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Capturing Selfies Motivations and Its Impacts among University Students

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Abstract

This study attempts to investigate capturing selfies motivation and its impacts among university students. The study used a quantitative approach with a semi-closed questionnaire internet online through Google Forms. The questionnaire was publicly accessible, and WhatsApp and mailing list disseminated an invitation with the link of it. The data collected from May 20-29, 2019. The sample was selected randomly, students aged 17-25 from different universities and different disciplines. There were 316 participants, (28.48%) were male, and (71.25%) were female. Our findings indicate that the frequency of taking selfies of the participants were rarely (46.20%). Most participants (50.63%) preferred taking and posting group selfies. The majority of the participants (66.87%) tend to keep the selfies to themselves rather than posting or sharing it. Most of the participants stated that for archiving, mainly to record the special moment and entertainment, especially to kill boredom as taking and sharing selfies purpose. (46.84%) The participants reported that the satisfaction of taking and sharing selfies is made them understand about how they looked and how people think about them. The majority of the participants (70.57%) felt that selfies have no impact on their daily lives because taking and sharing selfies is not their routine. Most participants believe that recording and archiving memories about their life, experience, and changes are the positive impacts of the selfies. Moreover, the negative of selfies are exposing personal information, and addiction becomes the most concern of the participants.

Keywords: *selfies, motivations, impacts, university students*

Introduction

Since the past decade, social networking has become a popular form of communication, especially among young people. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat are some of the most widely used social media platform. Social media allows individuals to create their profiles and share information and photos uses on their social network (Mills, Musto, Williams, & Tiggemann, 2018). With the development of digital photography and social media platforms, selfie or the self-photography rapidly has become part of popular culture.

The word selfie entered the English language through a 2002 Australian online forum. By 2013, Oxford Dictionaries formally defined the word selfie to mean "A photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically is taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website (The Public Domain Review, 2013)," and announced the word as the "2013 word of the year" after language researchers revealed a 17.000 % increase in its usage over a one-year time span. A more detailed description, a selfie is a fast self-portrait, made with a smartphone camera and immediately distributed and inscribed into a network,

instant visual communication of where we are, what we are doing, whom we think we are, and whom we think is watching (Holiday, Lewis, Nielsen, Anderson, & Elinzano, 2016). It is because most smartphones equipped with front lenses camera that allow users to see their images in the display before taking a picture and share it.

Phone with multiple front-facing cameras, widescreen, supported with unique or the newest selfie editing software, the capability to control the depth for capturing a better image, each contributing to the shaping of meaning-making potential selfie, make the use of selfies are growing day by day. These technologies are also continually evolving and co-evolving with selfie practice. In 2014, a new gadget hit the market: the "selfie stick," allowing photographers to take more "professional" looking selfies from ever-new angles (Iqani & Schroeder, 2015). The technological and physical constraints of smartphone cameras give rise to a specific form of "distorted look, which makes a particular type of selfie possible (Zhao & Zappavigna, 2018).

Over thousands and millions of people around the world are taking and sharing selfies. Since Instagram first selfie hashtag (#selfie) emerged in 2011, selfies have become the most popular photos posted on Instagram (Wang, et al., 2020). The digital oligarchs at Twitter declared 2014 as the "Year of Selfie" (Jain & Mavani, 2017). Also, according to Google, statistics in 2014 reported about 93 billion selfies taken per day – counting only Android phone users (Schneider & Carbon, 2017).

There are some of the reasons that taking selfies has become so popular. Selfie postings have three functions necessary for public display, presentation, and embodiment (Grogan, Rothery, Cole, & Hall, 2018). Most young people want to get a lot of likes and comments (Veena & Krishnamurthy, 2015; Lim, 2016). Generally, there are four selfie posting motives: attention-seeking, communications, archiving, and entertainment. However, in particular, narcissistic people engage in selfie posting behaviours because of a search for the attention of others and the urge to escape boredom (Biolcati & Passini, 2018). Others mentioned that there are three archetypal groups: "The Communicators" (take and share selfies to engage conversation), "The Self-Publicists" (to show others and to control their images), "Autobiographers" (to chronicle themselves or to "record memories" (Holiday, Lewis, Nielsen, Anderson, & Elinzano, 2016). There were five factors (looks good, keeping memories, mood drove, mirroring the self and posting on social media) behind selfie offline (taking) involvement. There are three factors (social approval, to be the best among the rest, to maintain an online presence) drove the online (posting) selfie popularity (Srivastava, Upadhaya, Sharma, & Gupta, 2018).

There are some different perceptions about selfie, negative such as, selfie is a sign of narcissism epidemic and related to death (Maddox, 2017), and less trustworthy, less socially attractive, less open to new experiences were rated to persons in selfies, on the other hand, more narcissistic and more extroverted than the same persons in photos taken by others (Krämer, et al., 2017). There was a significant indication that body satisfaction mediated the association between narcissism and selfie-posting behaviour, especially for individuals with a positive attitude toward selfie-posting behaviour (Wang, et al., 2020). Previous findings were supporting a positive association between narcissism and selfies (Sorokowski, et al., 2015). The motivation of selfie-posting will lead to narcissism, which is on selfie behaviour among students (Sung, Lee, Kim, & Choi, 2016). At the same time, there are also positive about a selfie, that selfie is a broader social, cultural, and media phenomenon that understands the selfie as far more than a representational image but as a social-technical phenomenon that

momentarily and tentatively holds together several of different elements of mediated digital communication (Cruz & Thornham, 2015). Selfies appear to be a creative innovation and representation in everyday photography (Frosh, 2015). Selfies also empowering to exercise freedom of expression, the practised of self-reflection, a real spiritual purity, increased literacy skills, and build secure interpersonal connection (Kedzior & Allen, 2016).

The impacts of a selfie to young people in society become a concern, did selfies have negative or positive impacts have become issues that many researchers had examined. Some studies mentioned the selfie do more harm than good. There have many reports of death and injuries due to having a dangerous selfie. Dangerous places even attract selfie-takers to take selfies; social media influence them to share their selfies with others that can potentially influence other people to take dangerous selfies. The aims of taking dangerous selfies are to show self-existence, to have more likes or just testing self-bravery (Kurniawan, Habsari, & Nurhaeni, 2017). From 2014 to mid-2016, seventy-five people have died while attempting selfie in fifty-two incidents worldwide (Jain & Mavani, 2017). Taking and sharing selfies could result in higher social sensitivity and lower self-esteem of selfie-takers (Shin, Kim, Im, & Chong, 2017). A prior study also showed the negative effect of selfie-taking behaviours, such as the students wasted their time to edit their images before they post it onto social media; consequently, their personalities become affected (Hassan, Bano, Saeed, Sadaf, & Akhtar, 2018). However, other studies showed that selfies give impact to students by increasing their self-esteem and confidence (Kedzior & Allen, 2016), improve interaction in social life, to help maintain contact with friends, family, and colleagues, and managed their daily communication that shares links, images, videos, news, and status updated (Maniou & Veglis, 2016).

This research objective is to find capturing selfies among the students from several universities in Indonesia, the purpose of taking selfies, the frequency of taking selfies, how they share the selfies, how they take the selfies, the impacts of selfies in their daily life and study, problems or benefits encountered by taking selfies.

Method

The research uses a quantitative approach, using a semi-closed questionnaire internet online through Google Forms. The questionnaire was publicly accessible and using WhatsApp and mailing list to send the invitation link. Data collected from May 20-29, 2019. The sample was selected randomly, students aged 17-25 from different universities and different disciplines including Bina Nusantara University, Tarumanegara University, Pelita Harapan University, Multimedia Nusantara University, President University, Trisakti University, and Kristen Indonesia University. After data collection, we sorted the data into gender, frequency of taking and sharing selfies, the purpose of it, where they share it, influence in their daily life, and the impacts of selfies. We use descriptive and comparative analysis to analyse the data by interpreting the data and comparing it to previous research to demonstrate the findings of the research.

Results

What is the gender of the participants?

The gender of the participant totals, male participants were 90 participants (28.48%), and 226 participants (71.25%) were female.

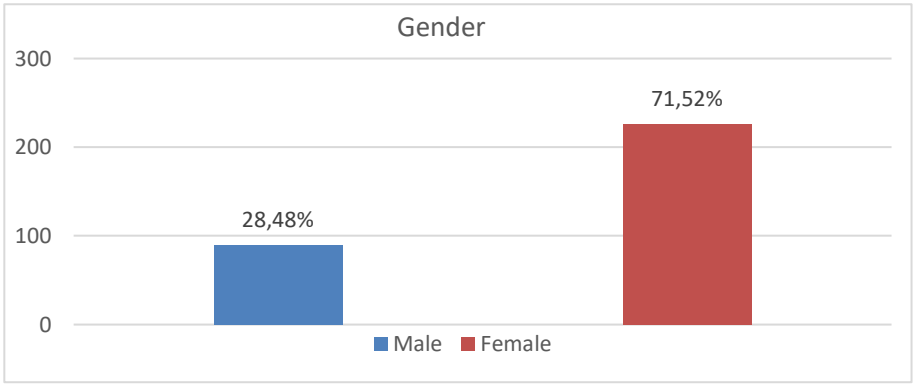


Figure 1. The gender of the participant

How is the frequency of taking selfies?

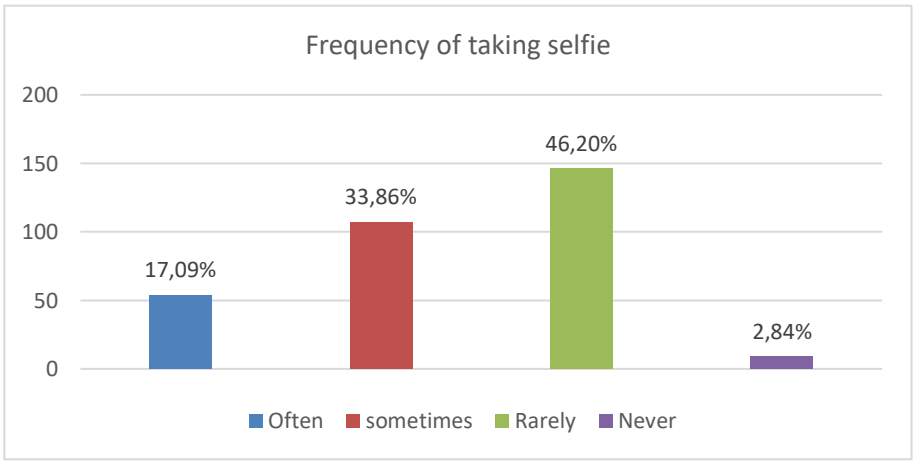


Figure 2. Frequency of taking selfie

Figure 2 shows that 146 participants (46.20 %) take selfies rarely, 107 participants (33.86%) take selfies sometimes, 54 participants (17.09%) often and 9 participants (2.84%) never take selfies.

Do the participants prefer self or group selfies?

Figure 3 shows that 160 participants (50.63%) prefer to take a group selfie, 108 participants (34.18%) take own selfie and group selfies almost about the same frequency, and only 48 participants (15.19%) take own selfies.

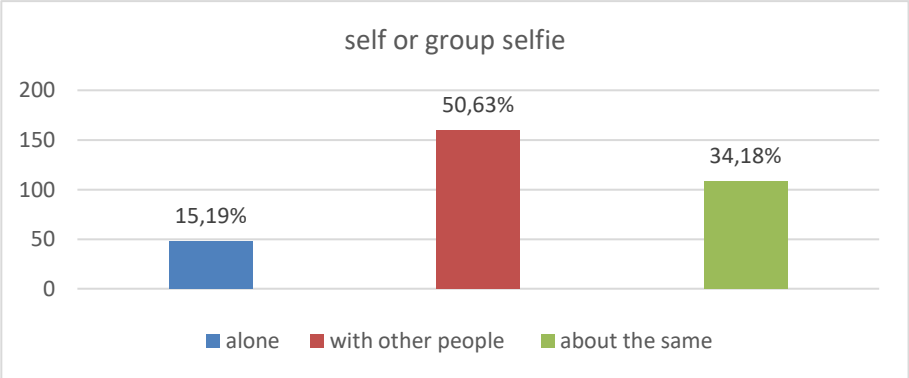


Figure 3. Self or group selfie

What participants do after taking selfies?

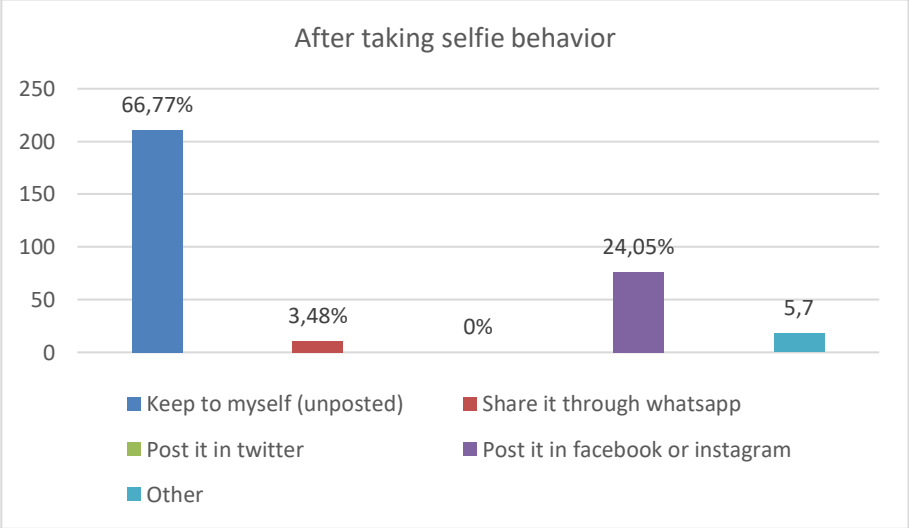


Figure 4. After taking selfie behavior

Figure 4 shows that most of the participants, 211 participants (66.78%) prefer to keep their selfies for themselves, followed by 76 participants (24.05%) share or post selfie through Facebook and Instagram, 11 participants (3.48%) choose WhatsApp and no participants choose Twitter. Other 18 participants (5.7%) never take selfies before, update profile after taking selfies and sometimes keep it or sometimes post it.

What is the purpose of taking and sharing selfies?

Figure 5 shows the majority, 249 of the participants think that the purpose of taking and sharing selfies is to record special moments in life, followed by 111 of the participants because there is nothing to do and to kill the boredom. One hundred three participants think selfies for expressing themselves or their feelings; 97 participants think for updating profile picture, 83 of the participants to document the changes of themselves. Fifty-five participants think for sharing their lives with other people, 43 of participants for showing people what they are doing and where they are, and 23 of participants for getting comments and likes from others because they feel happy when people respond.

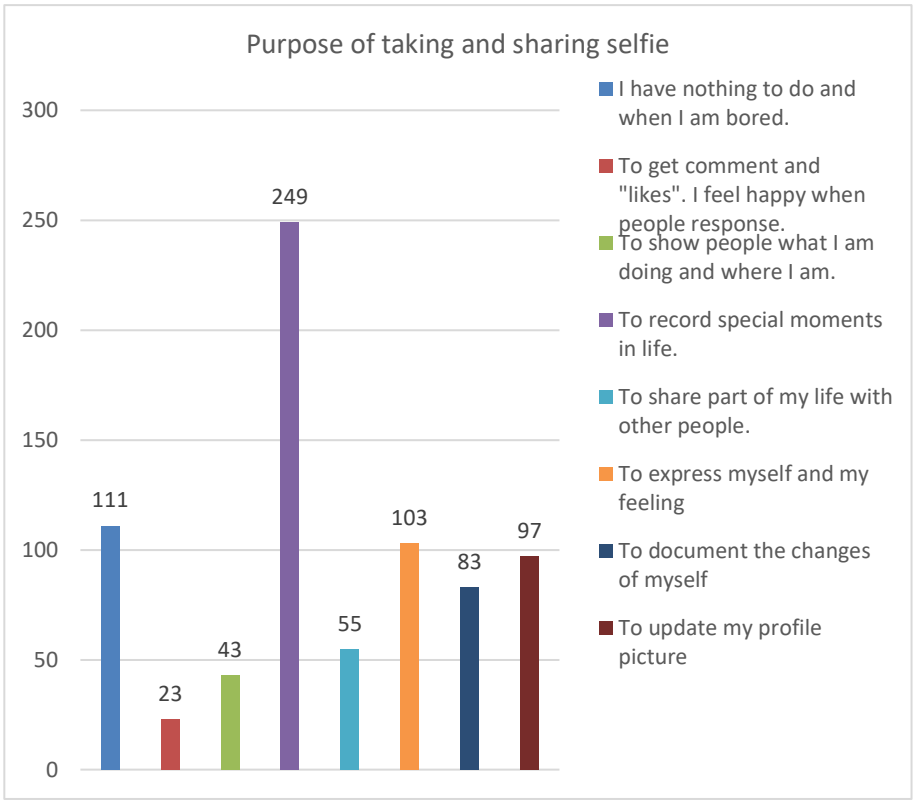


Figure 5. Purpose of taking and sharing selfie

What is the satisfaction of taking and sharing selfies?

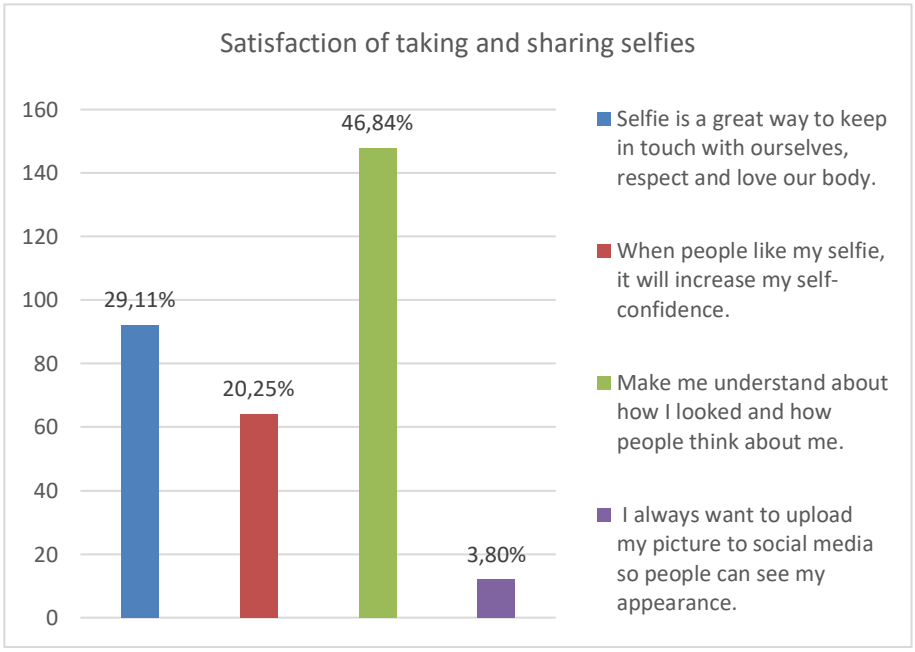


Figure 6. Satisfaction of taking and sharing selfies

Figure 6 indicates that most of the participants, 148 (46.84%) the satisfaction of taking and sharing selfie is making them understand about how they looked and how people think about them. Followed by 92 participants (29.11%) selfie is a great way to keep in touch with

themselves, respect and love their bodies, 64 participants (20.25%) think that when people like their selfie, it will increase their confidence, and 12 participants (3.80%) satisfied because they always want to upload their picture to social media so people can see their appearance.

What is the impact of selfie in participants daily life?

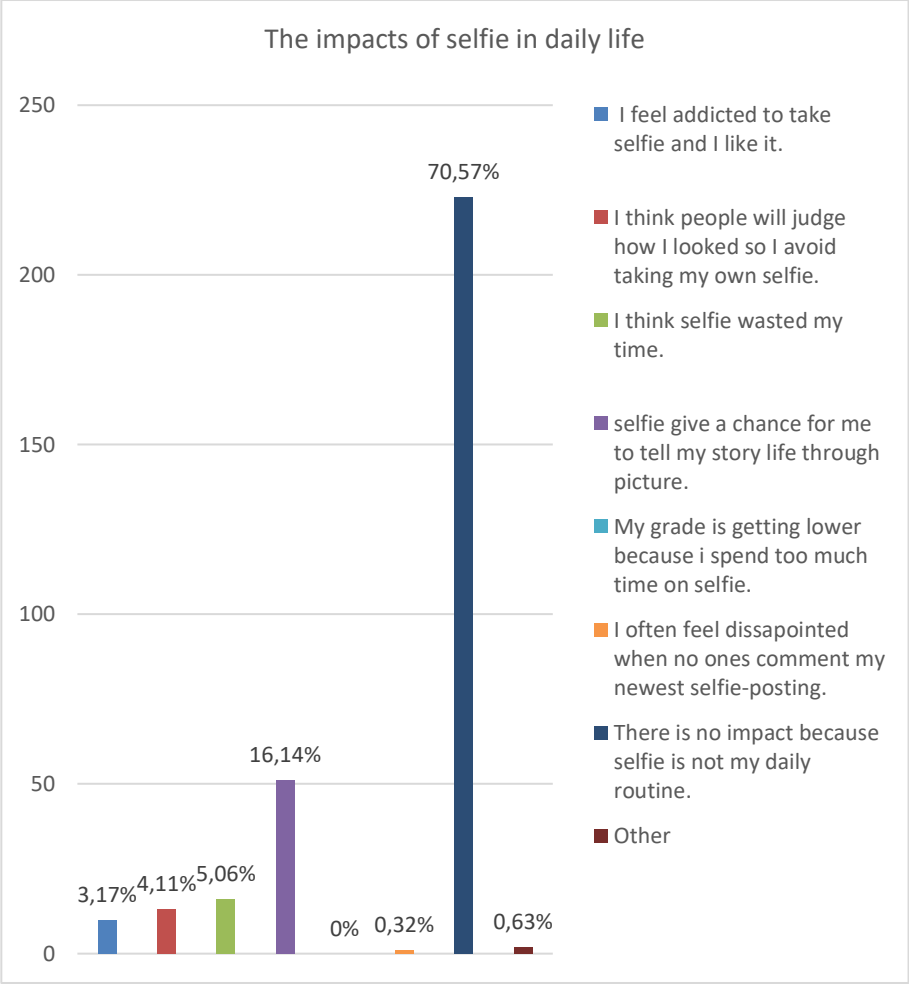


Figure 7. The impacts of selfie in daily life

Figure 7 indicates that most of the participants, 223 (70.57%) reported there were no impacts of selfies in their daily lives because selfies are not part of their daily routine. Followed by 51 participants (16.14%) feel that selfie can give a chance for them to tell their story life through pictures, 16 participants (5.06%) think that selfie wasted their time, 13 participants (4.11%), 10 participants (3.17%) feel addicted to taking selfie and like it, other (0.63%) reported that selfie increase their confidence and be able to express themselves. There is no participant' grade was influence because of taking and sharing a selfie.

What do the participants think about the positive impacts of a selfie?

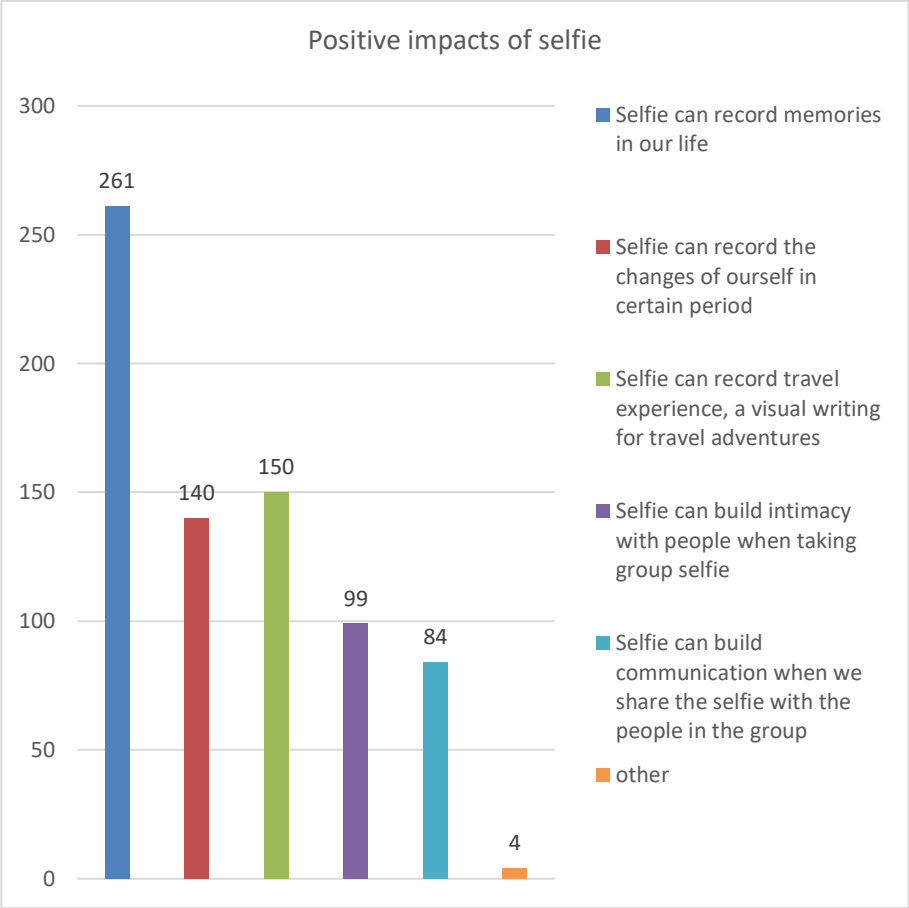


Figure 8. Positive impacts of selfie

Figure 8 shows that 261 of the participants think that selfie can record memories in their lives. They followed by 150 of the participants that selfie can record travel experience, visual writing for travel adventures. 140 of the participants feel that selfie can record the changes in themselves in a certain period, 99 of the participants selfies can build intimacy with people when taking group selfie, 84 participants think that selfie can strengthen communication when sharing the selfie with people in the group, other there is no positive impacts and selfie can increase self-confidence.

What do the participants think about the negative impacts of a selfie?

Figure 9 indicates that 153 of the participants aware about selfie can expose personal information, 111 of the participants concern that selfie can become addictive, 100 of the participants worry that selfie can reveal other important information, 62 of the participants acknowledge that selfie can cause accident, even death, 50 of the participants aware that selfie can send a message that “you are not at home”. Others believe that selfie can mediate narcissism, wasted time, identity theft, lower self-esteem (insecure) so they have to edit their picture before posting it, try to become someone else, obsession towards self, criticize by others, disturb people around especially in public area and waste phone battery, phone memory storage.

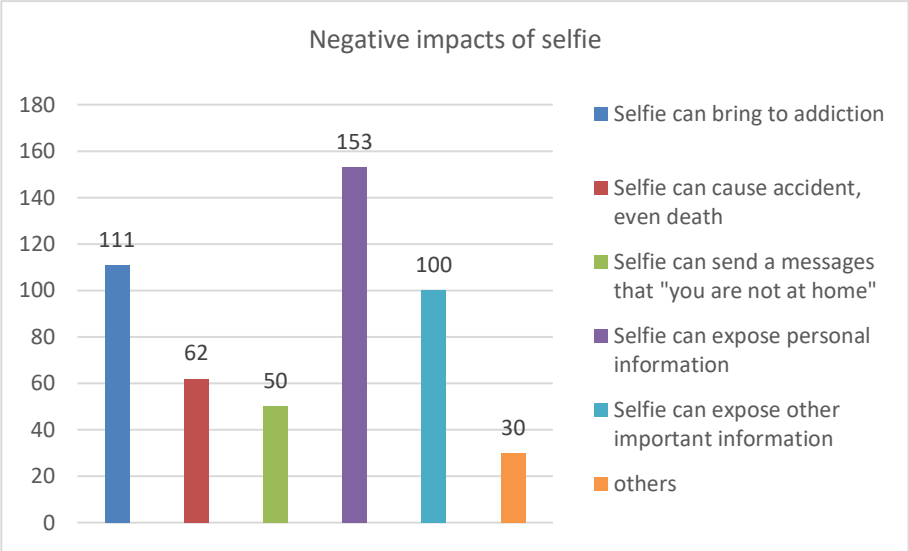


Figure 9. Negative impacts of selfie

Discussion

The research found that out of 90 participants (28.48%) are male, and 226 participants (71.25%) are female. About of 146 participants (46.20%) take selfies rarely, and 107 (33.86%) participants take selfies sometimes. This result in line with Biolcati & Passini (2018), that half of the participants engaged in selfie-posting behaviours very infrequently. Diefenbach & Christoforakos (2017) reported that 50% declared to take selfies about once a month. Krämer, et al., (2017) stated aged between 15 and 29 years, taking selfies per week (M=1.72) and Wang, et al., (2018) (M=1.86). While another study of Veena & Krishnamurthy (2015) indicates that 78 % of participants take selfies regularly, and P & Godwin (2017) though most respondents posted no more than two selfies to their social media accounts in a week, they take selfies 1-2 selfies in a day. Our findings that 160 participants (50.63%) prefer to take a group selfie and 108 participants (34.18%) photograph their own, and group selfies almost about the same frequency. This result consistent with prior studies that the participants prefer to group selfies (M=2.11) than their own (M=1.78) (Biolcati & Passini, 2018), According to Hassan, Bano, Saeed, Sadaf, & Akhtar (2018), that the participants prefer to take a selfie with family and friends and more than half participants predominantly posted group selfies (P & Godwin, 2017). Two hundred eleven participants (66.78%) prefer to keep their selfies for themselves than posting it. We did not ask further about the reason why the participants did not post their selfies. This may correlate to cultural taboos, personal preferences, and how a user tries to manage their presentation through sharing some selfies while blocking viewers from seeing others (Qutub, 2021) or it takes time to choose particular selfies for sharing the best selfie to post on social media (Srivastava, Upadhaya, Sharma, & Gupta, 2018) (this need explore in future research). For posting selfies, the participants prefer Facebook and Instagram platforms rather than WhatsApp, while 70.83% send their selfie via WhatsApp (Veena.G & M.Krishnamurthy, 2015).

The Previous study had mentioned the motives of taking and sharing selfies generally are attention-seeking, communications, archiving, and entertainment. This study showed that most of the participants (249) stated that taking and sharing selfies for memories recording (archiving). One hundred eleven participants were taking and sharing selfies because of

boredom (entertainment), 103 participants to express themselves or their feelings (archiving), 83 participants to document the changes of themselves (archiving), and 97 participants to update their profile picture (archiving). This result indicates significantly that most of the participants take and share selfies for archiving or autobiography purposes. This type of selfie-takers are the people who want to chronicle themselves, and they are interested in authoring their story and int the process hopes to experience self-discovery (Holiday, Lewis, Nielsen, Anderson, & Elinzano, 2016). This result consistent with Biolcati & Passini (2018), that archiving (M=2.45), entertainment (M=1.97), attention-seeking (M=1.90) and communication (M=1.76). While this result is not consistent with Sung, Lee, Kim, & Choi (2016), that attention-seeking (21.84%), communication (19.66%), archiving (18.54%), and entertainment (11.38%).

Our findings also showed the satisfaction of taking and sharing selfies, 148 participants (46.84%) stated selfie make them understand how they looked and how people think about them and 64 participants (20.25%) when people like their selfies, it will increase their confidence. This result inconsistent with Veena & Krishnamurthy (2015), that 51.67% of participants thought a selfie is a great way to in touch with themselves. It indicates that "selfie is a self-representation," "selfie is a self-branding" still affecting people, how we looked and how people looked at us still have a more or less influence in our social life. Also, there are 20% of the participants related to people's responses to self-confidence. This result showed a tendency that less "likes" may affect their self-confidence, this in line with Kedzior & Allen (2016), that selfie impacts self-esteem and self-confidence because people in some way seek affirmation from others to strengthen their self-concept (Shin, Kim, Im, & Chong, 2017). Selfies are efforts for collaborative construction of the self, basically with the returning comments. They serve the purpose of affirmation, validation, and approval from the public for collaboratively constructed online self (Çadırcı & Güngör, 2016). However, there are also 92 participants (29.11%) stated that selfie is a great way to in touch with themselves, respect and love their bodies. Therefore, selfie as self-reflection, selfie for "mirroring the self", also gives satisfaction for many certain people. Selfies are utilization as a mirror for verifying one's looks and appearance as one does through using a mirror (Srivastava, Upadhaya, Sharma, & Gupta, 2018). Seeing ourselves in a mirror always has positive and negative impacts on each person psychology. The positive thing looking about at a mirror can build positive growth and be more grateful for ourselves.

There are no impacts of taking and sharing selfies to most of the participants, 223 participants (70.57%) in their daily lives because selfies are not part of their routine. Nevertheless, there are 51 participants (16.14%) thought that selfie gives them a chance to tell their life stories through pictures. It means selfie also can become a tool to mediate communication, digital visual communication, online storytelling, or a "visual chat". Although there are no direct impacts to the participant' daily lives, there are some benefits that selfie can provide to our lives. Most of the participants' reported selfie has benefits for archiving their lives, 261 participants stated that selfie could record memories, can record travel experience (150 participants), and can record the changes of self (140 participants). As we knew, digital photographs can be stored for more extended periods and much more efficiently and quickly than analogue versions. Taking a digital photograph or selfie using mobile phones can be useful as a life recorder and provide an archive of everyday activities. Therefore, selfies become part of the digital footprints in order not to lose the sense of the past (Çadırcı & Güngör, 2016). The result indicates that selfie most significant benefits are

for recording and archiving people' life. There are also 99 participants consider to build intimacy with people when taking a selfie together, to build interpersonal connections. Some participants (84) thought that selfie could also become a communication media when they share their selfies, hence in this part, the result consistent that one of the positive impacts of a selfie is improving interaction in social life (Maniou & Veglis, 2016).

Most of the participants (153 participants) aware that, taking and sharing selfies on social media will expose their personal information. One hundred participants also stated that taking selfies will reveal other relevant information to the public. Selfie is part of social media, social networking, which have a possibility to some problems such as identity theft and hacking. Some young users feel that giving "status updates; posting selfie, stylish picture" is cool. Also, these young users might not hesitate to share information more than just name and age. Though our result showed that only 50 participants aware that taking a selfie can send a message that "you are not at home," but social networking and online privacy seriously turn out to be a severe concern when sensitive information is being shared (Gangopadhyay & Dhar, 2014). Besides, there is also reported about addiction and cyberbullying on social media. We found that 111 participants aware that taking and sharing selfies can be addictive. Though some previous studies did not mention addiction, it mentioned that the majority of the participants browse social media regularly, which proves that selfie-taking behaviours have considerable effects on them (Hassan, Bano, Saeed, Sadaf, & Akhtar, 2018). Many students feel agitated when cannot using social media sites because they feel incomplete without logging towards sites of social-media. Besides, P & Godwin (2017) showed that although none of the members of discussion groups addicted to selfie, they knew someone personally who seem addicted to taking a selfie. The worst-case there was a British teen, who was used to snap over 200 photos a day, did not leave his house for six months, dropped out from school and frustrated because he was incapable of capturing the perfect selfie, he eventually tried to commit suicide but failed (Jain & Mavani, 2017). Our findings showed that there were 62 participants believed that selfies could cause an accident, even death. In Indonesia, regulation and prohibition about selfies have not been issued officially by the Indonesian government about a dangerous location or dangerous selfie. People will give a warning if taking a selfie prohibited in some locations by putting a sign "Selfie Forbidden" (Kurniawan, Habsari, & Nurhaeni, 2017). This result inconsistent with Veena & Krishnamurthy (2015), that most of the participants (71.66%) stated that taking a selfie can turn deadly. They followed by 16% of participants that selfies could become addictive. There are some statements from participants about the negative impacts of selfies that we need to explore in the future. Such as selfie can mediate narcissism, wasted time, identity theft, lower self-esteem (insecure) so they have to edit their picture before posting it, try to become someone else, obsession towards self, criticized by others, and disturbing people around especially in public area.

Conclusion

It concluded that most of the participants take selfies rarely, group selfie is preferable to own selfie, and most of the participants take selfies but keep for themselves (unposted) to post it for public sharing. This behaviour related to their taking selfies motives, very significant that taking a selfie is for archiving. Because of rarely taking selfies and the archiving is the most dominant motive, therefore, taking and sharing selfies are no much impacts on their daily lives. The participants also feel that the benefits of selfies tend for

archiving. However, the participants still consider about how they looked and how people think about them when they posted the selfie. The response from others has an amount of influence on the satisfaction of taking and sharing a selfie. The major of the participants aware of the negative impacts of selfie that selfie, the same as other social media, there is a threat that the internet online can expose personal information. It indicates this issue becomes the primary concern of the participants and follows with the addiction problem. There are still limitations about this study that can explore more in the future research such as about the reasons of the unposted selfie, more about selfie motivation towards communication, entertainment and attention-seeking, selfies related to self-esteem and narcissism or about a dangerous selfie.

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