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Study: Women Post More Facebook Photos to Raise Self-Esteem

By Rebecca Greenfield

Breaking: Gender stereotypes persist on the Internet. Women use Facebook to deal with their image and self-esteem issues, according to a study released yesterday. Traditionally, men base their self worth on competition and achievement, whereas women focus on appearance. Riffing on these norms, University at Buffalo professor Michael Stefanone wondered if Internet behaviors matched these standards: Does social media usage reflect the female obsession with self-image?

To determine social media behaviors based on gender, the study had 311 participants fill out a questionnaire measuring their contingencies of self worth. It also asked of their typical behaviors on Facebook. Not only did the study show that women identify more strongly with their image and appearance, but it suggested that they use Facebook to express this association.

The study found that women who sought approval based on how others' saw them had a much more active social media presence. Specifically, they post a lot more photos of themselves on Facebook. From these findings, Stefanone asserts that women perform this behavior to compete for attention with each other:

> It is disappointing to me that in the year 2011 so many young women continue to assert their self worth via their physical appearance -- in this case, by posting photos of themselves on Facebook as a form of advertisement.

As a woman who has both high self-esteem and likes posting Facebook photos, my behavior has nothing to do with lady competition -- I just enjoy recording and sharing memories with my network. But, hey, maybe I'm not the norm.

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