

Beyond the Camera Lens - Self-Identity and Personal Growth among Adolescents

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Photographic and virtual photo sharing has become an integral part of our lives. Most Internet users that upload and share pictures are adolescents whose self-identity is developing and formed. It refers to the descriptive characteristics, qualities, and abilities that people use to define themselves. This study attempts to examine the interaction between photography language, self-identity and Personal Growth Initiative. The study examines to what extent the use of the camera for self-documentation may positively affect personal growth in the sense of self-esteem, differentiation and self-image.

Methods: A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology was employed when comparing two groups of participants aged 15-18; one of whom participated in a photography course, and the other did not.

Main findings: The results of the study indicated a significant increase in various parameters among the participants who took the photography course: The level of self-esteem, the level of general differentiation, level of satisfaction, and the level of physical and social self-image (two dimensions of self-image).

Conclusions and Implications to practice: This is a pioneering study since it suggests that photography can be used as a contemporary tool for examining the development of self-identity and personal growth among adolescents. This self-photography intervention model can help to expand programs by professionals who aim to strengthen social self-image, self-differentiation and self-esteem among youth.

Keywords: adolescence, introspection, personal growth processes, self-image, self-esteem, differentiation, contemporary photography, self-photography, personal growth processes raise

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