



Effects of Instagram Usage on Self Representation among the Gen-Z A Case Study of Punjab University Jhelum Campus & Mirpur University of Science and Technology Students

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Abstract

Instagram has become entrenched in the ways young adults share, think about, and build their people identities. Instagram was founded in 2010 and has experienced incredible growth making it a next big thing platform with currently over 2 billion active users as of January 2023 (Statista, 2023). This research tries to study on how the use of Instagram affects self-representation among Gen-Z. Instagram is interactive in the sense that photo and video sharing with filters, editing tools, likes, comments and reels, encourages the building of a digital environment that enables the construction of idealized versions of life to be curated and shared. These dynamics matter greatly when young adults think about and portray who they are. This study illuminates self-representation as a continuous process of sociably shaped development by cultural norms and feedback mechanisms in the invasive company that keeps us consistently turning over new leaves on our feeds. It operationalizes key variables like self-representation, self-identity and self-concept while focusing on how the Instagram's curated content and validation systems affect these constructs. In this regard, I explore self-representation as the deliberate adoption of an online persona through strategically chosen pieces of content. I then examine self-identity and self-concept in alignment or divergence between users' offline and online selves influenced by their use of Instagram's feedback loops, i.e. likes and comments and how it affects their self-image. The research draws attention to the ability of Instagram to be positive or negative nursing implication. One side of Instagram provides space for self-expression, social support and identity exploration, community and validation. In itself, it also encourages unachievable beauty standards, form of lifestyle comparison, and self-seeking validation, which may bring guilt, anxiety, and lowered self-esteem. These effects are greatest, however, during the most formative years of young adulthood which is a time of identity exploration and self-definition. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as Goffman's dramaturgical perspective and Festinger's social comparison theory, we offer a way to think through how Instagram enables both constructive and harmful ways of representing the self.

Keywords: Instagram Usage, Self-Representation, Self-Identity, Social Media Impact

Introduction

Instagram, a compelling social media platform well recognized for its interactional, visual content, has led to change in how young adults share and perceive their personal identity. Instagram was launched in October 2010, and it had exponential growth and has reached over 2 billion active users in January 2023 (Statista, 2023). With photos and videos, the users document their lives through photos and videos that are enhanced with filters and editing tools that represented life based on far more idealized, aesthetically pleasing constructions of life. Instagram enables interaction through likes, comments, and messages and their new function Reels is revolutionizing engagement, allowing users to create and consume short 90 second full screen vertical entertainment videos. For students of Generation Z, at Punjab University Jhelum Campus and Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Instagram serves as a means of self-expression as well as a space of identity exploration; self-represented out of social interaction and feedback. Beyond being social, Instagram plays an important role in identity formation, and especially amongst the largest demographic online, young adults during formative life stages. Rosenberg's (1979) defines self-concept, the organized thoughts and feelings about oneself that are a function of social feedback and peer validation. Instagram is a virtual space that typically reflects societal and cultural ideals, directly or indirectly, that can have an effect on how individuals conceive themselves, and (in) directly how they reflect their identities (Valkenburg et al., 2017). Research shows that the 'highlight reel effect' of Instagram often prompts us to compare ourselves to people who are posting images of the ideal world, and lifestyle that can have a negative impact to self-image and more can create social anxiety (Chou & Edge, 2012). More visible in young adulthood, typically between ages 16 and 25, at a crucial juncture when individuals, mostly students at schools, colleges and universities, decide 'who they are' and 'who they will be' (Erikson, 1968). The feedback and validation that Gen Z receive on Instagram by way of likes and comments may in fact reinforce particular self-representations or identity around social visibility, or 'what they are seen to be,' (Meier & Gray, 2014). Instagram's story also pushes beauty standards as well as a life that many of the students attending these institutions find inferior to themselves (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016). Often in this instance it has formed the basis for the self-worth that is based on social privilege, societal norms and other external validations, elements that are very influential in creating the identity for young adults dealing with academic and social settings (De Vries et al., 2018). Given that, Instagram becomes an important part of the self-representation, especially in regard to forcing Gen-Z to develop what constitutes their identity on cultural and social bases.

Conceptualization & Operationalization

Conceptualization

Self-representation is defined as how a person perceives themselves and how they present or express their identity, values beliefs both to others and to themselves. Thus, it is comprised of self-concept, self-identity and self-presentation. Representation is about how we view ourself, how the world views us and how the roles we choose to portray are altered by our social interactions, cultural practices and relationships. The other aspect of self-representation can be defined as people's ability to express ideas, beliefs, personal identity and experiences in forms of art and symbolism. Self-representation also refers to the one way in which a person is perceived by those within any given culture. The ability to present ourselves is a powerful and important part of the human condition, a way to manage ourselves and manage other people's impressions in order to get what we want and believe is appropriate in terms of personal and social expectations. Goffman's dramaturgical perspective offers a theoretical lens through which to view this behavior in terms of the actors who take on certain roles (control their public persona and private self) to present or 'perform': that is, their self-presentation is analogous to a type of 'show'. Self-presentation on Instagram then transforms into a dynamic, so to speak interactive process, whereby users strategically present parts of their identity through photos,

captions, stories, or engagement with other users. For the purpose of this This research aims to explores how Gen-Z use Instagram to construct their self-representation and to understand how interactions such as likes, comments, number of followers act as a feedback mechanism that shape self-representation among Gen-Z.

- **Self-Identity:** To explore how Instagram influences the way individuals perceive and define themselves.
- **Self- Concept:** To understand how Instagram influences an individual's overall perception of themselves, including their abilities, values, and social roles.
- **Self-representation:** To explore how individuals choose to present themselves on Instagram and the impact of these choices

Operationalization

In the context of my research Effects of Instagram Usage on Self-Representation among Gen-Z, the key variables self-representation, self-identity, and self-concept are operationally defined as follows:

- a. **Self-Representation** is the way that people put themselves across on Instagram. This refers to the process where you select, organize, present, and deliver content to your audience that would verify your identity and will change the way people perceive you. In this study, we will operationalize self-representation as it relates to types of content shared on Instagram, frequency of posts, use of filters, and the extent to which instagram users modify their appearances in order to present a particular image of themselves.
- b. **Self-Identity** refers to how people perceive themselves to be based on the characteristics and values and roles they think or believe they have. In the world of Instagram, the self is socially constructed through the online act of presenting the self as projected in one's digital personality mirror. This research will operationalize the self-identity by how the user's offline self-perception and their online self-representation converge or diverge, specifically on how Instagram influences individual's perception of who they are.
- c. **Self-Concept** means an individual's overall perception about them self, which entails personal and social dimensions. Behind the scenes, on Instagram, the feedback, validation and comparisons from users' peers all influences self-concept. In this study, self-concept is analyzed in a more concrete sense as an impact of Instagram usage on users' self-esteem, self-efficacy and the emergence of identity. In particular, it will examine how engagement with Instagram content, interaction with followers, and amount of social comparison relative to the general population affect how Gen-Z see and understand themselves.

This research seeks to examine the complicated relationship between the use of Instagram and self-representation, self-identity, and self-concept, operationalizing these variables to explore how social media platforms like instagram is shaping identity construction or formation among the youth.

Significance of Study

Since social media has become a great part of our lives the incorporation of Instagram into an everyday part of young adults' daily lives clearly presents important issues about how Instagram affects self-representation. Despite that, social comparison and idealized self-presentation is still encouraged by Instagram and their sequestered forum for self-expression and connection. Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory requires that people judge their own beliefs and skills by comparing them to those of others. Because of the precisely curated and often idealized content on Instagram, these kinds of comparisons are very common on the platform, and could have some impact on the value and how people feel about themselves.

Existing Research shows that Instagram, can impact on one's representation positively or negatively. (Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006). The pressure to present a 'perfect' version of yourself may lead in addition to stress and anxiety resulting from over compensation to a self-concept formation. Instagram, has both positive and negative effects on one's self representation. Benefits of increased chances of self-expression, social support, and affirmation are among the benefits. (Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006). For example, likes and encouraging remarks can help users feel good about themselves, create a feeling of community. However, those idealized images and lifestyles have the effects of inferiority, jealousy, and reduced self-esteem (Fardouly et al., 2015). Development of self-representation can be hampered if one has developed to live up to society's idealized representation which often results in stress and anxiety. Because of the vast usage of Instagram, it is critical to do further research on this 'phenomena' as Instagram is being used by a large majority of youngsters and it may affect how they view themselves.

This study focuses on both the favorable and the unfavorable effects of Instagram on young people constructing a self-concept. In study about the relationship between Instagram use and a number of aspects of self-concept such as Self Representation will be considered. This study is particularly relevant in the context of young adults. Young adults are often called 'digital natives' also referred to as 'Generation Z' because of their early involvement and reliance on digital technology and this term is often used because these people grew up in a world where self-expression and communication hold great importance. For these reasons, it's necessary to use Instagram and understand how it provides an impact on the young people's self-representation so as to deal with any potential psychological and social problems that can seem. This study is important because it could help lead the way for treatments designed to coax young adults into using social media healthily. This might help teachers, mental health specialists and even legislators to devise plans that will minimize the harms and maximize the benefits of use of social media by figuring out what factors affects development of self-concept on Instagram. Moreover, this research also sheds light on the delicate interconnection between digital ambient and psychological development and represents an advance for the field of media psychology. Young people' use of Instagram plays a very significant role when it comes to how they build their sense of self. The platform also provides possibilities for social interaction and self-expression. The goal of this study is to examine how Instagram affects young people' self-representation.

Objective of the Study

- To assess the positive effects of Instagram usage on the self-representation of Gen-Z students.
- To explore the negative effects of Instagram usage on the self-representation of Gen-Z students.

Hypotheses

There is a significant correlation between Instagram usage and the self-representation of Gen-Z students.

Literature Review

In the light of study objective, literature has been reviewed and findings of scholars have been cited in the following section. Instagram have had an enormous impact on how young adults create their own sense of self. This review of research on the effects of Instagram on self-concept focuses on body of work on social comparison, self-presentation, and social connectivity. According to social comparison theory, (Festinger 1954) people compare

themselves to others to determine themselves and their sense of self-worth and self-concept. Building on these preliminary findings, this research explores the ways in which Instagram plays a role in the construction of self among young adults, a process that is both rooted in social comparison, self-representation, and social connectivity. Fardouly et al., 2015, demonstrated that the impact of Instagram goes beyond what can be seen in the immediate visual content and involves how we internalize the expectations and norms that we find there. The special thing about Instagram social media comparison is that it often takes place with peers and influencers, as well as celebrities who carefully present aesthetically ideal representations for what it means to be successful, to be beautiful, to be stylish, etc. What results is a 'highlight reel' effect, where users feel compelled to compare their day to day lives to the often-idealized impressions of others on these highly filtered networks (Chou & Edge, 2012). Constant exposure to the same content makes one feel inadequate, envious and have low self-esteem (Vogel et al., 2014) and this is even more for the Gen Z as they have not developed their sense of self representation. An important feature of Instagram's influence on self-representation is the pressure to conform to not only others' ideals of attractiveness, but also ideals of how many likes, comments, and number of followers should be in order to qualify as 'successful' on the social 'gramme (Bergman et al., 2011). Tiggemann and Slater (2013) describe the other end of the cycle with research that indicates that such validation can be an addictive cycle in which people intentionally post content meant to exact positive validation from their followers. Because he encouraged them to continuously perfect and refine their Online Persona, the likelihood is that many users gradually become disconnected between what they are and what they portray their real and their online selves. This split identity has been connected to identity diffusion and heightened susceptibility to mental health difficulties, including anxiety and depression, due to a hyperreality in online self (Twenge & Campbell, 2019). According to the self-presentation theory by Goffman (1959), individuals consciously manipulate to present themselves with regards to the social settings. And this self-presentation continues on Instagram, not only through individual posts, but through an impact on the entirety of a profile, created onto the visual format of a curated profile as the user seeks to represent themselves to achieve a desired image. Managing that front stage behaviour on Instagram is mentally draining because one has to spend a significant amount of time selecting pictures, writing captions and editing them so that your online presence reflects your perfect version of yourself (Pérez-Torres, 2024). Nevertheless, as users exhaustively try to manufacture a screening self-image that looks perfect, they enter an exact procedure called 'imposter syndrome' where they begin to feel unnerved disconnect among their real-life encounters and their promoted portrayal, and a decline in their own contentment with the in-sim bolt and a rise in their self-critique (Brown & Tiggemann, 2022). Although it can, Instagram too aids in building community and social connectedness, albeit in a variety of quality. Taking a step here back, Yang et al. (2020) suggest that though Instagram allows users to share experiences and interact with other social media users, the breadth of these relationships may be limited by superficial nature of social media connectivity. Unlike in person interactions, online interactions seldom have the emotional and psychological support required for true social bonding. The resulting gap between online and offline relationships, in cases where users discovered that their interactions online do not yield the same level of intimacy and support as real life friends (Primack et al., 2017), especially when the online interactions do not have the same feel. Unlike Su et al. (2022), however, Instagram's direct messaging and comment features can promote a sense of belonging by supporting the back-and-forth interaction that allows and encourages personal exchanges, which has proven to improve users' social well-being. Despite this, the authenticity and depth of interactions is not always possible in the fast-paced environment of Instagram, and the quality of these connections is reliant upon it. However, as Instagram use influences mental health and self-representation, so too do the impact the app has on body image issues. Studies find that users on Instagram are significantly

affected by images that are highly edited and idealized, and especially by female users (Perloff, 2014). The abundance of how to be a model, fitness inspiration or professional lifestyle image on an Instagram account leaves young adults with unrealistic expectation of their own appearance eventually turning into feelings of body shame and insecurity. It promotes an idea of attractiveness that is too narrow, constantly comparing users to 'Instagram models' and influencers who often wear unattainable beauty standards, in the risk of damaging the self-representation and the body image (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016).

What's more is that these effects don't end at physical appearance. Research show that users of Instagram tend to perceive success and happiness, and that an average user is likely to compare the things that he has in his life, to the things that others are showing on the platform (Jordan et al., 2011). The social comparison here is even amplified by Instagram's algorithmic design that pushes content that is more likely to provoke high engagement – meaning we see the most adventurous, luxury focused posts that 'show' wealth, Travel, and Status. As a result, young adults may grow up in a sense of a deprived life if they don't fulfil these standards, thus decreasing life satisfaction and increasing envy and inadequacy feeling (Kross et al., 2013). The benefits of Instagram for self-expression, self-representation and identity exploration shouldn't be neglected. For young adults Instagram is a place to discover exciting new facets about their identity, try out different forms of self-expression, and receive validation of their appearance and self-representation from many people. Yet such social interaction, as represented by Valkenburg et al. (2006), can be a salutary practice in terms of helping young adults develop a stable self-concept through creating a secure place for expressing preferred opinions, interests and personal values. In particular, this exploration is of enormous value for young people during the early years in their social context as they work out who they are. However, the Instagram transaction is inherently burdened with the dual pressures of self-representation and social comparison, and the contradiction between authenticity and the necessity to please the crowd is difficult to fulfil; eventually, it can also stifle the healthy idea of self. What are the multifaceted ways in which Instagram can be said to affect young adults' self-concept both positively and negatively? The social connection, self-expression and identity exploration afforded by the platform are also accompanied by social comparison, unrealistic self-presentation and heightened body dissatisfaction. The issue of this dynamic underscores the necessity of a comprehensive cognizance of social media's role in psychological interest and precautions to guard in opposition to the possible damages the use of social media may well induce on psychological ingesting. Ultimately, further research is needed to explore how we might promote the balanced use of Instagram – one that prioritizes authenticity and real connection over rigged approval to help young adults build a strong and resilient sense of self.

Methodology

Data Collection Tools & Instruments

I use short survey to assess participants. Participants receive a research questionnaire to respond to the multifaceted nature of Instagram's influence on self-representation. This questionnaire quantitatively assess how instagram positively & negatively influences the self-representation among Gen-Z using 5-point Likert Scale.

Subjects & Participants

Students aged between 19-25 are selected from the Punjab University Jhelum Campus and MUST University Mirpur AJK.

Sample & Sampling Technique

Using convenience sampling, a sample of 60 youngsters is selected for this study.

Data Collection

Questionnaire is distributed online via Google Forms.

Data Processing & Analysis

- a. Data is processed and analyzed using SPSS.
- b. Descriptive analysis and Pearson Correlation Analysis is used to explore the relationship between the variables.

Results

Demographic Data – Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Male	28	46.7	46.7	46.7
Female	32	53.3	53.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

(46.7 % Male & 53.3% Female Correspondents)

Demographic Data – Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
19-24	23	38.3	38.3	38.3
22-24	18	30.0	30.0	68.3
25-27	19	31.7	31.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

(Out of the total sample **38.9%** represent age group 19-24, **30.0%** represent age group 22-24, & **31.7%** represent age group 25-27)

Descriptive Analysis of the Questionnaire

Does sharing content on Instagram make you feel more confident in expressing your true self?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
Disagree	4	6.7	6.7	10.0
Neutral	16	26.7	26.7	36.7
Strongly Agree	21	35.0	35.0	71.7
Agree	17	28.3	28.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

3.3% chose strongly disagree, 6.7% disagree, 26.7% are neutral, 35.0% agree, and 28.3% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (35.0%)**

Do the positive reactions (likes, comments) to your posts enhance your sense of self-worth?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
Disagree	4	6.7	6.7	11.7
Neutral	11	18.3	18.3	30.0
Agree	26	43.3	43.3	73.3
Strongly Agree	16	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

5.0% chose strongly disagree, 6.7% disagree, 18.3% are neutral, 43.3% agree, and 26.7% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (43.3%).**

Does curating your Instagram profile help you better understand your personal interests and identity?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
Disagree	5	8.3	8.3	10.0
Neutral	17	28.3	28.3	38.3
Agree	25	41.7	41.7	80.0
Strongly Agree	12	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

1.7 % chose strongly disagree, 8.3 % disagree, 28.3 % are neutral, 41.7% agree, and 17.4% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (41.7%).**

Do you feel that creating Instagram stories or posts improves your ability to communicate who you are to others?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
Disagree	8	13.3	13.3	16.7
Neutral	7	11.7	11.7	28.3
Agree	27	45.0	45.0	73.3
Strongly Agree	16	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

3.3% strongly disagree, 13.3% disagree, 11.7% are neutral, 45.0% agree, and 26.7% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (45.0%).**

Do you feel proud when your Instagram content reflects your achievements or personal growth?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
Disagree	6	10.0	10.0	15.0
Neutral	9	15.0	15.0	30.0
Agree	22	36.7	36.7	66.7
Strongly Agree	20	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

5.0% chose strongly disagree, 10.0 % disagree, 15.0 % neutral, 36.7% agree, and 33.3% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (36.7%).**

Does comparing your life to others on Instagram make you feel less satisfied with who you are?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
Disagree	13	21.7	21.7	26.7
Neutral	9	15.0	15.0	41.7
Agree	18	30.0	30.0	71.7
Strongly Agree	17	28.3	28.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

5.0% chose strongly disagree, 21.7 % disagree, 15.0 % are neutral, 30.0 % agree, and 28.3% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (30.0%).**

Do you feel pressured to portray a perfect image of yourself on Instagram, even if it doesn't reflect reality??

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
Disagree	13	21.7	21.7	23.3
Neutral	16	26.7	26.7	50.0
Agree	17	28.3	28.3	78.3
Strongly Agree	13	21.7	21.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

1.7% chose strongly disagree, 21.7% disagree, 26.7% are neutral, 28.3% agree, and 21.7% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (28.7%).**

Do you often feel that your Instagram posts are more about seeking approval than showing your authentic self?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
Disagree	13	21.7	21.7	23.3
Neutral	12	20.0	20.0	43.3
Agree	18	30.0	30.0	73.3
Strongly Agree	16	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

1.7% chose strongly disagree, 21.7% disagree, 20.0% are neutral, 30.0% agree, and 26.7% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (30.0%).**

Does spending time on Instagram sometimes make you doubt your abilities or self-worth?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
Disagree	13	21.7	21.7	23.3
Neutral	10	16.7	16.7	40.0
Agree	22	36.7	36.7	76.7
Strongly Agree	14	23.3	23.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

1.7% chose strongly disagree, 21.7% disagree, 16.7% are neutral, 36.7% agree, and 23.3% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (36.7%).**

Do you feel like the person you present on Instagram creates a conflict with who you truly are in real life?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	6	10.0	10.0	10.0
Disagree	8	13.3	13.3	23.3
Neutral	11	18.3	18.3	41.7
Agree	22	36.7	36.7	78.3
Strongly Agree	13	21.7	21.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

10.0% chose strongly disagree, 13.3% disagree, 18.3% are neutral, 36.7% agree, and 21.7% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (36.7%).**

Does posting on Instagram help you showcase your unique personality and creativity?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
Disagree	7	11.7	11.7	15.0
Neutral	11	18.3	18.3	33.3
Agree	24	40.0	40.0	73.3
Strongly Agree	16	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

3.3% chose strongly disagree, 11.7% disagree, 18.3% are neutral, 40.0 % agree, and 26.7% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (40.0%).**

Do you feel that you need to change or enhance aspects of yourself to fit in or gain approval on Instagram?

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Strongly Disagree	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
Disagree	6	10.0	10.0	15.0
Neutral	15	25.0	25.0	40.0
Agree	19	31.7	31.7	71.7
Strongly Agree	17	28.3	28.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

5.0% chose strongly disagree, 10.0% disagree, 25.0% are neutral, 31.7% agree, and 28.3% strongly agree. **The majority chose Agree (31.7%).**

It is hypothesized that there is a significant correlation between Instagram usage and the self-representation. Pearson correlation analysis is used to investigate the relationship.

Table 1.1 – Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables		Positive	Negative	Self-Representation
Positive	Pearson Correlation	1	.804**	.981**
	N	60	60	60
Negative	Pearson Correlation	.804**	1	.770**
	N	60	60	60
Self-Representation	Pearson Correlation	.981**	.770**	1
	N	60	60	60

***. *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2tailed)*

Results from correlation matrix (Table 1.1) revealed: -

- There is statistically significant strong positive correlation ($r = .804, p < .001$) between variables suggesting that as the positive effect increases negative effect also tend to increase but the relationship is moderate.
- A very strong positive correlation ($r = .981, p < .001$) exists. In other words, Self-representation is related to Positive effects, as higher Positive effects are very much associated with self-representation.

- A Statistically significant strong correlation ($r = .770$, $p < .001$) exists between positive effects, self-representation and negative effects meaning that as the negative effects rise, self-representation increases but to a lesser extent as compared to positive effects.

The positive Effects have the strongest influence on self-representation ($r = .981$) which means that of self-representation is driven by positive experiences or feelings. Given that they are clearly related to self-representation, however, the analysis showed that the negative effects wield a much weaker grip ($r = .770$) than do Positive Effects. It reveals that negative effects are not fundamental to self-representation, but only moderately dependent on them. The Moderate relationship between Positive and Negative Effects occurs, because, although both, the effects can coexist, these are not direct proportion to one another. There is statistical significance for all relationships ($p < .001$) suggesting that self-representation is affected by both positive and negative variables.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between positive and negative effects of Instagram usage on self-representation among Gen-Z. The findings strong correlations among these variables and distinct roles of positive and negative effects in shaping self-representation among Gen-Z.

Summary of the Findings

- From the analysis we found a very strong positive correlation ($r = .804$, $p < .001$) between self-representation and positive effects. This implies that those who are more likely to experience positive effects have self-representations that closely match to the positive effects. The results are consistent with earlier studies of the centrality of positive emotions in constructing and maintaining self-image (Fredrickson, 2001).
- Self-representation showed a strong positive relationship ($r = .770$; $p < .001$) to negative effects. The impact of negative effects on self-representation is not as dominant as positive effects. This finding is corroborated in prior research by Sedikides & Skowronski (2020), who find that negative effects can still matter in the service of self-reflection and identity formation, but to a smaller extent than positive ones.
- We found that these effects were strongly correlated ($r = .804$, $p < .001$), suggesting that these effects can coexist but do not necessarily exist in proportion. This is consistent with dual process theories (Carver & Scheier, 1990) that individuals are capable of experiencing conflicting emotional states at the same moment of time, which affects self-representation differently.
- Self-representation and the very strong correlation between positive effects and self-representation indicate the importance of positive emotion in identity construction. This is consonant with Fredrickson's (2001) broaden and build theory that positive emotions broaden cognition and social 'resources' leading to heightened robustness and optimism in individuals' self-representation.
- Negative effects are still influential, while less so in shaping self-representation. Baumeister et al. (2001) argue that negative experiences may be catalysts for introspection, that is, occasions on which individuals modify and refine their self-concept in order to become more adaptive. As the emotional interplay is complex, the strong correlation between positive and negative effects is to be expected. This is

consistent with the idea that self-representation is a dynamic, both enhancing and challenging construct (Carver & Scheier, 1990).

Conclusion

- The primary drivers of self-representation are positive and have a strong and significant impact.
- The strong contribution to self-representation is marked by secondary but meaningful negative effects
- Emotional dynamics in self-representation formation are complicated, and although it's important to consider the interplay between positive and negative effects, they are not proportional.
- The results emphasize that positive experiences are the most important factor that determines how people perceive and present themselves.

Strength & Limitations

Strengths

- This study emphasizes the distinct roles of positive and negative effects on self-representation.
- Correlation analysis usage ensures correlation analysis can bring you robust and reliable insights into the relationships between variables.
- What this research offer is precise and actionable findings pertaining to self-representation development by targeting specific emotional effects.

Limitations

- The generalizability of the results may be in question, as respondents may be more limited in accessibility to people who are more diverse.
- Deeper exploration of other influencing factors may perhaps have been restricted by a restricted timescale.
- This may have led people to not reveal their full emotional experience in giving the data, that may have made the data less accurate.
- Study's scope and sample size were limited by restricted resources.
- However, research did not look into other potentially relevant variables (e.g. cultural or social), leaving them out of the topic.

Implications and Suggestions

- More diverse participant groups should include future studies to increase generalizability of findings.
- Suggesting an onymous surveys and interviews can encourage respondents to share honest insights.
- A better understanding of self-representation should also account for other variables additional to family background, namely, cultural norms and peer influence.
- Accordingly, workshops or programs could be developed focused on positive emotional experiences that could help to develop healthier self-representations.
- By doing studies over longer periods of time, we might capture the evolving relationship between emotional effects and self-representation.

Future research has the opportunity to expand on the insights gained in this way, looking more deeply into how emotional dynamics can influence how we represent our selves.

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