

Online Self-Perception and other factors Affecting Instagram Users' Mental Health.

There was a study previously done by Mun and Kim (2021) who wanted to investigate certain personality factors and mental well-being in Instagram users. This was done with a South Korean sample, slightly older than the average Instagram user population. So you may be wondering how well these findings may apply to you, who may not be Korean or younger than the population investigated. South Korea is known to be a collectivist country meaning their activities on social media are centred around the reactions of other people. Western countries such as the UK, are known to be more individualistic (Cheng et al., 2021). This would mean that people from these countries would share posts for themselves and not mainly to please others. The motives of Instagram users from these countries may differ due to the different social ideologies. My study wanted to investigate how the factors taken from Mun and Kim's study would be in a more diverse and individualistic sample of participants.

My study involved Instagram users completing an online survey that was measuring:

- Presentation of online self-scale (POSS): Ideal self, multiple selves, consistent self, and online presentation preference.
- Perceived popularity
- Impression management
- The need for approval from Instagram users
- Depression as an indicator of mental well-being
- The Dark Triad

The data from 136 participants who took part in my study was analysed. It is important to note that in my study, around 79% of the participants were women, the average age was around 19 years old, and around 74% were British citizens. This contrasts with Mun and Kim's study where the average age of participants was around 29 years old, and 50% were women. According to Statista (2023), in 2023, 18–24-year-olds make up the majority of Instagram users. This can be seen parallel to the age range found in my study and Mun and Kim's.

My study found that the need for approval had predicted the Ideal self (POSS) factor which was like the false self-presentation concept as it can be a strategy used to achieve the Ideal self you want to appear as online. And that Ideal self (POSS) could predict the level of depression in Instagram users. This was similar to the findings that Mun and Kim had. Some different findings that my study had were that perceived popularity had no association with POSS factors and depression, and impression management predicted Ideal self (POSS). The new findings were that the dark triad factors had affected perceived popularity and POSS factors in Instagram users.

As the users in my study had differences in how much they posted and how much time they spent on Instagram, it would be useful for further research with a larger sample to see if there would be a

difference in the results investigating those factors and if there was a difference with Korean participants with the new measures my study had.