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Master's Thesis of Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design

Self Presentation using Photo-Editing Apps on Social Media

보정어플을 통한 SNS 사용자들의 자기 표현

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Abstract

In today's society, advances in technology have transformed approaches to culture and lifestyles, resulting in a different mode of self presentation as well. Traditional social structures and modes of interactions have shifted, as individuals spend more time online than offline, with social networking platforms at the center of this change. Here, the used of edited selfies are the main mediums of visual communication and engagement with others. This study's objectives lie in the investigation of expressive characteristics within selfies and especially photo-editing apps, as tools to assist one's self presentation on social media. First, an inspection of the online nature of social media and its influence on interactions with others is used as a foundation to understand how personal self presentation with online mediums work, and also identify social media users' underlying motivations for using apps to edit selfies. Second various factors that influence social media users' desires be viewed in a certain way are explored, along with how these factors shape the users' approaches to their expression of self-image. Lastly, the correlations between specific app features and ways of self-presentation in relation to self-concept and image are examined to gain a deeper comprehension on the diverse desires of different social media users in their portrayal of the ideal 'self'.

A qualitative approach in terms of methodology was chosen, in which individual in-depth interviews of a total of twenty participants from South Korea was conducted to gather data concerning the aims listed above. Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method was used as the frame for data analysis as it effectively preserves the meaning phenomena this study wishes to understand through interview participant's own subjective experience. Results of analyzed data revealed three categories within photo-editing app usage motivations (influence of social media, polishing one's appearance, online acculturation), five categories within influencing factors of self presentation (self autonomy factors, nature of social media medium factors, personal perspective factors, social media user factors, socio-cultural factors), four categories within shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies (authentic style of self presentation, avoiding extreme edits in fear of looking 'fake', general rules of edits, natural methods of selfie editing tool), and six categories in desired online self-image (natural image, living life as I want image, diverse and unrestricted image, crowd-pleaser image, amiable and easy-going image, urban and refined image)

Overall, the findings of this study are of value as it provides a thorough understanding of not only the significance of the dynamics of a visual-oriented social media platform on one's self presentation mediated through photo-editing apps, but also how the distinct editing processes of social media users reflect of their individual self-image desires.

Keyword: self-presentation, social media, selfie, photo-editing, trend, image
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Chapter I. Introduction

1. Background

It is an undeniable truth that today's younger generation is inseparable from the presence of social media. Social media refers to the diverse forms of media that facilitate in enabling its users to communicate efficiently with others through the creating and sharing of personal content or participating in social networking with one another. During an era in which people are constantly saturated with diverse digital content from websites and apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok, clearly contemporary social media users interact with other people through their active engagement with technology, deriving value from user generated content online.

With almost four billion global users, a number than that is projected to escalate continuously, social media has undoubtedly established itself as one of the most prevalent and frequently used internet-based digital channels. According to research by The Manifest (2019), more than 80% of every generation use social media at least once every day, and a study conducted by Hopelab and Well Being Trust (2018), similarly stated that approximately 93% of youth between the age of fourteen and twenty-two are on social media daily. Easy access to the internet through digital gadgets such as smartphones or tablets evidently explains how social media has so swiftly become deeply integrated in people's daily lives with great success. Key activities of social media range from uploading posts and images, along with sharing stories and videos, to sending messages, commenting on and liking other people's posts and images. Naturally, the specific features of the social networking websites and apps in addition to the content aimed to engage users, slightly differ depending on the platform, but these social media channels all share a common trait in that essentially, they aid users in maintaining socially relevant relationships and sharing favorable information about themselves, while being constantly provided with an unlimited entertainment source at the same time (Kim, 2018). This is more so as the amount of time spent on social networking sites continues to escalate, consequently shifting interactions with people from offline to online spheres, impressively centralized within the screen of one's smartphone.

Nevertheless, it is of equal significance to note that such social platforms are not only a medium of communication and socialization, but also a crucial method of projecting a personally desired identity and presenting one's idea of 'self'. As the mode of interaction today is predominantly taking place within modern day's most treasured electronic device, namely the smartphone, a considerable number of social media's users continue to develop their presence on social networking platforms, effectively constructing a virtual, online version of their self-perceived 'self'. The 'self' image is defined as the "the total subjective perception of oneself, including the image of one's body and impression of one's personality, capabilities, and so one" (Bailey, 2003). Social networking technologies have fundamentally altered existing paradigms of the 'self' by initiating novel possibilities for sharing information about oneself with close friend groups to complete strangers. From recording ordinary details of everyday life to actively expressing one's emotions and perspectives to engage with others, it is important to reflect on how today, aspects of a person's being and life

is shown to not only real acquaintances but also other innumerable, unknown social media users scattered all across the globe, as this complementarily influences the purposeful disclosure of personal information and behavioral characteristics of users (Bazarova & Choi, 2014). Such extensive change can be credited primarily to the distinction between conventional mass media and social media. Whereas traditional media channels only support a one-way type of communication, in which information is simply delivered from a media outlet to a mass audience, social media promises a two-way communication as users are allowed to not only receive, but also create and present their very own content through social networking. The latter is inherently interactive, enabling individuals to freely express, explore and create their own identity and version of 'self' through social media's distinctive features such as personal profiles, stories, and posts with other users (Stefanone, Lackaff & Rosen, 2011).

The presentation of this entity of the self is known as self-presentation, pertaining to any behavior or action that expresses an image of oneself to another. While the 'self' is very much correlating with a person's own self-gratification and opinion of his or herself, basically endeavors to control one's own impression of him or herself, this concept of self-presentation extends further to endeavors that aim to manage other people's impressions of oneself as well (Pounders, Kowalczyk, & Stowers, 2016). This specifically refers to an individual's attempt to skillfully control other people, also known as 'the audience' and subsequently their views of him or herself through a carefully and intentionally planned exposure of particular information about the 'self'. Thus, self-presentation can be viewed as a vital segment within the behaviors of one's impression management, a conscious or unconscious attempt to influence the perceptions of others through the regulation of information. In the past, offline face-to-face interactions were an essential prerequisite of self-presentation and impression management. During these times, the presentation of the 'self' was primarily based on personal appearances and traits that highlight personality, character or even social status, such as the way one dresses and visually presents oneself along with situationally appropriate behavior, including how one engages in conversations and acts towards others in certain social situations (Tseëlon, 1992).

However, currently in a tech-induced era, individuals more frequently engage in self-presentation through social media, as the online virtual space allows unrestricted experimentation with different domains of the self (Pounders, Kowalczyk, & Stowers, 2016). Within the context of social media and smartphone mediated self presentation, the revealing of the 'self' can be managed through the posts and pictures shared on user's profile, in addition to direct contact through messages and comments. The manner in which one presents him or herself is essentially parallel to the desires of be perceived by certain people in a specific way, pertaining to personal ideal versions of the 'self' along with social demands and perspectives constituting identity construction. The Berkman Center of Internet & Society at Harvard and the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project has revealed how teens associate social media with 'looking good' both physically and reputationally, as "you post what you want people to think of you". Thus, the expression of oneself on social media and the varied methods of accomplishing this bring to surface thought provoking questions on the how social media influences individual's such desires to be perceived by others.

As one of social media's definitive characteristics, visual-oriented features like personal photos and videos are a vital tool for self-presentation (Kapidzic, 2013), and hence the term 'selfie'. The definition of

selfie is, “an image of oneself taken by oneself using a digital camera [usually on a smartphone] especially for posting on social networks” (Pounders, Kowalczyk, & Stowers, 2016). The invention of a forward-facing camera in smartphones marks the milestone, as this is the definite indication of the omnipresence of the selfie as people are capable of instantaneously capturing themselves anytime and anywhere. Selfie, has been globalized between the years 2011 and 2012, although the concept of the selfie has pre-existed long before in the form of self-portraits. Through the 'selfie', users generally aim to share the most attractive photo of themselves on social media to convey an ideal image of the self (Kapidzic, 2013). Previous studies have examined diverse facets of the selfie, including the role of selfie as a representational image (Cruz & Thornham, 2015), selfies as a tool for impression management and branding (Pounders, Kowalczyk & Stowers, 2016; Belk, 2013; Eagar & Dann, 2016), the different motivations for taking selfies based on personality types (Etgar & Amichai-Hamburger, 2017; Kim & Chock, 2017), in addition to the more negative aspects such as the harmful sides of selfies on body image (Mills, Musto, Williams, & Tiggemann, 2018), body surveillance and self objectification (Feltman & Szymanski, 2017; Lamp, Cugle, Silverman, Thomas, Liss & Erchull, 2019), and self-esteem (Chang, Li, Loh & Chua, 2019). Research regarding the selfie and self-presentation is currently largely confined to those that focus on the selfie in general, without consideration of the process individuals undergo in capturing and refining the selfie prior to posting.

2. Research Purpose, Questions, Implications

In the same vein, the process of framing oneself on social media through selfies has led to a rapid proliferation in the use of beauty apps, which brings new questions regarding the relevance of such apps to social media users to the surface. Initially filters and alterations to selfies first introduced to social media were closer to an artistic virtual dress up, in which users could change their face to an animal, wear a bow, or even grow a beard. While such playful filters and edits to selfies are still present, more nuanced and less obvious edits have become pervasive, beautifying one’s looks to mirror model-like appearances. Enhancing one’s pictures had once been characterized as a process strictly reserved for professional models and celebrity figures alone, but through the emergence of various photo editing apps and simple accessibility of such apps, anyone can immediately alter their pictures with one swipe with ease and flexibility.

Hence, slowly but steadily beautifying one’s selfies has taken place as a basic routine, a phenomenon primarily concentrated in the younger female population, in that for young Korean women editing selfies and other photos prior to uploading them on social media is perceived as an essential step in their self-presentation online (Lee & Lee, 2019). On the one hand, some research suggests that intentions of utilizing beauty apps as appearance-enhancing devices are grounded in harmful ideals of beauty, especially as such apps encompasses tools that can swiftly produce unrealistically perfect looks unattainable through natural methods (Harrison & Hefner, 2014). Such views are shared by many psychology experts who express concerns that this will only foster an ‘airbrushed online environment’ that is gradually more divorced from reality. As a matter of fact, this is the ruling perspective of most research relating to selfie editing and self presentation, that beautifying one’s image will instill a distorted conception of beauty, namely the “Instagram face” and negatively impact individuals’ self-esteem.

On the other hand, there are other research results that simultaneously indicate the exact opposite, that there is no clear correlation between selfie editing and feelings of dissatisfaction with one's appearance (Chae, 2017; Sun, 2020). According to such research, although automated tools of editing apps may, to an extent, have the potential to project a standardized procedure of selfie beautification, interestingly, the desire edit one's pictures does not originate from an obsession on physical flaws, or oppositely lead to an extreme anxiety concerning one's looks. In fact, it is argued that in actuality, social media users' intentions to modify their photos lies within their primary objective to exhibit an appearance similar to that of others or even to look better than other people in comparison through a 'perfect' presentation of the self, 'perfect' here not necessary referring to visually physical perfection but rather a conceptual perfection of oneself (Chae, 2017). Hence, such suggests that the comparison of one's appearance to that of another people is present during the process of beautifying selfies, but not necessarily strongly correlated to an unhealthy fixation or lack of self-respect for oneself. A significant point of consideration is that while numerous studies have focused on proving the link between selfie editing and negative body-esteem (MacCallum & Widdows, 2016; Tiggemann, Anderberg, & Brown, 2020) caused by self-objectification and internalization of hazardous beauty ideals (Elias & Gill, 2017; Vendemia & DeAndrea, 2021; Lee & Lee, 2021), fewer have taken a positive, or at least neutral approach on this topic focusing on the role such beautification plays in one's self presentation on social media. Ultimately, this insufficiently addressed relationship is the subject this study intends to further examine through a more open-minded point of view on the action of selfie-editing as a whole in relation to self presentation. It, it will be meaningful to explore the process in between the capturing of the selfie, to the sharing of the refined selfie on social media through its implication on and specific self presentation motivations of individuals. There are three key questions of investigation this study aims to explore in conducting individual in-depth individual interview:

Question 1. *Identify social media users' underlying motivations for using photo-editing apps.* As outlined in previous findings, the action of manipulating one's appearance in selfies resonates with the expression of unlimited identities and self-exploration (Lavrence & Cambre, 2020), and this, in turn, highlights a need to comprehend user's motivations for using beauty apps, through a more detailed inspection of the online environment of social media and its influence on personal self presentation

Question 2. *Explore the various possible factors that considerably impact social media users' desires be viewed in a certain way, and how these factors shape the users' approaches to self-presentation.* This current study aims to fill such major gap in current literature on social media users' underlying motivations for using photo-editing apps with regards to the elements that potentially shape such such's intentions of and attitudes towards self presentation on social media. Details into the behaviors shown when using selfie-editing apps will be inspected to comprehend how such editing process shapes social media user's virtual 'self' within the digital domain.

Question 3. *Investigate the correlations between specific app features and ways of self-presentation in relation to self-concept and image.* Finally, the purpose of this study is to additionally investigating the correlations between specific app features and methods of self-presentation in relation to self-concept and fashion image. The goal is to delve deeper into how individuals wish to present their ideal 'self' by analyzing editing patterns

and methods of approaching their selfies in creating an ideal image online, in addition to gaining a broader insight into the varied images social media users wish to project through their selfies in the modern context of today.

This research is anticipated to have important implications on acquiring a thorough understanding of not only how the dynamics of a visual-oriented social media platform mediate user's presentation of 'self' with the assistance of photo-editing apps, but also how the various editing processes of distinct individuals is a truthful reflection of their own self presentation desires. Moreover, the different nature of self presentation on social media can be better evaluated through varied behavioral characteristics or reflective thoughts presented by social media users. Such knowledge is of academic value as it differs from the perspective of prior studies that founded upon the obstinate conclusion that selfie-editing is profoundly damaging to one's self presentation. This study will also help other researchers interested in similar areas by shedding light on the different array of self concepts and fashion images sought by social media users in their editing of selfies, as this desired projection of image will presumably shape the personalized method of editing and beautification. Through aims to illuminate on the self presentation potentials of selfie-editing apps, an elevated comprehension of the expressive characteristics of such apps can be reached.

Chapter II. Literature Review

1. The Concept of 'Self' and Self Presentation

1.1 The 'Self' and Self-Concept

The concept 'self' marks the basis of understanding self-presentation, both ideas that have been extensively explored in literature. Epstein explains that the self is an "object of knowledge" one identifies as entailing what the individual perceives as belonging to his or herself, in which three distinct selves exist (Epstein, 1973). The material self, an extended self that includes the individual's body, family, and possessions, the social self that provides for other people's views and opinions of oneself, and the spiritual self that includes one's feelings and wishes (Epstein, 1973). Similarly, Marks and Nurius state that the 'self' is "the object of definition, expectation or evaluation", in which an individual's desired identity determines the outcome of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves are said to be ideal versions of the 'self' people hope to become, have the potential of becoming, or are afraid of becoming; thus, the self a representation of specific individual needs, fears, imaginations (Markus & Nurius, 1986). While it is said that "an individual is free to create any variety of possible selves", possible selves are not only personal, but also largely social. They are a clear result of comparisons between the individual's thoughts and characteristics contrasted to that of other people, deriving from "the individual's particular sociocultural and historical context", in addition to the individual's "immediate social experiences" (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Through reflective modifications to one's perception of 'self' in response to the society one belongs to, individuals continuously construct their individual identity and sense of 'self', and conversely, one's possible serves also have the potential to reveal the extent to which the 'self' is socially determined, (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

The self-concept is one's, "self-identity, a schema consisting of an organized collection of beliefs and feelings" about oneself, which is also intimately related with self-image, a visualized conception of one's physical appearance integrated with a collection of diverse experiences, feelings and desires (Bailey, 2003). The self-concept is also explained as a "mental image and cognitive appraisal of our physical, social and academic competence", hence relating to the idea of our ideal possible selves (Bailey, 2003). Inherently, self-concepts are based on an individual's assessment of qualities present in him or herself, in which such qualities may refer to how one appears and what one does. The former involves visually measurable qualities such as unchanging genetic attributes, both fixed at birth and with potential for change through one's life and acquired material objects that have the purpose of enhancing one's physical appearance or symbolically portraying a certain coveted attribute in one's persona; the latter is established through qualities presented through one's actions and display of a certain disposition or personality trait, (Bailey, 2003).

It is important to understand that the development of the 'self' and one's self-concept is not something formed entirely internally, as Cooley explains, "the social origin of 'self' comes by the pathway of intercourse with other persons. There is no sense of 'I' without its correlative sense of you, or he, or they". Parallel to the

construction of 'self', as the self-concept is grounded upon qualities that are subject to the judgement of others. This image one has of one's 'self' is a very personal, yet at the same time is a socially structured concept. Hence, it can be understood that an individual's self-concept is essentially built and dynamically adjusted according to the interactions with other people and their reactions within a given context. These reactions from that are accepted and internalized is known as feedback, which can be positive and negative, either conscious or unconscious. The idea that one's 'self' is depend on one's appearance to others encapsulates Cooley's theory of the looking-glass self (Cooley, 1902). Three processes have been outlined in the identity formation through interaction of others: firstly, one's imagination of how he or she may appear to others; secondly, one's imagination of other's judgements of oneself based on one's appearance and display of 'self'; lastly, one's imagination of other's feelings about oneself based on the previous judgements formed (Cooley, 1902). During these reflective steps, the individual's autonomous role is imperative in deciding which judgements are worthy of paying attention to and evaluating other's responses within the appropriate social context.

1.2 Self Presentation and Impression Management (Goffman)

The social facets of the 'self' is further expanded in Goffman's The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, in which he claims that often people's engagement in activities is underlined by a strong inclination to control other's views of themselves (Goffman, 1956). Impression management, is a goal-directed, both conscious or unconscious process in which one tries to influence another's perceptions of a person, object, or event through the deliberate regulation of information in social situations. Goffman viewed impression management not only as a means of controlling how one is treated by others, but also as an indispensable part of human social interactions. Self presentation, more specifically, is a type of impression management that points to people's attempt to positively affect how they are perceived by others by conveying particular impressions about themselves (Lewis and Neighbors, 2005). Such impressions include, but are not limited to characteristics of one's appearance, abilities, attitudes, motives, status and emotions. The assertion made is that individuals convey an impression of oneself that serves his or her self-interests, by inducing others to reaction in certain desirable ways. This is due to the fact that such self presentation determines the individuals' placement within a social order, which sets the "direction and tone of an interaction" (Goffman, 1956). Goffman focuses on the importance of everyday, person to person interactions, stressing the importance in considering "the ways in which the individual in ordinary work situations present himself and his activity to others, the ways in which he guides and controls the impression they form, and the kind of things he may or may not do while sustaining his performance before them" (Goffman, 1956).

Goffman's specific choice of the word, 'performance' is due to his perception of self presentation as analogous to a theatrical show. Although earlier philosophers such as Burke (1950) and Hart & Burk (1972) proposed ideas on how people are comparable to a performer on stage, Goffman was the first to propose a self presentation theory and define its principles along the lines of this concept. According to Goffman and his theory, individuals attempting to manage another's impression through self presentation are compared to actors who put on different performances in front of different audiences, each corresponding to a distinct motive. In Goffman's theatre metaphor, the self presentation 'performance' is divided into the front and back

stage, in which front stage behavior are actions that are part of the performance, visible to the audience and back stage behavior are actions people engage in behind the scenes with no present audience (Goffman, 1956). It is proposed that the front stage "include insignia of office or rank, racial characteristics, clothing, sex, age, racial characteristics, size and looks, posture, speech patterns, facial bodily gestures and the like", the performance of identity affected by both the appearance, the physical exterior of the actor and the manner, the actor's certain display of behavior (Goffman, 1956). During the front stage, it is possible that the actors are conscious of being observed by the audience, but during the back stage hidden from the eyes of others, the following of particular values or norms are not necessary, hence revealing a personal presentation visible only to the actor him or herself. Within these interactions the roles of the audience and actor are interchangeable as both are simultaneously an actor and audience as they perform these two roles accordingly in relevant situations (Goffman, 1956). To Goffman, the 'self' is not something fixed existing within individuals, but rather an inevitable part of a social process. In order for social interactions to proceed smoothly, every participant of the show is required to project a public identity that guides the behaviors of others (Tseëlon, 1992).

1.3 Self Presentation and Impression Management (Leary and Kowalski)

Leary and Kowalski (1990) build on Goffman's theory of self presentation and impression management by reducing the myriad of variables influencing impression management to what their study refers to as "small sets of theoretically meaningful factors". Hence, a two-component model constituting of two discrete processes, a motivation process and construction process, is proposed. The motivation process in this model refers to the extent to which self presenting individuals are motivated to control other's perception of themselves, and the construction process involves the determination of which impression one precisely wishes to convey to whom in addition to the exact method on how to execute this planned impression. It is explained that these processes, "operate according to different principles and is affected by different situation and dispositional antecedents" (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In the case on impression motivation, it is important to note a small, but meaningful distinction between Goffman and Leary and Kowalski's approach; while the two are on equal grounds on the idea that individuals regularly monitor their impact on others and attempt to determine the impression others form of them, Leary and Kowalski claim that often this is done without any intentional efforts to convey a particular impression and that it is under certain circumstances in which one is motivated to control how other people view him or herself.

According to the model's motivation process, there are three separate, yet interrelated factors underlying why individuals are motivated to impression-manage in a situation (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In terms of the first factor, social and material outcomes, projecting the right impression is seen to significantly increase the likelihood of obtaining one's desired outcomes, meaning that self presentation enables individuals to maximize their 'reward-cost ratio' during interaction with others. These outcomes could be interpersonal outcomes such as approval, friendship, assistance and power or material outcomes, usually relating to financial benefits (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). However, even in situations where no immediate or future outcomes depend of certain impressions, individuals tend to be concerned about people's views on themselves, suggesting other, more personal motivation factors of impression management. The fact that

people are continually motivated to maintain and enhance their self-esteem, suggest a self-esteem maintenance factor (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Other's reactions like compliments and indications of liking can raise one's self-esteem while criticism and rejection deflate it. Accordingly, individuals act to make impressions that will elicit responses to increase their self-esteem, even in the absence of explicit or implicit feedback as self-esteem is still affected by one's own evaluation of their self presentation and other's imagined reactions to such (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). There is also a development of identity factor, apparent from people's engagement in self presentation as a means of creating their identities. It is suggested that "acquiring a particular identity requires the execution of identity-related activities", and because the sense of 'self' is ultimately intertwined with one's surroundings and society, individuals participate in 'self-symbolizing' behavior and impression manage to consolidate their self approved identity (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

While the three factors, social and material outcome, self-esteem maintenance and development of identity, explain the reasons underpinning self presentation, the degree to which individuals are motivated to impression-manage are mediated by other additional factors, namely the goal-relevance of impression, value of desired goals and discrepancy between one's desired and current image (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). How much one perceived his or her public image as relevant to the attainment of his or her desired goals is vital as individuals are generally more motivated to control other's impression of themselves when it is believed that this image conveyed will have important implications the achievement of a certain goal. Here, publicity plays a role in the goal-relevance of self presentation motivations as public behaviors are probably more appropriate to the fulfillment of one's goals than private behaviors (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Moreover, the motivations to impress are directly related to the value of one's desired goals as one is more likely to impression manage the more valuable their attainment of goals are, in relevance to their public image (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The extent of discrepancy between how one wishes to be perceived by others and how one believes others perceive oneself is seen to influence self presentation as individuals are typically more motivated to actively manage their impressions when it is deemed that there is a visible inconsistency between the desired, ideal image they would like others to hold of themselves and the currently existing image thought to be held by others. Leary and Kowalski (1990) further support this idea by claiming that each and every individuals possess "a latitude of images they regard as acceptable to project", and when it is thought that "the impressions others have of them fall outside this latitude", they are strongly motivated to impression-manage. Finally, individuals' own personality along with the social situations they are placed in are seen to determine the nature of impressions that are conveyed. In the construction process of Leary and Kowalski's (1990) proposed model, five sets of factors are outlined, two factors involving one's relationships with oneself: self-concept and desired identity, and three including one's relation to others: target value, role constraints, and current or potential social image. These factors provide a structural basis in the comprehension of how one constructs his or her identity and public image.

First, an individual's presentation of 'self' is influenced by not only the social context, but also one's self-concept. This is because on most accounts, people hope to be viewed as how they truly are like and moreover, it is thought that putting forth a public image that is conflicting with one's reality is unprincipled and difficult to successfully sustain in the long-run (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The potential of risk of failure in presenting a deceptive 'self' deters individuals from presenting such false impressions, but at the same

time, people deliberately manage certain impressions to be viewed 'accurately' by others. Second, a desirable identity is defined as how a person "would like to be and thinks he or she really can be, at least at his or her best" (Schlenker, 1982). Individuals have a tendency to self present in correspondence to their desired identity by openly asserting characteristics that are consistent with this identity and explicitly rejecting attributes they do not wish to be associated with (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Third, individuals tailor their impression management according to the values of others, whose opinions they are concerned with, hence the 'target value' (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The claim is that in the majority of cases, an individual chooses to selectively convey truthful aspects of oneself that coincides with the values of the 'target' and withhold information that may be judged negatively, although at times, this type of approach may intentionally or unintentionally result in the construction of impressions that are actually fabrications based on what an individual thinks important others value (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Fourth, role constraints refer to how the roles taken on by individuals, along with subsequent social norms affect one's content and manner of self presentation. Individuals often aim to project impressions consistent with their roles and sometimes these roles even own acceptable self presentation standards based on the types of required impressions holders of certain roles should or should not convey (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Fifth, as one's social image is influenced by one's perception of other's view of oneself, individuals direct their presentation of 'self' towards dismissing undesired impressions others may hold about them. Such behaviors include refuting possible negative impressions by demonstrating that they are not how others believe them to be, or projecting other favorable impressions in their identity to cover such negative perceptions (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The factors explained in Leary and Kowalski's motivation and construction processes provide valuable insight into why and how one forms and projects an image of 'self', and these conceptual frameworks of impression management are anticipated to offer constructive guidance in comprehending self presentation within the online domain as well.

2. Rise of the Social Media

2.1 Characteristics and Applications of Social Media

Social media, also known as social networking sites, are defined as web-based that enable its users to primarily, "construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The motivations of general social media typically include maintain existing relationships and seeking new relationships, self presentation and managing of an online identity, along with seeking entertainment and passing time (Kim, 2018). While SNSs have implemented a wide variety of technical features, their backbone consists of visible profiles that display an articulated list of friends or followers who are also users of the system. Profiles are unique pages where one can ''type oneself into being'' (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Some social media platforms enable individuals to their profile by answers to questions, which typically include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an ''about me'' section. The majority of platforms also encourage users to upload a profile photo. Some sites allow users to enhance their profiles by adding multimedia content or modifying their profile's look and feel. The visibility

of a profile varies by site and according to user discretion. By default, profiles on Friendster and Tribe.net are crawled by search engines, making them visible to anyone, regardless of whether or not the viewer has an account. Alternatively, LinkedIn controls what a viewer may see based on whether she or he has a paid account (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Sites like MySpace allow users to choose whether they want their profile to be public or ‘‘Friends only.’’ Facebook takes a different approach—by default, users who are part of the same ‘‘network’’ can view each other’s profiles, unless a profile owner has decided to deny permission to those in their network. Structural variations around visibility and access are one of the primary ways that SNSs differentiate themselves from each other. After joining a social network site, users are prompted to identify others in the system with whom they have a relationship. The label for these relationships differs depending on the site—popular terms include ‘‘Friends,’’ ‘‘Contacts,’’ and ‘‘Fans.’’ Most SNSs require bi-directional confirmation for Friendship, but some do not. These one-directional ties are sometimes labeled as ‘‘Fans’’ or ‘‘Followers,’’ but many sites call these Friends as well. The term ‘‘Friends’’ can be misleading, because the connection does not necessarily mean friendship in the everyday vernacular sense, and the reasons people connect are varied. The public display of connections is a crucial component of SNSs. The Friends list contains links to each Friend’s profile, enabling viewers to traverse the network graph by clicking through the Friends lists. On most sites, the list of Friends is visible to anyone who is permitted to view the profile, although there are exceptions. For instance, some MySpace users have hacked their profiles to hide the Friends display, and LinkedIn allows users to opt out of displaying their network (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

Research have shown that although social media can be a light source of entertainment, people tend to share their emotions to fulfill both the need for personal expression and the need to receive feedback (Choi and Toma, 2014). Although not all social media platforms are specifically designed to facilitate socialization between its users, it may be considered one of the most apparent commonalities of all types of social media (Aichner, Grünfelder, Maurer & Jegeni 2021). Sometimes referred to as online communities, these platforms are valuable given that people often do not perceive a difference between virtual friends and real friends, as long as they feel supported and belong to a community of like-minded individuals. 5 Social media helps to strengthen relationships through the sharing of important life events in the form of status updates, photos, etc., reinforcing at the same time their in-person encounters as well. Several other studies suggest that SM significantly influences the romantic aspects of life. Aside from facilitating human interaction, communication technologies are also shaping and defining our relationships.10 It has been shown that SM is important in the starting phases of a relationship and has a significant influence on the relationship of many couples in the long run.11 The SM can help when starting a romantic relationship, for example, contacting a crush through SM can have special benefits for introverts, who otherwise would avoid face-to-face contact and would otherwise communicate less.

2.2 Online Self Presentation and Identity Exploration

In today's society, technology has given way to changed approaches to culture and lifestyles, and this change in context signifies a change in self presentation as well. Traditional social structures and modes of interactions have shifted as people predominately spend more time online than offline, with social media at the center of transformation (Tiggemann, Anderberg, & Brown, 2020). Traditional forms of media such as

TV or fashion magazines and social media are inherently different in their content as the former is mainly peer-generated, meaning that social media users are able to share personal photos and information on their profiles and interact with other users within the same platform (Tiggemann, Anderberg, & Brown, 2020). Social media freely enables individuals to create "an unbounded and virtual self" (Eagar & Dann, 2016). This, in effect, successfully paved the road for a new, innovative form of self presentation. Prior studies suggest that individuals, especially the youth, use social media for exploring and presenting various aspects of the self (Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter & Espinoza, 2008), which correlates with Marks and Nurius' concept of potential selves. Essentially, social media users possess more control over their impression management in comparison to face-to-face interactions. In turn this enables a more strategic self presentation to others, while at the same time, given the diverse ways in which posts and pictures can be discovered and consumed, it is more challenging to tailor individual's self presentation in accordance to specific people as the communication on social media is geared towards a broader, more general audience (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006). Hence, users typically envision who their expected audience and express themselves accordingly.

Self presentation online is principally equivalent to Goffman's idea of presentation of the self, since activities of identity construction on social media also involve adjusting and editing the 'self' with an aim to generate the desired impression on the viewers (Pounders, Kowalczyk, & Stowers, 2016). Goffman's principles are applicable to the digital context like understanding self presentation online especially in social networking platforms, as social media users are capable of guiding other's views of themselves by purposefully highlighting certain desirable impressions of themselves. In order to ensure other users attain only favorable impressions about themselves, individuals usually engage in selective posting, a meticulous process that involves carefully choosing the image that best flaunts one's physical attractiveness and uploading text or posts that encapsulate their unique personality, while at the same time, concealing aspects that are deemed unappealing or potentially controversial (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006). Interestingly, while some research suggest that social media allows for a boundless, unrestricted exploration and creative expression of the 'self', it is also revealed that users engage in accurate self presentations in which their online 'self' is grounded on true aspects of their own identity, indicating user's disinterest in "playing with identities" (Marcus, Machilek & Schütz, 2006). Nevertheless, it is significant to note that although the fundamental natural of social media as a medium of online self presentation is equivalent, there is an observable distinction between the methods of such, depending on the dissimilar characteristics and features of each social media platform.

Likewise, Goffman's concept of a theatrical front stage, back stage in self presentation and user's management of impressions within the social networking context significantly differs on whether the platform is text-based like Twitter, or visual-based such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat (Smith & Sanderson 2015). The front stage analogy for text-based platforms refers to the updating status and posts that tactically disclose information about an individual's general interests and lifestyle, academic achievements and professional career, along with outlooks on certain social or political issues. For image-based platforms, the front stage can be examined through the sharing of pictures and videos through posts, stories and reels in addition to captions and hashtags that visually present people in ways they feel would be the most acceptable or even desirable in the eyes of other people. Apart from this 'performance' unfolding in the front stage,

another integral place involving online self presentation is the offline back stage of social media (Smith & Sanderson 2015). While users are finally free to be in their true self in the back stage, this is also where they self manage and prepare to deliver a presentable 'self' in the online front stage. The back stage could include process such as choosing, censoring, editing and deleting of content, enabling an individual to freely construct their ideal social media 'self' and appropriately altering other's perception to fit such chosen identity. Of course, there is flexibility with what is defined as front stage or back stage activities as, "front stage and back stage are always relative as they depend on the audience, context, and interpretation" (Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

Considering the interactive, networking purpose of social media, as Goffman (1956) explained one is both and actor and audience in the online sphere. This means that the projections of identities online are inherently collaborative, as users not only 'self' present but also judge the self presentation of other users, each and every interaction between users a ceaseless cycle of consumption of information and feedback to others. In some sense, social media is an identity testing ground for its users to navigate their direction of self presentation. Through this interdependence of impression management, individuals are also able to reflectively adjust their method of presentation based on the interaction with and feedback from other users, carefully curating one's online 'self' (Hogan, 2010). For instance, the number of likes on a post or comments from friends and other users are simple but efficient indicators of how people's reaction that persuade individuals to present specific aspects of their identity and manage impression in ways that is welcomed by others in their next, upcoming presentation. Social media users have admitted to actually deleting post or pictures that do not receive their desired number of likes in order to prevent themselves as from being viewed as unattractive, and thus the action of sharing content on social media only proceeds after a high scrutiny of whether it would be considered share-worthy (Dinhopl and Gretzel, 2016).

Thus, another key aspect of online self presentation is that social media usage can reveal interpersonal orientation. This is due to the fact that user's usage of social networking sites mirrors an increased need for social interaction, for those interested in others and care about others' opinions, possess a greater level of social comparison in determining their self presentation (Chae, 2017). The idea that one defines and assesses oneself through comparisons with other people is the foundational concept of the social comparison theory. Social comparisons are principally based on similarities and differences that indicate either a superiority over or inferiority to a particular reference group. Whereas the process of comparison in itself is not problematic, the probability of selecting of an unfitting reference group is increased in social media as individuals are able to compare themselves to any other users. Researchers highlight how this could negatively impact one's projection of 'self' and there are studies that have repetitively expressed concerns that the visual nature of specific social media platforms may potentially result in an unintended preoccupation and fixation on physical appearance, heightened through user's engagement in appearance related photo activities (Mills, Musto, Williams, & Tiggemann, 2018). On the other hand, other research indicate that there is a substantial number of social media users who are interested in specifically engaging in upward social comparisons with superior others to serve self-improvement objectives (Kim, 2018).

3. Selfie, Selfie Editing and Beauty Apps

3.1 The 'Selfie"

Indivisible from social media is the term 'selfie', which first appeared in 2013 and was nominated as Oxford English Dictionary's word of the year (Cambre & Lvrence, 2019). During this period selfies went completely viral with alarming speed, rising to become a cultural phenomenon sensationalized by the media. To not know what a 'selfie' is, was equivalent to being culturally illiterate. Notably, the action of taking and sharing selfies represents one of the most common ways through which users selectively self-present on social media (Mills, Musto, Williams, & Tiggemann, 2018). As such platforms are the most common environment for the presentation of selfies, selfies are also considered a platform specific photographic genre (Meese et al 2015). The unique aspect of selfies is that it allows individuals to feature themselves as the central subject of communication (Pounders, Kowalczyk, & Stowers, 2016). As the most ubiquitous method of photographic self-presentation on social media throughout recent years, the selfie has established itself not only as a means of sociality but also as an efficient tool for personal autonomy. Social media users can unrestrictedly express their sense of self through a visually constructed multifaceted identity, visible to friends and others on the same social media platform (Pounders, Kowalczyk, & Stowers, 2016; Eagar & Dann, 2016; Cambre & Lvrence, 2019; Chang, Li, Loh & Chua, 2019). Through the sense of self that is expressed and digitally constructed through an image, the selfie represents individuals' identity production desires. This is achieved through deliberate and detailed editorial steps present in the shot selection of an image, overall visual structure, and considerations taken in one's ultimate decision of a particular chosen selfie to be 'the one' posted on social media out of many other possible candidates (Eagar & Dann, 2016). To create a 'post-worthy selfie', users frequently put in special efforts to take selfies from specific angles and lighting that flatter or conceal physical features considered more or less attractive, depending on the individual's own perception of his or herself (Mills, Musto, Williams, & Tiggemann, 2018).

Selfies are public reflections of the way we view and present ourselves, an intriguing combination of inward and outward looking (Kozinets, Gretzel & Dinhopl, 2017). Their pervasiveness online has been facilitated not only by networked technology and devices such as front facing cameras and selfie sticks, but also by the internalized social conventions that make the capture and sharing of self-images desirable and acceptable (Larsen and Sandbye, 2014). That these conventions are shifting is evidenced by the changing and amorphous definitions of what constitutes a selfie (Hess, 2015). Sorokowski (2015) define selfies as photographs "of oneself (or of oneself and other people), taken with a camera or a camera phone held at arm's length or pointed at a mirror, that are usually shared through social media". This fundamental notion captures the core elements of the selfie phenomenon. However, that phenomenon is constantly changing as the practice evolves. Some literature now adopts a broader definition to accommodate group selfies, partial selfies of body parts, timers, selfie sticks, and highly manipulated photos facilitated by app technologies such as Snapchat. Rather than confining the selfie phenomenon to a particular technology or genre of photograph or video, we follow the broad definition of Dinhopl and Gretzel (2016), which identifies selfies as "characterized by the desire to frame the self in a picture taken to be shared with an online audience".

In the “subjective self-portrait” it is clear that the photograph is a self-portrait. We see the photographers’ outstretched arms pointing the camera at themselves, or it is obvious that they were shooting into a mirror. When they also look into the camera lens, this impression of self-capturing-self is magnified. Subjective self-portraits tend to be more common than the objective types, especially in generic social media where the self-conscious need to tell one’s ongoing life story is stronger than in the more serious photography communities where objective self-portraits prevail as a form of artistic expression. Subjective self-portraits are also easier to take, making them more amenable to the spontaneously immediate action of sharing oneself in-the-moment that has become the main attraction of contemporary social media (Suler, 2015). Whereas carefully executed objective self-portraits alleviate impressions of the photographer appearing narcissistically self-absorbed, subjective self-portraits tend to amplify that feeling of self-preoccupation. The “objective self-portrait” creates the illusion that someone else might have taken the photograph, in traditional photography by placing the camera on a surface or tripod to shoot from a distance, or more recently in the use of the“selfie stick” that enables one to place a phone camera at the end of a pole (Suler, 2015). The greater the distance between camera and subject, the less likely the viewer will assume it is a self-portrait. If photographers close their eyes, look away from the camera, and avoid a self-conscious facial expression, they can create the impression that they did not even know a photograph was being taken, that “this is how someone else captured me.” By fabricating this illusion of someone else’s presence, the objective self-portrait suggests a relationship between the subject and that imaginary photographer, a bifurcation of both identity and self-awareness often rooted in an unconscious reference to a particular person who took the shot (Suler, 2015).

3.2 The Normalization of Selfie Editing

Beautifying selfies, also referred to as photoshopping, retouching, airbrushing, and photo manipulation (Harrison & Hefner, 2014), are a typical preparation process for social media users prior to the actual upload of the image. Editing techniques such as color correction, blemish removal, skin-blurring, body tuning help individuals effortlessly achieve the impression they wish to visually present online (Mills, Musto, Williams, & Tiggemann, 2018). Such extent of photo editing can range from simple adjustments like changing elements of composition like cropping or color control, to relatively minor changes and retouching such as smoothing out wrinkles and removing blemishes, to more bold, dramatic modification like elongating the limbs and slimming the chin, waist, arms, and legs that directly alters the shape of facial and bodily features (MacCallum & Widdows, 2016).

From the past, editing has been a prerequisite in the production of commercial images used for promoting products and services for diverse factors, including fashion, entertainment, cosmetic, and beauty industries. (Harrison & Hefner, 2014). Even more, airbrushing to erase any signs of skin imperfections, whitening teeth, sliming the waists and legs, increasing breasts and hips are not only widespread but expected and sometimes even considered mandatory, especially in fashion and entertainment industries (MacCallum & Widdows, 2016). Traditionally such photo editing was reserved exclusively for celebrities and professionals working in the mainstream media. However, in today’s digital era of smartphones and social media, such editing tools, strategies, and practices are openly available to anyone and everyone with access to a digital gadget (Stefanone, Lackaff & Rosen, 2011; Vendemia & DeAndrea, 2021). Thus, the increased

availability and standardization of editing images for ordinary people is so commonplace that people automatically perceive pictures online to be altered somehow or the other (Vendemia & DeAndrea, 2021). Most people who employ editing techniques use it on social media for a strategically coordinated presentation of the self, which also correlates with their construction of identity and online social interactions. (Harrison & Hefner, 2014; Vendemia & DeAndrea, 2021). Hence, one can see that the selfie and the editing process, as a whole, is crucial to self-presentation on social media (Chang, Li, Loh & Chua, 2019).

3.3 Proliferation of Photo-Editing Apps

In face-to-face interactions, people attempt to convey favorable impressions to others by enhancing their physical appearance. Such efforts are comparable to editing one's photos before posting it on social media (Lee & Lee, 2019). This can be seen to be grounded on a social context, in which people wish to present themselves in a favorable light and generate a positive impression to others in pursuit of benefits such as enhanced social relationships (Lee & Lee, 2021). Selfie editing practices refer to the alteration of one's appearance in digital images before uploading and sharing them with friends or other social media users. Editing effects allow for the creation of numerous versions of the 'self', which assists in an individual's online engagement required in successfully maintaining visibility within the social media sphere (Lavrence & Cambre, 2020). Additionally, selfies always seem to assist in establishing a sense of control that is at risk of being undone by the camera, which possibly makes individuals feel vulnerable by accentuating unattractive features, such as enlarging the nose, decreasing the eyes, creating a double chin, etc. However, taking post-worthy selfies requires not just managing the camera's unpleasant distortions as much as learning how to make necessary adjustments through editing, as the latter reaps more satisfying results (Cambre & Lvrence, 2019). Correspondingly, the prevalence of photo editing applications and photoshop programs instantly simplifies social media users' effect in presenting their best self online (Chang, Li, Loh & Chua, 2019). Before the popularization of photo editing applications, selfie editing and impression management through photos used were limited to simply cropping or framing, choosing the most presentable images, or changing the overall color or tone of the images using the basic features offered within the social media platform itself (Lee & Lee, 2019).

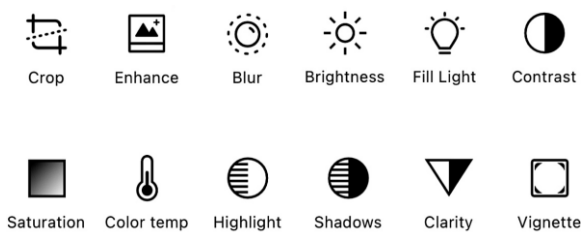
The start of editing can be traced back to the year 2008 when iPhone first released an innovative software development kit that swiftly commercialized editing features such as filters on the smartphone. From that point onwards, easy access to photo editing applications played a central part in the production of selfies (Lavrence & Cambre, 2020). Some examples of applications currently on the market are Snapchat, Instagram, Facetune, Facetune2, VSCO, AirBrush, YouCam, (Lavrence & Cambre, 2020), which equip its users with a wide assortment of tools for adjusting photo effects, correcting imperfections, enhancing facial and bodily features and taking multiple photos at the same time (Chang, Li, Loh & Chua, 2019). Filters reflect a virtual dress-up play, and manipulating one's appearance through selfie editing apps is appealing to its users as it effortlessly lends itself to the production of multiple identities and self-exploration (Lavrence & Cambre, 2020). The initial selfies filters introduced in social media, such as the dog face filter or the devil face filter displayed a more obvious type of editing that is focused on playful exploration and 'having fun', while currently at the moment a shift to more subtle types of editing such as beautifying one's features to an extent

that is not too noticeable can be seen. Furthermore, the latter type of editing has been somewhat standardized to what 'editing one's selfie means, as selfie editing apps regularly utilize phrases such as 'swipe your way to beautification', in which users are encouraged to modify their pictures to enhance not only their facial features such as enlarging the eyes, defining the jawline or whitening teeth but also body proportions for a slimmer waist, longer legs and toner body etc. (Lavrence & Cambre, 2020). Hence, the use of photo-editing apps has been normalized to beautifying one's appearance, taking on a new category understandable as beauty apps (Elias & Gill, 2017). There are countless of beauty apps available on the market, equip with diverse and innovative features ranging from various color filters, stickers, facial editing, makeup and so much more. Apps such as VSCO and Lightroom are focused filters and manipulating a picture's color, while apps like Facetune and FaceApp enable more refined and comprehensive edits through their facial recognition technology that efficiently identifies a face's structural features.

3.3.1 Types and Functions of Apps

The types of photo-editing apps can be largely classified as those that assist in the modification of basic photo elements without a particular focus on the alteration of the subject within the picture, and those that consist of primarily beautification functions that are intended to enable its users in changing in their outward, physical appearance in the direction wished. The former, earlier generations of photo-editing apps were primarily intended to modify the overall ambience of the picture through the adjustment of compositional elements such as color and tone, brightness, contrast, saturation, exposure, clarity and more (Zhao & Zappavigna, 2018).

<Figure. 1> Tools in photo-editing apps to adjust compositional elements of pictures

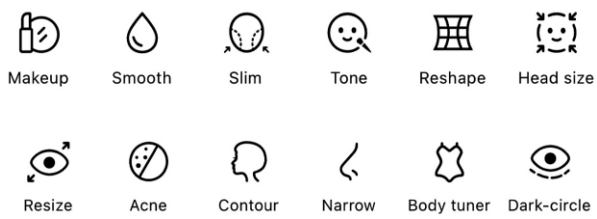


Recently, photo-editing apps have been more focused on face beautification, the term referring to the alteration of selfies to better conform to certain standards of physical attractiveness (Leyvand et al. 2006). The latter, editing apps centered around beautification functions were examined to see what specific features were provided to users, and the boundaries of editing available within such apps. Furthermore, photo-editing apps with highest rankings with South Korea were inspected with regards to not only their key features, but also the use of language in explaining how their specific app can produce specific results. The combination of photo-editing app functions in addition to their appeals to the desirable traits generally considered admirable by a large proportion of people, are considered imperative to a holistic understanding of the role such apps play in social media users' visual self presentation through personal selfies.

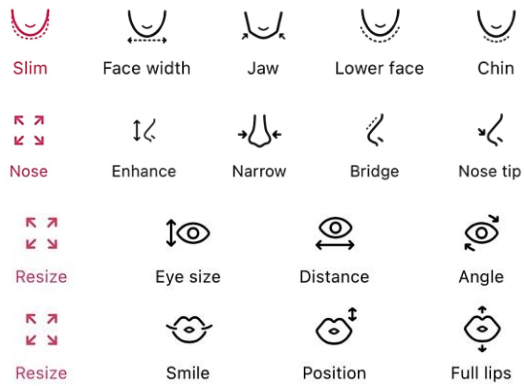
Basic tools present in most photo-editing apps were face and body filters. These tools enabled

individuals to modify their face and body across different parameters, such as not only shaping the shape and size of facial features such as the eyes, nose and mouth but also adjusting body proportions through elongation of legs and sliming of arms, legs and waist.

<Figure. 2> Tools in photo-editing apps to modify the face and body



<Figure. 3> Examples of detailed features within facial feature editing tools in photo-editing apps



Apart from alterations to the actual physical form, makeup tools were also an essential part of most apps that effectively corrected skin imperfections through the removal of blemishes. Additional features of such tool were the contouring of the face along with personalized arrays of makeup options that presented numerous choices of eyeshadow, eyebrow, blush and lip color.

<Figure. 4> Examples of varied color options within makeup editing tools in photo-editing apps

The use of language, specifically diction appealing to specific modes of self presentation also unveiled the general desires of photo-editing app users and their objectives in impression management through selfies. Repetitive references to ‘special’, ‘great looking selfies’ that are ‘flawless’ and ‘blemish-free’ with ‘perfect

features', which simultaneously must also be 'natural' 'easy' and 'effortless' obviously demonstrate the paramount importance of a visually perfect presentation of oneself that appears uncomplicated and spontaneous. This correlates with the phrases like 'automatically beautify' and 'instant beautification' that promises app users a straightforward and seamless photo-editing experience, in which individuals can appear 'stylish' and 'trendy' to ultimately deliver 'profile-worthy selfies' on social media that presents 'favorite versions' of themselves.

<Table. 1> Outline of different functions and tools of various commonly used photo-editing apps along with the use of language within apps that attempt to appeal to their user's desired presentation of self

Name of App	Language Use (Diction appealing to self presentation)	Key Tools Provided	Specific Features (Detailed function of key features)
BeautyPlus	*"great-looking selfies"* *"automatically beautify"* *"flawless"* *"retouch"* *"stylish"* *"natural"*	face filter, body adjustment, makeup, stickers, text, object/blemish removal	Face: Face (decrease head size; modify face line/shape, contour) Skin (remove acne, dark circles/eyebags) Eyes (enlarge, brighten, change shape) Nose (straighten bridge, narrow width) Mouth (whiten teeth, increase/decrease lip size/shape) Body: Height (increase torse/legs) Body shape (slim arm, leg, waist, neck; enlarge hips, breast; tone abs) Makeup: Face (highlight, shading, blush) Eye (eyeshadow, eyeline, eyebrow, colored lens) Mouth (lip color)
MakeupPlus	*"perfect"* *"makeover"* *"ultimate beauty guide"* *"improve personal beauty"*	face filter, makeup, hairstyle, color alteration, object/blemish removal	
Meitu	*"instant beautification"* *"flawless"* *"stunning"* *"sensational"* *"free of blemish"* *"completely erase"*	face filter, photo effects, body adjustment, stickers, text, frames, object/blemish removal	
Snow	*"favorite version of self"* *"profile-worthy selfie"*	face filter, makeup, body adjustment, creating own filter (playful), sticker, text, object/blemish removal	
Ulike	*"perfect features"* *"stylish"* *"fashion blogger style"* *"gorgeous features"*	face filter, makeup, body adjustment object/blemish removal	
Soda	*"easy effortless beauty"* *"blemish-free"* *"trendy styles"* *"ordinary to extraordinary"*	face filter, makeup, object/blemish removal	
B612	*"trendy"* *"natural look"* *"custom beauty style"* *"special"*	makeup, body adjustment, hairstyle, creating own filter (playful), color alteration, object/blemish removal	

3.4 Influence of Self-Discrepancy on Self Esteem

The roles selfie encompasses are diverse, as it facilitates self presentation and shapes individuals' understanding and experience of their own body (Tiidenberg & Gómez Cruz, 2015). The motivations for and

consequences of posting selfies, editing selfies and comparing selfies are all intricately linked to the concept of self-esteem. Self-esteem is basically an attitude about the 'self', defined as one's judgements towards his or her abilities, competencies and standing (McConnell, 2010). Low self-esteem would be a lack of respect for oneself, accompanied by feelings of unworthiness and deficiencies. It is argued that humans have a need for self-esteem, and how individuals evaluate themselves significantly shapes their behaviors, including communication with others. This motive to not only protect but also enhance one's self-esteem, is presumed to underlie a range of different behaviors, which explains why people strive for positive self presentations and convey favorable impressions of themselves to others (Schlenker, 1980). Given this, it can be assumed that individuals with a high sense of esteem will be eager to enhance their self-esteem through elaborate self presentation online, along with individuals with relatively lower self-esteem, who will be equally eager to partake in activities on social media that could increase one's esteem. This duality of self-esteem is presented in studies in which motives for posting selfies have yielded mixed results. While people with high, stable self-esteem are eager to share their photos because they are not susceptible to criticism, others with lower self-esteem could equally be willing to engage in such activities to raise their self-esteem (Sorokowska, Oleszkiewicz, Frackowiak, Pisanski, Chmiel & Sorokowski, 2016).

In one's development of certain perceptions of the physical body, media is a powerful medium in the transmission of ideals of what is perceived as visually acceptable (Rollero, 2015; MacCallum & Widdows, 2016). With extended periods of exposure to online content, social media is also an influential source of information about beauty and trends, in which users who unconsciously make comparisons between their own appearance and that of others. As a result, through their participation in social networking online, it is possible that individuals feel pressured to improve their physical appearance, directly affecting their self-esteem (Harrison & Hefner, 2014). The damage brought upon on one's image of 'self' and eventually, self-esteem can be explained through the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987). Higgin's theory proposes that individuals hold self-perceptions in three domains: the 'actual' self, which is the attributes we believe we have, the 'ideal' self, which is the traits we aspire to have, and the 'ought' self, which is the traits we believe we should have. When discrepancies arise between these perceptions, this can easily lead to negative emotions and cognitions of the self-image (MacCallum & Widdows, 2016). To decrease the magnitude of discrepancies between the actual and ideal self, individuals are motivated to either make changes to the actual self towards the ideal self or simply adjust the ideal self. In the context of self presentation on social media, the editing of one's pictures could be seen as the activities to eliminate such self discrepancies.

Some scholars argue that visual self presentation online is power-ambiguous or that it even works as a repressive reinforcement of negative body discourses, encouraging self objectification (Tiidenberg & Gómez Cruz, 2015). They claim that the extensive online interaction with pictures that are most likely edited to reflect unrealistic notions of beauty leads to social media users to either unconsciously or deliberately believe such notions to be true, a process known as internalization. The internalization of specific standards of the ideal beauty and media's beauty ideals refers to the extent to which an individual regards the societal norms of size and appearance as appropriate standards for his or her own appearance. An increasingly globalized and homogenized beauty ideal is emerging, which gives particular prominence to thinness and youth (MacCallum & Widdows, 2016). These standards, in turn, determine which visual attributes are important for being

regarded beautiful by other people (Rollero, 2015).

However, other scholars consider visual self presentation online more in a more positive light, claiming that it presents significant potential in increasing individuals' personal agency and sense of power over their self presentation, which will consequently also have positive outcomes for one's self-esteem (Tiidenberg & Gómez Cruz, 2015). The concept of empowerment is interpreted as a unique sense of power and control, which carries the potential for social impact through its influence on existing discourses and ways of looking (Tiidenberg & Gómez Cruz, 2015). If critically self-aware, the action of taking and sharing selfies can be conducive to positive becomings, or even function as a self-therapeutic practice (Tiidenberg & Gómez Cruz, 2015). Recently, more research present results contradicting the idea that social media and selfie editing fundamentally generate negative effects on its users. This is supported by another noteworthy finding that facial dissatisfaction does not mediate selfie editing, as similarly, body dissatisfaction does not influence the amount of editing in a selfie. Such results successfully suggest that selfie editing is not a behavior responsive to induced states of dissatisfaction. Rather, it can be viewed upon as a tool for a perfectionistic self-presentation, the desire to appear perfect to others (Tiggemann, Anderberg, & Brown, 2020; Sun, 2020). Furthermore, among young Korean women who spend more than an hour a day on social media, the use of photo-editing applications may lessen the negative associations of internalization and media pressure relating to body satisfaction (Lee & Lee, 2019). Results of experimentation show that participants experienced reduced pro-cosmetic surgery attitudes through a selfie-editing process (Vendemia & DeAndrea, 2021). Even individuals who are attractive or consider themselves attractive still participate in the process of selfie editing to post a visually perfected image. Essentially, they edit selfies to maintain a positive concept about the self regardless of their actual appearance (Chae, 2017).

4. Fashion Image and Self Presentation

4.1 Self Concept and Fashion Image

Self-concept is the expansive collection of beliefs and attitudes an individual possesses towards him or herself, in which self-image specifically refers to the subjective view of oneself that includes not merely one's own perception of him or herself, but also other people's perception of oneself (Goldsmith et al., 1999). Self-image, and integral part of one's identity, is fundamentally constructed from numerous internal and external self-impressions built over a period of time, including one's physical appearance like the body and one's character traits such as personality. Such images people hold of themselves are vital for these perceptions of the 'self' control, direct and motivate certain modes of behaviors in people (Malhotra, 1988).

Material goods are claimed to have the ability to extend one's idea of 'self' as individuals are able to learn, define and remind themselves of who they are through such possessions, which thus serve as a symbol of identity definition (Belk, 1988). In the same vein, clothing representing an individual's style of fashion can similarly be utilized as an efficient tool of self presentation and impression management. This is due to the fact that often, the clothing a person wears are considered connected to the 'self', a direction extension of the actual human body as Silverman (1986) elaborates, "clothing not only draws the body so that it can be seen,

but also maps out the shape of the ego". Simultaneously functioning as a tool for personal recognition and identity communication, (Sontag & Schlater, 1995), one's construction of physical appearance through his or her choice of fashion also significantly impacts how one is perceived by other people (Solomon and Schopler, 1982). Moreover, individuals embrace a diverse range of images within their self-concept, and during the process of social intercourse, present different facets of their self-identity at appropriate times to appropriate people. Based on the context surrounding one at a particular situation, an individual is seen to enact his or her 'self' accordingly, meaning that variations within one's surrounding socio-cultural environment is bound to influence one's self concept and desired presentation of self-image (Swann and Bosson, 2010).

Hence, there is immense value in understanding the dynamic ways individuals have and continue to identify their images of the 'self', in addition to the different descriptors used to describe one's personal image. Such descriptors, especially related to the style of fashion, were examined throughout different literature and subsequently, fashion images with regards to self-concept that were considered the most relevant were selected through an explication of the most repeated image descriptors used throughout various studies. The most frequently appeared descriptors were: stylish, trendy, classy, modern, sexy, fashionable, young, elegant, unique and sophisticated – the most repeated descriptors were those re-iterated a total of more than four times. Not only does this review of image descriptors enable a better comprehension of the diverse range of self-images for one's identity expression, but it also can act as a criterion for reference in assessing how desired impressions of the 'self' have stayed constant or changed in today's social media context, along with how individuals synthesize individual images to construct their own personalized self presentations.

<Table. 2> Fashion image descriptors that have been used in previous literature to illustrate self-concept

Fashion Image Descriptors in Literature		Most Repeated Image Descriptors
(Auty & Elliott, 1998)	*Stylish, trendy, classy, desirable, modern, sexy, individual*	Stylish
(Sirgy & Su, 2000)	*Classy, stylish, sexy, old, athletic, fashionable young*	Trendy
(Wee & Sohn, 2001)	*Elegant, beautiful, cool, unique, young, sophisticated, trendy, outgoing, calm, bright, active, attractive, graceful*	Classy
(Yeom & Kim, 2004)	*Sociable, glamorous, sexy, sophisticated, elegant, intelligent, neat, feminine, girly, bold, mature*	Modern Sexy
(Cho & Lee, 2005)	*Romantic, charming, elegant, fun, classic, fresh, modern, simple, innocent, natural*	Fashionable Young
(Willems, Janssens, Swinnen, Brengman, Streukens, & Vancauteren, 2012)	*Stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic*	Elegant Unique
(Rahman, 2013)	*Fashionable, chic, sophisticated, calm, self-possessed, unique, trendy, hip, stylist, sexy, attractive, classy, elegant*	Sophisticated

(Mocanu, 2013)	*Active, attractive, carefree, charming, confident, energetic, feminine, relaxed, seductive, sexy, sophisticated, unique, vibrant*	
(Chung, 2014)	*Young, cute, neat, luxurious, classy, modern, pure, sexy, graceful, active*	
(Johnson, Lennon, & Rudd, 2014)	*Attractive, feminine, desirable*	
(Yoon & Yu, 2017)	*Sophisticated, wealthy, elegant/graceful bold, sexy, decorative*	
(McNeill, 2018)	*Smart, fashionable*	
(Kim, Lloyd, Adebeshin, & Kang, 2019)	*Hip, stylish, unique*	
(Gorbaniuk, Wilczewski, Kolańska, & Krasa, 2021)	*Elegant, creative, wealthy, trendy/fashionable, modern, cheerful, humorous, sociable, intelligent, young, energetic, self-confident, athletic*	

Chapter III. Methodology

1. Phenomenology

The qualitative research methodology is used in studies that aim to explore, and in the process of exploration also understand numerous societal issues. As a method for deducing significant meanings from the course of experience, it is argued that the qualitative method is much appropriate for the research of a new social phenomena as it enables in-depth understanding within a natural setting (Englander, 2019). Another benefit of this method is that qualitative research relies on direct experiences, providing insight into the research subjects' different perspectives through their detailed descriptions of every day experiences. Hence, this methodology can to be seen as rich and holistic as well as valuable in interpreting various viewpoints and stories related to a certain phenomenon (Englander, 2021). The rich variety in qualitative research methods can be credited to the thematization of different aspects of complex phenomena. One approach to this qualitative methodology is the phenomenological study.

The idea of phenomenology was initiated by Edmund Husserl at the start of the 20th century, praised by Giorgi for its comprehensiveness (Giorgi, 1994). This study is a qualitative research method interested in the activities of consciousness and the objects that present themselves to consciousness, basically meaning the method is used to describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon and make meaning out of it (Giorgi, 2012). Here, it is crucial that the focus on investigation is on a concrete situation, in which the subjects of study have directly experienced the phenomenon being researched (Englander & Morley, 2021). A concrete situation is an experience that is directly lived, and does not extend to anything abstract or conceptual such as a simple idea or attitude (Englander & Morley, 2021). The advantage of phenomenology is that it offers a more accurate definition of description through its better role clarification and differentiation from other expressive modes like interpretation (Giorgi, 1992). Through this phenomenological process, knowledge is acquired through experience, and the researcher describes participants' experiences in a specific context. Thus, in a phenomenological study, the researcher is able to analyze the perceptions, perspectives, understandings, and feelings of those people who have actually experienced or lived the phenomenon. According to Giorgi (1994), there are three main interrelated process in the phenomenological method. The first is the description process, in which the phenomena to be studied have to be described exactly as they present themselves, without any addition or subtraction from what is given (Giorgi, 1994). The second is the reduction process, in which it must be understood that the descriptions in the first step must occur within the attitude of the phenomenological reduction, meaning the researcher is to withhold existential assent of the phenomenon and disengage from past theories and knowledge about the investigated phenomenon (Giorgi, 1994). The third is the 'search for essences' process. After the descriptions are obtained, the researcher applies free imaginative variation, whereby pieces of the phenomenon are varied until its essential features are revealed through unrealized possibilities. Then, revealed features are described in relation to each to construct the general structure of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1994).

In a phenomenological study, data is collected from individuals who have directly experienced or lived in the researched situation or phenomenon through the use of mainly observation and interviews. Qualitative

interviews are of significant value as these interviews effectively enable study subjects to communication their thoughts and provide explanations for a phenomenon (Tracy, 2013). Moreover, interviews also allow researchers to further investigate multifaceted phenomenon that may encompass hidden characteristics.

2. In-depth Interview (IDI)

This study is based on descriptive, qualitative research that uses individual in-depth interviews (IDI) to gather diverse data on people's different reasons for using photo-editing apps through the initiation of free discussion that provides more detailed insight into individuals' motivations and process of online self-presentation in addition to the corresponding use of specific editing features. It has been frequently mentioned in previous literature that purpose of an in-depth interviews is to understand thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes or motivations related to a specific subject, and this type of interview is considered one of the most appropriate and effective in exploring specific ideas or evaluation of concepts in detail, requiring heightened concentration.

Thus, the in-depth interview method was deemed ideal as the goals of such method lies in conducting a thorough and personal discussion that enables a more detailed comprehension of diverse perceptions and attitudes towards a certain subject, (Merton and Kendall, 1946). This method is also considered a valuable asset in social research for not only understanding the reasons behind a phenomenon but also studying the language and vocab of interview subjects. When comparing individual in-depth interviews to another type of interview method, the focus group interviews (FGI), the focus group interview could appear to have some advantages over individual interviews resulting from its interactive nature. Some noted benefits of focus interview include synergism, group interaction resulting in wider bands of data, snowballing, statements of a participant sparking a chain reaction of additional responses, and stimulation, discussion causing enthusiasm (Hess, 1968). However, when considering how the subject of this study has the potential to brush upon sensitive topics when discussing their personal insight and experiences, the individual in-depth interview method was viewed as more suitable in creating a comfortable environment for participants.

3. Interview Design

3.1 Participants Selection and Recruitment

When conducting a qualitative study, it is necessary to set a clear and consistent criterion when selecting the study subject sample. It has been noted by previous literature that the sampling of a phenomenological study is inevitably expected to be much narrower in comparison to other qualitative research sampling methods. This is because every participant must have directly experienced the research phenomenon to be able to provide detailed accounts of their experiences that communicate ideas and opinions significant to a research's explanations for a phenomenon.

3.1.1 Subjects of Study

The importance of a concrete situation in a phenomenological study has been repeatedly highlighted, in which the subjects of study must have experienced the investigated phenomenon first-hand (Englander & Morley, 2021). Hence, subjects of the study were selectively focused on individuals who routinely use social media and have the experience of editing selfies through photo-editing, beauty apps. Interview participants, both female and male between in their twenties and thirties, were recruited from South Korea, as prior research has suggested that people in Korea consider editing selfies before sharing them on their social media profiles as mandatory. Furthermore, this particular age group considered appropriate in revealing deeper reflections into one's intended desired self presentation through the perspective of editing apps. Both, the perspectives of male and female individuals were considered important, but the unbalance ratio of participants recruited were not intentional, and rather can be seen as a direction reflection of the proportions of males to females within editing app users.

A total of twenty interviews were conduct in person. The sample size was not pre-determined, but through literature, the appropriate sample size was estimated to be around 15-25 people. This flexibility was aimed at providing insight into a sample size sufficient for maximum accumulation of content. The demographic information of participants is listed below.

<Table. 3> Demographic information of the study's twenty interview participants

Participant No.	Name	Nationality	Age	Gender
1	TS, R.	South Korea	22	M
2	HE, Y.	South Korea	25	F
3	JM, P.	South Korea	30	F
4	DW, J.	South Korea	29	M
5	SA, H.	South Korea	25	F
6	SY, C.	South Korea	27	F
7	DH, K.	South Korea	22	M
8	SH, P.	South Korea	26	F
9	JH, J.	South Korea	24	F
10	YJ, L.	South Korea	28	F
11	YW, S.	South Korea	28	F
12	HE, C.	South Korea	21	F
13	TH, K.	South Korea	25	M
14	EB, K.	South Korea	25	F
15	YJ, H.	South Korea	25	F
16	YY, B.	South Korea	33	F
17	KY, J.	South Korea	27	F
18	HY, S.	South Korea	25	F
19	HE, K.	South Korea	21	F
20	SJ, K.	South Korea	25	M

3.1.2 Recruitment Process

Recruitment efforts included printed posters around the school campus of Seoul National University

(SNU), especially focused on buildings and facilities often used and visited by apparel design and fashion majors. This was in anticipation that the attention of visual detail and aesthetics especially required in such departments could result in an increased exposure and motivation of use photo-editing apps. The SNU campus was deemed as an appropriate recruitment setting as the majority of students attending the university fit the age group set for this study. The recruitment poster was also shared online through social media platforms such as Instagram stories and reels, as such mediums could more straightforwardly reach out to other social media users, a prerequisite of interview participants.

3.2 Interview Structure

The in-depth interviews (IDIs) focused on eliciting detailed descriptions of people's selfie editing processes and their online expression of the self (e.g., what specific features serve what purpose, and how this relates to one's desired self-presentation of a particular image). Structured interviews generally use a list of questions that are repeated across all participants while unstructured interviews, in contrast, enable more flexibility in the direction of the conversation (Tracy, 2013). Interview logistics such as access, quiet space, privacy, comfort, and availability of electronic devices to record the interview were all considered prior to the actual interviews and the interviews were all underwent a transcription process to be translated into usable data. The interviews for this study were semi-structured in order to maintain the benefits of both structured and unstructured interviews.

The questions of interview were primarily based on beauty app features and usage motivations in addition to distinct self-concept and fashion image groups. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences while also self comparing themselves to others, possibly friends or other social media users. Questions of the interview were phrases as simply as possible, through the use of clear and concise language to ensure easily comprehension for participants, as misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the what the question intended to ask could result in responses going off tangent to answer areas intended by the study. However, as the interview as semi-structured, free discussion of what the participant considered important was not disturbed, but rather new perspectives on the topic were welcomed and encouraged. However, if participant showed reluctance in answer a certain question, they were not forced to provide a response as such responses were viewed as potentially inaccurate or, to an extent, untruthful.

There are four separate parts to the IDI. The first part aims to identify social media users' underlying motivations in using photo-editing, beauty apps. Questions regarding participants' first experience with beauty apps and the reason for using these apps are expected to enable a more holistic comprehension of the beauty app experience and why this is personally of importance to each individual. The second part investigates participant's frequently used features of beauty apps, in order to identify the various intentions of self-presentation and specific app features. Insight into participant's most repeatedly used features and selfie-editing process can unveil unique and distinct images participants hope to portray themselves as. The third part, explores participant's different self-presentation related images through a personalized context of participant's social media and the purpose beauty apps serve. In this section, visual aid, one of photo-editing apps and their various functions and the other of selfies selected by participants correlating to the self-concept

and fashion image groups will be given to facilitate discussion. It is anticipated that the use of participant's actual selfies can allow more candid and situation specific responses on self-presentation motives and the sharing of selfies among participants can help participants reflect and start conversations on each other's photos and selfie experiences. Finally, the last part will seek to understand participant's preference of beauty apps among numerous apps and suggest development strategies for beauty apps based on the ideas of self presentation. The review of participants' opinions on various beauty apps and their features could additionally point to participants' desire for certain self-presentation methods that have not yet been sufficiently addressed by these editing apps.

3.3 Interview Questions

(Part 1: Overview)

Identifying social media users' underlying motivations for using photo-editing apps

Q1. When was your first experience of using beauty apps, and what made you want to use such apps?

Q2. Why do you continue to use these editing apps, what purposes do they serve?

Q3. How does your intentions of using beauty apps compare to that of other people you know?

(Part 2: General – with editing device for simulation)

Investigating frequently used key features and the correlations between specific app features and intentions of self presentation

Q1. Among the various features, which features do you use most often?

Q2. Why is this the feature you use most often?

Q3. Explain the whole process of your selfie-editing, from start to finish (until the point of uploading)

Q4. Do you think there is a routine or guide you adhere to when editing your pictures?

(Part 3: Personalized – with visual aid, participants' selfies)

Exploring the different self-presentation related images through a personalized context of participants' social media and functions of beauty apps

Q1. Is there a specific image or images you wish to convey through your selfies? Can you explain why?

Q2. How does this image influence your editing, e.g., do different features serve purposes of different images?

Q3. Can you give specific reasons in relation to the selfies you have selected for this interview?

Q4. Why did you decide to share these pictures? How you decide on which pictures ultimately get shared?

Q5. Do you see other people trying achieve a certain look on social media?

Q6. Are there visible trends or different images apparent from selfies you see on social media?

(Part 4: App Specific)

Understanding the detailed choice of photo-editing apps and specific features, in relation to the needs of desires in participants" self presentation.

Q1. Among various photo-editing apps, which ones do you mainly use? Do you use one or more than one?

Q2. What are the reasons for your app choice/preference?

Q3. Do you feel that each app serves a different purpose or is can be distinguished by a certain feature?
Q4. Are there any personal complaints regarding theses beauty apps?
Q5. What are some features that you wish apps would create or incorporate?

4. Procedures

4.1 IRB Approval

The entire research underwent review conducted by Seoul National University's Institutional Review Board. (IRB No. 2206/002-008). Both participant recruitment and interviews were carried out after receiving final approval.

4.2 Data Collection

As face-to-face interactions were deemed to provoke more thoughtful discussion, interviews were all took place offline, in person. As the interviews took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, interview abided the government regulations regarding the spread of the virus, such as wearing protective masks at all times during the interviews and selecting a safe setting with minimal contact with other people. While the default setting of interviews was a reserved classroom at the SNU campus, in consideration of CO-VID 19 situations, flexibility in the choice of place to conduct interviews were allowed, as some participants of the study expressed desires to meet at places, they felt safer and more comfortable at.

Participants were sufficiently informed about the purpose of the study along with the procedures of the interview. They were fully aware of their rights to suspend the interview if they felt uncomfortable answering the questions or simply did not wish to continue. All interviews were recorded under the consent of participants. Although the length of interview varied greatly depending of the participant, on average each interview lasted approximately 35-45 minutes, with the shortest interview at 25 minutes and the longest at 70 minutes.

Since interviews require transcription to be considered usable data, all interview recordings were transcribed right after the session. Even after transcription, a fact checking process was ensured by re-listening to the records while reading over transcripts. This step was mandatory as it effectively assisted in correct any potential mistakes that could be made while transcribing (Tracy, 2013). All files of recorded interviews were immediately deleted after the transcription of data was completed.

4.3 Data Analysis

4.3.1 Giorgi's Method (Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method)

As the central aim of this research is to investigate the phenomena behind self presentation on social

media in addition to the use of editing apps in the process of beautification, Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method was selected as the frame for data analysis. Phenomenology is the study of experiences and the way we perceive and understand the meaning phenomena have in our subjective experience. Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological psychological approach was applied to the data analysis process, as this method focuses on the actual language and description directly utilized by interview subjects rather than interpretation of certain actions or behaviors displayed. The descriptive process of this method refers to the clarification of how phenomena present themselves to consciousness, while descriptions are the use of language to articulate, what Giorgi calls the 'intentional objects of experience'.

When employing the descriptive phenomenological psychological method, Giorgi emphasizes how it is crucial that the researcher assumes 'the attitude of the phenomenological reduction', namely the way of seeing (Giorgi, 2012). This means that while the research still reflects on what is presented to him or her, the natural attitude must be suspended and the given object or statement given accepted without consideration of the researcher's past knowledge or experience (Giorgi, 2012). In effect, such attitude of phenomenological reduction enables researchers to better understand how the subjects are experiencing the world, themselves and others without falling back on physical rationalizations or personal stereotypes (Englander & Morley, 2021). Hence, this particular method can be seen to possess the strength of revealing the uniqueness of each individual's lived experiences within their world, effectively enabling the researcher to integrate the whole experiences of the subject into consideration. Additionally, as the analysis of the data is intended to be psychological, the researcher must possess a special sensitivity to the phenomenon being investigated (Giorgi, 2012).

After the first step of assuming the phenomenological attitude, data retrieved from interviews are analyzed in accordance with the five stages of the phenomenological approach suggested by Giorgi. These steps are as listed. 1) Read the whole description to obtain a sense of the whole. This sense of the whole is not to be confused with any hypothesis or theorizations that the research might initially hold (Englander & Morley, 2021). As this method is based on a holistic approach, understanding what the data is like most crucial and the researcher's sense of the descriptions will lay the foundational ground for analysis in the latter steps (Giorgi, 2012). 2) Delineate meaning units using the subjects' original words. This is the process of constituting parts by separating the descriptions when a transition in meaning (Giorgi, 2012). This step is based upon practically as breaking down descriptions into smaller, more manageable parts assists in retaining lengthy descriptions in the process of analysis. Such parts are known as meaning units and as they are arbitrary, they carry no theoretical weight on their own (Giorgi, 2012). Moreover, while all meaning units must be analyzed not all are vital to the overall structure of the phenomenon (Englander & Morley, 2021). 3) Transform the words of the subject, at this stage comprised of meaning units, into more relevant expressions based on psychologically sensitive statements of the subjects' lived-meanings. This requires an open, receptive mode of consciousness in which themes are constructed to explicitly convey the psychological value of what the subjects have expressed. 4) Through the assistance of free imaginative variation, elaborate on the themes to extract focal meaning and ultimately synthesize an essential structure of the experience based on the psychological constituents. 5) Use the essential structure to clarify and interpret the data of the research.

Through the process that first extracts significant statements to classify such statement into meaning units, which are then classified into themes and interpreted for their focal meaning with situated structural descriptions, this method is one that specifically focuses on revealing the meaning of the experience through group interviews on the study participants' SNS self-expression, and identifies the subject representing their experience of using the application through the participants' language. In addition, the subjects are embodied in the participants' language and integrated through the central meaning of the subject's experience to the subject, explaining the situational structural skills, the meaning of the experience from the perspective of the interview participants.

Chapter IV. Results (Empirical Study)

1. Overview of results

This section will present the results of data retrieved through twenty in-depth, in-person individual interviews conducted with participants who identified themselves as active social media users, who have the experience of using photo-editing apps. The data collected has undergone a synthetization process to produce the subsequent results of this study. Through a meticulous reduction process with the application of Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological psychological data analysis method, four foundational subjects were identified in relation to the study's initial research aims. 1. Photo-editing app usage motivations 2. Influencing factors of self presentation (photo taking, selfie editing and uploading on social media) 3. Shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies 4. Desired online 'self' image of social media users. The results have been systematized into tables, with separate categories that incorporate the defined themes and subthemes corresponding to individual meaning units.

As Giorgi's method examines meanings of a phenomenon through the descriptions provided by interview subjects, the meaning units have been taken from the direct words of participants to effectively preserve their lived experiences. Interviewees were recruited from South Korea, and thus most interviews were conducted in Korean while participants who were more comfortable speaking English proceeded with the language of their choice. For the descriptions given in Korean, translations were by completed by the researcher who endeavored to best encapsulate the meanings and allusions of the original language by listening to interview recording several times and actively questioning participant regarding statements that were considered rather vague or possibly open to multiple interpretations.

2. Photo-Editing App Usage Motivations

2.1 Influence of Social Media

Within the first subject, 'photo-editing app usage motivations', three main categories were formulated. The first category is the influence of social media, which is comprised of the themes: power of social media, social media exposure, changing nature of trends online and response to trends. Photo-editing app usage motivations correlates with the study's goals to comprehend why, social media users use editing apps. When evaluating the underlying motivations for photo-editing app usage, the consideration of its context is inevitable. As photo-editing is primarily performed on selfies, with the purpose of being publicly shared on social media, the different facets of social media play an imperative role in not only incentivizing individuals to use beautifying apps, but also shaping user's perceptions of on how to present one's 'self' in the online sphere.

<Table. 4> Category 1. of photo-editing app usage motivations (influence of social media)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Influence of social media	Power of social media	Social media virality	*Everything goes viral on media first; Everyone is doing it on social media; First used editing apps, because everyone was*
		Social media as a trend-setter	*Instead of social media being influenced by trends, trends on social media influence trends in society; First started using apps, because that was the trend; Trend on social media is 'following trends', trendy to follow trends*
		Role of celebrities and influencers	*People on social media, celebrities, influencers play big role; I idolized them; I adored how pretty these people were; I tried to follow pretty people on social media; Edited my facial features to make myself look similar [to people I idolized];*
	Social media exposure	Acceptance of trends	*Everyone could change pictures in that direction if exposed to it enough*
		Meeting new people	*Don't just interaction with friends, also new people; Want to look good to new people, not just friends*
		Bandwagon effect	*Use [famous filters] because don't want to give impression that I don't know things or fall behind; Famous filters, like sparkle filter, show you can follow trends; Filter that everyone uses*
		Social media surveillance	*Visit other people's profile; Social media is summary of friends and people you know; Probably looking at your pictures; Important that my photos look good since other girls checking out my profile*
	Changing nature of trends online	Unpredictability of future trends	*Might come up in future; super weird filter or editing feature*
		Anticipation of trends going out of style	*[The trendy hip look] is going to go out of style*
		Outgrowing trends over time	*Everyone had phases where they edited excessively; Grew out of [excessive editing] now; Now no one really does it; We think it's tacky now; Grown out of that; Was cool before; After some time, look not as nice as I thought, seem irrelevant*
	Response to trends	Refusing mainstream trends	*Opposite group actively resist trends; trend is to 'not follow trends'*
		Trends as a social expression of age	*[Trendy hip look] too much mz generation vibe; not that young anymore; stay away from trendy look*

2.1.1 Power of Social Media

The influence social media has on its users' perspectives of themselves and others is an indication of the power in holds over not simply people's thoughts and opinions but also the way people act or choose to behave. The easy accessibility to smartphones in our current technologically absorbed society has effectively paved the way for social media to become one of the most vital mediums in which we interact with people and our surroundings. In turn, the rapid rise of social media and similar networking sites has fueled the popularity of viral media content. Viral, meaning being quickly spread and popularized, social media virality refers to a certain piece of content being exposed to a large audience on social during a short period of time, which leads the content receiving a greater than normal amount of attention through shares and similar

postings.

> *"I've been using social media for quite a long time now. First Facebook, twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and many more. Something I have noticed is that everything goes viral on media first. A post on celebrity gossip, a video on social issues protests or even an insta reel on some dance moves. Whatever it is, suddenly everyone's doing it on social media, which makes the content go even more viral online."*
>
> *Participant 9(female)*

The phenomenon of a particular content 'going viral' on social media is closely correlated with the power of this medium and the ways in which social networking sites have the ability to focus people's attention towards a specific subject. Hence, this also brings to light the role of social media as a trend-setter. Trendy literary means fashionable or up to date, and social media is indeed effectively in immediately delivering various content from people all around the globe, making it the ideal place to find updates of what is the recent 'hot thing'. The use of photo-editing features can also be credited to social media, as exposure to new methods of selfie editing online caused users to want to 'try out' the new trend. The relation between trends and social media was repeatedly outlined in interviews, in which participants stressed that social media users' sensitivity to trends and their willingness to adapt such as their own demonstrates that the act of following trends, in itself could be accepted as a trend, pervasive online.

> *"I remember I first tried out editing apps like when I was in middle school, which is like more than fifteen years ago. At that time the features were limited because these apps were fairly new, but some did become very popular. When I first started using editing apps for my pictures, especially selfies, it was because that was like the trend online. At that time, we didn't have Instagram, but Cyworld was the thing in Korea and those edited pictures were considered trendy."*
>
> *Participant 3(female)*

> *"A major trend on social media is basically to follow trends. It's considered trendy to follow trends, because many people for some reason think those trends are what's considered cool at the moment."*
>
> *Participant 4(male)*

While some have expressed opinions on how social media is a trend-setter in a sense that the trends in society are delivered to a mass audience through social networking channels, others have voiced thought on social media's direct impact on trends. Considering the growing uses of social media to not only interact with friends and peers, but also the marketing and promotion advantages beneficial to brands, celebrities and influencers, it would definitely not be an overstatement to say that the trends on social media actually influence the trends in our society. Of course, the power social media holds are negotiated by the fame of its influential users, namely politicians, athletes, celebrities and influencers. The role played by celebrities and influencers are especially crucial as they are sources of inspiration for many teens who aspire to someday look equally attractive. Therefore, while it may not be the primary reason, to an extent, the admiration of celebrities and influencers do account for photo-editing motivations, by fueling social media users' desire to possess traits, visually similar to that of their idol.

"I think instead of social media being influenced by trends, trends on social media actually influence the trends in our society. It could have been the other way around a few years ago, but now social media has grown more influential than ever, and this has a lot to with the players involved. Not just big companies, but also people who are on social media like the celebrities or influencers play a big role."

Participant 16(female)

"So, I understand that this is not necessarily positive, but just to emphasize how important influencers in my activities related to social media, I basically idolized them. When I was younger, in my teens especially, I adored how unbelievably pretty these people were and like bought the clothes they wore, incorporated their hairstyle into mine, edited my pictures like theirs and stuff. Now I don't do that of course, but still check out profiles of those who have a similar style or vibe to mine."

Participant 11(female)

2.1.2 Social Media Exposure

Another characteristic determinate of social media's overarching influence is exposure. In simple terms, this could indicate the authorisms and technical mechanisms of social media in which the viral nature and involvement of famous figures increases an individual's exposure to a certain content. As the study aforementioned the role of social media as a trend-setter, the constant exposure of certain trends, which is somewhat inevitable during a user's time spent within social media, could gradually increase one's acceptance of trends. Participants have pointed out that increased exposure to certain types of pictures could convince people to change theirs in the same direction. From this comment, it can be inferred that in the case of photo-editing and beautification of selfies, the constant exposure to certain styles of edit could influence social media user's usage, or at the least, perception towards photo-editing.

"Honestly, my opinion is that people are always receptive and open towards change. I remember how I thought Y2K fashion was super tacky at first but because I've seen it so often with my friends on Instagram all wearing the same thing, I think it's kind of cute now. Same goes with selfies and trends. Everyone could change their pictures in that direction if they're exposed to it enough, even if they might think it's kind of weird at first."

Participant 19(female)

Apart from the exposure to content individuals receive on, on another level, social media exposure could also refer to the exposure of the users themselves. Although social media was initially created as a means of communication with one's circle of friends and family, today the engagement extends to include a much wider range of people. In certain cases, social media is used for the completely opposite purpose, to meet new people. Thus, to make a good first impression, people pay special attention to their selfies and the silent nuances the particular details convey. Crafting one's profile on social media through pictures, intended to 'be exposed' to others, is indicative of online self presentation through visual means.

"You don't just interaction with friends but also new people, like the friends of your friends or just people who you've met once or twice but aren't exactly close to. My friends I always get to see, but I don't often get the chance correct myself if I were to give a bad impression. So, I guess I wanted to look good to new people, not just friends"

Participant 1(male)

As the interactions online are of paramount significance to actual face-to-face interactions offline, with opportunities to become friendly with people other than one's group of friends, such constant social media exposure to trends from diverse people can result in the bandwagon effect. This effect refers to people's tendency to follow the crowd, adopting a certain behavior or style merely because they see other people doing so. It is the simple belief that acting in a certain way must be desirable if other people desire it all the same. Participants have shared their own experience of such, for instance trying out a certain editing feature because they have witnessed many others on social media using it, coming to the conclusion that it is trendy to use that specific feature. Some have even mentioned how this was closely tied with personal efforts to stay relevant, and not fall behind everyone else.

"On every social media platform and every period in time, there has been a super trendy filter. Long time ago, on Snapchat it was the dog filter. Even before that it was like these stickers you cover parts of your face with, similar to those found in sticker pictures from booths. Now, on Instagram it's the sparkle filter, which has many variations, like the sparkle with the crown, the sparkle with the hearts and more. Some famous filters, like the sparkle filter also shows people that you can follow trends since it's the filter that everyone uses."

Participant 2(female)

As social media exposes its users to people other than their friends, to those who keep open profiles available for everyone else to see, social media surveillance is another key factor deserving contemplation. The activities one does, the pictures one uploads, the people one engages with, are all pointers to what that specific person is like, or wishes to be perceived to be like. Many participants have elaborated on their visits to other user's profile, with intentions to see or compare something, by accident or just out of interest. All these activities of observing the profile of users, including both your friends and random strangers, are clear examples of social media surveillance. Since individuals have admitted to actively monitoring other users themselves, they express absolute confidence that others also monitor their pictures and profiles and this awareness lays the foundation for wanting to edit one's selfies to present the most attractive version of oneself. Moreover, to some, the possibility of an unknown, unfavorable someone looking at an unattractive picture of themselves is unacceptable in terms that someone could be a potential competition in the future. Notably, even if he or she does not directly see the other person making comparisons with their own pictures, the participant recalled the feeling of not wanting to lose to anyone else or display signs of flaws. These can be seen as attitudes emphasized through exposure brought by social media.

"It's important to me that my photos look good because other girls are probably looking at my profile. Like, I remember this one time this girl who saw my story seemed familiar and it actually

turned out to be my boyfriend's ex-girlfriend. I mean she probably didn't know I knew who she was but I was so surprised that she was looking at my stuff. Imagine, if she found like an ugly picture of me, she'd probably share it with her friends and be like look at this ugly girl my ex is dating now. I'm definitely not going to give them something to gossip about."

Participant 8(female)

2.1.3 Changing Nature of Trends Online

Although social media is the ideal place to efficiently obtain information on recent updates in our society and the new, trending 'hot thing' that everyone is obsessing over, online platforms are simultaneously home to many fads that eventually fade out in due course. The changing nature of trends are inseparable from social media for the influence of social media directly stems from its ability to swiftly share content, which also means that content can swiftly go out as swiftly as it comes in. Direct comments have been made on the unpredictability of future trends, including the attitudes and styles of editing our selfies, hypothesizing the potential appearance of a filter or editing style that could be popularized in the future but would be perceived as strange in today's times. Participants have also revealed how they personally feel that some of the currently widespread trends regarded fashionable will be actually short-lived, anticipating that regardless of how popular it is now, trends that are not classics will someday go out of style.

"Who knows, something else might come up in the future, like a super weird filter or editing feature. You never know, there isn't exactly a rule to it."

Participant 7(male)

"Because trends change so quickly online, you can't exactly expect to keep up with all. All trends eventually do, and then they come back, it's just a cycle that keeps on going."

Participant 15(female)

Correspondingly, one could also simply outgrowing trends over time, either because one realizes that a certain trend is no longer stylish or because fails to find personal relevance within that specific trend. An interesting point was how many participants shared the experience of thinking that making drastic changes in selfies was trendy, but considers it extremely outdated now, point to how this trend was a characteristic of their younger age. Some others talk about how regardless of age or trends online, their opinions on what looks nice, and how they want to look are slightly altered. Both examples given here would be a natural change in the adaption of trends, as the content and person social media users engage with slowly undergo process of transformations over time. Nevertheless this, in effect, is said to directly influence their self presentation on social media.

"Almost everyone had phases where they edited excessively. The super white faces, red lips, huge eyes and sharp chins and of course the strong contrast filter. At my school, that was cool and I'm sure all the kids edited along those line when they were young. Thankfully, we just all grew out of [excessive editing] now and know better."

Participant 11(female)

"I don't always keep the same pictures on my Instagram feed. Of course, I uploaded a picture at that time because I thought it looks good, but there are cases were after some time, the picture sometimes doesn't look as nice as I thought, or seem a little irrelevant."

Participant 1(male)

2.1.4 Response to Trends

Through social media's continuous exposure of constantly changing trends to its users, the responses to such trends are varies depending on how an individual views the trend as representing characteristics of his or her identity. For instance, a participant gave an example of people who take selfies at trendy places that everyone wants to go to, wearing clothes everyone wants to wear, and commented that there are people who stay away from all of these trendy things because they dislike the fact that too many people are into these trends. Thus, although some users opt to follow trends to fit in, others saw this attempt as rather pointless, and instead choose to refuse mainstream trends. Such decisions are credited to personal preferences and desires to stand out, appearing different from everyone else.

"While there are many people who stick to following everyone else, at the same time there's an opposite group who actively resist trends, because they think it's not cool to do what other people do. I just consider these people the group who thinks that the trend is to not follow trends, and whatever you choose to both are completely fine."

Participant 4(male)

On the other hand, other participants state that trends can be viewed upon as a social expression of age and therefore, their response to such trends, to a certain degree, must be in consideration of the things that is expected upon them.

"The latter [trendy hip look] is too much like a mz generation sort of vibe. I might've tried it out before, but regardless of whether I like it or not, I'm not that young anymore. I try to stay away from that trendy look because I don't want to be viewed as childish or as someone who doesn't know how to dress appropriately according to my age."

Participant 16(female)

2.2 Polishing One's Appearance

The second category of 'photo-editing app usage motivations' is polishing one's appearance, constituting of the themes: power of friends, I'm so unphotogenic, controlling self-consciousness and difficulties in taking 'good' selfies. Motivations for photo-editing app usage cannot be evaluated without the individual's efforts to appear more presentable online as the very essence of beautifying one's pictures lies within the desires to look more attractive, in one's own terms. Thus, the editing apps function as a method of polishing one's looks in selfies. Consistent to such idea, interviews have indeed unveiled that there are

multiple reasons that control and mediate the extent of a user's need to edit his or her selfies, encompassing both psychological and technical factors of selfie-taking activities.

<Table. 5> Category 2. of photo-editing app usage motivations (polishing one's appearance)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Polishing one's appearance	Power of friends	Alleviation of discrepancy between friends	*Started using editing apps in high school because I was only Asian in Caucasian group of friends; Wanted to minimize difference [between my friends and myself]; Difference in proportions, face and body is clear; Especially since you take pictures together, edit them together with friends*
		Comparison with others in the selfie	*Take selfies with others; Edit to match other person in picture; feel like face is too big or eyes are too small in comparison to others*
	I'm so unphotogenic!	Uglified me	*Photos don't come out the way you want; Look at pictures before editing, think I don't look like that ugly; Don't capture best parts of me; Camera don't sufficiently capture my looks; Look better in real life; Not looking like myself in photos is biggest reason why I use editing apps*
		Emphasized flaws	*Face is three-dimensional but pictures are two-dimensional; Process of flattening out face, flaws become prominent; Blemishes or acne emphasized*
		Vanishing features	*Facial features are smudged; Face looks stretched and blurred; Even if eyebrows are clearly visible in person, tend to disappear in pictures*
		Asymmetrical face	*Use liquify tool because face is uneven; One side is bigger than other; Edit right to match left; When eyes are uneven or only one side of my face is stretched; Edit to make face symmetrical; [Asymmetricity] irritates me most from my face*
	Controlling self consciousness	Dissatisfaction with physical characteristics	*Biggest pet peeve is face; Don't like nose; Nose looks wide and round, want it to look pointier and prominent; Don't look tall and slim in this dress*
		Fluctuations in appearance due to external factors	*Have a break out or put weight; Sometimes my shoulders look narrow because of clothes*
	Difficulties in taking 'good' selfies	Camera's inaccurate representations	*Hard to take good pictures in first place; Important to know that normal camera doesn't capture you perfectly; When take pictures with standard camera, don't look like yourself*
		Lens distortion	*Shape of lens change how you look depending on placement; Edges of pictures stretched; [Facial features] come out differently for every picture*
		Surrounding environment	*Factors like the direction of the sun is important; Can't get rid of shadows on your face; Wind and light influence your pictures*
		Movement during photo session	*Don't just stand when taking pictures; Walk around, turn your head to look at different things; Editing apps helps me control those factors [influencing photos] towards the direction I want*

2.2.1 Power of Friends

The influence an individual's peers and intimate group of friends has on one's perspectives, from general preferences and life style choices to detailed ideas and values reflecting one's social identity, is truly immense. This power held by friends extends to the role they play in the formation of a person's sense of belonging and motivation. Although variations and personal differences are said to be generally respected among groups, nonetheless, participants have cited an inclination and strong need to identify with the people they associate with, especially if they tend to consider themselves an outlier within their friend group due to certain characteristics. Of course, with such characteristics, the disparities in appearance are the most obvious and noticeable at first glance. A particular participant mentioned that the use of photo-editing apps was motivated by the desire to alleviate the discrepancy between herself and her friends. Through editing, she was able to visualize her self-image, as one that more closely resembled her friends'.

> *"When you're young, your friends matter a lot. In my case, I first started using editing apps in high school because I was the only Asian in my Caucasian group of friends and not surprisingly, I was the shortest among all of them. I guess I wanted to minimize the difference [between my friends and myself]. The difference in proportions like face and body wise is pretty clear [between Asians and Caucasians]. This is even more visible, especially since you take pictures together."*
>
> *Participant 8(female)*

An observant comment was made by a participant who pointed out how one is more prone to taking group pictures with friends, which also functions as a visual reminder to the differences between an individual and his or her friends. The comparison made with others within the taken selfie by an individual him or herself, or even the expected comparisons to be made by other social media users who will view the group picture. Hence, in this case, it can be understood that it is the combination of one's perceived discrepancies in appearances, usually the attributes of the friend deemed more admirable, along with the reaffirmation of such distinctions through pictures taken together that persuades individuals to edit their pictures.

> *"You sometimes also take selfies with other people, usually your close friends. I don't really care if the picture isn't going to be posted, but for pictures that will be upload, I edit to match the other person in the picture. Even if in real life this isn't the case, or it doesn't really show that much, I occasionally feel like my face is too big or my eyes are too small in comparison to other people in pictures especially. So, when taking pictures with friends, we tell each other not to lean back [to make our faces appear smaller]."*
>
> *Participant 12(female)*

2.2.2 I'm so Unphotogenic!

The need to polish one's appearance in selfies is enhanced by the feeling that he or she might be unphotogenic. A person who is unphotogenic, is someone who might be in person attractive, but for some mysterious reason does not appear in pictures as they really are. Interview results have shown that most participants feel that their looks are 'uglified' in pictures and that, scanning through the unmodified selfies prior to editing causes them to ponder upon whether they genuinely appear that unattractive in real life. Many

also expressed frustration at how pictures were inadequate in accurately presenting the truly 'good-looking' person they are.

> *"I think it's a general rule of thumb that your photos don't come out the way you want, unless you have amazing lightening, great hair, flawless makeup and so on. But even then, pictures don't always capture the best parts of me. I swear I look better in person and all my friends tell me so to, my pictures don't do me any justice."*
>
> *Participant 14(female)*

> *"I personally think camera don't sufficiently capture my looks, which is really a shame because I definitely look better in real life. I wish everyone else could see what I was seeing"*
>
> *Participant 20(male)*

Some interview participants attempted to explain the science behind unphotogenic selfies, by claiming that the two-dimensional nature of photos and smartphone screens inevitably emphasizes the flaws of one's face that tend to be less visible when seen in three-dimension. The capturing of a person's real, physical traits into a smooth, flat picture could potentially place unintentional emphasis on individual flaws, including but not limited to skin blemishes and acne, narrow or wide eyes, angled jaws and double chins.

> *"My face is three-dimensional, as you can see, but pictures are two-dimensional. This is a fundamental difference that accounts for ugly selfies because the pimples on my forehead, some dark circles under my eyes, all of these minor flaws that aren't that visible unless you pay really close attention, become more prominent in the process of flattening out my face through pictures."*
>
> *Participant 9(female)*

Others asserted that the it was not the emphasis of certain flaws, but rather the peculiar vanishing of features than caused them to look especially unphotogenic. The previously considered mechanism of three-dimensional form translated into two-dimensional pictures was still inherently relevant to this discussion, since in both cases, the flat and unmoving pictures was considered at fault for blurring out certain facial features. Participants elaborated by explaining that the smudging of the face required them to use photo-editing methods that could restore the outlines of their eyes, nose and mouth, in addition to the overall contours of the face to achieve the presentation of a polished appearance.

> *"You usually look somewhat dull, in pictures. I think that's because in pictures your facial features are sort of smudged. My face, for instance, looks stretched and blurred depending on how I take the selfie and this isn't just about the quality of the front-faced camera used for selfies. It's really more about pictures generally."*
>
> *Participant 14(female)*

> *"Even if my eyebrows are clearly visible in person, for some reason they tend to disappear in pictures. I edit my brows and some other stuff too using the makeup tool."*
>
> *Participant 3(female)*

Another factor accounting for unphotogenic selfies was the element of asymmetry within one's face. To varying degrees, everyone is known to have some asymmetrical facial features, as a perfectly symmetrical face does not exist. Participants cited different areas of asymmetry, including the shape of the face, size of the eyes, straightness of the nose, and how is a great source of irritation that particularly draws their attention in pictures. Again, the significance of these remarks was found within the restatement of participants and how they did not see consider their asymmetrical face obviously noticeable in real life. Therefore, according to interview results, it can be concluded that in terms of app use motivations, not looking like oneself in photos, usually in an unfavorable and less attractive way, is the foremost reason why social media users consider photo-editing apps absolutely vital in repairing such inaccurate reflections of ugliness.

"Can you see it? It doesn't really show when you see it from that angle but one side is bigger than the other so I usually edit my right to match my left."

Participant 10(female)

"I hate it when my eyes are uneven or only one side of my face has been stretched because I only look like that in pictures."

Participant 11(female)

2.2.3 Controlling Self-Consciousness

Unintentional, yet persistent comparison within a friend group on top exacerbated perceptions of flaws in an individual's appearance through unphotogenic selfies are probable sources of unhealthy feelings of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, is the state of being aware of oneself, and although not always negative, people who are overly self-conscious could be often be preoccupied with introspection, questioning how others might think of themselves. In such sense, the act of polishing one's appearance in selfies through editing apps could translate as efforts to control one's self-conscious thoughts. Participants all expressed they had different parts of the face and or body they were concerned about. Although the extent of concern and subsequent emotions related to self-consciousness varied from participant to participant, most were in agreement that often pictures acted as an unwelcoming reminder of their physical dissatisfactions.

"I don't look as tall and slim as I want in this dress, which I only have myself to blame because I'm actually not tall and super slim. Still, I usually really like my masculine, healthy figure but whenever I see my super large arms bulging out in pictures, I kind of start to doubt myself and can't help but feel a little embarrassed."

Participant 18(female)

Furthermore, it was pointed out that minimizing one's dissatisfaction towards physical characteristics can accomplished by photo-editing apps that offer an array of diverse methods and approaches to modify the picture. Thus, this implies the feeling of control over his or her awareness of 'self', one is able to indirectly feel through modifying selfies in the direction intended.

"My biggest pet peeve is my face, specifically my nose that stands out from the rest of my face. I think my nose looks a little too wide and round. It's the typical Asian nose, that you call the fist nose or the lucky nose. Apparently, the flat, round nose is considered lucky but I really don't care. I want it to look pointier and more prominent. Thankfully, there are apps that allow to do change the shape, size, length, width and even the angle of your nose."

Participant 8(female)

Whereas dissatisfaction towards physical traits that are relatively more permanent and difficult to change clearly influence an individual's self-consciousness, self-consciousness can also stem from fluctuations in appearance due to a wide range of external factors. Participants explained that such factors causing immediate, noticeable changes in one's appearance included changes in one's physical body due to hormones and stress, reflecting through skin condition and sudden gain or loss of weight due to an alteration in diet, daily activities or environment. The crucial aspect of such changes, clarified through the interviews, was that although these changes are fairly immediate, the reversal of such conditions are not. Returning to the body's earlier state requires the investment of time, effort and patience, which is exactly some participants stressed the role of photo-editing in assisting them maintain the image of their 'original', previous self during the period required to go back to what they looked like before.

"I think I edit more or less, depending on my condition at that time. Like when you have a break out due to your period or recently put on a bit of weight because you've gone on a vacation, these aren't things you can control and instantly make yourself go back to the way you looked before. I know my skin will clear up on its own but in the meantime, I don't want it to be visible on my pictures and make sure those are edited out."

Participant 15(female)

Other participants cited slightly different causes for fluctuations in appearance, illustrating an example of one's choice or clothing and style of dress can give the illusion of physical characteristics unfound in the actual individual. When employed to one's benefit, this can be successfully utilized to disguise imperfections, but on the contrary, it could simultaneously draw attention to an undesirable trait. These fluctuations in appearance are reversable and comparatively easier to control, yet participants explained how modifications are more effective through the use of editing apps.

"Sometimes my shoulders might look too narrow because of the clothes I'm wearing and depending on what I'm wearing on that day, my physique comes out different in pictures. My shoulders are on the narrower side, so my pictures are quite influenced by my clothing, but there's a limit to making them look wider through clothes."

Participant 1(male)

2.2.4 Difficulties in Taking 'Good' Selfies

While the image within a photograph depends on the subject displayed in the picture, this study has

reviewed how often, selfies are perceived insufficient in portraying real life version of oneself. As pictures highlight individual flaws and fail to capture the most visually impressive aspects of individuals, the conclusion reached by participants was that successfully taking a 'good' selfie, is more challenging than imagined due to the camera's inaccurate representations. Although labelling the camera as inaccurate might sound paradoxical, for the very invention of photography is traced the origination a reliable tool that depicts objective reality, cameras are not exactly perfect as people initially guess. A major cause of this is lens distortion, which is when the perspectives within photos are distorted due to multiple factors. Participants clarified that the difficulty in taking 'good' selfies is partially due to how the different positions in relation to where the camera is, results in the varied appearances. A comprehensive anecdote was given on how group selfies, typically unavoidable on birthdays, are an utter disaster, in which no one wishes to be placed anywhere near the ends of the camera frame, as the lens distortion causes not only the entire body, but also the face to appear abnormally bloated from the stretch.

> *"The shape of the lens changes how you look depending on your placement according to the camera. Maybe this is something happens in smartphone cameras more frequently, but I like know there's something wrong because the edges of the picture always get stretched. This means, if you stand close to the edge, you're going to lose fatter than the person in the middle, and this by the way is knowledge that comes from experience."*
>
> *Participant 17(female)*

Apart from the complexities of the camera, the surrounding environment where the picture is taken can intensify the complexities in capturing a 'good' selfie. Such boundaries of the surrounding environment of a selfie encompasses the actual location in which individuals take their pictures, but other than the place, elements of setting such as the time, weather atmosphere also play a role. The time of day directly impacts elements such as sunlight, which participants stated are vital in pictures as they determine the mood of the picture, along with the contours of the face. Other participants commented on weather related problems like the wind and rain, and how these uncontrollable factors regarding their surroundings, at times, substantially increase the difficulty level of taking good selfies.

> *"There are so many things that come into play in good pictures that you really can't control. For example, factors like the amount of sunlight and direction of the sun. You need to be standing so the sun is shining right on you because if the sun is shining from behind, you're face gets blurred. But when the sun is shining on you too hard, it's hard to open your eyes. If you stand so the sunlight is on the side, you get shadows on your face. That's why it's so hard"*
>
> *Participant 2(female)*

> *"Factors like the wind and light influence your pictures. Especially like the wind, because the light you can sort of move around to adjust, but the wind there's not much to do. It just blows in your face and stops you from taking that nice selfie you wanted to take."*
>
> *Participant 6(female)*

Finally, various types of movement that occur during photo taking sessions was another factor

participants identified as considerable in the challenge of taking 'good' selfies. Both the movement of the person taking the picture and the movement of the person having their picture taken were discussed. Overall, participants generally considered photo-editing apps as appropriate tools to exert some degree of control over their selfies, which are subjected to the influence of a variety of elements that cause somewhat flawed, and often less appealing representations of oneself.

> *"You need to think about how you don't just stand still when taking pictures. You could be in the middle of doing something, walking, turning around."*
>
> *Participant 6(female)*

2.3 Online Acculturation

The third category of 'photo-editing app usage motivations' is means of online acculturation. The themes of this category are accustomed to selfie editing, purposeful self presentation, affirmation from others and reflection of offline self presentation efforts. Acculturation is defined as the process of incorporating the values and behaviors of a different, usually dominant culture and is a key idea in this section of the study. In consideration of such, the phrase, online acculturation refers to how individuals adopt the mannerisms of the cultures online, especially on social media, in order to learn new ways and acquire relevant skills on successfully engagements with other people on social platforms. This is essential in the comprehension of photo-editing app usage motivations as these apps are the tools in which social media users are able to visually construct desired presentations of the 'self' in addition to become efficiently adjusted to the new online environment.

<Table. 6> Category 3. of photo-editing app usage motivations (means of online acculturation)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Means of online acculturation	Accustomed to selfie editing	Compulsive need to edit	*Feel need to polish my pictures; More pictures I take and upload, the more I feel I cannot upload without editing first; Ritual-like activity*
		Habitual editing	*Editing photos become habit; Don't need to [edit] but there's no reason not to edit; Become familiar with my edited face; Feels strange not to edit; Become used to editing; Seems weird to not edit*
		Source of entertainment	*Editing process kind of fun; Like to experiment with different edits*
	Purposeful self presentation	Importance of a consistent, edited image	*Want to maintain edited image of myself; Continue to use editing apps to present myself as who I want to be; Need consistency in selfies*
		Desire for absolute control over online self presentation	*Want to not have [visible flaws] at least in pictures on my profile; You want to control those flaws; Make sure temporary and small, but irritating flaws don't show; Sculpting myself into how I want to look online*
	Affirmation from others	Number of 'likes', an indicator of popularity	*Started editing my selfies because I wanted more likes; Number of likes determine your status on social media; When you're young [number of likes determining online status] is even more true*

		Validation of self worth	*[Want people to] tell me I'm amazing; From compliments, attention I get reaffirmation that I'm great person*
	Reflection of offline self-presentation efforts	Means of grooming	*Editing selfies part of grooming, in online environment; Is like how you put on makeup and wear nice clothes in real-life; [Editing], it's just like girls putting on makeup; Easy to adjust pictures to make yourself look good*
		Substitution for real-life activities	*Don't see the need to get procedures done on my face, edit my photos instead; I use makeup features when I haven't actually put on make-up but want to upload the picture so I can look nicer*

2.3.1 Accustomed to Selfie Editing

As selfie-editing is thought upon as a process compulsory before posting on social media, participants reflected on how they have become accustomed to this process. It is significant to understand that that intense familiarization with editing, does not merely pertain to the simple act of using editing-apps on its own, but it extends to other supplementary efforts, like the time one spends on selecting, possibly even retaking pictures of oneself. Interview revealed how different participants although similarly accustomed to self-editing apps prior to uploading selfies, clearly demonstrated a deeply varied association with this process. Some participants truthfully confessed that they possessed a compulsive need to edit, and a strong attachment to their selfies as direct mirror images of how they viewed themselves. An interesting comment was that some felt this need to edit their pictures, even if there wasn't a particular flaw visible in the selfie, simply due to the feeling of comfort and preparedness completing the editing process delivered.

> *"I recognize how I feel a sort of obsessive need to sort of polish my pictures before sharing them with others, even if there isn't anything particular wrong with them."*
>
> *Participant 3(female)*

> *"Editing your selfies before posting, it almost a ritual-like activity. You need to go through that process, or else you feel somewhat uneasy, as if your pictures are unprepared."*
>
> *Participant 9(female)*

Likewise, there were participants who expressed that their use of photo-editing apps was closer to a habit, in which such participants also considered the editing process necessary but not to the degree of addiction. The accumulation of editing experiences, were said to instill the feeling that their edited face in selfies and one social media, is the 'real' face belonging to them.

> *"To me, editing photos has just become like a habit in that I don't necessary need to always edit all my pictures, but there's also no reason not to edit you know. So, usually if I have time, I just briefly edit my pictures before posting them."*
>
> *Participant 18(female)*

Others considered photo-editing apps an enjoyable source of entertainment well suited to the unlimited, experimental nature of the online environment of social media. A participant announced her enthusiasm for selfie- editing as it enables a space where users can freely make modifications to their appearance and try on different styles to create new, innovative versions of their image.

> *"Some of my friends think editing pictures is tiresome, but personally I think the editing process are just kind of fun. I actually spend a lot of time of editing apps because I like to experiment with different type of edits and see how they produce different results, like the different shades of eye shadow and lip with filters create interesting moods."*
>
> *Participant 15(female)*

2.3.2 Purposeful Self Presentation

Social media provides its users opportunities to control their presentations of 'self' in the desired direction with more ease, as users can plan, the content to be shared and the means to do so beforehand and remove what has been uploaded if considered necessary in the future. However, self presentation online is not consisted of a singular, one-time effort, but instead it must be viewed as a continued course of development, since impressions of an individual can easily change overtime. Thus, interviews results stress the importance of a consistent, edited image in not only creating, but also sustaining a focused image of oneself. Obviously, the pictures uploaded online are not by chance or random, as many participants have mentioned that the selfies uploaded on their Instagram profile have been deliberately shared with a purpose of conveying a specific, desired impression. The role of editing apps is again, re-emphasized, as the apps are believed to be useful in helping participants continue such intentional self presentation online.

> *"The images on my Instagram profile have been planned out and I want to maintain that edited image of myself because that the version of myself I like. So that's why I continue to use editing apps, to continue to present myself as who I want to be."*
>
> *Participant 2(female)*

However, what participants consider is of equivalent significance is the consistency of the presented image. This is elaborated through the idea that other social media users, the audience of your self presentation, relate how consistent a profile's pictures are with how reliable that profile is, and therefore, once you start editing, here is no going back. What can be inferred from this remark, is that at least, the participant who claimed this to be true, is someone who includes the element of consistency of an image, when making personal evaluations on what other social media user could potentially be like. This also is in direct correlation with the nature of online self presentation, as while it is less demanding to control one's physical appearance in pictures than in real-life, the knowledge of such effortlessness consequently heightens social media users' awareness and uncertainty towards the credibility of other profiles.

> *"There needs to be consistency in your selfies, or else there isn't much point in your presentation especially on social media because people who look at your pictures are going to think that your profile isn't reliable. It's either you just don't edit at all or continue to edit all your pictures."*

Participant 10(female)

Additionally, purposeful self presentation also a foundation for individual's desire for absolute control over online self presentation, as complete control of one's self presentation certainly lends social media user's the ability to effectively manage their image online. Moreover, participants clearly viewed their social media profiles as their own personal spheres, referring to it as 'mine', expressing thoughts that other people's interactions with 'their' profiles and pictures must occur in the direction they desired. These feelings did not only persuade participants to try out, but continue to use photo-editing apps to achieve their self presentation aims.

> *"It's quite simple, I just want to not have any visible flaws, at least in pictures on my profile because my profile is mine. I should be able to decide what is looks like.*
>
> *Participant 8(female)*

> *"My social media is a space where I can sculpt myself into how I want to look online, I want to make sure people who see my selfies get the exact image I want them to receive."*
>
> *Participant 2(female)*

2.3.3 Affirmation from Others

New mannerisms of the cultures on social media, paved way for changed methods of engagements with other people. A 'like' or a 'heart' on a shared content is the most basic, yet commonly used function online that visually signals a positive response, such as interest, approval, compassion or admiration, noticeable not only to the person who owns the posted content, but also other users who are exposed who the content. In the social media environment, affirmation of others is evident through the number of 'likes' an individual receives, which is could also be an indicator of his or her popularity within that online sphere. Similarly, many comments during the interview were made on the perception of an 'online status' determined by the number of likes or followers a user possesses. Thus, this number of likes functions to convey a sense of confirmation to social media users' on how popular they are, or in order words, how successful they are in their intended self presentation.

> *"Usually on social media, it's the good looking and pretty people who get the highest likes. I started editing my selfies at first because I wanted more likes like these people When you're young the number of likes determining your online status is even more true, and even as you get older it's not something you ignore completely."*
>
> *Participant 16(female)*

Another important point brought up related to this subject, was how this online sphere closely resembles how our society actually works in terms of popularity, as a participant discerningly pointed out that the people who are deemed physically appearance objectively, are the ones who enjoy the greatest level of popularity on social media as well. The understanding of the preference everyone has towards beautiful people was credited

as the reason that why photo-editing apps are inseparable from visual, self presentation the activities of social media.

> *"I guess the number of likes or number of followers is seen to determine your status on social media. Famous people get a lot of likes, or attractive people get a lot of likes. But then, the famous people are usually attractive and the attractive people become famous due to their looks."*
>
> *Participant 11(female)*

Although this did not apply to the majority of participants of the interview, there were a few, who associated the affirmation given by other social media users with personal validation of self-worth. It was stated that the positive attention received from other people was a simple and honest indication of how much value one could see him or herself as holding. Other participants viewed compliments as more of a confirmation of their high expectations of self-worth, explaining that other users' flattery simply make them feel even better about themselves. The noticeable aspect of both descriptions is that the opinion held by others, carries substantial weight in influencing how an individual sees her or himself within the social media environment.

> *"I want people to see my pictures and tell me that I'm amazing. Some people might say that some selfies are like intentionally fishing for compliments but I don't necessarily see why that's bad. I know I look good and feel good about myself when others tell me so."*
>
> *Participant 14(female)*

2.3.4 Reflection of Offline Self Presentation Efforts

The practice of editing one's selfies prior to posting embraces an individual's desires to be the most presentable version of him or herself. While, photo-editing apps are predominately utilized to control an individual's image on screen, for online self presentation purposes, the core essence of polishing one's appearance is not exclusive to social media. In the real-life world, people equally pay great attention to how they look, and make investments to enhance their visual self presentation through different means of grooming. Parallel to such notions, editing selfies can be seen as an online 'means of grooming', that directly reflects offline self presentation efforts. During the interview, participants shared opinions that contouring one's face and re-applying lip gloss through editing apps, is not significantly distinct from how one applies make up before going to meet someone in person. An interesting point made was on the controversial aspect of selfie-editing and its proposed harmful ramifications on body image, as one participant questioned how different selfie-editing and applying makeup is, when both are intended to control one's physical appearance to look more attractive.

> *"I think editing selfies is just part of grooming in an online environment. Like think about how we make ourselves look pretty before going out on a date or with friends. Editing pictures is just like how you would put on makeup and wear nice clothes in real-life and to the people who say that editing is bad because you're making changes to how you look, makeup is intended of the exact*

same purpose. And how about high heels? Or perfume?

Participant 2(female)

Other participants mentioned how easy it is to adjusts in selfies as they wish through the use of photo-editing apps, and that this enables users to effortlessly enhance their image online. From these comments, it can be observed that many photo-editing app users, view their editing as an uncomplicated and quite natural means of grooming within the social media, indicative of editing app's important role in self presentation and online acculturation.

"It's really easily to make necessary adjustments to, make yourself look good online."

Participant 19(female)

Furthermore, photo-editing app usage is a reflection of offline self presentation methods in that it can also substitute or be considered alternatives to certain real-life activities. A participant exclaimed that she turned to editing rather can cosmetic procedures in relieve her dissatisfaction with specific facial features, explaining how she had previously considered getting rhinoplasty, also commonly known as a nose job, but was hesitant due to the potential negative side effects. As her discontent with her nose was not too extreme, and the vexing problem was the prominence of the crook visible only in certain pictures, she concluded that editing her selfies was the more reasonable option to surgery. Many other participants explained that photo-editing app were useful tools in quickly fixing 'a bad hair day' or 'face without makeup', when they could not be bothered, or have sufficient time to improve their actual appearances in real-life. Thus, such experiences of interview participants effectively underline how selfie editing functions as a replacement for offline self presentation efforts, by suggesting innovative methods to newly engage with people and manage one's desired image on social media.

"There are so many plastic surgery options in addition to procedures like Botox and fillers that are now common in Korea. Even if I want to touch up my face, I don't see the need to routinely get procedures done on my face because I don't really go out a lot. The only time people see me is usually through my social media account, so I simply edit my photos instead."

Participant 8(female)

"You know, like all girls probably can relate to how putting on makeup is a real effort and erasing it is an even bigger hassle. Most people don't put make up running simple errands or when they're in the house, but that doesn't mean we don't feel like taking a selfie. So, in the case on makeup features, interestingly I actually use it when I haven't put on make-up but want to upload a picture where I can look nicer without actually doing anything on my face."

Participant 19(female)

3. Influencing Factors of Self Presentation

3.1 Self Autonomy Factors

Within the second subject, ‘influencing factors of self presentation’ (photo taking, selfie editing and uploading on social media), five main categories were formed. The first category is self autonomy factors, which is comprised of two key themes: sense of 'self' and manipulated 'self'. The various influencing factors of self presentation correlates with the study’s goals to investigate what are the things that social media users consider meaningful and take into account in their online self presentation efforts, such efforts extending to a wide variety of processes like taking pictures, selecting pictures to edit, editing pictured using beautification apps and lastly actually sharing the final edited product with their intended audience. As one’s self presentation is inherently tied to one’s sense of identity and ideal image of the ‘self’, exploring the different aspects of personal identity and self autonomy is of great significance to the understanding of how this influences an individual’s direction or method of presentation on social media through the use of his or her selfies.

<Table. 7> Category 1. of influencing factors of self presentation (self autonomy factors)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Self autonomy factors	Sense of 'self'	Reflection of who I am	*Selfie, reflection of who you are as person; Pictures show what I'm actually like; Represents what I consider my identity; No one takes on image completely opposite of who they are*
		Reflection of who I want to be	*More due to this image, like ideal image of myself that I want to be; This [ideal image] reflects my fashion style*
		Reflection of how I want others to view me	*Interests shown in pictures used to convey something you want others to see; Pictures I post on social media, intended for other people; Degree of editing personal in terms of how you wish to be viewed; Tone, color, selfie angle, background and objects in photo all intended by people for intentional self-expression; Like how my pictures keeps people guessing or interested in what kind of person I might be*
	Manipulated 'self'	Selective display	*Only show parts of me I hope other people want to see; Give impression of bright, bubbly person, but not always like that; Pretend that I'm not sad even when I am*
		Prioritization of the online identity	*Feel need to fit myself to person on my social media, live up to that image in real life; Through social media pictures, I start to fit myself into what I have there; How I dress, places I go, they selected based whether they fit Instagram feed*
		A masquerade	*Social media is basically fake; Some say social media is fake; Reality of social media, pressure to live the life you can't live currently; This façade; People who post pictures with luxury items actuality have low self-esteem, want attention; Take selfies in galleries, proof you went for pictures and attention*

3.1.1 Sense of 'Self'

Individuals’ sense of self is formed upon their identities, or varied projections of themselves. The

interviews of this study revealed three main components of one's sense of 'self' present in selfies, namely the reflection of 'who I am', the reflection of 'who I want to be' and the reflection of 'how I want others to view me'. Firstly, the reflection of who I am, signifies how selfies are essentially a representation of the subject within the picture, clearly portraying who that person is simply. Participants confided that while selfies could appear as pretentious or superfluous to some, these selfies in actuality possess deeper value in that they are evidence to who the person in the picture is, with subtle hints to more personal attributes such as character and mindset. They explained continued exposure to the various people and different types of selfies enabled them to reasonably deduce what a person might be like, through his or her pictures posted on social media even before getting to personally know them.

> *"Yes, selfies are taken to show that you're pretty, that you're cool, that you're stylish and all those things but that's not all. I think selfies are somewhat a reflection of who you are as a person, because you can tell what the person is like through their pictures and all the cues to their personality, attitudes and even sometimes what they value. So, I think my pictures just accurately show what I'm actually like, just me truthfully. I mean who else would the person in my selfie be, if that isn't me."*
>
> *Participant 6(female)*

In addition to this, participants also elaborated on how selfies truthfully reflect who they, for the majority of social media users construct an online identity that is contingent upon their actually identity. Many stated that it is not common or frequent that one engages in self presentation of an image, irrelevant of to his or own real-life image.

> *"My pictures, they represent what I consider my identity, just who I am as a person, or at least what I look like in terms of my appearance. Like no one takes on an image that's completely the opposite of who they really are, and that's not exactly easy to do as well."*
>
> *Participant 15(female)*

While selfies are reflections of 'who I am', they also reflection 'who I want to be'. This second component of one's sense of 'self' present in pictures is not entirely separate from the first component, who I am, as individuals constantly strive to become the person they wish to be. In relation to a clarification previously made by one participant, an important observation was that interviews showed that most individuals did not wish to become entirely different from their current selves, or take on an identify almost identical to that of someone else. Instead, the reflection of 'who I want to be' was dynamic and in response to their changing preferences and styles, that adapted new facets displayed by others in their own ways. Thus, the reflection of who I want to be, did not largely deviate from one's perception of his or her actual 'identity', and referred to by participants, as an ideal image of themselves, that is also deemed to be the best possible version of 'who I am' or 'who I can be'.

> *"It's more due to this image, like an ideal image of myself that I want to be. And don't get me wrong, I want to be me, but more specifically this ideal image I'm taking about reflects more of my fashion style or preferences in how to show myself. But of course, style and preferences aren't set*

in stone and as they change, who I want to be, or how I want to see myself as also changes."

Participant 4(male)

The third component of one's sense of 'self' is the reflection of 'how I want others to view me'. This desire to control other's impression of one's is fairly predictable, as although selfies are representations of 'who I am' and 'who I want to be', the nature of social media and the interactions with other users inevitably shape an individual's self presentation online.

"Selfies, are images of you, but what you're wearing, where you're at, who you're with or even how you've taken the picture show your interests. These aspects shown in pictures are also used to convey something you want others to see, since pictures I post on social media are intended for other people to see. If I was going to look at it myself and not share it with others, I would keep a diary, not a social media profile."

Participant 3(female)

Participants explained how not only the elements with the selfie, but also the editing undergone all collaboratively function to display a uniform image of oneself, that one wishes for other people to perceive. Some others stated how they intentionally do not coordinate their online self-image into one that is singular, easily comprehensible to engage other social media users by encouraging feelings of curiosity.

"The degree of editing is also very personal in terms of how you wish to be viewed. I personally think that, the tone, color, selfie angle, background and objects in the photo are all intended by people for such intentional self-expression. None of it is accidental, it's all part of how you want others of think of yourself."

Participant 17(female)

"I intentionally make my selfies difficult to read, or at least I think it doesn't send one simple image. I like how my pictures keeps people sort of guessing or interested in what kind of person I might be."

Participant 9(female)

3.1.2 Manipulated 'Self'

One's sense of identity and ideal image of the 'self', when intentionally directed towards projecting an image that are not based an individual's own sense of 'self' but what he or she wants the audience to see can be interpreted as the manipulated 'self'. The distinction between sense of 'self' and manipulated 'self' is that while the former are direct reflections of how one thinks of oneself or wants to become, the latter the closer to half-truths, or selective displays of certain characteristics of an individual, with the specific intent of emphasizing a desired feature. Participants throughout the interview shared that at times, they do not wish to fully reveal themselves, and hence pick particular aspects that they feel is appropriate to show on social media, or relevant to their online image.

"I sometimes think that I only show the parts of me I hope other people want to see in me."

Participant 3(female)

Some even spoke about the burdens of maintaining the self presentation that they considered others liked, as disclosing conflicting yet still real parts of their selves cause not only discomfort in participants themselves, but could also result in a permanent change in other people's impression of them.

"I give the impression of a bright, bubbly person, but I'm not always like that. I'm human too, so I also feel down at times but you can't really show that on social media. Either people are going to think you're just looking for attention or that you're actually a desperate, depressing person on the inside despite your bright personality. So, I try to pretend that I'm not sad even when I am."

Participant 14(female)

Along with selective displays of one's 'self, another attribute of the manipulated 'self' is prioritizing one's online identity to offline identity. While selfies are indeed, a true representation of an individual at his or her best, some participants voiced how they realize the time and effort allocated to capturing one's such ideal moments gradually increased to surpass simply wanting to maintain an ideal online image, and instead consider self presentation on social media a major priority, in the offline world as well. This has been supported by participant's intensified need to live up to their pictures in real life at all times, and the prioritizing one's online identity results in participant's considering the place and style of an occasion based on the selfies they hope to take and share on their profile.

"Through my social media pictures, I sort of started to fit myself into what I have posted there. You see how some cafes and parks or even galleries are famous for their 'instagrammable' nature, and these places are packed with people who want to take a selfie there. It's not to that extent for me, but how I dress, the places I go to, they all are somewhat selected based on my first assessing if they fit my Instagram feed. If I have a picture of a jacket I've worn before, I probably won't wear to an event I have plans on taking pictures at, even if I want to because it's already on my feed."

Participant 3(female)

As social media enables its users to obtain absolute control over their self presentation, individuals could potentially construct images and impressions to deliver a deceptive, manipulated version of the 'self'. Many participants called attention to the masquerade put on by individuals, especially pervasive on social media, some even exclaiming that the representations of selves online were not to be trusted, and that one must be gullible to believe in such fake images. While, participants did not relate to such deceiving methods of self presentations themselves and asserted they prefer to stay true to their own personal sense of 'self', they shared their experience of noticing other pretensions users online who visibly accentuated characteristics, such as wealth or excessively edited body parts, in efforts to convey a fabricated self-image.

"Nowadays social media is basically fake. That's the reality of social media, it's the pressure to live the life you can't live currently, and some people seem to be even lying to themselves."

Participant 4(male)

3.2 Nature of Social Media Medium Factors

The second category of 'influencing factors of self presentation' is the nature of social media medium factors, constituting of the themes: feature-based factors and audience-based factors. The evaluation of the different features of social media and how such features motivate distinct images or methods of self presentation is crucial as the medium of social networking platforms and their functions of user engagement are different based on each platform. As this study focuses of photo-editing apps and the visual self presentation of social media, interview participants naturally provided responses that were specific to Instagram, as this platform is one that successfully enables its users to utilize visuals, especially pictures, as the primarily source of communication and self presentation.

<Table. 8> Category 2. of influencing factors of self presentation (nature of social media medium factors)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Nature of social media medium factors	Feature based	Selfies on stories and feed serve different purposes	*You don't just upload pictures on your feed but you also upload them on stories; There's also a big different between pictures you upload on your story and pictures you post on your feed*
		Stories, feel free to post whatever	*On my story [my pictures] doesn't really matter; [On stories] I upload super narcissistic looking selfies and kind of ugly pictures; While on my story I post selfies with my friends, family, boyfriend etc.; Other just daily pictures I post on my story*
		Feed, reserved for the best representations	*On your feed it's more like special events in life and pretty daily pictures; When I look good in the pictures, that's when I upload to my feed; On my feed all my pictures are of me; For my feed, I consider like the composition and pattern of pictures to give a unified feeling*
	Audience based	Privacy settings signal a preference in the mode of self presentation	*I think whether your account is public or private changes the whole dynamics of Instagram; you can differentiate those who have public profiles from those who keep private profiles*
		Changes in audience correlates changes in editing	*Even though I'm not a public figure and I think [the privacy status of my social media account] influenced my editing too; I changed by profile to private and now I feel liberated from the fact that I need to maintain a certain image*

3.2.1 Feature Based

On Instagram, there participants notice two key visual communication methods provided by the social media platform. Users are able to both share pictures or videos through Instagram stories and their personal Instagram profile, which is also referred to as the feed. It has been explained that the specific features of stories and feed are very distinct in their purposes; the former is more immediate and inviting of interactions, as whatever you post can be viewed and responded to by other users, in which individuals are also able to see which users have viewed their Instagram story. The latter is said to play a more influential role in one's first

impression of the user, as while stories are short-lived, disappearing after twenty-four hours, posts of feeds are permanent, unless removed by the user themselves. Therefore, the distinguishable features of stories and feeds also implies that the selfies that shared on stories and feed each serve different purposes of self presentation.

> *"You don't just upload pictures on your feed but you also upload them on stories. There's also a big different between pictures you upload on your story and pictures you post on your feed, like some the selfies you really like go on your feed and the ones don't make it to the feed but you still want to share you can post on your stories."*
>
> *Participant 20(male)*

As the story feature of Instagram has been intended for users to spontaneously share all of the moments of their day at any time, not limited to the ones to be kept on one's profile, participants explain how they feel much more free to post whatever they want on their stories. They state that stories do not require absolutely flawless and beautiful selfies, and that instead they would use this feature to showcase more casual, laid-back facets of their personality, some participants even claimed to shared 'sort of ugly but cute' pictures to demonstrate their sense of humor and fun personality.

> *"On my story my pictures and whether they look nice doesn't really matter. I don't upload extremely ugly pictures but still, compared to my feed, on stories, I tend to shared more fun selfies like super narcissistic looking selfies and kind of ugly but cute pictures like as a joke."*
>
> *Participant 5(female)*

To other participants, the story feature serves as a space to share their daily routines and activities that did not define as particularly special, but were considered of interest to users on social media who were included in their network of close offline friends. An additional notable point, was also the people within the selfie, as most agreed that pictures taken with other individuals such as friends and family were usually set aside for stories, while the feed mainly contained individual selfies of oneself.

> *"I guess the biggest different is who I take my pictures with. While on my story I post selfies with my friends, family, boyfriend etc., I tend to post pictures of just me on my feed. Also, other just daily pictures, that aren't really specially or pretty but I want to share to show what I've been up to for my friends, I usually post on my story."*
>
> *Participant 15(female)*

On the other hand, all participants were in accord with the idea that the feed must be reserved for the best selfies, only the best images of oneself. The feed was considered the face of a user's profile, that efficiently summarizes all the desired representations one wishes to convey to his or her audience. Similar to the cover of a book, it is said you cannot judge a book by its cover, but certainly a dull, cover dissuades potentials readers from wanting to read that book regardless of the quality of the actual story, which is exactly why participants stressed the significance of maintaining an interesting and well-presented profile of social media. This feature of the feed was also different to the features of stories in that feeds were also looked upon

as an appropriate space to share, celebrate and record special events or memorable occurrences in an individual's life or visits to special locations. An interesting term brought up during interviews was 'feed-worthy', indicating whether a content was considered as meeting the criteria of something that is worth being posted on one's feed. From this, it is undeniable that the clear distinction the features of social media, especially the story and feed on Instagram, has a vast influence have on user's self presentation online and their sharing of selfies.

> *"On your feed it's more like special events in life, birthday parties, graduation, a family celebration and so on. Or it's pretty daily pictures of me going to special places, like expensive fine dining restaurants, vacations a concert or a show."*
>
> *Participant 19(female)*

> *"When I look good in the pictures, that's when I upload to my feed and my feed all my pictures are of me because I am the subject of the selfies. Oh, and for my feed, I consider like the composition and pattern of pictures to give a unified feeling, you know like the overall flow of the feed, so like the balance of the selfies, the colors shown, the background, the clothes I'm wearing and just details like that."*
>
> *Participant 13(male)*

3.2.2 Audience Based

While specific features, like those previously discussed, can motivate different approaches to self presentation online, there are other aspects of social media platforms, such as the range of audience who can view one's profile, which also effectively impacts one's use of selfies as a means of visual communication and self-expression. Instagram and other social networking sites, have systems that enable their users to control exposure of not only their online profile, but also the content shared with specific users. In the case of Instagram, users can select between the two privacy settings, to have their profile public, visible to anyone, or private, visible to only accepted followers. Discussions in interviews reveal that such settings on social media signal a personal preference in the mode of self presentation online.

> *"I think whether your account is public or private changes the whole dynamics of Instagram because basically the people who are going to be looking at your stuff and totally different. You can differentiate those who have public profiles from those who keep private profiles, and from what I've seen those who keep their account private usually are less interested in keeping a perfect image because they personally know all the people who see their pictures. They have a lesser need to impress or convince people online."*
>
> *Participant 5(female)*

Participants stated that such changes in audience on social media could directly correlate changes in one's editing of selfies, especially if that particular person is someone who invests efforts in maintaining a visually perfect image. Those who had the experience of changing their personal privacy settings noted the differences in their attitudes prior to and after the switch, explaining how

"I changed by profile to private and now I feel liberated from the fact that I need to maintain a certain image. I still edited my selfies, that is something that probably won't change, but I do edit less, like I care less about whether my eyes are slightly small or my legs look a little fatter than usual because the people who see that picture know that I don't look my ugly pictures. I don't even think my friends actually care, whereas not knowing who's going to see your pictures makes you feel like you need to be prepared."

Participant 8(female)

3.3 Personal Perspective Factors

The third category of 'influencing factors of self presentation' is personal perspective factors. The themes of this category are personal evaluation of attractiveness and personal taste. The perceptions of a social media user obviously influence his or her choices of online self presentation, but the value of exploring the personal perspectives lies within understanding what one's perspective regarding the 'self' consists of, in addition to how these individual compartments are reflected in one's image of oneself and desired image for others to view.

<Table. 9> Category 3. of influencing factors of self presentation (personal perspective factors)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Personal perspective factors	Personal evaluation of attractiveness	Self-perceived flaws	*It's my face, I can clearly see flaws; Can see how people evaluate their face through selfies; Don't like their nose take pictures from the front; Don't like their eyes, other facial features, think their face is too wide take pictures from side; Find something I don't like about my face*
		Age and changing perceptions	*Five years ago, I would get rid of cheek fat; Older women actually transfer fat to their faces to look younger; I sort of [increase my checks] on my face too now; Something unimaginable from the perspective of younger me*
	Personal taste	Sense of style	*Angle, pose, all reflection of my style; How you edit your pictures and things show your preferences and just personal interests in style*
		Evolving preferences	*Pictures do not stay on my profile permanently; End up in my archives or I hide them; What I like changes*

3.3.1 Personal Evaluation of Attractiveness

Within one's personals perspectives of oneself, evaluations of his or her own attractiveness played a significant role in mediating individual's online self presentation, especially through the assistance of photo-editing apps. The criteria for attractiveness could be mainly categorized to those which were more subject and personal, and others that were more associated with societal perceptions. A frequently mentioned personal standard was one's self-perceived flaws, 'self-perceived' because these flaws were not objectively apparent to others, but a source of great irritation to actual individual. Participants expressed how this directly impacts

how they choose to take their pictures, as those who favored the right side of their face only had selfies capturing them from the right. Other participants added on to this by stating this also not just applies to how they take their selfies, but the process of edits on beautification apps, as their self-perceived flaws were the central focus of modification to enhance their evaluation of personal attractiveness in pictures.

> *"Because it's my face I can clearly see some flaws, I mean I look in the mirror when I wake up, before I go to bed, I check myself out when passing by windows, how can I not notice."*
>
> *Participant 3(female)*

> *"You can see how people think of and evaluate their face through their selfies. For example, people who don't like their nose or a certain angle of their face usually take pictures from the front. People who don't like their eyes or other facial features or those who think their face is too wide do the opposite and take pictures from the side. This is just really you putting extra meaning into small things about your face that probably go unnoticed by others."*
>
> *Participant 17(female)*

The standard of attractiveness associated with societal perceptions were the influence of age and changing perceptions on one's personal assessments of him or herself. Interviews often mentioned the important of age of one's understand of oneself and interaction with other peoples, and this element of age was again, emphasized in how a person's views of self image and beauty develops through time. A specific example shared by a participant was on how she originally despised her chubby cheeks and would be certain to slim her cheeks in selfies, but as she grew older, she realized of round cheeks were considered a sign of youthfulness, and currently make edits directly opposite to what she had done earlier, by making her face appear fuller. Hence, such experiences demonstrate how an individual's personal evaluation of attractiveness influences social media user's selfie edits, which are subject to change as one's personal perspectives vary depending on not only personal attributes but also growth one physically and mentally experiences.

> *"Five years ago, I would get rid of cheek fat but now you know how older women actually transfer fat to their faces to look younger; I sort of [increase my checks] on my face too now and it's just something unimaginable from the perspective of the younger me."*
>
> *Participant 3(female)*

3.3.2 Personal Taste

Apart from attractive and physical features, an individual's personal taste also plays a part in his or her personals perspectives of the 'self'. Within one's personal taste, the sense of style is included, as participants directly asserted that interests in style show through not just pictures themselves, but also their edits. Sense of style was defined in interviews in varied ways, not limited to just the style of fashion and dress but other factors mentioned were the atmosphere and feeling a person carries and the vibe someone naturally radiates through visible, unique traits.

"How you edit your pictures and things show your preferences and just personal interests in style. Like the style of dress is reflection the feel and vibe you relate you, and of course and translates into your pictures too."

Participant 4(male)

However, as evaluation of attractiveness can change through time, similarly personal taste has embodied the potential for transformation as one's preferences can evolve. This is important to perspective regarding the self-image, as an alteration in preferences could influence an individual's attitude towards his or her online self presentation as well. Participants commented on how their decisions on how to edit their selfies, and which pictures to upload of their social media feed is not necessary remain static, as changes in preferences influenced their opinions on what is relevant to their desired online image.

"My pictures do not stay on my profile permanently, What I like changes, and does what I post."

Participant 6(female)

"When I considered that a certain picture no longer looks nice because by standards on what looks nice has changes, then of course that picture comes down from my feed."

Participant 19(female)

3.4 Social Media User Factors

The fourth category of 'influencing factors of self presentation' is social media user factors, which contains the themes: influence of non-acquaintances and influence of friends. In the evaluation of such social media user factors, in is crucial to note that individuals interact with both users, who are acquaintances and strangers in the offline sphere. In reference to this categorization, this section investigates how social media users' engagement with other people affects their online sense of 'self', and specifically in what areas or process of self presentation, ranging from the actual taking of selfies to the editing and final posting of selfies on one's profile.

<Table. 10> Category 4. of influencing factors of self presentation (social media user factors)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Social media user factors	Influence of non-acquaintances	Other social media users	*Relative so your outlook on how much you edit is affect by people you see, could be close group of friends/but also other people on social media*
		Admiration of others	*Come across someone you don't know but pictures have cool mood or some kind of mood that you really like; Want to copy that vibe or at least incorporate into your own pictures as well*
	Influence of friends	Compatibility during selfie taking practices	*Take pictures with friends together or at same place; Need similar approaches to taking pictures or else you don't take pictures with that friend*
		Shared sense of style	*Influenced by [your friends] style too; Tend to follow the feeling of your friends and vice versa; Feel there is influence you get from your peers*

		Shared editing tendencies	*Friends tend to have same tendencies when editing pictures; Your pictures and editing style are significantly influenced by friends*
		Confirmation on pictures	*Get verification from friends; Tell me which picture to upload; Friends can assess pictures more objectively; Listen to my friends 'opinions on which pictures to upload even if I make last call; Ask [friends] for feedback on edited pictures before uploading them*

3.4.1 Influence of Non-Acquaintances

The influence an individual receives from social media users they are not necessarily close for familiar with is relatively bigger than one might expect, but as mentioned in the photo-editing app motivation section of the study, many social media users keep into account the possibility of encountering new people, and often wish to leave a good impression to non-acquaintances as well. This role social media users, outside one's group of friends, play was been brought up in interviews in which participants who stated that these 'strangers' could also shape people's outlook on how to present themselves online, particularly pointing to the degree of edits made in selfies. An interesting comment was on how even if these people are not those one knows personally, it does not matter because as long as you have access to their profile and pictures, this visual exposure function to unconsciously leave a lasting impact on one's perceptions.

> *"It's also very relative. So even if you feel a certain way, your outlook on how much you edit could be gradually affected by the people you see, who could be your close group of friends, but also just other people on social media. Even if you don't know them, you can still see their pictures, and so I guess that's why you get influenced by them"*
>
> *Participant 9(female)*

Other participants elaborated on the idea above through a more detailed examples of non-acquaintances can be subjects of admiration. Coming across someone's amazing pictures that result in leaving impactful impressions, could inspire users to incorporate similar styles to enhance their own online self presentation.

> *"On social media, especially like Instagram explore, you get to see a lot of other people's pictures that Instagram shows you based on people you follow you posts you've liked. Then, when you come across someone you don't know but their pictures have a very cool mood or some kind of feeling that you really like, you get inspired by it and then that impacts your style too."*
>
> *Participant 18(female)*

3.4.2 Influence of Friends

The impact friends have on one's self presentation is naturally more diverse and prominent in comparison to the influence of non-acquaintances. While the potential influence of non-acquaintances occurs within social media platforms, through the engagement with their profiles, the significance close friends exert goes beyond the smartphone screen. Friends and peers play a crucial part in the whole process of online self

presentation as they accompany individuals in actually capturing their desired image through pictures. Thus, participants have stressed that the compatibility and dynamics of the group you belong to is imperative during selfie taking practices as having similar outlooks of how to take the selfie makes the whole effort much more efficient. The similar nature of friend groups was mentioned, in which individuals within the same group share the same values regarding selfies, and their significance in self-presentation. For instance, participants elaborated by explaining that some friends might consider the act of taking selfies vital, and thus are willing to invest more time in capturing 'good' selfies for the other friend, in anticipations that such treatment will be equally reciprocated. However, some friends could not find high value in selfies, or consider the editing process and more effective in shaping one's visual appearances with the picture and thus, be relatively less inclined to spent such extra efforts in taking pictures of the other person.

> *"Taking good selfies isn't easy and you can't really do it with people you don't know. So, you usually end up taking pictures with your friends like together, or at the same place, where you take turns helping the other take a selfie."*
>
> *Participant 10(female)*

> *"You need to have like similar approaches to taking pictures or else you don't take pictures with that friend, there's like similar attituded to it. Some just spent so much time retaking pictures until they find the one they perfectly like, and others find that like really annoying. For them it's like, just snap a few pics and done."*
>
> *Participant 9(female)*

The importance of close friends is also applicable to one's sense of style, as it has been stressed in interviews that such personal styles in appearance choices are typically shared among friend groups. This directly influences one's self presentation, not only in the offline sphere, but also online on social media as such reflection on one's style is adjacent to the desired self-image, one intended to represent online.

> *"You are definitely influenced by your friend's style. Not sure which comes first, you become friends with someone who clicks with you in terms of style or your styles even out through your friendship. For me, I think it's the second case, you tend to follow the styles of your friends and try it out even if it isn't your thing because you know just like showing your friends you appreciate their style too. And then, you might realize that you actually like their style"*
>
> *Participant 11(female)*

Participants have also commented on the shared tendencies extend beyond simply style and physical looks, to more profound attitudes towards editing selfies as well. The feedback sent back and forth between friends, function to mediate their types and degree of editing, as one's friend's thoughts on what kinds of edits successfully enhance desired attributes in addition to the acceptance degree of modification in pictures, are highly considered by individuals during their own selfie-editing practices.

> *"My friends tend to have the same tendencies when editing pictures, because you like consider your friends opinions when making your edits."*

Participant 10(female)

Moreover, one's friends also exerts influences of the final selection of selfies to be ultimately uploaded on social media, as individuals have revealed that they regularly confide in their peers or close friends for further opinion or advice regarding which selfie is worthy of being shared, 'feed-worthy', and for what reasons. Such varying degree the role friend's confirmation on pictures play have been outlined by participants, in which while some state that their friends are believed to more objective and hence more reliable in judging one's selfies, others take into account the perspective of friend, but still value their opinion more in making the last call. An interesting reflection was on how friends also share thoughts on the 'order' of pictures, this order explained as the order of a selection of selfies shown on a single post on Instagram. A participant pointed how the 'first picture' on the post is of chief importance as this the one that delivers the first impression to other social media users, indicative of how self presentation online is not only strategic in terms of managing what selfies to convey, but also regarding the order of selfies to be exhibited with objectives to attain one, holistic yet simultaneously multifaceted self-image.

> *"You ask friends for feedback on your edited pictures before uploading them. I just upload the one they tell me to upload since I think they are capable of objectively assessing my pictures more than I can"*
>
> *Participant 1(male)*

> *"I usually listen to my friends' opinions on which pictures to upload even if I make the call the shots. It's really their opinion of the first picture that matters, like the one that is shown first."*
>
> *Participant 9(female)*

3.5 Socio-Cultural Factors

The fifth category of 'influencing factors of self presentation' is socio-cultural factors, constituting of the themes: role of gender, role of nationality and role of trends. Self presentation is a deeply personal reflection on one's values and preferences, but as this study has investigated the significance of the community one is associated with, such as friends, regarding its impact on how he or she decides to represent him or herself, the broader context of society and culture much also be inspected to further comprehend the effects of such on the perceptions of an individual's presentation methods on social media.

<Table. 11> Category 5. of influencing factors of self presentation (socio-cultural factors)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Socio-cultural factors	Role of gender	Desires	*Female users want to touch up on face; make themselves look pretty; Most male users don't want to completely alter facial features*
		Norms and acceptability	*Girls search up more girls; For girls [uploading close up selfies] is okay; Guys rarely search up guys; For guys, considered less cool to upload close up selfies; Most guys think it's okay to do that much [editing]*

		Area of focus	*I'm a guy usually get rid of any acne, nothing else; Maybe it's because I'm a guy, get rid of blemishes and fix nose; As a guy, more than face, pay more attention to body; women consider looks asset*
	Role of nationality	Korean users	*Natural selfie trend is Korean thing; Koreans very conscious of what others think; In Korea people increasing eyes but don't really do teeth*
		Chinese users	*Edited selfies from China, degree of editing often extreme; Think people [from China] care less about how others will see their edited pictures*
		Users with western backgrounds	*Whitening teeth more a thing in western culture; Western people don't really edit eyes*
	Role of trends	Influence of trends on desired self image	*Trend affects how you show yourself in your pictures; [Desire to look natural] is reflection of current trends; Tried out flash and mirror selfies because kind of trend right now*
		Adaption of trends as a process of group identification	*Since my beauty standards are fit to Korean beauty standards; Use it to adhere to trends and social standards here*
		Social standards of beauty	*Type of edits reflect changes in society's current views on beauty*

3.5.1 Role of Gender

Within the boundaries of socio-cultural factors, the role of gender is imperative as society has distinct expectations placed on individuals based on their biological sex or gender one chooses to more closely relate with. Similarly, participants of have outlined distinct desires in their photo-editing app motivations, in addition to sharing insight into comparative behaviors noticed throughout their editing experiences. For example, a considerable ratio of male users commented on witnessing how female friends or peers generally focused on dramatically enhancing physical appearances, although this meant accepting modifications that could potentially be viewed upon as more than usual. They also drew attention to how they felt that relatively, male users did not share such desires of beautification that was prioritized by most female users, explaining how most males' utilization of editing apps were based on slight changes in pictures, often unnoticeable to people other than the actual person who has performed the modifications.

> *"I can't speak on behalf of all female users, but from what I've seen from my friends, they seem to want to really touch up on their faces and make themselves look pretty, even if it means making lots of edits."*
>
> *Participant 20(male)*

> *"Most male users don't want to completely alter their facial features, it's just small, very slight modifications that are barely noticeable."*
>
> *Participant 1(male)*

Such distinct attitudes towards the use of editing apps, including the range and extent of edits in selfies were associated with the norms and acceptability concerning the difference genders. Further elaborations

were given, as in terms of social media exposure and usage, individuals also displayed distinguished perspectives on what other's would consider within acceptable limits. Male participants expressed how even regarding the types of selfies, generally social media users were more tolerant of close-up selfies zooming in on the entire face for female users, while this specific choice of selfie was considered outdated and portrayed subjects being overly preoccupied with their physical appearance for male users.

> *"There is a different in how people perceive the selfies of guys and girls. Like for girls uploading close up selfies is considered okay, while for guys it's considered less cool to upload close up selfies. Like being considered with how you look in general in not cool for guys."*
>
> *Participant 7(male)*

Furthermore, an insightful comment was made on how on social media, female users are more exposed to other users, as in terms of surveillance behaviors online. This was explained to be due to the observation on how the majority of female users appeared to be more absorbed in reviewing the profile of other female users including strangers, possibly reviewing themselves in comparison to the pictures presented by other individuals. On the other hand, a large portion of male users displayed little to no interest in other male users other than their friends, and instead were more prone to devoting their time spent online on looking at the pictures of female users. Another participant further detailed the influence society has on forming such behaviors by stating the different expectations placed on male and female individuals, more specifically traditional gender roles, are the cause even regarding self presentation on social media, female users are more concerned with their looks that are considered of more value whereas male users are more inclined to posting selfies that indirectly communicate their financial stability.

> *"Girls search up more girls than guys while guys rarely search up guys. I think guys also search up girls more."*
>
> *Participant 20(male)*

> *"In society, women have generally been more valued for their physical beauty and although times are changing traces of this patriarchal society remain. This is really obvious on social media, because like girls tend to focus on uploading pretty pictures, and guys do this too, but they focus on the more financial part. Like, selfies in their sports car or with their super expensive watch and stuff. Even now, for girls, how their look seems to be more important, in terms of attractive to opposite sex, like pretty genes are an asset literally."*
>
> *Participant 8(female)*

Thus, the fact that individuals possess an area of focus, categorizable based on their gender, does not come as a surprise. Removing signs of blemish, clearing skin to maintain a healthy and fresh appearance was the primary purposes male participants used photo-editing apps. Other participants also discussed how the standards of attractiveness were slightly different for males and females, as female users were frequently assessed based on their facial features, the overall physique and well-maintained body parts were of greater relevance to male users.

"In terms of my face, since I'm a guy I usually just get rid of any acne of skin but nothing else. I don't need to increase the size of my eyes and stuff because those things don't apply to me."

Participant 1(male)

"As a guy, I pay more attention to my body more than the face. I think this directly reflects the areas society focuses on in terms of the attractiveness of guys and girls."

Participant 7(male)

3.5.2 Role of Nationality

Not only is gender an important social identity that defines one's image, but also the one's nationality and ethnicity also embody vital cultural ideals or tendencies of the whole community that provide a background for self presentation. The significance of the role nationality, and subsequent cultural community one belongs to, can be understood from the examination of its lasting influence on an individual's choice of characteristics he or her wishes to associates him or herself with. As interviews of this study were conducted in South Korea, with people from Korea as its subjects, participants shared their options of certain traits habitually displayed throughout many Korean users on social media. Correspondingly, a participant mentioned how there is a trend in which individuals from Korea prefer to post 'natural selfies', the term natural selfie seemed to be defined in relative in each and every user's personal preference, generally, such Koreans did not employ excessive editing. This was credited to the atmosphere in the country, in which people from Korea were careful and concerned about the opinion's others held of them.

"I think the natural selfie trend is a very Korean thing, and it stems from their behaviors. Generally, you can see that Koreans are very conscious of what others think, so they probably care about how other's will view their edits as well."

Participant 17(female)

Participants also drew examples through comparisons with other nationalities. For instance, Chinese users were perceived to be visibly bolder in their edits of selfies, even though both countries belong to the same East Asian continent, and shared several historical roots. This was explained that while Koreans are more affected by what people might think of them, on the contrary, people from China were seen somewhat oblivious or simply did not put the same heavy emphasis on potentially negative comments of others, especially those users online who they did not personally know.

"Even if China and Korean are both Asian countries, there is a visible different. If you see pictures of edited selfies from like China, the degree of editing is often very extreme. Maybe this is more of a national or cultural difference, but I do think that people from China, or at least the people on social media there care less about how other people will see their edited pictures."

Participant 3(female)

Other nationalities, were also briefly stalked about, as participants reflected on how users with western

backgrounds had different priorities regarding editing one's image. While enlarging the eyes, makes top of the list for many Korean, and other Asian users when modifying selfies, users from western cultures were seen as not being concerned with such facial features, and rather focused on areas such as the teeth, which were of relatively less important to most Asian users.

> *"I think whitening teeth is more like a thing in western culture, you don't really see it here that much or its lower down in people's list of things to edit."*
>
> *Participant 8(female)*

> *"You don't really see western people editing their eyes, they don't really edit their eye size or shape."*
>
> *Participant 3(female)*

3.5.3 Role of Trends

Finally, one's socio-cultural context, is also reflective of trends within that specific society and culture, and the influence of trends on ideal self-image is also a factor of substantial significant in understanding social media user's perception on how they wish to present their identity online. This point was highlighted throughout interviews, as participants claimed deep-inside, most individuals possess a desire to be viewed as 'trendy', which is effectively attainable by following and keeping oneself updated on society's latest trends. From the fact that trends shape one's ideal sense of self, it can be inferred that a large portion of an individual's efforts to be in line with trends in society is not only due to the appreciation for a certain image that particular trend delivers, but rather because displaying the image of that particular trend successfully conveys the desirable impression that he or she is 'trendy', and 'fashionable'. This is an important motivating factor as it is one that efficiently can increase the attention drawn to oneself through his or her increased relevance in society. Additionally, participants reflected on how this adaptation of trends can be interpreted as a personal experimentation and discovery of different versions of 'self', in which they have in the past, been able to realize a more appropriate or fitting image to project on social media.

> *"Most people have a desire to be in with society's trends, because that's what being trendy is about right? The desire to look natural, I think, is also somewhat a reflection of current trends, you see it everywhere. Like your hairstyle, your outfit, your makeup, you nails and so forth. So, you can see that trends shape how people want to be viewed."*
>
> *Participant 6(female)*

> *"I also tried out this flash and mirror selfies because I think they're kind of the trend right now. You just try things out to eventually find something that suits you better."*
>
> *Participant 19(female)*

Other uses of trends in society could also be the sense of belonging and individual is able to obtain through the adaption of trends into their sense of 'sense'. Through interviews, participants elaborated on how adjusting themselves to according to trends are a vital process of group identification. For instance, a participant claimed her self presentation changed, in accordance with the trends of the community she belongs

to, detailing that the beauty standards of the US and Korea are quite distinct. In order to assimilate with the new culture in addition to effectively identify with her current group of friends, her beauty standards said to have changed, as she chose to adhere to the standards in Korean society.

> *"Since my beauty standards are fit to the Korean beauty standards, I guess I somewhat use it to adhere to the trends and social standards here. When I used to live in the states, my standards were pretty different. But if I dressed and wore makeup like I did in the US here, I probably would blend in well."*
>
> *Participant 8(female)*

The mentioning of social standards of beauty, open another discussion for the role of trends in one's desired image and self presentation. While standards of what is considered attractive in society depends on factors like nationality, geographical location, physical age, gender and more, trends in such are evident throughout the different periods of time. Participants emphasized the influence of trends in beauty on their perceptions of 'self', by elaborating on how fluctuations with such standards have directly impacted their method of editing selfies, as the physical feature to be modified changes through altered images of their desired ideal image.

> *"I think the type of edits reflect changes in your society's current views on beauty. You know, like body shape and type. I used to get rid of my butt, but now why would I since it's thought as hot, not fat."*
>
> *Participant 10(female)*

4. Shared General Rules of Social Media Users

4.1 Authentic Style of Self Presentation

Within the second subject, 'shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies', four main categories were created. The first category is authentic style of self presentation, which is comprised of the themes: candid selfies, selfies that don't look like selfies, effortlessly looking good, prioritizing the overall mood and selfie, a reflection of self. Identifying the shared rules of social media users in their methods of self presentation and editing selfies correlates with the study's objectives to understand what are the general impressions individuals wish to deliver to others online, in addition to how social media users approach selfies as a tool to convey their desired image. A commonality shared was that individuals preferred an authentic style of self presentation, authentic meaning they did not want their pictures to clearly demonstrate the prior planning and though put into achieving a certain image.

<Table. 12> Category 1. of shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies (authentic style of self presentation)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit

Authentic style of self presentation	Candid selfies	Facial expressions	*Facial expression looks natural in non-posing situations; When I choose which selfie to upload, I look at whether my facial expressions look natural*
		Poses	*Can't pull up off not-natural, posed pictures; [Pictures taken by friends] looks more natural; When your friend goes like 'I'll take a picture of you' and you start posing, I don't like that*
		Dislike for staged selfies	*Don't want to give the impression that my pictures have been staged; When I choose my photos too, I choose those don't look staged;*
		Movement in pictures	*Want pictures to be moment taken out of me in action; Pictures with me moving, it shows the real side of me as well*
	Selfies that don't look like selfies	Unselfie-like, whole body selfies	*Don't have any pictures that actually look like your typical selfie, like close-up picture of my face; Rarely upload pictures that zoom in face; Prefer photos that appear to have been taken by others*
		Selfies, taken by others	*Have other people take pictures of me for me or use the selfie tripod and the timer feature when I go on vacation and stuff; I usually use the tripod on trips or have my friends take pictures of me; Upload pictures others have taken for me, like candid picture*
		Unintentional selfies	*Compare selfies and selfies taken by other people; When you're looking somewhere else; If not everyone knows that you know your picture's being taken*
	Effortlessly looking good	Effortless trend	*Effortless, candid pictures are trend right now; Want to show I look good without putting in effort; Fact that people just put in a lot of effort isn't cool; Generally effortless image is trend*
		Natural trend	*Effortless image ties in with looking natural; Want my pictures to be natural; Don't want to show that I've tried too hard*
		Extra efforts for an effortless picture	*Clearly, [selfies taken by other people] looks more effortless for some reason; Photos taken by others looks like I put it less effort*
		Concerns over negative feedback	*Not model or a celebrity so if I post too many pictures where I'm posing or trying too hard, other people might be like 'what?'; Don't want to give impression that you're desperate for attention*
	Prioritizing the overall mood	Influence of mood on a person's conveyed impression	*Prioritize overall mood of photo because; People remember mood; Whether I look good in the picture is second to the mood of picture; Overall feeling matters at the end*
		Contributing elements of mood	*It's the pose, the angle, the focus, how I look or look away from the camera*
		Mood is unchangeable	*Can't edit mood, but can edit face; Not just editing, but feeling of picture*
	Selfie, a reflection of self	Presenting me at my best	*Try my match the picture to what I look like on my best days; Post-edit pictures are what I actually look like in real life but at my best; Editing is process to make yourself look like you; Edit pictures to match how I actually look on good days*

		Self-satisfaction	*Self-editing due to self-satisfaction; Feel better when you look good in pictures even when you've edited; Related to self-esteem and confidence in yourself; My before editing pics and after editing pics, others can't tell difference, but I can; Difference [only distinguishable to me] important*
		Embracing self appearance	*Some people zooming in pictures to smallest pixel, but I don't want to put in that much effort; Don't necessarily want to conceal something; Don't feel need to edit pictures to point of perfection; I don't need perfects abs and stuff; Looks only small part of me I'm showing to others*

4.1.1 Candid Selfies

The most basic and simple way of delivering the feeling of an authentic style of presentation was through the use of candid selfies. A crucial element that contributed to this 'candid' impression within picture was cited as one's facial expression. Participants explained how one's facial expression must look natural, which is best demonstrated through situations in which the subject of the selfie is not purposefully posing but rather in the middle of doing a particular action. It was especially emphasized how this is something that is reflection of whether or not a picture is genuine, as one's facial expression is not something most people can easily force or control, rather it is a result of a relaxed and natural atmosphere.

> *"My facial expression looks the most natural in non-posing situations. This is important for me as when I choose which selfie to upload, I look at whether my facial expressions look natural. This isn't something you can force, it comes naturally."*
>
> *Participant 6(female)*

Thus, as participants mentioned the important of the atmosphere and surroundings in their contribution to a natural facial expression, along the same lines, posing was comparatively considered less 'candid'. This dislike towards posed selfies was explained through how such posing that transmit the feeling that a certain picture has been staged, meaning other social media users are made aware to the prior preparations that have been conducted with intentions of presenting a certain image. Participants also stated that they simply do not look presentable when they attempt at staged selfies, as they appear somewhat awkward and overly conscious of the camera.

> *"I don't want to give the impression that my pictures have been staged. People are going to think you're that type of person, you know who puts on a show in front of people. So, when I choose my photos too, I choose those don't look staged, the ones that look candid. I know this is a thing because for a while the term candid selfies were like a trend, where everyone was like how do you make your selfies look candid."*
>
> *Participant 18(female)*

> *"I also can't pull up off not-natural, liked posed pictures. When your friend goes like 'I'll take a picture of you, and you start posing, I don't like that, it just doesn't look right so me. I look clumsy*

or awkward"

Participant 6(female)

Another aspect that contributes to what defines a 'candid' selfie, was the feeling of movement in pictures. Participants of the interview had divided opinions on this element of movement, as some interpreted this as a literal movement of the camera or person within the selfie that results in blurred, lower quality pictures. Although there were a few who approved of such blurred selfies, claiming that such unique features assist in defining his or her desired image, most participants referred to the movement more in a figurative sense. Movement not directly of the subject, but rather an artistic feeling or impression of movement through depictions of individuals in action within the picture was the aspect valued in the creation of a portrayal of oneself. These descriptions are significance in the further exploration of authentic style of self presentation, as they demonstrate that social media users, hope to communicate the flexible nature of their being as living persons, not merely pretty or good-looking faces to be framed on screens.

"I want my pictures to be like a moment taken out of me in action, like me doing things I actually do in my life. Also, pictures with me moving, I like them because it shows the real side of me as well. I not want to look like a doll just doing nothing but looking cute in pictures, since that's not all there is too me."

Participant 18(female)

4.1.2 Selfies that Don't Look like Selfies

Building on the candidness of selfies, more specific alternative methods to presenting selfies were suggested to effectively accomplish the authentic style in images. Interestingly, participants introduced a new kind of selfie, given the bizarre name 'unselfie-like selfie'. Although strangely contradicting, this term of 'unselfie-like' was used to refer to whole body selfies, which were pictures that revealed the figure of the subject from head to toe. Such selfies are truly in direct contrast to one's though on conventional selfies, as the original definition of the selfie is a picture of oneself, taken by oneself, usually through the use of one's phone's front-facing camera. However, selfies that display one's entire body, could not have been possibly taken by the person within the picture him or herself, giving the impression that he or she has been coincidentally captured in the picture taken by another. Hence, the developing methods of utilizing selfies as tools of visual self presentation in addition to increasing desires to conceal such obvious efforts of presentation has resulted in a new selfie, that basically does not look like a selfie.

"I also don't have any pictures that actually look like your typical selfie, like close-up picture of my face. Looking at all the pictures I've posted I see that I rarely upload pictures that only zoom in my face and definitely prefer photos that appear to have been taken by others"

Participant 4(male)

The most ironical part of capturing selfies that do not look like selfies, is that the so-called 'selfie' is actually not really a selfie. This is because these selfies, have been taken by others. Nevertheless, such pictures

are all the same considered selfies regardless of who has taken the actual photo, for in essence they collectively hold the subject's desire to present him or herself in a certain light, and the taking of the 'selfie, that technically isn't a selfie' has also likely been directed by the individuals who act as supervisors to their own picture. A participant even shared how she utilizes selfie- sticks or selfie-tripods in circumstances where no one is available to replace her in taking her pictures. Selfie-sticks and tripods are both portable device attachable to smartphones, enabling its users to capture pictures from a wider distance, at varied angles with increased stability. Such inventions furthermore underline the degree of important an authentic style of self presentation plays in one's selfies.

> *"I usually use the tripod on trips or have my friends take pictures of me; So, I usually upload pictures others have taken for me, you know like a candid picture."*
>
> *Participant 19(female)*

Finally, an additional point made was the impression that a selfie has been unintended increases the feeling of candidness. Participants related to this by clarifying how looking away from the camera, appearing to be unaware that one's picture is being taken, produces selfies that look unintentional, and therefore also authentic.

> *"When you compare selfies and selfies taken by other people like when you're looking somewhere else and stuff everyone knows that you know your pictures being taken."*
>
> *Participant 6(female)*

4.1.3 Effortlessly Looking Good

Whereas candid selfies and 'unselfie-like' selfie fostered an authentic feeling within one's pictures by controlling the perceptions of the viewers, changing the person talking the selfie from the actual subject of the selfie, to another person, the impression of a genuine self presentation is also reliance upon what sort of individual, one portrays him or herself to be. All participants fully agreed that they hoped to be perceived as some who looks good, without much effort. This prominence of the effortless trend was also recognized as the unwillingness to be seen as desperate, as participants specifically expressed how it is investing excessive efforts in one's appearance is viewed as 'not cool'. Other commented on the significance of the word 'effortless', and the connotations it possesses by further elaborating that anyone can look good, if they were allocated sufficient time, money and other necessary resources. Hence, their admirable appearance, is not innate, but rather a product of privileges such as wealth, that other people cannot equally enjoy. This is all the more reason why effortlessly looking good is desirable, as individuals can present their attractiveness as incomparable to that of others.

> *"The effortless, candid sort of pictures are the trend right now. Like trying too hard, it looks sort of desperate. I think the fact that people just put in a lot of effort is so not cool."*
>
> *Participant 9(female)*

"I want to show I look good without putting in the effort because honestly, who doesn't look good with that much effort. If you've investment that much time and money, you better look good."

Participant 3(female)

Such desires to present an effortless image are consistent to the natural trend, as effortlessly looking good can also be translated as being born with natural good looks. Again, participants explicitly referred to the plastic surgery and how this can harm the natural and authentic feeling of one's selfies. The natural trend in visual self presentation does not limit itself to simply a person's physical appearance, but other contexts such as the environment one is in, was explained to be important all the same. One participant attempted to elaborate on this factor of an individual's environment in pictures through the allusion to one's natural habitat. From this it can be inferred that the 'feeling of being at home' is essential to this natural trend, as only when one appears to feel belonged and included with his or her surroundings, does the impression of effortlessness reveal itself in pictures as well.

"I want my pictures to be more natural in that I don't want to show that I've tried too hard. You know like natural as in not synthetic, like those pretty girls who have done too much plastic surgery. It shows, it doesn't look natural."

Participant 17(female)

"The effortless image probably ties in with looking natural, you know like it's effortless because your like in your natural habitat. I don't how to explain it in detail, it's just if you see it in pictures, you know. It's somewhat comfortable to look at."

Participant 18(female)

Previously, the study has investigated the 'unselfie-like selfie', and how particular type of selfie requires the picture to have been taken by someone else, other than the subject of the selfie. In order to manage an authentic style of self presentation on social media, extra efforts are invested for an 'effortlessly looking good' picture. An awareness of such increased work devoted to such selfies were clear through interviews, as participants brought up how the conventional, close-up selfie, taken by themselves cause far less complications with the selfie-taking process.

"Clearly, [selfies taken by other people] looks more effortless for some reason, even if actually you need to put in more effort. Really, it's actually easier to just take a selfie on your own but then you've put in the effort. If it looks like others taken your picture, they're the ones who put in the effort, not you. Of course, this isn't true, like I said, because you put in a lot of persuading them to take that picture for you but you get what I mean."

Participant 2(female)

The effortless and natural trends could be traced to deeper, more complex considerations of others' perceptions of oneself. A notable concern was regarding the potential negative feedback from other social media users who could possibly hold stereotypical thoughts or negatively view one's selfies, if such pictures represented individuals to trying too hard. This is related to how participants have mentioned how the candid

selfies were generally preferred as it can significantly reduce impression that one is overly desperate for attention to preoccupied with his or her physical appearance.

> *"I'm not a model or a celebrity so if I post to many pictures where I'm posing or trying too hard, I feel like other people might look at it and be like 'what? who does she think she is. Probably won't say it to my face, but I still hate that they might think it."*
>
> *Participant 18(female)*

4.1.4 Prioritizing the Overall Mood

Another factor that successfully conveys an authentic, genuine style in one's selfies, is the inclusion of a certain mood, unique to the picture of individual. The influence of mood on a person's conveyed impression were elaborated through participants' own perspectives on the visual nature of other social media user's selfies, as it was explained that they tend to remember another person through the associated feelings his or her selfies represented, which were also regarded a definite priority in pictures. While many are concerned of the details of their facial or body features, these were said to be forgotten after the passing of time, whereas the mood one conveyed remains.

> *"I prioritize the overall mood of the photo because that's what people remember. Like even if I see a great selfie, it's not the big eyes or the tall nose that I remember, just what feeling that people gave off. Really, it's just the overall feeling that matters at the end."*
>
> *Participant 4(male)*

Elements of selfies that directly contribute to the creation of mood includes, but is not limited to the body pose, angle of the body, the focus on the subject and the way in which a person carries him or herself. Participants ceaselessly outlined point after point on how the mood can be constructed, but in conclusion, all these aspects boiled down to how through the attention to details in pictures there are an unlimited number of ways to create one's own mood to convey an image that is unique to oneself.

> *"It's the pose, the angle, the focus, how I look or look away from the camera. They all add to the feeling of the picture."*
>
> *Participant 19(female)*

Another reason this mood is of value to an authentic presentation of the self, is due to the fact that mood is difficult to replicated or modify through simple edits. Participants pointed to how photo-editing apps enable users to alter one's physical features without complications, but as the mood in selfies, is not a concrete aspect but rather an abstract concept through which impressions are delivered, this cannot be easily defined and straightforwardly edited as one desires.

> *"You can't edit the mood, but can definitely edit the face. This is why I prioritize the feeling the picture gives because the face, it's so easy to fix."*

Participant 14(female)

4.1.5 Selfie, a Reflection of Self

The simplest approach to an authentic self presentation is using selfies, to honestly reflect oneself. Many participants indeed believed that their selfies are a direct reflection of themselves, and considered the usage of photo-editing apps as a tool to presenting their self-images in the best way possible. Some also commented that the idea that editing apps solely serve the purpose of completely altering one's appearance by beautifying an individual to the extent he or she cannot be recognized in real-life, was a common yet understandable misconception, to further explain how in actuality, people who modify their pictures do so in effects match their uglified pictures, to their appearance on good days. Reference to other social media user's remarks of 'looking like one's selfies' also signifies how selfies are required to accurately reflect one's true self as such visual presentations are not exclusively reserved for social media, but offline acquaintances and friends could also access such pictures, in which extreme discrepancy between the two would adversely affect an individual's attempt at leaving a positive impression of oneself.

> *"Many people have the preconception that people use editing apps to changer their looks. This could apply to some, but I haven't really seen anyone like this. As for me too, I just sort of try to match my picture to what I might look like on my best days. This is probably why people tell me I actually look like my selfies."*
>
> *Participant 6(female)*

Furthermore, selfies were also regarded as reflection of the self, as they can be a source of self-satisfaction to some. Participants elaborated on this aspect of self-satisfaction by exclaiming they hold more positive views of themselves, and feel much better when looking at 'good selfies', in which they look physically attractive. This was explained to be the case even with awareness that their pictures had been modified, as the degree of edits were moderately controlled to ensure the selfies were identifiable as their own.

> *"I think self-editing is like to a degree due to self-satisfaction. I notice that you tend to feel better when you look good in pictures even when you've done some editing. The picture isn't like unrecognizable, since editing is like a process to make yourself look like you. Sometimes you look uglier than you actually do in selfies, so I edit my pictures to match how I actually look on good days. Looking at good looking me in my pictures makes me like myself even more."*
>
> *Participant 20(male)*

4.2 Avoiding Extreme Edits in Fear of Looking 'Fake'

The second category of 'shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies' is avoiding extreme edits in fear of looking 'fake', containing the themes: concerns associated with selfie editing, afraid of being someone else, unrealistic proportions, detectable edits (a big

turn-off) and screening selfie edits. This is closely related to social media user's desires for an authentic style of self presentation, as extreme edits prevent such genuine impressions online. Interview results have revealed different facets of fears individuals possess, with specific regards to their types of edits along with extent of modification to further shed light on how users determine and control the degree of their selfie edits.

<Table. 13> Category 2. of shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies (avoiding extreme edits in fear of looking 'fake')

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Avoiding extreme edits in fear of looking 'fake'	Concerns associated with selfie editing	Trying too hard	*Your edits might turn out like too extreme; I suddenly felt like this seems somewhat synthetic like it's been planned too much; Excessive editing makes you look desperate*
		Face looking awkward	*I also don't like to use automatic selfie-editing apps to take pictures because it makes my facial expression look weird and fake; It doesn't look authentic*
		Filtered faces, fake faces	*I don't like the unclear and cloudy, unrealistically white sort of feeling most editing apps have; [A look] that's not like fabricated through some filter*
		Looking cheap	*If you edit too much, you look pretty but cheap at the same time; What's the point of uploading nice pics of graduation pics of me or concert performance pics if I look like cheap in those pictures because of excessive editing*
		Picture quality	*Even when I choose my pictures, I like pictures that are clear and crisp because it looks more like the real thing; I use the default camera on my phone and then make edits because the picture quality looks more authentic*
	Afraid of being someone else	Do I look like my selfie?	*To the extent where you can't recognize someone from their pictures; I don't look like myself; It's not me; I realized that I changed my facial features too much to the degree to which people told me I look like someone else; I tend to just leave my eyes and nose because changing them make me look too much like a different person;*
		Coveting other's looks	*Now I don't slim myself to the degree to look like those influencers or like anyone else;*
	Unrealistic proportions	Exaggerated features	*Legs excessively longer it looks too fake; Girls with eyes the size of half their face, chests as big as their face or unrealistically tiny waist*
		Distaste towards excessive edits	*How can unnatural and not having real human qualities be pretty; Some people might find unrealistic edits and excessively big eyes and pointy chin pretty, but to me looks like you don't have proper sense of reality*
	Detectable edits, a big turn-off	Desire to avoid detection	*Don't want pictures to show like they've been excessively tampered with; Hate when it's obvious that I edited my pictures using apps; Important that others don't recognize what I've edited when they see my pictures*
		Attention to background	*A photo in which the background has been messed with, probably unintentionally when editing other*

			stuff, like when the bricks aren't straight and stuff, it obviously shows that you've edited
		Giving the wrong impression	*Don't consider extent of edits, even if you haven't edited much, others will think you have*
	Screening selfie edits	Level of editing difficulty	*When choosing candidates for my social media post, consider how hard it would be to edit photo; Pay attention to overall structure and details when selecting photos because if there's too many lines or things it's hard to change; Does it have a line in background, is my face in right angle etc.*
		Self-screening	*When looking at your own pictures for a long time you lose sense of what you actually look like; Look at same picture again later after some time to see if the edits are natural*
		Advice from others	*Ask friends for advice on edited selfies; friends tell me if edits are too much*

4.2.1 Concerns Associated with Selfie Editing

One of the most general anxieties associated with selfie editing, was the fear of looking like one has tried too hard in his or her pictures. This corresponded to the desire to effortlessly look good, explored previously, but differs in principle as a desire promotes positive motivations, whereas a fear is an intensely negative that instills emotions of stress and concern. Such feelings of worry over how other social media users might view their pictures were apparent in the descriptions of participants, who expressed that amid the process of using photo-editing apps, they suddenly notice traces of modifications that could result in their pictures being looked upon as constructed or fake. Others, directly stated how they at times, feel insecure, due to their concerns of their selfie edits causing them to be seen as someone who is desperate.

> *"While I'm making my edits, sometimes I unexpectedly felt like this seems somewhat synthetic, like it's been planned too much. Too many constructions on my facial features and stuff."*
>
> *Participant 3(female)*

> *"Excessive editing makes you look desperate, I'm sort of scared I might be seen as that kind of person."*
>
> *Participant 17(female)*

Another common anxiety was the awkwardness of the face. While looking awkward could also be related to the important of facial expression and selfies that have not been staged, as participants mentioned how editing unfit to their facial features causes strange expressions, another aspect newly introduced was the perception of a normal, human face. This could be deduced from participant's discussion on how some selfie-editing apps enable users to instantly capture selfies that have been automatically beautified, but that the risk of using such apps for the sake of convenience could result in one's selfies looking 'not human'. The phrase used signifies, that individuals have a conceptual, visual image of what a normal face of a person looks like, used as reference in defining whether their selfie edits would be perceived as slight, moderate or excessive

by other people online.

> *"There are editing apps that like edit your face before taking the picture, the automatic edits and I know a lot of people use it because they think it's convenient. I don't like to use these automatic selfie-editing apps to take pictures because I think it makes my facial expression look weird and fake It doesn't look authentic because like sometimes, it makes you look like not human."*
>
> *Participant 1(male)*

An unhuman-like face, also referred to as 'fake' or 'synthetic' was viewed upon as rather depended on one's choice of filters into his or her selfie. A filter is in terms of photography, generally refers to templates that assist people, especially nonprofessional photographers, in adjusting exposure, contrast, saturation and other related aesthetic settings of their picture to ultimately deliver an effect that transforms the final product in the direction desired, usually by enhancing aspects such brightness, vividness, clarity and etc. In the case of selfie-editing apps, filters incorporate not only elements of color and tone, but also templates that alter facial features of its users to increase the size of the eyes, narrow the bridge of the nose, remove any signs of acne of unwanted blemishes on skin and more. Depending on the features of the editing app, various selections of filters are available, in which facial features, face shape and contour, in addition to makeup and pre-made for its users to simply apply to selfies. However, as templates are essentially patterns of images created by the app, participants commented on how the use of such filters could, in fact, be damaging as when used inappropriately generate appearances that look fake. Some declared how they personally think that filtered faces are fabricated faces, and other participants while others explained how the was not the usage of filters itself, but the excessive use of such that results in an inauthentic self presentation.

> *"A look that's not like fabricated through some filter."*
>
> *Participant 4 (male)*

> *"I don't like the unclear and cloudy, unrealistically white sort of feeling most editing apps have, obviously filtered. If you use filters that don't show, then it's real, but if you use filters that show, then it's fake. Not about the process, it's about the product. If you can use it sparingly, then filters definitely have their advantages."*
>
> *Participant 5(female)*

An interesting concern associated with selfie editing, that was primarily of interest to female participants was the consequence of 'looking cheap', due to excessive editing. The words of one participant, 'pretty, but cheap' are different to comprehend initially, but a closer inspection of the images each represent enables an enhanced understanding of what this fear is about. This is better clarified through another participant's remarks of how her online self presentation of herself through selfies at occasions such as university graduations or personal musical performances are intended to convey a sophisticated image, but excessive edits defeat the purpose of such pictures as they potential cause her to look 'cheap'. From this it can be inferred, that 'cheap' in context of the interview, can be defined along the lines of not flashy, tasteless and unaware.

"If you edit too much, you look pretty but cheap at the same time, you know, you see those kinds of girls on social media all the time."

Participant 17(female)

"What's the point of uploading nice pics of graduation pics of me or concert performance pics if I look like cheap in those pictures because of excessive editing. There's really a fine line between editing just right and editing too much, but I know I definitely don't want to look cheap."

Participant 3(female)

Moreover, the overall quality of the final picture was said to indirectly provide evidence for the degree of modifications made to that particular selfie, and lengthened editing processes that require one to save their picture through multiple editing apps inevitably decreases the quality of the selfie. Thus, participants explained how this issue can be prevented, or at least alleviated, by stating that using default camera apps pre-installed on one's smartphone and limiting the number of editing apps used can preserve the original selfie quality. This was shown to be a shared general rule in editing selfies, to guarantee the best quality of picture, and best presentation of self on social media

"Even when I choose my pictures, I like pictures that are clear and crisp because it looks more like the real thing. To make sure that the quality stays decent, I use the default camera on my phone and then make edits because then the picture quality looks more authentic."

Participant 1(male)

4.2.2 Afraid of Being Someone Else

Not only does excessive modifications in pictures cause one to appear 'un-human', but also there are potential dangers of simply resembling another person. Thus, it can be understood that social media users attempt to avoid extreme selfie edits, to maintain their own image within their pictures. Participants shared how they have, in real-life, encountered and felt disappointment and disbelief towards someone they initially had difficulties recognizing as his or her physical features did not parallel that portrayed in selfies. Other participants admitted how they had escaped a phase of extreme editing through a sudden epiphany that their post-edited pictures failed to reflect their true appearances, causing them to lose faith it their sense of self. The significance of such discussions lies within how the fear of becoming someone else, encouraged social media users to successfully question not whether they look like their selfie, but instead do their selfies look like them.

"Sometimes the edits are so severe, like it's to the extent where you meet someone but you can't recognize them from their pictures. I'm serious like these two cannot be the same person, at all."

Participant 4(male)

"I didn't look like myself; It's not me I realized that I changed my facial features too much to the degree to which people told me I look like someone else."

Participant 17(female)

Other notable comments were on how coveting other's looks, or even just simple admiration of another's appearance could potentially influence one's approach to selfie-editing, in order to alter their images in pictures to resemble the features of people they admire. Some participants specifically mentioned influencers on social media, and as this study has inspected the imperative role figures such as celebrities and influencers play within the online sphere and motivating the use of photo-editing apps, their impact could also be extended to the areas of edit, along with the extent of selfie modification. A general rule participants outlined as vital in one's self presentation and editing selfies was avoiding to alter one's image to look like someone else, as this harm's one's own self image originally present in selfies.

"Now I don't slim myself to the degree to look like those influencers or like anyone else."

Participant 17(female)

4.2.3 Unrealistic Proportions

Another example of extreme edits that could result in one's selfies to convey fabricated and 'un-candid' impression is the over-exaggeration of certain physical features. Usually, this was seen to occur as an accidental result of attempting to conceal one's flaws or accentuate visible signs of attractiveness, such as enlarging the size eyes for those who consider their small, unnoticeable eyes a personal flaw, or decreasing the width of the waist for those who believe their slim wait is a feature to emphasize. However, the exaggeration of such features without the consideration of normal standards of a person's face and body was cited as a clearly sign that one's selfies are 'fake', as participants stressed the necessity to edit one' pictures within the boundaries of realistic human proportions.

"If you make your legs excessively longer it looks too fake; Girls with eyes the size of half their face, or chests as big as their face or like an unrealistically tiny waist."

Participant 3(female)

Participant's distaste towards excessive edits, were apparent in their remarks on how unnatural, unrealistic and most importantly unhuman visualizations of one's self image could, in anyways be accepted as attractive.

"How can unnatural and not having real human qualities be pretty; I mean some people might find unrealistic edits and excessively big eyes and pointy chin pretty, but for me it looks like you don't have a proper sense of reality."

Participant 4(male)

4.2.4 Detectable Edits, a Big Turn Off

While extreme, disproportionate edits that are clearly recognizable as 'fake' were perceived negatively,

a slight disparity was noticed as some participants rather accentuated the desire to avoid detection within their selfies. The crucial distinction was that these participants did not entirely reject the method of excessive alteration of one's physical features, and instead clarified that what they disapproved was the detectable nature of extreme editing, meaning that such approaches of modification through the process of using editing apps were deemed acceptable if the results did not directly mirror such excessiveness of the editing method.

> *"I don't want my pictures to show like they've been excessively tampered with, even if they might have been. But sometimes it's necessary, but still I hate it when it's obvious to other people that I edited my pictures using certain apps. Other people should not be able to recognize what I've edited, and how I've edited."*
>
> *Participant 14 (female)*

In order to conceal one's traces of selfie edits, participants outlined crucial aspects one must pay special attention to. The most often cited element of the picture that required increased awareness was the background of the selfie, as participants explained that it is common individuals get absorbed into the process of modifying his or her own face and body, unintentional alterations go unnoticed. However, a process many participants collectively stressed as absolutely necessary throughout the interviews, was re-assessing the background at the final stages of editing selfies to ensure that their edits appearance undetectable to the eyes of other discerning social media users.

> *"A photo in which the background has been messed with, probably unintentionally when editing other stuff, like when the bricks aren't straight and stuff, it obviously shows that you've edited. This is probably the clearest signs of edit, and it's so obvious, when you look at other social media profiles but people seem to be oblivious towards their own selfies."*
>
> *Participant 2(female)*

The rationale provided by participants who placed greater emphasis of minimizing the detectable nature editing in selfies was that the traces of one's modification in his or her pictures was not accurately reflective of the editing method or extent of alterations, but as other social media users cannot be guaranteed of what approaches were taken to modify the selfie, discovery of a singular edit could potential wrongly indicate excessive selfie-editing, even if this is not entirely the case.

> *"If you don't put consideration into your edits, even if you haven't edited too much, others are going to think that you have. Because the default think of social media users is that everyone edits their pictures, you just don't know how much. So, if people can't find something that has been edited in your selfies, they just assume that you now, something has been edited. But when they do find something, then that's like real concrete proof. Caught you red-handed"*
>
> *Participant 8(female)*

4.2.5 Screening Selfie Edits

Inspecting one's selfie for detectable signs of edits is an example of screening behavior displayed by photo-editing app users. This precautious action can also be interpreted as the significant influence one's selfie edits play in self presentation, more specifically how the alertness to such practices can influence other social media user's opinions on the subject of selfies. Prior to the process of screening selfie edits, participants are said to first, assess the level of editing difficulty on each social media post candidate selfie. A candidate selfie, was explained, as a selfie that is among the selection of selfies that one considers uploading, but has not decided for certain. Usually these are the selfies subjected to the evaluation of their editing complexity, and participants elaborated on the criteria of level of editing difficulty through detailed examples such as lines in the background, angle of the face, framing of the overall selfie, in which obstacles to the editing process and classified by how easily they can be visually controlled.

> *"When I choose my pictures like candidates for my social media post, I consider how hard it would be to edit that photo because there's no point choosing your selfie, start editing and then in the middle of it find out that that one is too hard to edit. By having to select a new picture, I've wasted by time, energy and also, I definitely feel de-motivated since I'll probably be annoyed at the me, or the picture, or maybe both."*
>
> *Participant 14(female)*

> *"I pay a lot of attention to the overall structure and details when selecting my photos because if there's too many lines or things that get in the way of editing it's really hard to change; Does it have a line in the background, is my face in the right angle etc."*
>
> *Participant 2(female)*

Evaluation of selfie's editing complexity in the stage that occurs before the actual editing, and self-screening edits is the actual inspection of the modification one is making during the actual process of editing. Participants commented on the inclination to lose objective judgement over one's own selfies due to prolonged exposure to the same image, and therefore suggested methods to more effectively self-screen by producing more than one version of a selfie or looking at one's selfie from a retrospective viewpoint.

> *"When you keep looking at your own pictures for a long time you lose a sense of what you actually look like. Staring at the screen for so long, my face just blurs into colors, so what I do is I make multiple versions of the same selfie, and also look at same picture again later after some time to see if the edits are natural."*
>
> *Participant 10(female)*

While social media users first self screen their pictures, as the picture is ultimately intended for self presentation online in which the audience are not themselves, but other users, participants also emphasized their tendencies to request advice from others, especially friends and will finally upload their selfies after receiving confirmation that the pictures are appropriate for sharing.

> *"I ask friends for advice on my edited selfies, they tell me if something looks sort of off, of there is something I've missed while editing. Everyone has different preferences, so they don't like*

comment on those choices, but like just general stuff that are objectively urgent."

Participant 19(female)

4.3 General Rules of Edits

The third category of 'shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies' is general rules of edits. The themes of this category are the rules for face and the rules for body, and this section provides more details into the areas of focus regarding selfie editing for social media users, and the specific tools within photo-editing apps are assist in producing the image desired. The free discussions of such topics in interviews have unveiled the deeper, more personal aspects of self image and the reflection of such on one's choice of edits made in pictures.

<Table. 14> Category 3. of shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies (general rules of edits)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
General rules of edits	Rules for face	Perfect face shape	*Put effort in tidying up face lines; Focus on shaping my face so it's smooth; Smoothen out rough edges; [My face] is not smooth line but kind of jagged in pictures; Focus on correcting face line*
		Softer facial features	*Make eyes look less slanted to give softer feeling; Nose little crooked from the side so smooth that out*
		Facial feature proportion	*Proportions of facial features important; Crucial that even after editing there's balance in proportions; When you push in the sides of your face and cheekbones, need to also move eyes towards center; If don't consider proportions of features, face looks spread out*
		Youthful, clear skin	*Smooth out any signs of acne; Smoothening cheekbones, deep wrinkles and things*
	Rules for body	Defined features	*[I] adjust brightness of pictures so abs or collarbone becomes more visible*
		Elongating body	*Make my proportions look nicer; I make my head smaller, legs and neck longer and slimmer to give off that model-like look*
		Silhouette of face and body	*The line is sort of more important; When you look at photo the first thing you see is overall shape; Usually shape my face and body first, overall silhouette; Then move on details like eyes, nose and mouth*
		Silhouette of clothing	*Use liquify tool to change shape of clothes more than face; Wore dress I liked but wind messed up picture, so I shaped the dress into the silhouette I wanted*
		Posture	*Posture is important; If I'm sort of slouching I straighten my back*

4.3.1 Rules for Face

The general rules of editing selfies can be largely divided into those that apply to the face, and those

that apply the body. In regards to the first section, the rules of editing for the face, participants displayed a particular fixation on the face shape. They aimed at perfecting the shape of their face by smoothening signs of roughness for imbalances within one's face lines. Participants also mentioned that the face, especially the outline of one's face was parallel the foundation required to build edits on top and the face shape holds all the facial features together in place.

> *"My face is like kind of jagged in pictures, which I don't like. I first focus on shaping my face so it's like smooth and then move on to the over things because you need to build that ground to start working."*
>
> *Participant 2(female)*

As for the facial features, generally a preference for softer features was noticed, in which participants shared their own rules regarding editing one's appearance. It was noted how in order to preserve the self image of the original picture, individuals opted for less prominent methods of edits. Softening facial features included modifications such as adjusting the slant of one's eyes and straightening the crook in one's nose bridge, inducing a gentler impression overall.

> *"I make my eyes look less slanted to give a softer feeling because slanted eyes make you look sort of aggressive, if you know what I mean. Also, for my nose, it's a little crooked when seen from the side so I smooth that out a bit too. For me, it's not about making your eyes big, or making your nose tall, it's just blending out those small patches to soften your face."*
>
> *Participant 5(female)*

When editing such facial features, another factor to consider was the proportion of such features, in terms of the length of the individual facial features, in addition to the distance between the distinct features. Participants underlined the significance of balance in proportions, which could also be understood and the ratio within the face, as not only the size and shape, but also the spacing between the eyes, nose and mouth define one's appearance and image, unique to him or herself.

> *"The proportions of your facial features are important in determining one's image so it's crucial that even after editing there's a balance in proportions."*
>
> *Participant 8(female)*

> *"When you push in the sides of your face and cheekbones, then you need to also move your eyes towards the center too. If you don't consider the proportions of features, and just make random edits to narrow your whole face, then you're the features inside will look too spread out."*
>
> *Participant 2(female)*

The final rule of editing one's face was maintaing a clear skin and youthful appearance that participants, regardless of their personal preferences of style, nationality or gender, all adhered to. Even those who did not particularly edit their facial features, demonstrated a strong desire to remove signs of blemish, and they explained that while skin is undoubtedly a crucial component of beauty, it also simultaneously can function

as an indication of diligent self-care.

> *"Smooth out any signs of acene or now that I've started getting older, I also edit like deep wrinkles and things near my mouth, or like new signs of wrinkles forming on my neck."*
>
> *Participant 16(female)*

4.3. Rules for Body

The general rules of editing selfies that apply the body were the emphasis of traits generally considered attractive. This was achieved through modifications that defined features such as the abs or collarbone. The sign of abs conveyed an imaged of physical fitness, both desired by male and female participants alike, while the prominent collarbone was considered representative of fragility and elegance, an extension of the ideal feminine beauty instilled in certain societies. Participants also wished to elongating body and limbs, in efforts to enhance their proportions.

> *"I usually adjust the brightness of my pictures so my abs or my collarbone becomes more visible."*
>
> *Participant 17(female)*

> *"I tend to edit to make my proportions look nicer, like make my legs and neck longer and slimmer to give off that model-like look"*
>
> *Participant 3(female)*

The altering of body proportions, such as lengthening one's arms and legs, indicate how the lines of the overall body is valued. Thus, another important rule regarding body edits is the appreciation of the silhouette presented in the picture. This not only includes the silhouette of the body, but also the silhouette of the subject's clothing within the selfie. Similar to the face lines, the outline of the body was considered a priority in selfie-editing process, in addition the shape of one's clothing, as participants explained that these silhouettes determine the feeling, or overall mood reflection through the picture. Slightly different, but correlated with the body silhouette was one's posture. This was discussed in interviews as not necessary a physical flaw, but nevertheless a factor that impacted other's impression of oneself.

> *"When you look at a photo the first thing you see is the overall shape; When editing, I usually shape the shape of my body first, like the overall silhouette."*
>
> *Participant 6(female)*

> *"I use the liquify tool to change the shape of my clothes. Like once, I wore this dress I really liked but the wind messed up the picture, so I shaped the dress into the silhouette I wanted because like the shape determines the feeling of the dress."*
>
> *Participant 18(female)*

> *"Posture is important because it doesn't matter how good you look, with bad posture you are bound to look ridiculous. This is why in my selfies If I'm sort of slouching I straighten my back, or*

push my neck in if it's protruding too much."

Participant 12(male)

4.4 Natural Methods of the Selfie Editing Tool

The fourth category of 'shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies' is natural methods of the selfie editing tool, constituting of the two themes: minimal touches and detailed control of edits. These efforts correspond to social media user's desires to conceal traces of their edits within pictures to ultimately deliver and authentic style of self presentation online. As individuals have demonstrated a fear of other's viewing their degree of edits as extreme, a clear preference for natural methods of selfie editing is evident, in which the definition of what natural is, was shown to be relative to one's perspectives on how much modifications to pictures can one regard natural, or at least natural-looking.

<Table. 15> Category 4. of shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies (natural methods of the selfie editing tool)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Natural methods of selfie editing tool	Minimal touches	No filter approach	*Don't use filters; Leave pictures as they are*
		No editing facial or body features that are not of concern	*Other facial features not of concern, so leave them; Try to minimize facial and body edits; Leave beauty marks; Getting rid of all spots doesn't look natural; Don't completely change my face and body*
		No drastic changes in size of features	*For eyes don't increase size, but make them prominent; If you increase your eyes too much, it shows right away; Don't excessively decrease face size; I don't use makeup or change the shape of my facial features*
		Mild makeup and tone correction	*Just give lips color; Something natural, not too eye-catching; Make sure my edits and color of makeup are natural; Stick to removing blemishing or spots; Touch up eyebrow faded from reflected light; Just edit my skin for clean complexion; Add eyelashes or very light lip color*
	Detailed control of edits	Knowing one's best features	*I know best how I look; I need to be in control of it; Have own tips on how to edit according to your face*
		Manual mode over automatic mode	*Don't like features that automatically fixes things; Want to be make detailed changes suited to my face; Use liquify tool for edits*
		Selfie by Selfie	*There isn't a strict editing process because it all depends on the selfie; According to those things that stand out in that particular picture I edit*
		Personalized use of tools	*Only use liquify tool because other automatic tools aren't fit for my face; Make changes accordingly based on the angle, the lightening, my facial features*
		Layered edits	*Small changes on top small changes on top of small changes; To achieve natural feeling, need to slowly build edits; Make many versions of edits of same photo, to see which fits feed best*

4.4.1 Minimal Touches

Among participants, the methods of natural selfie editing were mainly categorizable into two, those who valued the natural process and those who valued the natural result. The former, social media users who defined natural selfie editing as the natural process of making edits to one's picture generally minimized the scope of their edits. For instance, some participants incorporated a 'no filter approach', in which they only removed small signs of acne of blemish but did not make any adjustments to their facial and body features. Other participants selectively edited only parts of their selfies that they deemed critical or severely flawed, and chose to leave out other physical features that were not of concern, from their editing process. In short, such individuals made minimal touches to maintain the natural compositions and structures captured in the original selfie, and edited only areas that were considered truly necessary to one's improved self presentation.

> *"I don't use filters and just leave pictures as they are."*
>
> *Participant 4(male)*

> *"Apart from the things that really bug me, like my nose, none of my other facial features really concern me so I usually just leave the others to really just minimize the overall facial and body edits."*
>
> *Participant 6(female)*

> *"I leave the beauty marks because getting rid of all those spots just doesn't look natural. I don't completely change my face and body."*
>
> *Participant 1(male)*

In terms of the style of the edits, participants who valued the natural editing process and minimal touches in selfies explained that they did not drastically changes the size or shape of their facial features. It was the opinion of such participants that modifications within the face were relatively more recognizable, and therefore could easily transform one's image in pictures too radically, to make one undefinable by appearance.

> *"For my eyes, I guess I don't really increase the size but I try to just make them look more prominent, if that makes sense. Like the outline of the eye and things because I noticed that if you increase your eyes too much it shows right away."*
>
> *Participant 15(female)*

> *"I don't excessively decrease the size of my face because just whenever, I try to just make these changes, and do a little bit more and a little bit more, it turns out to look like someone else. This is also why I don't change the shape of my facial features."*
>
> *Participant 18(female)*

Other features of minimal touches in edits were mild makeup and tone correction. The makeup tools available for use in photo-editing apps were mainly utilized by female participants, and specifically those

who valued a clean complexion over heavy makeup in actual real-life, and therefore, this description was value in re-affirming how the image such individuals wish to project online, are congruent to those in the offline sphere.

> *"As for make up, I usually just give my lips some color, but something natural, not too eye-catching. But usually, unless it's a selfie on like a special occasion, I just stick to like removing blemishing or spots or touch up on things like my eyebrow that has disappeared from the light that's been reflected on them."*
>
> *Participant 5(female)*

4.4.2 Detailed Control of Edits

Apart from the participants who valued the natural process in the methods of natural selfie editing, there were others so similarly regarded natural element important, but different in their approach to such as they placed emphasis on the natural result of the editing, not the process. These social media users who considered natural selfie editing as the natural looking end result of editing processes claimed that the detailed control of edits, is vital to accomplishing such natural image regardless of one's degree of adjustments to pictures. Such detailed control first required one to acquire and accurate and objective awareness of one's physical looks. Participants elaborated by explaining that knowing one's best features enables acute assessment of what areas required editing in what ways, and that the accumulation of such information, through both observation of practice of using photo-editing apps, are claimed to assist one in obtaining skillful, yet natural selfie editing methods uniquely suited to his or her own physical attributes.

> *"I know best how I look so I need to be the one to control it, I mean who knows my face better than I do. Because I'm very observant on how I actually appear to others, and what parts of my appearance that stand out, I have my own tips on how to edit according to my own facial structure and features."*
>
> *Participant 19(female)*

Another feature of photo-editing apps that enables enhance detailed control over selfies was the different modes of editing within the app itself. The majority of editing apps has two distinct types of editing, namely the manual modes and automatic modes of edits. Participants highlighted the better control manual edits provided over the automatic mode, in which the lack of consideration for different facial shapes and feature proportions of automatic editing apps, have been aforementioned in earlier sections of results. Furthermore, manual mode in apps, such as the use of the liquify tool instead of automatic shrink or enlarging of features, enabled users to edit accordingly, in reference to their individual appearances.

> *"I don't like the features that automatically fixes things for you. I use the liquify tool for all my edits and do I think most people prefer the manual editing, like me because you want to be able to make detailed changes that's best suited to your own face."*
>
> *Participant 2(female)*

The practice of selfie editing in reference to one's personal attributes, essentially, is of value as it takes into consideration the how each and every person has edits that are precisely relevant to his or her distinct need of self presentation. This acknowledge of differences also applies to selfies of the same person, as although the subject remains unchanged, external factors influencing pictures in addition to other unaccounted for details can cause variations with the images of one individual. Therefore, the ways and degree of alterations must be made distinctly, selfie by selfie. The utilization of manual edits in addition to applying different editing methods ultimately leads to the significance of personalized use of tools. The personalized use of tools, not only refers to the options of manual mode, but also it is indicative of all the efforts one puts in the editing process to tailoring the different tools to his or her ultimate image central of self presentation on social media. Personalized tools can be used to modify one's appearance, in addition to other important components of a photo, such as the lightening and color, can also be adjustment to convey the impression desired by an individual.

> *"There isn't a strict editing process because it all depends on the selfie."*
>
> *Participant 13(male)*

> *"I only use the liquify tool because the other automatic tools aren't fit for my face; I want to make changes accordingly based on the angle, the lightening, my facial features, which by the way comes out differently for every selfie."*
>
> *Participant 19(female)*

Lastly, participants also exclaimed how another approach to detailed control of editing for a successful natural selfie product, in to layer one's edits. The mechanism of this was explained through the descriptions of having to build small edits, on top on other equally small edits, one by one to decrease the feeling of excessiveness drastic changes in pictures produce. It was also further elaborated that, layering minimal levels of changes on one another effectively decreased the detectability of edits in selfies, as the alteration of other components of the picture such as the background were left intact.

> *"You make change small changes on top other small changes on top of small changes; In order to achieve that natural feeling, you need to slowly build your edits."*
>
> *Participant 5(female)*

5. Desired Online 'Self' Image

5.1 Natural Image

Within the fourth subject, 'desired online self image of social media users', six categories, also recognized as self-images, were identified. The first category is the natural image, which includes the themes: looking like yourself 'natural' image and genuine and effortless 'natural' image. The natural image is a clearly reflection of interview participants' previous references to the currently pervasive 'natural trend', in which individuals not only hope to present themselves as 'natural' in terms of physical appearance, but also in terms

of their personality and self-identity.

<Table. 16> Category 1. of desired online self image of social media users' (natural image)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Natural image	The looking like yourself 'natural' image	Honestly revealing oneself	*Want pictures to look natural, show things as they are; Look as natural as possible; even if I don't look as good as someone else; Okay to just be you; Intentionally leave out editing some flaws*
		Showcasing unique aspects of oneself	*Looking natural is showing unique aspects of yourself; Edit pictures in direction that matches image I think suits my unique characteristics best*
	The genuine and effortless 'natural' image	Naturally good-looking	*Want to naturally look good; Ideal image is supposed based on natural beauty*
		Natural and candid	*Like natural look; want selfies to look natural; Natural vibe; Make sure I don't go over the top with edits; Maintain natural feeling; All my edits are natural*

5.1.1 Looking like Yourself, 'Natural' Image

<Figure. 5> Collage of looking like yourself, 'natural' image selfies

The looking like yourself, 'natural' image, is an extending of the natural image, in which the essence of such presentation embodied the element of being genuine, thus those who wished to portray such image utilized their selfies to honestly reveal various aspects of themselves. Elements of the 'natural trend' mentioned in earlier parts of the study, such as the feeling of being at home were clearly displayed, as individuals revealed how their main aim was to share moments of themselves, looking relaxed and comfortable in their selfies. Moreover, as this feeling of comfort was also applied to their approach to editing, as their desires for pictures to appear natural, was said not to have instill a need to edit their selfies to the degree of perfection.

> *"I want my pictures to look natural, show things as they are. Sometimes, I intentionally leave out editing some flaws"*

"Even if I don't look as good as someone else in my photos it's okay."

Furthermore, individuals stated another characteristic of the natural image is being true to yourself, which could also be seen as efforts to showcase unique aspects of oneself through one's selfies. It especially emphasized how the features of 'uniqueness' did not need to adhere to the standard of what other's considered as unique. Rather, even if other people viewed a certain aspect as common, if that was something that clearly indicated one's own sense of self, it could be considered as unique to him or herself.

"Looking natural is like showing the special parts of yourself, special as in not spectacular, but what you, yourself consider special."

"I edit my pictures in the direction that matches the image I think suits my unique characteristics the best."

5.1.2 Genuine and Effortless, 'Natural' Image

<Figure. 6> Collage of genuine and effortless, 'natural' image selfies

The genuine and effortless, 'natural' image is a combination of the looking like yourself, 'natural' image's honest impression along with the desire no appear 'naturally good-looking', thus the word effortless. Similar to the natural trend, the effortless trend has been elaborated on as well, in which key features of such trend were being seen as someone who does not necessary invest extensive efforts in his or her appearance, yet simultaneously maintain an attractive and presentable look.

"Like I want to naturally look good; This image is supposed to be like based on natural beauty."

In order to achieve this genuine and effortless, 'natural' image, the natural and candid mood and one's selfies were cited as prime importance. The natural mood was seen as referring to the impression that individuals are able to blend with their surroundings, radiating the appearance of feeling belonged and included with within their communities, while the candidness of the image directly was indicative of one's

approach of editing. Natural edits, which did not modify one's original pictures to a great extent, paralleled the desire to convey an authentic and comfortable impression on social media.

> *"I like the natural vibe and I also want my selfies to look natural. So, I try to make sure I don't go over the top with my edits."*

> *"I try to make sure that all my edits are natural so my selfies look genuine."*

5.2 Living Life as I want, Image

The second category of 'desired online self image of social media users' is the living life as I want, image. The themes of this category are the 'hip' image and the nonchalant image. The living life as I want, image is founded upon the desired of individuals to be perceived as free, and unbound to the demands or expectations of others. Generally, they shared a tendency to gravitate towards a relatively casual, yet definitive mood and appearance to represent their self-image.

<Table. 17> Category 2. of desired online self image of social media users' (living life as I want, image)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Living life as I want, image	The 'hip' image	The natural and hip image	*Natural but sort of hip kind of vibe; With a touch of raw, rough sort of hip feeling, adds to natural look*
		Moderately hip	*Look laid back, sort of hip but a lot of people have different versions of this; Prefer relaxed hip and don't like extreme rapper-like street style hip*
		Casual hip style	*Wear loose fitting shirts and pants, rarely dress up or wear skirts, so I don't fit that feminine and dressed up vibe; I prefer a casual yet edgy kind of hip; Usually wear casual, hip like loose fitting clothes*
		Fashionable hip	*Want to show others that I keep up to date with fashion trends; I upload based on what sort of hot and trending*
		Hip, as unconventional	*Going against the norm; That's what's really hip and cool, not wearing hip clothing or putting on a hip filter and such outside stuff; Thought and outlook on life matters more*
	The nonchalant image	I don't care what you think	*Not paying attention to what others think; Upload regardless of what other think, much cooler; Like nonchalant vibe; Dark pictures and monotone filters with emotional aesthetics; More shadow, gives more moods; Don't post pictures of me smiling; Don't like to smile in pictures; Usually expressionless; Impression that I don't care about opinion of others; Not caring about other's judgements of me*
		Content with myself	*Show others that I feel good in my own skin; Realized that I'm not going to be like [other people] even if I make those edits; Just stick with being true myself*
		'Doing whatever I want' trend	*'I don't give a fuck' attitude, trend on social media; Trending photo dump, posting whatever you want; Cool how people dump random pictures; Without considering how others might perceive it*

5.2.1 Hip Image

<Figure. 7> Collage of hip image selfies

The 'hip' image, mostly directed reflected the casual style of the living life as I want image. Characteristics of this image were that the natural look was similarly desired, but in a slightly distinct way in that the natural are defined more closely as 'untouched', and also somewhat original. The combination of such natural yet hip and stylish feeling can be interpreted as the hipster look, that delivers the impression of an appearance that has not been 'touched' or interfered by the opinion of others.

"There is this natural but sort of hip kind of look, with a touch of this raw, unrefined vibe."

"A rough, untouched sort of hip feeling, it adds to the natural look."

Different variations of the hip image were noted, as some participants directed pointed out how different people have been versions of what laid back and hip looks like. Individuals of this study's interview displayed a preference for relaxed, hip looks, specifically mentioning their distaste for radical and rather extreme interpretations of the hip image that were over-the-top. Hence, the hip within the living life as I want, image can be inferred as a more moderate hip, possibly that can appeal to a wider range of audience.

"I want to look laid back and sort of hip, a lot of people have versions of hip."

"I don't really like those typical extreme rapper-like street style hip, like those metal things on their teeth or the tattoos on the face."

In terms of the overall outfit, the casual hip image seemed to incorporated more loos-fitting clothing and less extravagant fashion. Especially, those who desired this image commented how they rarely present themselves in formal, or overly feminine attire. Such effects functioned to construct a laid back and relaxed image, also reflective of such individual's approach to their personal lives.

"I sort of prefer a casual yet edgy kind of hip, usually wearing like comfortable loose-fitting clothes."

Another interpretation of the hip image comprised of the fashionable and hip look, in which individuals noticed how the hip style is the currently trending style, and how this correlates with their efforts to convey themselves as someone who is up-to-the-minute on the latest trends popular styles.

"I upload based on what sort of hot and trending, the hipster sort of look."

Finally, there were others who disagreed with the interpretation of the hip above, my claiming that the hip image was to be seen as something as deeper than mere outwards self presentation of appearances in pictures. They perceived hip as the profoundly unconventional attitude, in which one strongly refused to simply replicate what others are doing, and continued to directly criticize hip fashion are fundamentally going against the real dimensions of a hip sense of self and personal identity.

"Going against the norm; That's what's really hip and cool, not wearing hip clothing or putting on a hip filter and such outside stuff; It's the thought and outlook on life that matters."

5.2.2 Nonchalant Image

<Figure. 8> Collage of nonchalant image selfies

The nonchalant image presented the core values of the living life as I want image, through an 'I don't care what you think' attitude. This image was primarily based on the idea of simply doing whatever one desires, but was relatively more defiant in nature as it revealed an underlying intention to act on what she or he wishes at that certain period of time, without considering how such actions would be received through the eyes of others. Interestingly, those who identified themselves through this image commented on the darker visual appearance they gravitated towards, such as the lack of facial expressions in selfies along with monotonous and cold pictures that incorporated large amounts of shadows.

"I upload regardless of what other people think, and that's much cooler"

"I decrease contrast in pictures to create more shadow, which gives more mood to the pictures."

Furthermore, those who displayed aspects of this nonchalant image, generally showed signs of self-satisfaction, which they also considered an integral part of their self-image. Many desired to deliver the impression that they did not care about other people's opinion and such enhanced feelings of content with themselves were demonstrated through their approach to editing selfies. Comments on not necessarily making significant alterations to one's pictures were made by participants, with elaborations that one did not wish to modify his or her image to adhere to the standards set by others, or to persuade people to regard him or herself in a certain light.

"I want to show others that I feel good in my own skin, like who care what they think."

"Now I realized that I'm not going to be like [other people] even if I make those edits. So, I just stick with being true myself and try not to edit too much."

These expressions of the 'I don't care what you think' attitude, was correlated to the 'doing whatever I want' trend on social media, as an increasing number of users incorporated such methods of self presentation to not only utilize selfies to highlight their visually attractive appearance or personality, but also rebel against such online conventions and seek for bolder ways to articulate oneself.

"I do think that the 'I don't give a fuck' sort of attitude is like the trend on social media"

"People just dump random pictures on their profile, posting whatever you want without considering how others might perceive it."

5.3 Diverse and Unrestricted Image

The third category of 'desired online self image of social media users' is the diverse and unrestricted image, which is comprised of the two themes: the versatile image and the unique, individualistic image. The diverse and unrestricted image embraces a broader spectrum of images, for as the name suggests, individuals of this image wished to portray themselves in a multiple of ways, in which each person's collection of ideal self-images did not necessarily overlay with that of others who equally regarded themselves as diverse and unrestricted. What are shared was the purpose to be seen as someone who cannot be defined by a singular image, open to various interpretations depending on viewer's perspective.

<Table. 18> Category 3. of desired online self image of social media users' (diverse and unrestricted image)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Diverse and unrestricted image	The versatile image	Unlimited potential	*Don't want to limit myself to one specific image; Be that person who suits anything, can be anything*
		Many personalities	*Show different sides of me; Don't stick with one look; Can be versatile; I'm not a doll, I'm a living person; Want pictures to show many personalities; Based on set image, adapt other images to make my own*
		Coordination of images	*Vary pictures; If I post close-up selfie then I upload full body photo next; Mix [different] images on feed*

	The unique, individualistic image	One-of-a-kind	*Try not to make pictures look like everyone else's; But not me; Not like everyone else; Feed distinguished from others; Use angles most people don't; Give off unique feeling; Makes strong impression*
		Unconventional	*Pictures of me that are blurry from moving because they're both me; Try to show movement in my pictures*
		Non-conformist	*Seen as free spirited, doing my own thing*
		Reminiscent of the analog	*Vintage filter to give film camera look; Have idolization of analog things; Like old things, in terms of music, fashion and just objects; Faded effect in my pictures is because that's the old feeling I like and what I like is all that matters to me; Like retro mood; Put in fade effect; Warm, retro, vintage look*
		Impactful color and lighting	*Filters with strong contrast; [Flash photography] gives cool, impactful look; Instead of cliched filters I use flash, especially when it's dark*

5.3.1 Versatile Image

<Figure. 9> Collage of versatile image selfies

Individuals of the versatile image, wished to be seen as diverse and unrestricted through their unlimited potential to be more than just who they are seen as in one picture. A single selfie, was explained insufficient in capturing their possibilities of various selves, and it was underlined that those who identified as this image, did not want to be framed into just someone easily definable. Additionally, those who considered themselves as versatile, wanted to see themselves as being able to adjust and adapt to any surroundings, with any people, do all sorts of activities, and also be able to visually appear as dynamic.

> *"I want to be that person who suits anything, can be anything. I don't really want to limit myself to one specific image"*

The aspect of being versatile, is not only based on outward appearances, but also the deeper attitudes and behaviors one embraces. Therefore, someone who is dynamic would possess many personalities, in a positive sense. Additionally, it was mentioned how the impression of liveliness is also a crucial part of

the versatile image.

"I'm a living person not a doll and I want my pictures to show that I have many personalities. Both [types of pictures] show different sides of me"

"Based on a set image, I adapt other images to like make it my own."

Moreover, in order to highlight the diverse feeling of the versatile image, individuals invested considerable efforts into their coordination of images. Selfies on their profiles were deliberately assorted to ideally best illustrate the varied 'selves' through the mixture of not only different types of selfies, but also the different feelings intended in the selfies through the use of edits parallel to that particular version of one's self image.

"I mix these different images in my feed, and also make different edits depending who I'm trying to show myself as in that picture."

5.3.2 Unique, Individualistic Image

<Figure. 10> Collage of unique, individualistic image selfies

The unique and individual image is centered around the 'boundless' aspect of the diverse and unrestricted image, as it specifically focused on the unlimited ways in which one can represent him or herself without having to borrow ideas from the self presentation of others. Those who perceived themselves and unique and individual possessed an inherent need to be considered as 'one-of-a-kind', which was also mirrored in their use of selfies as tools to visually illustrate their inimitable identity. This was said to be incorporated in their distinguished use of color, lighting and angles, intended to convey an impactful, lasting impression.

"I try not to make my pictures look like everyone else's."

"To make my feed distinguished from others, I use angles most people don't use."

"But not me, I'm not like everyone else. I want to give off an individual and unique feeling that makes a strong impression."

Apart from the relatively unusual utilization of visual tools in photos, those who expressed a unique, individual image also illustrated unconventional portrayals of the self. Whereas, many social media users valued crisp, high-resolution pictures that clearly represented their physical appearance and choice of style, people who valued the uniqueness and individuality of their self-image held positive opinions, or even a preferred for blurred pictures with a sense of movement.

"I also like the pictures of me that are like blurry from moving because they're both me."

Thus, it can be inferred that the unique and individual image is founded upon a non-conformist attitude, that strives to persistently rebel against what others consider appropriate or admirable.

"I guess I wanted to be seen as sort of free spirited, doing my own thing."

In terms of the mood of the pictures, a toned-down range of colors with an addition faded effect was explained to be primarily used for a retro feeling. Such choices of edit with hints of antique touches incorporated a reminiscent feeling towards of analog objects, such as the film camera, which was stated to be a true source of inspiration for personal pictures. What is especially notable is the remark how one's such edit of selfies is reflective of his or her individual interests, and that is of utmost significance in their self presentation

"The reason I put a fade effect in my pictures is because that's what I like and what I like is all that matters to me."

Finally, another interesting feature of the unique, individual image was the use of impactful color and lighting within one's selfies. The application of flash photography in selfies was frequently mentioned, which is the use of turning of flash, typically in front of a mirror, to take a mirror selfie that reflects the camera's flashing light. The though was that such selfies with flash were more effective in conveying a unique image, as not many other social media users considered such methods in their pictures. Along the same lines, other individuals of this image explained a preference for filters and lightening that produced strong contrast, and this corresponding with their desires to convey an impactful impression to others.

"Instead of cliched filters I often use flash, especially when it's dark. Flash photography gives this really cool, impactful look"

5.4 Crowd-Pleaser Image

The fourth category of 'desired online self image of social media users' is the crowd-pleaser image,

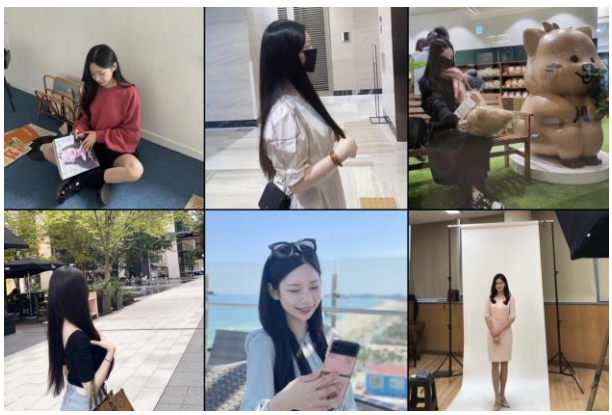
containing the themes: the well-presented, inoffensive image, the flawless image and the socialite image. The crowd-pleaser literally translates to someone who enjoys pleasing a crowd, a large number of people. Hence, within the context of social media, this image specifically refers to impressions of the 'self' that are notably widely popular as they are capable of appealing to a broader range of audience, generally liked by the majority. The image of crowd-pleaser here, is to be clearly distinguished from people-pleasers, for the latter implies an enhanced need to be dependent on the approval of others, a characteristic that may potentially be present in the crowd-pleaser image but not a definitive trait of this particular image.

<Table. 19> Category 4. of desired online self image of social media users' (crowd-pleaser image)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Crowd-pleaser image	The well-presented, inoffensive image	Pleasantly plain	*Refrain from giving one unique image; strong style somewhat controversial; Either really like style or hate it; Want to be in between*
		Clean and neat	*Clean and neat image can't go wrong; Neat look, like well put together; Clear difference between well-organized and messy profile; Interested in the well-organized profile more often*
		Soft facial features	*Don't use strong highlights or contouring edits on face; Makes face shape too defined; Gives strong impression that I don't like; Like smooth, round feeling, like a comfortable vibe*
	The flawless image	Feeling pretty	*Special moment during my day when I look pretty; Use editing apps to look prettier; Because you want to look pretty*
		Need for perfection	*Editing apps are way of packaging yourself as someone better than you really are; Give off perfect, constructed image*
		Concealing flaws	*Choose pictures where I look less ugly; Hiding flaws from others; Get rid of acne or blemishes on skin; From the side, flaws hidden due to angle;*
		Removing signs of disorganization	*When hair looks untidy, touch up on hair using the liquify tool; Focus on editing hair; Don't like how hair sticks out in some places; Want to look neat, get rid of beauty marks; Edit my clothes, get rid of wrinkles; Look clean*
	The socialite image	Desire to look sociable	*Not exactly outgoing but want people to see me as sociable; See me as someone who knows how to have fun with others*
		Outgoing personality	*Want to people to see me as enjoying life; Want pictures to show my diverse, outgoing personality instead of reducing myself to just my looks*
		Adjustable to TPO	*Change style depending on where I took picture; Hip on one day, feminine on other; Change color of lips to fit outfit or overall tone of picture; When I go to bar, try edits incorporating sexier vibe with darker colored eye shadows and lip; Color of lipstick, blush fit with mood of overall picture; Wear pink or pastel, put on cute smiling face while for others wear all black and my eyes looking down without signs of smile*

5.4.1 Well-Presented, Inoffensive Image

<Figure. 11> Collage of well-presented, inoffensive image selfies



The well-presented and inoffensive image can be distinguished through their rather simple, yet pleasantly plain visual self presentation. Individuals who perceived themselves as fitting to this image stated that styles that are unique could also be viewed upon as too definitive, and thus subject to controversial opinions. They explained how while the inoffensive image does not assist in acquiring the attention and intense admiration of a selected few, the well-presented nature of this image is one that most people do not strongly disapprove of.

> *"I also want to refrain from giving one strong, unique image, simple is the best. I don't really see a need to overdo things and try to experiment with yourself all the time."*

> *"A unique style is somewhat controversial; I feel comfortable in being the person in between. I know I might not stand out but at least people won't hate me for it."*

A key characteristic of the well-presented and inoffensive image was the necessity of a clean and neat appearance, as the was claimed that such appearance is one that generally appeals to all. This appearance was also considered reflection of the actual person, as an organized look was suggestive of one's well put togetherness in his or her daily life.

> *"A clean and neat image can't go wrong."*

> *"I aim to give off a neat look not too flamboyant but not like shabby or poorly dressed. I want to just look I like I am well put together."*

In terms of the edits on selfies, excessive use of colors that could deliver unwanted, strong impression were said to be avoided. Instead, modifications were made on one's facial features to soften the looks transmitted through selfies, to achieve the well-presented and inoffensive image.

"I don't use too strong highlights or contouring edits on my face because these edits make my face shape too defined which sort of gives strong impression that I don't like"

"I like the smooth, round sort of feeling, like a comfortable vibe."

5.4.2 Flawless Image

<Figure. 12> Collage of flawless image selfies

Individuals who desired a flawless image, hoped to appeal to others through their attractive physical appearance, beautified with the assistance of photo-editing apps. Those who identified with this image demonstrated a definite, unwavering priority to present their beauty and charm in selfies, apparent through the constant re-iteration of wanting to 'look pretty'.

"Selfies are still like a special moment during my day when I look pretty and I usually use editing apps to of course look prettier."

"You do it because you want to look pretty."

Moreover, a need for perfection within one's selfies was also noted in those who identified with the flawless image, in which the role of editing apps was highlighted in their abilities to enable users in the construction of a visually perfect appearance.

"Editing apps are just a way of packaging yourself, in that through apps you can easily make yourself look perfect."

This need for perfection corresponded to the editing processes taken by individuals of this image, as their approach to modifying selfies was focused on the intent of concealing any signs of visible flaws. Elaborations of such were made in how pictures were selected based on a criterion of whether they effectively minimized the flaws in one's visual appearance. A higher-than-average fixation of one's flaws were demonstrated as selfies were evaluated from different angles on how each accentuated or obscured one's areas

of concern in the face and body.

"I choose pictures in which I look less ugly, so my face needs to be looking at the right angle where I can easily adjust the shape and other things like the eyes and nose."

"I get rid of all the acne or blemishes on the skin, so there are no traces of them left at all."

Lastly, the flawless image concerned not only the perfection of the subject's physical appearance like the facial or body features, but also the impeccable details within the selfies most individuals relatively paid less attention to. Examples of such were removing signs of disorganization in selfies, including retouching one's hairstyle in addition to folding marks on clothing. Such efforts to tidy one's overall looks collectively functioned to ultimately achieve the polished, flawless image of 'self'.

"When my hair looks a little untidy, I touch up on that as well using the liquify tool. I don't think how it sticks out in some places."

"I also edit my clothes like getting rid of wrinkles so they look clean."

5.4.3 Socialite Image

<Figure. 13> Collage of socialite image selfies

The socialite image, is fundamentally grounded in one's desire to simply look sociable, direction one's self presentation towards the image of one who actively engages with others, especially through attending large social events of entertainment along with private parties. The significance of this image is that through the representations of oneself in the presence of others, an individual and successfully communicate him or herself who is likeable, their presence enjoyed by others as well.

"I'm not exactly outgoing but I want people to see me as sociable and someone who knows how to have fun. This is true at times, but I do then to emphasize this part a lot more."

This image can be defined by the clear and consistent delivery of an outgoing personality, someone who is carefree and prioritizes enjoying their life to its utmost fullest. Individuals who identify with the socialite image expressed how pictures that highlight their such approach to life and interaction with friends, can successfully assist them in presenting their images of 'self' as not only in regards to their physical appearance, but rather the temperament and core values that consist their true identity.

"I want to people to see me as someone who enjoys life."

"My pictures show my diverse, outgoing personality instead to reducing myself to just my body."

As the primary activities of individuals of the socialite image involve participating in numerous events, a key attribute of this particular image was cited as one's ability to easily adjust his or her presentation in accordance to the appropriate time, place and occasion. Thus, the edits performed on selfies correlated to such increased attention to TPO, as individuals repeatedly commented on how they vary their style and makeup edits depending on the event the selfie was taken at.

"I'm hip on one day, feminine on the other and stuff."

"Sometimes I change the color of my lips to fit my outfit or the overall tone of the picture."

"The color of the lipstick of blush needs to fit with the mood and color of that overall picture or outfit; I wear pink or pastel colors, put on this sort of cute smiling face while for others I'm wearing all black and my eyes are sort of looking down without any signs of a smile"

5.5 Amiable, Easy-Going Image

The fifth category of 'desired online self image of social media users' is the amiable, easy-going image which includes the themes: the bright and cheerful image, the down-to-earth image and the humorously playful image. The amiable and easy-going image desired a self presentation that emphasized one's friendly personality, radiating positive energy to others. Generally, individuals of this image considered their selfies as a personal medium to their character and generosity towards oneself and others.

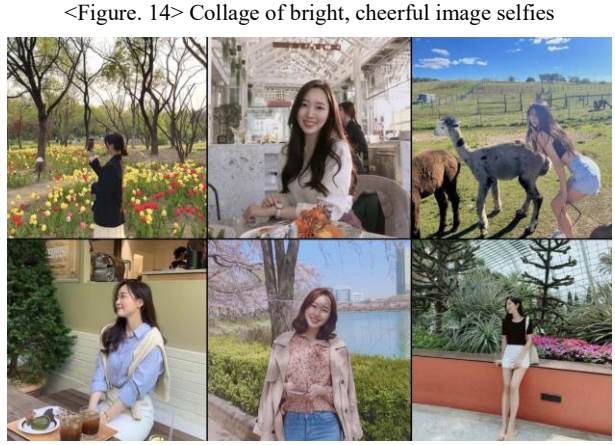
<Table. 20> Category 5. of desired online self image of social media users' (amiable, easy-going image)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Amiable, easy-going image	The bright and cheerful image	Nature lover	*Take pictures outside in nature; Like relaxing and chill outdoor vibe; I go to cafes and parks that are modern but have warm vibe and woody tone; I don't wear bright colors or black because they give off an urban vibe too much and don't blend with the background*
		Vibrant colors	*Cheerful people, their personality shows in pictures; So, clothes in pictures were usually bright, pictures taken in bright places with bright colored backgrounds; Use filters to convey vibrant mood*
		Sunlight, radiance	*Sunlight and natural light key components; Makes face look cleaner and fresher; Brighter complexion that makes the person look bright in general; Pictures taken*

			during day; Sunlight brightens up pictures and highlight colors; Sun makes them appear lively
		Warm and inviting	*Tone of pictures mostly white and beige; Upload pictures centered around an ivory tone; Like white and beige tones; Don't like harsh white and black look; Prefer warmer, feminine style, not overly girly; Beige adds calmer tone to image*
	The down-to-earth image	Sharing daily activities	*Pictures show my normal routinely activities; Well put together version of me doing my usual thing; Show me doing my daily activities; Sharing what I do every day with others*
		Record for the self	*There are people who upload basically anything, using their social media profile as like a personal diary; It's more for me to see*
		Occasional selfie uploads	*Happen to take good picture, I upload; Don't really upload a lot of pictures so I don't like find the need to constantly take good pictures; I happen to have a good picture, like when I'm dressed for an occasion or my hair looks good or my clothes are new*
		Preference for everyday settings	*Don't go to special places to take photos; Don't like grand, luxurious places; Don't go to specific places to take and upload pictures*
	The humorously playful image	Poking-fun	*If everyone on social media takes pictures to show them, just why not go all right obvious; Stupid filters are making fun of your own pretense*
		Light-heartedness	*Sparkle filter to upload selfies on stories to lift serious feeling; [Some filters] add lighter feeling that I want to show in stories*
		Fun entertainment aspect	*Editing apps fun thing; Strange filters, stickers, scribbles; Add stickers such as sunglasses or teddy bear to selfies; [Stickers] add cute and funny aspect to yourself; Playful feeling; Pictures of me doing goofy things*

5.5.1 Bright and Cheerful Image

<Figure. 14> Collage of bright, cheerful image selfies



The key visual feature of the bright and cheerful image, was the apparent love for nature and

appreciation for the beauties of smaller things in everyday life. Individuals identifying with the bright and cheerful image commented on how their selfie-taking activities were carried out outdoors in nature, or at places that resembled the relaxing and warm mood of natural landscapes. The selection of such settings for pictures were considered ideal in underlining one's open and easily approachable personality. Moreover, the awareness of the important of background in one's impression was accompanied by individual's detailed attention to colors of clothing, in which overly bright or dark tones were avoided as they were considered incongruent to not only the background of selfies in nature, but also to the overall desired projection of a relaxed and joyful image.

> *"I take most of my pictures outside in nature, I really like that relaxing and chill outdoor vibe. Usually, I go to cafes and parks and stuff that are modern but have a warm vibe and woody tone."*

> *"I don't wear super bright, neon colors or really dark colors and black because they give off an urban vibe too much and don't blend with the background."*

The importance of vibrant color was also commented on, in addition to how pictures are an accurate reflection to one's personal character and temperament. The colors were described as vibrant, in which distinctions were drawn from mere bright colors. Those who identified themselves as the bright and cheerful image emphasized how the function of colors in selfies were to deliver a feeling of liveliness, not merely draw the eyes of other people through a visual boldness.

> *"Cheerful people, their personality shows in pictures. I use filters to convey such vibrant mood."*

> *"My clothes in pictures were usually bright yet calm, pictures taken in bright places with bright colored backgrounds, with shades that go well with nature like green, yellow, pink and those softly bright colors."*

Sunlight and radiance were outlined are the fundamental components essential to the pictures for those intended for presenting this image, as such lighting were said to highlight one's complexion and incorporate a clean and fresh feeling to the overall mood of the selfies.

> *"Sunlight and natural light are crucial component of my picture because it makes your face look cleaner and fresher."*

> *"A brighter complexion usually makes the person look bright in general."*

> *"I usually make sure that all my pictures are taken during the day since the sunlight really brightens up my pictures and highlight the colors, making them appear lively."*

In terms of edits in color, individuals showed a preference for a warm and inviting feel, through the incorporation of filters that adjustment pictures to a more ivory, and beige tone. Highly contrasting colors, such as white and black were also considered unfitting to the bright and cheerful image as the combination of such was deemed to create a harsh and rigid appearance.

"The overall tone of my pictures is mostly white and beige, centered around an ivory tone."

"I think beige adds a calmer and warmer tone to the sort of feminine image I aim for, these tones help in making you look like a more sociable person."

5.5.2 Down-To-Earth Image

<Figure. 15> Collage of down-to-earth image selfies

The down-to-earth image extends upon the element of generosity within the amiable and easy-going image, especially as those who endeavored to present such image displayed generosity towards oneself. Through the sharing selfies that captured daily activities on their average day, their approach to self presentation could be regarded modest and fairly unpretentious. Individuals who identified with this image did not hold themselves to high standards of polishing one's pictures to the point of perfection. Rather they focused their self presentation efforts on portraying the characteristics of a regular person everyone is. Likewise, they viewed their selfies as a method of sharing the small, but equally meaningful experiences of the normal day with their close group of friends.

"There's nothing special about my selfies, it's just a well put together version of me doing my usual thing."

"I'm constantly sharing what I do every day with others, because that's the whole point of social media, to just share what you're doing and feeling."

Hence, those who reflecting this image viewed their self presentation as also an important space that functions as a personal record for the self. Through such approach to one's social media, one could also convey the impression of being someone to is genuine, as individual commented on how they simply hoped accepted for their truthfulness to his or her actual life and subsequently shaped identity.

"There are people who upload basically anything, using their social media profile as like a

personal diary. That's just the kind of person I want to be seen as, honest to myself."

"My profile, it's more for me to see."

Individuals of the down-to-earth image also admitted that their upload of selfies were relatively occasional and to a degree random, in that they did not necessarily make prior plan to taking selfies. Rather, their selfies were direct results of their spontaneous desire to capture themselves during a certain moment, considered valuable.

"If I happen to take a picture and I think it looks good, I upload it."

As selfies were not planned in advance, a natural preference for everyday settings within one's picture are noticed, as it was explained that those who saw themselves as down-to-earth, did not perceive the need to intentionally visit new places to take their pictures, as they considered the mundane scenes of daily routines as sufficiently special.

"I don't really go to specific places to take and upload pictures because honestly, I just take them whenever I feel like it, doesn't matter where."

5.5.3 Humorously Playful Image

<Figure. 16> Collage of humorously playful image selfies

The humorously playful image exemplifies one's easy-going nature more explicitly as those with this image have highlighted behaviors that intended to poking-fun at themselves and also others. Individuals identifying with this image have commented on how while the majority of social media users' selfies are used for purposeful self presentation, it is considered more acceptable to conceal such efforts to manage impress others. Therefore, through the humorously playful image, individuals directly showcase their use of such visual presentation and editing tools to deliver the impression that one has a 'sense of humor', that that their selfies are essentially 'playful in intent'.

"If it's obvious that everyone on social media takes pictures to show them to others but you need to pretend that it's actually not the case, so why not go all right obvious and be like here I took this picture because I want you to see it."

"Stupid filters are like making fun of your own pretense, since everyone tries to find that filter that isn't recognizable but really it is."

Some other individuals who hope to convey this humorously playful image mentioned how the utilization of filters or stickers in photo-editing apps can effectively induce a feeling of light-heartedness that can lift or alleviate the discouraging or somber moods of others.

"Sometimes I use filters like the sparkle filter to upload selfies on stories to lift the serious feeling."

Another reflection was on the entertainment aspect of such, especially as the humorously playful image actively incorporates interactive and experimental features such as the dog filter or the famous sparkle filter. This was supported by individuals who explained that their identification with this image can be traced to the inherently enjoyable nature of editing apps, and how rather silly looking tools like the sticker can convey a comical and simultaneously attractive facet of one's sociable personality in the process of online self presentation.

"I sometimes add like stickers such as sunglasses or a teddy bear to my selfies, with super strange filters or writings on pictures, me doing goofy things."

"[Stickers] adds a somewhat cute and funny aspect to yourself, a more playful feeling that I want to show in stories where other people can reply and engage with the things I've shared."

5.6 Urban and Refined Image

The sixth category of 'desired online self image of social media users' is the urban and refined image. The themes belonging to this category are the 'travel influencer' image, the stylishly lavish image and the modern sophisticated image. The urban and refined image is a reflection of not only one's polished styled of selfie and visual presentation of the 'self', but also one's attitudes towards his or her modern lifestyle as an indication of their personal characteristics.

<Table. 21> Category 6. of desired online self image of social media users' (urban and refined image)

Category	Theme	Subtheme	Meaning unit
Urban and refined image	The 'travel influencer' image	Vacation selfies with others	*Lot of vacation selfies with friends; See a lot of vacation vibe pictures with friends, families or like their partner; I upload a lot of pictures of me on vacation or hanging out with friends*
		Vividness of the experience	*Visit places, going to beach etc.; Share bright blue sky, vividness of thing I see; Filters enhance colors of scenery*

		Prioritizing the picture	*People emphasize they're outgoing, like to travel; Bring several bikinis and take lots of pictures to save, upload in future; Plan outfits for pictures*
	The stylishly lavish image	Sophisticated glam	*Luxurious, sophisticated; No prominent contouring or dark eyeshadow edits; Feed mostly navy, black, beige, grey with tints of colors like yellow, green, blue; Deep, sophisticated yet not too serious image*
		Luxurious leisure	*Enjoying somewhat luxurious lifestyle; Posh feeling of smart, successful people; intentionally take pictures visiting museums and galleries; Show people 'I'm educated and cultured'; Silhouette of person, fair skin, well-maintained hair and body*
		Muted aesthetic	*Wear muted colors; Prefer grey, green and purples matched with navy, grey or brown tones; Grain filter emphasize muted feeling; Colors with soft feeling; Toned down colors makes me appear calm, put together sophisticated*
	The modern sophisticated image	Sharp cut, chic	*Want chic sort of image; Sophisticated, more defined face; Don't like round look; Want facial features to be prominent, to look more chic*
		Classy and simple	*Sophisticated sense of style but not over the top; Underlying key words is timeless, sophisticated; Solid colors; Increase clarity in pictures*
		Monotone minimalistic	*Black and white pictures; Edgy feeling; Decrease brightness, increase contrast; Unified tone looks less messy; Impression of urban, minimalistic look*
		Composed style	*Clean and sophisticated look, reflection of clothing; Don't do patterns or super bold colors; Stick with black, white and beige; Toned down versions of little color, pastel mint, burgundy, light coral etc.; Stay away from frays or cute patterns*

5.6.1 'Travel Influencer' Image

<Figure. 17> Collage of ‘travel influencer’ image selfies

The most obvious characteristic of the ‘travel influencer’ image, the presentation of oneself through his or her varied array of captivating vacation selfies. As the nature of vacations and exploration of new places usually requires a compatible travel partner, individuals who identified with this image explained that their

selfie-taking activities were accompanies by friends or family members. Therefore, vacation selfies with others were considered an integral part of the ‘travel influencer’ image.

“I upload a lot of pictures of me on vacation or hanging out with friends.”

A clear, distinguishable visual feature of this image was not only the diverse background and setting of pictures, but also the assortment of brightly colored scenes that accentuated the enthusiasm felt within the selfies. This was expressed as individuals’ efforts to directly portray the vividness of their experiences, in which the mood conveyed through such scenery was also considered to be reflected upon one’s own representation in the picture as an active, passionate person who loves go to on vacation.

“When you visit places, like going to the beach on vacation, I really want to share this bright blue sky and the vividness of my experience.”

“I often use filters to enhance the colors of the scenery, because those colors make me appear brighter too.”

An interesting point about the ‘travel influencer’ image, was the attitude towards self-taking was the pictures were at times, one of the most significance priorities of the entire trip. Making prior plans to outsits to be worn in different occasions were considered a basic necessity of vacation planning, and furthermore, some who considered themselves as the ‘travel influencer’ image, even were said to bring our choices of clothing to be worn on the same place, but different selfie intended for further posting on social media.

“I would like bring several bikinis and take a lot of pictures I can save up and upload later in the future. Planning outfits for my vacation pictures are a priority.”

5.6.2 Stylishly Lavish Image

<Figure. 18> Collage of stylishly lavish image selfies

The stylishly lavish image is ideally defined by a sophisticated visual presentation of one’s appearance

in addition to a similarly sophisticated lifestyle. Individuals who desired to portray this image emphasized the important of a stunning sense of style and keen eye for aesthetics that could successfully acquire positive attention of others, while at the same time, appear indifference to such attention. Thus, the phrase, sophisticated glam. Edits to selfies mirrored such desired as facial features were polished to convey a well-presented immaculate appearance, whereas prominent makeup edits were generally avoided in fear of looking too excessive, or gauche.

> *"I also like a glamorous image, eye catching yet sophisticated at the same time in that you get noticed by people but don't look like someone who really wants to be noticed by others."*

> *"I don't go for very prominent contouring or like dark eyeshadow edits since I don't think it looks sophisticated."*

Furthermore, those who identified with the stylishly lavish image wished to incorporate subtle indications of their sophisticated lifestyle through displays of their luxurious leisure activities. These were explained as not direct presentations of symbols of wealth and financial status, such as through selfies with highly priced material objects like cars, bags and watches, but rather suggestive illustrations of the educated background and upbringing of an individual through his or her acquired taste. Specific examples of visits to invite only events, enjoying time at exclusive galleries or meals at renowned cafes restaurants were given to demonstrate the presentation of the ideal self, through the visual setting of the picture the 'self' is situated within. Whereas make up edits were explained as quite unnecessary previously, elaborations on this were made and how the overall feeling that the stylishly lavish image aimed at delivering was achievable through selfie edits that were focused on modifying the overall silhouette, skin or hair, which were direct indications of self-care and high-maintenance of one's physical appearance.

> *"I show myself as enjoying a somewhat luxurious lifestyle."*

> *"I like the posh and natural sort of feeling."*

> *"You want to show people you're educated, cultured and well off, which is mostly given off from like the overall silhouette of the person, the fair skin, well-maintained hair and body."*

In terms of color, individuals preferred a generally muted aesthetic, as such toned downed pictures were viewed to effectively convey the impression that one's personality is also calm, and sophisticated with relatively softer moods in the overall image.

> *"I usually wear muted colors, I prefer greyish yellow, green and purples matched with navy, grey or brown tones. I like toned down colors with a soft feeling"*

> *"Calm colors make me appear like a put together and sophisticated person."*

5.6.3 Modern Sophisticated Image

<Figure. 19> Collage of modern sophisticated image selfies

The modern sophisticated image, is an accurate reflection of the ‘urban’ within the urban and refined image. As the word modern suggested, individuals identifying with this image appreciated the chic mood generated from sharp cut facial features, resembling the straight, definitive lines of modern architectural structures.

> *“I want a sophisticated, sort of a more defined face. I don't like the round, soft look. Like I also want my facial features to be prominent, for example the defined jawline”*

In terms of style, individuals revealed that they revered the classic feelings simple colors, and clothing reflected. The timeless mood was also incorporated the in approach to selfie edits, in which alterations to pictures were centered around accentuating the lines of one’s facial features instead of changing their size and shape.

> *“I also want to be able show that I have a sophisticated sense of style but nothing like too over the top.”*

> *“I go for solid colors and I don't quite use filters but increase clarity in my pictures.”*

A monotone and minimalistic presentation of visuals were also noted, as those with the modern sophisticated image commented on how the restriction of color uses in actuality conveyed an organized and straightforward impression through a unified mood in one’s self presentation.

> *“If you change a colored picture into a black and white one you instantly get a different edgy feeling to your pictures.”*

> *“I usually try to do put a minimalistic feel in my feed through a unified tone since it gives the impression of a more urban chic minimalistic look.”*

References the significance of one’s style in clothing were also drawn as many expressed how their

preference of a composed style and sophisticated choice in fashion were influenced by the desires to convey such modern sophisticated image of the self.

> *"I think this clean and sophisticated look is a reflection of my clothing. I stay away from like frays or like cutesy flower patterns in my fashion."*

> *"I don't do patterns or like super bold colors, I usually stick with black, white and beige."*

Chapter V. Conclusion and Discussion

In today's society, advances in technology have transformed approaches to culture and lifestyles, resulting in a different mode of self presentation. More specially, traditional social structures and modes of interactions have shifted, as individuals spend more time online than offline, with social networking platforms at the center of this change, as today's younger generation is inseparable from the presence of social media. It is of paramount importance to consider the role these social networking platforms play, as not only mediums of interaction and socialization with others, but also crucial methods of projecting a desired impression to ultimately present one's personal sense of 'self'. The 'self' image is defined as the "the total subjective perception of oneself, including the image of one's body and impression of one's personality, capabilities, and so one" (Bailey, 2003). Changes in modes of self presentation have essentially transformed current paradigms of the 'self' by introducing new possibilities for sharing information about oneself with people including both one's close friend groups and complete strangers.

On social media, the used of edited selfies are the main mediums of visual communication and engagement with others. The unique feature of selfies is that it enables individuals to display themselves as the primary subject of communication, meaning individuals, through the use of social media, are able to unrestrictedly express their sense of self through a visually constructed multifaceted identity. Another crucial element is the editing selfies, also commonly referred to as photoshopping, beautifying and retouching pictures, as a common preparation process prior to the actual sharing of one's image on social media. Editing techniques such as color correction, blemish removal, skin-blurring, body tuning help individuals effortlessly achieve the impression they wish to visually present online, and the degree of such photo editing can range from small, basic adjustments of tone and color to more dramatic alterations of physical features of one's face and body. Thus, the subsequent goals of this study are to investigate the expressive characteristics within selfies and especially photo-editing apps, as tools to assist one's self presentation on social media. First, an inspection of the online nature of social media and its influence on interactions with others is used as a foundation to understand how personal self presentation with online mediums work, and also identify social media users' underlying motivations for using apps to edit selfies. Second various factors that influence social media users' desires be viewed in a certain way are explored, along with how these factors shape the users' approaches to their expression of self-image. Lastly, the correlations between specific app features and ways of self-presentation in relation to self-concept and image are examined to gain a deeper comprehension on the diverse desires of different social media users in their portrayal of the ideal 'self'.

Results of analyzed data revealed three categories within photo-editing app usage motivations: influence of social media, polishing one's appearance, online acculturation. Firstly, the influence of social media explains the power it holds over individuals, not simply their thoughts and opinions but also the way they behave through its viral nature that functions to set trends in society, through the assistance of powerful figures such as celebrities or influencers. Furthermore, the exposure the various content and diverse people exemplified how social media user's reasons for editing their selfies are impacted by what they see and who they meet online. Secondly, polishing one's appearance demonstrated that the friends one is surrounded by,

in addition to the difficulties in capturing a ‘good’ selfie that consequently result in the uglified image of oneself in pictures persuades individuals of the need to edit their photos before sharing them with others on social media. Thirdly, online acculturation emphasizes how the practice of modifying one’s selfies is both a learned process through accumulations of related habits and a tool for presenting a consistent image online through the access to absolute control over one’s selfies visual qualities.

The five categories within influencing factors of self presentation are: self autonomy factors, nature of social media medium factors, personal perspective factors, social media user factors, socio-cultural factors. Firstly, the self autonomy factors show that one’s sense of self, including reflections of who one is, wishes to be and be viewed by others, along with one’s version of manipulated self, that prioritizes the online identity through a selective display of characteristics, is significant in the comprehension of what social media users consider meaningful in self presentation efforts. Secondly, the nature of social media refers the feature based and audience-based facets on this medium and discussion of the interview have shown how the distinct between stories and feed, public and private accounts, function to influence one’s approach to his or her representation of self online. Thirdly, personal perspective factors demonstrate how personal evaluation of attractiveness and personal taste and how these influence social media’s choices of online self presentations. Fourthly, social media user factors elaborate on the influence gained from other people, categorizable into those of non-acquaintances and friends. It has been shown that the shared selfie-taking practices and editing process, in addition to each other’s confirmation of pictures prior to uploading, affects how individuals consider their friend’s opinions and standards to evaluate their own self-images. Fifthly, socio-cultural factors provide evidence to how one’s gender and nationality in addition to a society’s specific trends shape different criterion of what is desirable and what is acceptable.

The four categories within shared general rules of social media users in their approach to self presentation and editing selfies are: authentic style of self presentation, avoiding extreme edits in fear of looking 'fake', general rules of edits, natural methods of selfie editing tool. Firstly, authentic style of self presentation revealed that individuals do not want their selfies to obviously illustrate the prior planning and though put into achieving a certain image, through findings that showed a clear preference for candid selfies that don’t look like selfies, which subsequently can also convey the impression of an effortless image. Other authentic styles included social media user’s efforts to simply embrace their flaws direct selfie editing to highlighting one’s best features. Secondly, avoiding extreme edits in fear of looking 'fake' unveiled different types of concerns associated with selfie editing, in which the majority were founded upon the possibility of appearing to be someone else, and the detectability of selfie edits. Thirdly, the general rules of edits showed that the areas of edits were largely dividable into those regarding the face or body, in which both were required special attention to the proportions and overall outline of shape. Fourthly, natural methods of selfie editing tool elaborated on how social media user’s perception of natural was different, as some values the natural process and opted for minimal touches within their selfies, whereas others deemed the natural final produced more significant and choice methods of detailed control, such as personalized used of tools and layered editing, in managing the end result of their edits.

Finally, the six categories in desired online self-image are: natural image, living life as I want image,

diverse and unrestricted image, crowd-pleaser image, amiable and easy-going image, urban and refined image. The natural image showed to embrace the element of being authentic, honest and effortless in presentation, true to one's own original characteristics and features. The living life as I want image, was demonstrated as reflecting individuals' desired to be viewed as free, and unbound to the expectations and opinions held by others. The nonchalant image presented the core values of a defiant attitude, doing whatever one desires, marked by a disregard for the perceptions of other people. The diverse and unrestricted image showed how individuals of this image wished to portray themselves in a multiple of ways, while the crowd-pleaser image indicated people who stuck to impressions that of images of 'self' that are notably popular and acceptable. The amiable and easy-going image was shown to prefer a self presentation that emphasized one's friendly personality, radiating positive energy to others, contrasted to the urban and refined image centered around a stylishly, modern and most importantly sophisticated atmosphere within one's image

Overall, the findings of this study are of value as it provides a thorough understanding of not only the significance of the dynamics of a visual-oriented social media platform on one's self presentation mediated through photo-editing apps, but also how the distinct editing processes of social media users reflect of their individual self-image desires. Moreover, the different nature of self presentation on social media can be better assessed through varied behavioral characteristics or reflective opinions presented by social media users. Although there are limitations in research such as the centralized focus on the female photo-editing experience especially in the desire image of social media users' portion, this discrepancy between females and males within the study can be seen to directly mirror the actual ratio of photo-editing app usage among the different genders, the scope of knowledge obtained through this research is significant in that it differs from the perspective of prior studies that founded upon a limited view of selfie-editing's potentially damaging effects, disregarding the role in plays to express one's desired image of 'self'. The study is anticipated to also help other researchers interested in similar areas by shedding light on the different array of images sought by individuals in their editing of selfies and overall pictures, within the current context of social media and online self presentation. Areas of future research could potentially extend to filling in the current gaps in the male user experience of photo-editing apps in relation to the context of social media, particularly since one's self presentation is a manifestation of both personal and societal standards placed on the self and thus individuals who identify as male are likely to hold distinct ideas and attitudes towards their impression management in the online sphere.

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Figure references

Figure 1 https://www.beautyplus.com/

Figure 2 https://www.beautyplus.com/

Figure 3 https://www.beautyplus.com/

Figure 4 https://www.beautyplus.com/

Figure 5 https://instagram.com/yscho8.25?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=
https://instagram.com/s0nyeo?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

Figure 6 https://instagram.com/judy_ch?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

Figure 7 https://instagram.com/myoeunnyy?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

Figure 8 https://instagram.com/zzzx_xuz?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

Figure 9 https://instagram.com/so.hyeonpark?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

Figure 10 https://instagram.com/im_thuji?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=
https://instagram.com/zzzx_xuz?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

Figure 10 https://instagram.com/rororohark?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

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Figure 13 https://instagram.com/yyusomething1?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=
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Figure 14 https://instagram.com/h.shiinae_?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=
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Figure 15 https://instagram.com/seoyoungontheroad?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

Figure 16 https://instagram.com/jh.j51?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

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Figure 19 https://instagram.com/yyusomething1?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=

국문 초록

오늘날의 사회에서 기술의 발전은 문화와 생활 방식에 대한 접근 방식을 변화시켰고, 결과적으로 새로운 자기 표현 방식을 탄생시켰다. 이러한 변화의 중심에 소셜 네트워킹 플랫폼이 있는데 사람들이 오프라인보다 온라인에서 더 많은 활동을 하고 시간을 투자함으로써 전통적인 사회 구조와 상호 작용 방식이 달라졌다는 것을 쉽게 볼 수가 있다. 이러한 새롭게 변화된 온라인 환경에서, 보정 과정을 거친 개인의 셀카는 다른 사람들과의 시각적 의사소통과 참여의 주요 매개체이다. 따라서 본 연구의 목적은 소셜 미디어에서 자신의 프레젠테이션을 지원하는 도구인 셀카와 사진 보정 앱 내의 표현 특성을 조사하는 데 있다. 연구는 총 세개의 연구문제로 이루어져 있으며 첫째, 소셜 미디어의 온라인 특성과 다른 사람과의 상호작용에 미치는 영향에 대한 조사는 온라인 미디어와의 개인적인 자기표현이 어떻게 작동하는지 이해하는 바탕으로, 앱을 사용하여 셀카를 편집하는 소셜 미디어 사용자의 근본적인 동기를 파악한다. 둘째, 소셜 미디어 사용자의 욕구에 특정 방식으로 영향을 미치는 다양한 요소들이 이러한 요소들이 사용자의 자아 이미지 표현에 대한 접근 방식을 어떻게 형성하는지 탐구한다. 마지막으로, 이상적인 '자기'에 대한 묘사에서 서로 다른 소셜 미디어 사용자의 다양한 욕구에 대한 더 깊은 이해를 얻기 위해 자기 개념 및 이미지와 관련된 특정 앱 기능과 자기 표현 방식 간의 상관관계를 조사한다.

방법론적 측면에서 질적 접근법을 선택하였으며, 위에 열거된 목적에 대한 자료를 수집하기 위해 총 20명의 한국 참가자를 대상으로 개별 심층 인터뷰를 실시하였다. 본 연구는 면접참여자 자신의 주관적 경험을 통해 이해하고자 하는 의미현상을 효과적으로 보존하고 있기 때문에 Giorgi의 서술적 현상학적 방법을 자료분석의 틀로 활용하였다. 분석된 자료의 결과는 사진편집 앱 사용동기 내 3개 범주(소셜미디어의 영향, 외모 가꾸기, 온라인 문화의 적응), 자기표현의 영향요인 내 5개 범주(자기결정 자율성 요인, 소셜미디어 매체 성격 요인, 개인적인 관점 요인, 소셜미디어 사용자 요인, 사회적 요인), 소셜 미디어 사용자의 자기 프레젠테이션 및 편집 셀카에 대한 접근 방식에서 공유된 일반 규칙 내의 네 가지 범주(진정성 있는 자기표션, '가짜'로 보일 것을 두려워하여 극단적인 편집을 피하는 행동, 일반적인 편집 관련 보정 규칙, 셀카 편집 도구의 자연스러운 활용방법), 추구하는 온라인 자기 이미지 내의 여섯 가지 범주(자연스러운 이미지, 내가 원하는 대로 삶을 사는 이미지, 다양하고 제한되지 않는 이미지, 호불호가 없어 다양한 사람들에게 호감을 사는 이미지, 상냥하고 다가가기 쉬운 이미지, 도시적이고 세련된 이미지)로 분류 된다.

본 연구의 결과는 전반적으로 사진편집 앱을 통해 매개되는 자신의 자기표현에 대한 시각지향적 소셜미디어 플랫폼의 역동성의 중요성뿐만 아니라 소셜미디어 사용자의 개별적인 자기 이미지 욕구가 어떻게 반영되는지에 대한 철저한 이해를 제공하기 부분에서 연구 의의가 있다.

키워드: 자기표현, 소셜미디어, 셀카, 보정, 트렌드, 이미지
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