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Effects of Facebook on Mood and Self-Esteem

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Background

- Humans are alike in that all compare themselves to others in social settings. The use of social media is widespread in society, so it often has effects on self-esteem.
- There are increasing amounts of narcissistic behaviors exhibited on social media (MacDonald, 2010).
- Social comparisons made when viewing social media can have significant effects on self-esteem, through making upward and downward social comparisons (Vogel, et al., 2014).
- There is a positive correlation between social comparison on Facebook and having negative feelings from that comparison (Lee, 2014).
- How will thinking about one's self while observing a Facebook post affect one's self-esteem and mood?
- We predicted that when primed with their ideal self (who they aren't but wish they were) and viewed narcissistic Facebook posts, participants would have low self-esteem and negative mood.

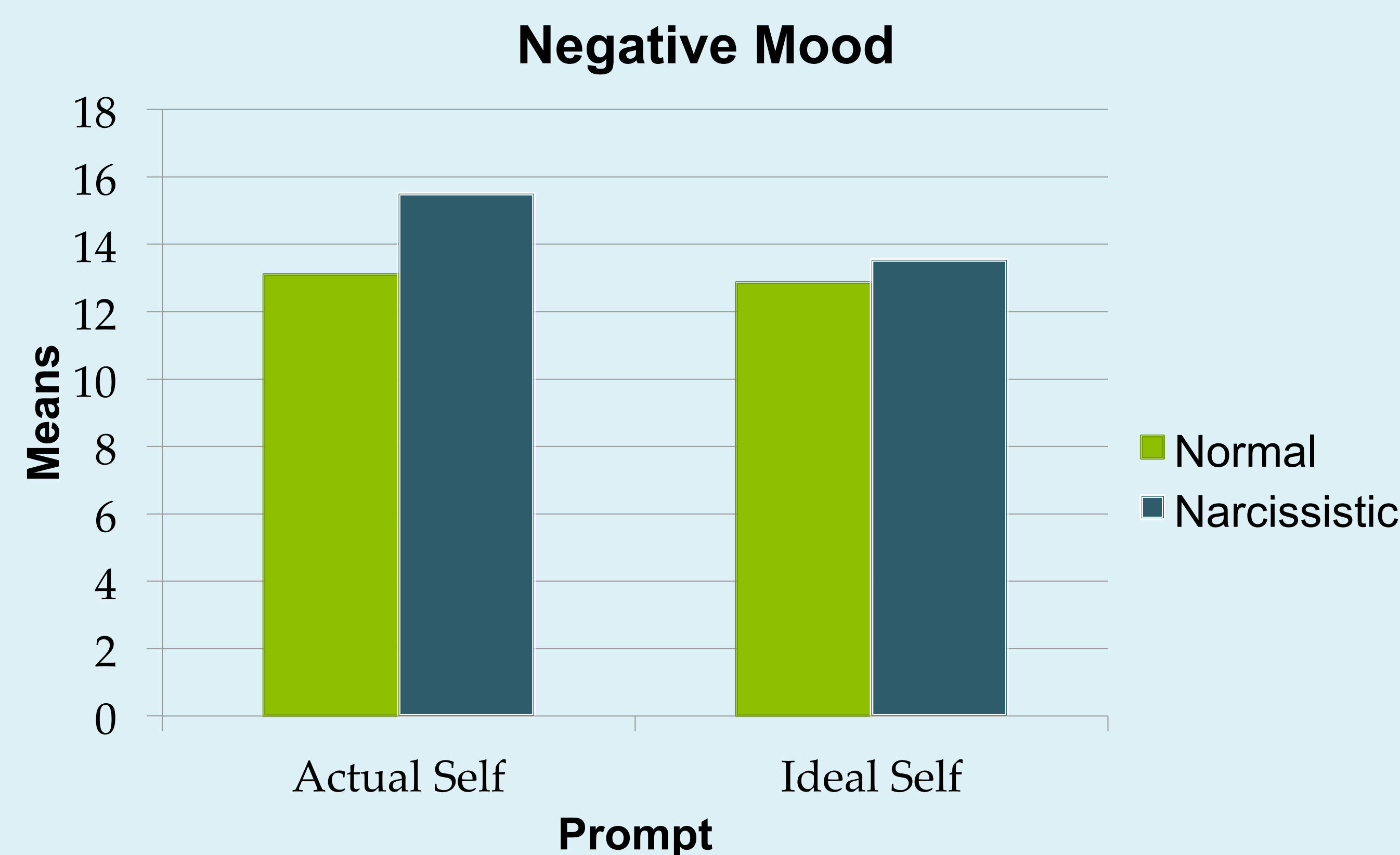
Method

- 64 participants, ages ranging from 18 to 23.
- Participants first completed a writing prompt asking them to write about either their actual self (who they are, what they like about themselves) or their ideal self (who they wish they were but aren't).
- Then participants viewed fictitious Facebook posts created by researchers from a character named, Alex Maberley. One group saw narcissistic posts and the control group saw normal.

- Participants then completed 3 surveys:
 1. Personality Inventory (based on the TIPI) on how they perceived Alex Maberley.
 2. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) to evaluate their current moods.
 3. Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, to measure participants' self-esteem.

Results

- Contrary to our hypotheses, there was no main effect of post on self-esteem, $F(1,60)=.955, p > .05$. There was also no main effect for prompt on self-esteem, $F(1,60)=3.349, p > .05$. There was no interaction between prompt/post and self-esteem, $F(1,60)=.246, p > .05$.
- There was also no significant changes in mood based on prompt, post, or both combined.
- Interestingly, we did find significant effects type of Facebook post viewed for five out of the six personality traits we measured, including the following:
 Humility: $F(1,60)=326.557, p < .05$
 Emotional Stability: $F(1,60)=25.088, p < .05$
 Agreeableness: $F(1,60)= 48.603, p < .05$



Conclusions

- Contrary to our hypothesis, priming for actual or ideal self did not result in lower scores in mood or self-esteem.
- The Facebook posts participants viewed, either narcissistic or neutral, also did not have significant effects on mood or self-esteem. However, participants who viewed narcissistic posts rated Alex much lower on our humility measures in the Personality Inventory.
- Our findings could have been due to researcher manipulation error or unrealistic Facebook experience conditions. Our findings may have been different if we had included more posts.
- It would be interesting and beneficial for future research to specifically study upward and downward social comparisons on social media.
- Additionally, measuring participants/viewers personality and seeing how different personality traits affect how people respond to social media.

References

- MacDonald, P. (2010). Narcissism in the modern world. *Psychodynamic Practice: Individuals, Groups, and Organizations*. 20(2), 144-153.
- Lee, S. Y.. (2014). How do people compare themselves on social network sites?: The case of Facebook. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 32. 253-260.