

## **Online Selfie Behavior and Self-Representation Among Emirati Youth**

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**ABSTRACT:** This article examines selfie-behavior and perceptions among Emirati youths and explores multiple variable shaping young's people selfie behavior in the context of UAE. Using a quantitative method, namely a survey involving 300 Emirati youth, the article explores various the extent to which key demographics variables such as gender and age are the main factors shaping online selfie behavior and perception among youth. Drawing on sociological distinctions between defensive and acquisitive self-representations as well as between high and low self-monitors, the study confirms, on the one hand, that both age and gender are strongly correlated with personal characteristics influencing lower or higher self-promotion and self-representation in general, and, thus, online selfie trends among youth. However, the study also affirms that sociocultural variables related to marriage as a societal institution (family status) plays also a more prominent role in online selfie behavior, and sheds light on this important phenomenon in the context of UAE as an Arab and Islamic country, on the other.

**Keywords:** Selfies; Social media; UAE; youth; self-representation; gender; self-monitoring, family status.

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### **Introduction**

Research studies have shown that age and gender are key factors shaping social media behavior and use in general (Dhir et al., 2016), and users' selfie activities online particularly (Nguyen & Barbour, 2017; Weiser, 2015). Scholars have found, indeed, close correlations between individuals' usage of social media and their life satisfaction, especially among young people. In this literature, scholars have stressed the importance of psychological factors related to youth behavior as major variables shaping their online selfie trends. But despite the development of a rich literature exploring this issue, existing studies have rarely explored how socio-cultural culture might affect online selfie behavior, in addition to the key demographic category of age. This lacune is particularly more significant in the context of Arab countries where cultural and societal factors strongly

impinge on youth as a demographic group and social movement in general and on gendered use and perception of selfies in particular.

Addressing the above lacuna, the aim of this article, thus, is to examine selfie-behavior and perceptions among Emirati youths and study various factors shaping young's people selfie behavior in the context of UAE, an important Arab country that boast one of the highest social media use and penetration in the Middle East and globally. Using a quantitative method, namely survey involving 300 Emirati youth sampled from universities across the country, the paper explores the main demographics shaping selfie behavior among Emirati youth as well as the cultural and social factors in the context of the UAE influencing selfie behavior among youth. Drawing on sociological distinctions

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between defensive and acquisitive self-representations as well as between high and low self-monitors, the study confirms that both age and gender are strongly correlated with personal characteristics that can determine lower or higher self-promotion and self-representation in general. Nonetheless, the study also affirms that family status (single vs married) plays also a prominent role, highlighting the role of cultural context specific to the UAE and Arab region. That is, in the context of Arab countries, young and single people are socially and psychologically more vulnerable and less empowered, which lead them to engage in defensive self-representation and by extension low-impression self-impression.

### **Self-Portraits and Social media: The Rise of the 'Selfie':**

The phenomenal development of selfies as a social practice in recent years has become a key aspect of the online social experience (Weiser, 2015). Social media users post pictures of all sorts, particularly selfies, to express their personalities, lifestyles, and social relationships. A selfie typically refers to “a self-portrait photo of oneself (sometimes with other people), taken with a camera phone or a selfie stick held at arm's length or pointed at a mirror that is usually shared through social media” (Sorokowski et al., 2015). But while the mass adoption of selfies is a recent phenomenon, self-portraits as a genre in photography dates back to early nineteenth century at least (Kim & Chock, 2015). In fact, the invention of the portable Kodak Brownie box camera in 1900 led to photographic self-portraits becoming a popular practice (Lutz, 2017). The adoption of the genre flourished mainly in the 1970s when affordable instant cameras permitted selfies to become a new medium of self-expression used to delve into intimate representation of the self, allowing in the process amateurs to learn photography with instant results.

The genre of self-portraits reached a turning point with the mass adoption of digital cameras and social media. The convergence between digital photography and computer-mediated communication has made selective self-presentation an effective way to create an ideal self-image (Walther, 2007; Hancock & Tome, 2010; Wallop, 2013). Scholars have argued that the impact of computer mediated communication and social media go beyond allowing fast and more convenient form of communication and interconnection to offering people “a great channel and venue for self-presentation” (Kim & Chock, 2017). Early forms of online self-representation identified by scholars include blogs and personal pages as well as chat groups and online dating site profiles (Ellison and al., 2007). With the rise of social media sites and mass

adoption of smart phones, this phenomenon has become deeply ingrained in the daily practices of millions of online users so much so that that “photo sharing on various social networking sites (SNSs) has become an important part of the online social experience” (Sung and Choi, 2016, p. 260).

### **Selfies as 'backstage' self-presentation**

The idea of using communication for self-presentation was initially advanced by Goffman (1959) in his seminal work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* in which he pointed out how people express their identities through verbal and non-verbal messages. According to Goffman, people try to manage information about themselves in order to help “define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of [them]” (p.1). In fact, scholars have drawn on Goffman's dramaturgical distinction between a person's “front stage” and “backstage” posturing of the self to examine the interconnections between offline and online self-presentation and implications of social media for self-presentation and identity construction (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013; Smith & Sanderson, 2015; Rettberg, 2015). In particular, social media have permitted individuals to have more resources to manage self-portrayal and control information disclosure using both verbal and non-verbal resources especially in the case of selfies (Xu and Armstrong, 2019).

### **Why do people post selfies? Pathology of an everyday 'mundane' practice**

While people can have diverse reasons for taking and posting selfies, a significant part of research in the literature has focused on the psychological motivations for this phenomenon, especially among young users. In fact, a number of scholars have found close relationships between individuals' usage of social media and their life satisfaction (Saslow et al., 2012; Ross et al., 2009; Valenzuela et al., 2009). Saslow et al. (2012), for instance, found that individuals who posted dyadic profile pictures on Facebook, reported feeling more satisfied with their relationships and closer with their partners than individuals who did not. Some studies suggested that people with low self-esteem feel encouraged to post selfies to seek recognition (Mehdizadeh, 2010), but others reported that people with a higher tendency toward public self-consciousness post fewer selfies (e.g. Chae, 2017). Researchers have also linked selfie-behavior to narcissism especially among users who spend long time on social media sites (SMS), labelling selfie-behavior as “shallow way for teenagers and celebrities to show narcissism and

fashion, seek attention, and practice self-promotion” (Nemer & Freeman, 2015, p. 1833). as and that narcissism is closely associated with SNS users' self-promoting behaviors, selfie-posting behaviors, time spent editing selfies (Fox & Rooney, 2015), as well as with Facebook profile picture selection and selfie-posting frequency (Sorokowski et al., 2015).

Many scholars, however, have criticized what Sneft and Baym (2015) describe as ‘extreme’ discourse about selfies reflecting a type of ‘moral panic’ that “tends to heighten when a particular media form or practice is adopted by young people, women, or people of color” (p.1592). Understanding the selfie phenomenon, in this perspective, need we need “more accurate language than that afforded by 19th-century psychoanalysis to speak about what people believe themselves to be doing, and what response they are hoping to elicit”. (p.1589). In the same vein, scholars have argued that we need to analyze selfies as empowering practices through which individuals regain control over their own embodied self and body aesthetic (Rugnetta, 2014; Tiidenberg and Tekobbe, 2014), allowing them to reconstruct confidence and receive acknowledgement (Nemer & Freeman, 2015).

### Gendered Selfie and self-disclosure

Though research studies have confirmed that both males and females utilize selfies for self-presentation and self-identification, scholars have reported important gender differentiations related to selfie behavior. Researchers have found that females tend to use the Internet in general for social gratifications compared to males who use it more for professional reasons and information seeking (Colley & Maltby, 2008). Scholars have also found that females prefer to use social media for building relationships and maintaining them (Hargittai & Hsieh, 2010; Special & Li-Barber, 2012; Teppers et al., 2014). In the same vein, scholars observed that females are more likely to take selfies than males, (Qiu et al., 2015), and that females tend to seek approval from peers and social groups more than males (Manago et al., 2008). In the same vein, Scholars pointed out that girls tend to edit their selfies to get favorable attention from peers and meet standards set up by them (Chua & Chang, 2016). Similarly, some researchers concluded that female teenagers tend to disclose more information online compared to male teenagers (Valkenburg & Peter 2007).

However, several other studies pointed out that females disclose less personal information than males in general (Special & Li-Barber, 2012; Chang & Heo, 2014), and that females tend to reveal less personal information due to social pressures (Taraszow et al., 2010; Thelwall,

2008). In addition to gender, research studies have found that age is among the most important variables determining Internet use in general and selfie behavior particularly. Scholars have argued that young people are more likely to take selfies (Qiu et al. (2015), and that self-disclosure online support youth’s narcissistic inclinations (Weiser, 2015). In the same vein, Dhir et al. (2016) found that older adolescents are more likely to feel regret while using SMS compared to their younger counterparts.

### Self-presentation: selfie as impression management

This paper draws on the notion of ‘self-presentation’ to examine online selfie behavior among Emirati youths. Self-presentation has been defined as attempts by people to communicate self-images to manage others’ impressions of them (Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi, 1981). It has been pointed that people engage in various self-presentation strategies to engage in impression management and monitor their expressive behavior. Synder, (1987) for instance distinguishes between high self-monitors and low self-monitors to distinguish between different self-representation behaviors and degree of control individuals place on impression management. In the same vein, commentators distinguish between two types of self-representation orientations, namely defensive one where individuals seek social approval and try to avoid social rejection, and an acquisitive one that “emerges from the active search for power and social status” (Laghi et al, 2011, p. 210). Similarly, researchers agree on the fact that self-enhancement and self-effacement are the most common types of self-representation (Kim et al., 2014).

Commentators have also argued that impression management is “instrumental in regulating social rewards and consequences, maintaining or enhancing self-esteem, and constructing and maintaining the self-concept (Neighbors, 2005, p. 470). In the same vein, researchers pointed out that self-representation is closely linked to social and bodily self-confidence (Jackson, 2007), and that the “basic motives of self-presentation are being liked and respected” (Kim et al., 2014, p. 512). Self-representation is instrumental in identity negotiation (Schlenker, 2003).

Commentators have also noted that affordances proper to online communication facilitate self-presentation, allowing users to engage more in impression management (Vitak, 2012; Cheng et al. 2019). While researchers agree on the fact that online communication has made self-representation a common social phenomenon, there is less consensus as to the factors that shape how people engage in this

process. Equally important, through a significant body of research has already explored the links between personal and psychological characteristics and self-representation in the context of Western countries, researchers have yet to examine this link in the context of Arab countries in general and the UAE particularly. Therefore, the third hypotheses this paper will examine is the following:

### Purpose and Research Questions

In the context of Arab countries, existing literature shed light on the gendered dimension of selfie practice, highlighting the stark differences between males and females in this regard. Similar to trends in other countries, Al-Kandari & Abdelaziz's study (2017) that targeted Kuwaiti university students found that both males and females took and posted selfies for appraisal-seeking, self-presentation and entertainment. The study also confirmed that females are much more likely to upload personal pictures and disclose personal information than males. Their female study subjects indicated that, when posting personal photos, they try to 'appear sober and modest, and not reveal much of their bodies or physical attributes' in order to avoid being perceived as 'flirty and frivolous' (Al-Kandari et al 2016: 4-5).

Despite the development of the literature examining online selfie and youth in the last years, there is a dearth of research in the context of Arab countries in general and UAE particularly. Moreover, existing research in general have been inconclusive as to the main factors shaping youth's social media experience, as well as to the role of gender as a key variable in this process. This issue acquires a major importance in the context of Arab countries where gender social divisions and gaps are significantly high compared to other regions of the world.

Addressing these lacunae, this study would like to examine the following key research questions:

RQ1. To what extent gender and age are the main demographics shaping selfie behavior among youth in the context of the UAE?

RQ2. To what extent are the demographic factors of gender, age and family status shaping personal characteristics related to self-representation among Emirati youths?

RQ3. To what extent cultural and societal factors proper to the context of the UAE affect selfie behavior of Emirati youth?

### Method & Procedure

#### Demographics

Table 1. Demographics.

|                       |                             | N   | %    |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----|------|
| <b>Gender</b>         | Males                       | 104 | 34.7 |
|                       | Females                     | 196 | 65.3 |
| <b>Age</b>            | Between 17 and 21           | 219 | 73   |
|                       | Between 22 and 25           | 65  | 21.7 |
|                       | 26 and above                | 16  | 5.3  |
| <b>Academic Level</b> | Undergraduate               | 248 | 82.7 |
|                       | Graduate Student            | 52  | 17.3 |
| <b>Discipline</b>     | Business Administration     | 42  | 14   |
|                       | Communication and Media     | 30  | 10   |
|                       | Engineering                 | 86  | 28.7 |
|                       | Fine Arts                   | 6   | 2    |
|                       | Health Sciences             | 26  | 8.6  |
|                       | Humanities & Social Studies | 48  | 16   |
|                       | Sciences                    | 23  | 7.7  |
| <b>Employment</b>     | Not Working                 | 222 | 74   |
|                       | Working                     | 78  | 26   |

|                            |         |     |      |
|----------------------------|---------|-----|------|
| <b>&amp; Social Status</b> |         |     |      |
|                            | Married | 26  | 8.7  |
|                            | Single  | 265 | 88.3 |
|                            | Other   | 9   | 3    |

A major hypothesis tested by the study is that gender and age are major variables associated with selfie behavior on social media platforms (Fox & Rooney, 2015; Sorokowski et al., 2015). While the hypothesis motivated the sampling method, it was also reinforced by the fact that female students and young students between 17 and 21 registered the highest respond rate compared to other demographics. As table 1 indicates, 65% of respondents are females while 35% are males. The majority of respondents are aged between 17 and 21 73%, followed by 22% for respondents between 22 and 26 years old and a minority of 5% for those above 27 years old. The vast majority of respondents are undergraduate students with 82% compared to 17.3% graduate students, which constitutes a valid representative distribution of students in most UAE universities. The majority of students come from the college of engineering, followed by the business administration and social science studies colleges. The majority of respondents are also undergraduate students (82.7%), do not have a job (74%) and single (88.3%).

#### **Data collection**

A survey was distributed to participants electronically between the period of 20<sup>th</sup> - October - 2018 and 29<sup>th</sup> - November - 2018. Convenience sampling was used to approach participants who studied in seven different Universities across the UAE, and the valid responses received obtained was 300 undergraduate and graduate students aged 17 years and above.

#### **Control variables**

The study contained three independent variables, namely gender, age and marital status. The dependent variables in this study are selfie behavior and perceptions in addition to personal characteristics and self-presentation predispositions.

#### **Instrumentation**

The survey instrument used a five-point Likert scale and included 35 mandatory questions that collected data about three main sets of variables: (a) demographic information including gender, age, major, and social status; (b) self-reported use of selfies on social media and the frequency of using social media for selfie-related activities; (c) selfie behavior, perceptions, and motivations in using selfies. For the purpose of this research, reliability was administrated through the use of Z-test, which is used to compare population means to a sample's means.

#### **Findings & analysis**

The second set of questions targeted the frequency and use of social media and selfies. After demographics, the first part of the survey also asked questions about the frequency of using selfies. Results show (that most respondents take selfies at least once a month, and that almost half of participants are frequent selfie takers (47% either daily or weekly). Only a small minority (2.7) do not take selfies (2.7%), which indicate this practice is dominant among young people. However, the frequency rates decrease when it comes to posting selfies on social media with 44.3% of respondents stating they post them at least once a month. But if we take into consideration the high number of those who rarely post selfies also (42.7%), it becomes clear that the vast majority of young people engage in this practice, albeit with significant frequency variations. What's more, the majority of respondents indicated that edit their selfies at least once a month (57.1%), a significant rate reflecting how young people are self-conscious about how they look in the selfies they share, even if they are not heavy social media users. In fact, these people may be using other closed channels to share their selfies or may be just editing them to keep for their own evaluation and pleasure (Chua & Chang, 2016).

**Table 2. Frequency of editing selfies and social media platforms used**

| Questions   | Scales  | N   | %    |
|---|---------|-----|------|
| How frequently do you take selfies?<br>(Not necessarily posting them) | Daily   | 44  | 14.7 |
|   | Weekly  | 97  | 32.3 |
|   | Monthly | 47  | 15.7 |
|   | Rarely  | 104 | 34.7 |
|   | Never   | 8   | 2.7  |

|  |           |     |      |
|--|-----------|-----|------|
| How frequently do you post/share your selfies on social media (privately or publicly)? | Daily     | 18  | 6    |
|  | Weekly    | 78  | 26   |
|  | Monthly   | 37  | 12.3 |
|  | Rarely    | 128 | 42.7 |
|  | Never     | 39  | 13   |
| How often do you edit your selfies?  | Daily     | 59  | 19.7 |
|  | Weekly    | 68  | 22.7 |
|  | Monthly   | 44  | 14.7 |
|  | Rarely    | 100 | 33.3 |
|  | Never     | 29  | 9.7  |
| What social media do you use the most to post, edit or view selfies?                   | Facebook  | 2   | 0.7  |
|  | Snapchat  | 243 | 81   |
|  | Instagram | 19  | 6.3  |
|  | WhatsApp  | 9   | 3    |
|  | None      | 27  | 9    |

Finally, the vast majority of respondents (81%) indicated that their primary platform for posting selfies is Snapchat compared to 6.3% for Instagram and only 0.7% for Facebook. The clear preference for Snapchat can be explained by the fact that the platform provide users with more control over their selfies as it is used primarily for person-to-person communication and feeds are disappear automatically shortly after being posted and viewed. This choice indicates how youth in UAE try to strategically reconcile the urge to post selfies with concerns over privacy and cultural barriers associated with sharing personal photos online.

Regarding the second section about motivations shown in Table 17, even though 76% of both males and females disagree about taking selfies because it is the trend, many females (13%) agree compared to very few males who do (3%). The gap here is also high (+10%)

with a significant p value. So we can say that compared to males, females may be influenced more by social media trends. Also, most respondents (43%) disagree on question 12, which is whether or not users take selfies because they make them feel good. But when looking at the gap between males and females, we find that 50% of males disagree while only 42% of females do.

More females (29%) agree than males (21%), which shows that females depend more on selfies to make them feel better than males. This can be explained by Nguyen & Barbour (2017) who observed that selfies enable young women to experiment with their look and project themselves as more attractive (Nguyen & Barbour, 2017).

**Selfie phenomenon and Gendered behavior**

Results show important similarities between male and female students in selfie behavior. Still, there are also important differences as well. While the vast majority of male and female respondents deny they take selfie because of it is trendy, more female students (13%) consent compared to only 3% for male. Similarly, more female respondents (29%) admit taking selfie make them feel good, compared to 21% for males, and that their selfies focus specific features of their bodies (48% for women and 40% for men).

**Table 3. Selfie and gender: Motivation & behavior**

| Question                                  | Value    | F %  | M %  | Gap  | Z score | P value |
|---|----------|------|------|------|---------|---------|
| I take selfies because it's trendy        | Disagree | 76 % | 76 % | 0 %  | 1.568   | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 11 % | 21 % | 10 % | 10.319  | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 13 % | 3 %  | 10 % | 7.182   | 0.00001 |
| I take selfies to show others how I look. | Disagree | 58 % | 62 % | 4 %  | 4.967   | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 25 % | 22 % | 3 %  | 0.628   | 0.529   |

|   |          |      |      |        |          |          |
|---|----------|------|------|--------|----------|----------|
|   | Agree    | 17 % | 16 % | 1 %    | - 0.970  | 0.332    |
| I take selfies to show others what I'm doing or where I am.       | Disagree | 44 % | 50 % | - 6 %  | - 6.06   | 0.00001  |
|   | Neutral  | 22 % | 22 % | 0 %    | - 1.881  | 0.059    |
|   | Agree    | 33 % | 28 % | 5 %    | 1.600    | 0.109    |
| I take selfies because it helps me feel good.                     | Disagree | 42 % | 50 % | - 8 %  | - 7.818  | 0.00001  |
|   | Neutral  | 29 % | 29 % | 0 %    | - 1.954  | 0.050    |
|   | Agree    | 29 % | 21 % | 8 %    | 3.910    | 0.000092 |
| I edit my selfies because everyone around me do it.               | Disagree | 61 % | 55 % | 6 %    | 2.954    | 0.003    |
|   | Neutral  | 22 % | 22 % | 0 %    | - 1.74   | 0.080    |
|   | Agree    | 17 % | 23 % | - 6 %  | - 6.451  | 0.0804   |
| When I take selfies, I focus on myself more than my surroundings. | Disagree | 33 % | 37 % | - 4 %  | - 5.090  | 0.00001  |
|   | Neutral  | 24 % | 23 % | 1 %    | - 1.510  | 0.131    |
|   | Agree    | 43 % | 40 % | 3 %    | - 0.079  | 0.9373   |
| When I take   | Disagree | 28 % | 27 % | 1 %    | - 1.70   | 0.089    |
| selfies, I focus on specific features of my body.                 | Disagree | 24 % | 33 % | 9 %    | - 9.205  | 0.00001  |
|   | Agree    | 48 % | 40 % | 8 %    | 3.537    | 0.000404 |
|   | Neutral  | 28 % | 27 % | 1 %    | - 1.70   | 0.089    |
| I take more selfies alone than with my friends.                   | Disagree | 20 % | 19 % | 1 %    | - 1.974  | 0.048    |
|   | Neutral  | 19 % | 30 % | - 11 % | - 10.921 | 0.00001  |
|   | Agree    | 61 % | 51 % | 10 %   | 0.735    | 0.462    |
| I don't mind posting/sharing my selfie without filters or edits.  | Disagree | 28 % | 20 % | 8 %    | 3.481    | 0.000499 |
|   | Neutral  | 28 % | 32 % | 4 %    | - 5.537  | 0.00001  |
|   | Agree    | 44 % | 48 % | - 4 %  | - 5.537  | 0.00001  |
| I feel more satisfied after sharing my selfies online.            | Disagree | 43 % | 38 % | 5 %    | 1.960    | 0.049    |
|   | Neutral  | 36 % | 38 % | 2 %    | - 3.844  | 0.000121 |
|   | Agree    | 21 % | 24 % | - 3 %  | - 4.673  | 0.00001  |

Moreover, more females than males take selfies alone (+10%). Males are also less conscious about females about how they look in the selfies since 48% of them say they post them unedited. Also, more males indicated posting selfies help them to feel better. Despite these differences, results show that the vast majority of male and female respondents do not take

selfies just because it is trendy, or to show people how they look or where they are, neither they feel they are only riding the wave when it comes to editing selfies.

**Table 4: Gender and Selfie perception**

| Question   | Value    | F   | M   | Gap | Z score | P value  |
|--|----------|-----|-----|-----|---------|----------|
| I think selfies make people look better than other types of photos.                          | Disagree | 26% | 25% | 1%  | -1.755  | 0.079259 |
|  | Neutral  | 29% | 31% | -2% | -4.018  | 0.000059 |
|  | Agree    | 45% | 44% | 1%  | -1.755  | 0.079259 |
| I trust selfies less than other types of photos because they are easier to manipulate.       | Disagree | 27% | 26% | 1%  | -1.755  | 0.079259 |
|  | Neutral  | 34% | 36% | -2% | -4.168  | 0.000031 |
|  | Agree    | 39% | 38% | 1%  | -1.776  | 0.075733 |
| When I view other people selfies, I think that they look better in pictures than in reality. | Disagree | 24% | 19% | 5%  | 1.188   | 0.234833 |
|  | Neutral  | 29% | 27% | 2%  | -1.104  | 0.269593 |
|  | Agree    | 47% | 54% | -7% | -7.985  | 0.00001  |
| It is reasonable to  | Disagree | 17% | 23% | -6% | -7.590  | 0.00001  |

|   |          |     |     |     |        |          |
|---|----------|-----|-----|-----|--------|----------|
| edit and add filters to selfies.                                | Neutral  | 36% | 35% | 1%  | -1.968 | 0.049068 |
|   | Agree    | 47% | 42% | 5%  | 1.243  | 0.213684 |
| Emiratis take much more selfies than people in other countries. | Disagree | 32% | 34% | -2% | -4.166 | 0.000031 |
|   | Neutral  | 39% | 36% | 3%  | 0.050  | 0.959565 |
|   | Agree    | 29% | 30% | -1% | -3.32  | 0.0009   |
| Emirati culture influences my selfie choices and habits         | Disagree | 29% | 27% | 2%  | -0.920 | 0.357573 |
|   | Neutral  | 35% | 32% | 3%  | -0.131 | 0.895775 |
|   | Agree    | 36% | 41% | -5% | -6.437 | 0.00001  |

While results above indicate that there are some differences, albeit limited, between males and females at the level of selfie motivations and behavior, these distinctions significantly decrease when it comes to perception and assessment of selfie phenomenon itself (see table 4). Unexpectedly, however, more males than females (-5%) believe that Emirati culture has an influence on their selfie-related behaviors. While this gap is very small it still indicates that female youth feel less constrained by cultural norms in society or at least that cultural factors are not more important than other factors, such as personal character.

**Selfie behavior and age variable**

**Table 5. Age and Selfie: Motivation & behavior**

| Question | Value | 26 < | 17 - 25 | Gap | Z score | P value |
|----------|-------|------|---------|-----|---------|---------|
|----------|-------|------|---------|-----|---------|---------|



|   |          |     |     |      |         |         |
|---|----------|-----|-----|------|---------|---------|
| I take selfies because it's trendy                                | Disagree | 94% | 76% | 18%  | 14.183  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 0%  | 16% | 16%  | 12.433  | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 6%  | 8%  | -2%  | -3.319  | 0.00091 |
| I take selfies to show others how I look.                         | Disagree | 63% | 61% | 2%   | -0.171  | 0.86422 |
|   | Neutral  | 19% | 23% | -4%  | -4.968  | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 18% | 16% | 2%   | -0.171  | 0.86422 |
| I take selfies to show others what I'm doing or where I am.       | Disagree | 56% | 46% | -8%  | -7.453  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 6%  | 22% | -16% | -13.02  | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 38% | 32% | 6%   | 2.2965  | 0.02165 |
| I take selfies because it helps me feel good.                     | Disagree | 63% | 46% | 17%  | 10.508  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 6%  | 28% | -22% | -18.081 | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 31% | 26% | 5%   | 1.712   | 0.08704 |
| I edit my selfies because everyone does it.                       | Disagree | 63% | 58% | 5%   | 2.1705  | 0.02997 |
|   | Neutral  | 12% | 24% | -12% | -11.15  | 0.00001 |
| When I take selfies, I focus on myself more than my surroundings. | Agree    | 25% | 18% | 7%   | 3.738   | 0.00018 |
|   | Disagree | 19% | 33% | -14% | -12.25  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 19% | 24% | -5%  | -5.807  | 0.00001 |
| When I take selfies, I focus on specific features of my body.     | Agree    | 62% | 43% | 19%  | 9.944   | 0.00001 |
|   | Disagree | 19% | 29% | -10% | -9.955  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 19% | 29% | -10% | -9.955  | 0.00001 |
| I take more selfies alone than with my friends.                   | Agree    | 62% | 42% | 20%  | 12.532  | 0.00001 |
|   | Disagree | 13% | 20% | -7%  | -7.939  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 25% | 20% | 5%   | 1.0074  | 0.3137  |
| I don't mind posting/sharing my selfie without filters or edits.  | Agree    | 62% | 60% | 2%   | -1.229  | 0.22247 |
|   | Disagree | 31% | 21% | 10%  | 4.9847  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 31% | 30% | 1%   | -1.779  | 0.07673 |
| I feel more satisfied   | Agree    | 38% | 49% | -11% | -10.8   | 0.00001 |
|   | Disagree | 37% | 44% | -7%  | -7.99   | 0.00001 |

|                                  |      |    |    |    |      |      |
|----------------------------------|------|----|----|----|------|------|
| after sharing my selfies online. |      |    |    | %  | 1    |      |
|                                  | Neut | 25 | 36 | -  | -    | 0.00 |
|                                  | ral  | %  | %  | 11 | 11.3 | 001  |
|                                  | Agre | 38 | 20 | 18 | 12.7 | 0.00 |
|                                  | e    | %  | %  | %  | 42   | 001  |

Results shows that the age variable is an important factor in determining selfie behavior and motivations (Table 5). In general, results indicate that respondents in the older category (26 years and above) are more concerned about societal and cultural norms, and about their appearance than younger students. In fact, while the vast majority of students in the older group (94%) indicate they do not take selfie just because it is trendy, more respondents from this category (38% compared to 32%) said they are using selfies to show others how they look, that selfie taking make them feel good, and that they edit their selfies because everyone around does it (25% compared to 18% among younger students). Moreover, the majority of older students (62%) focus on themselves and their bodies, and take selfies alone than with friends. These results indicate that younger students are relatively more interested with selfie taking and posting as a social experience than it is a form of personal expression or dissemination. These results confirm Nelson’s (2013) study that found that young people typically become worried if they are unable to attract sufficient “likes” and are more likely to delete the shared selfie if it does not achieve this objective.

Equally important, results indicate the existence of important differentiations among age groups in relation to selfie taking and posting (Table 6). Results show that more respondent in the older age group believe selfies do not reflect an accurate image about people compared to other genres of photos. They also trust less selfies because they are easy to manipulate (+18%), and agree less with editing the pictures to look better (-13%). Many more respondents from the older cohort also believe more that Emiratis are heavy selfie takers (+19%), and that culture influences selfie behavior (+17%). In general, thus, results show that age is an important variable underpinning selfie taking and posting among Emirati youth, and that younger segments of students are more inclined to trust selfies and accept that photo editing is

part of the digital online culture. Younger students also are more prone to find that their selfie behavior is adequate and compatible with cultural norms and standards.

**Table 6: Age and Selfie perception**

| Question   | Value    | 26 < | 17-25 | Gap  | Z score  | P value |
|--|----------|------|-------|------|----------|---------|
| I think selfies make people look better than other types of photos.                          | Disagree | 19%  | 26%   | -7%  | -7.789   | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 25%  | 29%   | -4%  | -5.527   | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 56%  | 45%   | 11%  | 5.7865   | 0.00001 |
| I trust selfies less than other types of photos because they are easier to manipulate.       | Disagree | 19%  | 28%   | -9%  | -9.7515  | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 25%  | 34%   | -9%  | -9.7515  | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 56%  | 38%   | 18%  | 11.781   | 0.00001 |
| When I view other people selfies, I think that they look better in pictures than in reality. | Disagree | 13%  | 19%   | -6%  | -7.221   | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 37%  | 26%   | 11%  | 5.77615  | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 50%  | 55%   | -5%  | -6.45627 | 0.00001 |
| It is reasonable to edit and add filters to selfies.   | Disagree | 19%  | 19%   | 0%   | -2.772   | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 44%  | 31%   | 13%  | 7.6683   | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 37%  | 50%   | -13% | -        | 0.000   |

|  |          |     |     |      |        |         |
|--|----------|-----|-----|------|--------|---------|
|  |          | %   | %   | %    | 13.21  | 01      |
| Emiratis take much more selfies than people in other countries . | Disagree | 6%  | 34% | -28% | -22.72 | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 44% | 35% | 9%   | 5.1113 | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 50% | 31% | 19%  | 13.545 | 0.00001 |
| Emirati culture influences my selfie choices and habits          | Disagree | 0%  | 28% | -28% | -24.57 | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 44% | 33% | 11%  | 6.174  | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 56% | 39% | 17%  | 10.903 | 0.00001 |

**Selfie phenomenon and family Status**

Results indicate that family status, particularly marriage, is a strong variable influencing selfie behavior and motivation. While only a minority of both married and single respondents agree to the fact that they take selfie because it is trendy, the number of single respondents who agree with the statement they are taking selfies to show others how they look far exceeds that number of married ones (+12%). More single respondents also say they edit their selfies because it is trendy (+10%, focus more on their bodies in the selfies (+12%), and take less selfies alone than with friends (-8%). On the other hand, more married respondents indicated they use selfies to show others what they are doing (+8%), they don't mind posting selfies without editing (+9%) and feel less satisfied after posting selfies (-13%).

**Table 7. Selfie and family Status: Motivation & behavior**

| Question | value | Mar | Si | Gap | Z score | P value |
|----------|-------|-----|----|-----|---------|---------|
| I take   | Disag | 96  | 76 | 20  | 15.9    | 0.000   |

|   |          |     |     |      |         |         |
|---|----------|-----|-----|------|---------|---------|
| selfies because it's trendy                                 | Disagree | 0%  | 19% | -19% | -18.195 | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 4%  | 5%  | -1%  | -2.443  | 0.0145  |
|   | Agree    | 85% | 56% | 29%  | 21.413  | 0.00001 |
| I take selfies to show others how I look.                   | Disagree | 7%  | 24% | -17% | -15.360 | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 8%  | 20% | -12% | -11.362 | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 53% | 61% | -8%  | -7.452  | 0.00001 |
| I take selfies to show others what I'm doing or where I am. | Disagree | 12% | 12% | 0%   | -1.881  | 0.0599  |
|   | Neutral  | 35% | 27% | 8%   | 3.689   | 0.0002  |
|   | Agree    | 50% | 50% | 0%   | -1.954  | 0.0511  |
| I take selfies because they make me feel good.              | Disagree | 15% | 26% | -11% | -10.017 | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 35% | 24% | 11%  | 6.109   | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 77% | 67% | 10%  | 6.089   | 0.00001 |
| I edit my selfies and add filters because many people       | Disagree | 15% | 12% | -3%  | -4.099  | 0.00004 |
|   | Neutral  |     |     |      |         |         |

|   |           |      |      |        |           |          |
|---|-----------|------|------|--------|-----------|----------|
| around me do.   | Agree     | 8 %  | 21 % | - 13 % | - 11.9 37 | 0.000 01 |
|   | Neutr al  | 12 % | 14 % | - 2 %  | - 4.56 4  | 0.000 01 |
|   | Agree     | 53 % | 62 % | - 9 %  | - 4.56 4  | 0.000 01 |
| When I take selfies, I focus on myself more than my surroundings. | Disag ree | 96 % | 76 % | 20 %   | 15.9 33   | 0.000 01 |
|   | Neutr al  | 0 %  | 19 % | - 19 % | - 18.1 95 | 0.000 01 |
|   | Agree     | 4 %  | 5 %  | - 1 %  | - 2.44 3  | 0.01 45  |
| When I take selfies, I focus on specific features of my body.     | Disag ree | 85 % | 56 % | 29 %   | 21.4 13   | 0.000 01 |
|   | Neutr al  | 7 %  | 24 % | - 17 % | - 15.3 60 | 0.000 01 |
|   | Agree     | 8 %  | 20 % | - 12 % | - 11.3 62 | 0.000 01 |
| I take more selfies alone than with my friends.                   | Disag ree | 53 % | 61 % | - 8 %  | - 7.45 2  | 0.000 01 |
|   | Neutr al  | 12 % | 12 % | 0 %    | - 1.88 1  | 0.05 99  |
|   | Agree     | 35 % | 27 % | 8 %    | 3.68 9    | 0.00 02  |
| I don't mind posting/sharing my selfie                            | Disag ree | 50 % | 50 % | 0 %    | - 1.95 4  | 0.051 1  |
|   | Neutr     | 15 % | 26 % | -      | -         | 0.000    |

|  |           |      |      |        |           |          |
|--|-----------|------|------|--------|-----------|----------|
| without filters or edits.                              | al        | %    | %    | 11 %   | 10.0 17   | 01       |
|  | Agree     | 35 % | 24 % | 11 %   | 6.10 9    | 0.000 01 |
| I feel more satisfied after sharing my selfies online. | Disag ree | 77 % | 67 % | 10 %   | 6.08 9    | 0.000 01 |
|  | Neutr al  | 15 % | 12 % | - 3 %  | - 4.09 9  | 0.00 004 |
|  | Agree     | 8 %  | 21 % | - 13 % | - 11.9 37 | 0.000 01 |

Equally important, results reveal that there are some important discrepancies between single and married respondents when it comes to how they perceive their selfie experience. In general, the majority of married respondents (54%) believe that selfies can make people look better more than any other types of pictures, and to make them look better than they really are as well (66%). Besides, more married respondents find it reasonable to edit selfies (+10%), and do not think that Emiratis take more selfies compared to people in other countries (+22). Married respondents are also less convinced that Emirati culture influence their selfie behavior (-10%). In general, results show that married respondents are more confident about their use of selfies and the adoption of this phenomenon within Emirati society, whereas single respondents are more concerned about the authenticity of selfies and way of the impact of culture on their selfie behavior.

**Table 8. Selfie and family Status: Perceptions**

| Questi on                                    | Valu e    | Marr ied | Sin gle | G ap  | Z scor e | P value  |
|--|-----------|----------|---------|-------|----------|----------|
| I think selfies make people look better than | Disag ree | 35%      | 39 %    | - 4 % | - 5.09 0 | 0.000 01 |
|  | Neut ral  | 11%      | 13 %    | - 2 % | - 5.09 0 | 0.000 01 |

|  |          |     |     |     |         |         |
|--|----------|-----|-----|-----|---------|---------|
| other types of photos.   | Agree    | 54% | 48% | 6%  | 2.068   | 0.00001 |
| I trust selfies less than other types of photos because they are easier to manipulate.       | Disagree | 35% | 25% | 10% | 5.036   | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 23% | 35% | 12% | 11.453  | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 42% | 40% | 2%  | -0.960  | 0.3370  |
| When I view other people selfies, I think that they look better in pictures than in reality. | Disagree | 15% | 16% | 1%  | -3.465  | 0.00053 |
|  | Neutral  | 19% | 28% | 9%  | -3.465  | 0.00053 |
|  | Agree    | 66% | 56% | 10% | 4.735   | 0.00001 |
| It is reasonable to edit and add filters to selfies.   | Disagree | 23% | 35% | 12% | -11.550 | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 39% | 24% | 15% | 8.742   | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 38% | 41% | 3%  | -4.786  | 0.00001 |
| Emiratis take much more selfies than   | Disagree | 54% | 32% | 22% | 16.059  | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 15% | 35% | 20% | -18.772 | 0.00001 |

|  |          |     |     |     |        |          |
|--|----------|-----|-----|-----|--------|----------|
| people in other countries.                               | Agree    | 31% | 33% | 2%  | -3.844 | 0.000123 |
| Emirati culture influences my selfie choices and habits. | Disagree | 58% | 61% | 3%  | -3.990 | 0.000066 |
|  | Neutral  | 27% | 14% | 13% | 8.310  | 0.00053  |
|  | Agree    | 15% | 25% | 10% | -9.372 | 0.00053  |

**Selfie behavior and personality characters**

The fourth hypothesis the study sets forth to answer is examine weather personality characters, such as high/low self-esteem and self-confidence are significant factors determining selfie behavior and motivations among Emirati youths. The hypothesis was tested at two stages. First, the hypothesis was tested through calculating the correlation between the personality traits with the key variable of gender, age and family status; second, by testing the correlation between the main categories used in the survey in general, namely, motivations, behavior, perceptions in addition to personality characters.

**Table 8: Gender and personality characters**

| Question                    | Value    | F   | M   | Gap | Z score | P value |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----|-----|-----|---------|---------|
| I connect well with others. | Disagree | 18% | 12% | 6%  | 2.286   | 0.0222  |
|                             | Neutral  | 41% | 39% | 2%  | -1.214  | 0.2247  |
|                             | Agree    | 41% | 49% | 8%  | -9.967  | 0.00001 |
| I am a                      | Disagr   | 9%  | 11  | -   | -       | 0.000   |

|   |          |     |     |     |        |         |
|---|----------|-----|-----|-----|--------|---------|
| confident person.                       | Disagree | 24% | 17% | 2%  | 5.537  | 0.01    |
|   | Neutral  | 24% | 17% | 7%  | 2.852  | 0.0043  |
|   | Agree    | 67% | 71% | -4% | -7.401 | 0.00001 |
| I am satisfied with my life in general. | Disagree | 8%  | 7%  | 1%  | -2.824 | 0.0047  |
|   | Neutral  | 20% | 21% | -1% | -4.735 | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 72% | 69% | 3%  | -0.913 | 0.3612  |
| I have a high degree of self-esteem.    | Disagree | 9%  | 11% | -2% | -5.625 | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 13% | 15% | -2% | -5.625 | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 78% | 74% | 4%  | -0.037 | 0.9704  |
| I don't compare myself to others.       | Disagree | 13% | 14% | -1% | -4.275 | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 19% | 16% | 3%  | -0.825 | 0.4093  |
|   | Agree    | 68% | 70% | -2% | -5.138 | 0.00001 |
| I understand myself in terms            | Disagree | 8%  | 10% | -2% | -5.594 | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 19% | 20% | -   | -      | 0.000   |

|  |          |     |     |     |        |         |
|--|----------|-----|-----|-----|--------|---------|
| of my acts, thoughts and personality.                              | Disagree | 1%  | 1%  | 1%  | 4.661  | 0.01    |
|  | Agree    | 73% | 70% | 3%  | -0.927 | 0.3575  |
| I understand, respect and notice emotions and behaviors in others. | Disagree | 5%  | 0%  | 5%  | 0.859  | 0.3903  |
|  | Neutral  | 12% | 14% | -2% | -7.510 | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 83% | 86% | -3% | -8.706 | 0.00001 |

Correlation between gender and personal characteristics show clear indications that female respondents have issues with connecting with others (-8%), they feel less self-confident (-4%), they compare themselves more than male to others (-2%), and they are a little less capable of empathy (-3%). However, female respondents are also more satisfied with their life (+3%), have more self-esteem (+4%), and also introspection skills, i.e. ability to understand one's acts and personality (+3%). That is, although female respondents may have indicated they have lower self-confidence and ability to connect with others compared to males, this has not prevented them to be satisfied with their life and to be more introspective. These differences in female's responses personality characters can be related to cultural factors that still impact women 'self-expression and assertiveness in society. These factors, however, are not holding women back since they are increasingly able to bridge the gap with men in all sectors and enhance their self-esteem in the private and public spheres.

**Table 9. Age and personality characters**

| Question            | Value    | 26 < | 17-25 | Gap  | Z score | P value |
|---------------------|----------|------|-------|------|---------|---------|
| I connect well with | Disagree | 6%   | 17%   | -11% | -12.86  | 0.00001 |

|   |          |     |     |     |         |         |
|---|----------|-----|-----|-----|---------|---------|
| others.                                 | Neutral  | 56% | 38% | 16% | 11.18   | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 38% | 45% | -7% | -9.301  | 0.00001 |
| I am a confident person.                | Disagree | 13% | 10% | 3%  | -0.876  | 0.38103 |
|   | Neutral  | 18% | 20% | -2% | -5.537  | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 69% | 70% | -1% | -4.605  | 0.00001 |
| I am satisfied with my life in general. | Disagree | 0%  | 9%  | -9% | -12.38  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 13% | 21% | -8% | -11.423 | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 87% | 70% | 15% | 10.552  | 0.00001 |
| I have a high degree of self-esteem.    | Disagree | 0%  | 9%  | -9% | -12.13  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 19% | 14% | -5% | -8.395  | 0.00001 |
|   | Agree    | 81% | 77% | 4%  | 0.006   | 0.995   |
| I don't compare myself to others.       | Disagree | 6%  | 12% | -6% | -8.589  | 0.00001 |
|   | Neutral  | 19% | 17% | 2%  | 1.687   | 0.091   |
|   | Agree    | 75% | 71% | 4%  | 0.03    | 0.037   |

  

|  |          |     |     |     |        |         |
|--|----------|-----|-----|-----|--------|---------|
|  |          | %   | %   |     | 7      |         |
| I understand myself in terms of my acts, thoughts and personality. | Disagree | 0%  | 8%  | -8% | -11.2  | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 31% | 18% | 14% | 9.341  | 0.00001 |
| I understand, respect and notice emotions and behaviors in others. | Agree    | 69% | 74% | -5% | -8.395 | 0.00001 |
|  | Disagree | 6%  | 2%  | 4%  | -0.336 | 0.737   |
| I understand myself in terms of my acts, thoughts and personality. | Neutral  | 6%  | 12% | -6% | -12.29 | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 88% | 86% | 2%  | -2.727 | 0.006   |

More importantly, results show that there are stronger correlations between personality characters and age (table 9). In fact, respondents in the younger group, indicated they connect much less with others (-7%), they are much less satisfied with their life (-15%), have less self-esteem (-4%), compare more themselves to others (+4%), and have slightly less empathy towards others (-2%). Although results show that a slightly more younger respondents indicate that they are self-confident (+1%), this result is not significant because more respondents from the same group said they disagree than agree that they are self-confident (-3%). The only exception in the result is that younger respondents have indicated they have more empathy (+5), a quality that should perhaps be associated with more experience in life, and therefore older age. Overall, however, results indicate that age is a more important factor shaping personality characters that in turn are assumed to have a significant impact on selfie motivations and behavior.

**Table 10: Age and personality characters**

| Question                                | Value    | Mar | Single | Gap  | Z score | P value  |
|---|----------|-----|--------|------|---------|----------|
| I connect well with others.             | Disagree | 15% | 14%    | 1%   | -2.176  | 0.0295   |
|   | Neutral  | 39% | 37%    | 2%   | -1.286  | 0.1984   |
|   | Agree    | 46% | 49%    | -3%  | -5.738  | 0.00001  |
| I am a confident person.                | Disagree | 4%  | 16%    | -12% | -14.859 | 0.00001  |
|   | Neutral  | 12% | 28%    | -16% | -18.588 | 0.00001  |
|   | Agree    | 84% | 56%    | 28%  | 22.429  | 0.00001  |
| I am satisfied with my life in general. | Disagree | 0%  | 10%    | -10% | -13.334 | 0.00001  |
|   | Neutral  | 12% | 22%    | -10% | -13.334 | 0.00001  |
|   | Agree    | 88% | 68%    | 20%  | 15.328  | 0.00001  |
| I have a high degree of self-esteem.    | Disagree | 4%  | 6%     | -2%  | -5.625  | 0.00001  |
|   | Neutral  | 8%  | 12%    | -4%  | -7.48   | 0.00001  |
|   | Agree    | 88% | 82%    | 6%   | 1.825   | 0.067941 |
| I don't compare myself to               | Disagree | 8%  | 13%    | -5%  | -7.726  | 0.00001  |
|   | Neutral  | 4%  | 21%    | -17% | -18.07  | 0.0000   |

|  |          |     |     |      |         |         |
|--|----------|-----|-----|------|---------|---------|
| others.  | al       |     | %   | %    | 8       | 1       |
|  | Agree    | 88% | 66% | 22%  | 15.565  | 0.00001 |
| I understand myself in terms of my acts, thoughts and personal identity. | Disagree | 0%  | 11% | -11% | -13.995 | 0.00001 |
|  | Neutral  | 12% | 21% | -9%  | -12.128 | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 88% | 68% | 20%  | 14.941  | 0.00001 |
|  | Disagree | 0%  | 7%  | -7%  | -13.48  | 0.00001 |
| I understand, respect and notice emotions and behaviors in others.       | Neutral  | 4%  | 23% | -19% | -27.839 | 0.00001 |
|  | Agree    | 96% | 70% | 26%  | 25.971  | 0.00001 |

While gender and age are important variables shaping personal characteristics, results indicate that social status plays even a bigger role as the gaps between single and married participant's responses reflect (Table 10). Actually, although results show that single respondents think they connect better with others (+3%), the importance of this indicator is vastly overshadowed by the fact that single students feel much less self-confident (-28%), and less satisfied with their life (-20), have a lower self-esteem (-6%), and compare themselves more to others (+22%). Single respondents have also indicated they are less self-introspective (-20%), as well as less capable of empathy (-26%).

**Discussion & Conclusions**

Research studies over the last years have indicated that gender and to a certain extent age are important factors determining selfie behavior in general (RQ1). Though results have confirmed the existence of differences between male and female Emirati youth in terms of selfie behavior and perceptions, the gender gap at this level is limited and not conclusive. In particular, results



do not confirm significant differences between male and female youths in terms of selfie motivations and behavior, and even less when it comes to how both males and females frame selfies and perceive their implications. Interestingly, results indicated that more males than females (-5%) believe that Emirati culture has an influence on their selfie-related behaviors. These results above show that while gender may have been an important factor in the early years of selfie mass adoption, this factor is increasingly playing a less prominent role in the context of UAE conservative society, both males and females generally abide by cultural social norms and traditions.

Results have been more prominent when it comes to the factor of age. Indeed, results have confirmed that respondents in the older category (27 years and above) are more concerned about societal and cultural norms, and about their self-representation and impression management than younger respondents. In fact, the majority of older students give more importance and time to managing their own image and projecting themselves favorably to others. These results indicate that age is an important variable high/low self-monitoring. That is, whereas older youths engage in acquisitive self-representation, seeking to enhance their social status, younger ones engage more in what commentators (see Laghi et al. 2011; Kim et al., 2014) labelled defensive self-representation seeking more social approval and networking.

This brings us to RQ2 about the role of social and cultural factors in determining selfie-behavior. Results above show that family status, particularly marriage, is a stronger variable compared to that of gender and age. Indeed, results indicate that married respondents are more confident about their use of selfies and the adoption of this phenomenon within Emirati society, whereas single respondents are more concerned about the authenticity of selfies and wary of the impact of culture on their selfie behavior. Like in the case of older groups of respondents, married ones engage more in high self-monitoring and in acquisitive self-representation. This is only normal in the context of Arab countries where the institution of marriage and family play a central role in society and in destemming behavior, social networks, and boundaries of self-expression. Married people in conservative societies acquire more social status and decision making freedom than single ones, who, as the results above confirm, are warier about the impact of culture on their selfie-behavior than married respondents.

While demographics of gender, age and social status are important variables shaping selfie behavior among Emirati youth, research studies have highlighted the

importance of personal characteristics and psychological factors associated with this phenomenon. As discussed above, selfie behavior has been widely associated with narcissistic tendencies among young people. This assumes that age is a major factor in self-centered behavior. Results, above, have demonstrated that age alone is not enough to explain selfie behavior and self-representation in general. Addressing this issue, RQ3 proposes that the demographic factors of gender, age and family status are shaping personal characteristics related to self-representation among Emirati youths. Results above have shown that both age and gender are strongly correlated with personal characteristics that can determine lower or higher self-promotion and self-representation in general. Nonetheless, family status, remains more important, which again highlights the role of cultural context specific to the country. That is, in the context of Arab countries, young and single people are socially and psychologically more vulnerable and less empowered, which lead them to engage in defensive self-representation and by extension low-impression self-impression.

To sum up, this paper has set up to understand selfie behavior among Emirati youth. While it confirmed some major assumptions in the literature that gender and age play a big role in shaping this behavior, it also shed light on the role of other variables, particularly social status and cultural context specific to the UAE and Arab country.

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