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THE IMPACT OF USING THE SNAPCHAT APP ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' SELF-ASSERTION LEVELS

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to investigate the impact of using the Snapchat app on self-assertion levels among university students. The sample consisted of 57 participants (25 males and 32 females), intentionally selected from the University of Jordan. The experimental group underwent a one-month training program designed to boost self-assertion. Data on self-assertion were gathered using the Self-Assertion Scale for University Students. The results revealed significant improvements in self-assertion within the experimental group after the intervention. Moreover, notable differences were found between post-intervention and follow-up assessments. An independent samples t-test indicated no significant gender differences in pre-test assertiveness scores. Overall, the findings demonstrate that focused short-term training can effectively improve and maintain assertiveness among university students, regardless of gender.

KEYWORDS: Snapchat, Application, Self-Assertion, University, Students.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital world, with often overwhelming content on social media platforms, communication through social media has become common, especially among university students (Burnell et al., 2020). One such platform is Snapchat, a multimedia messaging app that lets users send messages and photos. It is known for its temporary nature and visual style. Snapchat has grown in popularity, ranking just behind Facebook and Instagram, with over 750 million monthly active users worldwide, most of whom are young adults (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2020). When considering how Snapchat influences communication, self-expression, and relationship-building (Dzreke & Dzreke, 2025), this rise in usage prompts us to examine how social media and platforms like Snapchat affect users psychologically and behaviorally. It is crucial for self-assertion, a key social skill that enables people to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and needs honestly, confidently, and respectfully. Self-assertion is vital for building healthy interpersonal relationships; being able to express oneself can also lead to positive outcomes in academics and mental health (Chua & Chang, 2016). This skill is especially relevant during emerging adulthood, a developmental stage characterized by defining oneself as a "young adult" and exploring personal identity and new social relationships (Brown & Lee, 2022).

Nevertheless, the impact of a digital communication platform like Snapchat on self-assertion has not been thoroughly studied. Some research suggests that anonymity and online communication might limit opportunities for direct and confident interpersonal interactions, affecting individuals' assertiveness skills in real life (Dzreke & Dzreke, 2025). Conversely, some scholars argue that digital platforms can provide a unique space where people can creatively express themselves and build confidence in their communication skills (Yang & Brown, 2016). Given Snapchat's widespread use among university students and the importance of self-assertion during this critical developmental stage, it is important to explore the relationship between Snapchat use and self-assertion. This study examines how Snapchat usage influences university students' levels of self-assertion. Exploring this relationship can enhance the understanding of how social media affects overall psychological well-being and offer insights for practitioners aiming to improve students' communication skills and well-being as they transition into society in the digital age (Yang, Holden, and Carter, 2018).

2. SELF-ASSERTION

Self-assertion refers to a person's ability to openly and honestly share their thoughts, feelings, and needs while respecting others' rights. Therefore, it is a vital aspect of psychological and social functioning. Self-assertion features prominently in literature on assertiveness training and has been discussed since the 1960s and 1970s, with links to mental health, relationship building, and personal growth (Alberti & Emmons, 2008). It is often contrasted with passive or aggressive behaviors. Consequently, self-assertion is seen as a balanced, adaptive response that maintains self-respect and social connectedness. The psychological advantages of self-assertion are well-documented, including boosts in self-esteem, decreased anxiety, and better stress management (Speed, Goldstein, and Goldfried, 2018). Self-assertive individuals tend to have healthier boundaries and are more capable of handling peer pressure, making self-assertion a protective factor for adolescents and young adults (Oana and Ona, 2019). Most importantly, self-assertion is positively linked to emotional intelligence and resilience, highlighting its role in proactive coping and emotional regulation (Gultekin, Ozdemir, and Budak, 2018).

Culturally, the way self-assertion is expressed varies across socialization contexts. Individualistic settings generally have more norms that encourage assertiveness compared to collectivist settings, where maintaining interpersonal group harmony may be more important than expressing oneself (Kim et al., 2001). This has implications for development programs and interventions. Staff must be aware of culturally appropriate ways to express self-assertion and respect the socialization patterns of the population when designing program components. Self-assertion training can improve communication skills, conflict resolution, and academic motivation in educational or therapeutic settings (Abu-Hatab, 2022). Life skills programs often include assertiveness strategies, which are important for fostering creativity and personal growth to support psychological well-being. The study indicates that self-assertion is essential for mental health and effective functioning with others (Speed, Goldstein, and Goldfried, 2018).

2.1. *Snapchat Application*

It is a multimedia messaging app with a unique content-sharing approach defined by ephemeral messaging. Snapchat debuted in 2011 and was founded by Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy, and Reggie Brown. It gained popularity due to its distinctive feature, which allows users to send photos

and videos, called "Snaps," that only appear briefly after being viewed (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). The ephemeral nature of its communication sets it apart from other social media platforms, focusing on spontaneous moments and greater privacy compared to the public interactions typical of traditional social media (Astleitner & Schlick, 2024). The camera serves as the primary interface, encouraging users to capture and share their experiences as they occur. In 2013, Snapchat introduced Stories, allowing users to compile Snaps in chronological order for others to view over a 24-hour period. The Stories feature quickly gained popularity and was soon adopted by other platforms (Piwek & Joinson, 2016).

Snapchat's success stems from its appeal to young users, particularly teens and young adults, who enjoy casual and playful communication styles. Snapchat offers many lenses and filters that enhance photos and videos, enabling users to get creative (Dzreke & Dzreke, 2025). It has also expanded with features like Discover, which showcases publishers' content, and Snap Map, a location-sharing tool that allows users to share their location with friends. The continuous growth of Snapchat warrants at least secondary attention, as many initially doubted its business model (Choukas-Bradley *et al.*, 2020). Studies highlight Snapchat's increasing popularity and its potential to reshape the social media landscape, changing how society interacts and shares. Its focus on individuality, privacy, visual storytelling, and real-time communication appeals to users seeking authentic and fleeting connections and experiences (Mellor & Hadi, 2024).

2.2. The Relationship between the Snapchat Application and Self-Assertion

Snapchat's unique features, especially its augmented reality (AR) filters and ephemeral content, could have fundamentally altered how users (particularly young ones) perceive and present themselves (Oana & Ona, 2019). Snapchat's AR filters enable users to modify their physical appearance when posting stories and see their changing looks; often, these filters allow users to enhance features to match societal standards of beauty. While some filters are fun, they also contribute to a new phenomenon called "Snapchat dysmorphia," where users of various social media platforms consider cosmetic procedures to resemble their filtered or avatar images (Abu-Hatab, 2022). This desire to change one's appearance to match their Snapchat depiction arises from the gap between real-life physical presentation and the idealized images seen

online, which can lead to junior high-era misery, low self-esteem, and poor body image (Astleitner & Schlick, 2024). One recently published article summarizes this well by stating that while boys viewed filters as a fun, casual activity, girls saw them as a way to alter their physical appearance, serving as early signs of self-consciousness about their looks. Early use of digital appearance-altering platforms allows users to define and justify their sense of self (Mellor & Hadi, 2024).

Users of Snapchat are empowered to define their identities by curating content that aligns with their preferred self-image. The impermanence of Snapchat encourages impulsiveness in sharing, giving users the freedom to adopt many personalities without the burden of permanence expected by their environments (Dzreke & Dzreke, 2025). It potentially prolongs avenues for self-authenticity, self-selection, and self-assertion, making totality irrelevant for users in this context. However, the pressure users might face to constantly maintain their ideal version could lead to self-objectification. A study comparing Snapchat and Facebook users, mostly among young adults, found that Snapchat users were digital narcissists and self-objectification seekers with lower self-esteem (Burnell *et al.*, 2020). This outcome indicates that Snapchat's format and functions emphasize visual engagement, often with a greater focus on appearance, opposing an authentic self-assertion motive relevant to Snapchat, as we have argued. Snapchat is a tool for self-creative expression, but we must stay alert to the potential psychological effects of using the platform (Brown & Lee, 2022). The influx of idealized images on Snapchat could reinforce unrealistic beauty standards or harm users' self-worth. Educational programs focusing on digital literacy and social media spaces can help users manage their challenges, positively influencing their Snapchat experience (Mellor & Hadi, 2024).

Studies have examined the connection between Snapchat use and self-assertion related to body image, narcissism, self-esteem, and self-perception. One study by Burnell, Kurup, and Underwood (2022) evaluated the relationship between Snapchat lenses (filters that enhance beauty) and body image among users, reporting that regular use of beauty-enhancement lenses was linked to concerns about their body image. This suggests that seeking an idealized appearance created by such filters may impact users' self-perception and self-assertion. Musarrat *et al.* (2022) compared Snapchat and Facebook users, finding that Snapchat users reported higher levels of digital narcissism and self-

objectification, along with lower self-esteem compared to Facebook users. This indicates that Snapchat's social media environment may encourage self-presentation and peer validation, which can influence users' self-assertion.

Aamir, Hassan, and Shams (2022) investigated the combined influence of Instagram and Snapchat use on narcissism in undergraduate students. The study found that worldwide, addictive use of Instagram and Snapchat—especially using beauty filters and sharing selfies—leads to increased narcissistic traits. It suggests that the interactive features of Snapchat encourage self-focus and self-assertion. Barry et al. (2020) examined Snapchat behaviors and traits related to self-perception, such as narcissism and fear of missing out (FoMO). The study indicated that there were some correlations between self-perception traits and Snapchat activity types, but these relationships were weak. Barry et al. suggest that Snapchat partially influences self-assertion, although many other factors also play a role. These studies collectively highlight the complexity of understanding Snapchat and self-assertion, indicating that further research is necessary to better understand socially influenced behaviors on social media and their implications.

2.3. Statement of the Problem

Social media apps, like Snapchat, have quickly shifted from optional to essential, and now almost all university students use a social media app as their main way of communicating. However, microscopic studies focus on training programs centered on specific social media platforms, such as Snapchat, and how these programs support psychological growth, like self-assertion, among university students. Therefore, understanding how training programs based on Snapchat can boost self-assertion levels in university students is important for educators and mental health professionals, especially in supporting personal development and communication within higher education. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by exploring the effects of a Snapchat-based training program on self-assertion levels in university students. It examined changes in self-assertion before and after participating in the Snapchat training to gather empirical evidence about the potential benefits and challenges of using social media platform-based training programs in educational settings.

2.4. Significance of the Study

The importance of this study lies in exploring how digital platforms, especially Snapchat, can serve as

practical tools for personal growth among university students. Incorporating these platforms into educational and psychological training programs offers a new approach to skill development, especially as social media becomes a central part of young adults' lives. Self-assertion, a vital element of effective communication and mental health, is particularly important during college years, when students face academic, social, and emotional challenges. By using a familiar and engaging platform like Snapchat, this study could lead to innovative, accessible, and relatable training methods that boost students' confidence and self-expression in real-life interactions, potentially changing how interventions are delivered in higher education.

2.5. Hypothesis

1. There are statistically significant differences at ($0.05 \leq \alpha$) between the means of self-assertion before and after participating in a month-long training program.
2. There are statistically significant differences at ($0.05 \leq \alpha$) between the means of self-assertion after participation and after one month of follow-up in the training program.
3. There are statistically significant differences at ($0.05 \leq \alpha$) between the means of males and females in self-assertion before the training program.

3. STUDY DESIGN

This study employed a pre-test-post-test control group design and a quasi-experimental method to investigate the impact of a Snapchat-based training program on the self-assertion levels of university students. Participants were randomly assigned to either the control group, which received no intervention, or the experimental group, which participated in the training over four weeks via Snapchat. Using interactive media, scenario-based learning, and real-time communication tools, the training aimed to enhance self-assertion.

3.1. Participants

A sample of the study included 57 university students (25 males and 32 females) enrolled in undergraduate programs at Jordan University. They were selected through purposive sampling because they either had persistent access to Snapchat or had no prior training in communication or critical assertive skills, and they consented to participate throughout the entire brief intervention. Participants were randomly assigned without bias to either the

experimental or control group.

3.2. Tools

To gather the data, the study adopted the self-assertion measure among university students (Wolpe & Lazarus, 1966). It consisted of 30 items, formatted according to a five-point Likert scale, with each item offering five options: always (5), often (4), sometimes (3), rarely (2), and never (1). Regarding the validity and reliability of the scale, it was evaluated and reviewed by psychology professors. They provided comments and suggestions, emphasizing that items should be appropriate to measure the study's aim, easy to understand, and open to a single interpretation, all aligned with the study's purpose. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha and split-half reliability were examined. The scale was administered to 30 students from the sample twice, with a 14-day interval between administrations. The results showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 and a split-half reliability of 0.83.

3.3. Program Description

This training program is designed to investigate the potential effectiveness of a training intervention using the popular chat application Snapchat to improve self-assertion in university students. Self-assertion refers to the ability to state feelings, thoughts, and beliefs directly and confidently while respecting the rights and opinions of others. Focusing on Snapchat to communicate and engage in the training program incorporates technology into the training to help students assert themselves in both digital and real-life interactions. University students, particularly those who struggle with assertiveness in social situations or in their academic studies. The program benefited students who want to develop their communication and interpersonal skills and build confidence. The program lasted four weeks, with meetings held twice weekly for approximately 45 minutes per session.

3.4. Resources Of The Program

- Snapchat App: Each student must open the app on their phone.
- Facilitator: A trained facilitator and psychologist experienced in self-assertiveness training and communication skills.
- Supporting Materials: articles and videos on self-assertiveness and effective communication that can be shared with students via Snaps on Snapchat Stories and Groups.

3.5. Objectives Of The Program

This program aims to teach self-assertion skills to students through hands-on, activity-based exercises and discussions conducted via Snapchat. Additionally, it helps students understand how social media, especially Snapchat, provides opportunities for self-expression and self-assertiveness. Furthermore, the program aims to assess how Snapchat-based dialogue influences students' ability to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs with confidence.

3.5.1. Program Structure

The first week covered theories of self-assertion and the use of Snapchat as a communication tool.

Session 1: Introduction to Self-Assertion.

- Introduction to self-assertion.
- Group discussions about what self-assertion looks like in real life.
- Identifying common obstacles to self-assertion in real-life situations and digital settings.
- Session 2: Using Snapchat as a communication tool.
- Introduction to Snapchat and its features, such as stories, snaps, and chats, and its role in communication.
- Example of confidently expressing thoughts, ideas, and feelings on Snapchat.
- Create a short story on a relevant topic, allowing participants to share their opinions, such as academic challenges, clubs, or hobbies.

Second Week: Moving into Practice – Self-Assertion through Snapchat

Session 1: Developing Assertive Online Communications.

- Strategies for assertiveness in online interactions.
- Role-playing activity: responding assertively to a hypothetical situation, such as a peer disagreement.
- Using Snapchat's visual features, such as images, filters, emojis, or text, enhances an assertive message.
- Session 2: peer interaction and feedback.
- Students posted their Snap stories and then received feedback from peers.
- Group discussion on how effectively they communicated their needs or opinions to others.
- Reflection on how the new Snapchat format affected their self-authentic assertion.

The third week focuses on developing self-assertion in various contexts.

Session One: Self-Assertion in Academic Contexts.

- Discuss the importance of self-assertion in academic settings, such as speaking up in class and addressing academic concerns.
- Snapchat exercise: Students used Snapchat to practice assertive interpersonal communication about an academic topic, such as asking a professor a question or sharing a perspective on a class discussion.
- Session Two: Self-Assertion in Social Contexts.
- Focus on self-assertion that takes place in informal, social settings.
- Students complete group challenges to make assertive statements in Snapchat group conversations.
- Wrap-up: Has the informal tone of the app affected how students assert themselves in different contexts?

Fourth week: reflect and assess.

Session One: Overcoming Challenges in Self-Assertion.

- Discuss challenges students face when practicing self-assertion on Snapchat.
- Explore strategies for handling insecurity and anxiety related to self-assertive communication.
- Peer reflection feedback: share stories about experiences and challenges in navigating self-assertion with Snapchat.
- Session Two: Final Assessment and Reflection.
- Final Snap Story project. We asked students to share a story about how they developed self-assertion throughout the curriculum.
- In the final reflection, students shared insights about how the Snapchat app contributes to self-assertion development.
- A final assessment of students' self-assertion levels and feedback on the training workshop.

3.6. Program Evaluation

To evaluate the program's effectiveness, the following steps have been taken:

1. Pre- and post-training survey: Students completed a self-report survey at the start and end of the program that measured their comfort and confidence with self-assertion.
2. Snapchat activity analysis: Students' Snap Stories and chats are monitored for using assertive communication techniques as part of ongoing evaluation steps.
3. Peer and instructor feedback: peer feedback during group sessions and instructor observations contributed to qualitative data on

student progress.

4. Final Reflection: Each student submitted a personal reflection describing how their self-assertion has evolved and the role that Snapchat played in that communication situation.

3.7. Ethical Considerations And Data Privacy

Before participating, all individuals signed written consent forms. They received detailed information about the study's objectives, voluntary participation, potential risks and rewards, and data management procedures. Participants were made aware of their right to withdraw at any point without penalty and to skip questions they found uncomfortable. The researcher's contact details were provided for any assistance that may be needed during the study. Participants were assured that their data would remain confidential and anonymous. All data were stored securely, anonymized, and used solely for research purposes, adhering to both institutional and APA ethical standards.

4. RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of using the Snapchat app on the self-assertion levels of university students and to evaluate the effectiveness of a short-term training program designed to enhance assertiveness. A total of 57 students (25 males and 32 females) participated in two separate groups, an experimental group and a control group. The program for the experimental group lasted over one month. To test hypothesis one, a paired samples t-test was conducted to determine whether their self-assertion scores changed for the experimental group before and after training, as shown in the following table (1).

Table 1: T-Test Results for the Experimental Group on Pre-Test And Post-Test.

	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	Effect size (d)
post-test	3.52	0.26	31.84	56	0.00	4.22
per-test	2.85	0.30				

Table 1 shows a statistically significant increase in self-assertiveness scores after training. The mean pre-test score was 2.85, and the mean post-test score was 3.52 ($t = -0.00$, $p < 0.00$). This indicates that the training program was successful in increasing assertiveness levels. The results showed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores, $t(56)$

= 31.84, $p < .001$, $d = 4.22$, indicating a very large effect.

Self-assertion scores were compared to those obtained one month after the training to examine the second hypothesis, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Results Of The T-Test For Post-Test And Follow-Up.

	Mean	SD	T	df	p-value	Effect size (d)
follow-up test	3.65	0.23	4.31	56	0.00	0.57
post-test	3.52	0.26				

Table 2 shows that follow-up scores (3.65) increased slightly from the post-test ($t = 4.31$, $p = 0.00$). This increase was statistically significant, indicating that most of the gains in assertiveness were not only maintained but also slightly improved one month after the intervention. The follow-up t-test revealed a significant improvement in scores compared to the post-test, $t(56) = 4.31$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.57$, indicating a medium effect size.

For the third hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare self-assertion scores between male and female students prior to the intervention. The results in Table 3 indicate that male students had an average score of 3.50, while female students had an average score of 3.54. The findings indicated no statistically significant difference ($t = -1.03$, $p = 0.30$), suggesting that, for this sample, gender did not significantly affect initial assertiveness levels. The results showed no significant difference between male and female participants, $t(55) = -1.03$, $p = .30$, $d = 0.17$, indicating a very small effect size, meaning that both groups achieved similar results.

Table 3: Independent t-test for Males and Females Pre-test.

	Mean	SD	T	df	p-value	Effect size (d)
Male	3.50	0.26	-1.03	55	0.30	0.17
Female	3.54	0.26				

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overall, the results of this study support the facilitative role of a structured training program that uses a familiar social media application (e.g., Snapchat) to enhance self-assertion in university

students. The notable change in assertiveness scores from pre- to post-test indicates that students showed improvement due to the intervention, likely because the training was interactive and contextually relevant. This study aligns with previous literature suggesting that assertiveness training can improve self-assertion skills through education, mainly via programs focused on communication skills with in-person practice and encouragement to apply these skills outside the course. Snapchat, a social media platform currently popular among young people for social interaction through a familiar and engaging app, was provided to students as a functional, organized, and open space for demonstrating their ability to apply and interpret the skills learned during the program. Although assertiveness scores slightly declined at the one-month follow-up after the program, any changes linked to the intervention's components were significant. While the intervention's effects were fairly long-lasting, repeating the program with booster sessions might enhance long-term change as needed.

Snapchat's features appear to encourage assertiveness by enabling genuine, low-risk communication. Its messaging reduces worries about negative judgment and promotes open emotional sharing, supporting a key aspect of assertive behavior (Bayer et al., 2016; Vaterlaus et al., 2016). The informal, low-pressure interactions help users build confidence and feel more comfortable with self-disclosure, which then enhances their interpersonal skills (Yang, 2020). Additionally, Snapchat's private and direct messaging fosters clear and personal expression without the anxiety of public exposure, thereby boosting self-efficacy and social competence (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). The app's reciprocal feedback features further strengthen users' confidence in their communication abilities, while visual elements like emojis and filters aid in practicing nonverbal assertiveness and emotional expression (Manago et al., 2020). Overall, these features create a psychologically supportive environment that cultivates essential communication skills for assertive behavior.

Notably, the absence of any significant pre-intervention gender difference in self-assertion is noteworthy. While literature suggests that males may exhibit higher levels of assertiveness, this study shows that male and female students may start with similar levels of self-assertion related to self-defense against perceived threats. It also highlights the benefits of training programs that include both males and females, helping either gender improve self-assertion and defend against unwanted attacks.

This study supports the idea that integrating social media apps, such as Snapchat, into structured training programs can enhance self-assertiveness in college students. This intervention resulted in clear increases in assertiveness, and these gains were mostly maintained over time. The findings also suggest that social media, often perceived as a distraction, can be harnessed to develop personal and social skills. Since students are already active on digital platforms, higher education institutions should consider them as partners to help improve students' psychosocial skills. Additionally, future research should examine the long-term effects of such programs and explore how other social media platforms can be used collaboratively for student growth.

The results of this study align with those of Burnell, Kurup, and Underwood (2022), Musarrat et

al. (2022), and Aamir, Hassan, and Shams (2022), which showed a positive effect of not using social networking sites on the development of social communication skills. The study found a positive influence on behavior and personality, emphasizing the potential of these sites to support self-affirmation and boost confidence among university students. However, the study has limitations related to sample size and self-report measures, which can introduce sampling bias depending on participants' relationships with social media. Future research should replicate this study with a larger, more diverse sample and employ mixed-method designs that incorporate observation or qualitative data to enhance understanding. Another aim could be to compare different social media platforms and examine their effects on various interpersonal skills.

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