliland, Melanie, Todd-G (2018), in their study "Characterological Correlates of Selfie Taking Behavior" examine selfie behavior. 35 participants (age 18 - 60) completed an online questionnaire assessing a variety of psychological factors, personality traits, and selfie taking activities (i.e., frequency of selfies posted to social networking sites [SNSs], time spent editing selfies, and number of selfie taken prior to posting). A number of statistically significant correlations emerged. For example, participants' levels of neuroticism, social physique anxiety, body-related shame, and concern about physical appearance correlated positively with the amount of time spent editing selfies. As well, group comparisons between selfie (n = 193) and non-selfie takers (n = 42) suggest that the former exhibit higher levels of certain facets of vanity. The implications of these findings and directions for future research are outlined.

For Duguay (2016), Instagram's affordances and content generation tools were said to encourage users to focus on aesthetic appearance, whereas Vine's limited editing tools and support of creative sharing allowed users to highlight personal experiences. These findings generate the final research question.

Sarah and Christoforakos (2017) in their study "The selfie paradox" opine that selfie appear as a double-edged phenomenon. Taking, posting, and viewing selfies has become a daily habit for many. At the same time, research revealed that selfies often evoke criticism and disrespect, and are associated with non-authenticity and narcissism.

Abdullah (2015) in his study "Self-esteem levels and selfies" used survey approach to measure the participants' self-esteem levels. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was employed which is a predetermined instrument for measuring self-esteem. A survey of 365 undergraduate students between the ages of 18-24 years was done online. The relationship between self-esteem levels; the number of selfies people take and post, and the uses

and gratifications behind taking and posting selfies were analyzed. The study also measured consumers' behavior's, opinions, knowledge, or attitudes and the relationship between the variables. The study found that the highest number of selfies is posted by those with high self-esteem and that those with low self-esteem still used selfies to boost their self-esteem levels. The study also found a significant relationship between low self-esteem levels and posting selfies to boost self-confidence. The implication is that selfies boost the self-esteem and self-confidence of the users. The current study however examines the extent of selfie taking and usage and the reasons behind the practice.

The existence of any difference in selfie posting habit and perception across gender and age was investigated by Uma and Evangeline (2017) in the United States. They sought to understand the differences if any in the selfie posting frequency, selfie type, uses and functions, as well as the differences in the perception of the act of selfie disclosures by Users across age and gender divides. This involved a focus group discussion, conducted among college students in the United States, with two groups of 10 participants from either gender to gather data as well as refine the survey administered to 200 participants. The study found that there was no significant difference in the selfie posting habit and perception across the age groups but with variations in the perception of the selfie across gender.

Theoretical Framework
This study is anchored in the following theories:

The Self-Verification Theory
The originator of this theory, William B. Swann (born 1952), is a professor of social and personality psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. He is primarily known for his work on identity, self, and self-esteem, but has also done research on relationships, social cognition, group processes, accuracy in person perception and interpersonal expectancy effects. He received his PhD in 1978 from the university of Minnesota and undergraduate degree from Gettysburg College. Self-verification theory proposes that people want others to see them as they see themselves. For example, those who see themselves as relatively dominant want others to see them as dominant and those who see themselves as relatively submissive want others to recognize them as submissive. Swan (1983). Drawing on earlier theorizing, he assumed that people form self-views so that they can predict the responses of others and know how to act towards them. Thus, for example, those who see themselves as intelligent expect that others will notice their insightfulness and so are inclined to pursue activities that require intelligence. Because self-views play a critical role in making sense of their experiences and guiding their actions, people become interested in maintaining them by obtaining self-confirming information. When individuals receive self-verifying feedback within a group, feelings that one is accepted and valued by others within the group increases worth-based self-esteem (Bradford, & Lohr, 1987; Burke &Jan 1999; Ellison

1993). Among persons with positive self-views, the desire for self-verification complements another important motive, the desire for self-enhancing or positive evaluations. For example, those who view themselves as "organized" find that their desires for both self-verification and self-enhancement compels them to seek feedback that confirms their positive "organized" self-view. People with negative self-views, however, find that the two motives conflict: although the desire for self-verification compels such persons to seek negative evaluations, the desire for self-enhancement compels them to seek positive evaluation. Self-verification theory points to the conditions under which people with negative self-views resolve this conflict by seeking self-verification rather than self-enhancement. Considerable evidence supports self-verification theory (Swann 1996). In a study, researchers asked participants with positive and negative self-views whether they would prefer to interact with evaluators who had favorable or unfavorable impressions of them, those with positive self-views preferred favorable partners, but contrary to self-enhancement theory, those with negative self-views preferred unfavorable partners.

The major criticism of self-verification theory has been that, relative to self-enhancement, it is a rare phenomenon that is restricted to people with terribly negative self-views. As evidence, critics cite hundreds of studies indicating that people prefer, seek and value positive evaluations more than negative ones. Such critiques overlook two important things. First, because most people have relatively positive self-views, the fact that they display a preference for positive evaluations may reflect a preference for evaluations that are self-verifying (as well as self-enhancing). Second, self-verification strivings are not limited to people with globally negative self-views; even people with high self-esteem seek negative evaluations about their flaws, and even people with moderately positive self-views withdraw from spouses who evaluate them in an exceptionally positive manner.

This theory relates directly to the trend of taking selfies because some of the people who are taking and posting selfies on social media do that to receive self-verification from others. Some people confess that they use selfies as confidence boosters. They post selfies to get positive comments and likes, which makes them feel better about themselves (Grabmeier, 2015).

Uses and Gratification Theory
Uses and Gratification Theory was first developed in the 1940s by a man called Harold Lasswell. It wasn't until later in the 1970s, where the theory was built upon by Blumler, Katz Guarevitch. The theory is one that has developed from ideas dating back as far as the 1940s. in 1974, researchers such as Blumler, Katz and Guarevitch made links between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and how people use media. Blumler and Katz published the Theory of Uses and Gratification in 1974, Blumler, communication and media theorist, and Katz, a sociologist and communication scientist, challenge other communication theories like the media effects model.

The Uses and Gratification Theory is a user-centered approach that focuses on how people use their media for their own personal uses and gratifications. Uses and Gratification theory emphasizes motives and the self-preserved needs of audience members. Blumler and Katz (1974) concluded that different people could use the same communication message for different purposes. The same content may gratify different needs for different individuals.

The Uses and Gratifications theory is one of many used to create effective communications programs when it is implemented properly. It describes the relationships formed between the media and its active audience. The audience (acting actively, not passively) select and use the media to fulfill their own needs and desires. These individuals may use the media for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, entertainment, the desire to learn about world events, or to divert themselves from life problems (Oliver & Nabi, n.d.). Uses and gratifications, even when looked at in depth, is not a complicated concept to understand and can be beneficial in this Study. Selfies in general isn't a complex activity but applying this theory when studying the Use of Selfies helps gain a more understanding as to why people engage in selfies. Some research regarding uses and gratifications, the media, and its audience began in the 1940's, but this has expanded in more recent years as the Use of Selfies has evolved. Recognizing the components of this theory helps one realize how often it is used in everyday life.

Additional research was conducted prior to the emergence of Katz and Blumler's model. In the 1940's, researchers studied what people missed the most during newspaper strikes because this was a primary source of news, the benefits people reaped from soap operas, and why children were appealed to comics (Peirce, 2007). Katz and Blumler then developed a more systematic approach in response to how and why people use different forms of media.

This model portrays the main components and ideas that comprise the uses and gratifications theory:
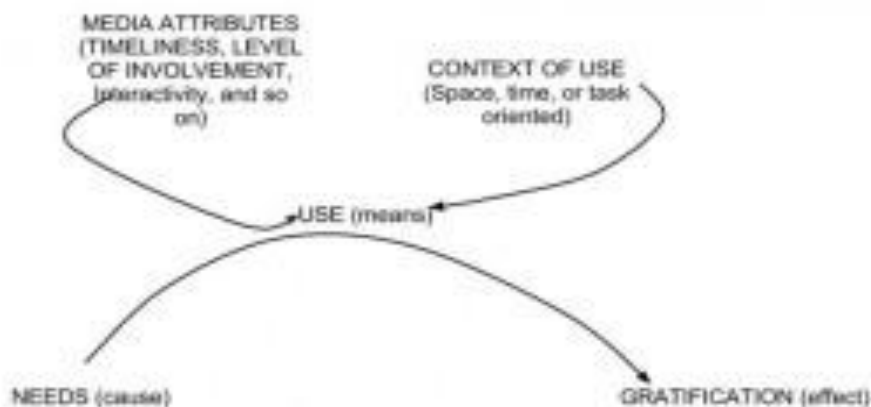

Figure 1: Uses and Gratification Theory matei.org

There are several points of criticism on uses and gratifications theory, but they mainly relate to three recurring themes. It lacks a common theoretical basis. Many critics argue that it is merely an approach to understanding media consumption based on an underlying tautology, namely that media use necessarily leads to the gratification of media needs. Furthermore, they suggest that being theoretical, uses and gratifications do not really explain the complex cognitive processes involved in the experience and interpretation of media content (Fourie, 2007: 237). Katz (1974: 514) reported that uses and gratifications "barely advanced beyond a sort of charting and profiling activity", which merely provided a list of needs and gratifications. However, it did not provide an analytical framework in which theoretical deduction can be made (December 1996: 15; McQuail, 2005: 426). Recently more research time has however been devoted to the relevance of particular media attributes and their capacity to satisfy the needs that Katz et al. identified (Seungwhan, 2004: 3). It has failed to deliver its own effects model. Critical theorists maintain that since uses and gratifications research is primarily "functional" in its approach, it is concerned with the status quo and does not seek to dwell on the normative role of the media and its ultimate effect in or on society. It has ignored the motivations that pre-empt media needs. Katz (1974) posit that media needs have "social and psychological origins". Seungwhan (2004) cites Palm green when arguing that "more conceptualization of motivations is still necessary in order to apply the uses and gratifications approach, because motivations are the beginning of uses and gratifications studies: they explain the purposive nature of human behavior."

This theory relates directly to the trend of taking selfies because some of the people who are taking and posting selfies on social media do it for their own personal uses and gratifications.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do Ajayi Crowther University Undergraduates take Selfies?

Table 1: How often respondents take selfies

How often do you take selfies?	Frequency	Frequency %
Frequently	160	45.7
Occasionally	90	25.7
Rarely	70	20
Never	30	8.6
Total	350	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2022*Table 4.2.2:

From the above Table 1, it is observed that majority of respondents or 45.7% take selfie frequently while a paltry 28.6 rarely or hardly engage in the practice.

Table 2: Frequency at which respondents take selfie per day

How many selfies do you take per day?	Frequency	Frequency %
1-5	100	28.6
6-10	140	40
11-15	70	20
16-20	40	11.4
Total	**350**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

This table shows the frequency at which respondents take selfie per day, 28.6% takes between 1-5 selfies per day, 40% takes between 6-10 selfies per day, 20% takes between 11-15 selfies per day while 11.4% takes between 16-20 selfies per day**.** Majority of respondents take more than ten selfies per day.

Research Question 2: Why do Ajayi Crowther University Students take selfies?

Table 3: Reasons why selfies are taken.

Why do you take selfies?	Frequency	Frequency %
For Memories	190	54.3
To send to families and friends	70	20
To get Sunkissed	20	5.7
To showcase my beauty	70	20
Total	350	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

This table shows reasons why respondents take selfies, 54.3% takes selfie for keeping memories, 20% takes selfie to send to families and friends, 5.7% takes selfie to get Sunkissed while 20% takes selfie to showcase their beauty.

Discussion
It has been observed that majority of students sampled used much of their time for selfie taking for reasons outside academic engagement. This, of course, is an indication that counselling touching on the need to spend quality time on one's study is lacking both at home and in school.

Apart from all this, it might be interesting to note that all the reasons adduced for selfie taking pertain to physiological needs which at this stage of the participants' life might simply constitute a huge distraction.

Recommendations
University authorities should advise students to spend less time in selfie taking in favour of their academic work through a counselling unit. This should be an ongoing exercise. This should also be taken up at home by parents and guardians alike.

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