

The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Narcissism With Self-Presentation on Social Media Among Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

Intense social media use among Generation Z has led to idealized self-presentation behavior that often does not align with reality. This study aims to examine the relationship between self-esteem and narcissism with self-presentation on social media in Generation Z, both partially and simultaneously. The subjects of the study were 151 respondents from Generation Z who were active on social media platforms. Using a quantitative approach, the data were analyzed through a regression test. The results showed that narcissism had a significant correlation with self-presentation ($t = 2.397$, $p = 0.018$), while self-esteem did not show a significant relationship ($p = 0.270$). Simultaneous analysis showed that self-esteem and narcissism together influenced self-presentation with a sig value of 0.010. Although the contribution of narcissism is more dominant, with a practical contribution of 4.6%, overall, these two variables only explain a small part of the factors that influence self-presentation ($R^2 = 0.060$). Thus, narcissism is a dominant factor in self-presentation behavior, while the contribution of both to the model is still limited. This study recommends exploring additional psychological variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

Keywords : Generation Z, Social Media, Narcissism, Self Presentation, Self Esteem

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology in 2024 brings significant changes to the way we communicate and access information. The Internet, now a daily necessity, has increased the accessibility of communication and information through social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. In the midst of this advanced era, Generation Z was born as a group that can easily adapt to technological advances such as the Internet. From an early age, generation Z has been exposed to Internet technology and has an unlimited thirst for technology (Noordiono, 2016). Social media allows Generation Z, a highly digitally skilled generation, to utilize the platform as a means of communication, entertainment, and self-presentation. Survey results suggest that in 2024, Generation Z will be the highest Internet user group at 34.40%, and 3.32% will use the Internet to access social media (Indonesian Internet Network Providers Association, 2024). This is notable because many individuals present an idealized or altered version of themselves in the real world to gain social validation, such as "likes" and positive comments, which can indirectly affect their self-image.

Research conducted by (Aulia, 2023) and (Wulandari, 2022) says that many individuals do self-presentation by displaying information that is different from that in the real world. Social media users often present an idealized version of themselves that does not always match reality. Factors that can affect self-presentation are self-esteem and narcissism. Self-esteem affects the way individuals assess themselves, allowing them to make self-presentations driven by the self-esteem that exists within them. Meanwhile, narcissism is related to the need for excessive recognition. Individuals who engage in self-presentation attempt to display positive aspects on social media in order to achieve their goal, namely, gaining recognition from others. Research by (Putri et al., 2022) shows a relationship between high self-esteem and increased self-presentation intensity. While the literature has extensively discussed this factor, gaps remain in understanding how the two variables simultaneously influence self-presentation behavior among Generation Z, particularly in Indonesia.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and narcissism and their impact on self-presentation on social media among Generation Z. This approach is expected to contribute to understanding the psychological factors that influence behavior in the digital world. This study also focuses on the Generation Z population who have a high intensity in using social media in Indonesia. In addition, the study's results are expected to provide practical benefits, offering insight for individuals and related institutions on how to utilize social media healthily and wisely. Thus, this study not only addresses the existing literature gap but also aims to make scientific and practical contributions to the field of digital psychology in the modern era.

Previous research has shown that individuals with high self-esteem tend to present themselves in a positive light on social media. In contrast, individuals with narcissistic traits tend to use social media to gain excessive recognition and attention. This study aims to fill the gap by analyzing the relationship between self-esteem, narcissism, and self-presentation behaviors in Generation Z, using an in-depth and current data-driven approach.

This study aims to fill the gap by examining the combined influence of self-esteem and narcissism on self-presentation in Generation Z. Furthermore, it expands the scope of subjects beyond late adolescents and college students, as previous studies have done, to include Generation Z as a whole, thereby reflecting the characteristics of a broader population. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution by offering a new perspective on the dynamics of self-presentation behavior on social media, as well as providing practical input for the education and self-development of Generation Z in the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Goffman (Rorong, 2018), self-presentation is an activity carried out by specific individuals to create and maintain definitions and social identities for themselves and others. The definition of the situation affects the variety of interactions that are feasible or not feasible for actors in existing situations. Self-presentation is an individual's effort to foster a particular impression in front of certain people in front of others by arranging behavior so that others interpret his identity according to what he wants. On the other hand, (Michikyan et al., 2015) highlighted the internal dimensions of self-presentation, which include authentic self, ideal self, and false self. Another definition, put forward by Brown (Vogel & Rose, 2016), defines self-presentation as part of impression management, where individuals develop their roles and identities to gain social respect through interactions with others. This

perspective complements Goffman's view by demonstrating that self-presentation is not only influenced by external factors but also closely tied to personal aspirations and social pressures.

Self-esteem is described as an individual's perception of themselves regarding the importance of achievement, pleasant social interactions, and psychological health (Baumeister & Vohs, 2016). Self-esteem comprises a series of thoughts and feelings regarding our self-perception, influencing motivation, attitudes, behaviors, and emotional adjustments that impact us. (Sriyasekti & Setiady, 2015).

(Apriliani, 2015) defines narcissism as a behavior characterized by self-love and excessive display of self-identity. In addition to having increased self-confidence, narcissistic individuals also feel superior in terms of achievement and recognition. Narcissistic individuals tend to rate themselves highly in aspects of intelligence, ingenuity, and imagination. According to Raskin & Terry (Maghfiroh, 2023), Individuals with high levels on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory show a tendency to show off, seek dominance, assert themselves, and show arrogance and critical; narcissism includes seven aspects, namely: Authority, Self Sufficiency, Superiority, Exhibitionism, Exploitativeness, Vanity, Entitlement. According to (Pangastuti, 2015), self-esteem, self-concept, loneliness, and envy can influence the presence of narcissism in individuals.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The purpose of this approach is to investigate the relationship between self-esteem, narcissism, and self-presentation in Generation Z. The population in this study consisted of individuals from Generation Z born between 1997 and 2012. Because the population size cannot be determined with certainty, the number of participants is estimated using the GPower application. The calculation results indicate that a minimum of 61 participants is required. However, during the study's implementation, 151 respondents were collected. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The criteria for participants were individuals from Generation Z who use social media for more than 3 hours per day and actively post 2 to 3 times a day or more.

Data collection in this study was conducted through a survey using a Likert scale-based questionnaire. The scale consists of five answer choices: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), which include both favorable and unfavorable statements. This approach is employed to gather comprehensive and in-depth data in line with the research objectives.

This study involves three main variables. Among them, the dependent variable in this study is self-presentation; the independent variable consists of self-esteem and narcissism.

Self-presentation refers to how individuals portray themselves by adjusting to the expectations or desires of themselves or others. Self-presentation has 3 aspects, namely, the Real Self, the Ideal Self, and the False Self.

Table 1. Self Presentation Instrument

Dimensions	Indicator	Item		Total Item
		Favorable	Unfavorable	
<i>Real Self</i>	Showing yourself as you are on social media	5,6,7,8,9	-	5
<i>Ideal Self</i>	Showing self-will and expectations on social media	4,10,14	-	4
<i>False Self</i>	Showing a different self on social media and in the real world	1,2,3,11,12,13,15,16,17	-	9
Total Item		17	0	17

Data collection for the self-presentation variable used an adaptation of the Facebook Self Presentation Questionnaire (SPFBQ) Scale developed by Michikyan, et al (2015). This instrument consists of 17 favorable statements designed to comprehensively measure aspects of self-presentation. Based on the validity test, this scale showed an item power of difference that ranged from 0.457 to 0.905, indicating good measurement quality. In addition, the reliability of this instrument is also very high, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.925, so it can be concluded that this measuring instrument qualifies as a valid and reliable instrument. Self esteem as a set of individual beliefs about themselves, which includes feelings of competence, worthiness, and self-esteem. Self esteem has four aspects, namely: Significance, Competence, Virtue, and Power.

Table 2. Self Esteem Instrument

Dimensions	Indicator	Item		Total Item
		Favorable	Unfavorable	
<i>Significance</i>	Care, attention, and affection received from others	7,9,11,13	8,10,13,14	8
<i>Competence</i>	Ability to successfully meet demands	21,23,25,27	22,24,26,28	8
<i>Virtue</i>	Adherence to or following ethical and moral standards	15,17,19	16,18,20	6
<i>Power</i>	The ability to control, the ability to be able to regulate and control the behavior	1,3,5	2,4,6	6

	of others			
Total Item		14	14	28

Data regarding self esteem was collected using 28 items, consisting of favorable and unfavorable statements, which have been modified from the instrument (Darmawan, 2023). Based on the validity test, this instrument shows the differentiating power of the items within the range of 0.313 to 0.584, which indicates the ability of the items to distinguish respondents adequately. Meanwhile, the reliability test results show a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.874, which indicates that this scale has a fairly high level of accuracy and consistency for use in measuring self esteem.

High scores on the Narssistic Personality Inventory have a tendency to have an exhibitionist, domineering, assertive nature that tends to be arrogant and criticizing. Narcissism consists of 7 aspects namely, Authority, Self Sufficiency, Superiority, Exhibitionism, Exploitativeness, Vanity, Entitlement.

Table 3. Narcissism Instrument

Dimensions	Indicator	Item		Total Item
		Favorable	Unfavorable	
<i>Authority</i>	Individuals are seen as dominating, preferring to lead or who often make their own decisions compared to others.	1,3	2,4	4
<i>Self Sufficiency</i>	Individuals feel they have high self-efficacy such as assertiveness, independence, self-confidence and the need to achieve.	5,7	6,8	4
<i>Superiority</i>	Individuals have a feeling that they are the best, great, and perfect.	9,11,13	10,12,14	6
<i>Exhibitionism</i>	More often show their physical appearance in order to get recognition from others of their identity	15,17,19	16,18,20	6

<i>Exploitativeness</i>	Individuals will use others as a means to increase their self-esteem. Such as demeaning others to gain admiration from others	21,23	22,24,25	5
<i>Vanity</i>	Individuals are less able to accept input or points of view from others towards them or it can be said that they have an arrogant, stubborn or haughty nature.	26,28	27,29	4
<i>Entitlement</i>	Individuals tend to choose according to their own will without paying attention to the environment around them even though it will make them get opposition from those around them.	30,32	31,33	4
Total Item		16	17	33

This study measures the level of narcissism using a measuring instrument modified from the instrument from (Nanda, 2022), which consists of favorable and unfavorable statements. This narcissism scale consists of 33 items that have been adjusted for research needs. Based on the results of the validity test, the differential power of the items is in the range of 0.309 to 0.833, which indicates the ability of the items to distinguish respondents well. In addition, the reliability test resulted in a Cronbach alpha value of 0.920, which indicates that the scale has a very high level of accuracy and consistency.

Questionnaires were distributed to members of Generation Z who actively use social media to conduct this study. The correlational method was used in this study to test the hypothesis stating the relationship between the variables. Multiple regression analysis was used in the data analysis of this study with the help of SPSS version 25.

RESULTS

Participant data obtained through Google Form included information on age and gender. The data was then processed and presented in tabular form, and recapitulated with the following results.

Table 4. Demographic Data

Variable	N=151	Percentage
Gender		
Male	46	30%
Female	105	70%
Age		
12	0	0%
13	0	0%
14	0	0%
15	0	0%
16	0	0%
17	2	1,32%
18	7	4,64%
19	7	4,64%
20	21	13,91%
21	37	24,50%
22	33	21,85%
23	12	7,95%
24	11	7,28%
25	8	5,30%
26	9	5,96%
27	4	2,65%

From the table above, it shows that based on gender, the majority of respondents are women as many as 105 people (70%), while men totaled 46 people (30%). In terms of age, there are no respondents under 17 years old. Respondents aged 21 years dominated the number of participants as many as 37 people (24.50%), followed by 22 years old as many as 33 people (21.85%) and 20 years old as many as 21 people (13.91%). Other ages had smaller percentages, with 18 and 19 years old each totaling 7 people (4.64%) and 17 years old only 2 people (1.32%). The oldest respondent, aged 27, was only 4 people (2.65%). This data shows that the age distribution is dominated by the young adult age range, especially at 20 to 22 years old.

Table 5. Empirical Category

Variable	Self Precentage	Self Esteem	Narcissism
Mean	57,52	86,88	102,00
SD	11,53	6,464	6,672
Frequency			
ST	6 3,97%	8 5,29%	7 4,63%
T	45 29,80%	24 15,89%	28 18,54%
S	53 35,11%	81 53,64%	78 51,65%

R	41 27,15%	31 20,52%	32 21.19%
SR	6 3,97%	7 4,63%	6 3,97%

In the Self-Presentation variable (Y), with an average of 57.52 and a standard deviation of 11.53, the majority of respondents are in the Moderate category (35.11%), followed by the High (29.80%) and Low (27.15%) categories, while the Very High and Very Low categories are 3.97% each. In the Self-Esteem variable (X1), with an average of 86.88 and a standard deviation of 6.464, the Moderate category dominates (53.64%), followed by the Low (20.52%) and High (15.89%) categories, while the Very High and Very Low categories are relatively small, 5.29% and 4.63% respectively. The Narcissism variable (X2) which has an average of 102.00 and a standard deviation of 6.672 is also dominated by the Moderate category (51.65%), followed by Low (21.19%) and High (18.54%), with the Very High and Very Low categories amounting to 4.63% and 3.97% respectively. This distribution shows that the Medium category dominates in all three variables.

Table 6. Normality Test

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Self Esteem – Narcissism – Self Presentation	0,070	151	0,069

The normality test results for the Self Esteem (X1), Narcissism (X2), and Self-Presentation (Y) variables using SPSS 25 for Windows show a significance value of 0.069 which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$).

Table 7. Linearity Test

Variable	Deviation from Linearity		
	F	Sig.	Description
Self Esteem – Self Presentation	1,161	0,284	Linear
Narcissism – Self Presentation	1,231	0,216	Linear

The results of the linearity test of the relationship between the self esteem variable and Self Presentation obtained a significance of 0.284 ($p > 0.05$), so it can be concluded that the relationship between the self esteem variable and Self Presentation is linear. Meanwhile, for the relationship between narcissism and Self-Presentation variables, a significance value of 0.216 ($p > 0.05$) was obtained, which also indicates that the relationship between these two variables is linear.

Table 8. Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Collinearity Statistics		
	Tolerance	VIF	Description
Self Esteem – Narcissism	0,906	1,104	No Multicollinearity

The results of the multicollinearity test between the variables of self esteem and narcissism obtained a tolerance value = $0.906 > 0.10$ and $VIF = 1.104 < 10.00$. This means that there is no multicollinearity between the variables of self esteem and narcissism.

Table 9. Heteroscedasticity Test

Variable	Correlations	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Keterangan
Self Esteem	0,296	No Hetercodasticity
Narcissism	0,071	No Hetercodasticity

Based on the table above, the results of the heteroscedasticity test show that the self esteem variable has a significance value of 0.296 ($p > 0.05$), and the narcissism variable (X2) has a significance value of 0.071 ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no heteroscedasticity in these two variables.

This study uses multiple linear regression analysis method with the help of SPSS software version 25. The choice of this method is based on the fulfillment of data analysis requirements, such as normal data distribution, linear relationships, and the absence of multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity symptoms. The regression analysis process includes a t-test to evaluate the partial relationship between the independent and dependent variables, as well as an F-test to assess the simultaneous relationship between variables X1 and X2 and variable Y. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R square) is used to measure the joint influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 10. Determination Coefficient Test

Variable	R-square	Description
Self Presentation	0,060	Weak

The coefficient of determination test shows that self esteem and narcissism contribute 6% to self-presentation, while the remaining 94% is influenced by other factors outside the model. This result indicates a weak influence of self esteem and narcissism variables on self-presentation variables, so additional factor exploration is needed for a more thorough understanding of self-presentation.

Table 11. Simultaneous Test (F Test)

Variable	F	Sig.
Self Presentation	4.751	0,010

The results of the simultaneous test show that self esteem and narcissism significantly affect self-presentation, with an F value of 4.751 and a significance of 0.010 ($p < 0.05$). These

results confirm that the two independent variables together contribute to changes in self-presentation.

Table 12. Partial Test (T Test)

Variable	t	P	Description
Self Esteem	1,107	0,270	Not Significant
Narcissism	2,397	0,018	Significant

Based on the table above, the self esteem variable has a t value of 1.107 with a p value of 0.270. Since the p value is greater than 0.05, the relationship of self esteem to self presentation is declared insignificant, which means that there is insufficient evidence to state that self esteem has a direct contribution to self presentation.

In contrast, the Narcissism variable shows a t value of 2.397 with a p value of 0.018. Since the p value is smaller than 0.05, the relationship between narcissism and self-presentation is significant. This indicates that narcissism has a meaningful direct contribution to self-presentation. Thus, in this study, only narcissism was statistically proven to provide a significant relationship to self-presentation, while self esteem did not provide a significant relationship.

Table 13. Regression Equation

Variable	Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig
	B	Std.Error	Beta	t	
Constant	7,734	16,422	-	0,471	0,638
Self Esteem	0,165	0,149	0,093	1,107	0,270
Narcissism	0,347	0,145	0,201	2,397	0,018

The regression equation shows that the constant of 7.734 describes the value of self-presentation when self esteem and narcissism do not exist. Every increase of one score on self esteem will increase self presentation by 0.165, while every increase of one score on narcissism reduces self presentation by 0.347.

Table 14. Effective Contribution

Variable	Regression Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	R Square	Effective Contribution
Self Esteem	0,093	0,154	0,060	0,014
Narcissism	0,021	0,229	0,060	0,046

Regression CoefficientThe results of the above analysis show that the variables of self esteem and narcissism make different effective contributions to self-presentation on social media, although the overall contribution is relatively small. The self esteem variable has a regression coefficient of 0.093, a correlation coefficient of 0.154, and an R Square value of 0.060, with an effective contribution of only 0.014 (1.4%). Meanwhile, narcissism showed a regression coefficient of 0.021, a correlation coefficient of 0.229, and the same R Square value, but with an effective contribution of 0.046 (4.6%). This means that despite its limited contribution, narcissism has an important role in influencing how individuals present themselves on social

media. This also indicates that there are other factors beyond self esteem and narcissism that are more dominant in shaping self-presentation.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research conducted, several things can strengthen the understanding of the relationship between self-esteem, narcissism, and Self-Presentation in Generation Z on social media. This study aims to test three hypotheses, namely, the positive relationship between self-esteem and self-presentation, the positive relationship between narcissism and self-presentation, and the simultaneous relationship between self-esteem and narcissism with self-presentation. The test results obtained showed a significant contribution of narcissism to self-presentation, while self-esteem did not show a significant effect.

This study found that self-esteem does not significantly impact self-presentation and that each social media platform has distinct social rules and interaction patterns, thereby creating unique social dynamics that influence the behavior of users with varying levels of self-esteem. In addition, the level of engagement of social media users, such as on Facebook, can affect self-esteem positively or negatively, where some individuals focus more on seeking information than presenting themselves.

This suggests that narcissism has an important role in shaping the way individuals present themselves on social media. Individuals who have narcissistic tendencies tend to be more active in managing their self-image to appear attractive to others. Meanwhile, self-esteem was not found to have a significant effect, indicating that a person's self-confidence does not necessarily influence how they present their image on social media. This indicates that the drive to stand out is more strongly influenced by the need for recognition unique to narcissistic individuals than by stable self-esteem.

Narcissism, through aspects such as authority, superiority, and exhibitionism, encourages individuals to perform ideally and attract attention, which is in line with the findings of (Pangastuti, 2015) and (Hemaviana, 2024). This study highlights narcissism as a dominant factor in the self-presentation behavior of Generation Z, who seek social validation through social media.

This study shows that self-esteem and narcissism exert different influences on self-presentation on social media, although the overall contribution is negligible. The practical contribution of self-esteem is only 0.014%, while narcissism reaches 0.046%, confirming the greater role of narcissism in influencing how individuals present themselves. The R Square value of 0.060 indicates that these two variables only explain a small part of the factors that influence self-presentation, so it is necessary to study other variables that have a greater influence.

The results showed the empirical mean on the self-presentation variable (57.52), self-esteem (86.88), and narcissism (102.00). All three variables are in the high category, indicating that individuals from Generation Z in this study tend to have high self-confidence, both in terms of their self-perception and in presenting themselves strategically on social media. In addition, the high narcissism score indicates a tendency to display an idealized or even exaggerated self-image, in line with the characteristics of social media as an imaging space.

The regression equation results show that narcissism contributes more than self-esteem to self-presentation, with an increase of 0.347 for every unit of narcissism, while self-esteem only contributes 0.165. Without the influence of both variables, self-presentation has a baseline value of 7.734. The findings suggest that individuals with narcissistic tendencies are more driven to present an idealized image online as a form of seeking social validation.

This study contributes to the digital media psychology literature by affirming narcissism as an important factor in digital identity formation. Practically, these results can inform

educators and counselors in designing digital literacy interventions that are more sensitive to narcissistic motivations.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to examine the relationship between self-esteem and narcissism, as well as self-presentation on social media, among Generation Z. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and self-presentation, a positive relationship between narcissism and self-presentation, and a simultaneous relationship between self-esteem and narcissism and self-presentation. The results of this study revealed that narcissism has a significant influence on self-presentation on social media in Generation Z, while self-esteem did not show a significant influence. These findings make an important contribution to understanding the psychological dynamics of Generation Z, particularly the role of narcissism in driving the behavior of presenting an idealized self-identity on social platforms. These results support the theory that the need for social validation and the tendency to attract attention plays a role in shaping Generation Z's online behavior. In addition, this study highlights the need to consider other, more substantial variables to expand insights into the factors that influence self-presentation on social media. Future research is expected to include additional variables, such as self-regulation or social-environmental influences, to enrich the understanding of the factors that influence self-presentation. Qualitative methods can also be used to explore individual perspectives more deeply, including those from populations with diverse cultural backgrounds. From a practical perspective, Generation Z is expected to prioritize authenticity in self-presentation and utilize social media as a tool that supports self-development and fosters meaningful relationships rather than merely seeking social validation. The findings confirm that individuals with higher levels of narcissism tend to more actively present an idealized self on social media to gain social recognition and validation, underscoring the importance of narcissism in shaping self-presentation behaviors.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that need to be considered, the first is that the distribution of questionnaires has not been carried out widely, so the reach of respondents is limited. This may affect data coverage and generalization of findings. Second, there are limitations in ensuring the accuracy of the selection of research subjects. Inaccuracy in determining the characteristics of subjects in accordance with the research criteria has the potential to affect the validity of the data obtained. Third, this study has not included the intensity of social media use as one of the variables measured. In fact, the intensity has significant potential in influencing self-presentation patterns on social media, so that it can provide more comprehensive information about the relationship between self esteem, narcissism, and self-presentation.

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