Psychological Predictors of Virtual Socialization and Selfie Posting

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Abstract: The advent of internet based communication has revolutionized the manner in which people form and maintain social relationships. The aim of the current study was to explore the effect of virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting on individuals belonging to different educational and employment categories (150 intermediate students, 150 undergraduate students, and 100 Employees of a multi-national company/ information technology company). The study also explored the psychological predictors of virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting among the groups. Results reveal significant differences among the individuals belonging to different educational/employment status with respect to virtual socialization behavior, selfie posting and a few dimensions of affect. Furthermore, multiple regression analyses revealed that fear of missing out is a common predictor of online social behavior regardless of the education/employment status of the individual.

Index Terms – Virtual socialization, Selfie posting, Affect, Fear of missing out, Students, Employees.

I. INTRODUCTION

Millennials are thus far the only generation for whom the internet, mobile technology and especially social media have not been something they had to adapt to (Blow, 2014). They are a generation that witnessed the evolution of modern internet based technology since its very inception. Millennials, as they are so fondly dubbed, are people presently between the age group of 13 years and 35 years. This particular generation has witnessed the evolution of technology from time to time while growing up, especially with respect to social media and its development.

Human beings have an innate tendency to socialize and form groups. Social media networking has thus paved a new path for people to socialize without having to even leave their homes. Social networking platforms are undeniably one of the most preferred source of human interaction throughout the world and have become an integral and inescapable part of life for today's youth (Wright & Hinson, 2009).

With approximately 150 million Internet users, India ranks 3rd in the world after China with 575 million and US with 275 million internet users. The present generation is by far the most avid user of networking sites when compared to previous generations (Mason, Boldrin & Ariasi, 2010). Online social networking, also known as virtual socialization refers to the digital online space that allows people to identify themselves, to refine their social networks, allow communication and interact with other people who are also a part of the virtual community (Cain, 2008). In her article, Igbaria (1999) went on to explain a virtual community as a group of people who exchange thoughts and ideas through the mediation of computer bulletin boards and networks. Social networking sites (SNS) provide youth with easy access to their peers and allows them to socialize. These opportunities may be particularly significant since peers are readily available online at almost any time. Such contacts may foster the development of identity and intimate relationships, including friendships as well as romantic relationships.

The popularity of social networking sites is linked to the features and opportunities which includes, profile making, "friending", commenting, and communication and some of these online opportunities are closely linked to adolescent developmental needs (Buckingham, 2008). One of the most rapidly growing trends, among these young individuals that has emerged as a result of increased virtual socialization is clicking 'selfies' and posting them on different social networking sites. The term 'selfie' - a self-taken picture of oneself - has become ubiquitous in the vocabulary of nearly every teen and young adult in the technological world. Tolete and Salarda (2015), in their study state that "Google had reported that Android users post 93 million selfies per day." Selfies have become a new medium for self-representation and self-expression. Leary (2013) points out that "by posting selfies, people can keep themselves in other people's minds. In addition, like all photographs that are posted online, selfies are used to convey a particular impression of oneself."

The practice of clicking a selfie and posting it on one's social media platform forged itself as the latest tool of self-presentation. By posting a selfie, an individual intends to create and maintain an often modified impression in the minds of others. As the world keeps moving online, the undeniable popularity of social media platforms has influenced people to create an online identity for themselves, lest they should be left behind (Taslim & Rizwan, 2013). According to the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) people evaluate their opinions and abilities, emotions and personality traits and try to enhance their self-esteem and self-concept by comparison with others (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). People tend to associate their self-image in either a negative or positive manner through comparison with others. According to Mussweiler, Rüter and Epstude (2006), when people find out information about others, their strengths and weaknesses, what they might have achieved or failed at, they relate this information to themselves. This implies that social comparison takes place in our everyday lives almost all the time, because people are easily exposed to or can effortlessly obtain information of others regardless of the channel through which they receive the information. The internet has made this process of social comparison something people do without even realizing.

As much as virtual socialization has contributed towards making the world a smaller and extremely accessible place, online behaviors such as selfie posting often act as double edged swords. While posting selfies may be a way for people to present themselves to the world on their own accord, selfie posting is also seen as a contradictory phenomenon. Research into this phenomenon sheds light on a discussion that talks not only about the values but also the consequences of selfies (Diefenbach & Christoforakos, 2017). For instance, Rettberg (2014) perceives selfies as a form of cultural expression that gives rise to creative experimentation and invention of newer methods to express oneself. On the other hand, studies have explored the possible consequences of being so deeply

immersed in online socialization behavior or clicking selfies for the perfect shot, that it may diminish the experience of the very moment the individual is in (Roman, 2014). Another strand of research explored a much more serious concern that is on the rise. Adolescents are especially prone to participating in online trends in order to keep up with their peers. McLean et al. (2015) discussed how sharing selfies among adolescent girls is correlated to overvaluation of their shape, weight, body dissatisfaction and dietary restraint. A study conducted by Valeknburg (2006) discussed how self-esteem and well-being among adolescents were indirectly influenced by the frequency with which they accessed social networking sites. It was observed that while positive feedback on the profiles enhanced their social esteem and well-being, any negative comment decreased the same.

A number of studies have also looked into the link between one's social networking and online behavior and their overall well-being (Burke, Marlow & Lento, 2010; Wang et. al, 2014). Results from such investigations indicate online behaviors including those involving photography may play a crucial role in the overall emotional state of an individual. According to Suls and Wills (1991), social comparisons can be categorized as either upward or downward. An upward comparison refers to a belief that one is superior or much better than others. A downward comparison is the opposite and elicits feelings of inferiority. Such upward or downward comparisons can each lead to positive or negative emotions (Weinstein, 2017).

The term 'affect' is one manner in which we can understand the various emotional states that a person experiences. The term affect (or affective state) can be defined as "any type of emotional state often used in situations where emotions dominate the person's awareness" (VandenBos, 2013). Positive affect can be described as the extent to which an individual experiences positive emotional states such as joy, interest, confidence and alertness and negative affect refers to the extent to which an individual experiences negative emotional states such as fear, sadness, anger, guilt, contempt and disgust (Snydedr & Lopez, 2002).

Fear of missing out is a phenomenon that has been extensively researched during recent times especially in relation to its relationship with negative affect states. Fear of missing out or FoMo can be described as a feeling of apprehension of missing out on rewarding and pleasurable experiences and being left out. This drives the individual to constantly keep checking their online platforms in case they miss out being a part of something that would have been enjoyable. FoMo is associated with increased smartphone usage especially in college going youngsters who tend to experience pervasive apprehension when they are not using their phones or logged into their social media platforms (Przybylski et al., 2013). A thorough review of past literature highlights the importance of exploring the various psychological contributors that interact and then effect virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting among individuals across various age groups, educational and employment categories. Keeping this in mind, the present study aims to explore some psychological predictors of selfie posting.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the role of educational and employment status (intermediate students, undergraduate students and employees of IT/MNCs) and gender on virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting, the dimensions of affect (negative affect, positive affect, fear, hostility, guilt, sadness, joviality, self-assurance, attentiveness, shyness, fatigue, serenity, and surprise) and fear of missing.
- To determine the predictors of virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting among intermediate students, undergraduate students and employees of IT/MNCs.

III. METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative study wherein educational and employment status (intermediate college students, undergraduate college students and employees of IT/ MNCs) and gender are treated as independent variables and virtual socialization behavior, selfie posting the dimensions of affect (negative affect, positive affect, fear, hostility, guilt, sadness, joviality, self-assurance, attentiveness, shyness, fatigue, serenity and surprise) and fear of missing out are treated as dependent variables.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a factorial design to study the main and interaction effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables. The study also implements a correlational design to determine the predictors of selfie virtual socialization and selfie posting among intermediate college students, undergraduate college students and employees of IT/ MNCs.

3.2 Sample

Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select a sample of 400 individuals. These participants belong to the age group of 15 years to 26 years. The sample comprised of 150 intermediate students (75 boys and girls), 150 undergraduate students (75 boys and 75 girls), and 100 Employees of a multi-national company/ information technology company (50 men and 50 men).

3.3 Instruments/Tools

The following questionnaires/instruments were used to collect data for the study:

- Information Schedule: Participants were asked to provide details regarding their gender, age, education, family information, socio-economic status, physical and psychological health of the participants and their family members in the Information Schedule.
- The Online Social Networking Scale: It is a self-report inventory consisting of 19 items. The scale measures the extent of virtual socialization among individuals. The types of responses are Yes or No questions where a "Yes" is scored as 1 and a "No" is scored as 0. Some of the survey questions are "How many social networking sites or communities are you a member of?" "On average, how much time do you spend on social networking sites?" The Spearman Brown split-half reliability was computed for this scale and it was found to be 0.435.
- Selfie posting Scale: It is a 28-item questionnaire on selfie posting. The first 3 items of the questionnaire had four responses showing different levels of frequency in the respondent's actions pertaining to selfie posting where, for the first item, 0-1 times per week (Scores 1), 2-3 times per week (Scores 2), 4-5 times per week (Scores 3), and More than 5 times a week (Scores 4). Similarly, the responses for item numbers 2 & 3 are, 0-1 times per day (Scores 1), 2-3 times per day (Scores 2), 4-5 times per

day (Scores 3), and More than 5 times a day (Scores 4). The remaining 25 items have a Yes or No type response system, where a 'Yes' is scored as 1 and a 'No' as 0. At the end, all the scores are summated for the final score. Cronbach's alpha was computed for this scale and it was found to be 0.66 indicating acceptable reliability.

- Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Expanded Form (PANAS-X): It was developed by Watson & Clark (1999) at The University of Iowa. The present scale PANAS-X is a 60-Item schedule that uses a 5 point Likert scale for recording the response as 1-very slightly or not at all, 2-a little, 3-moderately, 4-quite a bit and 5-extremely. The scale measures 11 specific affects: Fear, Sadness, Guilt, Hostility, Shyness, Fatigue, Surprise, Joviality, Self-Assurance, Attentiveness, and Serenity in addition to the two original high order scales i.e., the Positive affect and the Negative affect. This scale has been developed and validated by Watson & Clark (1999) who reported the reliability scores (Cronbach's Coefficient alpha) as .87 for the two high order scales and an α-value ranging from 0.77 to 0.92 for the other affect scales. Similarly, the construct validity for the two high order scales i.e., for PA and NA was 0.92 and 0.93 respectively.

- Fear of Missing out Scale: It is a 10 item questionnaire. This scale was developed by Przybylski, et. al., (2013). This scale helps the respondents reflect on the experiences of the belongingness to his group or the related thoughts that bother him on being missed out. The scale uses a five-point Likert scale for recording responses where 1 - not at all true of me'', 2 - slightly true of me, 3 - moderately true of me, 4 -very true of me, and 5 - extremely true of me. The score was calculated by adding the score of each item. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency (α=.90) and presented acceptable levels of skewness (1.10) and kurtosis (1.05) (Przybylski, et. al., 2013).

3.4 Procedure

Procedure After selecting the questionnaires and preparing the information schedule, arrangements were made for data collection. The authorities of various institutions and organizations (intermediate colleges, undergraduate colleges and multi-national companies) were contacted for permission to collect data. Rapport was established and they were made aware that their participation in the study was purely voluntary and were assured of confidential throughout the study. The individuals who agreed to participate in the study were requested to sign an 'Informed Consent Form'. For the participants from intermediate college, the informed consent was made signed by the authorities and as well by the students. There was no fixed time limit for any of the questionnaires. However, the respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire in about 45 minutes.

IV. RESULTS

The obtained quantitative data of this study was analyzed using two-way ANOVA and stepwise regression using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Two-way ANOVA was computed to determine whether there are any main and interaction effects of educational and employment status (intermediate college students, undergraduate college students and employees of IT/ MNCs) and gender on virtual socialization behavior, selfie posting, the dimensions of affect (negative affect, positive affect, fear, hostility, guilt, sadness, joviality, self-assurance, attentiveness, shyness, fatigue, serenity and surprise) and fear of missing out. The study also implements a correlational design to determine the predictors of selfie posting and virtual socialization among intermediate college students, undergraduate college students and employees of IT/ MNCs.

Table 1a: Results of Two-way ANOVA and descriptive statistics with Educational and Employment Status and Gender as IVs and virtual socialization behavior, selfie posting, affect and its 13 dimensions and fear of missing out as DVs in Intermediate Students, Undergraduate Students and Employees of IT/MNCs (N=400).

Variable	Educational and Employment Status				Gender			Interaction Effect [Educational and Employment Status* Gender]
	Intermediate Students (N=150) Mean (SD)	Undergraduate Students (N=150) Mean (SD)	Employees of IT/MNCs (N=100) Mean (SD)	F	Men (N=200)	Women (N=200)	F	
Virtual Socialization Behavior	27.18 (7.03)	29.06 (5.61)	29.30 (5.26)	**5.73***	30.69 (5.99)	26.15 (5.46)	**62.29****	0.26
Selfie Posting	17.47 (6.10)	15.21 (4.64)	14.43 (4.66)	**12.13****	16.49 (5.64)	15.24 (5.05)	**5.92***	0.92
Negative Affect	22.49 (6.41)	22.73 (6.93)	22.67 (7.69)	0.05	22.61 (6.96)	22.64 (6.91)	0.08	1.07
Positive Affect	37.49 (6.56)	36.56 (6.22)	36.28 (6.87)	1.25	37.33 (6.43)	36.35 (6.59)	2.46	0.34
Fear	12.97 (4.56)	13.56 (4.31)	13.56 (5.09)	0.76	13.03 (4.67)	13.65 (4.53)	2.07	0.20
Hostility	13.97 (4.65)	13.49 (4.36)	13.55 (4.83)	0.49	13.94 (4.40)	13.43 (4.69)	0.99	1.51
Guilt	12.84 (4.65)	12.61 (4.79)	12.71 (5.02)	0.09	13.47 (4.78)	11.98 (4.68)	**7.96****	2.54

Sadness	10.80 (4.31)	11.95 (4.63)	12.07 (4.66)	**3.42***	12.15 (4.68)	10.95 (4.34)	**5.19***	**3.56***
Joviality	29.83 (5.98)	29.53 (5.42)	28.91 (6.31)	0.75	29.42 (6.00)	29.56 (5.73)	0.02	2.19
Self-Assurance	22.10 (4.81)	21.26 (4.51)	20.57 (4.43)	2.80	22 (4.47)	20.9 (4.72)	**5.81***	0.44
Attentiveness	14.38 (3.25)	14.31 (3.22)	14.42 (3.23)	0.04	14.46 (3.25)	14.27 (3.20)	0.17	0.39
Shyness	8.67 (3.10)	9.03 (3.48)	9.06 (3.72)	0.56	9.14 (3.27)	8.67 (3.52)	1.89	1.02
Fatigue	10.28 (3.35)	10.39 (3.30)	11.00 (3.51)	1.50	10.27 (3.41)	10.74 (3.33)	1.75	1.34
Serenity	8.99 (2.47)	9.55 (2.34)	9.76 (2.38)	**3.60***	9.41 (2.51)	9.38 (2.33)	0.24	**3.63***
Surprise	9.63 (2.74)	8.65 (2.77)	8.41 (2.69)	**7.41****	9.08 (2.85)	8.83 (2.72)	1.05	0.77
Fear of Missing out	27.23 (6.50)	25.75 (7.19)	23.49 (6.88)	**9.05****	26.74 (7.52)	24.74 (6.28)	**7.56****	0.29

Note: *p≤0.05, **p≤0.01

Table 1b: Post-hoc results of Two-way ANOVA and descriptive statistics with Educational and Employment Status and Gender as IVs and virtual socialization behavior, selfie posting, affect and its 13 dimensions and fear of missing out as DVs in Intermediate Students, Undergraduate Students and Employees of IT/MNCs (N=400).

	Intermediate Students – Undergraduate Students	Undergraduate Students – Employees of IT /MNCs	Employees of IT /MNCs – Intermediate Students
Virtual Socialization Behaviour	**-1.88***	-0.24	**2.12***
Selfie Posting	**2.27***	0.78	**-3.04***
Negative Affect	-0.25	0.06	0.18
Positive Affect	0.93	0.28	-1.21
Fear	-0.59	0	0.59
Hostility	0.49	-0.06	-0.42
Guilt	0.23	-0.10	-0.13
Sadness	**-1.15***	-0.12	**1.27***
Joviality	0.31	0.62	-0.92
Self-Assurance	0.84	0.51	**-1.35***
Attentiveness	0.07	-0.11	0.04
Shyness	-0.36	-0.03	0.39
Fatigue	-0.11	-0.61	0.72
Serenity	**-0.55***	-0.21	**0.77***
Surprise	**0.98***	0.24	**-1.22***
Fear of Missing Out	1.48	**2.26***	**-3.74***

Note: *p≤0.05, **p≤0.01

Table 1a indicated that there was a significant influence of educational and employment status on virtual socialization behavior (F= 5.73, p≤0.05). Post hoc results from Table 1b indicate significantly higher levels of virtual socialization among undergraduate students (M=29.06, SD=5.61) when compared to intermediate students (M=27.18, SD=7.03) (p≤0.05). It was also seen that employees of IT/MNCs (M=29.30, SD=5.26) had significantly higher scores on virtual socialization behavior than intermediate students. Table 1a also indicates an influence of gender on selfie posting (F=62.29, p≤0.01), wherein men (M=30.69, SD=5.99) indicated higher virtual socialization behavior than women (M=26.15, SD=5.46).

Similarly, according to the results in Table 1a there was a significant influence of educational and employment status on selfie posting (F=12.13, p≤0.01). In other words, there is a significant difference between the three groups with respect to selfie posting. Post hoc results from Table 1b indicate that intermediate students (M=17.47, SD=6.10) are significantly higher than undergraduate students (M=15.21, SD=4.64) (p≤0.05) when it comes to selfie posting behavior. It can also be seen that intermediate students had higher scores on the variable of selfie posting when compared to employees of IT/MNCs (M=14.43, SD=4.66) (p≤0.05). Table 1a

also indicates an influence of gender on selfie posting (F=5.92, p<0.05), wherein men (M=16.49, SD=5.64) indicated higher selfie posting behavior than women (M=15.24, SD=5.05). Table 1a shows no significant effect of education or employment status on the dimension of guilt. However, there is an influence of gender on guilt (F=7.96, p≤0.01), wherein men had higher mean scores (M=13.47, SD=4.78) when compared to women (M=11.98, SD=4.68). With respect to the dimension of sadness, there was a significant effect of education or employment status (F=3.42, p≤0.05). According to the post hoc results from table 1b, undergraduate students (M=11.95, SD=4.63) had significantly higher levels of sadness than intermediate students (M=10.80, SD=4.31) (p≤0.05). It was also noted that employees (M=12.07, SD=4.66) experienced significantly higher levels of sadness when compared to intermediate students (p≤0.05). There also was a statistically significant interaction between the effects education or employment status and gender on sadness. The graphical representation of this interaction effect can be seen in Figure 1.

Although Table 1a shows no significant effect of education or employment status on the dimension of self-assurance, there is a significant influence of gender on the same (F=5.81, p≤0.05). It was noted that men had higher mean scores (M=22, SD=4.47) in comparison to women (M=20.9, SD=4.72).

The next dimension that was significantly influenced by education or employment status was serenity (F=3.60, p≤0.05). While, there was no significant effect of gender on serenity among the three groups, there was a significant interaction between both the independent variables on the dimension of serenity (p≤0.05) which can also be seen graphically in Figure 2.

Additionally, according to the results in Table 1a there was a significant influence of education or employment status on the dimension of surprise (F=7.41, p≤0.01). Post hoc results from table 1b indicate that intermediate students (M=9.63, SD=2.74) had significantly higher levels of surprise than undergraduate students (M=8.65, SD=2.77) (p≤0.05). It was also noted that intermediate students experienced significantly higher levels of surprise when compared to employees (M=8.41, SD=2.69) (p≤0.05).

Lastly, table 1a showed that fear of missing out was a variable that was influenced by the educational or employment status of individuals (F=9.05, p≤0.01). It was also noted that there was a significant influence of gender on fear of missing out (F=7.56, p≤0.01). Post hoc results from table 1b showed that undergraduate students (M=25.75, SD=7.19) had significantly higher levels of fear of missing out than employees (M=23.49, SD=6.88) (p≤0.05). It was also noted that intermediate students (M=27.23, SD=6.50) experienced significantly higher levels of fear of missing out when compared to employees (p≤0.05). Results from table 1a also indicated that men had higher mean scores (M=26.24, SD=7.52) in comparison to women (M=24.74, SD=6.28).
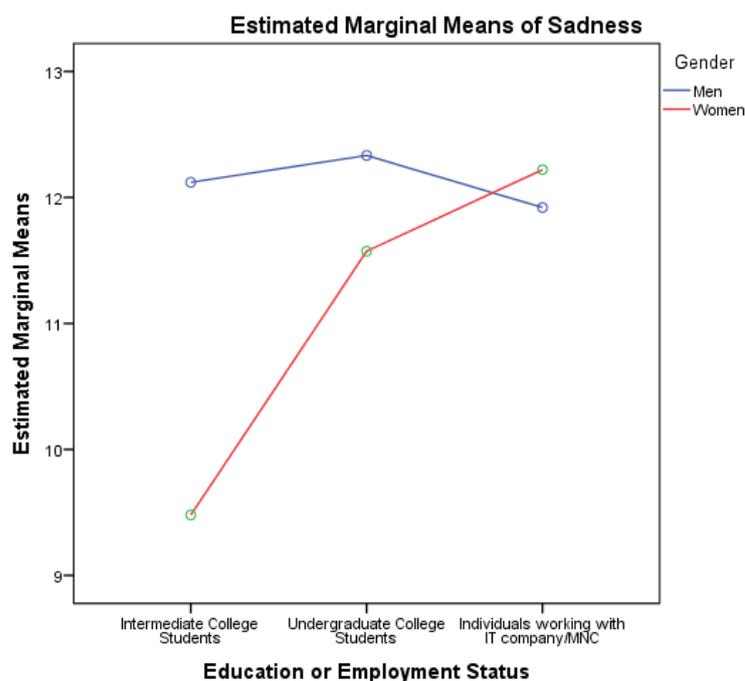

Figure 1: Line graph showing the interaction between education and employment status and gender on sadness
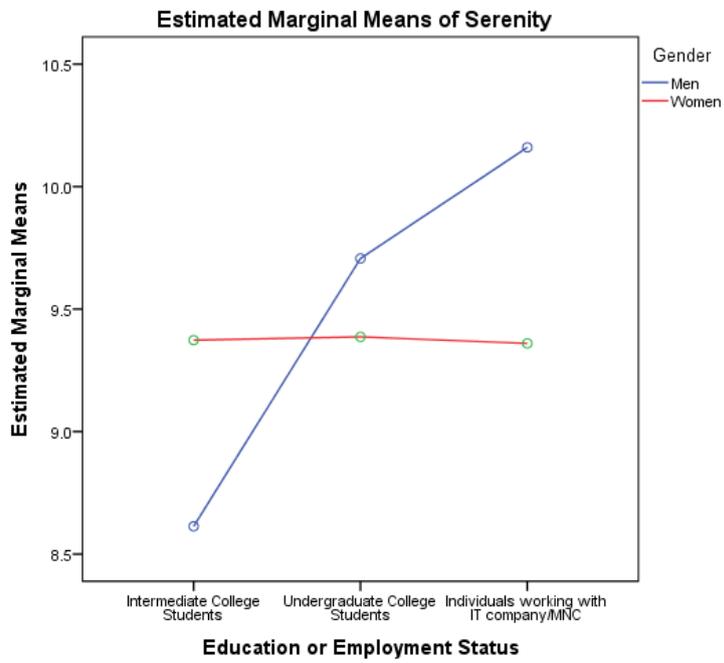
Figure 2: Line graph showing the interaction between education and employment status and gender on serenity
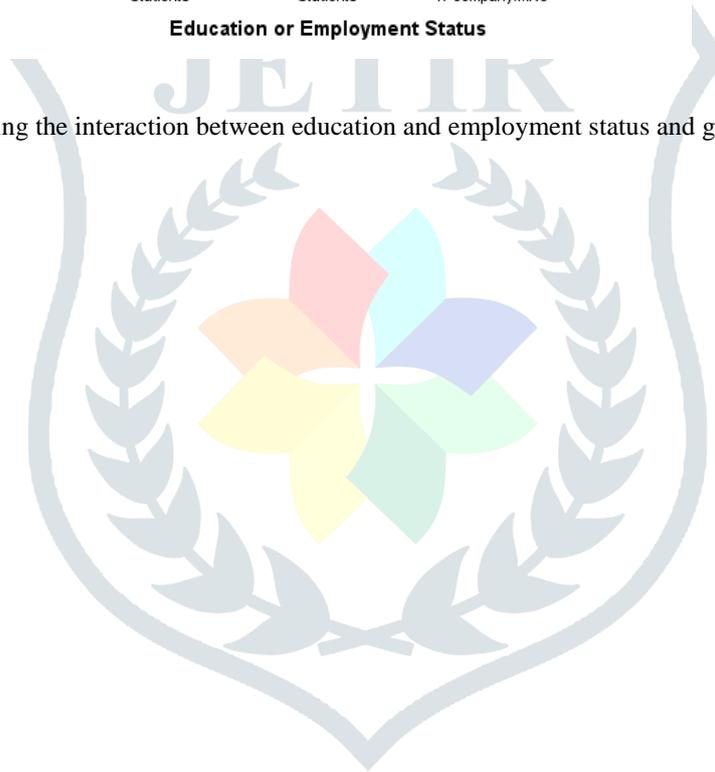
The next section focuses on the stepwise regression analyses aimed at determining the predictors of virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting. The dimensions of affect (negative affect, positive affect, fear, hostility, guilt, sadness, joviality, self-assurance, attentiveness, shyness, fatigue, serenity and surprise) and fear of missing out were entered as predictor variables. Tables 3 and 4 show the summary of stepwise regression analyses for the predictors of virtual socialization and selfie posting respectively. Tables 5, 6, and 7 show the detailed regression analyses for the same.

Table 2 – Showing the summary of regression analysis for predictors of virtual socialization behavior

	Variables	Virtual Socialization Behaviour		
		Intermediate College Students	Undergraduate College Students	Individuals working in MNC/IT
β	Negative Affect	**-0.21***	NS	NS
	Positive Affect	NS	NS	NS
	Fear	NS	**-0.21****	NS
	Hostility	NS	NS	NS
	Guilt	NS	NS	NS
	Sadness	**0.20****	NS	NS
	Joviality	NS	NS	NS
	Self-Assurance	NS	NS	**0.26****
	Attentiveness	NS	NS	NS
	Shyness	NS	NS	NS
	Fatigue	NS	NS	NS
	Serenity	NS	NS	NS
	Surprise	NS	NS	NS
	Fear of Missing Out	**0.31****	**0.23****	**0.28****
ΔR²	Negative Affect	**0.03**	NS	NS
	Positive Affect	NS	NS	NS
	Fear	NS	**0.04**	
	Hostility	NS	NS	NS
	Guilt	NS	NS	NS
	Sadness	**0.04**	NS	NS
	Joviality	NS	NS	NS
	Self-Assurance	NS	NS	**0.07**
	Attentiveness	NS	NS	NS
	Shyness	NS	NS	NS
	Fatigue	NS	NS	NS
	Serenity	NS	NS	NS
	Surprise	NS	NS	NS
	Fear of Missing Out	**0.09**	**0.05**	**0.08**
Total Adjusted R²		0.16	0.09	0.14

Note: *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, R-Coefficient of Correlation, ΔR^2-R Squared Change, β-Standardized Coefficient Beta

Table 3 – Showing the summary of regression analysis for predictors of selfie posting

	Variables	Selfie Posting		
		Intermediate College Students	Undergraduate College Students	Individuals working in MNC/IT
β	Negative Affect	NS	NS	NS
	Positive Affect	NS	NS	NS
	Fear	NS	NS	NS
	Hostility	NS	NS	NS
	Guilt	NS	NS	NS
	Sadness	NS	NS	NS
	Joviality	NS	NS	NS
	Self-Assurance	NS	NS	NS
	Attentiveness	NS	-0.16*	NS
	Shyness	NS	NS	NS
	Fatigue	NS	NS	NS
	Serenity	NS	NS	NS
	Surprise	NS	NS	NS
	Fear of Missing Out	0.27**	0.26**	0.26**
ΔR²	Negative Affect	NS	NS	NS
	Positive Affect	NS	NS	NS
	Fear	NS	NS	NS
	Hostility	NS	NS	NS
	Guilt	NS	NS	NS
	Sadness	NS	NS	NS
	Joviality	NS	NS	NS
	Self-Assurance	NS	NS	NS
	Attentiveness	NS	0.02	NS
	Shyness	NS	NS	NS
	Fatigue	NS	NS	NS
	Serenity	NS	NS	NS
	Surprise	NS	NS	NS
	Fear of Missing Out	0.07	0.07	0.07
Total Adjusted R²		0.07	0.09	

Note: *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, R-Coefficient of Correlation, ΔR^2-R Squared Change, β-Standardized Coefficient Beta

Table 4: – Showing the summary of regression analysis for predictors of virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting among intermediate college students

Predictor	ΔR^2	β
		Criterion: Virtual Socialization Behaviour
Model 1	0.09	
1. Fear of Missing Out		**0.31****
Model 2	0.04	
1. Fear of Missing Out		0.27**
2. Sadness		**0.20****
Model 3	0.03	
1 Fear of Missing Out		0.27**
2. Sadness		0.34**
3. Negative Affect		**-0.21***
Total Adjusted R^2	0.16	
		Criterion: Selfie Posting
Model 1	0.07	
1. Fear of Missing Out		**0.27****
Total Adjusted R^2	0.07	

Note: *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, R-Coefficient of Correlation, ΔR^2-R Squared Change, β-Standardized Coefficient Beta

Table 4 shows the predictors of virtual socialization and selfie posting among intermediate college students. With respect to virtual socialization behavior, it can be noted that fear of missing out, sadness and negative affect emerged as predictors among intermediate college students. While FoMo (β= 0.31, $p \leq 0.01$) and sadness (β= 0.20, $p \leq 0.01$) had a positive correlation with virtual socialization behavior, negative affect (β= -0.21, $p \leq 0.05$) was negatively correlated with the same. The contribution of FoMo, sadness and negative affect was 9%, 4% and 3% respectively which makes the overall contribution of the predictor variables towards virtual socialization among intermediate college students as 16%.

In the case of selfie posting, FoMo (β= 0.27, $p \leq 0.01$) was positively correlated with selfie posting and emerged as the only predictor among intermediate college students. It contributed to 7% to the variance in the criterion variable.

Table 5: – Showing the summary of regression analysis for predictors of virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting among undergraduate college students

Predictor	ΔR^2	β
		Criterion: Virtual Socialization Behaviour
Model 1	0.05	
1. Fear of Missing Out		**0.23****
Model 2	0.04	
1. Fear of Missing Out		0.29**
2. Fear		**-0.21****
Total Adjusted R^2	0.09	
		Criterion: Selfie Posting
Model 1	0.07	
1. Fear of Missing Out		**0.26****
Model 2	0.02	
1. Fear of Missing Out		0.25**
2. Attentiveness		**-0.16***
Total Adjusted R^2	0.09	

Note: *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, R-Coefficient of Correlation, ΔR^2-R Squared Change, β-Standardized Coefficient Beta

Table 5 shows the predictors of virtual socialization and selfie posting among undergraduate students. It was observed that FoMo and fear were predictors of virtual socialization behavior. While FoMo (β= 0.23, $p \leq 0.01$) was positively associated with the criterion and contributed to 5% of the variance, the dimension of fear (β= -0.21, $p \leq 0.01$) had a negative association with the same

and contributed to 4% to the overall variance. Both the predictors of virtual socialization among undergraduate students contributed to a total of 9% of the variance. The predictors of selfie posting among this group were FoMo and Attentiveness.

While FoMo (β=0.26, p≤0.01) was positively correlated, attentiveness (β= -0.16, p≤0.05) was negatively correlated with the criterion variable. With a contribution of 7% and 2% of variance each, FoMo and attentiveness together contributed to 9% of the overall variance in selfie posting among undergraduate students.

Table 6: – Showing the summary of regression analysis for predictors of virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting among employees of MNCs/IT companies

Predictor	ΔR^2	β
	Criterion: Virtual Socialization Behaviour	
Model 1	0.07	
1. Self-Assurance		**0.26****
Model 2	0.08	
1. Self-Assurance		0.29**
2. Fear of Missing Out		**0.28****
Total Adjusted R^2	0.14	
	Criterion: Selfie Posting	
Model 1	0.07	
1. Fear of Missing Out		**0.26****
Total Adjusted R^2	0.07	

Note: *p≤0.05, **p≤0.01, R-Coefficient of Correlation, ΔR^2-R Squared Change, β-Standardized Coefficient Beta

Table 6 shows the predictors of virtual socialization and selfie posting among employees of MNCs/IT companies. With respect to virtual socialization behavior, it can be noted that the dimension of self-assurance and fear of missing out were the predictors. Both Self-assurance (β= 0.26, p≤0.01) and FoMo (β= 0.28, p≤0.01) had a positive correlation with virtual socialization behaviour. The contribution of self-assurance and FoMo was 7% and 8% respectively which makes the overall contribution of the predictor variables towards virtual socialization among employees as 14%.

In the case of selfie posting, FoMo (β= 0.26, p≤0.01) was positively correlated with selfie posting and emerged as the only predictor among employees of MNCs/IT companies. It contributed to 7% to the variance in the criterion variable.

V. DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to determine whether there were any main and interaction effects of education or employment status (intermediate college students, undergraduate college students and employees of IT/ MNCs) and gender on virtual socialization, selfie posting, the dimensions of affect (negative affect, positive affect, fear, hostility, guilt, sadness, joviality, self-assurance, attentiveness, shyness, fatigue, serenity and surprise) and fear of missing out.

The results obtained through statistical analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between educational and employment status on virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting. It was observed that employees had higher levels of virtual socialization than college going students indicating that as an individual growls older, they tend to increase their virtual socialization behavior. These results can be backed by a study carried out by Ozguven & Mucan (2013) that also concluded that social media use increases as education and income levels increase.

On the other hand, it was noted that selfie posting behavior was higher among younger individuals and gradually decreased as we moved to a higher age group. This could be attributed to the nature of selfies that requires the person to participate in self-disclosure of current activities, emotions, hobbies, and interests. Dhir et al. (2017) states that as a person ages, they become wary of their online behaviors and are more concerned with their privacy. Young adults have higher levels of privacy concern, and tend to disclose less information than adolescent users (Nosko et al., 2010).

Results of the current study also indicate gender differences with respect to guilt, sadness and self-assurance. It was seen in the above study that men are higher on all three dimensions in comparison to women. In accordance with the current study, research conducted by Watson and Clark (1999) also reported that men experience higher levels of guilt. Payned and Schnapp (2014) conducted a study on college students that revealed that men scored higher on the dimension of self-assurance of the PANAS-X scale than women. On the other hand, other studies have found results that contradict the ones revealed by the current study. For instance, Thoits (1989) reveals that, when college students are faced with a stressful situation, women are more likely to express their feelings and cope with their emotions by seeking social support than men. However, there has been enough research done to show that both scenarios are plausible since experiencing emotions is more complex than a simple generalization. Studies that have shown that actual male versus female expression of emotions in a larger context is a relatively more complex idea and needs to be understood along with context (Kring & Gordon,1998).

Furthermore, the present study also shows a significant influence of education or employment status on the variable of fear of missing out. Post-hoc analysis clearly indicates that college students experience a higher fear of missing out than employees. There is also a significant gender difference in the same variable where men tend to have a greater fear of missing out than women. In support of these results, a study conducted by JWT Intelligence (2012) found that younger people tend to experience intense unease when they felt they are missing out on what their peers were doing. The study also found that men were more prone to FoMo than women. For instance, 38% said they feel somewhat or very left out when they see via social media that their peers are doing

something they're not, compared with 26% of women. Men from the study also revealed that they are more likely to feel they're missing out when after learning from social media that friends or peers are buying something they're not or aware of.

The next part of the current study was to determine the predictors of virtual socialization and selfie posting among intermediate college students, undergraduate college students and employees of IT/ MNCs. One of the most significant findings was the emergence of fear of missing out as a predictor for both virtual socialization behavior as well as selfie posting across all three groups. This indicates that regardless of what age group one belongs to or their educational or employment status, the fear of missing out was a major motivator of social media usage and selfie posting. The JWT Intelligence (2012) study revealed that 70% of millennials admitted that they related to the idea of FoMo which shows how prevalent the understanding and feelings of fear of missing out are among young adults. Another study conducted on young adults also suggests that people with higher levels of FoMo were more likely to experience the urge to constantly keep checking their social media platforms (Abel, Buff & Burr, 2016). A similar study carried out by Beyens, Frison & Eggermont (2016) indicates that adolescents have a need to belong this in turn was related with increased feeling of FoMO, all of which, led to increased Facebook use.

Regression analyses conducted in the current study also reveal a negative association of fear and virtual socialization behavior among undergraduate college students. A study conducted by Sheldon (2008) reveals people who are involved in online relationships tend to be those who are willing to communicate in real life rather than the opposite. These findings are thus consistent with the current study.

Results from the current study reveal that attentiveness is negatively associated with selfie posting among undergraduate students. As discussed earlier, young adults are often driven by a string desire to keep up with their friends and colleagues by being omnipresent on social media. This behavior can lead to a lack of attention in daily life and activities. Selfie posting is a time consuming process that requires time and attention to detail since youngsters want their selfies to be perfect before posting. This could explain the negative relation of attentiveness and selfie posting.

The current study concludes that there is a significant difference between individuals belonging to various educational and employment categories and even across genders with respect to virtual socialization behavior and selfie posting. Also, in general fear of missing out emerged as a common the predictor of social media related behavior. This is an important theoretical contribution because of the rapid growth of virtual socialization and selfie posting and how the roots of these behaviors are affected by and in turn affect the psychological needs of individuals. This warns us against how a trend among the group can affect the need of belongingness in individuals.

Limitations to this study include the relatively small number of survey participants, as well as the depth of the survey questions. Follow-up personal interviews would have provided a better understanding of how the Millennial Generation perceives the new trend and phenomenon of posting selfies to social networking platforms. Future research might include in-depth interviews, as well as the inclusion of a wider age range of participants.

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