

Ripple Effect of Taking Selfies; Attitude of Generation Z MBBS Students

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Abstract

Objectives: To determine the attitude of Generation Z undergraduate medical students on taking selfies and their effects.

Methodology: A mixed-method study was conducted wherein all undergraduate medical students coming under Generation Z (born after 1997 i.e. 26 years and below) and studying at Al-Tibri Medical College Karachi were included. For qualitative part, focused group discussions were held where the students were open to discuss about selfie-taking and their effects. Purpose was to develop a questionnaire for the quantitative part of the study. Data was collected and analyzed using SPSS. The correlation of number of selfie captured by students to the factors was evaluated by applying Pearson correlation keeping $p < 0.05$ as statistically significant.

Results: Qualitative analysis showed 4 main themes viz. Behavioral Intentions, Actual Behaviors, Attitudes and Narcissistic Behaviors. Quantitative analysis reported significant agreement of students on certain aspect of each of the themes such as become more successful ($p < 0.04$), expect from other people ($p < 0.03$), to get recognition ($p < 0.04$), gain compliments ($p < 0.05$), make people believe them ($p < 0.04$), selfie is a fashion trend ($p < 0.01$), better story teller ($p < 0.01$), take selfies for others ($p < 0.02$), manipulate people ($p < 0.03$), feel confident ($p < 0.03$), show I am more capable ($p < 0.02$) and be center of attention ($p < 0.02$).

Conclusion: Selfies have a significant ripple effect on attitude and behavior of Generation Z medical students. This research highlights need for awareness and education about healthy selfie-taking behavior to ensure that medical students are able to harness the positive effects of selfies while avoiding negative impact of excessive selfie-taking.

Keywords: Selfie, Gen Z, MBBS, Medical Students, Social Media.

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Introduction

The advent of social media has led to an increase in the popularity of selfies. ¹ Generation Z MBBS students are no exception to this trend, and their attitudes and behaviors towards selfies can have a ripple effect on their lives. In today's digital age, taking selfies has become a common phenomenon, especially among the younger generation.² With the increasing use of smartphones and social media platforms, capturing and sharing selfies has become a part of everyday life. ³

Technology became an integral part for the generation born in mid 1990s and early 2010s, known as the Generation Z.⁴ Gen Z are tech-savvy, socially conscious and highly connected.

They have access to huge amounts of information and are highly adaptable to use that information for their own use. ⁵ The Gen Z are growing in an era wherein social media platforms are the main source of self-expression and communication. ⁶

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A substantial paradigm shift has taken place with the rise of social media and in the way people present themselves and interact with each other.⁷ Social media is becoming a platform for personal branding and self-promotion.⁸ They tend to showcase their personality traits, interests and talents by profiles and posts to a much larger audience. Taking selfie is a pivotal tool in such showcasing themselves. This allows the generation to capture and share their experience and various moments with the whole world.⁹

Medical students are not immune towards this trend of taking selfies. However, mixed reactions from medical community have been observed with regards to selfies.^{10,11} Some raise concerns about selfies in terms of the potential impact on medical students' professional code of conduct. Other argues that the trend is rather a harmless one.¹² Although the trend of selfie is a popular one world over and there is no denying it, nonetheless it is vital to comprehend the motivation and attitudes behind such behavior.

In the era of the digital age, self-taking trend among medical students of Gen Z age group is the reflection of changing behaviors and attitudes among the young generation.¹³ Since the trend has received mixed reactions from the medical community, it is vital to seek information for understanding the attitudes and motivations for such behaviors.¹⁴ We aim to shed light onto this trend and provide insight into the potentiality of its impact on healthcare profession.¹⁵

The rationale behind this research is to explore and identify the attitude of medical Gen Z students toward selfie-taking. This research examined the reasons as to why selfie is captured, its impact on individual behaviors and potential implications of the trend on professional lives. Through the article, we aim to shine light on evolving behavior and attitudes of Gen Z and provide fruitful insights into its potential impact on their profession and healthcare at large

Methodology

This was a mixed-method study that included qualitative in-depth focus group discussions and quantitative cross-sectional observational survey. The inclusion criteria was all MBBS students currently enrolled in Al-Tibri Medical College Karachi. Total duration of study was 6 months (July 2022 to December 2022). Then only the students falling under Generation Z time frame (born after 1997, i.e. below 26 years of age) were included.

The qualitative part of the study involved recruiting 15 Generation-Z students at random and was called for three focused group discussions 15 days apart. The purpose of the discussions was to gather first-hand information from the students regarding selfies and develop a questionnaire for attaining quantitative data from rest of the students.

The quantitative part of the study included a cross-sectional survey using non-probability quota sampling which consisted of questions on a Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree) and open-ended questions aimed at investigating the frequency of taking selfies, the motivation behind taking selfies, the effect of selfies on self-esteem, and the influence of social media on selfie-taking behavior.

In order to achieve this, qualitative in-depth focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with sample of MBBS students from ATMC. The FGDs were done to explore their attitudes towards capturing selfies, motivations behind it, and perceptions of impact of social media on professional lives.

The study findings were then used for providing valuable insight about MBBS Generation Z study towards selfie-taking. To understand their motivations, and assessing their impact on academic performances, strategies can be developed for encouraging a more positive use of social media and also in helping students maintain professional image. This is vital since using social media is highly prevalent in healthcare industry, where medical professionals are day by day required to navigate digital age complexities. The qualitative data collected was subjected to thematic analysis by using Braun and Clarke's analysis method that involves six steps as follows:

Step I: Become familiar with the data	Step II: Generate codes
Step III: Generate themes	Step IV: Review themes
Step V: Define and Refine the themes	Step VI: Final report

For analysis of data, SPSS v23.0 was used. Nominal data like students' opinions were reported as frequency and percentages in terms of Likert Scale. In order to test for significance between student responses, chi-square test was applied keeping <0.05 as statistically significant.

Results

The study results demonstrated majority of Gen Z medical students tend to capture selfies on a regular

basis. To capture a moment or memory was the main motivation for taking selfie. Some students do take and upload selfie on social media to gain fame.

Selfies were found to have a positive impact on self-esteem, as they allowed students to capture their best moments and showcase their personality to others. However, a negative impact was also observed, as some students reported feeling pressure to conform to certain beauty standards while taking selfies.

The in-depth interviews provided further insights into the selfie-taking behavior of MBBS students. The students reported that the influence of social media played a significant role in their selfie-taking behavior. They reported feeling pressured to conform to certain beauty standards and take perfect selfies to gain likes and comments on social media. However, they also reported that taking selfies helped them express themselves and boost their self-esteem. The themes identified from the FGDs were Behavioral Intentions, Actual Behaviors, Attitudes and Narcissistic Behaviors.

From the cross-sectional survey using the above mentioned themes, among the questions asked about behavioral intentions, 57% of the students agreed that they did not have any specific reason for taking selfies,

followed by 52% agreeing that taking selfies and posting them of social media helped to get recognized by people. In the actual behavior theme, 64 % students agreed to take selfies since it's in fashion and everybody does it while 58 % agreed to be a better story teller through selfie-taking. Among the attitudes themed questions, 58 % of students agreed to find it easier to manipulate people around them using selfies and 52 % agreed that they feel more capable and confident than others by taking selfies. In the narcissistic themed questions, 58 % agreed to be an authoritative person through selfie-taking while 50 % agreed to want to become a center of attention through selfies.

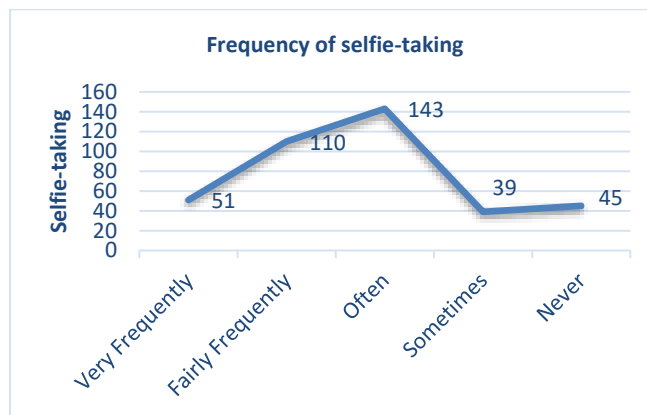


Figure I. Graphical representation of frequency of selfie taking by student. (n=388)

Table I: The frequency of selfies snapped by students. (n=388)

Mobile phone usage for selfies	Frequency	%
Very Frequently (>10 / day)	51	13.1
Fairly frequently (5-10 / day)	110	28.4
Often (2-5 / day)	143	36.8
Sometimes (1-2 / day)	39	10.1
Never	45	11.6

Discussion

The results of our study showed that a significant number of students viewed selfie-taking as a way to

Table II: Cross tabulation of Generation Z students' response to Selfie-taking Questionnaire

Themes	Question background	Strongly Agree/ Agree %	Neutral %	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree %	p-value
Behavioral Intentions	Prefer blending in the crowd	42	28	30	0.12
	To become successful	51	25	24	0.04
	Expect from other people	47	26	27	0.03
	For fun not show off	38	21	41	0.32
	No specific reason	57	22	21	0.03
	Recognition by people	52	27	21	0.04
Actual Behaviors	To get compliments	42	29	29	0.05
	To make people believe in me	43	28	29	0.04
	Selfie is in fashion / trending	64	21	15	<0.01
	To become better story teller	58	27	15	0.01
Attitudes	Take selfies for others	49	17	34	0.02
	To manipulate people	58	29	13	0.03
	To feel more confident	52	26	22	0.03
	To show that I am more capable	46	29	25	0.02
Narcissistic Behaviors	To stamp my authority	38	26	36	0.08
	To become center of attention	50	27	23	0.02
	Show off my stories with others	39	23	38	0.16
	To feel extra-ordinary	32	26	32	0.28
	To make people believe in me	37	23	40	0.06
	Be in competition with others	40	28	32	0.07

become more successful (p-0.04), expect from other people (p-0.03), take selfie to get recognition (p-0.04), to gain compliments (p-0.05), to make people believe them (p-0.04), selfie is in fashion / trending (p<0.01), to become better story teller (p-0.01), take selfies for others (p-0.02), to manipulate people (p-0.03), to feel more confident (p-0.03), to show that I am more capable (p-0.02) and to become center of attention (p-0.02).

The attitude of Generation Z towards taking selfies is an interesting case study.¹⁶ On the one hand, students are becoming more and more tech-savvy and enjoy using social media platforms to connect with their peers and share their experiences.¹⁷ They may see taking selfies as a harmless and fun way to document their lives and share their successes with others.¹⁸ Additionally, the competitive nature of medical school can also contribute to the desire to showcase their accomplishments and progress.¹⁹

On the other hand, the pressure to maintain a certain image and reputation can also be a burden for MBBS students. Medical school is a rigorous and demanding program that requires a significant amount of time and dedication.²⁰ The pressure to excel academically and professionally can be overwhelming, and the constant need to take and share selfies can add to this stress.²¹ Additionally, the need to maintain a professional image as a medical student and future healthcare professional can make it difficult to strike a balance between self-promotion and humility.²²

Another aspect to consider is the potential impact of taking selfies on patient care. While it may seem harmless to take a quick selfie in the hospital or clinic, the privacy and confidentiality of patients must be respected at all times.²³ Medical professionals have a duty to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and ethical behavior, which includes protecting patient privacy and confidentiality.²⁴ The misuse of social media platforms to share sensitive information or images can have serious consequences for patients and medical professionals alike.²⁵

Few articles discuss the topic of selfie-taking among Generation Z MBBS students. A research done by Pasztor et al., aimed to compare the prevalence and factors associated with selfie-taking among medical and non-medical students in Pakistan.²⁶ The study found that the prevalence of selfie-taking was higher among medical students (95.3%) compared to non-medical students (91.1%). The study also found that

the frequency of selfie-taking was higher among female students compared to male students.

Another research by et al. aimed to determine the prevalence and associated factors of selfie-taking among medical students in Saudi Arabia. The study found that 95.7% of medical students reported taking selfies, with female students being more likely to take selfies than male students. The study also found that students who perceived their appearance to be important were more likely to take selfies.²⁷

In yet another article, while not focused specifically on MBBS students, examined the relationship between social media use, selfie-taking, and body image among early adolescents (aged 11-13) in the United States. The study found that selfie-taking was positively associated with body dissatisfaction, especially among girls, but not among boys.²⁸

Overall, these articles provide insights into the prevalence and factors associated with selfie-taking among Generation Z MBBS students. All articles found that prevalence of selfie-taking was high among MBBS students. The studies also suggest that the need to maintain a certain image and reputation may contribute to the pressure to take and share selfies, which can have negative consequences for body image and self-esteem. However, more research is needed to fully understand the implications of selfie-taking among MBBS students and to develop effective interventions to promote healthy social media use.

To conclude, selfie-taking can have a rippling effect on Gen Z medical students both positive and negatively. Although it can be a creative way and fun to express oneself to boost self-confidence, yet it can lead to issues in bodily image and to maintain the pressure for reputation and social image. Students ought to manage such challenges whilst maintain high standards of ethical and professional behavior throughout their profession. In the end, it is pivotal for them to maintain humility and self-expression in balance and to utilize platforms of social media responsibly and respectfully.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicated selfie-taking to have substantial rippling effect on Gen Z medical students' behavior and attitudes. Although some argued that selfie can have positively affect one's self-esteem, however other were of the view that it can pressurize on to conform beauty standard and gain fame on social media. The study highlighted need for both awareness

and educating students regarding healthy behaviors for selfie-taking in order to gain positive effect of selfies and to avoid any negative impact of it.

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