

Social Comparison, Envy and Indirect Aggression amongst High Facebook Users

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ABSTRACT

Background: Facebook is one of the well-known online platforms being utilized for offering content and media to different users helpfully. In facebook profiles, users impart copious social comparison data passing on mostly positive self-depictions. In this way, long range interpersonal communication locales like facebook give a rich ground to envy which result out as indirect aggression.

Aim: To examine the influence of high facebook usage on social comparison, envy and indirect aggression of university students.

Study Design: Cross-sectional research

Place and Duration of Study: Institute of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab Lahore from 1st February 2018 to 31st August 2018.

Methodology: A total of 200 university students of both genders men and women were selected through purposive sampling. The study used quantitative method and data was collected through questionnaires.

Results: The results presented that there were noteworthy positive association amid social comparison, envy and indirect aggression. Moreover, Envy positively predicted indirect aggression along with its subscales (Social exclusionary, Malicious Humor & Guilt Induction).

Conclusion: Social comparison predict envy and indirect aggression positively (malicious humor, guilt induction and social exclusionary). Further results explained that social comparison and envy are the predictors of indirect aggression

Key words: Social comparison, Envy, Indirect aggression, University students, Facebook users

INTRODUCTION

Facebook is the most gone by site after Google. As per the facebook audience insights tool, Facebook users in Pakistan incorporate around 5-6 million women and 15–20 million of its individuals are men. In Facebook profiles, users impart copious social comparison data passing on mostly positive self-depictions. In this way, long range interpersonal communication locales like Facebook give a rich ground to envy.¹

"Who am I?" is a question that most individuals frequently question themselves. How people respond to this issue has been the topic of numerous disciplines investigating. While there are many ways in which a person can obtain knowledge about himself / herself, it seems to be a difficult task to overcome.² Comparing yourself with others is an essential aspect in gathering knowledge about yourself.³ A person has the incentive for self-assessment according to the social comparison theory suggested by Festinger.⁴ As per Festinger⁴, the primary objective of social comparison is to measure the person properly. Whenever the person does not provide reasonable criteria for judging him/herself, he/she tends to equate him/herself to others. Social comparison demonstrates how people make logical sense about themselves and their social environments by using others.⁵

The social comparison on facebook mainly involves upward social comparisons, particularly contrasting ones, and individuals in a perfect position.^{6,7} Indirect aggressive behaviour was associated with issues of psychological disturbances⁸, jealousy, rivalry, social distinction, beauty, sense of emotional support⁹, apprehension of negative appraisal¹⁰, as well as dissatisfaction in interpersonal relationships.¹¹

Social comparison is one significant element which has been shown to be important in creating and/or retaining envious feelings and indirect hostility.¹² Several findings indicate a greater risk of self-displeasure resulting in indirect hostility by individuals who often look at themselves as 'more desirable and effective' people (those who are more likely to do so).¹³⁻¹⁵ However, less work has explored the consequences of associations made with those viewed as 'less desirable and good' (i.e. a downward comparison).

Even though it is evident that peer similarities are significant in the production of jealousy and indirect aggression, another important socio-cultural effect is relational disruption in the form of criticism or signals regarding an individual's self image. Bump, study has shown that social interaction on SNSs can have negative impacts on the emotional health of individuals.¹⁶ One of the undesired impact of social upward comparison on SNSs is depression.¹⁷ Evidence has also shown that upward social comparison on social media sites is inextricably linked to symptoms of depression¹⁸, whereas envy on social media sites has positively predicted depression symptoms.¹⁹

It is summarized that comparing oneself as well as other people whether it is via social networking media or one-on-one relationship can prompt envious feelings towards encompassing individuals. An intriguing finding from the literature is that envious feelings can be both instinctual and learned behavior as being assertive towards individuals and letting out those feelings through indirect aggression. These emotions regularly get increased when individuals compare their lives and others on facebook and let that envy out through indirect aggression.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional research was conducted at Institute of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab Lahore from 1st February 2018 to 31st August 2018. A total of 200 students were comprised. Participants who used Facebook at least 6 hours or more per day and participants aged between 18-24 were included. Participants who were doing any part time job and students residing in hostels were excluded. A self-developed demographic sheet consisted of personal and academic information was used to get their background information. Indirect Aggression Scale-Aggressor Version, Social comparison scale and The Dispositional Envy Scale was used to assess indirect aggression, social comparison and envy in university students.

The study was orderly begun by receiving consent from the authors of the scale used for data collection. The Institute of Applied Psychology sought formal letter of authority to begin the research. The letter authenticated the identity of the researcher and the research topic. Thereafter, major data collection began. The participants were explained about the nature as well as purpose of this research and also any questions from respondents were addressed. The respondents were guaranteed that the information they submitted was private and confidential.

These were collected after completion of the questionnaires. The data was processed via SPSS 21.0.

The association between demographic variables, social comparison, envy and indirect aggression among high Facebook users was used by the Pearson product moment correlation. Simple linear regression analysis was used to investigate predictors of indirect aggression and its subscales i.e. social exclusionary, malicious humor and guilt induction. The discrepancies between demographics and research variables were established by independent t-test analyses.

RESULTS

Reliability Analysis of the study variables were shown in (Table 1). Social comparison has a positive relationship with Envy and Indirect aggression along with its subscales i.e. Social exclusionary, guilt induction and malicious humor. Envy has a positive relationship with indirect aggression and its subscales (Table 2), Envy positively predicted Indirect Aggression amongst high Facebook users (Table 3). Results showed that there were significant gender differences in Envy and Indirect Aggression with its subscales (Social Exclusionary, Guilt induction and Malicious Humor) Males have more envious feelings resulting into indirect aggression as compared to females (Table 4).

Table 1: Research variable's analytical statistics (N=200)

| Variable | Mean±SD | No. item | Cronbach alpha | Potential Range | Actual Range |
|---------------------|-------------|----------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Envy | 17.83±5.23 | 8 | .80 | 8-34 | 8-40 |
| Indirect aggression | 41.45±14.03 | 25 | .92 | 24-86 | 25-125 |
| Social exclusionary | 16.80±5.84 | 10 | .80 | 9-31 | 10-50 |
| Malicious humor | 14.25±5.92 | 9 | .86 | 8-30 | 9-45 |
| Guilt induction | 10.40±3.63 | 6 | .71 | 5-22 | 6-30 |
| Social comparison | 35.60±6.53 | 11 | .71 | 20.0 | 11-55 |

Table 2: Relationship between Social Comparison, Envy and Indirect Aggression along with its subscales

| Variables | Social comparison | Envy | Indirect aggression | Social exclusionary | Malicious humor | Guilt induction |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Social comparison | - | .31** | .29** | .35** | .12* | .35** |
| Envy | - | - | .71** | .67** | -.02 | .89** |
| Indirect aggression | - | - | - | .71** | -.05 | .92* |
| Social exclusionary | - | - | - | - | .08 | .84** |
| Malicious humor | - | - | - | - | - | .02* |
| Guilt induction | - | - | - | - | - | - |

*p <.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 4: Independent Sample t test shows gender differences on, Envy, Indirect Aggression with its subscales (Social Exclusionary, Guilt induction and Malicious Humor) N=200

| Variable | Male (n=84) | Female (n=116) | T value | P value | 95% CI | | Cohen's d |
|---------------------|-------------|----------------|---------|---------|--------|------|-----------|
| | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | | | LL | UL | |
| Envy | 18.92±5.20 | 17.02±5.12 | 2.56 | .01 | .44 | 3.36 | 0.36 |
| Indirect aggression | 43.63±13.31 | 37.62±12.96 | 3.18 | .00 | 2.29 | 9.73 | 0.45 |
| Social exclusionary | 17.32±5.25 | 14.30±5.02 | 4.08 | .00 | 1.57 | 4.46 | 0.58 |
| Guilt induction | 9.8±3.37 | 8.85±3.15 | 2.15 | .03 | .09 | 1.94 | 0.31 |
| Malicious humor | 13.82±5.02 | 12.24±5.27 | 2.17 | .03 | .13 | 3.04 | 0.30 |

p > .05; M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; CI=Confidence Interval; LL=Lower Limit; UL= Upper Limit.

Table 3: Linear regression used to indicate the predictor of Indirect Aggression (N=200)

| Variable | Indirect aggression | | |
|----------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | B | CI | |
| | | Lower limit | Upper limit |
| Constant | 9.90** | 1.56 | 18.24 |
| Envy | .26*** | .11 | .39 |

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| R ² | .13** |
| F | 4.34*** |
| ΔR ² | .13** |
| ΔF | 4.34*** |

p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; B = Unstandardized Co efficient; ΔR²= R Square change; ΔF= F change; CI=Confidence Interval

DISCUSSION

The current research was aimed to inspect the relationship amongst social comparison, envy, and indirect aggression amongst High Facebook Users. Moreover, the purpose of the study was to investigate whether social comparison and envy are predictors of indirect aggression.

Hypothesis was made that social comparison positively affect high facebook users. The results of this current study revealed that High usage of social networking sites is a positive predictor of social comparison. Previous studies like, Robitschek and Keyes²⁰ exhibited that people using social networking sites (SNS) somehow in their lives socially compare with others and this social comparison influence the well-being of their psychological health by means of 4 types of emotions based on social comparison. In light of state study information, we originate that emotions based on social comparison arbitrated the relationship between social comparison introduction of facebook users and well-being of psychological health. In the event that Users of facebook have sturdier capacity-based orientation of social comparison, their well-being of psychological health weakens through upward comparison (i.e., envy and misery) around examination of other; though, it enhances by means of downward assimilative feelings (e.g., stress and sensitivity). These consequences demonstrated that social comparison effects the wellbeing of psychological health of the individuals using social networking sites and this ends up negative or positive contingent upon whether the facebook users social comparison introduction highlighted sentiment or ability, and the kind of emotions that are triggered by comparing with others.

Furthermore, Jordan et al²¹ examined that facebook use which is passive predicts distinct processes of social comparison and envy. In numerous researches envy and social comparison intercede a positive relationship between use of facebook and unwanted emotional outcome, example given, depression and anxiety. Though, causal connections have not so far been adequately settled. Lee in 2015²² conjointly displayed that severe use of Facebook is related to recurrent and frequent behaviors of social comparison between friends of Facebook. Lee²² also established that there are a lot of depression, indirect aggression, social comparison and the upper level of tension. Another hypothesis was made to test the predictive role that envy is expected to predict indirect aggression (social exclusionary, malicious humor and guilt induction) amongst high facebook users. The outcome and results of the research depicted that envy predict positively to indirect aggression and its subscales social exclusionary, guilt induction and malicious humor.

Jan and Holberg²³ analyzed intimacy, envy and indirect aggression in 273 sample of grownups from Cameroon and Germany. The segments of the intimacy and affiliation thought process in core, the photo story work was used to evaluate the requirement for connection and closeness. Furthermore, members gave an account of encounters of relatedness, roundabout hostility and envy. The relatedness low levels are connected with enhanced levels of indirect aggression and envy amongst people with an articulated understood closeness and affiliation

rationale. Those impacts remain constant crosswise over social gatherings.

In the light of previous literature, Hofer et al²⁴ analyzed assumptions in an example of 273 grown-ups from Cameroon and Germany. The parts of the intimacy and affiliation cause, i.e. photo story exercise was used to survey the requirement for intimacy and alliance. Moreover, the participants stated their experiences of envy, indirect aggression and the connection of the two. The people who have low levels of experiences of relatedness between the two had improved levels of indirect aggression and envy between people with marked unspoken intimacy and affiliation cause. These affects embrace factual across national gatherings.

CONCLUSION

The present study linked the multidimensional approach of social comparison to complicated process of envy and indirect aggression. Facebook is a platform wherever opinions, thoughts and events of private life are shared on unit of time and other individuals have a natural and natural capacity to make themselves look better off and booming than others that typically make them assert their opinions on others and will become a supply of indirect aggression towards them. This study confirms the view that social comparison predict envy and indirect aggression positively (malicious humor, guilt induction and social exclusionary). Further results explained that social comparison and envy are the predictors of indirect aggression. Moreover, demographics are also probable to predict social comparison, envy and indirect aggression amongst high Facebook users.

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