



## Original Article

## Narcissism and Selfitis Disorder Features among Young Adults: Body Dysmorphic Disorder as Mediator

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays young generations are involved in such activities which abolish their life seriously. In today's world everyone wants to look flawless and wants to be praised. **Objective:** To investigate the mediating effect of body dysmorphic disorder on narcissism and selfitis disorder among young adults. **Methods:** The sample size for the present study was 400 young adults. Convenient sampling technique was used for screening of young adults on Body Image Concern Inventory and further data were collected on Selfitis Behavior Scale and Narcissistic Personality Inventory from screened sample. Inclusion criteria included all the young adults aged between 20 to 35 and have body dysmorphic disorder. **Results:** Narcissism had significant positive correlation with features of both selfitis disorder and body dysmorphic disorder. Age of persons had significant negative correlation with narcissism, selfitis disorder and features of body dysmorphic disorder. Outcomes revealed that both selfitis disorder and narcissism are greater in males, while features of body dysmorphic disorder are greater in females as compared to males. **Conclusions:** This study will be beneficial for professionals (sociologists and social workers) for creating awareness in young generation about flaws or defects in the physical appearance should not be considered as life frightening conditions and they should appreciate themselves as they are.

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, there are a bunch of narcissistic individuals that are intensely in love with their reflections. But the difference is they don't look steadily and intently at their image in water but on the sparkling screens of their smartphones. In our lives, we are not aware that one psychological issue may cause a lot of other psychological issues. Nowadays our young generations engage in such activities which abolish their life seriously. In the modern world, everyone wants to look flawless and wants to be praised. Social media websites show a flawless and perfect image of the people that badly affects our young generation. Perfectionism is the enemy of their

lives; as result, so many individuals have an obsession and compulsion with their different bodies. Obsession with the body could lead to subsisting or copying behaviors like they spend hours taking perfect and flawless selfies in order to reduce anxiety. They have hundreds of photographs of their looks to lessen their anxiety and satisfy them. They use beauty cameras like snap chat to smooth out skin and to make face slim, lip filters, teeth whitener to look flawless in their selfies or photographs, all these actions are the gateway to perceive oneself in a whole new perfect way and as a result user's want to replace his/her self in practical life. Excessive and regular selfies taking lead to inflated

self-admiration and cause dysfunctional behaviors. Preoccupation with body parts could lead to indulgence in various forms of coping behaviors. To reduce anxiety users are frequently using technology like beauty cameras to take selfies in order to get appreciation from other users [1]. Body Dysmorphic Disorder is a distressing obsession and compulsion with one or more imaginary or minor flaws in body appearances, these obsessions may cause significant distress and impairment their social and occupational functioning. The individual with body dysmorphic disorder does repetitive behaviors like mirror checking, excessive grooming, changing cloth, again and again, skin picking. All these behaviors are performed in order to reduce their anxiety. These obsessions can be associated with any part of the body [2]. Selfitis Disorder is an obsessive-compulsive desire to take photos of one's self & then share these photos on social media websites and a person's continuous desire to look good in selfies and to show these to others. There are 3 levels of Selfitis Disorder (Borderline, Acute, Chronic). All these level is based on the frequency and sharing of selfies on social media [3]. Selfies posting behavior on social media is positively correlated with self-objectification, weight dissatisfaction, and comparison of physical appearance [4]. Narcissism is a sense of individuality or a grandiose feeling of self-importance. A narcissistic person is always concerned with imaginations of unlimited power, beauty, success, brilliance, and love. Narcissistic individuals think that they are superior to others and they also have an excessive need for the approval of others they want everyone to praise and admire them and they are not tolerating criticism of others because they perceive themselves as exceptional and unique. They also have interpersonal relationship problems because of a lack of empathy, idealization, and devaluation [5]. Narcissistic personality trait is relatively high in individuals with body dysmorphic disorder [6]. Social-media websites give the opportunity to narcissistic persons to keep the focus on their profile's photo. They post photographs, comments, and updates status for satisfaction; which represent only them, and by doing this they are enhancing or maintaining their self-center nature [7]. Selfie-taking and posting behaviors are closely related to narcissism personality disorder [8]. American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery is one of the well-known aesthetic institutes in which more than 2,500 cosmetics, dermatoplasty, reconstructive, rhytidectomy surgeons work from all over the world. It is stated by 55% of surgeons; that a lot of patients come for plastic surgeries to improve their appearance in selfies because they think that when they took selfies their nose looks too big in it. According to plastic surgeons now most patients show their own filtered selfies rather than showing the photos of

beautiful celebrities for plastic surgery in order to get a perfect and flawless look of themselves. These beauty cameras and filters diminish the actuality and take towards the imagination and this behavior has very destructive consequences especially for youngsters and perpetuates Body Dysmorphic Disorder [9]. There is a high ratio of narcissistic individuals who love to see their reflections on their phones. Obsessions with body parts cause anxiety in the individual. To reduce their anxiety, individuals involve in different coping behaviors, for perfect click, they use different filters and cameras to modify their face shape. These entire acts are the gateway to perceive oneself in a whole new perfect way these beauty cameras diminish the actuality and take towards the imagination and as a result, persons want to replicate them self in real life. Excessive selfie-taking behaviors also cause a life-threatening situation which may cause serious injury or death of the person [10]. The outcome of the meta-analysis exposed that men constantly scored higher on narcissism which indicates that on average males are more narcissistic as compared to females [11]. The current research study had the following objectives: To investigate the relationship between features of body dysmorphic disorder, narcissism, and selfitis disorder among young adults. To study the mediating effect of body dysmorphic disorder on narcissism and selfitis disorder among young adults. To find out the role of demographic variables (age and gender) on body dysmorphic disorder, narcissism, and selfitis disorder features. The hypotheses formulated for the present study were: Narcissism will be positively correlated with features of body dysmorphic disorder and selfitis disorder. Body dysmorphic disorder mediates the relationship between narcissism and selfitis disorder. Gender differences will exist with respect to body dysmorphic disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, and selfitis disorder features among young adults. Age of individuals will be negatively correlated with body dysmorphic disorder, narcissism, and selfitis disorder features among young adults.

## METHODS

The current study was quantitative and cross-sectional. A survey method was used to collect the data for the present study. Total three instruments were used in the present study: The Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI), Selfitis Behavior Scale (SBS), Narcissistic Personality Inventory NPI-16, and demographic sheet. Inclusion criteria include all the young adults aged between 20 to 35 and have features of body dysmorphic disorder. The Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI) was used as a screening tool for the present study. BICI was administered on 1800 young adults, 400 individuals who met the criteria of Body

Dysmorphic Disorder by obtaining scores greater than the cut-off point on the scale were selected as a final sample for further analyses on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory & Selfitis Behavior Scale. All those young adults who did not meet the criteria of Body Dysmorphic Disorder were excluded. For the present research study, appropriate statistical analyses were used, Hayes PROCESS macro technique was used to check the mediating effect of BDD on Narcissism and selfitis disorder. Co-relation analysis was used to check association between variables, and independent sample t-test was used to check gender differences on all three variables. P-value < 0.05 considered as significant.

## RESULTS

The first step in data analysis was to check the alpha value of all scales. The calculated alpha value for BICI was .80, for NPI-16 the alpha value was .72 and for SBS alpha value was .82. These values indicated that all scales have satisfactory values of reliability. All of these scales have good validity as entire items of the scales have a significant positive association with total scores of the respective scales. In the present research the data of (N = 400) of young adults who met the criteria of Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI) were analyzed. The outcomes of analyses are mentioned below. Results of Table 1 showed significant positive correlation of Body Image Concern Inventory with Narcissistic Personality Inventory and Selfitis Behavior Scale. It was also revealed that the age of individuals has significant negative correlation with BICI, NPI and SBS.

**Table 1:** Correlation Coefficient among Age, Body Image Concern Inventory, Narcissistic Personality Inventory, Selfitis Behavior Scale (N=400)

Sr #	Measures	1	2	3	4	Mean ± SD
1	BICI	-	.46**	.47**	-.41**	79.23±4.58
2	NPI	-	-	.38**	-.31**	11.50±2.52
3	SBS	-	-	-	-.37**	85.30±5.48
4	Age	-	-	-	-	23.11±3.14

Note: BICI = Body Image Concern Inventory; NPI = Narcissistic Personality Inventory; SBS = Selfitis Behavior Scale; M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

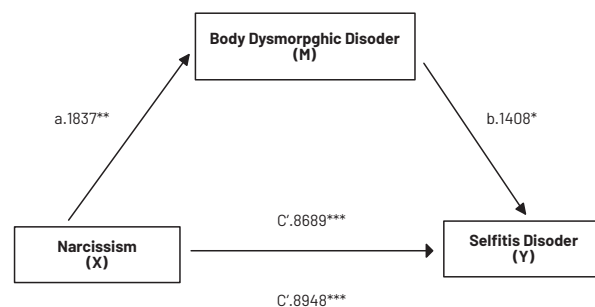
Results showed that the strength of relationship exists between narcissism and features of selfitis disorder were altered because of mediating effect of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). The outcomes of mediation analysis revealed that narcissism was indirectly related to features of selfitis disorder, through its relationship with body dysmorphic disorder. The path a, of figure one revealed that narcissism reported high relationship with body dysmorphic disorder (a = .1837\*\*, p = .049). Similarly, path b indicated that significant association of body dysmorphic features with features of selfitis disorder (b = .1409\*, p = .011). Result of path c, also showed significant positive

impact of narcissism on features of selfitis disorder (c = .8688\*\*\*, p = .001). The results also indicated that the indirect effect (ab = .0258) was totally above zero (.0039 to .0781). Furthermore, narcissism led to more borderline personality features of selfitis disorder after taking into account narcissism in direct effect through body dysmorphic disorder (C' = .8949\*\*\*, p = .001) (Table 2 and Figure 1).

**Table 2:** Summary of Mediation Analysis for Selfitis Disorder with Narcissism as Independent Variable

DV	M	Effect of IV on M	Effect of M on DV	Direct effects	Indirect effect	Total effects
Selfitis disorder	Body dysmorphic disorder	.1838**	.1409*	.8688***	.0258**	.8949***

Note: DV = dependent variable; IV = independent variable (narcissism); M = mediating variable a significant point estimate. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001.



**Figure 1:** Mediation Analysis of Body Dysmorphic Disorder Features between Narcissism and Selfitis Disorder

Table 3 revealed significant gender differences on BICI, NPI and SBS, which showed that both features of selfitis disorder and narcissism are more in males as compared to females whereas features of body dysmorphic disorder are greater in females as compared to males.

**Table 3:** Gender Differences on Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI), Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) and Selfitis Behavior Scale (SBS; N = 400)

Variable	Males (n=200)	Females (n=200)	t(398)	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD			LL	UL	
BICI	78.10±4.00	80.33±8.01	3.4	.001	-3.441	-.94	.33
NPI	12.31±2.40	10.71±2.51	6.3	.001	.092	2.05	.63
SBS	87.01±8.51	83.52±6.81	4.6	.001	.01	5.01	.46

Note: BICI = Body Image Concern Inventory; NPI = Narcissistic Personality Inventory; SBS = Selfitis Behavior Scale; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

## DISCUSSION

The present study intended to explore the mediating effect of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) features on narcissism and features of selfitis disorder (SD). The analysis of the current study exposed a significant positive correlation of Narcissistic Personality Inventory with Selfitis Behavior

Scale and Body Image Concern Inventory (see Table 1), these results are also supported by the past researches that selfitis disorder was positively correlated with loneliness and narcissism [12]. Moreover, analysis of previous study concluded that narcissism and hyperactivity were positively associated with Selfitis Disorder [13]. Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) is strongly correlated with dark attributes of personality. The outcomes proposed that obsessional personality traits and narcissistic personality disorder are positively associated with Body Dysmorphic Disorder [14]. An outcomes of cross-sectional study showed that girls who have selfitis disorder (SD) and consistently post their selfies on social media websites have significantly more overvaluation of the shape and weight of the body, dietary restraint, and internalization of the thin ideal [15]. The outcomes of mediation analysis revealed that narcissism was indirectly related to features of selfitis disorder, through its relationship with body dysmorphic disorder. When both body dysmorphic disorder and narcissism are lapsed together to clarify their impact on selfitis disorder (SD), then this relationship was found to be significant. Outcome also revealed the indirect effect ( $ab = .0258$ ) was completely above zero (.0039 to .0781). The situation could be understood that the strength of the relationship that exists between selfitis disorder and narcissism was altered due to mediating effect of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). These results revealed that features of body dysmorphic disorder partially mediate between narcissism and selfitis disorder among adults. The results of the current study also revealed significant gender differences on NPI and BICI, which exposed that features of selfitis disorder and narcissism are more common in men as compared to women while BDD features are more common in females as compared to males (see Table 3). Previous research findings also support the current results by concluding that as compared to males, females were more concerned about their weight, cover-up with makeup, skincare, the shape of hips, and have bulimia nervosa. Females were more enthusiastic to take non-psychiatric medical treatment such as cosmetic surgery than males. Men habitually unveil their life by sharing pictures to pass their time and more important to seek disclosure gratification, so selfitis disorder is more common in men. However, women are more conscious about their privacy on social media so women are concerned about online self-disclosure [16]. The results also showed that the age of a person has a significant negative correlation with the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, Selfitis Behavior Scale, and Body Image Concern Inventory (see Table 1). These findings are nearly similar to the results of previous research which showed that persons with older age had

significantly lower levels of narcissism as compared to participants of the middle-aged group [17]. The findings of the longitudinal study confirmed that narcissism tends to decrease as a person get matures. [18]. Selfie posting behavior is most common among teenagers as compared to older people [19]. It is also exposed that body dysmorphic disorder was more dominant among females as compared to males and body dysmorphic disorder was negatively correlated with age and income of the person [20].

## CONCLUSIONS

There is a significant positive correlation between body dysmorphic disorder, narcissism, and selfitis disorder. BDD partially mediates the relationship between selfitis disorder and narcissism. Age is negatively correlated with body dysmorphic disorder, selfitis disorder, and narcissism which show that as the age of the individuals' increases all variables start to decline in the individuals. Features of selfitis disorder and narcissism are greater in males as compared to females while body dysmorphic features are greater in females as compared to males. The outcome of current research will be helpful for mental health professionals for the depth understanding & root causes of body dysmorphic disorder, narcissism, and selfitis disorder for making clinical prevention and interventions of all these mental disorders.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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