

Posting a lot of selfies may suggest anti-social traits

January 6 2015, by Jeff Grabmeier



Men who post a lot of selfies are sending a bad message. Credit: Ohio State University

The picture isn't pretty for guys who post a lot of selfies on social media

sites like Facebook and Instagram.

A new study showed that [men](#) who posted more online [photos](#) of themselves than others scored higher on measures of narcissism and psychopathy.

In addition, men who were more likely to edit their selfies before posting scored higher in narcissism and self-objectification, which measures how much they prioritize their appearance.

"It's not surprising that men who post a lot of selfies and spend more time editing them are more narcissistic, but this is the first time it has actually been confirmed in a study," said Jesse Fox, lead author of the study and assistant professor of communication at The Ohio State University.

"The more interesting finding is that they also score higher on this other anti-social personality trait, psychopathy, and are more prone to self-objectification."

Fox conducted the study with Margaret Rooney, a graduate student at Ohio State. Their results are published online in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*.

Fox emphasized that the results don't mean that men who post a lot of selfies are necessarily narcissists or psychopaths. The men in the study all scored within the normal range of behavior - but with higher than average levels of these anti-social traits.

Narcissism is marked by a belief that you're smarter, more attractive and better than others, but with some underlying insecurity. Psychopathy involves a lack of empathy and regard for others and a tendency toward impulsive behavior.

The sample included 800 men from age 18 to 40 who completed an online survey asking about their photo posting behavior on [social media](#). The participants also completed standard questionnaires for anti-social behaviors and for self-objectification. (This study doesn't include women because the dataset, which Fox received from a magazine, did not have comparable data for women.)

In addition to asking how often they posted photos, the survey inquired about whether the men edited their photos before posting, including cropping photos, using filters and using picture-editing software.

"Most people don't think that men even do that sort of thing, but they definitely do," Fox said.

Results showed that posting more photos was related to narcissism and psychopathy, but psychopathy was not related to editing photos.

"That makes sense because psychopathy is characterized by impulsivity. They are going to snap the photos and put them online right away. They want to see themselves. They don't want to spend time editing," she said.

Editing photos was also related to higher levels of self-objectification, which has been rarely studied in heterosexual men, Fox said.

Self-objectification involves valuing yourself mainly for your appearance, rather than for other positive traits.

"We know that self-objectification leads to a lot of terrible things, like depression and eating disorders in women," Fox said.

"With the growing use of social networks, everyone is more concerned with their appearance. That means self-objectification may become a bigger problem for men, as well as for women."

While this study didn't include women, Fox said she is currently conducting follow-up work that suggests the same findings found in this research also apply to women. Women who post more selfies also show [higher levels](#) of [narcissism](#) and [psychopathy](#).

However, self-objectification plays a larger role with [women](#), as would be expected.

Fox said she believes there is a self-reinforcing cycle when it comes to self-objectification. People who score higher on self-objectification post more [selfies](#), which leads to more feedback from friends online, which encourages them to post even more photos of themselves.

"It may make people objectify themselves even more," she said. "We are running a study on that now."

Overall, Fox said this and other studies suggest our personality traits may influence how we present ourselves online.

"We are all concerned with our self-presentation online, but how we do that may reveal something about our personality."

Provided by The Ohio State University

Citation: Posting a lot of selfies may suggest anti-social traits (2015, January 6) retrieved 16 April 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-01-lot-selfies-anti-social-traits.html>

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