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## Are you Looking at Me? The Relationship Between Social Media and Personality Disorders

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ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME?  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA AND PERSONALITY DISORDERS

by

MADISON GRACE GORAN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major program in Psychology in the  
College of Sciences  
and in the Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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Thesis Chair: Karen Mottarella, Psy.D.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis investigates the relationship between social media and Cluster B Personality Disorders: Borderline Personality Disorder, Narcissistic Personality Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder, and Histrionic Personality Disorder. This research builds upon previous findings by examining specific negative social media motivations and behaviors, such as excessive use and negative motivations, in relation to Cluster B Personality Disorders. Participants completed the McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD; Zanarini et al., 2005), The Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014), Antisocial Process Screening Device (Frick & Hare, 2002), Self-Test Histrionic Personality Disorder (Olivardia, 2022), and Motivations for Social Media Use Scale (MSMU; Rodgers et al., 2020). These instruments assess callous-unemotional traits, narcissism, impulsivity, attention-seeking behaviors, erratic behaviors, and motivations for social media use. The results indicate a significant positive correlation between extensive social media use and higher tendencies toward Cluster B Personality Disorder traits, with specific social media motivations strongly linked to distinct aspects of these disorders. This study enhances understanding of the psychological correlates of excessive social media use.

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## **CHAPTER 1: SOCIAL MEDIA AND PERSONALITY DISORDERS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Cluster B Personality Disorders are characterized by dramatic, emotional, or erratic behavior and include the Antisocial, Histrionic, Borderline, and Narcissistic Personality Disorders. These disorders are often challenging to diagnose and treat due to their complex presentations and the interplay of various psychological, psychosocial, and biological factors. Antisocial Personality Disorder is marked by a disregard for and violation of the rights of others. Individuals with this disorder often engage in criminal behavior, manipulation, and deceit without remorse. The etiology of Antisocial Personality Disorder involves a combination of genetic, environmental, and neurobiological factors. Treatment is challenging, but early intervention and a focus on behavior modification can be beneficial. Borderline Personality Disorder is characterized by instability in mood, self-image, and interpersonal relationships. Patients often experience intense emotions, impulsive behaviors, and a fear of abandonment. The disorder is associated with a history of trauma, such as childhood abuse, and has a high comorbidity with mood and anxiety disorders. Psychotherapy, particularly Dialectical Behavior Therapy, has been shown to be effective in managing symptoms and improving quality of life. Histrionic Personality Disorder involves excessive emotionality and attention-seeking behavior. Individuals with this disorder often display theatricality and an exaggerated expression of emotions. The etiology is not well understood, but it is thought to be influenced by early childhood experiences and family dynamics. Treatment typically involves psychotherapy, focusing on developing healthier interpersonal skills and emotional regulation. Narcissistic Personality Disorder is characterized by a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy. Individuals with this disorder often have an inflated sense of self-

importance and exploit others for personal gain. The etiology is believed to involve a combination of genetic and environmental factors, including early parenting styles. Treatment can be challenging due to the patient's resistance to acknowledging their vulnerabilities, but psychotherapy can help them to develop more realistic self-perceptions and healthier relationships (Kraus & Reynolds, 2001).

While the complexities of Cluster B Personality Disorders present challenges in understanding and treating these conditions, the motivations behind social media use also reveal intricate psychological dynamics that can intersect with these disorders, providing insight into the multifaceted nature of human behavior in the digital age. The motivations for social media use are complex and varied, encompassing a range of psychological and social factors. Rodgers et al. (2021) aimed to develop and validate a comprehensive scale to measure these motivations, resulting in the identification of four key dimensions: Connection, Popularity, Appearance, and Values and Interests. The Connection motivation highlights the importance of social media as a tool for maintaining and enhancing relationships with peers. Individuals use social media platforms to stay updated on their friends' lives, share their own experiences, and feel included in their social circles. The innate human need for social belonging and interaction drives this aspect of social media use. The Popularity motivation reflects the desire for social recognition and status among peers. Individuals may use social media to increase their visibility, gain more followers or likes, and enhance their social standing. This motivation is often linked to impression management, where individuals carefully curate their online persona to project a desired image to others. The Appearance motivation involves concerns about physical appearance and body image. Individuals may use social media to seek validation for their looks,

compare themselves with others, and engage in activities that enhance their appearance, such as posting filtered or edited photos. This motivation relates to the pervasive presence of appearance focused content on social media. The Values and Interests motivation encompasses the use of social media for self-expression and advocacy. Individuals may share their opinions, support causes they care about, and connect with like-minded individuals. This dimension highlights the potential of social media as a tool for personal growth and social activism. Understanding these motivations is crucial for comprehensively addressing the impact of social media on individuals' mental health and well-being and providing insight into the ways in which social media can influence self-esteem, body image, and social relationships.



## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of social media significantly transformed the way young adults interact, communicate, and perceive themselves. This critical developmental period, marked by the transition from adolescence to adulthood, involves navigating complex social landscapes, forming identities, and seeking a sense of belonging. Social media platforms, with their emphasis on likes, comments, and followers, have become a significant arena for these activities. However, the reliance on social media for validation and approval can profoundly impact the personal and social self-concept of young adults. The need for external validation, driven by the desire to be accepted and liked by peers, can lead to problematic social media use, including behaviors such as excessive time spent online. Garibaldi et al. (2022) explored motivations behind social media use and how these motivations may differ across various social media platforms. Feelings of disconnection predicted more total time spent on social media across platforms. Additionally, using social media for friendship and information was associated with higher levels of social media use. The study also found that the intrinsic aspiration for affiliation, like the desire for meaningful relationships, significantly predicted higher self-reported intention to use social media. The results also highlighted the importance of considering different social media platforms and the specific motivations for their use when examining their impact on psychological well-being.

The complex relationship between self-concept, external validation seeking, and problematic social media use among young adults was explored in a study by Maza (2022), *Examining Personal Self-Concept, Social Self-Concept, and External Validation Seeking As*

*Predictors of Problematic Social Media Use in 18 To 22 Year Olds*, it concluded that individuals with an unstable self-concept may engage in external validation seeking, potentially leading to problematic social media use. This research is relevant to Cluster B Personality because individuals with these disorders often exhibit behaviors and traits such as emotional instability, attention-seeking, and a heightened need for admiration, which can be linked to external validation seeking. The study's focus on external validation seeking and self-concept can share information on the motivations behind social media use in individuals with Cluster B Personality Disorders. For example, those with narcissistic traits may use social media as a platform for validation and admiration, while those with borderline traits may seek reassurance and connection to mitigate feelings of emptiness or insecurity. The compulsive and excessive use of social media can exacerbate symptoms or lead to negative consequences in personal and social domains, highlighting the importance of understanding the underlying motivations and patterns of social media use in this population (Maza, 2022).

A study conducted by Akça et al. (2020) explored the relationship between Cluster B Personality Disorders and social media use among university students. The study revealed several significant associations between personality features and social media use. Participants with higher levels of Social Media Disorder demonstrated elevated levels of Antisocial, Histrionic, Borderline, and Narcissistic Personality Disorder features compared to those with lower levels of Social Media Disorder. Regression analyses indicated that addictive use of social media, daily duration of social media, and frequency of posting on social media were predicted by Histrionic Personality Disorder features. Moreover, frequent posting was predicted by Narcissistic Personality Disorder features. The results suggested that certain personality traits,

such as Histrionic and Narcissistic characteristics, may predispose individuals to addictive and increased engagement in social media. These findings underscored the importance of considering personality factors in understanding problematic social media use, especially among young adults. The study added valuable insight into the complex interplay between personality disorders and social media use, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and preventive measures in addressing problematic social media behaviors.

Savci et al. (2019) comprehensive study offered additional insights into how social media platforms serve as both a reflection and amplifier of personality traits, particularly within the Cluster B spectrum. It explored the intricate relationship between Cluster B Personality Disorders and social media use and discussed how social media platforms served as both a medium for expressing personality traits and a catalyst for exacerbating underlying disorders within the Cluster B spectrum. For example, individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder exhibited attention-seeking behaviors on social media, seeking validation and admiration through posts. Similarly, those with Histrionic Personality Disorder engaged in dramatic and attention-grabbing posts or videos to fulfill their need for constant stimulation and approval. While some individuals with specific disorders, such as Borderline Personality Disorder, use social media as a means of connecting with others and seeking support, Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder use social media platforms for manipulation, exploitation, or to engage in risky behaviors.

Adding depth to the exploration of personality disorders and social media, Saghih (2023) investigated the role of impulsivity, self-esteem, and social desirability, traits of Cluster B Personality Disorders, in shaping individuals' susceptibility to social media influences. The study

illuminated how individuals' characteristics may influence their susceptibility to social media influences. Notably, it unveiled a relationship between impulsivity and the likelihood of being influenced by social media content and suggested that individuals with higher levels of impulsivity, a trait often associated with Cluster B Personality Disorders, exhibited greater susceptibility to excessive social media use. This study underscored the complexity of the interaction between personality traits and the enduring effects of social media on individuals' behaviors and beliefs.

In further examining the relationship between personality traits and social media behavior, Tang et al. (2022) looked into the fascinating dynamics of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, collectively known as the Dark Triad. Individuals with higher levels of these traits were more likely to exhibit addictive social media behaviors. Additionally, the study uncovered indirect associations, showing that motivations mediated the relationship between dark personality traits and social media. Specifically, individuals high in dark personality traits were more likely to engage in social media use for a diverse range of motivations that others did not experience. Individuals with dark personality traits, such as narcissism and psychopathy, were prone to problematic social media use. Interestingly, while narcissism had a negative impact on relationship maintenance motivation in the context of social media, psychopathy demonstrated a positive influence. These findings emphasized the need for a deeper understanding of how different personality traits can manifest in online behaviors and contribute to addictive patterns of social media use. Motivations like self-expression and communication, which are often considered benign, can act as channels through which individuals with dark personality traits reinforce their addictive behaviors. Individuals with

narcissistic tendencies may seek validation and admiration online, while Machiavellian and psychopathic individuals may manipulate social media for personal gain or thrill-seeking purposes.

Brailovskaia et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between two forms of narcissism, grandiose and vulnerable, and social media in a sample of 327 Facebook users. Grandiose narcissism is characterized by self-confidence and a desire for admiration, while vulnerable narcissism is marked by insecurity and hypersensitivity to social evaluations. Results confirmed that both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism were positively associated with social media. These findings suggest that similar mechanisms might underlie the risk of developing addictive social media use in individuals with elevated levels of narcissism.

A study by Lyvers et al. (2022) explored the relationship between narcissism, a key trait in Cluster B Personality Disorders, and symptoms of social media and internet addiction. This research is particularly relevant to understanding the behavioral patterns associated with Cluster B Personality Disorders. The study found that narcissistic traits were significant predictors of both social media and internet addiction symptoms. This suggested that individuals with narcissistic tendencies, characteristic of some Cluster B disorders, may be more prone to seeking validation and admiration through social media platforms. Additionally, the study highlighted the potential for social media served as a medium for individuals with these personality disorders to engage in behaviors that align with their narcissistic traits, such as self-promotion and attention-seeking.

Furthermore, the correlation between self-objectification and self-promotion or attention-seeking behavior provided insight into the complexities of social media behaviors, particularly

concerning personality disorders. One notable outcome from the study *Me, My Selfie, and I: The Relations Between Selfie Behaviors, Body Image, Self-Objectification, and Self-Esteem in Young Women* (Veldhuis et al., 2019) was the positive association between self-objectification engagement in self-promotion or attention-seeking behavior. Self-objectification, defined as viewing oneself primarily as an object to be looked at, was significantly and positively related to all aspects of self-promotion or attention-seeking behavior, including preoccupation, selection, editing, and posting of content. This finding suggested that individuals who engage in self-objectification are more likely to invest time and effort in creating and sharing content, possibly as a means of seeking validation or approval based on their physical appearance. This association between self-objectification and self-promotion or attention-seeking behavior can be particularly relevant when considering personality disorders. Individuals with Cluster B Personality Disorders often exhibit a tendency to manipulate and exploit others for personal gain. The use of social media as a means of self-promotion or attention-seeking behavior could align with the manipulative tendencies observed in individuals with Cluster B Personality Disorders (Farrell, 2013). Furthermore, the positive feedback or validation received through likes and positive reactions to content posted online may serve to reinforce the behavior in individuals with Cluster B Personality Disorders, potentially perpetuating a cycle of seeking external validation and attention. This cycle could exacerbate existing traits associated with Cluster B personality disorders, such as narcissism and impulsivity (Jones & Paulhus, 2014). In summary, the positive association between self-objectification and engagement in self-promotion or attention-seeking behavior observed in the study may have implications for individuals with Cluster B Personality Disorders, suggesting a potential avenue for understanding their online behavior and motivations (Veldhuis et al., 2019).

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized individuals who spend more time on social media platforms and exhibit certain motivations for their usage will show higher tendencies towards Cluster B Personality Disorder traits. These traits are assessed through The McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD), Short Dark Triad, Antisocial Process Screening Device, and Self-Test Histrionic Personality Disorder.

The Cluster B Personality Disorders often manifest in various forms of interpersonal dysfunction and emotional deregulation, making them particularly pertinent to the motivations for social media use outlined by Rodgers et al. (2021). Antisocial Personality Disorder characterized by a disregard for others' rights and criminal behavior, intersects with the motivations for Appearance on social media platforms. Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder may utilize social media to bolster their image and manipulate perceptions, leveraging appearance-focused content to project an idealized self-image and gain social advantage. Borderline Personality Disorder, marked by unstable relationships and intense emotions, could be linked to the Connection motivation, as individuals may use social media as a means of seeking reassurance and validation to mitigate their fear of abandonment. Histrionic Personality Disorder, typified by attention-seeking behavior, may correlate with motivations for Popularity, as individuals strive to garner admiration and recognition online, mirroring their offline tendencies. Similarly, Narcissistic Personality Disorder, characterized by grandiosity and a need for admiration, may align with motivations for Popularity and Appearance, as individuals seek to

project an idealized self-image and garner admiration through their online presence. Understanding the interplay between these personality disorders and social media motivations can provide valuable insights into how individuals with Cluster B traits navigate and engage with digital platforms, shedding light on the complex dynamics underlying their online behavior and its implications for mental health and well-being.

*Hypothesis 1:* Individuals who have a high amount of total daily hours on social media platforms will score higher on the Cluster B personality screening scales: Mclean Screening Instrument for BPD (MSI-BPD), Short Dark Triad, Antisocial Process Screening Device, or Self-Test Histrionic Personality Disorder.

*Hypothesis 2:* Individuals who score higher on the Motivations for Social Media Use Scale (MSMU) will also score higher on the Cluster B personality screening scales: Mclean Screening Instrument for BPD (MSI-BPD), Short Dark Triad, Antisocial Process Screening Device, or Self-Test Histrionic Personality Disorder.

*Hypothesis 3:* Individuals who score higher on the Motivation for Social Media Scale (MSMU) Popularity Subscale and Appearance Subscale will score higher on the Short Dark Triad.

*Hypothesis 4:* Individuals who score higher on the Motivation for Social Media Scale (MSMU) Popularity Subscale will score higher on the Self-Test Histrionic Personality Scale.

*Hypothesis 5:* Individuals who score higher on the Motivation for Social Media Scale (MSMU) Appearance Subscale will score higher on the Antisocial Process Screening Device.



*Hypothesis 6:* Individuals who score higher on the Motivation for Social Media Scale (MSMU) Connections Subscale will score higher on The McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD).

## **Design**

Data was collected using an online Qualtrics survey that incorporated the McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD; Zanarini et al., 2005), The Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014), Antisocial Process Screening Device (Frick & Hare, 2002), Self-Test Histrionic Personality Disorder (Olivardia, 2022), Motivations for Social Media Use Scale (MSMU; Rodgers et al., 2020) and a set of questions created based on the Margetts et al. (2015) definition of social media. Demographic information was also collected. The present study used a correlational design to analyze the relationship between social media use and Cluster B Personality Disorders.

## **Participants**

A total of 185 participants took the survey. Participants were recruited from the University of Central Florida (UCF) SONA System and received course credit/extra credit for their participation. The UCF Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study.

Females made up approximately 124 participants, which is 60.54% of participants, while a total of 59 males constituted 36.76%. Individuals identifying as Queer, Non-binary, or Gender Non-Conforming represent approximately 2.7%, totaling 3 participants. The participants ranged in age between 18 and 49 years old. The mean age of the dataset was approximately 19.81 years, with a standard deviation of approximately 3.98 years.

Out of a total of 185 individuals, the ethnic breakdown is as follows: White individuals represent 120 participants, which is 46.49% of the total, 45 Hispanic or Latino/a/x participants comprising of 20% of the group, and 19 Black or African American participants account for 10.27% of the group.

## **CHAPTER 4: MATERIALS**

### **McLean Screening Instrument for BPD (MSI-BPD; Zanarini et al., 2005)**

The McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD; Zanarini et al., 2005) identifies individuals who may be experiencing symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). The MSI-BPD consists of 10 self-reported items designed to assess various aspects of BPD symptomatology. The MSI-BPD is derived from a subset of questions within the Diagnostic Interview for *DSM-IV* Personality Disorders, ensuring its foundation in established diagnostic criteria. Its questions inquire about emotional instability, identity disturbances, interpersonal relationships, impulsivity, and self-harm tendencies. Each item is scored dichotomously, with a rating of 1 denoting the presence and 0 denoting the absence of symptoms. Scoring on the MSI-BPD ranges from 0 to 10, with a score of 7 or higher suggesting a high likelihood of BPD. The MSI-BPD includes ten items, each designed to assess the presence of Borderline Personality Disorder symptoms, such as "Do you often feel empty or emotionally numb?" (Zanarini et al., 2005) Reliability and validity assessments demonstrate the psychometric properties of the MSI-BPD, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.78 indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Zimmerman & Balling, 2019).

### **Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014)**

The Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014) assesses three distinct, but related, personality traits: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. The inclusion of the Short Dark Triad in this study was motivated by its relevance to various interpersonal and societal outcomes, including unethical behavior, interpersonal manipulation, and exploitative tendencies

relating to Narcissistic Personality Disorder. The Machiavellianism subscale probes for tendencies toward manipulation and strategic behavior. The narcissism subscale addresses aspects like self-centeredness, grandiosity, and entitlement. Lastly, the psychopathy subscale examines traits such as callousness, lack of empathy, and impulsivity. For Machiavellianism, participants consider the statement “It’s not wise to tell your secrets.” This item reflects the tendency to manipulate others for personal gain. In assessing narcissism, participants rate their agreement with the statement “I am entitled to more respect than the average person,” capturing a sense of entitlement and grandiosity. Finally, for psychopathy, participants consider the statement “I never feel guilty over hurting others,” reflecting a lack of remorse and empathy. Each item is rated on a scale, typically ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), allowing for the quantification of these dark personality traits. Each subscale (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) consists of a set number of items, and scores are summed within each subscale to yield separate scores for each trait. Studies find internal consistencies ranging from 0.65 to 0.88 for the subscales, indicating acceptable reliability. Additionally, the measure has shown convergent validity with related constructs, such as aggression and unethical behavior (Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

### **Antisocial Process Screening Device (Frick & Hare, 2002)**

The Antisocial Process Screening Device, developed by Frick et al., (2002), measures the interpersonal, affective, and behavioral features of psychopathy. An example item from the Antisocial Process Screening Device might be “I lie or cheat if I have to.” Participants respond to items on a 3-point scale (0 = *not at all true*, 1 = *sometimes true*, 2 = *definitely true*). Scores are summed across items to generate a total score, with higher scores indicating a greater likelihood

of antisocial behavior. The Antisocial Process Screening Device demonstrates strong psychometric properties, including good internal consistency and validity. Studies report high test-retest reliability and convergent validity with other measures of antisocial behavior. Additionally, the measure has shown utility in predicting various outcomes related to antisocial behavior, such as aggression and delinquency (Frick & Hare, 2002). Munoz and Frick (2007) found moderate correlations between self-report scores on the APSD and parent ratings of psychopathic traits. The self-report scores were moderately stable across 1-2 years and showed significant correlations with measures of antisocial behavior both concurrently and predicatively.

### **Self-Test Histrionic Personality (Olivardia, 2022)**

The Self-Test Histrionic Personality Disorder, developed by Olivardia (2022), was employed in this study to assess histrionic personality traits among participants. This measure assesses attention-seeking, dramatic expression, emotional volatility, and desire for approval and admiration from others. Responses are provided on a Likert scale ranging from "*Very Often*" to "*Never*", indicating the extent to which each statement applies to the participants. Each question presents a statement related to histrionic symptoms, and respondents are prompted to select the frequency with which they experience or engage in these behaviors. A sample item from the Self-Test Histrionic Personality might be "I often seek attention and admiration from others." Scores are typically summed to generate a total score, with higher scores indicating a greater presence of histrionic personality traits. The Self-Test Histrionic Personality demonstrates satisfactory internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Additionally, the measure has been validated against clinical interviews and other established measures of histrionic personality traits (Olivardia, 2022).

### **Motivations for Social Media Use Scale (MSMU; Rodgers et al, 2020)**

In this study, the Motivations for Social Media Use Scale (MSMU), developed by Rodgers et al., (2020), assesses individuals' motivations for engaging with social media platforms. The MSMU provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the diverse reasons underlying social media use, encompassing various social, emotional, and functional motivations. The MSMU consists of items designed to assess different motivations for social media use across several dimensions, such as social interaction, information seeking, entertainment, and self-expression. An example item from the Motivations for Social Media Use Scale (MSMU) might be "I use social media to stay connected with friends and family." Responses are provided on Likert scales, with participants indicating the extent to which each item reflects their reasons for using social media. Participants rate their agreement with each item on a Likert scale, typically ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Scores are summed or averaged across items within each subscale to obtain scores for different motivations for social media use, such as social interaction, information seeking, and entertainment. The Motivations for Social Media Use Scale (MSMU) has demonstrated good reliability and validity in assessing various motivations for using social media. Studies have reported strong internal consistency for the subscales, as well as evidence of convergent and validity. Additionally, the scale has shown stability over time, indicating strong test-retest reliability (Rodgers et al, 2020).

### **Social Media Questionnaire (Margetts et al., 2015)**

The Social Media Questionnaire was utilized in this study to assess various aspects of participants' social media use. The questionnaire draws on the definition of social media

provided by Margetts et al. (2015), which characterizes social media as internet-based platforms facilitating the creation and exchange of user-generated content using mobile or web-based technologies. The Social Media Questionnaire covers a wide range of social media-related behaviors, and attitudes such as platform preferences, posting behaviors, and attitudes toward photo editing. The questions include topics like identifying what platforms participants consider social media, participant's most frequently used platform, total daily social media usage time, posting frequency, purpose/content in posting, number of followers, and photo editing usage.

In the Social Media Questionnaire (Margetts et al., 2015), participants are asked to indicate which platforms they consider to be social media by checking all that apply, with options including TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Discord, Facebook, YouTube, Reddit, OnlyFans, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Goodreads, and an option for "Other." Responses to items in the Social Media Questionnaire are typically used descriptively rather than to generate total scores. Each question provides insight into participants' social media usage patterns, preferences, and attitudes. For example, responses to questions about the frequency of social media use, preferred platforms, posting habits, and use of filters or editing tools can offer valuable information about participants' engagement with social media. The Social Media Questionnaire lacks traditional scoring and psychometric properties such as reliability and validity because it primarily collects descriptive data about participants' social media behaviors and attitudes. However, the questionnaire can still provide valuable insights into individuals' social media habits and perceptions, allowing researchers to explore patterns and trends in social media usage (Margetts et al., 2015).

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

### Hypothesis 1

*Table 1: Correlations between Total Daily Hours Spent on Social Media and Cluster B Personality Disorders*

*Scales*

	Pearson Correlation with Total Daily Hours Spent on Social Media	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mclean Screening Instrument for BPD	.065	.380
Self-Test Histrionic Personality	.184*	.012
Antisocial Process Screening Device	.183*	.013
Narcissistic Personality Disorder (Combined Short Dark Triad Subscales)	.218**	.003
Short Dark Triad Subscale: Machiavellianism	.195**	.008
Short Dark Triad Subscale: Narcissism	.029	.698
Short Dark Triad Subscale: Psychopathy	.259**	<.001

*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Firstly, a significant positive correlation was found between total daily hours spent on social media and Self-Test Histrionic Personality ( $r = .184$ ,  $p = .012$ ). A significant positive



correlation was also observed between the total daily hours spent on social media and the Antisocial Process Screening Device ( $r = .183, p = .013$ ). Also, the Short Dark Triad Subscale: Machiavellianism had a significant positive correlation between total daily hours spent on social media ( $r = .195, p = .008$ ). Lastly, a significant positive correlation was exhibited between Narcissistic Personality Disorder (combined Short Dark Triad Subscales) ( $r = .218, p = .003$ ) and total daily hours spent on social media. Additionally, there were more moderately positive correlations with the Mclean Screening Instrument for BPD (MSI-BPD) ( $r = .065, p = .380$ ) and the Short Dark Triad Subscale: Psychopathy ( $r = .259, p < .001$ ). However, the correlation with the Short Dark Triad Subscale: Narcissism was not significant ( $r = .029, p = .698$ ). Notably, the strongest correlations existed between total daily hours spent on social media and the Short Dark Triad Subscale: Machiavellianism ( $r = .195, p = .004$ ), the Short Dark Triad Subscale: Psychopathy ( $r = .259, p < .001$ ), and Narcissistic Personality Disorder (combined Short Dark Triad Subscales) ( $r = .218, p = .007$ ), indicating a strong relationship between more total daily hours spent on social media use and dark personality traits.

## Hypothesis 2

*Table 2: The Correlations between High Motivation for Social Media Scale Scores and High Cluster B Personality Disorder Scale Scores*

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
The McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD)	.316**	<.001
Self-Test Histrionic Personality	.502**	<.001
Antisocial Process Screening Device	.445**	<.001
Narcissistic Personality Disorder (Combined Short Dark Triad Subscales)	.411**	<.001
Short Dark Triad Subscale: Machiavellianism	.349**	<.001
Short Dark Triad Subscale: Narcissism	.322**	<.001
Short Dark Triad Subscale: Psychopathy	.293**	<.001

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Total score on the Motivations of Social Media Scale positively correlated with The McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD) at  $r = 0.316$ , Self-Test Histrionic Personality at  $r = 0.502$ , Antisocial Process Screening Device at  $r = 0.445$ , Narcissistic Personality Disorder (combined Short Dark Triad subscales), Short Dark Triad Subscale: Narcissism at  $r = 0.322$ , Short Dark Triad Subscale: Psychopathy at  $r = 0.293$ , and Short Dark Triad Subscale: Machiavellianism at  $r = 0.349$ , all with p-values less than 0.001. These correlations suggested moderate to strong positive associations between Motivations of Social Media Scale and Cluster B Personality Disorder scales.

### Hypothesis 3

*Table 3: The Correlations between Motivations for Social Media: Appearance and Popularity Subscale and the Short Dark Triad*

	MSMU Appearance Subscale	MSMU Popularity Subscale
Short Dark Triad Subscale: Machiavellianism	.321** (p<.001)	.378** (p <.001)
Short Dark Triad Subscale: Narcissism	.238** (p<.001)	.256** (p<.001)
Short Dark Triad Subscale: Psychopathy	.316** (p<.001)	.343** (p<.001)
Narcissistic Personality Disorder (combined Short Dark Triad subscales)	.377** (p<.001)	.424** (p<.001)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

MSMU Popularity Subscale exhibited moderate positive correlations with Short Dark Triad Subscale: Narcissism ( $r = 0.256$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Short Dark Triad Subscale: Psychopathy ( $r = 0.343$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and Short Dark Triad Subscale: Machiavellianism ( $r = 0.378$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Similarly, MSMU Appearance Subscale demonstrated moderate positive correlations with: Short Dark Triad Subscale: Narcissism ( $r = 0.238$ ,  $p = .001$ ), Short Dark Triad Subscale: Psychopathy ( $r = 0.316$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and Short Dark Triad Subscale: Machiavellianism ( $r = 0.321$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Additionally, both MSMU Popularity Subscale and MSMU Appearance Subscale showed strong

positive correlations with the overall Short Dark Triad (combined subscales) ( $r = 0.424$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $r = 0.377$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively). This demonstrated that individuals who score higher on the Motivation for Social Media Appearance and Popularity Subscales will score higher on the Short Dark Triad Subscales.

#### Hypothesis 4

*Table 4: Correlations between Motivations for Social Media: Popularity Subscale and Self-Test Histrionic Personality*

Variable	Pearson Correlation
Self-Test Histrionic Personality	.455** ( $p < .001$ )

*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the MSMU Popularity Subscale and Self-Test Histrionic Personality Scale, with a correlation coefficient of 0.455 ( $p < .001$ ). This indicated that there is a moderate positive linear association between the two constructs. In practical terms, individuals who scored higher on the MSMU Popularity Subscale tended to exhibit higher scores on the Self-Test Histrionic Personality Scale measure.

## Hypothesis 5

*Table 5: Correlations between Motivations for Social Media: Appearance Subscale and Antisocial Process Screening Device*

Variable	Pearson Correlation
Antisocial Process Screening Device	.393** (p< .001) (N=185)

*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

The correlation analysis indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between the MSMU Appearance Subscale and the Antisocial Process Screening Device, with a correlation coefficient of 0.393 ( $p < .001$ ). This demonstrated a moderate positive linear association between the two constructs. Specifically, individuals who scored higher on the MSMU Appearance Subscale tended to exhibit higher scores on the Antisocial Process Screening Device measure.

## Hypothesis 6

*Table 6: Correlations between Motivations for Social Media: Connections Subscale and The McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder*

Variable	Pearson Correlation
McLean Screening Instrument for BPD (MSI-BPD)	.222* (p=0.002)

*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The correlation analysis unveiled a statistically significant positive relationship between the MSMU Connections Subscale and The McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD) variables, with a correlation coefficient of 0.222 ( $p = 0.002$ ). This indicated a mild positive linear association between the two constructs. Specifically, individuals who scored higher on the MSMU Connections Subscale tended to exhibit slightly higher scores on The McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD).

## Additional Findings

*Table 7: Correlations between Motivation for Social Media Subscales and the Cluster B Personality Disorder Scales*

	MSMU Values and Interests Subscale	MSMU Popularity Subscale	MSMU Appearance Subscale	MSMU Connections Subscale
Self-Test Histrionic Personality	.176* (p = .017)	.455** (p = <.001)	.463** (p = <.001)	.405** (p = <.001)
Antisocial Screening Device	.046 (p=.535)	.455** (p=<.001)	.393** (p = <.001)	.366** (p = <.001)
The Mclean Screening	.152* (p=	.248** (p=	.331 (p = <.001)	.222** (p =

	MSMU Values and Interests Subscale	MSMU Popularity Subscale	MSMU Appearance Subscale	MSMU Connections Subscale
Instrument for BPD	.040)	<.001)		.002)
Dark Triad	.057 (p= .442)	.424** (p= <.001)	.377** (p = <.001)	.330** (p = <.001)

*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.0 level (2-tailed).*

The Mclean Screening Instrument for BPD had the highest correlation with the MSMU Appearance Subscale with a Pearson Correlation = 0.331, statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The next highest correlation was between the MSI-BPD and MSMU Popularity Subscale with a correlation of 0.248, which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The MSMU Connections Subscale had a correlation of 0.222\*\* (p = 0.002). Finally, the lowest correlation was between the MSI-BPD and the MSMU was the MSMU Values and Interests Subscale at 0.152\*\* (p=.040). Therefore, among the MSMU subscales, the MSMU Appearance Subscale had the strongest significant correlation with MSI-BPD.

The Dark Triad had the highest correlation with the MSMU Popularity Subscale with a correlation of 0.424\*\*. The next highest correlation was between the Short Dark Triad and the MSMU Appearance Subscale with a correlation of 0.377\*\*. The Dark Triad and the MSMU Connections Subscale had a correlation of 0.330\*\*. The correlations were significant at p= <.001. The lowest correlation was between the Dark Triad and the MSMU Value and Interests Subscale with a Pearson Correlation = 0.057 (p=.442).

Self-Test Histrionic Personality had the highest correlation with the MSMU Appearance Subscale at 0.463\*\*. The next highest correlation was between the Self-Test Histrionic and the MSMU was the MSMU Popularity Subscale at .455\*\*. The MSMU Popularity Subscale and the Self-Test Histrionic had a correlation of 0.405\*\* and showed a slightly lower correlation

compared to the previous two. The correlations were statistically significant at  $<.001$ . There was a statistically significant positive low correlation ( $r = 0.176^*$ ,  $p = 0.017$ ) between the Self-Test Histrionic and the MSMU Values and Interests Subscale.

The highest correlation with ASPD was with the MSMU Popularity Subscale at  $0.455^{**}$ , followed closely by the MSMU Appearance Subscale at  $0.455^{**}$  and MSMU Connections Subscale at  $.366^{**}$ . The correlations were significant at  $p = <.001$ . The MSMU Values and Interests Subscale also showed a significant correlation with ASPD at  $.046$ , but slightly lower compared to the other three subscales.

*Table 8: Correlations between Motivations for Social Media Questions and The Mclean Screening Instrument for BPD*

Motivation for Social Media Question Variable	The Mclean Screening Instrument for BPD
MSMU Question #17 “So people see me looking my best”	$.356^{**}$ ( $p = <.001$ )

*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

There were other notable findings with the correlations between the Motivations for Social Media Scale (MSMU) questions and The Mclean Screening Instrument for BPD. The strongest positive correlation was with MSMU Question #17: “So people see me looking my best”, with a correlation coefficient of  $0.356^{**}$ , significant at  $<.001$ .



Table 9: Correlations between Motivations for Social Media Questions and the Dark Triad

Motivations for Social Media Scale Question Variable	The Dark Triad
MSMU Question #5: “So more people know and like me”	0.450** (p= <.001)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There were other notable findings with the correlations between the Motivations for Social Media Scale (MSMU) questions and the Dark Triad scale. The strongest positive correlation with the combined subscales was with MSMU Question #8: “So more people know and like me”, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.450\*\* with a significance value of <.001.

Table 10: Correlations between Motivations for Social Media Questions and the Self-Test Histrionic Personality Disorder

Motivation for Social Media Question Variable	Self-Test Histrionic Personality
MSMU Question #11: “To get my friends' opinion on how I look”	.423** (p= <.001)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The highest correlation coefficient between Self-Test Histrionic Personality and the Motivations for Social Media Scale (MSMU) questions was found with MSMU Question #11 “To get my friends' opinion on how I look”, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of .423\*\*, significant value at <.001.

*Table 11: Correlations between Motivations for Social Media Questions and the Antisocial Process Screening Device*

Motivation for Social Media Question Variable	Antisocial Process Screening Device
MSMU Question #17 “So people see me looking my best”	.408** (p=<.001)

*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The highest correlation coefficient between the Antisocial Process Screening Device and the Motivations for Social Media Scale (MSMU) questions was found with MSMU Question #17 “So people see me looking my best” with a Pearson correlation coefficient of .408\*\*, significant at <.001.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

This study explores the relationship between social media usage patterns and Cluster B Personality Disorders, encompassing Antisocial, Histrionic, Borderline, and Narcissistic Personality Disorders. The results suggest a significant relationship between extensive social media use, specific motivations for using social media, and higher tendencies toward Cluster B Personality Disorder traits.

*Hypothesis 1* posited that individuals who spend more time daily on social media platforms would score higher on the Cluster B personality screening scales. The results of Hypothesis 1 indicate a significant positive correlation between total daily hours spent on social media and various Cluster B Personality Disorder traits. This suggests that individuals who engage more frequently with social media platforms tend to exhibit characteristics associated with these personality disorders. The findings underscore the influence of online interactions on psychosocial development and behavior, highlighting the need for further research to explore the underlying mechanisms and implications of excessive social media use on personality traits.

*Hypothesis 2* predicted that individuals with higher scores on the Motivations for Social Media Use Scale (MSMU) would also score higher on the Cluster B personality scales. The data strongly support this hypothesis, showing moderate to strong positive correlations between motivations for social media use and traits of Borderline, Histrionic, Antisocial, and Narcissistic Personality Disorders. This suggests that individuals with these personality disorders or traits may use social media to fulfill specific emotional and social needs, such as seeking attention, validation, or escapism.

The results for *Hypothesis 3* demonstrate a significant positive correlation between the Motivation for Social Media Use (MSMU) Popularity Subscale and Appearance Subscale scores and the Short Dark Triad scores. This suggests that individuals who use social media primarily for popularity and appearance reasons tend to exhibit higher levels of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. These findings indicate that the pursuit of social recognition and an idealized self-image on social media platforms are associated with dark personality traits. This aligns with the theoretical understanding that individuals with dark personality traits may use social media as a platform to manipulate and exploit others for personal gain, and to enhance their social standing and self-image.

The analysis of *Hypothesis 4* reveals a statistically significant positive relationship between the MSMU Popularity Subscale scores and the Self-Test Histrionic Personality Scale scores. This indicates that individuals who use social media primarily for popularity reasons are more likely to exhibit traits associated with Histrionic Personality Disorder, such as attention-seeking behavior and a strong desire for approval and admiration from others. This finding suggests that social media platforms may serve as a platform for individuals with Histrionic Personality Disorder to engage in behaviors that fulfill their need for constant attention and validation.

The results of *Hypothesis 5* show a significant positive correlation between the MSMU Appearance Subscale scores and the Antisocial Process Screening Device scores. This suggests that individuals who use social media primarily for appearance-related reasons tend to exhibit higher levels of traits associated with Antisocial Personality Disorder. This finding supports the notion that individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder may use social media as a tool to

enhance their image and manipulate others' perceptions, potentially as a means to achieve their goals and exploit others.

*Hypothesis 6* predicted that individuals who score higher on the MSMU Connections Subscale would score higher on The McLean Screening Instrument for Borderline Personality Disorder (MSI-BPD). The data supports this hypothesis, indicating a positive correlation between the desire for social connections on social media and symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder. This suggests that individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder may use social media as a means to seek connection and validation, potentially exacerbating their symptoms.

The results suggest significant associations between Motivation for Social Media Scale (MSMU) behaviors and Cluster B Personality Disorder traits. Specifically, individuals exhibiting higher levels of motivation related to appearance and popularity on social media platforms tend to display characteristics associated with Cluster B Personality Disorders. This implies that certain patterns of social media engagement may be indicative of underlying personality tendencies linked to attention-seeking behavior, impulsivity, and interpersonal difficulties. The findings highlight the potential utility of assessing social media motivations as a supplementary tool in identifying individuals at risk for or displaying traits of Cluster B personality disorders.

The correlation between the Motivations for Social Media Use Scale (MSMU) and Cluster B Personality Disorder traits reveals significant psychological implications within social media. Individuals predominantly driven by appearance and popularity motives reflect a broader societal trend towards external validation and image cultivation, shaping a digital landscape where self-presentation and social approval are paramount. However, this emphasis on surface-

level validation also perpetuates a space where authenticity may be compromised, fostering a culture of comparison and insecurity. Furthermore, the correlation between appearance and popularity motivations and Cluster B Personality Disorder traits suggests a deeper intertwining of online behavior and underlying psychological characteristics. Individuals prioritizing attention and validation on social media platforms may exhibit traits like narcissism, histrionic personality, or antisocial tendencies. These traits manifest in harmful ways, such as excessive self-promotion, manipulation of others, or disregard for boundaries. Consequently, such behaviors contribute to a harmful online environment characterized by exploitation, conflict, and emotional volatility, impacting both individuals and the broader digital community.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between social media use and personality disorders, specifically Cluster B Personality Disorders. It supports the notion that social media can serve as a platform that exacerbates or reflects certain personality traits. The findings provide empirical evidence for theories suggesting a link between digital behaviors and psychological constructs, such as the self-presentation theory, which posits that individuals use social media to manage their impressions and seek validation.

This research enhances the theoretical understanding of the intersection between social media use and Cluster B Personality Disorders. It provides empirical support for the hypothesis that certain social media behaviors, particularly those related to appearance and popularity are associated with traits of Antisocial, Histrionic, Borderline, and Narcissistic Personality Disorders. This study contributes to the self-presentation theory by illustrating how individuals with these personality traits may use social media as a platform for impression management and

validation seeking. Additionally, it highlights the potential of social media as both a mirror and a magnifier of certain personality traits, offering a new perspective on the relationship between online behaviors and underlying psychological constructs.

## **Practical Implications**

The findings of this study have important implications for mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers. By identifying specific social media behaviors associated with Cluster B Personality Disorders, mental health practitioners can develop more targeted interventions and therapeutic approaches. Educators can use these insights to design digital literacy programs that teach responsible social media use and help students recognize and manage unhealthy online behaviors. For policymakers, this research underscores the need for regulations and policies that promote mental health awareness and digital well-being, especially among vulnerable populations.

## **Limitations**

One limitation of this study is the reliance on self-report measures, which are subject to distortion and social desirability bias. Additionally, the correlation design does not allow for causal inferences. In addition, the sample was comprised of college students, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other populations.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research should aim to explore the causal relationships between social media use and Cluster B Personality Disorders. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into

the directionality of these associations and the potential long-term effects of social media on personality development. Additionally, investigating the role of specific social media platforms and the content of online interactions could further elucidate the nuances of this relationship. It would also be beneficial to examine the impact of interventions designed to reduce problematic social media use and improve mental health outcomes in individuals with Cluster B Personality traits.

Future research could also explore the psychological complexities of social media influencers, delving into the motivations, challenges, and mental health implications of this unique online role. Investigating the factors that drive individuals to become influencers, the stressors they face in maintaining their online persona, and the impact on their mental well-being can provide valuable insights into the complexities of digital fame. Additionally, examining how influencers' behaviors and content affect their audience's mental health and perceptions is crucial. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing support mechanisms and mental health resources tailored to the needs of influencers and their followers, ultimately fostering a healthier social media environment.

## **Conclusion**

This study explores the relationship between social media use, specific motivations for using social media, and Cluster B Personality Disorders. The findings suggest that excessive social media use and certain motivations for using social media are associated with higher tendencies towards traits of Antisocial, Histrionic, Borderline, and Narcissistic Personality Disorders. These results underscore the importance of considering the psychological implications of social media use, particularly for individuals with or at risk for Cluster B Personality



Disorders. Further research is needed to explore the causal relationships and potential interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of social media on mental health.

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